

publication of the world zoroastrian organisation

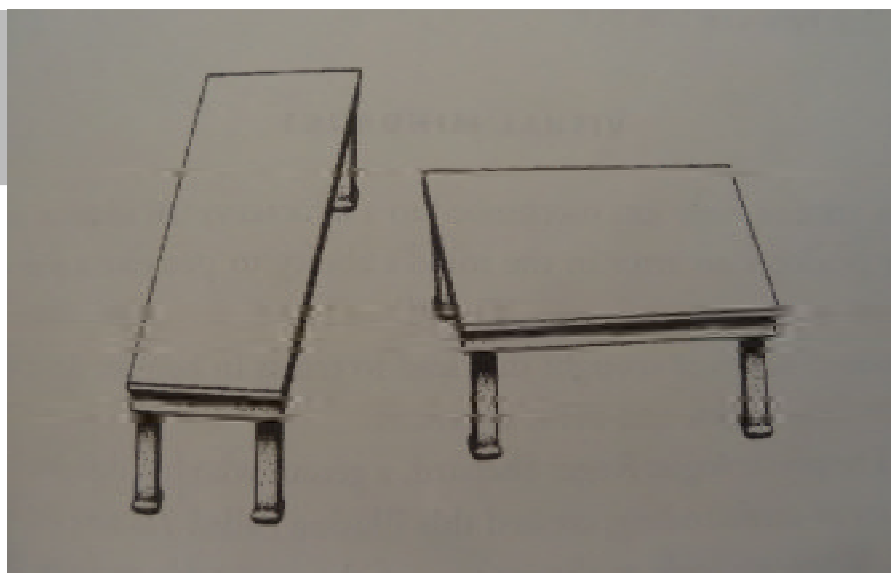
HAMAZOR

2
issue 2015



Niloufer Dubash Dastur,
partner of Parsee pioneered
100 year movie magic.

Farewell to reel
and spool films!



Demonstrating one,,s blindspot - p23

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From the Editor

Judging from what one keeps reading both in articles published by the Indian press and individuals sending their comments or thoughts, the only conclusion one can come up with is – there are two factors of concern today.

One, the major issue is the rapid decline in numbers as far as Parsis go. The second is the mindset of refusing to accept women or their children – that is if they wish to embrace Zoroastrianism – as Zoroastrians. Not having visited Mumbai or for that matter India, my impression can only be what I read and from that it seems to be such a small minority but a very strong and determined one, not to allow the diminishing community to go forward in India.

PARZOR with their associates are trying their utmost to increase numbers through the Jiyo Parsi scheme, even with the possibility of surrogacy through the womb of non-Parsi women, though it is doubtful this would ever be permitted in the closed minds of policy makers under the banner of “religion”. One can only hope some light will shine through in these closed minds, thereby saving the Parsi tribe, as that is what it has become. [Parsis though Zoroastrians, are a separate entity being from the sub-continent only and having their own dogmas.]

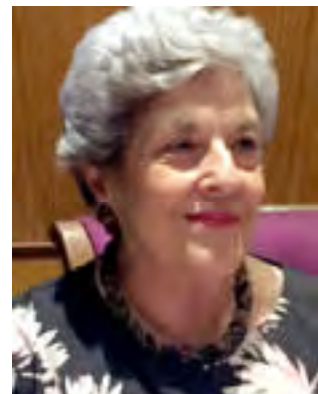
Within the pages of this issue, a book has been profiled about blindspots, it is available in India and would encourage the sincere people who are trying so valiantly to increase the numbers in the community to read it. Who knows, miracles do happen, and if the will is there usually one succeeds.

As far as the second issue of non acceptance goes, this struggle dates back in India since generations with the historical case which went on for years, namely Justice Davar in *Petit v. Jijibhai*; and till today we have Goolrookh Gupta fighting for her right to be permitted in the firetemple as she is a Parsi Zoroastrian through birth but married to a Hindu.

