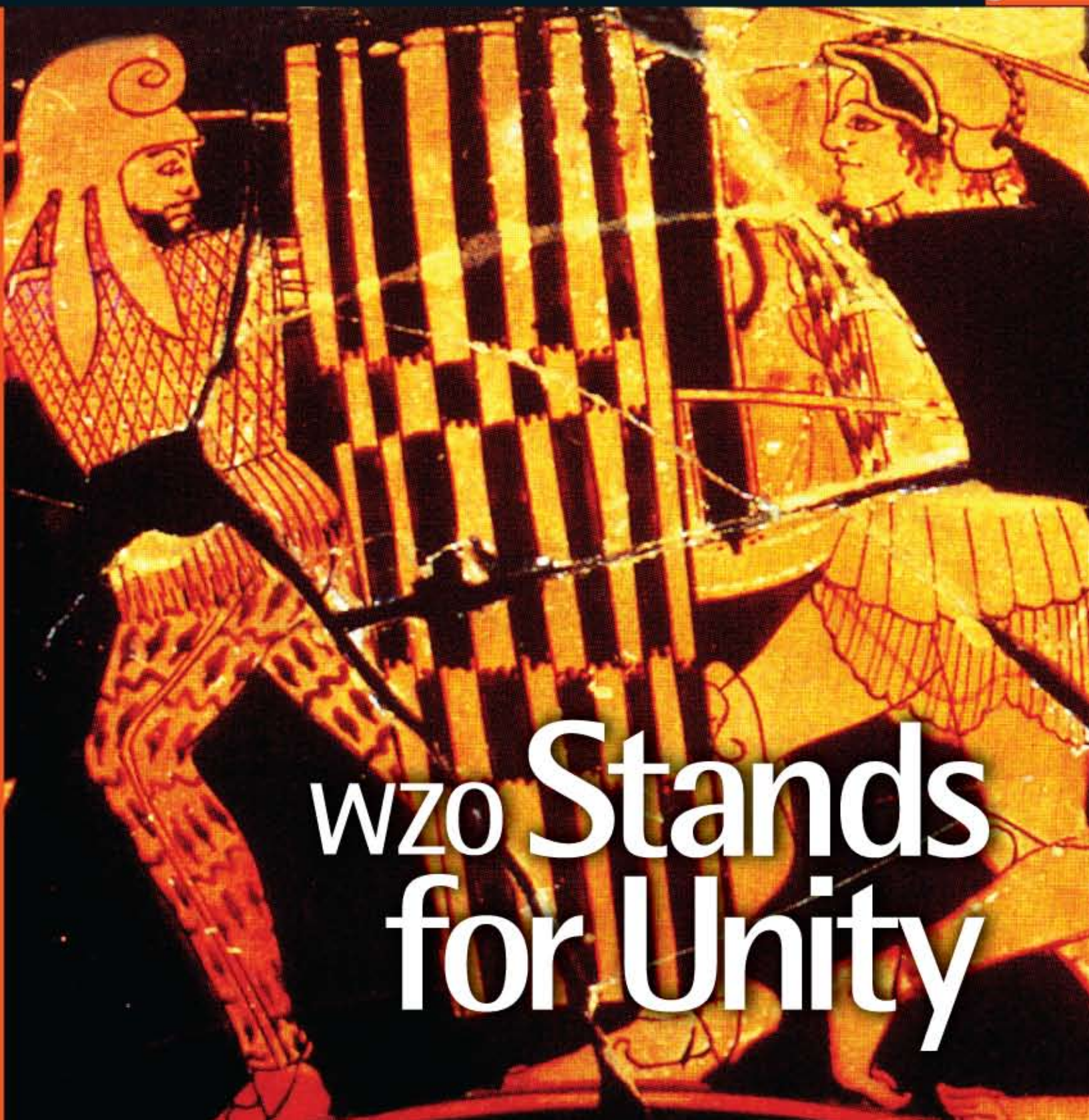


publication of the world zoroastrian organisation

HAMAZOR

1
Issue 2010



wzo Stands
for Unity



Drawing by Anushka Rustomji, p22

Contents

04	Report presented at WZO AGM - sammy bhiwandiwalla
07	Chairman's statement on WZO (India) presented at AGM
08	Darayus Motiwala, WZO Chairman elect
09	Washington Post's reporter behaves irresponsibly
11	WZO's Annual Gala Dinner-Dance
12	WZO's committee for 2010
13	Singapore-China Religious & Cultural Exhibition - minaz kanga
15	WZO Trust Funds Programme at Navsari
16	2009 Parliament of World's Religions - sam kerr
19	9th World Zoroastrian Congress - meher marker noshirwani
26	9th WZC - "The Iranian Angle" - navaz bustani
30	9th WZC - Connect, Collaborate, Create - sunnu golwalla
31	The 2009 Ratanbai Katrak Lectures - farrokh vajifdar
38	The Italian Mission in the Yaghnob Valley - antonio panaino
42	The Zoroastrian Ethos of Compassion - homi dhalla
46	Our Calendars: Real & Fake - farrokh vajifdar
50	Bas-relief of Kourash the Great - sam kerr
52	A chronicle of Parsis in Mombassa, part II - dara patel
54	High Achievers of the Zoroastrian community
59	Mhow - jehangir mehta
62	Concert to remember Tina Murdoch - zareer masani
63	New Membership Form with rates

COVER

PHOTOGRAPHS

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

WZO WEBSITE

www.w-z-o.org

International Board Members



London, England

Mr Darayus S Motivala
Chairman
E-mail: chairman@w-z-o.org

Mr Sam H
Bhiwandiwalla
President
E-mail: president@w-z-o.org

Mr Dinyar Modi
Hon Secretary
E-mail: secretary@w-z-o.org

Mrs Khurshid B
Kapadia
Membership Secretary
E-mail:
membership@w-z-o.org

Er Jehan Bagli
Mississauga, Canada
E-mail:
wzo_canada@w-z-o.org

Mr Dadi B Engineer
President, WZO India
Mumbai, India
E-mail:
president_india@w-z-o.org

Mr Dadi E Mistry
New Delhi, India
E-mail:
dadi_mistry@w-z-o.org

Mrs Meher Amersey
Mumbai, India
Email:
meher.amersey@w-z-o.org

Mr Rustom Yeganegi
Tehran, Iran
Email:
Rostam.yegagnegi@w-z-o.org

Mr Darius Mistry
Auckland
New Zealand
E-mail:
wzo_nz@w-z-o.org

Mrs Toxy Cowasjee
Vice President
Karachi, Pakistan
E-mail:
wzo_pakistan@w-z-o.org

Mr Russi Ghadiali
Singapore
E-mail:
wzo_singapore@w-z-o.org

Mr Keki Bhote
President, US Chapter
Illinois, USA
E-mail:
wzo_usa@w-z-o.org

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

Volume LIV - Issue 1 | 2010

Printed by:

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

Funded by:

A Zarathushti couple

Cover design by:

Tannaz Minwalla
Karachi, Pakistan

Design & layout by:

Toxy Cowasjee
Karachi, Pakistan

From the Editor

Hamazor is back again, after a lapse of four months, carrying scholarly articles and sharing the happenings which have taken place, primarily the much-talked about World Congress at Dubai. A gathering of "who's who" in the Zarathushti community, with glitter and fanfare, providing all those present a chance to meet up with old friends and to make new ones. The entertainment was professional as were the arrangements throughout the four days.



For reasons best known to the Congress organisers, WZO was given the 'cold shoulder', despite being promised a slot originally. It is a question one has to ask, if associations from small pockets of Zarathushtis were given a platform to speak from; the four large bodies namely BPP, FEZANA, ZTFE & WZCC were prominently showcased, then why not the only World Body? Another surprise was, spouses not born as Parsi-Zoroastrians were not permitted to attend the Congress even though this event avoided all topics pertaining to religion. Then WHY is the question, as the excuse for exclusion in the sub-continent, is usually 'religion'.

We at WZO are very proud for our own Dinshaw Tamboly to be awarded the Congress "Community Service Award" who heads the WZO Trust in India, and is the 'clearing house' for giving charity in the country from donations sent to him. Likewise the acceptance speech of Sooni Taraporewalla was both bold and frank, giving rise to a standing ovation from a packed room of attendees.

I share part of her speech: "... As a Parsi woman, I am nothing unusual. Through the centuries we have distinguished ourselves – we are living proof of a religion and a community that did not discriminate between men and women – who treated their girls at par with their boys. Yet despite this history of female emancipation, today if my daughter were to marry a non-Parsi, she and her children would be shunned while if my son were to do the same – we could celebrate his kids' navjotes with much *dhoom dham* at Colaba Agiary (while of course treating his wife, the mother of his children like an untouchable.) And then there are those who say — 'Treat both equally. Excommunicate the boys also!'

It is a matter of great sadness to me that we, the Parsis of India, who were once at the forefront of reforms, who were the first Indian community to embrace change, seem to be sliding backwards in so many ways – into the dark ages. I believe true spirituality is about compassion, not cruelty. Let's bring the kindness back into being Parsi, bring all the women we have pushed away, back into the fold. We cannot afford to lose them or their children. ..." She said it all, in these brief but honest words.

Some changes have taken place - the timing for publishing the Hamazor will now be end January, April, July and October. Membership fees have been slightly increased but giving the new member more options.

We take this opportunity of wishing you Naoruz Mobarak, a new beginning - one with tolerance, understanding and Hamazori.

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



Report presented at the WZO AGM - Sunday 13 December 2009, by Chairman Sammy Bhiwandiwalla

Past Chairmen, Mr Shahpur Captain, Ladies and Gentlemen -

Your International Board of Trustees and I are delighted to welcome you to our 29th Annual General Meeting.

We commenced 2009 with confidence and our diary for the year's social and cultural events brimming with enthusiasm and creativity. The Persian New Year celebrations attracted growing numbers of Iranians who applauded our efforts for creating a Persian ambiance to the spring Navroze celebrations with Iranian food, music and a voluptuous belly dancer thrown in for good measure. In June we held an evening of light entertainment with a violin recital by the very talented Rustom Pomeroy and 13 year old Jessica Mistry on the Bansuri flute as supporting act. Both performers enthralled the audience with their virtuosity and musical dexterity and we record our sincere thanks to both for offering their services free to WZO.

In late August on a lovely summer's day we successfully managed to squeeze in a scrumptious BBQ at the splendid residence of our generous hosts Alex and Valerie Burns. This was followed a week later with the Shahenshahi Navroze celebrations, an evening of charm and elegance combined with good food, wine and music. While these social events brought merriment and togetherness there was the serious purpose of fundraising and I would like to thank most sincerely all the willing hands who helped and those who devoted their time in planning and organising these events and in particular to Armaity and Benafsha Engineer.

On 21st November, Rumi Sethna and his wife Hilda organised the Annual Grand Charity Ball. In spite of the present tough economic climate nearly 135 guests generously supported the event and all the proceeds will

be added to WZO's Education Fund. The surprise event of the evening was the graceful and elegant dance performed by our own ex-All India championship dancers Freny and Noshir Umrigar to the music of the Anniversary waltz on the very day of their 50th wedding anniversary. The captivated audience showed their appreciation with rapturous applause. To Rumi and Hilda we convey our sincere thanks for their annual fundraising effort not forgetting their constant commitment and support to WZO throughout the years.

Taking a step back to 6th February 2009, at a special awards ceremony, President Dadi Engineer of WZO India was awarded a "Lifetime Achievements Award" for his long and devoted services to the Zoroastrian community in India. On behalf of WZO UK, President Darayus Motivala presented Dadi with a magnificent crystal bowl in commemoration of the honour bestowed upon him and we convey our best wishes to Dadi for the future.

WZO is dedicated to imparting knowledge of Zoroastrian Religion, History and Culture and during the year financed and participated in four major international conferences.

The season kicked off in March 2009 with a symposium on Cultural and Historical Perspective of Zoroastrian Faith held in Toronto, Canada. The FEZANA Khorshed Jungalwala Lecture was delivered by Prof Oktor Skjaervo on Zoroastrian Literature as a Part of the Cultural Heritage of Modern Zoroastrians. Papers were also delivered by

Prof Jennny Rose on Keepers of the Flame: The Early Zoroastrians of Central Asia, Prof Maria Subtelny on The Water of Omniscience and the Milk of Knowledge: Zoroastrian Elements in the Apocalypse of Muhammad and by Prof Jamsheed Choksy on How a Minority Adapts: Zoroastrians in Ceylon/Sri Lanka from Antiquity to the Present.

In April the Dastur Dr Sohrabji H Kutar Memorial Lecture was delivered by Dr Rukshana Nanji from the University of Pune on the Zoroastrian Migration to India.

WZO's annual seminar commenced in June and lectures were delivered by Dr Alan William on Mythical Reality or Historical Fiction? Understanding the Real Significance of the Qesse-ye Sanjn, Dr Constantinos Sandis on Why did Nietzsche choose Zarathustra as his mouthpiece, and Ms Shahin Bekhradnia on Zoroastrian Tajiks: Myth or Reality?

The Gatha Colloquium held in New York on the weekend of 27th/ 28th June was a major collaboration between WZO-ZAGNY where 12 erudite scholars presented their papers on the Gathas of Zarathushtra to a rapt audience and was a successful event by all accounts.

All these events were fully reviewed in Hamazor. We acknowledge with gratitude the constant support from Farrokh Vajifdar who plays a central role in organising lectures and seminars and for his scholarly contributions to Hamazor. Our sincere thanks also to Ervad Dr Jehan Bagli for arranging a very successful symposium in Toronto and to Shahin Bekhradnia for arranging the annual WZO lecture series.

WZO continues to play a significant role in the upliftment of many economically deprived sections of the Zoroastrian community in collaboration with numerous

charities. The Erach & Roshan Sadri Foundation, UK, provided £17,500 towards the replacement of five mud huts with brick built cottages and £14,285 to five farming families through the Farmers Rehabilitation Project in the rural areas of Navsari. In addition a further £15,000 was awarded towards education in vocational and 1st degree courses and these funds were allocated to India and Iran.

WZO has always believed in serving the communities within which Zoroastrians live and work and one of the projects that has been very successful, thanks to the intervention of Toxy Cowasjee, has been to support the charity CHAL in Pakistan. The devastating earthquake in the northern regions of Pakistan in 2005 ravaged poor communities and impacted severely on the lives of women and children living in remote mountain areas. The Sadri Foundation very generously underwrote the sum of £10,000 to provide prostheses to children who had lost their limbs as a result of the earthquake and will continue to be assisted by CHAL into adulthood. We are indebted to the Trustees of Sadri Foundation for their constant support and overwhelming generosity, helping the underprivileged and deprived sections of various communities around the world.

WZO Trust Funds in India raise substantial sums towards a multiplicity of regeneration and self-help programmes for the community in South Gujarat. During the year a property at Aspar Street, Asparwad, Navsari was donated by Mr Kersi F Aspar of Singapore and his family in memory of his beloved parents. The plot will be used to construct the eighth apartment building for economic housing. The first tranche of funds for the construction of apartments was received from the Trustees of Bai Maneckbai P B Jeejeebhoy Deed of Settlement Fund and the new building would be named: "The WZO Trust Funds – Bai Maneckbai P B Jeejeebhoy Building No VI." Completion is expected to take place by

around March 2011. To Bachi & Dinshaw Tamboly we convey our immense admiration for successfully implementing so many worthwhile projects in India.

WZO relies very heavily on the World Zarathushtrian Trust Fund, The Dasturji Sohrabji Kutar Benevolent Fund and The Firuz Madon Foundation to carry out its charitable activities throughout the year. We offer our sincere thanks and gratitude to all the Trustees of all the above Trusts.

The Noshirwan F Cowasjee Medical Benevolent Fund assists towards the numerous applications received each year for medical/surgical treatment. We also donate annually towards the scholarships awarded by the Fali Chotia Foundation, USA, to deserving students in North America.

We must of course never fail to thank the numerous individual donors and supporters who each year contribute generously towards worthy causes and with whose help WZO has grown to be what it is today.

Hamazor has grown from strength to strength and its success reflects the creativity and dedication of one person namely Toxy Cowasjee. She often prefaces each issue of Hamazor with biting editorials that clearly don't mince words when stating the facts and never fails to raise the journalistic content within to exacting standards.

Sadly I have to state that the costs of printing and postage have escalated over the years and the free distribution is proving unsustainable in the present financial climate. We are therefore seeking urgent support from well-wishers and members to become sponsors of Hamazor and no amount is too small to keep the journalistic voice of freedom in our midst. Through the efforts of Toxy herself I must inform you that issue 2 and 3 of 2009 were sponsored by two very generous donors of

whom one preferred to remain anonymous. The Committee wishes to express its deep gratitude and recognition of Toxy's commitment and devotion to WZO.

Our sincere thanks to Keki Bhote, President of WZO US Region, for his selfless services in North American and his constant support towards the future well being of WZO. I would also like to record our thanks to Marzi Byramjee from Canada who will be stepping down from the Board at the AGM. Marzi has shown total dedication, commitment and loyalty to WZO throughout his terms of office and we are sorry to see him go.

I would like to conclude by thanking all the committee members who have worked with me over the last five years. I hope you agree that during these years a lot has been achieved and certainly if one milestone is worthy of mentioning it is that we were very fortunate to have received and transmitted towards charitable causes more funds than ever before. Also I think we had a lot of fun and satisfaction while doing so and long may it continue.

In conclusion there are two important matters I wish to touch on. The first is that we must make a concerted effort to find new blood for the Managing Committee in the UK and I hope if all goes well a new member will be co-opted at the next meeting. The second is that there is a lot of unfinished business for the new year and you should welcome the new Chairman and offer him your undivided support as soon as he takes up office. ■■■■

Sammy Bhiwandiwalla since arriving in the UK was in employment and in 1970, formed his own company together with his wife Ursula, trading in chemical products for the foundry and model making industry. After 35 years they have called it a day, with six grand children to occupy them.



Ursula and Sammy always took an active interest in community matters in the UK and were greatly influenced by the actions and sincere beliefs of individuals such as Noshirwan Cowasjee, Shirinbanoo Kutar, Shahpur Captain and many others, that in a changing world it was necessary to create a more balanced and equitable community within the UK. He was requested to join the WZO Board and in 1988 was elected as Community Relations Officer. Later he was elected as the Hon Treasurer, followed as the Jt Hon Secretary and since 2004 the Chairman.



Chairman, Sammy Bhiwandiwalla's statement on WZO (India) presented at the AGM on 13 December 2009

As I conclude my five year term of office which to all intents and purposes was a fruitful one, it is particularly sad for me to mention that WZO (India) set up by one of our own senior Board Members Shahpur Captain has been the scene of unacceptable conduct by various individuals who have been its office bearers at one time or another.

Individuals invited or selected to join an organisation sometimes ignore the interests of the organisation by using it to further their own agenda. There is a loss of focus on their real responsibilities and their commitment to the furtherance of the organisation's ideals.

Unbeknown to us and over a number of years the committee of WZO (I) failed to implement the membership clauses passed by a special resolution in 1993. Applications from intermarried families and their children were rejected contrary to our Articles of Association. More disturbing was the alteration and issuing of new WZO membership application forms in 2002 and a reversal of our membership clause back to pre 1993, thereby only accepting "those who are born into the faith".

As per past practice, neither was membership application forms sent to the UK for verification and election by the UK Managing Committee to the company's resister of members and these were serious deficiencies in operating procedures. Not happy to content themselves with their actions, some of these committee members were seeking election to the main Board in an attempt to undermine the organization even further.

The attitude of these members of the WZO (I) committee was in the opinion of the main

Board, detrimental to the reputation of the WZO and its worldwide membership. It is important for a member of the WZO Board to take a global view of the issues facing the community and not a narrow, parochial one. The issue at the heart of all this was of course our pristine religion and the practice of it.

For many in our community the pursuit of religious knowledge is of minimal interest and would present an inconvenience to their daily lives. Many rely on the scant knowledge passed on to them by their parents during their childhood and it is enough to be a Parsi or a Zoroastrian by birth and little else matters. It is Parsi-ism and not Zoroastrianism that they subscribe to.

The prevalence of such attitudes continues to have dire consequences for our community and it is these self styled defenders of the faith who wanted WZO to re-adopt and impose their narrowly focused belief system on the rest of our worldwide membership. That was their agenda and in direct conflict to WZO's own hard won membership criteria.

In the opinion of the International Board of WZO a small group of WZO (I) committee members, were operating outside the requirements of the UK Company and Charity laws. They were prepared to violate the fundamental human rights of others in justification of their own beliefs. They discarded democratic rules and challenged the will of the International Board, which was unacceptable to the latter. By their actions they created conflict unnecessarily making the International Board doubly determined to make sure that such a group could never again indulge in activities that are detrimental to the world wide membership of WZO and its reputation.

The surge of support from the international membership to protect WZO has been overwhelming by the number of proxy votes held in favour of the Chairman at the last AGM. Later, we will be seeking your approval to strengthening our constitution by appropriate changes to it. These changes will ensure that WZO Board will not experience the situation it had to face this year and that those who wish to disrupt WZO are kept at bay. In the New Year we will engage in discussions with the President of WZO India so we can resolve the present impasse that exists between the two organizations.

I wish to record my sincere thanks to the International Board for supporting me throughout the year during this very difficult time and for their understanding and co-operation in all our actions.



Darayus Motiwala, WZO Chairman elect, addresses you -



It is indeed a privilege and an honour to be elected Chairman of the World Zoroastrian Organisation, an organisation that has been an important part of my life for over 16 years. I am very pleased to inform you that WZO will be celebrating its 30th anniversary in the Spring of this year.

Through these years, WZO has gone through a lot of changes, always adapting to the needs of the Zoroastrian diaspora. In 1993, WZO led the way by opening its membership to non-Zoroastrian spouses and their children because of their significant contribution to our community, particularly in the West. In the past decade, we have changed our attitudes to disbursing charity from exclusively to Zoroastrians in India to directing it to needy Zoroastrians wherever they are and, on occasions, to deserving non-Zoroastrian causes. Whilst charity in India will continue to be our major focus for many years to come, we have also been supporting our brethren in Iran, and assisting Zoroastrians in the West with their medical and educational needs. We know we are on the right track with this approach as we continue to receive substantial sums to support our work.

Last year, after close consultation with all the members of the International Board, WZO sought to review its membership clause to be more inclusive in a changing Zoroastrian Diaspora.

Unfortunately, a couple of Board members chose at the eleventh hour to oppose our plans and tried to impose their views on the worldwide membership. We had to take preventative action against them to safeguard WZO's reputation and integrity. It is my intention to continue adapting the work done by WZO to meet the needs of the Zoroastrian community worldwide.