The theory of maintaining this closed community was to safeguard the vast wealth of Parsi Trusts and Charities. Surely any thinking person would draw the conclusion that Trustees have it in their hands who to share their largesse with? Rather a lame excuse! Today the issue is deeper but living in another country and not being involved in Parsi Mumbai politics, refrain to voice my thoughts. Having said that, I do know anything is possible if the will is there, therefore it is up to the silent majority of the Mumbai community to wake up and select their leaders. After all quoting a wise maxim – ‘one gets what one deserves’.

Ending on a positive note, we as a community are rich with good minds, shining in every profession, let us use it in sound policy-making lest history judges us responsible for wiping out our own race.

Levy Gungie



The Zoroastrians of South Gujarat

- Team WZO Trust

Team WZO Trust is pleased to present an overview of the progress made in their project to rehabilitate poor Zoroastrians residing in the rural areas of South Gujarat.

Our project revolves around four main issues:

1. Rehabilitate poor Zoroastrian farmers who have land available to pursue agriculture viably. Alternatively to make use of land available towards dairy and poultry farming, setting up brick kilns and so on.
2. For those who do not have any land, to provide support towards their self employment.
3. Replacing huts in which the poor Zoroastrians live into decent cottages made from bricks and mortar.
4. Providing adequate quantities of food grains to economically challenged Zoroastrian families residing in villages that would last them for a few months thereby providing relief.

Given here below is a short treatise on how our journey began and how it has unfolded so far.

1988:

Dr Cashmera Bhaya submits her report on the **sample (not census)** survey that she undertook at the behest of World Zoroastrian Organisation, London and Surat Parsi Punchayet on the Socio-Economic conditions of Zoroastrians residing in the rural areas of South Gujarat.

Her conclusions - she identifies 687 Zoroastrian families in 209 villages living below the poverty line.

1991:

The World Zoroastrian Organisation Trust is established, primarily with the intent to rehabilitate these poor Zoroastrians. During the course of their journey they find there are many more Zoroastrians than mentioned in the report (which was a sample and not a census survey) residing in abject poverty.



Glimpses of what still needs to be done



A cottage constructed in replacement of hut at village Chasmandva

Rehabilitation process begins, comprising of providing inputs to agrarians, providing self-employment to the landless or those where agricultural efforts could not be economically viable, replacing the huts in which the poor Zoroastrians lived into cottages, providing medical relief, supporting their children to receive a good education, distributing food grains and so on.

What has been done so far (Financial year 2013-2014):

450 Zoroastrian farmers in 179 villages have been extended support in their farming activities.

215 huts in which Zoroastrians lived have been replaced into cottages.

253 individuals in 93 different rural locations have been provided opportunities and financial support to be self employed in vocations of their choice, such as plying taxis, auto-rickshaws, grocery shops, motor garages etc.

Food grains are distributed periodically every year to economically challenged Zoroastrians residing in the villages.

Collaborations & Partnerships:

It is not possible for any single institution to undertake work on this scale without the active cooperation support from other likeminded individuals and institutions through collaborations and partnerships.

World Zoroastrian Organisation Trust is fortunate to have received generous support from all continents on which Zoroastrians reside and are extremely grateful to those who have contributed towards this massive ongoing exercise. It acknowledges that whatever has been achieved has been due to the unstinted support of donors and well wishers who have participated by way of donations and also by creating awareness of our work. Partnerships such as these have enabled WZOT to change the lives of many. Whilst much has been done, even much more yet remains to be done.

Pictures always speak louder than words - we are happy to share some with our

community. Some pictures are of those who have transited from abject poverty to relative prosperity, whilst others are of those who are still experiencing the throes of poverty, and looking forward to helping hands bringing them back into the mainstream of society.