December end, I was very proud to represent WZO at the 9th World Zoroastrian Congress in Dubai. This was a good opportunity for me to meet many influential Zoroastrians of differing views. We had some interesting discussions and I hope that WZO has made some new friends as a result.

Under my Chairmanship, I hope to increase WZO's membership size and its range of activities. We will continue to be inclusive in our approach and respect the view of others. Whilst we have a

dedicated team on the Board, we cannot do it all by ourselves. We want you to take a more active role as a member. Initially, I would urge all of you to recruit new members to this organisation as this will have a greater influence in representing your views. We have made it easier for you by introducing two new grades of membership; a Family membership which is open to all members of a family living at a single address and a 'Friend of WZO' which is open to those persons who are interested in WZO and Zoroastrianism but do not qualify under our membership rules. The latter grade will not have any voting rights.' Over time I will, through Hamazor, suggest other ways of you playing your part as a member of WZO.

In the previous paragraph, I alluded to the dedicated team on the International Board on whom I will be reliant to help me fulfil my role as a Chairman. Please welcome Meher Amersey and Homi Khusrokhan, both from India, who were elected as Board members at the AGM in December. I would also like to take this opportunity in mentioning just a few exceptional persons whose vision and commitment over the years has helped WZO to be what it is today. Shahpur Captain, a founder member who is always there for us providing a guiding hand from his vast experience as a community leader for over 40 years. Rumi and Hilda Sethna who continue to support our activities and raise tens of thousands of pounds for us from their Isle of Man retreat. Toxy Cowasjee whose quiet and unassuming manner affects and positively influences the Zoroastrian global community way beyond her role as an editor of this excellent magazine, Hamazor. And saving the best for last, Sammy Bhiwandiwalla who has worked 24/7 as a Chairman of WZO for the last five years and the results are very plain for all to see. Sammy is a hard act to follow and I am very pleased and relieved that he has agreed to remain on the Managing Committee.

I would like to thank you all for your confidence in electing me as your Chairman and I will do my best to live up to your expectations. Wishing you all a successful and prosperous 2010. May it bring you joy, peace and good health.



THE WASHINGTON POST

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/discussion/2009/11/06/DI2009110603445.html>

Balance of Power with Tucker Carlson and Ana Marie Cox - Political Journalists (Monday, November 9, 2009; 12:00 PM)

Tucker Carlson. Ana Marie Cox. He's conservative. She's liberal. They both write for The Daily Beast, he's a contributor to Fox News and she's a national correspondent for Air America Media. They were online Monday, Nov 9 to offer their analysis of the Obama presidency and other goings-on in the world of politics.

Extracted brief:

Silver Spring, MD: I wonder if you two could help me. As you likely know, two tragic shooting rampages happened last Thursday. Our media did an obsessively thorough job of telling me the first one was done by a Muslim, but none of the stories about Mr Rodriguez, the Florida shooter, informed me of HIS religion. Since I desperately need to know which faiths attract dangerous, bloodthirsty animals so that I can stereotype and steer clear of them, I am left

high and dry by the latter coverage. I'm assuming Rodriguez was a Christian (as was Mr Cho of Virginia Tech), but the media is terminally shy when it comes to even mentioning if a shooter is "Christian". How can I know whom to fear and hate when the media is so spotty in its bogeymongering?

Ana Marie Cox: Well, you are in a pickle, aren't you! I think you could save a lot of time and just start being scared everyone - a lonely but safe existence, OR you could not assume that the media has the best judgment when it comes to relevant details. Also, why aren't more crazy people Zoroastrians?

Not that I want to imply that there's anything crazy (relatively speaking!) about Zoroastrianism, but man does it SOUND scary. Like, just the name, you know? "Zoroaster" could be the villain in a Ghostbusters sequel or something.

Tucker Carlson: ...



Please turn page for immediate response to this scandalous statement



The World Zoroastrian Organisation

135 Tennison Road, South Norwood, London SE25 5NF

Website: www.w-z-o.org

Charity No. 1023334

The Editor-in-Chief,
Washington Post

25th November 2009

Dear Editor,

Re: Carlson-Cox exchanges on "Zoroaster"

For and on behalf of the worldwide Zoroastrian community
composed by Farrokh Vajifdar

It has been brought to our notice that in reporting some low-grade banter in the prestigious *Washington Post* a deplorably inappropriate reference to Zoroaster as "*villain in a Ghostbusters sequel or something*" is as childishly vague as it is disquieting.

The puerile exchange between your two journalists makes us despair of seeing your high standards continuing. It indicates to us that both parties are overdue for refresher courses. Whilst we are aware that North American villains are all killed off, or bested, or even superannuated, there is surely little need to delve into the directory of greatly respected, universal figures from ancient History to replenish lists where Plato can be replaced by Pluto (the dog, that is), and perhaps now Zorro by Zoroaster?

For your information, Zoroaster, the name by which he is popularly recognized by the intelligentsia everywhere, was Zarathushtra, the Sage of (pre-Islamic) Ancient Iran. His teachings, now realized as timeless and of universal application, are still treasured, revered, and followed by some 150,000 devout followers worldwide.

These teachings are of high ethics and preach only of profound moral values which would undoubtedly benefit a peace-seeking world. Let it be noted that all great religious systems have assimilated what best suited, and respectfully researched what did not – from Zoroastrianism. The U.S. has several thousands: none of them "villain"ous!

Whilst the misuse and attempted derision of the name Zoroaster for cheap journalistic purposes may well be *de rigueur* for immature tabloids, it very clearly ill befits the *Washington Post* to veer towards such miserly productions. As we are aware, the followers of our ancient faith, Zoroastrianism, that bears the Founder's glorious name have brought lustre and increase to all lands wherever they have settled over the centuries. True to our beliefs we have followed and respected the Laws of the lands, integrated successfully with most communities, and have never subscribed to any villainous aspects of any societies.

We trust you will now be enabled to see why we have stoutly defended our Founder Zoroaster's name against base suggestions from uninformed figures who, we suggest, should at the very least could have consulted even the most compact encyclopaedia before mindlessly besmirching Zoroaster, the *Washington Post*, and even *Ghostbusters*.

We wish you and all your colleagues the enlightenment that derives from Wisdom. For your added information "Wisdom" exactly translates *Mazda*, our benevolent Deity.

May we progress in Wisdom, Peace, and all Prosperity.

Yours sincerely,

Sammy Bhiwandiwalla, Chairman WZO



WZO's Annual Gala Dinner Dance - 21 November 2009

The Hilton, London Gatwick Airport is not the most likely of places to hold a social event but its easy accessibility for those flying in to attend make it a great location and quite a few do so. With a very cooperative management and staff always ready to please our guests we can look forward to a pleasant evening combined with good food, wine and entertainment.

In spite of the economic downturn we were delighted to have 135 guests who were keen to join in the fun and bid generously throughout the auctions and fund raising games. Compere, Barry Williams provided his highly entertaining one man show interspersed with some lively dance music to the sounds of the "Beached Boys", needless to say, a tribute band to the Beach Boys. The dance floor was packed and everyone was enjoying themselves not wanting to come off till late in the evening.

The surprise event of the evening was the graceful and elegant dance performed by our own ex-All India championship dancers Freny and Noshir Umrigar to the music of the Anniversary waltz on the very day of their 50th wedding anniversary. The captivated audience showed their appreciation with rapturous applause and we thank them both for their impromptu performance.

WZO expresses its heartfelt gratitude to the guests who have supported this event over the years and helped make each event as successful as they have been.

We must of course record our sincere thanks to Hilda and Rumi Sethna who journey back to the UK each year from the Isle of Man for so professionally organising this annual event, not forgetting their constant commitment and support to WZO. Their combined efforts have rewarded us with substantial sums running into tens of thousands of £'s and this year was no exception with a magnificent £6,000 being allocated to WZO's Education Fund. ■■■■





Your committee for the year 2010

WZO Managing Committee

Chairman	Darayus S Motivala	chairman@w-z-o.org	UK
President	Sammy H Bhiwandiwalla	president@w-z-o.org	UK
Vice President	Toxy C Cowasjee	vice_president@w-z-o.org	Pakistan
Hon Secretary	Dinyar J Modi	secretary@w-z-o.org	UK
Treasurer	Framroze R Joshi	treasurer@w-z-o.org	UK
Membership Secretary	Khurshid B Kapadia	membership@w-z-o.org	UK
Social Secretary	Armaity R Engineer	social@w-z-o.org	UK
Social Secretary	Benafsha R Engineer	benafsha.engineer@w-z-o.org	UK
Social Secretary	Noshir J Umrigar		UK
Religious Co-ordinator	Shahin Bekhradnia	religious@w-z-o.org	UK
Grants Co-ordinator	Dr Godafreed S Irani	grants@w-z-o.org	UK

International Representatives & Board Members

Canada representative	Er Dr Jehan Bagli	wzo_canada@w-z-o.org	Canada
NZ representative	Darius Mistry	wzo_nz@w-z-o.org	NZ
Pakistan representative	Toxy C Cowasjee	wzo_pakistan@w-z-o.org	Pakistan
Singapore representative	Russi Ghadiali	wzo_singapore@w-z-o.org	
Singapore			
USA representative	Keki R Bhote	wzo_usa@w-z-o.org	USA
	Shahpur Captain	shahpur.captain@w-z-o.org	UK
	Soonu Engineer	soonu.engineer@w-z-o.org	UK
	Tirdad Sorooshian	tirdad.sorooshian@w-z-o.org	UK
	Rohinton Minwalla	rohinton.minwalla@w-z-o.org	Canada
	Rostam Yeganegi	Rostam.yegagnegi@w-z-o.org	Iran
	Abtin Sassanfar	abtin.sassanfar@w-z-o.org	France
	Mobed Kamran Jamshidi	kamran.jamshidi@w-z-o.org	Sweden
	Meher Amersey	meher.amersey@w-z-o.org	India
	Dadi Engineer	president_india@w-z-o.org	India
	Homi Khusrokhan	homi.khusrokhan@w-z-o.org	India
	Dadi Mistry	dadi_mistry@w-z-o.org	India
	Mahyar Ardeshiri		Iran
	Dr Kersey Antia	kersey.antia@w-z-o.org	USA
	Dr Meherwan P Boyce	meherwan.boyce@w-z-o.org	USA
	Dhunmai P Dalal	dhunmai.dalal@w-z-o.org	USA
	Sohrab R Felfeli	sohrab.felfeli@w-z-o.org	USA



Singapore-China Religious & Cultural Exhibition

Minaz Kanga, Secretary of the Parsi Zoroastrian Association of Singapore, reports

It was the 60th anniversary of the Singapore Inter-Religious Organisation (IRO) and to commemorate the same, they hosted a week-long Singapore-China Religious and Cultural Exhibition. This took place at the convention centre of Singapore's swanky Suntec City from 15th December – 22nd December 2009.

Many distinguished guests and speakers visited the exhibition including His Excellency, Mr S R Nathan, President of Singapore. The sprawling convention halls majestically ensconced stunning displays and stalls set-up by each of Singapore's nine recognized religions, as well as many breathtaking exhibits from China. It all looked lovely and was definitely poised for success.

Our Zarathushti stall looked dignified, yet stunning and was the cynosure of many eyes, including those of our little visitors. The *afarganyu*, cleverly lit from below with halogen bulbs, was fitted with an in-built fan, which when switched-on, blew the orange and red "flames" in a most elegant and majestic fashion, so real from afar, that it truly was a crowd-puller.

As always, we've wished to spread the word and to spread our wings. Farrokh Vajifdar was invited by us from England, which was sponsored by WZO in total, to give a talk at the venue as was the case with scholars from most other religions, whose booths were on display. Mr Vajifdar is a scholar who spearheaded the first ever Gatha Colloquium in England, sponsored by the WZO in 1993. The WZO's Second Gatha Colloquium in New York, June 2009, was his happy collaboration with ZAGNY's Dr Lovji Cama.

On 19th December, 2009 at around 5:00pm, Mr Vajifdar ascended the podium to deliver a speech on his topic of choice, entitled *The Smallest Great Religion*.

He opened with a quote from the German political philosopher Karl Marx who said, "*Religion is the opium of the people.*" He went on to explain that what Marx intended by this was that religion was meant to *contain* and not ameliorate the social ills of his times.

He drew this parallel to the beginnings of our own great religion, wherein a similar scenario of societal division and impoverishment prevailed at the time of Zarathushtra, who Mr Vajifdar describes as the Sage of ancient Iran. The Sage strove for *social justice*, not *social equality* – he was too focussed a realist to succumb to egalitarian pretensions.

He spoke of a pre-Zarathustra Bronze Age and the ruling priesthood, who used religion as a tool for keeping the economically underprivileged submissive and compliant, who shrewdly claimed to mediate for favours with a number of "gods".

He indicated the date and homeland of Zarathushtra, who according to the Gathas, lived amongst a predominantly pagan, settled society with traditionally polytheistic worship. Cattle and crops were the mainstays of the economy. He explained how Zarathushtra formulated the First Animal Rights Charter in promoting animal welfare through man's proper awareness and compassionate behaviour.

Mr Vajifdar threw light on Zarathushtra's originality. "Recognising the divine in all beings, (Zarathushtra) made no claim to divine or semi-divine status and was a "Truth-speaker and not a foreteller", he said to the idea of Zarathushtra being called a prophet.

Our esteemed speaker enlightened us on Zarathushtra's ideology of a *pure monotheism*. He further elaborated saying, "... while his precepts were addressed to the elite they were fully intended for universal dissemination."

Mr Vajifdar went on to explain ancestor-worship, tracing the origins of the ideology of the *fravashis* and bringing it into clear meaning for the present day. He spoke of how highly significant it is that in his poems, Zarathushtra never invoked the *fravashis* nor used the commonplace term “baga” for God. He explained Zarathushtra’s approach to Mazda in his poems “as friend to friend” (Ys. 46.2) and that such immutable friendship could never be sustained through fear but in love and truth – both integral to Mazda’s personality and *not* separate from Him.

Vajifdar says that in our approach to Ahura Mazda, we should relate to Him through his various aspects or agencies, chief among which are Truth, also defined as Justice, Order, Rightness and the Good Mind, which activates these in man in all aspects of his thinking and behaviour. In thus aspiring to the Divine, man himself becomes divine.

His speech threw light on the explanation of terms like Asha and the twin Primordial Principles of *good* and *evil* and what place these hold in our great religion. “*There exists free will by which man is free to choose – this freedom of choice is towards either good or evil modes of life*”, Mr Vajifdar laid great emphasis on the fact that each of us must take individual responsibility and accountability for our own actions.

He spoke of our religion giving equal regard and rights to both men and women and also shed light on the concepts of Life and the supposed Afterlife, and how the meaning behind these concepts became changed over the centuries.

He further explained several other aspects of the religion including its close relationship with science, the ideology behind dying and death, the modes of disposal of the dead, and shed further light on different verses of the Gathas with their meanings.

He went on to explain the means of transmission of the religion over the centuries and how the Iranian establishments spread far and wide in practically every global

direction. He spoke of the symbolism of the Navjote ceremony and the mode of worship essentially being non-congregational. He spoke of our festive and religious gatherings always being joyous affairs and also gave a deeper insight into the eclectic Iranian and Parsi cuisines.

All in all his talk was extremely enlightening and a pleasure to attend. I truly wish we have many more speakers like him to learn from. His knowledge is deep and he imparts through happy notes. Likewise, I am going to leave you on the very same note on which Mr Vajifdar wrapped up his speech. He asked the audience, “*Do you know who are the most dangerous people in the world?*” When everyone decidedly stayed silent his answer was, “*Little Zoroastrian ladies who write big cook books!*” ■■■■

In Memorium

Dastur Meherji Dastur Kaikobad Meherjirana, of the renowned Meherjirana ‘gaadi’ of Navsari, passed away on Saturday 23 January 2010, at the Surat Hospital where he was taken on Friday night feeling uneasy. He was 73. Dastur Meherjirana, a staunch traditionalist, was perhaps the last incumbent holder of the Meherjirana ‘gaadi’, which was founded by the first Dastur Meherjirana during the reign of King Akbar in the 16th century.

Dastur Meherjirana was a great upholder and defender of our faith as have been his ancestors, a gentle soul with great compassion towards all of creation. The Meherjirana family have been at the fore of ensuring that the religion and its customs and above all its values continues till the present day. The Dastur had the privilege of seeing one of his dreams coming to completion a few months ago, with the Meherjirana Library Annexe. For his work and determination to protect the manuscripts of the Library, the Dastur deserves the gratitude not only of the Zoroastrians but of historians and culture specialists all over the world.

Dastur Meherjirana was one of the only six Parsi High Priests in the world.

The International Board of Trustees of the The World Zoroastrian Organisation offer their sympathies to the Meherjirana family and the loss to the Zoroastrian community.

WZO Trust Funds Programme at Navsari

Report filed by the local Committee at Navsari of WZO Trust Funds



Every year, since the last six years, WZO Trust Funds have been hosting a programme at Navsari when bright Zoroastrian students who have performed well in academics, are felicitated, as a measure of encouragement and motivation.

On 2nd January 2010, a programme was organised by members of the Local Committee of WZO Trust Funds when not only were students felicitated, but educationists, teachers, support staff who have been involved in the noble profession of education for 15 years & more and 25 years & more were also acknowledged and felicitated.

Dr Mehroo D Bengalee, Hon Member, National Commission for Minorities came especially to Navsari as Chief Guest for the function. Mr Yazdi N Karanjia, noted educationist, writer, stage artiste and social worker was the Guest of Honour. Vada Dasturji Meherji K D Meherjirana, accompanied by his wife Mehroo and the District Magistrate and Collector of Navsari district Mr D P Joshi were also honoured guests at the function. Mr Sam Vesuna, President of Zoroastrian Society of Ontario, Toronto, visiting Navsari on that day was a very welcome guest.

The programme commenced with a welcome song specially composed for the occasion and rendered by children of Sir J J Primary (English Medium) school at Navsari. Thereafter, Trustee Dinshaw Tamboly, welcomed the honoured guests, introduced them to the audience and felicitated them with flowers, shawls and mementos. Expressing gratitude to the educationists who had served in the noble profession for 25 years and more, he remarked that education should be viewed as an investment and not as an expense. He also said that education was the backbone of progress, the promise of peace & prosperity, the instrument of liberty and the foundation to build the lofty structure of a nation on.

Pauruchisti Kadodwalla, Principal of Sir J J School informed the gathering that Dinshaw Tamboly had been given an award for 'Outstanding Community Service' at the recently concluded WZC held at Dubai. The news was applauded by the vast gathering. Dr Mehroo Bengalee, in her address touched upon the various issues that educationists have to contend with in the present times and exhorted the 80 odd educationists present to pursue their noble profession with dedication, imparting sound education through which youth can build a sound future.

Guest of Honour Mr Yazdi Karanjia suggested to the students to imbibe good family values; his message to parents was to help their children overcome stress factor through understanding and participation. His talk was laced by his outstanding sense of humour.

WZO Trust Funds felicitated 80 educationists, 47 Zoroastrian children in Nursery & KG, and 270 Zoroastrian children from 1st standard to final year in college, who had ranked 1st, 2nd & 3rd amongst Zoroastrian students in their respective classes.

A function of this dimension requires considerable planning, which was ably done through a band of volunteers. Thereafter, a play *Albelo Parsee*, written by Piyush Bhatt and directed by Rumi Baria, both well known artists in Navsari, was presented. The curtain rung down on a very enjoyable evening by the rendition of *Chaiye Hame Zarthoshti* sung by one and all present in the function. ■■■■

Dinshaw Tamboly awarding a prize winner



2009 Parliament of World's Religions - Melbourne, Australia

by sam kerr

Zarathushti involvement and participation



Part 1

This part of the article relates briefly the 'happenings' during the Global Interfaith Meeting in the newly built Convention Centre in Melbourne. I have dedicated it entirely to the Zarathushtis of Melbourne, who worked tirelessly as our hosts to make the 10-day meeting a really joyous one. We, the visitors have really appreciated their efforts. They stretched their daily courtesies most times to the point of extreme fatigue and at the cost of their own family welfare just so our stay remained comfortable. During my many visits to Zarathushti settlements and Zarathushti conferences throughout the world I have, truly, not experienced gestures of felicitations anywhere near such a genuine and generous Zarathushti spirit.

Their arrangements for the overseas visitors from around the globe as guests in their homes were attended to in great detail including the particular requirements of each visitor, their daily transport at split second timing through the peak hour traffic to reach the Centre by 7:30 am and return late at night and genuine concern about our general welfare and comfort. Rohinton Rivetna of Chicago, one of the Founders and Trustee of the Parliament with his vast experience was the main guiding voice through the 15 month Zarathushti preparation. Perviz/Nergish Dubash worked tirelessly not only to keep the likely visitors informed at all junctures, but also sometimes even appeasing them after minor email misgivings.

The well-prepared Zarathushti exhibition booth was entirely of their making and cost.

There was no spare time left to accept the many dinner invitations during these hectic days.

The reception laid out for us at the



Our Melbourne hosts with participants for PWR

Communities Night was really lavish, reminiscent of a Zarathushti wedding occasion (as commonly experienced in Mumbai). It was also associated with a show - skits, dances and songs in Farsi and Gujarati.

The newly built massive Convention Centre, with its state of the art facilities is the most modern and the largest I have so far had the privilege to participate in, during a global conference. The proceedings, which commenced 8 am daily and continued as the evening Plenary Sessions lasting well after 9 pm, created a unique experience of a life time.

The opening plenary

The Religion of Zarathushtra being the oldest monotheistic faith was given the first place in the opening Plenary Session. Our enacting of the welcoming '*Zarathushti Blessing ceremony*' was initiated by the incredibly moving orchestral strains of *Thus*



The Religion of Zarathushtra being the oldest monotheistic faith was given the first place in the opening Plenary Session.

Sprach Zarathushtra by Richard Strauss as we entered the stage and formed two lines. The children were in front - girls in floral dresses, the boys in white clothes and *topi*, men dressed in the traditional white clothes with *pheto* or *pagri* and the women in their colourful *garas*. Prompted by Ervad

Kaivan Antia we recited the words of our prophet audibly and in unison as an appropriate finale to the music and a prolonged applause.



Symbolic Jashan with Homi Ghandhi, Homi Dhalla, Rohinton Rivetna standing l to r.

Daily morning Observances: Day 1 & 2 -

After a brief introductory narrative we began by performing the daily morning *Kusti Padyab* prayers followed by and a symbolic Jashan ceremony demonstration by Ervad Kaivan Antia and Ervad Armin Dumasia.

Panel 1- L to R : Rashna Ghadialy, Homi Gandhi, Pervin Mistry, Homi Dhalla, Rohinton Rivetna.



The following is a brief description of the Zarathushti participation:

Panel discussions 1 on *Z-stewardship for all Creations, the animate and the inanimate*. The panel moderated by Rohinton Rivetna was well represented by Dr Homi Dhalla,

Homi Gandhi, Pervin Mistry and Rashna Ghadialy. Drs Homi Dhalla and Homi Gandhi presented an incredibly large number of valid instances from our holy scriptures. Rashna Ghadialy from Chicago listed her own experiences and related them to passages from our scriptures. Pervin Mistry of New Zealand contributed passages from the Avesta regarding our care for all Creations.

Sharing The Zoroastrian Environmentalist Faith: Building Bridges with Indigenous Communities, Rashna Ghadialy a research scholar showed her heart rendering and concerned involvement with the Pakistan 'Tharis', tribal indigenous Hindus living on the remote fringes of the Thar desert of old Rajputana. Her powerpoint presentation with photographs showed her genuine concern about this generally isolated community. As a dedicated 'greeny' it would be interesting to read about her post Parliament experiences in the Rain Forest of Tasmania.

Panel discussions 2 on *Zs – their imperative as Bridge Builders* was moderated by Arnavaz Chubb. Perviz Dubash gave documented instances in Gathic verses.

Dolly Dastoor gave illuminating instances among Zarathushti philanthropists in India and elsewhere, helping peoples of all creeds. Young Kayzad Namdarian, who has just been awarded the prestigious prize - the Karmaveer Puraskar Award, Global Indian

Category, as a "Noble Laureate" for his 'e-activism and e-donation drive to end world hunger' did an excellent job in his modest drive, building useful bridges in the community and outside. I spoke a bit about my own life experiences on the various continents I worked, both in and outside my own profession.

passage in Avestan from *Doa tandrosti - Daham afriti* with English translation. During Achaemenian times, commencing with Darius I's rule, this benediction was recited solemnly by the Pontiff (Mobedan-e-Mobed) of the Empire with great telling effect in the presence of the Great King even before the King spoke and proceedings of the Court commenced. It was a benediction for happiness and harmony in a structured society guided by a righteous order. It reads: "In this house may understanding obedience (Sraosha) overcome ignorant disobedience; may harmony displace discord and generosity of spirit triumph over covetous avarice; may respect replace derision and open honesty displace dishonesty. And, above all, may the Righteous Order prevail over the web of deceit and bring consequential happiness to all."



Panel 2 - L to R: Perviz Dubash, Dolly Dastoor, Sam Kerr, Arnavaz Chubb, Kayzad Namdarian.

The Many Faces of Peace by Homi Dhalla - an amazing study of statistical data presenting a large number of instances around the world (as a powerpoint presentation) where injustice prevails and what can be done to address each situation. He showed how understanding and dialogue can bring an end to conflicts round the world.

Sharing Wisdom in Search of Inner and Outer Peace - Homi Dhalla took part in a deeply thought inducing group discussion. Again he showed his passion for a cause he so relentlessly pursues.

The Ethos of Compassion. Homi Dhalla once more showed his zeal and immense knowledge of his contacts with the under privileged and exploited peoples of the world and his role in their emancipation. I followed him to do my bit on Cyrus the Great's role as a humanitarian to bring together peoples of vast cultural differences and spiritual persuasions in his enormous Empire during a by-gone archaic age. Zoroastrian Benediction: Ervad Kaivan Antia and Ervad Armin Dumasia recited a

Zoroastrian Blessings recited by Arnavaz Chubb at the Closing Plenary Session :

I believe there is interfaith harmony in Melbourne when, like sugar softly sweetens milk we dissolve into the fabric of Australian society enriching but never overpowering, contributing but not confronting, co-existing not isolated, unified but still preserving our uniqueness.

When through the co operation and commitment of all the diverse cultures that make up this magnificent city, Melbourne, we are one in justice, one in truth, one in right action and the stream of clear reasoning leads to understanding, tolerance and respect towards all. ■■■■



Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine (London) and of several Colleges of Surgery, Sam Kerr was Surgeon/ Lecturer, the University of NSW and College Hospitals, Sydney from 1968 to 2003. He is now Emeritus Surgeon at the University and Hospitals. He has initiated/been a founding member - AZA of NSW, Sydney. In addition to his professional writing he has lectured/published on the social, cultural, historical and scriptural aspects of the religion of Zarathushtra.



Zoroastrian booth

9th World Zoroastrian Congress - Dubai

28th - 31st December 2009

by meher marker noshirwani



They wore gara's and silk sari's,

duglees and suits, and came from different parts of the world. The old and the young, the liberal and the orthodox, and for four days they honoured their past, reinforced their identity as Parsi's, united as Zarathushtis, and pledged to uphold the tenets of their faith; *Humata, Hutaka, Havarasta*.

The 9th World Zoroastrian Congress (WZC) was held at the Crown Plaza, in Dubai from 28th - 31st December 2009. Its theme "Unity through the Sands of Time" focused on bringing participants together to discuss various issues confronting the Zarathushti community. The atmosphere in the hotel was one of celebration, old friends meeting each other in the lobby, Gujarati spoken in the lifts, and as more and more Parsis checked in, the noise level in the hotel rose to festive proportions. The aim of the Congress was "a celebration of not only our rich past, but what will bind us together in the future; a celebration of the community's resilience and strength and its contribution to the world".

Pre Congress Activities

The Pre Congress activities began on 27th December with a meeting entitled "Coming Together Round Table Conference" (CTR) which set the stage for the Congress. It explained the spirit of the Congress as *Hamazor*, a concept which means "united in spiritual energy". This meant the inner strength essential for being assertive and affirmative. In order for *Hamazor* to work we need to have empathy for others, irrespective of their beliefs and learning's. In order to develop empathy it is essential to understand and tolerate each other. And since those in leadership positions in Zoroastrian organizations around the world were present, it emphasized that leadership demands responsibility. The theme of the

CTR was "Connect, Collaborate, and Create" and the genesis of the CTR's was explained. This was based on a realization which emerged during the 8th WZC in 2005, on the urgency of keeping the global community connected. "The CTR serves as a forum for information sharing, dialogue and collaborative action, among Zarathustis in Iran and India and in the Diaspora. The objective of the CTR is for the regional leadership to assume a pivotal role in setting future direction. The five Goals of the Congress were introduced: Youth, Women, Entrepreneurship, Community Organizations, and Medicine".

The Chair of the Congress, Meher Bhesania welcomed the participants to the 9th WZC.



Meher Bhesania, Congress Chair

She said 750 delegates had registered, and this WZC was commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the WZC's which began in 1960. The spirit of the Congress

was to listen to each other, and focus on the need for harmony in the community. An underlying issue of the Round Table discussions was to avoid conflict and work towards unity within the community. There was a large delegation from Iran, who spoke Farsi, and emphasized the importance of language as a unifying thread within the community. As the speaker of the Iranian Anjuman said "if you lose your language you lose your religion".

Although the Congress team emphasized unity and harmony, there was a distinct sense of issues which divided the community. The differences between the Iranian Zarthushti's and the Parsis, and the opinions of the orthodox and the liberal, were underlying strains which threatened to surface every so often in the discussions. And although controversial issues were avoided, these must be addressed if the community is to retain its diversity and strength in the future. During the Pre Congress session there was also a focus on the importance of communication as a means to network within the community, to use technology to create more effective channels of communication among the diaspora, and to share information about various Zarathushti organizations. This would enable Parsis all over the world to maintain contact with each other, and provide a space for the exchange of new ideas. Community projects in various parts of the world were reviewed, and new initiatives identified. Promoting the language and alphabet of the ancient Iranian culture, collection of demographic statistics, and supporting initiatives such as Z-net and NextGenNow, were discussed.

In the afternoon a *Khushali nu Jashan* was held at the Astoria hotel, where mobed's from Udwada, Mumbai, and Dubai, performed a Jashan to initiate the Congress. It was a moving ceremony with the Vada Dasturji from the Iranshah in Udwada leading the prayers. Throughout the Congress the presence of the mobeds maintained a spiritual touch to the activities. Meher Bhesania honoured the mobeds and said "they have kept the spirit of our culture, customs and traditions alive and are the beacon of light for our younger generation." The Jashan was followed by tea and traditional *maleda*. A WZCC Pre-AGM meeting was held in the evening which was a



Khushali nu Jashan

closed session. Registration formalities took place, and registration packs were provided in colourful bags with a book on the WZC, elegant file holders, ID cards, WZC pins, and lots of perfume, were eagerly received by the participants.

Day 1



Lighting of the divas, courtesy Roshan Rivetna

The Congress was officially opened with prayers, the Congress Anthem, and the unfurling of the Congress flag. The Anthem had been written especially for the 9th WZC and the words to the song were placed on the tables in front of all participants. The Opening ceremony was held in the Banquet Hall, and elegantly arranged. The lighting of diva's, silence during the prayers, the mobeds from Iran, Udwada, Bombay and Dubai, who symbolized Zoroastrianism, created an atmosphere of unity, pride in our heritage, and reinforced our identity. In the Welcome address Meher Bhesania said that "the community is ready to take on the future and the challenges it holds". She explained the reason why Dubai had been chosen as the venue of the WZC because it was "a salute to Zoroastrians, who like the city of Dubai, have shown progressiveness and the spirit of innovation, while retaining their culture and values". Messages from Presidents, Prime Ministers, Sponsors, and



Lord Karan Bilimoria

Heads of Zoroastrian organizations were read out. Each message praised the Parsis for their high achievements and contributions to the countries they lived in.

This was followed by the Keynote address delivered by Lord Karan Bilimoria, CBE, DL. In his address Lord Karan captivated the audience by his inspiring speech. He acknowledged our forefathers, who had been a part of the British Parliament in the past. Dadabhoy Naoroji, Bhowanagree, and Saklatvalla, and honoured current leaders like Ratan Tata. Lord Karan said he had “stood on the shoulders of giants”, and praised the Parsi community for having “achieved so much with so little”. He stated that with great opportunity comes phenomenal responsibility, and that the Zoroastrian faith and credo of “good thoughts, words and deeds”, are guiding principles for action. He referred to poverty in India as a challenge, and emphasized the spirit of entrepreneurship among Parsis with reference to the Tata Nano, and quoted Mahatma Gandhi who said the Parsis were “in numbers beneath contempt, in achievements beyond compare”. Lord Karan’s speech brought together the tenets of the religion, and reinforced the identity of the community.

A film *Footprints on the Sands of Time* was viewed, which traced Zarathushti history and the migration of Zarathushtris to other countries. A ballet entitled *Unity in Diversity* was also performed. This was an enjoyable dance, which began with the Kissa-e-Sanjan, and traced the migration from Iran

to India, and beyond. Later that evening, we were entertained to more contemporary music and dance from Broadway musicals, and a fashion show. Keeping to the love and appreciation Parsis have of the theatre and music the first day provided a wonderful balance of food for thought, and music for the soul. As for food for the sheer pleasure of eating, the breakfast, lunch and dinner provided throughout the Congress ranged from eastern to western cuisine. The long queue’s for food were ample evidence of the fact that good food plays a great part in our lives in any part of the world.

The more serious business of the Congress took place through the sessions: Zoroastrian – Vision 2010 and Beyond, the DNA code, and Operation Eyesight a charity initiative. These focused on presenting a blue print for the community, and the identification of religion, demography, entrepreneurship, health, women, community organizations, youth, and supporting the poor, as a roadmap for community leaders to follow. Results of surveys conducted illustrated the issues prevailing within the community. The declining population, lack of housing, health of women particularly breast cancer, are among problems faced by Parsis today.

Speaking of developing the character of an individual, the main message to the participants was, “watch your thoughts, they become your words, watch your words they become your actions, watch your actions they become your habits, watch your habits they become your character, and watch your character they become your destiny”. A sober message to the younger generation of participants.



Ballet - Unity in Diversity

The youth were given a fair amount of space at the Congress to discuss, debate, and share their ideas on their achievements, their projects, and their aspirations. Web sites were identified, mentoring by the leadership in business was emphasized, ways of applying for support for higher education, and medical problems were shared. The WZC Youth Initiative focused on technology, youth outreach and promoting social networks. The Zoroastrian Trust Funds for Europe mentioned how Gujarati classes for children had been started, and the Youth Leadership Enhancement Programme (YLEP) presented its projects. Finally, a session in Farsi on the Zoroastrian community in Iran was held which gave the Iranians a feeling of inclusion at the WZC.

More entertainment was provided in the form of Astrological Predictions for 2010 every lunch time. A hilarious account of each star sign by Bejan Daruwalla, kept us laughing between meeting old friends and making new ones during the lunch breaks. Sightseeing tours were arranged, and the Youth Bash with DJ Scorpio, kept us going till the early hours of the morning.

Day 2

A lavish breakfast appeared on the 3rd floor every morning at 7am. I usually went downstairs at about 8:30am, to find the rooms full of women in sari's, men in duplees, eating akoori and drinking tea. Even at that hour of the morning we Parsis keep to our traditions.

The previous day's activities continued, with the youth developing their plans further in a session on Youth Vision. A Trade Show was opened by the CEO of Emirates, and we all met in the plenary to listen to Nadir Godrej speak on the spirit of entrepreneurship. This was another inspiring session, since Mr Godrej spoke in verse. His entire speech was in the form of a poem encapsulating the spirit of Parsi entrepreneurship. It was an enjoyable and thought provoking session. This was followed by presentations on business, trade, and economic issues.

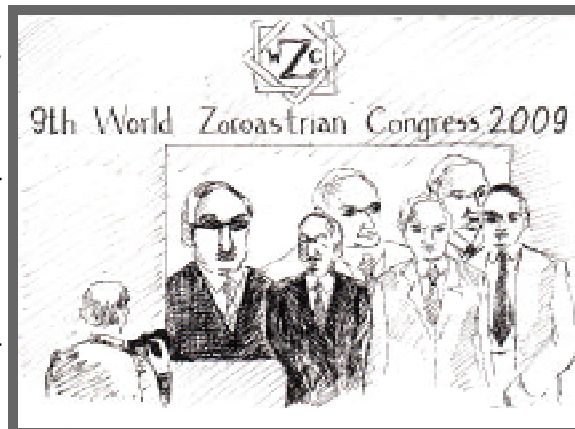
Lord Karan Bilimoria discussed the contributions of Zarathushtis to World Economies and urged the community to remember our past glory, but to continue to build towards a sustainable future. The sessions

were informative, and each speaker referred to the tremendous achievements of the Parsis.

In "Meet the Titans" the youth were given a chance to ask specific questions to Karan Bilimoria, Neville Shroff, and Nadir Godrej. However, this would have been more useful if we had been able to have an informal session with these individuals. Each of them had so much to contribute and we could have learnt from their experiences if the participants and particularly the younger people had been given the opportunity to communicate with them directly.

The afternoon sessions focused on Women's issues, Women Power, Zoroastrian Women's International Networking (ZWIN), PARZOR, and a finally presentation by FEZANA.

The ZWIN meeting was a disappointment since the session was cut short because the room was needed for the WZCC AGM, and we did not have time to discuss anything substantial. Dr Zareen Karani Araoz, and Dolly Dastoor made a presentation on ZWIN's projects, such as the ZEAL programme, creating awareness about breast cancer, and the need to revive social support to the elderly. The turnout for this session was good and many women attended, but it was not well organized, so we felt it was a lost opportunity. A session on Women Power was being held in the



"Meet the Titans"

Plenary, which paid tribute to the role and contributions of Zoroastrian women. Dr Dhun Noria, emphasized education, urbanization, and generational transfer of tradition and knowledge as the main reasons for Parsi women having achieved so much professionally. However, running between rooms to capture all the information in two back to back presentations was not constructive. Even the PARZOR project which was the highlight of the day was held in a small room, and should have been in the plenary.

PARZOR, presented by Dr Shernaz Cama, is a unique project begun in 1999 with UNESCO support. It focuses on revival and preservation of the culture and traditions of the Parsis. Oral histories, documentation of textiles, preservation of *manojats*, photographs, and research are conducted by the PARZOR team. Dr Cama emphasized the importance of our oral tradition which is disappearing, and the urgency with which we need to capture it. She said a rich legacy lives in the minds of the older generation, and we need to record memories and information before it is lost forever. She spoke of the threat to the



Boman Irani at a serious moment exhibited.

PARZOR was conducting, and played some recorded *manojats*, which many of us had last heard our grandmothers sing to us as bedtime lullabies. PARZOR also had an exhibition of its products on display. Exquisite handmade gara embroidery on bags, stoles, mobile covers, and diaries were

The FEZANA presentation showcased the organization and the community in North America who were firmly committed to strengthen the Zarathushti community in the USA.

Throughout the Congress, there was a constant mention of the past which provided a strong reference point for those of us who live in an increasingly globalised world. Every speaker throughout the Congress spoke of our “roots” and emphasized the need for the community to retain its identity, while contributing to the countries we live in. Over four days of hearing these sentiments expressed it led to a sense of pride among all those at the Congress, and will continue to guide us into the future.

The evening was a hilarious show by Boman Irani who kept us in splits of laughter, with his *koilah* jokes about the Parsis and Iranian Zarathustis. This was followed by the Gala Awards and music and dancing till late night. By this time the atmosphere was one of constant celebration, enjoyment, thinking over the interesting presentations heard through the day, and a complete reinforcement of being a Parsi/ Zarathushti. The only aspect we would have benefited more from is, if there



PARZORs stall

“Parsi Gujrati” language, and told us that in the next few generations this too will also be lost to the community. She appealed to the younger generation to help in the research



Shayan Italia

had been direct interaction with the speakers.

Day 3

Another day of events and excitement at the WZC. This time the focus was on the younger generation, the new leaders of the Parsi community. Enthusiastic, articulate, energetic, and committed, young men and women from the diaspora debated, discussed, planned their projects, and made presentations of their activities. They identified their future goals as social networking, religious education, global exchange, and a one membership platform for all. It was heartening to see so many young people, and for a while the fear of a declining population and a threatened existence of the community were forgotten. I felt another example of our presence as a community when someone who had been looking for me all morning said when she

found me in the afternoon, "normally in a crowded room a Parsi stands out a mile, among all these Parsis I could not find you!"

In the afternoon, on our tables we found key chains with the Farohar embedded in it. Gifts from supporters of the Congress, and the words to the Congress anthem were also distributed so that we could sing along to the song and reaffirm our unity as a force to be reckoned with. This constant reinforcement of identity was important to us individually, who live as minorities in our respective countries. It subtly strengthened the community spirit.

The next priority was health issues. Infertility, neurological disorders, allergy and asthma, breast cancer, and medical diseases were presented and discussed. This was quite a technical session, but indicated the health status of the Parsis. Zarathushti organizations were also given space to present their annual reports. The Bombay Parsi Panchayat will host the next WZC in 2013 in Mumbai. Zoroastrian Trust Funds for Europe, Associations of Australia and New Zealand, illustrated how the Parsis have been assimilated in remote areas of the world, and still contribute to the countries they inhabit. Every Parsi child knows the story of "Sugar in Milk", the fabled Kissa-e-Sanjan, and when we learn this from our parents and grandparents, somehow we internalize its implications, and continue to uphold an ancient promise made by our forefathers to integrate and enrich the lives of those around us.

Another session in Farsi, on projects for Zarathushtis in Iran, and the Youth in Iran was held, which balanced the different sections of the community. The Congress Express, a newsheet covered the events and interviewed different personalities at the WZC. This was available on two days and was a useful documentation of the Congress activities.

Entertainment was in the form of music by Shayan, and a desert safari in the evening. This was also well organized, and while Shernaz Cama made us sing *manojats* in



Whirling dervish at Desert Safari

the bus, we watched the Dubai skyline disappear as we drove towards the desert.

Day 4: New Year's Eve

On the last day of the Congress, New Year's Eve, we gathered in the Main Hall to listen to the summaries of the discussions held earlier. The story of the Zartoshty Brothers and their contribution to the Zoroastrian Center for Europe was explained, and this was followed by a presentation by Khojeste Mistree who spoke about the ethnic identity of the Parsi / Zoroastrians. He urged the diaspora to maintain linkages with India and Iran, and said that the concept of charity was decreasing within the community, and urged participants to uphold the old adage of "Parsi thy name is charity". He claimed that our forefathers were wise since they knew that if they looked after the community, the community would look after the religion.

A Zoroastrian blueprint was presented, from which a global working group would take the plans forward to the next Congress. These included the BBP, FEZANA, ZTFE, and other Associations. Targets for Health and the wellbeing of the community were identified as, the need for medical insurance, the creation of a center for scientific research, linkages to the PARZOR project, and awareness of breast cancer. Women's issues where ZWIN was the nodal point would focus on parents and develop programmes to instill Zarathushti values in children, and find ways to balance work and the family. For entrepreneurship, the World Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce pledged support to another 100 new entrepreneurs by the next WZC. And the Youth decided they would focus on communication and technology.

As the Congress drew to a close, the BPP stepped in to take on the responsibility for the next WZC to be held in Mumbai in 2013. Finally the closing ceremony began with mobeds lighting the divas, and the Congress anthem sung by all participants. It was an emotional moment since over the past four days friends and strangers had

come together on a common platform. Looking around the Hall during the Closing Ceremony, at 750 Parsis / Zarathushtis who had made the effort to come to the WZC, I felt the power of numbers, the sheer strength of being part of a large community. For four days we made our presence felt and I realized for the first time in my life what it felt like to be part of a majority. As I said to my children, "tomorrow we go back to being minorities, today feel the power, strength and security in numbers, and remember this is what the rest of the world feels like all the time".

New Year's celebrations began with a photo session of all of us who had come from Pakistan. These photo's will always remind us of the Congress, and we were given more goody bags as we entered the Main Hall for the last time. Tables covered with balloons, hats, and enough hooters to shatter the sound barrier, were on each table. Shayan sang his soulful music; gold and silver coins were won by some lucky people, and we ate, sang, danced, said farewell to 2009, and welcomed the 2010 as the New Year, with optimism and hope.

The WZC had been my first experience of a World Zoroastrian Congress. I am glad I had the opportunity to attend, and hope to be able to participate in the next WZC in Mumbai in 2013.



Meher Marker Noshirwani is a Sociologist, and has worked in the field of women, development and environment since 1985. The period 1991-2009 spans a career in women and social development in various positions with Shirkat Gah, a women's NGO established in 1975. She is currently working independently as a consultant on gender and development issues, and is doing social research for the Parzor Foundation on Parsi / Zoroastrian textiles. With an interest in crafts, she also develops hand crafted cane products using local resources made by skilled artisans to preserve a local craft.



“The Iranian Angle”

by navaz bustani

The Congress was held at the centrally located and spacious Crowne Plaza Hotel and was attended by over 700 delegates of whom approximately 150 had come from Iran.