We conclude by paraphrasing the words of Robert Frost - ***"The woods are lovely, dark and deep. But we (WZO Trust) have promises made to ourselves to keep, and miles to go before we sleep".*** ■■■



Dairy farm at village Bartaad



Brick kiln set up for lady entrepreneur at village Khambhla; she produces 300,000 bricks every year.

WZO Trust & D N Mehta Sarvajanik Hospital, Navsari collaborate with PARZOR & others to take 'Jiyo Parsi' forward in South Gujarat

- Dinshaw K Tamboly

The Government of India and the Ministry of Minority Affairs are to be congratulated for the care and concern they have demonstrated for the Parsi community by launching and funding the 'Jiyo Parsi' scheme that is aimed to reverse the declining trend of Parsi population by adopting a scientific protocol and structured interventions, with the objectives of stabilising and increasing the population of Parsis in India.

Whilst Parzor Foundation of Delhi have been appointed to administer the scheme, the Tata Institute of Social Sciences at Mumbai are implementing the same. Bombay Parsi Punchayet & Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India are also playing equally important roles of propagating and administering the 'Jiyo Parsi' initiative.

It is a known fact that many Parsi families reside in the villages of South Gujarat who being economically challenged would be unable to participate in this '*community saving*' venture as it would not be possible for them to first pay for the fertility treatment and thereafter recover the same as per norms laid down.

Keeping the above in mind, Parzor Foundation, World Zoroastrian Organisation Trust and D N Mehta Sarvajanik Hospital at Navsari have agreed to collaborate their efforts in order to create awareness about the Jiyo Parsi scheme amongst the Parsi Irani population in South Gujarat, and to aid and / or facilitate economically challenged individuals to take benefit under the Jiyo Parsi scheme in the manner stated below:

WZOT shall issue the Jiyo Parsi application forms to prospective couples of South Gujarat intending to participate and take

benefit of the scheme. On receipt of applications, WZOT will conduct a 'due diligence' in respect of the financial capacity of such applicant couples. This shall be for the purposes of determining whether the applicants can be determined to be "economically challenged".

The signed application forms of those determined to be 'economically challenged' will be forwarded to Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai for scrutiny and changes if necessary.

D N M S Hospital, Navsari will arrange for a doctor specializing in providing 'Fertility Treatment' to give a consultation to the applicant couples and treatment as may be found appropriate. This facility will be available to couples that avail of the treatment at the D N M S Hospital, Navsari or at the clinics of doctors approved by them.

D N M S Hospital will make sure that the referred doctor presents the bills within the limits stipulated by Ministry of Minority Affairs and will also directly settle the bills of the doctor providing such consultation and treatment to such couples, without the doctor in question having to raise any bill upon the applicant couples categorized by WZOT as being economically challenged.

D N M S Hospital will open joint bank accounts with participating couples to facilitate banking of cheques received from Parzor Foundation - (which as per government procedure will be in the name of the beneficiary couple) - and recovering what they have already paid to the attending doctor.

Thus, economically challenged Parsi couples will receive fertility treatment on a cashless basis with D N M S Hospital, Navsari first making payments on their behalf to the attending doctors and thereafter recovering the same.

It is hoped that couples of South Gujarat who are unable to make payments first and thereafter recover the same from Parzor Foundation, as per the 'Jiyo Parsi' scheme, will come forward and take advantage of the 'cashless facility' being offered under the collaborating institutions.

In our country of 118 crores, where there are 86,853 children being born every day, where the focus of the government is on containing the galloping population, we Parsis must recognise and be extremely proud of the fact that our government, has in spite of these factors recognised the importance and necessity for Parsis to survive and continue to be an integral part of India have conceived, launched and funded the 'Jiyo Parsi' scheme to ensure, we Parsis do not get wiped out.

Atha Zamyad, Yatha Afrinami.



Dinshaw Tamboly has actively associated in community welfare activities since 1983. He is a Trustee of the three WZO Trusts in India spearheading their activities; as well a Trustee on other Trusts, Hospitals and an Agyari. He was on the International Board, WZO London from 1983 - 2004 and Trustee of BPP from

1996 – 2008.