The Congress started with prayers and the lighting of a lamp overseen by our great Mobeds including Mobed Ardeshir Khorshidian; head of Tehran's Mobedan Anjuman. This was followed by a welcome speech by the Congress Chair, Meher Bhesania, who welcomed the Iranian participants in Persian stating: “Dorood bar hameh Irani Zarathostian-e-Gerami. Be Congre-e-khodetan khosh amadid. Omidvarim

defence of their country. He read out messages of goodwill sent by Dr Mahmood Ahmadinejad; President of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Dr Ali Larijani; Speaker of the Parliament of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Dr Ekhtiyari stated that he was proud and honoured to be delivering his speech on behalf of all Iranian Zarthushtis and from the birthplace of the Great Prophet Zarathushtra; from all corners of Iran stretching from the Caspian Sea to the shores of the ever and everlasting Persian Gulf.

He expressed his concern on the issue of ‘migration’ and the fact that many Zarthushti youth, especially those from India and Iran, were emigrating in large numbers. Dr Ekhtiyari emphasized that the common point amongst all members of the community was being Zarthushtis and the belief in the teachings of the great Prophet Zarathushtra. It was of utmost importance that the youth were educated as to the teachings of the Prophet so that they could carry this information with them wherever they go. He also mentioned that it was important, at a time of ever increasing migration and dispersion of the community, that there be unity and contact between the mobeds and organisations around the world so as to facilitate the ability to network smoothly.

Dr Ekhtiyari invited all participants and members of various organisations in the world to establish connections with the Iranian Zarthushti Organisations and Anjumans and hoped that the separate circles would be connected together to form the beginnings of a universal network. He hoped that there would be a proximity and better understanding of the different cultures resulting in long-term benefits to social, religious and economic dimensions for the Zarthushti youth.

Dr Ekhtiyari ended by stressing that we are all part of one family and should try and become more familiar with one another and help each other in solving problems.

ke az in congre yadegar-e-khoobi dasthe bashid.
Behtarin arzoo ha-e-Elahi be hameh-e-shoma.
Tashakor az hameh-e-shoma.”

Dr Esphandiar Ekhtiyari; Zarthushti Member of Parliament in Iran, delivered his welcome address which started with blessings to the Glorified Fravahar of the Aryan Prophet, Ashu Zarathushtra Spentemen and to the eternal and sacred souls of the Iranian martyrs who had sacrificed their lives in



Later on in the day the Young Achievers Awards were handed out in recognition of the winners of the newly formed 'YLEP'; the Youth Leadership Enhancement Programme. The winners were the team from Iran followed by the Indian and North American teams who were joint runners up. The Dubai, Australian and United Kingdom teams were joint winners of the third prize. The Iranian team had chosen the project "The first Congress of outstanding Zoroastrian youths" the main aim of which was the promotion of trust in the talents of the Zarthushti youth in Iran. Congratulations to the participants of the Iran team who were Behzad Jamasbi, Shahnoosh Behzadi, Armita Kyani, Fereshteh Shagoshtasbi and Arman Falati.

The Young Achievers Awards was followed by a talk on the Zarthushti Community in Iran presented by Colonel Dr Rustom Khosraviani, Head of the Tehran Anjuman. The Tehran Anjuman, which had been in existence for over one hundred years, is one of the oldest and strongest Anjumans and is involved in cultural and religious activities which are organised throughout the country. Dr Khosraviani started with a history of the Zarthushtis in Iran pointing out that the great Prophet Zarathushtra had been born in Iran in 1768 BC and had called his people to Ahura Mazda; the giver of wisdom. He told his followers that theirs was the religion of wisdom. They were to choose with the mind, which God had given them. He taught them the ways of 'asha' and many empires that came after Zarathushtra followed the same path. There then followed a very difficult and turbulent time for the Zarthushtis in Iran. The oppressive *Jeziyeh*, a religious tax imposed on the community, resulted in a great reduction of the population. Later on it was a Parsi, Maneckji Limji Hataria, who was instrumental in having the *Jeziyeh* abolished. He was also responsible for the formation of the Kerman Anjuman. There followed the creation of other Anjumans in different parts of the country and there are now prayer places and cultural centres in many parts of Iran.

One of the incidents affecting the community in more recent times had been the eight year

war with Iraq in which Zarthushtis along with other Iranian youths fought and sacrificed their lives so as to defend their homeland. Functions are held every year to remember the Zarthushti youth who lost their lives during the war. There are, sport, cultural and political events being held and progress has been made as far as the legal rights of Zarthushtis are concerned. For example; we now have the same '*Dieh*' (blood money) rights as the Muslims and the issue of the inheritance laws is also being addressed.

Dr Khosraviani concluded his talk by reading a poem by the great Iranian poet Tooran Shahriari Bahrami titled 'Zarathushtra'.

Day Three of the Congress saw two informative talks given by Dr Esphandiar Ekhtiyari; Zarthushti Member of Parliament in Iran and Mr Alyar Dabestani, founder of the Dabestani Group of Companies.

Dr Ekhtiyari's talk was titled *Achievements of Youth in Iran* and addressed the achievements of Zarthushti youth in Iran who were very much a minority. If one looked at the statistics at best, one could say that there is one Zarthushti youth to every five thousand Iranian youths. Despite these figures the Zarthushti youth had excelled in the fields of science, education, classical music, theatre, cinema, photographic competitions and television. The community placed a high value on education and Zarthushti youth in Iran did exceptionally well in university entrance exams and postgraduate studies. The youth had accomplished much in the fields of invention, innovation and technology. In the field of athletics Zoroastrian youth had participated in basketball, volleyball, chess, badminton, swimming, cricket and archery teams at national level.

One field in which Zarthushti youth could be encouraged to achieve more was that of commerce. However, recently the youth had been shining in the fields of internet and ICT centres. Dr Ekhtiyari stated that it was important that the adults in the community look more to the youth and offer them opportunities. It was important that the adults act as mentors for the youth.

Dr Ekhtiyari stressed that the youth of today were the future and it was important to give them the tools they would need in pursuit of a bright future. The youth had achieved great things but it was difficult being in such a minority and it was important that the adults offer more help and support.

Dr Ekhtiyari commended the Zarthushti youth for carrying the torch of our religion. He gave the example of the youth in south Ahwaz, who have no *Sazman* but still hold the *Jashans* in our language. He concluded his talk by showing a short film which had been prepared on the Society of Zoroastrian Students in Iran and thanked all those who had attended the Congress. He hoped to see all those present and more new faces at the 11th World Zoroastrian Congress which is to be held in Iran.



Navaz Bustani is an Iranian Zoroastrian who had the good fortune of growing up in Iran and India. She is now settled in the UK where she practices as a Barrister specialising in the fields of Immigration and Human Rights. She maintains close contact with Iran, where her parents live, and visits on a regular basis.

Mr Dabestani's talk was titled *Projects for Zoroastrians in Iran* and started by addressing the fact that many Zoroastrian youth were leaving the country. He stated that more should be done to entice the youth to stay and achieve their dreams within Iran. Mr Dabestani identified ten issues which he felt needed to be addressed. They were as follows: 1) cultural awareness and educational services, 2) employment and job opportunities, 3) tourist, pilgrimage and sightseeing sites, 4) sports and sports clubs, 5) arts and drama, 6) promotion of effective communication between the various Zarthushti organisations and anjumans around the world, 7) creating a Zarthushti charitable trust, 8) forming scientific, research and religious education centres, 9) environment, health and health care facilities and 10) building on suggestions and conclusions in respect of the above.

Mr Dabestani discussed how there could be improvements in the issues he had identified so as to assist the youth. He pointed out that our forefathers had been active and it was now our duty to ensure that the youth had better opportunities so as to access the best education, practical training and jobs. It was also vital to promote effective communication between

Zarthushti organisations and anjumans around the world. One of the biggest problems was the language barrier and, if this could be overcome, Zarthushtis across the globe would be able to communicate and understand each other better.

Mr Dabestani felt strongly that the youth in Iran had made great strides in difficult circumstances and urged the elders in the community to offer what help and support they could so as to encourage the youth to be able to stay and achieve their full potential in Iran.

On the final day of the Congress, Meher Bhesania thanked the team of thirty people from different countries who had been involved in the organisation of the Congress. The Iranian organisers were Mobed Mehraban Khodamorad Firouzgary, Dr Esphandiar Ekhtiyari, Dr Rustom Khosraviani and Mr Khodayar Attaie. We are grateful to them and all the organisers who contributed their time and ideas to make the Congress a great success.

all photographs used for the Congress report is courtesy of <http://www.berasad.com>, shared by ZNA Digest except where mentioned

The four drawings appearing in the Congress reports have been executed by Anushka Rustomji for Hamazor.



Anushka Burjor Rustomji will be 21 in March this year. Born in Karachi, did her schooling GCE'O' Levels from Karachi Grammar School and GCE 'A' Levels from the Lyceum, Karachi. At present she is in her 3rd year studying for a Bachelor's degree in Fine Arts - Painting from National College of Arts, Lahore. She is a big fan of English Football Chelsea Club and loves dogs. Anushka is a gifted artist and has to her credit won many prizes in drawing and art.

sponsored by a Zarathushti couple

Winners of the 9th WZC Awards at Dubai



Outstanding Zarathushti Award
Rohinton Rivetna



Excellence in Performing Arts, Painting or Literature
Soonu Taraporevala



Community Service Award
Dinshaw Tamboley



Technology and Engineering Award
Minoo Patel



Excellence in Medicine Award
Farrokh Udwadia (on right)



Special Award given by the Congress
Outstanding Philanthropy
Mehraban & late Faredoon Zartoshty



Connect, Collaborate, Create

by sunnu golwalla

Rohinton Rivetna our Outstanding Zarathushti, chaired the 5th Coming Together Roundtable (CTR) a day before commencement of 9th World Zoroastrian Congress.

The first CTR was held in London immediately after the WZC there in 2005. The thought behind this was that in the last half century, Zoroastrians had migrated from Iran and the Indian sub-continent to other parts of the globe and had become a community without borders, who needed to be kept connected through information sharing, dialogue and collaborative action.

The CTRs have had noteworthy accomplishments : The first CTR developed a list of issues, challenges and projects; followed by two meetings in Mumbai in January 2007 and January 2008 and the 4th in Houston in December 2008. Collective result of these meetings have been:

- Developing the process and selection criteria for world congresses
- Promoting celebration of Nou Rouz in North America
- Awareness of community enhancement projects such as PARZOR, Operation Eyesight, Manuscript restoration, Gene Study, Persepolis tablets, Parsi General Hospitals
- "NextGenNow" a legacy of 3rd roundtable.
- Ervard Bagli's visit to Zoroastrians in South Africa
- Iran Economic Advisory Council
- "Study in India" programme for Iranian students
- Creating documents such as "Duties, Rights and Privileges of the Diaspora", "Ethnic of Collective Giving" and "Code of Conduct"
- Creating website www.zoroastrians.net by Yazdi Tantra which has made a virtual connection worldwide

Rohinton opened the 5th roundtable with, "We are gathered here to build upon the good work done by many around the world. We are gathered here to strengthen our bonds of hamazori and ashoi, through dialogue and joint action. We must focus on social togetherness, harmony and cooperation, with respect for our diversity because diversity is richness."

Focus of Dubai roundtable was to engage Zoroastrian organisations worldwide in dialogue and action, and discuss socio-communal, spiritual / religious, educational / cultural, infrastructure and intellectual projects.

These were deliberated on Sunday 27th December from 9am to 3pm, followed by an-hour session on 30th and 31st December culminating in following six goals:

1. Global Working Group - CTR (BPP, FEZANA, ZTFE, Iran)
2. Health - BPP / Piloo Hakim
3. Entrepreneurship - WZCC - all chapters
4. Women - ZWIN (Drs Zareen Karani Araoz & Dolly Dastoor)
5. Youth - Focus on Youth Leadership : YLEP
6. Communication - Appoint countrywide communication managers

These will be Dubai Congress' footprints in the sands of time.

Hamazor Bad! - Commemorating Togetherness
Hamazor Asho Bad! - Coming & Working Together in Spirit of Hamazori



Hamazor means "united in spiritual energy". It is a beautiful concept, but difficult to put into practice because of our individual desires, beliefs and sense of personal rights and wrongs. In order for *Hamazor* to work, we need to have empathy for others, irrespective of their beliefs and leanings. To develop empathy, we have to have understanding and tolerance towards fellow beings. Forgiveness is also an important aspect of *hamazor*.

The 2009 Ratanbai Katrak Lectures

by farrokh vajifdar

Background

In 1922 Nanabhai N Katrak

instituted the dual series of lectures to perpetuate the memory of his second wife, Ratanbai (his first wife was also a Ratanbai). They were intended to present the latest researches into fields of Zoroastrianism which preoccupied students involved in such studies. Originally devised as a quinquennial Paris series, they were to be shadowed by a decennial Oxford cycle.

The Paris *Ratanbai Katrak Lectures* [RKL] commenced with a heady sequence of the best scholarship of the times. Thus Emile Benveniste, Arthur Christensen, and Henrik Samuel Nyberg delivered the RKL in pre-war France. The Second World War intervened in their succession, bringing in its aftermath the collapse of the franc entailing a precarious future for the French RKL. Post-War times saw an attempted revival with the Jesuit R P Jean de Menasce, after which the Paris series folded.

Meanwhile the Oxford series soldiered on with their own election of illuminati – Louis H Gray, and Harold W Bailey, then a wartime interruption followed by Walter Bruno Henning (arguably the greatest influence on Zoroastrian studies in the United Kingdom, continental Europe, and the United States), Ilya Gershevitch, Mary Boyce, John R Hinnells, and Philippe Gignoux.

All the Paris RKL were published [additionally, the undersigned translated the Christensen and the de Menasce – the first, published unchecked by the K R Cama Oriental Institute, Bombay; the latter was “lost” after receipt and, falling into private hands, never saw the light of day!). All but one of the Oxford Series were published.

A series of Ratanbai Katrak Lectures at Oxford University were held to commemorate the work of Mary Boyce on Zoroastrianism, on Tuesdays at 5pm during the period 20th October – 24th November 2009.

A radical departure by the 2009 Oxford RKL Trustees was from their one-scholar-per-set pattern by electing six lecturers each to deliver one paper. Held on every Tuesday over six weeks at the Oriental Institute, Pusey Lane, Oxford, they were dedicated to the greatly lamented Professor Emerita Mary Boyce, prolific historian of the Zoroastrian religion. In order of appearance, the six were: Dr Francois de Blois (Cambridge), Professor Philip Kreyenbroek (Gottingen), Professor James R. Russell (Harvard), Professor Frantz Grenet (Paris), Professor Albert de Jong (Leiden), and Dr Alan Williams (Manchester). All six lecturers had been Mary Boyce’s students, collaborators, and now her continuators: each acknowledged her fine qualities of heart and mind, her devotion, and the loyalty she spontaneously gave and unstintingly received.

Five of “the six” were chaired by Professor Theo van Lint, Calouste Gulbenkian Professor of Armenian Studies, and one by Dr Elizabeth Tucker, Senior Research Fellow in Sanskrit and Avestan, both of Oxford University. All six lectures were well attended with full audience participation after each session.

First among the six to pay homage was de Blois who largely reprised his earlier similarly titled Royal Asiatic Society lecture, “Mary Boyce: the Quest for Zoroaster”, but without his London illustrations. The same personal details were given – attentive readers of *Hamazor*, ^{2/}₂₀₀₉,

will remember these. Her great mentor Walter Henning once more took centre stage to explain Mary Boyce's emergence on the Zoroastrian field. It had taken her considerable courage, and not a little bullying, to surface to the challenge of Zoroastrianism after her immersion in Manichaean studies in which her initiator had been her stern "father figure"!

Where Henning had regarded Zoroastrianism as the most rational of religions, Mary Boyce came to be convinced of the continuity of its traditions. And once again de Blois stressed that *she was not an ethnographer* (see below); as anthropologist, she became steeped in its customs and rituals which she persisted in tracing back to Zarathushtra's times. The fictional king-lists concocted in Sasanian times to conform to its new-fangled "orthodoxy" do not provide credible regnal years: her dating of the Sage was subject to vague notions of the unhistorical nature of her chosen chronology, for the Gathas contain no hint of specific events, empires and emperors, yet Zarathushtra was moved ever further back in time from the Henning-influenced sixth century BC to 1800 BC and then back again to 1200 BC! Not surprisingly for this writer, Boyce's views on the Zoroastrian calendar were disagreed by de Blois, himself a considerable authority.

Professor Philip Kreyenbroek next took the lectern with "On the Construction of Zoroastrianism in Western Iran". Now, however, the focus moved from Boyce's Platonic idea of religion and the over-emphasized importance of Zoroastrian tradition, on to the new horizons of religious perception by contemporary students. An expert on oral traditions, orality, and the transmission of cultural memories, he outlined the role of the priesthood for whom the elements of continuity accommodated them to the task of (re)construction of an ancient Indo-Iranian system to the historico-religious requirements of State worship in

the Iranian west and indeed to the lands acquired and settled by Mazda-worshippers.

Mazda, as Wisdom, incorporated within his "person" the entities selected by Zarathushtra from the ancient Indo-Iranian pantheon to suit his visionary purpose in his election of Mazda as sole Ahura. The origin and distinction of the *asura* and *deva* were satisfactorily explained, but constraints of time – Kreyenbroek had much ground to cover – prevented fuller exposition. His chosen title meant that he had to move onto the well-attested cuneiform inscriptions of the first clearly Mazdayasnian emperor, Darius I to present the origins of Zoroastrianism as the first Imperial Persian religion.

Darius had bequeathed to posterity two major sets of writings: the Behistun [= DB] group of five, and the Naqsh-e Rostam [= DNRm] two. The first outlines his coming to the Achaemenid throne and the expansion of his empire – all through Ahuramazda's will and favour; the second, at the portals of his rock-cut tomb, displays the Great King's ethical and physical qualities, again presented within a religious frame. Based on DB.IV.78-80, Kreyenbroek indicated a departure from Darius' Persian ethico-religious claim in employing Mesopotamian-inspired ideas with his use of *jan-*, "to smite", and *ni-kan-*, "to destroy" in the context of the non-preservation and non-dissemination of his inscriptions. Those who would destroy his religio-political testament would themselves be struck down by Ahuramazda – to us it seems that here Darius was not quite as Mazdayasnian as he claimed! Perhaps he upheld the *lex talionis* in an expected, non-conventional, way by placing retribution in the hands of Ahuramazda. Reward and punishment were indeed Darius' prerogatives, but was it for Ahuramazda to chastise? Kreyenbroek believes Darius to be either Zoroastrian or close to Zoroastrian

traditions; his ethical pronouncements certainly reflect Gathic precepts, but to look for mention of Zarathushtra would be futile. The Sage was indeed the founder of his version of Mazda worship, but it was the King, Darius, and not the Founder in the east, who established Mazdayasna in the western Perso-Elamite cultural setting. Originally followers of Magianism, the Persians later went over to Zoroastrianism whose orthodoxy and orthopraxy were shaped without benefit of scriptural authority to fall back on. Their veneration of fire was not the spiritualized worship inculcated in the Gathas. The language of ritual was distinctive to the priesthood, and its commitment to writing in the “foreign” Avestic was the work of the 5th/6th century AD continuators.

Accommodation of another kind was required for the Harvard Professor James Russell whose tenure of Armenian Studies does not diminish his vast knowledge of the folkloristic aspects of Zoroastrianism. His paper, “The Magic Mountain: a Zoroastrian Archetype” was presented with added handout demanding close attention to his arguments. It was a technical *tour-de-force* with recourse to illustrations of hypergrams or alliterative patterns – those curiously dissimulative, name-emphasizing literary devices which, for reasons best known to their authors, were inserted to fulfil some hidden purpose without openly declaring their hand. Among those Armenian authors who had, at their peril, broken free of coercive “orthodoxist” Sasanian Mazdayasna to embrace Christianity, was Movses Xorenac’i (= Moses of Khoren) who, in highly allusive language, fabricated his “History of the Armenians”. Armenian epic, it would seem, evolved from the template of Zoroastrian myth.

The “Magic Mountain” of Russell’s story hove into view through P’awstos (= Faustus) of Byzantium (?). Its outline became discernible when the mighty

Shahpur II (309–379) confronted the diminutive Armenian rebel Vasak. This Vasak defiantly explained he was “small in person, great in size” and, as giant, he crushed two mountain peaks underfoot. What did these peaks represent? To be sure, these were Ararat’s twin summits, and their levelling indicated the rise and fall of the superpowers of Iran and Rome. Just how an unimpressed Shahpur received this piece of braggadocio may be gauged from his kingly reaction: he had the recusant flayed alive, and his body stuffed with straw.

P’awstos’ “History” turns out to be pure heroic epic, and not at all a true history. Movses’ “History” contains an account of the birth of the divinely descended triplets, one of whom sped southwards leashing a monstrous dragon to launch an attack upon Armenia. The dragon was Azi dahak, the Serpent King, equated with Astyages, the Median ruler who subjugated their land: Movses calls the Medes the “progeny of the dragon”. Azi dahak’s evil nature is similarly perceived in Zoroastrian literature.

As often with their early “historians”, the Armenians encoded names and through themes, colours and sounds, created multiple levels of perception in their listeners. For example, Vahagn/Varhagn was Verethraghna (= “Breaker of Resistance”), and little Vasak owed his name to a wordplay on “fox” (*var*) and “giant” (*sakh*). Among the colours were purple, red, and a “heavenly colour” which, to the undersigned, remains vague. Sounds with sonic rhythms and patterns could be understood best in a culture-specific setting: sonorously recited Armenian doubtless was emotive and compelling.

Through an extract, Russell provided a dramatic account of the splendour of Christianity, again with allusions to heights and abysses or pits of perdition – wisdom against arrogance, that emerged through the sermon of

St Grigor (= Gregory) of Narek, 10th century Armenia's great mystic poet and hymnist. Whilst Christianity gained the ascendancy over "paganism", the Armenian historians and apostles could not detach wholly from Zoroastrian themes and expressions.

With Frantz Grenet's "Mary Boyce's legacy to the archaeologists: From the Achaemenid temples to Sogdian funerary practices (IVth century BC – VIIIth century AD)", we entered his richly illustrated fourth RKL. Impossible as it is to reproduce any in this report for reasons of copyright, *Hamazor* readers may be assured that his commentaries were extensive and challenging. Mary Boyce's part in Grenet's field = work – he is a world-renowned archaeologist, specializing in the sites uncovered and excavated in south Central Asia – was in providing crucial supporting evidence through her wide knowledge of Zoroastrian scriptures and rituals.

What struck us was Grenet's averment that Boyce was *not* an ethnographer (contrasting with de Blois' view, above), had not practised field archaeology, did not have access to the more recent Russian articles although aware of their documentation. On the other hand, the Russians occasionally could be prone to some fanciful identifications precisely through insufficient acquaintance with indications from Zoroastrian texts. Where, in former times, there was an occasionally tendency in some western circles to see Fire in every scriptural statement, the Russians seemingly had a passion for declaring ash-heap finds as proof of earlier fire-altars!

Mary Boyce's stubborn identification of rock-tombs and nearby edifices at Naqsh-e Rostam and Parsagada as sepulchres for members of the Achaemenid royal families had to be partly discounted. Grenet gently eased us away with his penetrating logic from this hard and fast view, offering

alternative suggestions as to their functions and even probable occupants. Boyce's identification of the three paired facing armed figures on each of the three registers upholding the throne of the Great King (particularly Darius I) with the six Amesha Spentas was similarly discounted. Iconoclasm – the disfigurement or destruction of all cultic statuary – for purposes of proscribing idolatry was intermittently indulged in by religions throughout history. Zoroastrianism was seen as aniconic, yet the later Achaemenids were characterized by cult statues, Anahita–Nana among them. In Central Asia her cult was associated with the River Oxus/Wakhsh, and her depictions on wall-paintings, statuettes, coins and seals are well attested. The Sasanians too had an Anahita cult within their Mazdayasna: the well-known relief of the investiture of Narseh (r.293–302 AD) at the hands of Anahita was adduced as evidence. (Ardashir I, the founding dynast had been a superintendent of the Anahita Fire-temple at Stakhra in the Pars heartland).

Certain it was that the Sogdians who operated from their home territory between the Oxus and the Zarafshan to the north, used Zoroastrian deities mixed up with Graeco-Bactrian divinities: Anahita with Artemis, Arshtat with Athena, etc. The Zoroastrian Amesha Spentas figured in Sogdian art, among them Vohu Mana and Armaiti, the latter even depicted as holding an ossuary (receptacle for skeletal remains). They figured often on funerary objects such as Sogdian ossuaries.

Speaking of funerary edifices, Grenet mentioned *dakhmas* as far afield as Izbasket, near Samarkand, and at Chilpik, near the Aral Sea, hard by the Oxus river. The former was built with steps, not ladders – as was the case with the *dakhmas* of central Iran, and there was no ossuary discovered nearby. It reinforces our view that such buildings served the safest practical purpose

for the times, with the aim of protecting the elements of Earth and Fire: earth to preserve scarce arable land from pollution, and fire for safeguarding precious fuel stocks.

Grenet's identification of the Kuh-I Khwaja ("The Mount of the Master") with Mount Ushidha-Ushidaren of the *Zam Yazad Yasht* is based on the row of cells uncovered in the course of excavations amidst the ruins of the vast religio-cultural complex at the Hamun-I Hilmand in east-central Iran. Those cells were the lodgings for trainee clerics in the *herbedistan* or priestly seminary. In the Buddhist temple atrium at Kara Tepe (in ancient Termez of the Kushans in Uzbekistan), a small fire-altar marks the spot for Zoroastrian worship. The connexion between Bactrian Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, and local Mazdean cults – all thriving in the area in those far-off times was given good space by the lecturer.

Particularly intriguing for this writer was Grenet's re-location of the original *sanctum sanctorum* in the vast building complex of the *Adur-Gushnasp* Fire-temple at the dramatic hill-top site today called the Takht-I Soleiman in north-west Iran. Using earlier ground-plans of the cultic environment, he re-directed us to the room where the Royal Fire continuously blazed, re-siting the main ante-chamber to the west of which was the royals' rest/changing enclosure. (For forgetful readers, this is the Royal Fire where the Sasanian kings made their pilgrimage on foot after their coronation).

After drawing a week-long breath, we joined Professor Albert (Ab) de Jong who appeared for the penultimate lecture in the RKL series. The Netherlands University of Leiden, where he professes Religious Studies, has long been reputed for its wholly open-minded and enviously liberal approach. Of great interest and a matter of natural impatience for us is his eagerly awaited continuation of the wonderful

History of Zoroastrianism [HZ] commenced by Mary Boyce under whose hand three extensive volumes had appeared before her demise. The late Professor had herself approved the choice of de Jong to see through the four remaining parts of this vast historical project. (Volume IV itself was rumoured to have been completed by her; the rumour became report; the report turned into certainty. This writer took occasional opportunity to enquire into its progress from her – yes, it was well into preparation; it had neared completion – and then "*There is no HZ-IV*"!)

If the quality and sweep of de Jong's paper is anything to go by, then indeed he is well entrusted to complete this mammoth task. With the exact title "Regional Variety in Zoroastrianism: the Case of the Parthians". It will be recalled that the Parthians, Iranian-speakers from beyond north-east Iran, wrested the ruling power from the Greek successors of Alexander III, the Macedonian, anathematized by our Zoroastrian priests. Thereafter they engaged in long inconclusive wars with the Romans who menaced the western frontiers of Iranshahr, ruling Iran with their feudal kings for some 450 years before they in turn were subdued by the Sasanians.

De Jong reminded us that knowledge of the Parthians was formerly founded on Greek and Roman Classical authorities, some coins, inscriptions, reliefs, and monuments – levels of knowledge acquired and maintained since the 1870s by Canon George Rawlinson, brother of the famous cliff-hanging Sir Henry Creswicke Rawlinson who was the first to decipher Darius I's lengthy inscriptions with the accompanying tableau at Behistun / Bisitun. Canon George's *The Sixth Great Oriental Monarchy* (= the Parthian period) and *Parthia* (in the popular *Story of the Nations* series) were the result.

The often gruesome character and behaviour of Parthians was long held as proof of the barbarity of the oriental monarchs until, that is, the Roman side of their “civilization” was uncovered. De Jong spared us some terrible details, and moved on and away from Rawlinson’s assessments. The Parthian rulers had described themselves tersely as “Philhellenic” on their coins, but to what extent they had limited themselves to absorbing aspects of Greek culture remains problematic.

They had abandoned the notion of *ew-khwadayih*, or “one empire” and allowed the Iranian nation to be fragmented, with feudal lords controlling the outlying provinces of Iranshahr. The very unity of the central area was divided between two kings. Certain it was that the thoroughly Iranized Parthians had evolved their own political, social, economic, and religious affairs and practices; their military tactics were equally famed as feared – remember their chain-mail, personal armour as well as shielding for their mounts (the *cataphractii*), and above all the “Parthian shot”? Liberating of Jerusalem?

In the literary field, once again orally transmitted, they had become famed as narrators of dramatic events and romances. It is believed that the originals of the *Arda Wiraz Namagh*, the *Wis u Ramin*, *Yadgar-e Zareran*, and *Drakht-I Asurig* hark back to Parthian times. (Mary Boyce, in a seminal article, *The Parthian Goshan and the Iranian Minstrel Tradition*, had laid the ground-work for such literary studies). Much of Firdowsi’s epic *Shah-nameh* owes its material to the various elements of the Parthian-inspired *Khwaday-namags* which detailed the high deeds of lords, court luxuries, and feats of arms. It remains undoubted that the developed Parthian culture was distinctly Iranian, and that they were indeed Zoroastrians, very likely that of the Zurvanite variety.

Sasanian propaganda was generally unfavourable towards the Parthians whose feudally constituted empire was regarded as an entity alien to Iranian interests. In matters of religion and its transmission through difficult times, however, it was clearly established that their religion was Zoroastrian-based. The Achaemenians had followed a non-Zoroastrian Mazda worship – so de Jong, although here he diverged from Mary Boyce on beliefs and teachings. The Parthians had preserved the memory and teachings of Zarathushtra through their bringing together the oral scattered religious literature, including the memorized sacred texts, and transmitted with remarkable fidelity, although “rarely used in a cognitive way, except in the heads of priests”. De Jong had much to offer, and even much more to ponder: gallons of it in pint-pots!

With Dr Alan Williams, the 2009 Oxford RKL series was completed. His recently published *Qisse-ye Sanjan* set the tone and content of his lecture, “The Re-placement of Zoroastrian Iran: a new reading of the Persian Qesse-ye Sanjan of Bahman Kay Qobad Sanjana (1599)”. For this writer, it was Williams’ third public airing of the text on which by now one should regard him as arbiter and authority (he ventured forth, fourthly, at the Brill Publishers’ “launch” of his book earlier in January). It was since learnt that some over-heated pedant had objected to the “Re-placement” in his lecture’s title, and that it could have been bettered with “Re-location”! Ho hum!

Alan Williams had very thoughtfully provided a Synoptic Chart of the *Qisse’s* Narrative Structure in a handout, indispensable for the uninitiated among his audience. And here he commented, in passing, that the late Mary Boyce had a “finely grained *ethnographic* approach” to the text! Those of us who knew her will no longer retain any doubts on this, and so we must remain. Boyce had apparently limited

herself to S H Hodivala's translation with its reconstructed historicism. Williams found Jivanji Modi's rendition "more accurate". Some of us abided by Rustom Paymaster's English version. The name of a Shernaz Munshi, who tragically died a little while ago, again cropped up, although this writer still fails to grasp her hold on the affections of non-Parsi scholars. (She was reverentially recollected by Kreyenbroek and Russell in their earlier RKL appearances, so one assumes she was steeped in Parsi folkloristic traditions).

The fable of the "walking mango tree" was recounted, and its depiction figured on Williams' book cover. For those not privy to its fabulous significance, it must be explained that it was not noted in the *Qisse* but restored to fame by a delightful Parsi archaeologist Rukhshana Nanji who retailed its strange story to Williams (and earlier to us during the 2009 WZO-Kutar lecture at SOAS, London). Williams duly used the programmatic element – it "walks" by virtue of setting tendrils from a low overhanging branch which then root powerfully enough to found a new trunk while the earlier wilts away over time. The process repeats, and Williams sees it symbolic of the first storm-tossed Parsi (the name occurs just once in the text) refugees putting down roots, and then purposefully marching into the hinterland, and so on. Good, symbolically stirring stuff, indeed from which legends are made!

The narration here of Williams' skilful analysis of the text is not necessary, for most know the story; some even embellish it with their own sayings and symbolisms. Suffice it to say that our RKL reader, himself an expert in Persian, beautifully rendered some passages in the original, followed by his metrical translations. How did he characterize this text? Well, for a Parsi-orientated piece, he addressed it as would a Parsi – in negatives! We were told

what it was not repeatedly, leaving us gasping for knowledge of what it was!

Williams parried questions with deep knowledge of the workings of his book (which has the Persian original characters, with romanized transcription, and metrically formed rendition). Several questions remained unasked; some gave great satisfaction – even to the enthusiast who demanded to know if the myth of the "sugar-and-milk" appeared in Sanjana's unhistorical confection. Upon raising the question of the *Qisse*'s purpose, setting, and "traditions", the response was curt: Williams was not a historian of India. We passed up enquiring after some notable absences. We will leave our readers with some names which very definitely should have figured in "old Bahman's" narrative: Naryosangh Dhaval, Nariman Hoshang, Meherji Rana, and, surely, the Great Moghal Akbar himself whose *Ibadat-khaneh* was by then in full operation. Missing subjects are: the advent of the Avesta; its rendition into Pahlavi, then Sanskrit; the Sanjana-Bhagaria divide, and, not least, the *Rivayats*: the first few of which were by then well known.

The honorand of the 2009 Oxford RKL, Professor Mary Boyce, was admirably commemorated by the Six. It was clear from the series that she had made a deep impression on her loyal students who remain ever faithful to her treasured memory. She had indeed taught them how to think, speak, and act according to the motto of the Zoroastrianism she so loved and lovingly taught. May her memory be cherished by all! ■■■■



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.

The Italian Mission in the Yaghnob Valley

by antonio panaino

It is well known that small groups of mountaineers living in the uppermost area of the Zarafshan river in the Yaghnob Valley still use a dialect directly descended from a branch of the Sogdian language which was spoken along the Silk Road in Late Antiquity and early Middle Ages. Sogdian was a species of *lingua franca*, widely prevalent in the Central Asian bazaars and markets, and because of its relevance it was used by Buddhist, Manichaeian and Christian missionaries, although many Sogdians could well have been Zoroastrian. After the collapse of the Sogdian confederation and the assimilation of the local nobility to Islamic domination, their Sogdian language progressively disappeared, and by the end of the first millennium AD it had practically fallen into disuse in the main towns of the region, such as Samarkand or Panjikent. On the other hand, in the mountain areas, local people still spoke ancestral varieties of Sogdian, although they became linguistically assimilated during the following centuries.

In the course of the first scientific explorations of the upper Zarafshan by the Russians, when this region came under the Tsar's domination, Alexander L Kuhn (1840-1888), a prominent Russian linguist attached to the military Mission led by General Abramoff, exploring the Yaghnob valley in 1870, firstly realized that Yaghnobi had nothing to do with Tajik. Some years later, with the discovery of Mediaeval Sogdian, some scholars, in particular Fr Muller, Carl Salemann and Fr Andreas, finally discovered that this dialect was connected with that north-eastern Iranian language. In the following years a number of expeditions entered this remote Tajikistan valley. In the pre-Soviet period Robert Gauthiot and Heinrich F Junker (1913) visited the valley, while after the October Revolution, several Soviet scholars dedicated important researches to Yaghnobi ethno-linguistics.

Life in this particular region has never been easy, nature being beautiful but hard. Even now the Yaghnob valley remains isolated for 8 months every year and connections with the rest of the world, although always current, have never been substantial or overwhelming. For this reason we can, at least in part, explain the high level of preservation of the traditional folklore, language, and cultural heritage which make of the Yaghnobi a living linguistic monument of the Iranian heritage.

At the beginning of the 1970s, in enforcement of a decision taken by the Tajik Soviet Republic, these mountaineers were dispersed, mostly deported to the newly created town of Zafarobod, close to the Uzbek border, in order to work as cotton pickers. At that time, the Yaghnobis (about 500 families totalling some 3500/4000 persons) were transferred, mostly to Zafarobod and other little towns or villages (like Sughd, Varzob, Rudaki, Hissor, Shahrinav, Vahdat, Yowon-xatlon, Ganchi, Jovon, etc.); their original places were destroyed, their animals sold on, with a series of very devastating consequences in terms also of fatalities, because the waters of the new settlements were partly poisoned. This forced evacuation was also severely criticized, within permissible limits, by Russian scholars. Towards the end of the 1970s, and again after the collapse of the Soviet Union, some Yaghnobis returned to their homeland. Because of the crisis in which the Tajik State still presently lives, and in particular after the destructive aftermath of the Civil War that devastated this country, no serious project concerning the improvement of the living conditions of this ancient people has been really endorsed.

Presently, about 500 persons still live in 16 villages, while the others are completely abandoned. Earlier, all the villages had been destroyed by the army, and those

which have been restored owe this work of reconstruction to their inhabitants who had originally lived there, and had now returned. Other villagers from the rest of the valley have decided against return. The road, as in Soviet times, reaches up to the villages of Bidev and Marghtimayn, but it is frequently left in disrepair. The educational system and medical conditions are most abject, and only satellite communications are possible, while in the adjacent valley of Matcha mobile telephones function normally. Also the animals, cows in particular, suffer from diseases, transferable to humans through milk, because of the lack of any veterinarian treatment, which, contrariwise, had existed in Soviet times.

Since four years the University of Bologna, starting from its base in Samarkand, has developed a project dedicated to the preservation of the cultural heritage in the Yaghnob area. From our point of view, the approach to this particular region had to be more diverse than in past expeditions. We have focused our attention not only on the language (with recordings of oral sources, transcriptions of traditional stories, etc.), and the archaeological background of this valley (for instance, identification of the ancient system of Sogdian fortifications, discovery of petroglyphs [rock drawings, carvings, and inscriptions] etc.), but also on the actual conditions of the Yaghnobis. For these reasons, the Italian Mission ("Italian" only because it was promoted by the University of Bologna and partly supported by the Italian Foreign Ministry, but nevertheless open to the participation of scholars from many countries, like England, Bulgaria, France, Russia, etc.), has involved not only archaeologists and linguists, but ethnographers, anthropologists, and a medical staff with a pharmacologist, expert in botanic and medicinal plants. With a programme of international cooperation, co-signed with the Academy of Sciences of the Tajik Republic, we have already realized three different expeditions – in the years 2007, 2008, 2009 – in which scholarly field research has been accompanied by a variety of humanitarian activities in order to support the local population. Medical

assistance, distribution of medicines, and also distribution of basic educational books for children, toys, etc., have been undertaken.

The presence of Yaghnobis in this area is very ancient, as confirmed not only by the tenacity of the language, but also from the presence of Sogdian fortresses located along the Yaghnob valley according to a feudal system of overall control of the territory and its pastures. In particular, after the completion of our survey in the Yaghnob and Matcha valleys (2009), it appears clear that the two valleys were part of an integrated economic and political system, which ultimately came under the control of the last Sogdian king, Dhewastich, who was captured after the capitulation of Mount Mug. The high mountain passes that interconnect both valleys were controlled by strongholds of varying dimensions, and it is probable that during the Arab invasion of 722 AD, many Sogdians escaped into the peripheral Yaghnob valley, where their position was much more safe and secure.

Furthermore, it is clear that the Yaghnob valley was earlier populated by other, probably Iranian, tribes in a proto-historical period, since in some areas, in particular around Tang-e Dahana and the village of Tag-e Chanor, we have found an impressive number of ancient petroglyphs, with some apparently Sogdian *tamgas*.

Additionally, the valley preserves a number of Sufi shrines and sacred places of a certain antiquity, and it is still for the whole Yaghnobi community a kind of "memorial", occasionally also visited by people living afar.

The Yaghnobis have suffered greatly through their deportation, and some of their secular traditions have been partly lost together with their ancient folklore. For instance, some rituals of pre-Islamic origin, such as the lighting of three fires on the tomb of a dead person in the first three nights after decease has only recently been abandoned. But the Yaghnobis, although Sunni Muslims, respect dogs, and do not

spit on the ground or on the fire, because these are regarded as offences against these elements. Several other particular observances, also of socio-psychological nature, have been detected by our doctors.

Our hope, after the last mission, is to create an Ethno-cultural and Archaeological Park, under the protection of UNESCO and that of the Tajik State. In fact, the survival of the Yaghnobis in their homeland, which has been presently repopulated by some 500 persons, today living in harsh conditions as remarked above, are important aims for Tajikistan as well as the International Community. This ethnic group amidst their valley home with its historical monuments and its unique natural character can be considered as living witness of the secular history of the Silk Road. The Tajik Republic would thus obtain the privilege of possessing one of the most important examples of a still living heritage of Sogdian origin. In addition, we must emphasize that, apart from the preservation of archaeological monuments, it is the earlier mentioned "immaterial heritage" which should deserve our careful assessment and attention, in particular in the case of a population that until relatively recently had suffered the consequences of deportation during the Soviet period.

The Park project should be entered, we hope, onto the lists of protected areas by UNESCO as a unique example of ethno-cultural continuity, the last example of the living memory of the ancient peoples of the Sogdian Silk Road. In association with the Park, other archaeological and historical places of the Matcha valley could be eventually included under the Park authority, because of their extraordinary relevance. While the Tajik government must formulate the regulations governing the Park and the composition of its directorate, we suggest that an international Scientific Committee should be established in order to promote, at international level, the activities of this new institution. These could be of diverse character.

a) Properly directed cultural activities of preservation of the archaeological heritage.

b) Managed cultural programmes for preservation of the language.

c) Tourist and visitor activities.

d) New economic activities.

e) Protection of flora and fauna.

As a general precaution, the Park would need the presence of wardens. In the event, some of the Yaghnobis living there could be involved in this work after proper training, thus assuming a direct role in the process of preservation of the cultural and natural heritage of their area. From a condition of marginalization, they could become protagonists of their own future. In addition, the school system of the valley could be improved, and the local dialect preserved through specially devised programmes. Presently, there are some manuals for children in Yaghnobi, which could be given to young students, following the example set by us. We have suggested also the creation of a modest museum dedicated to Yaghnob folklore, which could be the main base for all the international missions working thereafter in the valley. This edifice could be used for meetings and short conferences also for the local people and their children. With the institution of a Park and a tourist presence, the Park authority will be in a position to realize the implementation and revival of the local production of arts and crafts, carpets, woodworked objects, which had been of much more importance in the past. Production of souvenirs for tourists and visitors may offer another means of income for the local population. Also the local production of food – cheese, for instance – should be taken into consideration. In such matters it would be necessary to develop a strictly controlled veterinarian system because of the presence of brucellosis in domestic animals whose products are transmittable to humans.

The Yaghnob valley has very interesting flora, in particular of lavender and other plants that could provide an economic market, towards which the Park authority should start development programmes in this field. Thus the new role to be attributed to the local people would create a balance

between the community living outside the valley (apparently more than 20,000 persons, mostly now only Tajik speaking) and those perennially dwelling within it. This dialectic between “internal” and “external” Yagnobis could implement the movement of people visiting the valley, thus offering a more engaged role for the small community living in this remote place, which will then assume the new role of protector of the Yagnob heritage. The construction of such regional Park should be developed in cooperation with Yagnobis living both within and outside the valley. In particular, all our activities have received powerful support from Dr Saifiddin Mirzoev, a Yagnob scholar with the Institute of Languages at the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tajikistan in Dushanbe, allied with the Rais of the Yagnob valley (Mr Kalandarov Jamoluddin) and with various members of their community living in Zafarobod.

Another aspect of the field research on the Yagnobis is emerging with enormous importance. It concerns the study which we have also developed, with the direct authorization of the local people, on the mitochondrial DNA of the Yagnobis. Their DNA, also according to the highly important researches of the Genographic Project (National Geographic) presents a number of very rare and relevant markers. This fact confirms the antiquity of this people, whose importance emerges as a crucial requirement for biological studies.

A detailed description of our activity has been presented in our last report of the first two expeditions: *Sulla Punta di uno Spillo*. [“On the point of a pin”], Rapporto Scientifico Preliminare sulla Prima Missione Etnolinguistica nella Valle dello Yagnob (Repubblica del Tajikistan), 31 luglio 2007 — 23 agosto 2007. [“Preliminary Scientific Report on the First Ethnolinguistic Mission in the Yagnob Valley, (Tajikistan Republic), 31st July – 23rd August 2007”]. Edited by G P Basello – D Guizzo – P Ognibene. Ravenna – Milano. Other articles in English concerning our researches are currently in the press.

Prof Dr Antonio Panaino
Chair of Iranian Studies
University of Bologna at Ravenna
Faculty for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage
Via degli Ariani, 48121 Ravenna, Italy



Prof Panaino with the Yagnobis



Continued from page 14

The Bhagarsath Anjuman has elected Ervad Kaikhushroo Navroze Dastoor (more popularly known as K N Dastoor, or KND) as the 17th Dastur Meherjirana in place of Dastur Meherji Dastur Kekobad, who expired on 23rd January.