He has received awards for services to community and humanity, from institutions both in India and overseas, the most prestigious being two awards from WZO, London in 2000 & 2005, and the Community Service Award received at the World Zoroastrian Congress in Dubai in 2009.

Parsis, Pandas & Procreation

A new ad campaign to save the species is not just provocative, it's also a waste of money. Just do the math, mate!

- Farrukh Dhondy

So we Parsis –

yes I'm 100% on both parental sides with no racial dilution since Darius conquered Egypt – are to be treated as pandas with a sense of humour? The Commission for Minorities' allocation of Rs 10 crore to get Parsis to procreate and thus save the race and the religion, the latter being restricted in India to the former, is very welcome. It will, and has produced some piquant tongue-in-cheek advertisements, ribald jokes, ironic comments and spirited debate. What it won't produce is the number of Parsi babies to save the race from extinction in a generation or two.



Yes tigers, pandas, even Parsi-eating vultures and Parsis need concerted campaigns to survive as a species. Most campaigns to control human birth, such as the Chinese one-baby rule, aim to shrink the population rather than expand it. Our own Sanjay Gandhi (or apro Sanjay, a Parsi born of a Parsi Zoroastrian father) had his own draconian scheme to sterilize the population of the country. Could he have, even subconsciously been motivated to readjust the ratio of Parsis to non-Parsis? Perhaps not. I remember the 'prasav na' ads urging the populace not to procreate. Now we have clever ads aimed at the Parsi men who won't leave mummy and at the Parsi girl who is choosy and single.

They won't work. Before wasting money on this noble but hopeless campaign the minority-wallahs should have hired a

statistician to do some sums which I am now about to do for them. Let's face two numerical facts: There are now 68,000 Parsis left and for every 200 births a year, the community suffers 800 deaths.

Of the 68,000, let's say half are women and a third of this half or a little more are of child-bearing age. That leaves us with approximately 12,000 women who are, ignoring any infertility, able to make babies. There is no way to calculate how many are willing to so do, but the 200 births a year indicate that less than 1% of the 12,000 are getting on with it. Let's imagine that the ad campaign manages to tackle this dearth or reluctance. Let's imagine that it quadruples the birth rate! We would still have 800 babies a year balancing 800 deaths. The numbers would be at a standstill.

Imagine that the campaign was infinitely successful and all the women able to procreate gave birth to a baby and so there were 12,000 new Parsis in the first year. If they continued to each produce a baby for let's say 15 years, we would have 180,000 new Parsis by and by. Hurray!

But the campaign, the community and the law assume monogamy and it is highly unlikely that any modern woman would want to give birth to a child a year or any of this Facebook and selfie generation would want to bring up 15 children.

At this point I have to tell you that my maternal great grandmother had 17 children – two girls and fifteen boys in a monogamous marriage. Only three of these, the two girls and one boy, given the medical and social circumstances of the time survived into adulthood.

My daughters and nieces would, I know, rather join ISIS in Syria than become Parsi baby-making machines like my poor great grandmother. Even if the ads and social pressures succeed in persuading those critical 12,000 to go some of the way, we are not likely in their child-bearing years to get more than three or perhaps four children each from perhaps 4,000 of them. So in

those 15 years we will have 12,000 new Parsis and 12,000 deaths. Back to square one.

The ad campaign is not in vain. It has begun a humorous debate but, as my statistics prove, it only means we'll die laughing.