It was the written wish of Dasturji Meherji that in case of his death, the Anjuman should consider his request to nominate Ervad K N Dastoor. This morning, the Bhagarsath Anjuman met under the leadership of Dastur Firoze M Kotwal and Dastur Meherji's last wish was put forward and discussed at the meeting. After deliberations, Ervad K N Dastoor was offered the post and he accepted.

In this manner, without much fuss or attention or controversy, but with deep spiritual import and in line with the nearly 800 year history of the Bhagarsath Tola, the seat of spiritual power has passed from one member of the Meherjirana family to another. - Ervad Marzban J Hathiram, The Parsee Voice Team.

The Zoroastrian Ethos of Compassion

by homi dhalla

[Dr Dhalla spoke at length on this subject at the recent Parliament of Religions 2009, at Melbourne, with reference to the corporate social responsibility of the House of Tatas and Godrej]

The focus of this paper is to examine the concept of 'compassion' in the Zoroastrian tradition and the impact it has had on the lives of its adherents and others. The Zoroastrian texts graphically depict Ahura Mazda the Creator, as the "merciful and compassionate Lord" and also the 'Forgiver of sins'. Besides being 'Loving', he is benevolent and kind towards His creation.

All these attributes and many more, depict the nature of Ahura Mazda. It is man's duty to emulate these qualities in his day to day life so that he progresses. As progress is the Zoroastrian watchword, he is expected to move from the love of his family to the welfare of all creatures. This ethos of progress as well as inclusiveness are one of the important elements of this ancient faith.

Compassion is one of the most articulate values in the Zoroastrian tradition. This spiritual value plays a significant role and which has actually been translated into action in many cases. To a Zoroastrian, this feeling of compassion is stronger than empathy. It is a deep desire to alleviate the suffering of others. This is demonstrated by a fervent prayer in the *Atash Nyaish* (Litany to Light). Standing before the holy Fire, which is an inspiring and dynamic symbol of Divine Light, a devotee fervently prays "Grant me a child ... who would relieve distress". Another ancient text, the *Visparad* also accentuates "Ye Zoroastrians! Hold your hands and feet in preparedness ... Relieve those who have fallen in distress". This demonstrates a great sensitivity to the suffering of all living beings irrespective of caste, colour or religion. This selfless compassion would undoubtedly lead to spiritual evolution (kindness towards animals is a recurring theme in Zoroastrian texts). Moreover, a part of the Ahunavar

which is the oldest and the most important Zoroastrian prayer affirms that "He who provides succour to the helpless poor, acknowledges the kingdom of God". Prophet Zarathushtra asks Ahura Mazda, "O Mazda! What is Your kingdom? What is Your Will, by acting according to which, I may come unto Your friendship? Ahura Mazda replies: "You will come unto my friendship by helping your poor fellowmen who live righteously and with a loving mind."

Furthermore, one is expected to go far beyond the limits of compassion in relieving the suffering of those in distress – the Denkard declares that "Apart from the salvation for one's soul, it is best to strive for saving other people's soul". Hence, it is imperative to cultivate our minds and mould our actions in such a manner that we work for the liberation of others. This is a great moral and spiritual responsibility. Hence, a Zoroastrian is expected not merely to work for his own salvation but it is best for him to work for the liberation of other souls. This consciousness of compassion will help others to be liberated from suffering.

A discussion about compassion would be incomplete without examining two of the fundamental principles of Zoroastrianism, *nidhasnaithishem* (non-violence) and *khaetwadatham* (self-sacrifice or service). To a Zoroastrian, the life of every creature is sacred. Any form of violent action is unacceptable. This compassionate and non-violent attitude is to be extended even to nature as Zoroastrianism is an ecological religion. A Zoroastrian is to live in harmony with nature and hence should not pollute or destroy any of its elements. This compassionate attitude towards nature makes him a trustee of nature and in that capacity he should not violate that trust by destroying or harming nature.

Khaetwadatham, leading a life of self-sacrifice, altruism or service to humanity is another principle which is also an extension of compassionate living. Service to our fellow brothers has been greatly emphasized in Zoroastrian texts.

Zarathushtra declares that “one who strives to understand and attain a true life, should preach the law of Ahura Mazda to mankind better by acts of service than by words”. And again he states “... urging the inner self to serve mankind, O Mazda, the Highest shall be reached by deeds alone, for action true I strive and ever will”. Moreover, “joy comes to the one who brings joy to others”.

Closely connected to this concept is another important ideal which is also motivated by their religious tradition – that accumulation of wealth by honest means is considered fundamentally positive. This, however, in turn brings with it a social obligation to share one’s wealth with the less fortunate.

In this context, it is imperative to note that the one characteristic which is usually attributed to a Zoroastrian is his large-heartedness or philanthropy – “Parsi, thy name is charity”. This is considered a sacred duty. There are several references in the scriptures, which extols this cardinal virtue; one of these is from the Menok Xrat, which states, “The greatest act of righteousness is charity”. Besides this, the Prophet declares “May we be surely like those, who make this world prosperous. May the chosen leaders of Mazda be helpers and supporters of the world”. Hence, Parsi history in India is replete with examples of how this miniscule community of barely 70,000 in a burgeoning population of over a billion has been endowing schools, colleges, parks, hospitals, *dharamshalas* etc. for the benefit of all communities, including hospitals for animals.

Sharing the Fruits of Industry

Max Weber had stated that economic ethics are considered as “the practical incentives for human actions which are derived from the psychological and pragmatic dimensions of a religion”. In this context, it is also pertinent to

note the words of Andriano Tigher that “Zoroastrianism prized labour and gave it an ethical value”. Perhaps the best example of this principle is that of Jamsetji Tata (1839 - 1905), the man who laid the foundation of Indian industry. Jamsetji was initiated into priesthood at a young age and hence his religious tradition had influenced his character and moulded his values of deep social commitment and philanthropy.

The late Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India had said, “The three fundamental requirements of India, if she is to develop industrially and otherwise are: a heavy engineering and machine-making industry, scientific research institutes and electric power. These must be the foundations of all planning”. And Jamsetji provided India with all three enterprises viz., Tata Iron and Steel Co. Ltd. at Jamshedpur, Tata Power – Hydro Electric Works at Lonavla and the Indian Institute of Science at Bangalore. It is no wonder that Nehru had observed that “he was a one-man planning commission”. Though a staunch Zoroastrian, his catholic spirit is evident in a letter he wrote to his son from abroad in 1902, five years before the site of the steel plant at Jamshedpur was finally located: “Be sure there is plenty of space for lawns, playgrounds ... and parks. Earmark areas for Hindu temples, Mohammedan mosques and Christian churches”. Furthermore, his commitment to the development of India was so intense that when he did not receive cooperation from the British government to set up a science university, in September 1898, he announced a personal donation of IndRs30 lacs (Rs3 million) to launch the Indian Institute of Science at Bangalore.

Although, he was concerned with gigantic projects of national magnitude, his compassion extended even to animals. A very touching example of this trait came to light only recently. In 1900, due to the famine, millions were affected. In the small village of Chharodi (35 kms. from Ahmedabad) in Gujarat, a large number of animals were starving to death; Jamsetji had sent a donation to save these animals. This came to light in December 2008, through a marble plaque that was found on

the land that his great grandson, Ratan Tata has now been given by the Government of Gujarat to set up the small car 'Nano' plant.

On February 8, 1911, Jamsetji's son, Sir Dorabji Tata, laid the foundation stone of the Lonavla dam and thus commenced the hydroelectric project. On this occasion he recalled the lofty aims of his father by saying: "To my father, the acquisition of wealth was only a secondary object in life; it was always subordinate to the constant desire in his heart to improve the industrial and intellectual condition of the people of this country". JRD Tata who led the Tata industrial empire for over 50 years once said: "The wealth gathered by Jamsetji Tata and his sons in half a century of industrial pioneering formed but a minute fraction of the amount by which they enriched the nation. The whole of that wealth is held in trust for the people and used exclusively for their benefit. The cycle is thus complete; what came from the people has gone back to the people, many times over". The pleasure in earning truly lies in its distribution. JRD Tata acknowledged the humanitarian nature of his religious tradition when he wrote to a friend in April 1984: "The Zoroastrian philosophy of hard work, honesty and charity is one that the world should know today".

The House of Tata has touched every aspect of Indian life through its several institutions such as the Tata Institute of Social Science, Tata Memorial Hospital for Cancer, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Tata Blood Bank and Transfusion Services, Tata Agricultural and Rural Training for the Blind, National Centre for Performing Arts and many others.

Corporate Social Responsibility of the House of Tata

RM Lala, author of the best-selling book on the House of Tata, *The Creation of Wealth*, emphasizes that wealth is far from just profit or income generation. It has deep concern with "*weal which means well-being or happiness*" of all members of society which businesses serve. The company's soul lies in its social involvement. And that is what the Tata Group is determined to maintain.

In the last 16 years, since Ratan Tata took over the leadership of the Tata empire, he has been guiding the destiny of 114 companies. The \$70.8 billion Tata group today has operations in more than 85 countries and 350,000 employees. The 2009 survey by the New York based Reputation Institute has ranked Tatas as the 11th most reputable group out of 600 global companies. This charismatic leader with extraordinary entrepreneurial skills has always been driven by a set of values by infusing altruism into business. Ratan Tata has said, "Our philosophy is to enhance the quality of life of the Indian people. Access to water, drinking water and nutrition is the foundation of this quest".

The panoply of community development projects launched by the Tata companies embraces everything from health, education, art, sport and more – thereby touching the lives of multitudes of Indians across the sub-continent. Their involvement with corporate social responsibility amounts to approximately IndRs1700 crores (Rs17 billion) annually. The principle involved is to give back to society what came from the people. A few of these may be mentioned here viz., the anti-leprosy crusade and AIDS awareness initiatives in Jamshedpur, the handicraft development project for women in Okhamandal, Gujarat, helping disabled children through their Tata Tea's organization Srishti, rehabilitation of maimed Indian soldiers of the Kargil war, aiding earthquake victims of Gujarat, supporting mentally ill homeless women in Chennai etc. On November 26, 2008, the world saw one of the most inhuman terror attacks in Mumbai. Besides the Taj Mahal hotel, there were other areas where innocent people were killed. Ratan Tata immediately set up a new Trust thereby catering to the needs of all the victims who had suffered in Mumbai. He personally visited the families of all victims and offered them every form of help. This exhibited the deep streak of compassion in the man.

The seed of industrial development was sown by Jamsetji Tata about 120 years

back. Besides the industrial development, it has generated through its various companies, it continues to provide succour to the distressed, disabled and marginalized sections in the far corners of India to this day. This spiritual motivation and sensitivity to alleviate the pain and distress of others has not only been a passive emotion but has been translated into action through several projects, thus transforming the lives of millions of people over the last 100 years. His life reminds me of the words of Meister Eckhart who had said, "What we plant in the soil of contemplation, we shall reap in the harvest of action".



Dr Homi Dhalla was awarded the MA degree by Harvard University and the PhD degree from Mumbai University. He has represented the Parsi community at various international conferences focusing on the issues of peace, ecology, human rights, inter-religious dialogue etc. He has also been very active in the interfaith movement for the last 25 years both at the local as well as at the international level. Homi was awarded the "Mother Teresa National Award for Interfaith Harmony" in 2007. As the Founder-President of the World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation, he has initiated various cultural projects for the Parsi community.

Fravahar Island in the Persian Gulf

excerpt from Behrooz Khalili's report on <http://www.berasad.com>

The plan for building an artificial island in the shape of fravahar in the Persian Gulf is under completion. The confirmation for this project has also been issued. This island is being built on a six million two hundred thousand square meter land measuring 3 x 5 km which is located in front of the outskirts of the historical Siraf Harbour in the Bushehr province. It includes boarding and lodging sites, hotels, university, solar energy centre, playground, a large cultural International Hall for cultural speech and conversations etc. Dr Esfandiyar Ekhtiyari (The Iranian Zoroastrian MP) being the managerial member of this team informed us that in the near future the plan for this project which is being supervised by 60 executives will be executed after final analysis. The project being unique will be displaying something of its own kind to the future generations. The artificial island will be built in the southern part of Pars locality in the outskirts of the historical harbour of Siraf. Siraf being one of the oldest cities of the Bushehr province, once being host to large ships that arrived from main Iranian and Middle East harbours, but due to the earthquake and tsunami in the spring of 398 Ghamari, most of the harbour was destroyed and now the only remains are the Siraf Jame Mosque, the Nasuri Fort, Dakhme (The Zoroastrian Cemetery), and a market.



Our Calendars: Real and Fake

by farrokh vajifdar

[This piece is abridged from the author's full-scale study of the history, problems, and solutions facing our Religious Calendar]

For those who lay claim to tradition through pious observances and practices of our Mazdayasnian faith, the issue of three differing calendars cannot have escaped notice. Far from being scuppered and sunk without trace, such matters must be re-floated for public reassessment, more especially in the lands of our Zoroastrian diaspora where the appreciation of our ancient cultural values is steadily diminishing. One reason is as obvious as it is alarming: being religiously sanctioned, it is crucial that this true calendar be explained, agreed, and followed for appropriate prayers during the timely observance of our anciently devised festivals and commemorative rites.

Our Zoroastrian prayers, whether in Gathic Avestan, Avestan, or Pazand, are primarily addressed to Ahura Mazda as Creator and sole Deity, his six Amesha Spentas / Amshaspands or attributes, and the *yazatas* or worship-worthy divine beings. Pious dedications are only made effective at their prescribed times and, for ensuring this, our carefully devised calendar provides exact religious guidance.

A survey of our calendar's history shows that over the long course of its evolution, there were several systems in simultaneous use (as was also the case in Ancient Greece). The Old Persian calendar of c.600 BC had non-Zoroastrian month-names, and its days were numbered, not named. In the 5th century, the slow adoption of the Zoroastrian months and days, as we know them, took place: firstly alongside the Old Persian, thereafter linked to the official Achaemenian state religion through mid-5th century reforms.

The order and names of our Zoroastrian months will be long known to all devotees.

For those of forgetful natures, their bowdlerized forms are:

Fravardin, Ardibehesht, Hordad, Tir, Amardad, Shahrevar, Mihr, Aban, Adar, Dai, Bahman, and Aspandarmad. There should be no difficulty in identifying these with their strictly religious Avestic forms – thus, *Fravartin*: the Fravashis, *Asha Vahishta*: Best Truth; *Haurvatat*: Wholeness, Health; *Tir/Tishtrya*, (for which see below); *Ameretat*: Undyingness, Life; *Khshathra Vairya*: Good Governance; *Mithra*: the ancient solar deity of Friendship and the solemn Word; *Apan*: the Waters; *Atar*: Fire; *Datar*: the Creator; *Vohu Mana*: Good Mind; and *Spenta Armaiti*: Bountiful Right-mindedness.

Unlike the uneven Julian and Gregorian months, each of our twelve Zoroastrian months has 30 days. With five end-of-year Gatha days added, we get the full complement of 365 days. What happens to the quarter-day shortfall each year will be explained shortly. Each month is divided into “weeks” of 7 + 7 + 8 + 8 days; each “week” is headed by the day honouring the Creator Ahura Mazda / Ohrmazd. Thus week 1 commences with his illustrious name; week 2 starts with *Dai pa Adar*; beginning week 3 is *Dai pa Mihr*; and heading the 4th week is *Dai pa Din*, Pious folk always mention *datar/dadar* on these days – their staunch devotion has helped preserve and perpetuate knowledge of our religious calendar and much else besides

These are the approximate meanings attaching to the 30 days:

Week 1: Ahura Mazda (Lordly Wisdom); Good Mind; Best Truth; Desirable Governance; Bountiful Right-mindedness; Wholeness / Health; Undyingness / Life. In

this week the full roster of the Six Amesha Spentas / Amshaspands is present, with Ahura Mazda at their head. In the Gathas we notice the close association of Mazda with Vohu Mana and Asha, and the pairing of Haurvatat and Ameretat,

Week 2: Creator of Fire; Fire; the Waters; Radiant Sun; Moon; Tir/Tishtrya; the Kine. Tir is the star Sirius; Tishtrya or Trishtar is Orion's Belt.

Week 3: Creator of Mithra; Mithra; Sraosha; the Righteous; the Fravashis; Bahram; Peace; Beneficent Wind. Vata or Vayu, the Wind god, displays a two-fold nature – as gentle zephyr or destructive storm force.

Week 4: Creator of Daena; Daena or spiritual vision; Good Reward; Rectitude; Sky; Blessed Earth; Sacred Word; the Infinite Lights.

Each day is divided among five watches (four in the autumn and winter periods). These are the *gahs*: from dawn to noon is the *Havani*; noon to mid-afternoon is the *Rapithwina* (though not during the autumn and winter months, when a double *Havan* is reckoned); *Uzayeirina* follows until sunset, followed by *Aiwisruthrima* until midnight. *Ushahina* sees the night hours through until the break of dawn: the full *Vendidad* ceremony is performed during these hours by priests determined on repelling demons everywhere.

The solar-regulated or seasonal calendar has been the preferred Zoroastrian method of time-reckoning. The *Bundahishn*'s 25th chapter, "On the Religious Year" unequivocally warns, "*As it is said, those who declare for the moon confound everything He who arranges the year according to the moon's revolution, mixes up summer with winter, and winter with summer*" – these were our priestly strictures, together with good reasons, against the purely lunar calendar.

So far, so good! At six different periods during the year are placed the six *gahanbars* or seasonal festivals, each

lasting for five days. The six have names exclusively pertaining to their functions and times in the solar year, commencing with the mid-spring *Maidhyoizaremaya* festival. Two of these clearly mark midsummer and midwinter – the first, *Maidhyoishema*, is the summer solstice when the sun is at its highest in the noon sky, facing south, such that over the following six months it stands at a lower height each day; the winter solstice, *Maidhyairya*, signals its lowest southerly point from which it begins its slow northward climb to its high noon point.

This southerly direction – very clearly a solar indication – is called *Rapithwin*, after which the noon till 3pm watch, or *gah*, is named. Our texts dealing with our calendar give us the exact dates of its "arrival" and "departure": it occupies the full seven summer months from March 21 to October 16 (i.e., from Ohrmazd *ruz* of Fravardin *mah* to Anaghran *ruz* of Mihr *mah* or first day of the first month to the last day of the seventh).

Rapithwin is the only *gah* which is honoured with its special blessing or *Afrin*. For a pastoral and agronomic society in which our remote ancestors lived, loved, and laboured, this passage of the sun was of crucial import for their animal and farm husbandry. Its great importance meant that an accurate calendar system was arranged around it, and with that went the appropriate prayers and other festivals. An explanatory text reads: "When winter gains strength, the spirit of Rapithwin goes below ground. Winter sets in on Adar *ruz* of Dai *mah* when they light fires throughout". The date corresponds to December 24 – the winter solstice from when Mithra, Lord of Fire, arises to bless us with warmth and light. Christmas? think again!

Another indication of the astronomical basis of our true calendar may be noted by sharp-eyed investigators of such matters. The inseparable pair of Haurvatat/Khordad and Ameretat/Amardad (months 3 and 5) have been parted by the intrusion of Tir/Tishtrya as month 4. Why an asterism to so disrupt the usual order? Its answer originates from Ancient Egypt where it was first noticed that

this bright star was the last to be observed on the eastern horizon before sunrise. So, what may one ask is so wonderful about that? Well, it just so happened that the Nile river rose in flood at that very time, bringing much needed nutrients for fertilizing the crops and legumes grown along its wide banks. The timing was carefully noted.

At about the same latitudes in Iran a similar observation of Tir/Tishtrya predicted much needed rainfall on the summer-parched land. Our feisty *Tir Yasht* tells the story of the vanquishing of the Drought Demon by the advancing force of this heavenly army. The festival of *Tirgan* on July 1st, when the coinciding of the thirteenth day of the fourth month – both named after Tir – commemorates this annual event: an ancient cultural aspect brought to life in prayer and pleasure. It's also Aresh's story.

Three *gahanbars* are still to be accounted for and explained. They are centred around farming and herding duties, followed by their respective festivities. In the calendar they are *Paitish.hahya* (harvest), *Ayathrima* (the bringing-in of cattle from the high pastures) and *Hamaspathmaedaya* whose favoured meaning is something like "assembling for countryside work", uniting the work-force for clearing away the accumulated debris and undergrowth from fields and ditches, and freeing their irrigation channels.

It is noteworthy that this last-named five-day feasting exactly coincides with the five Gatha days – a reminder, were it needed, for man's sacred duty to care for the land and his animals which sustain him. It becomes very evident that only a formal, fixed calendar, based on the sun, the stars (the zodiac) and the seasons, and – ah yes, common sense! – would satisfy all priestly and lay requirements, at the same time ensuring harmony and happiness. It is not just work and worship, but indeed that "work is worship".

The solar year comprises three hundred and sixty-five full days. While the months were regulated according to the phases of the moon, their extent was approximately

twenty-nine and a half days or 354 days in the year. The thirty-day month requires five floating days to be tacked on at their very end. A quarter-day shortfall still remains, and that has given rise to the intercalation controversy, one in which both opposed parties appear to know little of what our religious calendar texts firmly recommend.

Firstly, there is a warning that the days and months should not be allowed to accumulate in such arrears that the seasons are disarranged for normal reckoning purposes. Secondly, and this is for the fear-stricken in our midst: our funerary rites and the accompanying prayers are all askew, and for those further afflicted with superstitious dread, note that this neglect would hinder their souls from attaining to Paradise. In Ancient Iran it was formally declared that "the herbadhs/priests make their decisions on funerary rites and other matters by this reckoning of summer and winter". This obviously implies a fixed time-reckoner and not the vague floating calendars of the *Qadimi/Kadmi* and the *Shahanshahi* systems where in the year 2009 the *spring*-commenced New Year is celebrated on 20th July and 19th August, both *high summer months*! Their mid-spring *gahanbars* accordingly would fall during 29 August – 2 September, and 28 September – 2 October : late summer and early autumn, with dislocations of the appropriate prayers.

It is clearly enjoined that the quarter-day excess be made up as one full extra day every four years. The thoroughly impractical suggestion of adding one thirty-day month every one hundred and twenty years is simply unworkable, since five or six generations' lapse would certainly invite forgetfulness and neglect – we see the confused results to this day; yet our ignorant priests whose very ancestors had recommended this four-yearly intercalation deny that it ever was so!

For the record, the 120-year method was last followed in Iran in 1006 AD and additionally in India in 1126 since when no further intercalations were ever made. The textual ruling is that up to five months'

intercalations should not be delayed for more than 600 years (30 x 4 x 5), which doubtless comes as relief to those who had never intended to take any action in the matter in the first place! In their ignorance, little can they realize that the mandatory ten days' *Muktd* and the *Fravardegan* are hopelessly mistimed; yet the *Shahanshahi* and *Qadimi* factions are being hoodwinked into entrusting such deeply felt commemorations to mere prayer-babblers!