So, as Lenin asked at a crucial juncture in his nation's fortunes, 'What is to be done?' In the race to settle this question of survival the cart has gone well before the horse. We haven't asked ourselves what it is we want to save. Do we, as one of the ads in the campaign says want to save Dadar Parsi Colony for Parsis? I can with my poetical training appreciate that the housing estate is being used as a metaphor for the community. Or is it a metaphor for racial exclusiveness? Do we want a community of *dhan-sak* eaters to survive or are we anxious, on the principle that without believers there is no belief, that Zoroastrianism will be as extinct as the religion of the Aztecs? Is it racial purity we want to preserve or do we just want a thriving community which shares a religion, rituals, culture and can look back on a history as illustrious, troubled and tragic as any?



Farrukh Dhondy was born in Pune, India and went to school and college there before getting a scholarship to Cambridge University UK to study Natural Sciences. He took a second degree in English and began a career as a writer of short stories, novels, journalistic columns, stage and TV

drama and screenplays. Among his screenplays are Bandit Queen, Split Wide Open, The Rising -Mangal Pande, Red Mercury, Exitz and Kisna.

Disposal of the dead with dignity



After our advent into India in 625 AD from the Great Persian Empire, the dilemma of disposing our kith and kin with dignity has once again come to hound us in the absence of predator birds. This began from 1985 to date, with no solution. Many suggestions were made, only to end up with non-functional solar panels in Mumbai. To work effectively, burning only starts beyond 500°C, a temperature which the mobedism and dasturism will not allow, as the system would defile one of the five natural elements as per our tenets of Zoroastrianism.

by syrus irani

I have worked up a project of disposing of our kith and kin with dignity through the chemical way which the next batch of trustees in this election year must pledge to fulfill for our votes. This project if tried would be successful, would be environmental and present day religious practice friendly, and would be much cheaper than any other methods suggested.

Two chemicals can help us provided BPP who are the custodians of Doongerwadi, obtains special permission for their use:

- A. Potassium Hydroxide (KOH)
- B. Sodium Hydroxide (NaOH)

A. Potassium Hydroxide (KOH):

i) Properties:

- a) An inorganic compound also called caustic potash. Along with sodium hydroxide, this colourless solid is prototypical strong base.
- b) It is hygroscopic, strongly exothermic in water.
- c) It does not dehydrate readily at high temperature.
- d) Concentration higher than 2% is corrosive
- e) Because of its high affinity for water, KOH serves as a desiccant.

ii) Advantages:

- a) KOH is highly basic, forming strongly alkaline solution in water.
- b) Exhibits high thermal stability.

c) Hastens decomposition of soft tissues for both animal and human tissues to leave behind only bones since it has corrosive properties.

d) Thus by the process human body is turned into liquid and not ashes.

e) The process thus utilizes 95% water and 5% KOH (121 gms to 100 ml of water).

f) An average adult takes 2-5 hours for the completion of the process.

g) Readily available.

iii) *Safety:* Very safe for the handlers of the preparation and process.

iv) *Utility:* Steel containers along with galvanized tin over the surface with lids and pressurized to produce heat.

v) *Permission:* Special permission required from authorities to obtain and use.

B) Sodium Hydroxide (NaOH):

i) Properties:

- a) An inorganic compound also called caustic soda along with KOH, is also colourless solid and prototypical strong base.
- b) Highly caustic alkali salt approximately 50% by weight saturation with water.
- c) It is deliquescent and readily absorbs moisture.
- d) Dissolution of solid hydroxide in water is highly exothermic, liberating large amount of heat.

ii) *Advantages:*

- a) Can be used to digest tissues of humans like KOH.
- b) Exhibits high thermal stability.
- c) Dissolution in water is strongly exothermic where large amount of heat is liberated posing a threat to the safety of handlers due to splashing.
- d) Easily available and very cheap.
- e) Since it is highly corrosive and strongly exothermic, it hastens decomposition of soft tissues of animals and human bodies to leave behind bones which are very brittle and can be crushed with hands.
- f) Human bodies are turned into liquid within three hours.
- g) Compared to KOH, 100 gms of NaOH in 100 ml of water will suffice at room temperature.

iii) *Safety:*

- a) Hazardous to the skin and eyes of the handlers.
- b) Safety equipment is needed.

iv) *Utility:*

- a) Steel containers with galvanized tin and lids will suffice for the process.