The existence, therefore, of *two* erroneous calendars may puzzle some. It was noted at the time that the 1006 AD intercalation in Iran was not universally accepted. The Parsis in India nevertheless continued on that basis with their 1126 AD month insertion, and then, for some reason, completely failed to follow it up ever after. It was the visit in 1720 to India of the Kerman priest Jamasp, called "Velayati", that first occasioned the split within the Parsi community in the matter of the calendar. Jamasp had pointed out the month's discrepancy between the Iranian and Indian systems – of which no further notice was taken until another Iranian, a layman versed in *astrology* came up with the same observation and recommendation that the Iranian version be taken up in India.

In 1745 a calendar controversy – the *kabisa* – arose when a section of the Parsis decided to follow the Iranian system. There ensued some violent confrontations and even fatalities. Since then the *Qadimi/Kadmi* calendar has been arranged one month earlier (ahead) of the *Shahanshahis* who took to calling themselves *Rasmi*: "Traditionists". Whatever their private epithets, both calendars are irredeemably erroneous, pointless, and therefore religiously defunct.

This absurdly irreligious situation is far from irremediable – its rescue comes from a quarter which saw several reforms with its own calendar system: the Gregorian calendar which is now universally agreed and followed by all civilized nations. Despite its quirks of uneven month lengths and movable and fixed feasts, it has science and logic in its favour. We are well

acquainted with its leap year system of intercalating a day every four years. Without entering into technicalities, this system ensures an accuracy of one day in 20,000 years.

The Gregorian rule for such regularly observed "leap" years is: "Every year the number of which is divisible by 4 is a leap year, excepting the last year in each century, which is a leap year only when the number of the century is divisible by 4; but 4,000 and its multiples, 8,000, 12,000, and 16,000, etc., are "common" years". Confused? Exhilarated? Indifferent?

There remains only to throw one more spanner into the works – that of our calendar eras. The utterly crazy notion that we follow the new-fangled date of 1725 BC as the *Era of Zarathushtra* ought to be discarded with all possible haste, since it conveys only the results of fevered imaginations by some who fancied themselves as astronomers. We need not enter into the fictitious connexion made between Zarathushtra and some stellar configurations, except to register our protest at yet another dangerous lunacy being forced upon us – *ignotum per ignotius!*

We are accustomed to counting our Zoroastrian Era from 632 AD, the accession year of the last Zoroastrian emperor of all Iran, Yazdgard III. Whilst this is in keeping with the optimistic spirit of Zoroastrianism, which would have frowned upon the era year of 652 when His Imperial Majesty was foully murdered, we should seriously consider *instead* the accession year of the greatest Iranian emperor of them all, Kurush/Cyrus II, in 559 BC. The first world Empire's foremost ruler would make for a far greater embracing of our Ancient Iranian culture and civilization. The proposed era would then yield the year 2569 A.K. for 2010 AD. Think on it!



Farrokh Vajifdar's profile appears on p37

Bas-relief of Kourash the Great

by sam kerr

Lived 599 - 529BC. Ruled 559 - 529BC

On this day, 29 Nov 2009, also the anniversary day of Cyrus the Great, as celebrated word-wide, the Australian Zoroastrian Association of NSW was particularly fortunate in having in our possession this magnificently executed bas-relief of Kourash the Great, who lived 2,500 years ago. Fig 1: It was unveiled in the garden of our Dar e Mehr. Presented by Homer Abramian, Founder of the Cultural Foundation in Sydney and his colleague Akbar Eghbali in collaboration with Phil Madon of the World Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce - Australia; it was designed by Hushang Saihun and sculpted by Peter Scipperheyne. [The same sculptor who executed "Thus Spake ..." which is at Melbourne. Hamazor Issue 2/06, pp 43-45].

Sam Kerr's profile appears on p 18

Fig 2: This bas-relief appears to have been based on a colour painting done by Sir Robert Ker Porter, English explorer, writer and painter in 1818 during his travels in Iran. As you see in this picture there is an extension at the top, which bears a one-line inscription in three languages: Old Persian (the western dialect of the Avestan script of our holy scriptures); Elamite & Aramaic (the language of Jesus Christ). The top line in Old Persian reads "*Adam Kourash Khshyayathiya Hakhamanishya*" – 'I am Kourash, King of Hakhamani descent', a simple statement of serene dignity commensurate with the deep humility in which the Great King lived in real life. If it were etched in the pure Avestan language it would have read "*Ahami Kourash Khshathra Hakhamani*". The six foot average Iranian man standing on the right side gives a fair idea about the dimensions of the bas-relief. Since the painting, the top part showing the inscriptions has been vandalized.

As is commonly taken Kourash the Great was not the founder of the Hakhamani dynasty. It was Hakhamanus his great-great grandfather. Clay tablets reveal that Hakhamanus ruled a small principality 700-

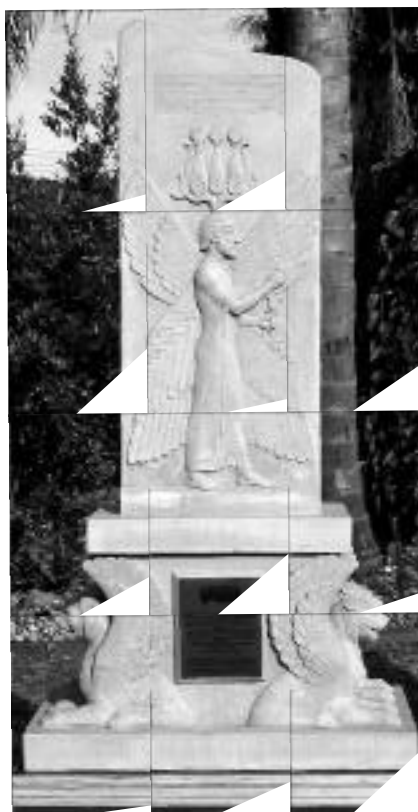


Fig 1



Fig 2

675 BC (Gk: Achaemenes), had lead a contingent against the Assyrian Sin-Akh-Arba (Gk: Sennacherib) and defeated him in the battle of Hallulina. The principality he thus maintained was known as Anzan. This was the beginning of the Hakahmani Empire and it was further expanded to occupy a place recorded as Parshuash (later Parsava and now Pars). His son was Chishpaish 675-640 BC (Gk: Teispes). Then came Kourash I 640-600 BC whose son was Khambujia I (GK: Cambyses) 600-559 BC. It was his son, Kourash II who is our Kourash the Great. A gold tablet found in Varkana (now the region of Gilan) lists the lineage of kings, who are cousins in the two separate kingdoms.

Kourash the Great's cousin and contemporary Vishtaspa (Gk: Hystaspes) who ruled in Varkana was not the same as

King Vishtaspa, patron of our Prophet Zarathushtra. They therefore gave the incorrect date of circa 550 BC as the era of Zarathushtra, partly also because the Pontiff's (Mobedan Mobed) name was Zardust.

Fig 3: This is the original left bas-relief of Kourash the Great at the gatehouse entrance to Parsagard, the newly built capital city of Kourash's vast empire. On the opposite side of the gatehouse was a second bas-relief facing this left one. It was completely destroyed along with the gatehouse, the ruins of which are seen in the foreground. Note the tips of the mountains of the Alborz range rising from the valleys in the background. The stones, gravel and lime stone blocks for the construction of Parsagard were harvested from these mountains. Note also that there is no fortress wall built to guard the newly built city. Stone walls had no place in the great king's manner of thinking. The best security he could offer his subjects was through their hearts and minds. His benevolent nature certainly ensured that there was no revolt or disquiet during his rule. We will shortly come to a slide with a line drawing of the bas-relief which will help to describe its intricacies.

Fig 4: Line drawing. It would appear that the bas-reliefs were commissioned by Khambujia, son of Kourash the Great after the death of his father. Within nine months he had conquered Egypt and become the first Iranian Pharaoh. The bas-relief appears to reinforce his father's vision of harmony among his subjects of widely divergent cultures, beliefs, languages, tongues ... etc.

The 4-winged bearded person represents an Assyrian divinity. The crown is composed of a ring of several Egyptian crowns of Osiris, each one showing the upper smaller mountainous region and the lower broad delta of the Nile. The two horns represent the dream of Daniel in the Holy Bible. Even the Holy Qu'ran mentions him as Dhu al Qarnayn – the one bearing two horns. The long encircling fringed robe is Elamite. It is unlike a follower of Zarathushtra to allow the bare feet to touch



Fig 3

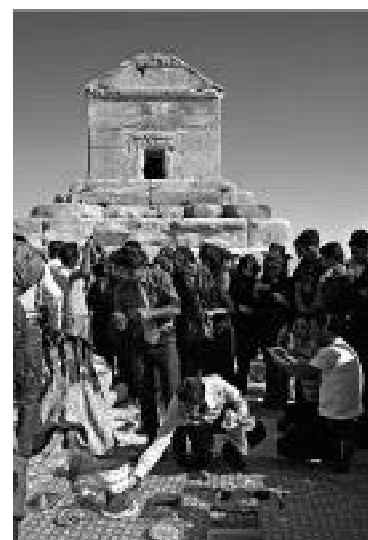


Fig 5



Fig 4

good earth, but Khambujia wanted to identify his father with the common peoples of his vast realm.

The two bas reliefs were fondly referred to by his subjects as representing the Spirit of the Great King guarding the city as angels in a physical manifest state.

Fig 5: The Great King was 70 when he died in a battle with the nomads in the region of the present Khazakstan. Note that 2,500 years have not erased the memory of this great King. As you can see his humane

legacy lives on. Rather than celebrate Nou Rouz to themselves these Zarathushtis have decided to gather together and enjoy food and merriment along with Muslims, Iranian Jews, Christians, Indians on this, the first day of Spring and therefore of the Seasonal New Year's day in the Northern Hemisphere. Unshielded this tomb of the Great King has survived the test of time - 2,500 years. ■■■

A Chronicle of Parsis in Mombasa

by dara edulji p a t e l

Part II

Colourful characters and episodes amongst early Parsi settlers

In the early days of the Mombasa Parsi Anjuman, meetings were held at the homes of prominent Parsis, until a permanent building was acquired. In those days, the Anjuman had no steady income of its own (due to lack of rental properties) and all the expenses were met by voluntary contributions. In 1897, Seth Dinshaw and his brothers bought a piece of land in the vicinity of the Anjuman's cemetery from Rustomji Dhunjibhoy Talati and donated it to the Anjuman for raising income for its welfare and social activities.

In the early days of settlement, Parsi men kept their families in India and visited them every few years. However, records show that some Parsis did bring their spouses and families to Mombasa, and between 1895 and 1925, some marriages took place there.

There was one colourful character associated with the Anjuman building, **Kawasji Uranwala.**

He was short, fair and could pass as European and so the Africans called him 'Musungu Africa' meaning 'European African'. The Parsis called him 'Kawasji Cock.' He was a carpenter and worked for Mackinnon Mackenzie and Co., in the Customs verification department, where his job was to open wooden cases for Customs inspection, to repair damaged cases and repack opened ones.

He was very popular amongst African Ngomas (bands) and he himself became a leader of one of these bands. The British Colonial Government encouraged and funded local African Ngomas to play and perform every Sunday and on public holidays in a large public arena. These musical performances were supplemented with dances and mock war games. In his spare time Kawasji built models of wooden

naval vessels with fake guns and mounted them on long, four-wheel hand carts.

During the naval war games, the Ngomas wore naval uniforms with fake armaments and placed their carts, with model ships, in fighting formation on opposite sides. Kawasji dressed up as the Naval Commander-in-Chief, fake decorations and medals hanging on his chest and a sword in its casing, hanging on his torso. When the referee blew the whistle the mock battle began, the naval band played martial music and the spectators cheered their favourite naval formations.

Kawasji stood on the upper deck (cart) of the model navy issuing orders through a loud hailer, in English and Swahili, to the sailors who manned the mock cannons in the front and back. The attack on the opposing formation was marked by letting off fireworks. After an hour, the referee would stop the war game and declare the winner. Kawasji's band usually won.

After an interval, the Ngomas changed into army uniforms (bought at auctions) to engage in a new battle. Kawasji's band always had the best uniforms and he led his mock army dressed as a Major General, holding a naked army sword in his right hand. There were at least four competing groups, some playing African instruments, some playing brass instruments and others playing bagpipes. Kawasji led his mock army, marching to war music, in one part of the grounds. The spectators showed their approval by shouting and clapping. Similarly the other groups marched in other areas of the huge ground, encouraged by their supporters. In the centre, a watchtower was erected from which a panel of referees viewed the performance of various Ngomas.

After an hour, the referees called a halt, descended from the watchtower and retired

to their office to deliberate. Meanwhile, various Ngomas played popular music and some Ngomas performed exotic dances; the spectators bought food and cold drinks from the kiosks. After some time, the leader of the referees would emerge from the office and invariably declare Kawasji's Ngoma the winner - to the delight of the crowds.

Kawasji's Ngoma won trophies year after year, and these were displayed in his office. When he retired after forty-five years of service, on a meagre gratuity and pension, he stopped participating in Ngomas. Later on, he was employed by the Anjuman, as caretaker of Parsi Shamba (Parsi garden) and lived in the assembly hall. He planted flowerbeds and decorative shrubs and trees and improved the garden.

Kawasji was hot headed and never tolerated nonsense, jokes or criticism. If provoked, he would utter expletives in Gujarati and so was known as 'Kawasji Cock'. However, the President of the Anjuman, Bamanji Hormasji Mistry, was able to control him. While Kawasji never participated in the general meetings of the Anjuman, he played a ritual role during its proceedings: if the arguments got heated and there was commotion in the meeting, he would rush into the hall and say to the President loudly, "*Bamanji soti laa-u? Sala-o ne fatkaro!*" ('Bamanji shall I bring a cane? Whip the blaggards!'). Bamanji would reply, "*Ama taru kam nathi, tuu bar jaa*" ('You have no business here; please leave') and Kawasji would exit obediently, having had the effect of calming the meeting.

He never married and died at the ripe age of 96 years and is buried in the Anjuman's cemetery. When the Parsi volunteer pall-bearers entered his room to bring his body out for *sachkar*, they saw his favourite sword in its casing, hanging on the wall. They also found naval and army uniforms, fake decorations, medals and a dented loud-hailer in his trunk.

Dasturji Charna: In July 1901, Rustomji N Talati sponsored Dasturji Charna, on a three year contract, to come to Mombasa and officiate as the resident priest. He was accommodated in one of the rooms of the

Anjuman's prayer hall and assembly building. There was a garden round the building, known as Parsi Shamba.

The Parsi Community were pleased with the religious services of Dasturji Charna. Notably, he never failed to perform the *kusti* prayers five times a day. He did this on the veranda of Parsi Shamba, facing the Makupa Road (now Jomo Kenyatta Avenue), in full view of the local natives passing by. They watched the Dasturji performing the *kusti*, first with amusement and then with suspicion. Word soon spread amongst the natives that a certain *Muhindi* (Indian) was practicing witchcraft, *mumyani*, in Parsi Shamba. The rumours became more fanciful: that the *Muhindi* was capturing African children, bleeding them in order to concoct blood potions and then throwing their bodies down the well of Parsi Shamba.

One Saturday, when Dasturji Charna was performing *kusti* prayers on the verandah, a mob entered the Shamba with the intention of killing him. When the Dasturji saw the mob approaching, he fled and ran towards the centre of the town, with the mob in hot pursuit.

When Dasturji reached the bazaar, some Indians and Arabs intervened and saved him from the blood-thirsty mob. Some of the rioters were arrested by the police. As the Dasturji was roughly handled by the mob, he was traumatised and unable to perform religious ceremonies. The Anjuman decided to repatriate him to India, with full pay and gratuity. Until 1903, when another Dastur was called, there was no Dasturji in Mombasa. [The use of the title "Dastur" is used by some quite freely, and possibly this gentleman was a mobed - Ed] ■■■■



Dara Patel was born (1925) and bred in Mombasa. He supported the freedom struggle and served as the Treasurer and Publicity Secretary of the Kenya African National Union (KANU) and as Treasurer of the Kenya Freedom Party (Asian political party, affiliated to KANU). He was a manufacturer with orchards and poultry farms in

Mombasa and is now retired and settled in Canada.

High Achievers of the Zarathushti community

Dr Persis J Amrolia

and his team of scientists have developed a new bone marrow transplant technique that only requires a small dose of chemotherapy. This may therefore make treatment safer and less distressing for children with genetic defects in their immune system (primary immunodeficiencies or PID).

A consultant in Bone Marrow Transplant (BMT) at the Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH), London, United Kingdom, Dr Persis Amrolia received his Fellowship of the Royal College of Physicians in May 2006 and was made a Fellow of the Royal College of Pathologists in January 2007. He obtained a PhD in Medicine from the London University in April 1997.

Traditionally patients needed a matched donor for a transplant, however almost all children have a half-matched donor in their parents. Half-matched, haploidentical stem cell transplants are very difficult as the immune cells from the donor are mismatched and these T-cells can attack the patient causing graft versus host disease (GVHT) which frequently results in death.

Dr Amrolia and his team pioneered the use of antibodies that recognize the bone marrow, to prevent rejection and create space for the donor stem cells i.e. the bad cells which cause GVHD are selected and the remaining good immune cells are given back to restore patient immunity. This process is known as allodepletion. This antibody treatment avoids some of the most devastating short and long term side effects caused by standard chemotherapy e.g. hair loss, sickness, organ damage and infertility.

A major clinical study carried out in collaboration between GOSH and the Centre for Cell and Gene Therapy, Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, using this approach was published in the journal *Blood* (15 September 2006). Lead researcher Dr Amrolia treated 16 half-matched transplant patients. Half were given low doses of the allodepleted T-cells and the other half were given high doses. Patients receiving the high dose of allodepleted donor T-cells had much quicker recovery of their immune systems after transplant and had a low mortality rate from infection, although some patients did still relapse. GOSH / ICH (Institute of Child Health) research is now in the process of refining this method of allodepletion with the aim of improving outcomes for children undergoing half-matched transplants i.e. cell therapy to improve patients' immunity after BMT; reducing the intensity of the conditioning drugs used before BMT; and gene therapy for genetic immunodeficiency disorders.

As Dr Persis Amrolia sums it up, "Given how sick some of these children were before transplant, the results are remarkable."

Dr Firoze Patel, Karachi, Pakistan

Source : Daily Express of 2 September 2009 and the Internet

For over ten years now, **Khushroo Poacha** has stood by the sole belief that to do good work you don't need money. Poacha runs indianblooddonors.com (IBD), a site that lets blood donors and patients in need of blood connect with each other almost instantaneously. He also does not accept cash donations.

The site has been live for almost ten years and with over 50,000 donors in its database, IBD is perhaps a classic example of what the Internet is truly capable of. But more importantly, it is a reflection of a single human being's desire to make a difference to this world.

It started in the mid-'90s when Khushroo Poacha, an employee with the Indian Railways in Nagpur saw a doctor being beaten up because he couldn't save a patient's life. No one in the mob seemed to understand that it was the lack of blood that caused the death. Poacha, however, had no clue about how he could make a difference until one day, sitting in a cyber cafe with a 56 kbps connection, the idea came to him. "I did not know head or toe of the Internet, let alone about domain names, but I knew this would be the tool that would make a difference," he says.

"I had spent almost IndRs 40,000 in developing the site and had gone practically bankrupt." Poacha says he even went to a local newspaper to place an ad. The silver lining to the dark cloud came when someone from the outskirts of his hometown Nagpur contacted him, expressing interest.

Visibility, however, was still an issue. No publication was willing to write about him. No major hospital or blood bank was interested in taking his calls. And then the 2001 Gujarat Earthquake happened. As visuals of the devastation flashed before his eyes on television, Poacha realised yet again he had to do something. Only this time he knew just what. "I called up Zee News (TV channel) and requested them to flash the site's name on the ticker and they agreed." Five minutes later, the ticker was live. Ten minutes later, the site crashed. He explained the situation to them was put on a fresh server and over the next three days or so received some 3,500 odd registrations. Realising the difference he had made, the 42-year-old started working on getting visibility again.

Interestingly, IBD is not yet registered as an NGO. "We function as individuals. We don't take donations and only accept bumper stickers (of IBD) and postage stamps to send out those stickers to create awareness," he says. "I was asked to deliver a lecture at IIM during a social entrepreneurship seminar and was asked what my sustenance model was. I replied I didn't have one. And I have been doing this for the last ten years."

Today, the database of IBD is growing at the rate of 10-15 users every day and the requests have grown from 25 to 40 per day. IBD is currently on an auto pilot mode and Poacha continues to keep his day job. He says, "Initially I would take the calls and personally connect the donor with the patient's relative. But I know only three languages and I'd get calls from all over India," he laughs.

Last year Poacha was invited to the Asian Social Entrepreneurs Summit 2008 in South Korea where venture capitalists argued that it wasn't possible to sustain an endeavour without money. He says, "If you want to do good work, you simply do it."

From the article written by Abhishek Mande

The fundraiser for "*Three Cups of Tea*" took place at the Hyatt in Brunswick, New Jersey on October 24th 2009. It began with a reception at which **Greg Mortenson** and **Bapsi Sidhwa** signed books for patrons. By six o'clock the banquet hall was packed with a sold-out crowd of over 800 guests. Entertainment included a children's recital, silent auction and Quawalis. Distinguished guest and internationally acclaimed writer, Bapsi Sidhwa was introduced to the audience and was constantly being approached by the crowd to autograph her novel, "*Cracking India*", which was included in the gift bag for every guest at the dinner.

The theme for the evening was defined by the book's subtitle "One Man's Mission to Promote peace – One School at a Time" Greg Mortenson, a mountaineer who has built over 150 schools in North Pakistan and Afghanistan, spoke of the pressing need for education in a region that has almost no schools. Since its inception, The Central Asia Institute founded by him has promoted



and supported community based education, especially for girls, in the remote and almost inaccessible reaches of the mighty Karakoram and Hindu Kush mountains. The Institute not only helps build schools, but provides scholarships, medical facilities, teacher training and seeds incipient library projects.

Through his personal story in *"Three Cups of Tea"*, Greg Mortenson has been influencing people globally. He has been able to motivate students to launch the Pennies for Peace programme in schools all across America. For more information on this programme, please visit <http://www.penniesforpeace.org/>

Today, *"Three Cups of Tea"* is not only sold in bookstores worldwide, but is part of curriculums in schools and a mandatory read within US military and government organizations assigned to the area. Earlier this year, Mortenson launched a Young Readers version of the book aimed at elementary school children and in December he hopes to launch his second book: *"Stones into Schools"*.

The well organized event was enjoyed by all the guests, who also found the evening's talks and films inspirational. The dinner raised around two hundred and thirty thousand dollars.

To learn more about The Central Asia Institute or to make a donation, please visit <https://www.ikat.org/> Bapsi Sidhwa's website: www.BapsiSidhwa.com

Usheen Davar, New York, USA

Note from the Ed: The 'wonderman' Greg Mortenson of course is not a Zarathushti, but Bapsi Sidhwa is. Their achievement fits well in this section of the Hamazor, so just a little latitude please.



First recipient of the gold medal award for Service to International Neurology was presented to **Dr Noshir H Wadia**, MD, FRCP, FNA, FAMS, FASc, DSc (Hons), on 26th October 2009 at Bangkok, Thailand during the 19th World Congress of Neurology.

The World Federation is an affiliation of more than 100 National World Societies and Associations with a total membership of several thousand neurologists, which actively promotes Neurology in its every aspect at the international level. It was established in 1957. National Societies were asked to nominate a Neurologist worthy of this award and the Indian Academy of Neurology of which he is a member had sent in his nomination.

Prof Noshir Wadia was asked at age 32 years to set up a department of Neurology at the government JJ Hospital, Bombay when there were few dedicated neurologists to Asia and Oceania. Within five years he developed a department of Neurosciences recognized by National Institute of Health, USA, in 1961 for a collaborative project with the Massachusetts General Hospital, and the first President of the World Federation of Neurology invited him to be founder member of the 'Problem Commission of Tropical Neurology'.

This despite paucity of funds and equipment as was in those days. Initially his only help was a Medical Registrar to treat a sizeable number of patients in an honorary capacity, which he did for 25 years. Yet he found time to identify and document the prevalence of local and unique diseases to build up a regional neurological nosology as is documented in his book 'Neurological Practice – an Indian Perspective' which received laudatory reviews internationally.

He has about 150 scientific publications in peer reviewed high impact national and international journals.

Through his teaching he attracted medical students to Neurology and is now known as a mentor to more than a 100 neurologists practicing globally, some of whom have become internationally renowned.

His services to the disabled is recognized by his participation in their many societies. He is an elected fellow / member of National and International medical and science societies. He has delivered many prestigious orations and received national and international awards and was appointed President (Chancellor) of an Institute of National Importance related to Neurosciences and Biotechnology, a position he held for seven and a half years.

His continuing service to WFN was recognized by Past Presidents who presented him “proudly” certificates of “appreciation for services to Neurology” and which was also acknowledged by the current President, who has called him “father of contemporary Indian Neurology”.

He is a caring physician, educator, role model, researcher and pioneer in the development of regional and International Neurology who emerged from a developing country in the 1950s.

After a due process of selection the World Federation of Neurology found Dr Noshir H Wadia worthy to be chosen as the first recipient of the medal for “Service to International Neurology”. The President of the World Federation of Neurology, Prof Johan Aarli wrote to him – **“It is a great pleasure and an honour for me to inform you that there is a world-wide support for you as the awardee for the first medal, Noshir for your work for service to international neurology”**.



Cyrus Todiwala, Chef Patron of Cafe Spice Namaste, has been awarded an OBE in the 2010 Queen's New Year's Honours List for his services to the hospitality industry. Cyrus says he is deeply honoured and humbled to receive this recognition, which came as a lovely surprise. [Announced on 31 December 2009]. Cyrus previously was awarded the MBE.

A further honour was bestowed, early December 2009. During its annual graduation ceremonies on 2nd December, London Metropolitan University conferred an honorary doctorate degree on Cyrus.

Awarding the degree, Bob Morgan, Head of the London Metropolitan University Business School, said, 'It gives great pleasure to award this degree to Cyrus Todiwala in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the international hospitality and catering industry and his support for providing training and development opportunities for young people and adults.'

Cyrus said, 'I am deeply honoured to receive this degree and only wish my mother could have been here. Education is perhaps one of the most valuable assets we can have in our lifetime, and once we have it, no one can take it away from us. That goes for both academic and vocational education, which must have equal esteem.'



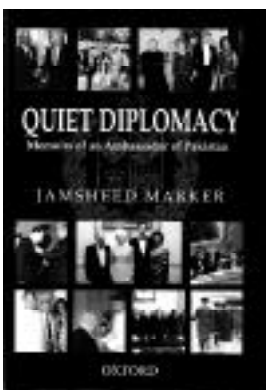
Dinaz Vervatwala, a fitness trainer at Secunderabad, has made it to the Guinness Book of World Records for completing 26-hour-long aerobics marathon that ended on Sunday 10th January 2010.

700 volunteers took the stage with Dinaz to help her set the new world record. The polo grounds resonated with applause and encouragement of army officers, participants and audience who were present in large numbers.



Dinaz said, "I'm happy that I'm the first person to set a new record and the first woman to have got this achievement. The feat couldn't be achieved without support from my friends and family. I'm extremely happy that the city will now be noted in the entire world. The aim of the event was to spread the message of fitness and healthy living."

Information from The Hindu of 11th January 2010, sent through courtesy of Jehangir Bisney



Oxford University Press, Pakistan, launched on Thursday 14 January 2010 at the Beach Luxury Hotel, Karachi, **Ambassador Marker's** memoirs – "Quiet Diplomacy". The evening was an elegant one, just as it should be for a man who is himself, refined, quiet, unassuming and a 'complete' diplomat.

Jamsheed willingly and patiently signed each book, the queue running well beyond the banquet hall of the hotel, sharing his charming smile with one and all. After the welcome address by Ameena Saiyid, MD of OUP, past Ambassador Aneesudddin Ahmed held an interesting conversation with Ambassador Marker, bringing to light the various experiences, both pleasurable and difficult situations faced by Jamsheed. The floor was then thrown open for questions to Ambassador Marker, some of which were "googlies" brilliantly caught by the ardent cricketer-diplomat.



The Man - Jamsheed Marker is a veteran Pakistani diplomat. He was Pakistan's top envoy to the United States and to more than a dozen other countries including the former Soviet Union, Canada, East Germany, Japan, the Federal Republic of Germany and France for more than three decades, earning the distinction as the 'world's longest-serving ambassador'. During his Ambassador-ship to the US he helped negotiate the Soviet military withdrawal from Afghanistan. Reportedly, he is listed in the Guinness Book of Records as having been ambassador to more countries than any other person. He has served as United Nations Under-secretary General, as a special advisor to United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, and won praise for his role in bringing about the resolution of the East Timor conflict and the independence of that nation. He speaks English, Urdu, Gujarati, French, German, and Russian. He is currently teaching political science at Eckerd College in St Petersburg, Florida, USA.

Ambassador Marker's earlier publications include: "East Timor: A Memoir of the Negotiations for Independence & "The American Papers : Secret and Confidential India-Pakistan-Bangladesh Documents, 1965-1973", jointly with Roedad Khan.



Vera Danesh Dinshaw was conferred the 'Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Merite' (Knight of the National Order of Merit) by the President of the French Republic for her distinguished achievements for the Government, at the residence of the Consul General of France, Pierre Seillan, at Karachi, Pakistan, on 30th January 2010. Vera has been working with the French Government for the past 30 years and in recognition for this long service she received the 'Medaille d'Honneur des Affaires Etrangères' on 23 August 2008.

The National Order of Merit is an Order of Chivalry. It was founded on 3rd December 1963 by President Charles de Gaulle and was created to replace the large number of ministerial Orders previously awarded by the ministries; and to create an award that can be granted more liberally than the Legion of Honour.



Mhow – Tales of Generosity, Philanthropy and Valour

by jehangir mehta

[The article is based on the author's personal observations during his visit to Mhow]

Mhow, a small cantonment town

in Madhya Pradesh was established in 1818 as a result of a treaty between the English and the princely Holkars who ruled Indore. My journey to Mhow in 2008 had the distinct expectation of a place that enjoys quite a European climate and where the Zoroastrian community once lived well amidst the British residents in what was once a class conscious Anglo Indian society. A Shangri-La, where the rich and famous Zoroastrians sipped their high teas on the manicured lawns of their bungalows and beautiful gardens. A serene little town blessed with the cold and mild weather of Malwa plateau of central India. Where once, horse drawn Victorias were used to transport friends and family and where polo was played with gusto. The British did choose some excellent places to set up their cantonments.

I returned from Mhow with the reality that those were day's bygone and the grandeur has sadly been replaced with worn down bungalows in disrepair, the noisy polluting trucks and the three wheelers. Where once the Parsi woman was the principal of an all English school, today there are now, only a handful of families residing in Mhow. Economic migration to the cities has seen this small town meet its fate like others. But Mhow has a few tales to tell of its eminent Zoroastrians, the magnificent heritage of its philanthropic tradition and the brave sons, once part of the military institution in Mhow who fought and died in the wars.

I stayed with my friends Sherni and Cyrus Mancherji at their lovely bungalow. In personifying the open-hearted country hospitality of a Mhow Parsi, Cyrus had ensured that all my needs were taken care of, including sending his car and driver to pick me up from Indore - a journey of 22 kms which takes an hour on the Mumbai-Agra highway. A dinner party that night

hosted by Cyrus included swag of people from the community with whom I could share and reminisce the nostalgia and tales of what was once a thriving, prosperous and a cohesive community.

Mhow cantonment has three premier military training institutions – The Infantry School, The Military College of Telecommunications Engineering and The Army War College, formerly known as the College of Combat. My day in Mhow was carefully planned and included a drive up to the Parsi Hill and the Mhow dokhma. Although the dokhma is still maintained, the bungli is now in ruins. The adjoining land owned by the Anjuman has now become a talking point due to its pristine location, danger of encroachment, and the saleable value attached to it. A state highway passing through the area is already attracting property developers, builders and retired army personnel. With the ultimate demise of the Parsi population in next fifteen to twenty years, the question is not if, but when the decision will be made to sell the property. The current estimate of the Mhow population is approx 60 individuals and many over the age of seventy - typically senior citizens. It once boasted a population of 1000 strong.

A social outing in Mhow would mean a picnic to the Bercha Lake. Artillery firing exercises take place over the lake and access to those areas is restricted by the military personnel during those times. The adjoining forest rich in teak and sal wood and wildlife is also prey to unscrupulous poachers and illegal deforestation. Mhow agiary was built in 1916 and the Dotiwalla hall once boasted gala functions and ghambhars – a meeting place for Parsis of that era, is now a sad reminder.

That afternoon, I met Mrs Roshan Marker whose husband Late Group Captain

Dhunjisha Marker served in World War II at Iraq and Mesopotamia in 1944. Dhanjisha's father came to Mhow in 1918 and owned the aerated drinks company called Marker Cold Drinks. Their present bungalow belonged to the Dewan of Dhar (prime minister of Maharaja) and the bungalow pre-dates the Indian Mutiny. Roshan's sister in law Banoo Merchant taught at the St Mary's convent in 1953 - when only the British children were admitted. Later on, Anglo Indians and then the Parsis were allowed.

Early Parsis of Mhow were businessmen engaged as contractors to the British Army and later to the Indian army, building educational institutions and hospitals. Almost every institution, be it educational, social, medical or welfare oriented, carries the indelible Zarathushti hallmark. Khan Bahadur Eduljee Pestonjee built the Mhow Zoroastrian School in 1866 and in 1886 he built another school which even today is known as Khan Bahadur Eduljee Pestonjee Vernacular School. In 1875 KB Eduljee Pestonjee established the Cantonment Hospital. Another icon of Mhow, Khan Bahadur Dhunjisha Dotiwala's major contributions as a contractor and philanthropist was building roads, the Bercha Lake embankment, army barracks, Flag Staff House (where the senior most General in Mhow resides), and the Dotiwala Hall next to the agiary. The White House complex which he built was later donated to the Anjuman by the benevolence of his children as residences for needy Zoroastrians.

Other eminent Parsis in the 1800's - Ardeshir Dadabhoy Bhote was one of the first Indians to be appointed the Indian Divisional Forest Officer. He was made member of the Victorian Order (MVO) for his contribution in enhancing the Government's forestry revenue through scientific and eco-friendly means. Eduljee Bharucha (Edibhai) started powerhouses in Mhow in 1928 and he earned the reputation of not permitting any power failure to last for more than a couple of minutes. Ironically today Mhow experiences power cuts lasting

several hours during summer. His descendant Zal Cowasji is a stockbroker and lives in their ancestral home on Post Office Road. Ardeshir Dadabhoy (Masalawala) donated the Pirojbai Library in 1914. Dr Adi Dastur who had his early education in Mhow qualified as nuclear physicist and took leadership in developing Canada's deuterium uranium reactor and was affectionately dubbed "Young Einstein" by his Canadian colleagues.

Miss Homai Illava's name is synonymous for her social work in Mhow. Honorary teacher at the Parsee School Mhow, she was founder member of Asha Kala Kendra, the Mahila Sangh, Pratap Bal Mandir and the President of the Ladies Committee of the Indian Red Cross Society Mhow. She was the trustee of various Illava Charities and President of Mhow Anjuman 1978 - 1997.

Mhow has seen the passage of many of its brave and inspiring Parsi Army officers. Some of them won the highest gallantry awards. Late Lt Col Adi Tarapore won the Param Vir Chakra for his heroic action during the Indo-Pak War in 1965 destroying sixty enemy tanks and finally succumbing to his wounds. Cyrus Pithawala is now a Brigadier. As 2nd Lieutenant in 1981, Cyrus won the Ashok Chakra for capture of armed extremists in Manipur. Lt Gen Rustom Nanavati served in Kargil and comes to Mhow as guest lecturer. Brigadier Farokh Bulsara won the award for leading the Para Brigade to Maldives and saving its Government from the Tamil militants who had tried to take over. Late Field Marshal Sam Maneckshaw was the Commandant of The Infantry School as a Brigadier based in Mhow. Many other Parsi army officers continue to visit Mhow for higher courses and since retirement, numerous Parsi army officers have served the community at Mhow.

Today the Mhow Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman is said to be the second richest per capita Anjuman in India after the BPP. Much of the wealth was gifted to the Anjuman by the benevolence of the rich and famous Mhow

families, whose foresight towards community welfare can be compared to the Tatas, Wadias, Petits and Jamsetjees of Mumbai. They truly believed that charity begins at home and the Mhow community to them meant a close-knit family. There was friendship and harmony and all the needs were taken care of. Sadly all that is forgotten, and the Anjuman homes and residences that gave the community a roof over their heads, has now taken an ugly slant. The old houses need constant yearly repairs and the Anjuman funds are not infinite. Some residents have locked up the Anjuman properties and shifted to the cities hoping to cash in on future development and saleable returns of the assets.

Everyone wants to have a lion's share of the pie and not contribute a single penny for the repairs and maintenance. It is a much divided community and the root cause is "what's in it for me". Mhow Anjuman faces a stiff challenge and the solution is not easy. There is guidance coming from well meaning individuals, but none that will be easily resolved. The bucket of money is attracting interest from all quarters and lone sharks. Value of assets has gone up and the ever rising dollar value is pulling and pushing the Anjuman and the community into a vicious spiral of disharmony, greed and loss of friendships. Nominating the federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India as the custodian trustee for the funds and properties in Mhow may be a wise move, but will it restore the past Parsi glory to this town in full measure.

As the dinner party at Cyrus's bungalow progressed through the night and the cool night was warmed by the burning wood and coal fire on the bar-b-q, there was an underlying pessimism that this dilemma of finding a solution to the end seems a long way away. I can only be as hopeful as the Late Gp Capt Dhunjisha Marker who in his address as the president of Mhow Anjuman said, "May Ahura Mazda grant us our prayers and guide us on the righteous path to accomplish this dream (increasing the population in Mhow) - I am convinced that we can create in Mhow Anjuman a socio-economic

model that may later be adopted at other places."

It is a common saying that "money is the root of all evil" but I think it would be a much more accurate statement to say that the root of most evil is man's greed to increase his own status. Blaming money for evil is like blaming the generosity of those magnificent philanthropists to whom we owe such a lot today. The glory and the tribulations are a part and parcel of the dynamics of any community. ■■■■

Reference: *The Souvenir on the occasion of the Federation of Anjumans of India meeting held in Mhow in 1999.*



Jehangir Mehta, with his wife Phyrooza lives in Perth, Western Australia.



Cyrus & Sherni Mancherjee



Dotiwala Hall



Marker bungalow. Below with the Marker family



Mhow Dokhma



With Cyrus on Parsi Hill

Concert to remember Tina Murdoch

by zareer masani



Concert dedicated to the memory of Tina Murdoch (1948-2009) held at St Annes's Church, Westgate Hill, London, on 22 November 2009 in aid of Cancer Research UK.

Although I've known Dinu Suntook

literally from the cradle, I had no idea until last Sunday (22nd November 2009) what a talented young singer she had grown into. I knew, of course, that she had always been bright at school and college, and was doing well as an up and coming London lawyer. But seeing her perform on an autumn afternoon at a charming North London church was a revelation.

Although well over 100 people attended, I was struck by how remarkably composed and relaxed Dinu appeared. The programme was highly varied in style and mood, with an eclectic mix of pieces. It began with an extremely challenging religious motet for solo soprano by Vivaldi, and Dinu coped remarkably well with the virtuosic demands on her voice. There followed two operatic excerpts, a serious one by the relatively modern composer Menotti and a hilarious piece about a mechanical doll from Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffman*. The latter involved Dinu being carried on stage by a strong young man, who we later discovered was her cousin, and being regularly wound up with a key by her piano accompanist. The concert ended with a beautiful Schubert lied and a Broadway song. Each of these made considerable demands both on Dinu's singing technique and interpretative skills. And she also demonstrated a dramatic talent rare in classical singers, charming the audience with her passion and humour.

For the Schubert piece, *The Shepherd on the Rock*, Dinu was joined by the clarinettist Lucy Asquith, who also played a piece for clarinet and piano. The piano accompaniment was provided throughout by Neil Cloake, who read music at Cambridge University and has been a music teacher and accompanist ever since. Dinu herself has the Diploma in Performance (with honours) from the Guildhall School of

Music and Drama, and while at university she was awarded music bursaries and also won first place in the Warwick Concerto competition. She has sung solo at public venues and she has also been invited to sing at a number of private functions. In December 2009 Dinu took her Licentiate examination with Trinity College of Music in London. In between all this musical activity Dinu has somehow found time to pursue her other career, working as a trainee solicitor at a law firm based near the Houses of Parliament!

The afternoon lasted for about two hours, the first part being taken up by the recital itself and the second by a social get together over tea and homemade cakes generously provided by the parishioners. Everybody seemed to have a thoroughly enjoyable time, both while they were listening to the music and after that chatting with friends – altogether a very jolly affair! The concert helped raise £300 which would be sent to Cancer Research UK.



A feedback from Farrokh Suntook:

"As you may recall, the concert was a sort of "dress rehearsal" for the LTCL (Licentiate from Trinity College London) exam which Dinu was to undertake in December. Having recently learnt her results, Maneck and I are very pleased to say that Dinu managed to achieve a distinction (the pass mark is 60%, the minimum mark for a distinction is 80%, and Dinu got 85%).

We are all sure that the experience of the concert helped her to achieve these results, because it enabled Dinu to focus in the few weeks between the concert and the exam on outstanding things requiring final attention - so we would like to thank you all very much indeed for the support you offered which made it possible for us to hold the concert."



Dr Zareer Masani currently works as a freelance journalist and broadcaster, having for two decades been a current affairs producer for BBC Radio 4. He is the author of a celebrated and definitive biography of Indira Gandhi and two other historical books on India. He is the son of the well known Indian author and politician, the late Minoo Masani.



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

To The Joint Honorary Secretaries
THE WORLD ZOROASTRIAN ORGANISATION

_____ 20__

Dear Sirs,

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

I confirm that I am (Tick only one except if applying as a Friend of WZO in which case do not tick any box):

- (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 the 1st of January in each year. **In case of arrears, I understand that my membership will be terminated after 3 months of sending a reminder.**

I agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles and Rules and Regulations so long as I remain a member of the World Zoroastrian Organisation.

Yours truly

.....
(Signature)

Block Capitals Please

FULL NAME

PROFESSION / OCCUPATION

If Student, please give date of birth.....Email Address.....

ADDRESS: (IN COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE)

.....

TEL. NOS: (Res).....(Office).....(Mobile).....

Proposed by:

Seconded by:

=====

NOTES:

- 1.The proposer and seconder must be WZO members.
- 2.Family membership includes all dependents (children and parents) living at the same address. Voting rights for all over the age of 18. Only one copy of publication will be sent to the primary member. Please list all secondary members.
- 3.Friends of WZO is for those persons who are interested in Zoroastrianism and WZO but do not qualify the criteria stated above. They will have all the benefits except they do not have voting rights and will not receive the Zoroastrian calendar.

Full names of Secondary members

Relationship to Primary member

Membership Fees

For UK residents & other countries

Grand Patron: £600	Patron: £300	Life Member: £150
Ordinary Member for 3 yrs: £ 40	Ordinary Member: £15 pa	Student: Gratis till 25 years of age
Family: £250	Anjuman: £250	Friends of WZO: £15 pa
Hamazor Subscription for Institutions: £30		Hamazor Subscription for Individuals: £15

Please send completed application form and cheque payable in Sterling to WZO, London to:
Mrs Khurshid Kapadia, 217 Pickhurst Rise, West Wickham, Kent BR4 0AQ.

For USA residents

Grand Patron: \$1000	Patron: \$500	Life Member: \$250
Ordinary Member for 3 yrs: \$70	Ordinary Member: \$25 pa	Student: Gratis till 25 years of age
Family: \$425	Anjuman: \$425	Friends of WZO: \$25 pa
Hamazor Subscription for Institutions: \$50		Hamazor Subscription for Individuals: \$25

Please send application form and cheque payable in US Dollars as "World Zoroastrian Organisation (US Region)" to: Mr Keki Bhote, 493 Woodlawn Ave., Glencoe, Illinois 60022.

For Canadian residents

Grand Patron: C\$1200	Patron: C\$600	Life Member: C\$300
Ordinary Member for 3 yrs: C\$80	Ordinary Member: C\$30 pa	Student: Gratis till 25 years of age
Family: C\$500	Anjuman: C\$500	Friends of WZO: C\$30 pa
Hamazor Subscription for Institutions: C\$60		Hamazor Subscription for Individuals: C\$30

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 New Zealand residents

Grand Patron: NZ\$1400	Patron: NZ\$700	Life Member: NZ\$350
Ordinary Member for 3 yrs: NZ\$90	Ordinary Member: NZ\$35 pa	Student: Gratis till 25 years of age
Family: NZ\$550	Anjuman: NZ\$550	Friends of WZO: NZ\$35 pa
Hamazor Subscription for Institutions: NZ\$70		Hamazor Subscription for Individuals: NZ\$35

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

“...I realized Thee to be (ever)
young in mind, Wise One...”

Yasna 31.7

Insler translation