- v) *Permission:* Special permission required from authorities for its use.

The present trustees possibly could have found the solution but in all probabilities were not interested.

I hope and trust our community members will now try to elect trustees who have concern for the community affairs and must obtain pledges from the candidates for the following:

- a) Housing Scheme as suggested.
- b) Growth in forming World Alliance of Mazdayasni Zarhostis.
- c) Disposal of the dead with dignity.



Dr Syrus Darvish Irani, is a Medical Practitioner in Mumbai and also works as a professional international tour leader.



Return to Roots –

The second trip in the programme

- Veera Rustomji

People tend to have unrealistic expectations from religion – we're either waiting for prophetic answers to provide us with closure or we perceive it to be the real perpetuator for all disagreements on this planet. Perhaps one of the major reasons as to why the (increasingly diasporic) younger generations of Zoroastrians steer away from religious discourse is because it has become jarringly polarized and often very little rationalization is provided to explain the importance behind traditions and rituals.

Considering a religion such as Zoroastrianism, which predates a plethora of civilizations, it is so important to provide academic and well researched opportunities to encourage young people to associate themselves with religion. The Zoroastrian Return to Roots Program is exactly that; a journey which not only allows one to rediscover heritage but assimilates scholarly and approachable information for participants to engage with. As an art student, my thesis and dissertation had begun to revolve around Zoroastrianism and I found that there are so many lacunas in our knowledge of our ancestral lineage. The Return to Roots (RTR) trip was an absolute gold mine for me with an exposure to the varied and lively Indian Parsi culture with fascinating talks by eminent figures of the community.

The Zoroastrian RTR journey is much more than a 'tour', it aims to create lasting connections with the scattered Zoroastrian community and reflect on how to make sustainable contributions to our global community. As the itinerary took the 14 participants around major sites of Zoroastrian heritage and value, the tour also encompassed the generosity of Parsi families who let us into their homes and businesses.

As we started off from New Delhi with the screening of *Qissa-e-Parsi* at the Mengusi Parsi Dharamshala, the film immediately spurred interesting debates on core issues of today's Zoroastrian community. While we shared our experiences and opinions on marriage outside of the community, the dwindling population and the divide between the Irani Zoroastrians and the Parsis it became clear from the word go that one had to be mature, respectful and moreover, appreciate each other's opinions. As we witnessed the *boi* ceremony at the Daremeher *agari* and prayed together for the first time a sudden trust was formed within the group which was to last throughout the trip. Delhi was also the starting point for the gallons of Parsi food which we were to eat in the upcoming days; little did we expect the floods of *chutney* and endless platters of *machi* and *dhansak* served every day. When it came to food, the RTR hosts really kept the ball rolling. An amazing contemporary *paneer akoori* by the SodaWaterBottleOpenerWala Cafe head chef, 24 year old Anahita Dhondy, could have been enough to wow us all but the restaurant's attention to detail with decor of old Parsi portraits and glass paintings highlighted how creative and successful young entrepreneur Parsis are in Delhi. The Indian capital may not have such an expansive Zoroastrian heritage as compared to Bombay but after leisurely and beautiful visits to Shernaz Cama's family farmhouse and the Shroff Eye Hospital, we felt so welcome and truly appreciated the hard working Delhi Parsis contributions. With long travels on the bus and a short flight to Mumbai, the Roots participants and organizers started to really show their true colours and before we knew it everyone was singing along to irrationally cheesy songs – Backstreet Boys being a close favourite – and heated *aikupachar* card games confirmed that no Zoroastrian takes losing lightly.

As our travels in Mumbai began, we soon went into a frenzy pointing out to all the Tata statues, the Parsi owned buildings and best of all the very spot-able flowery print Parsi aunties with their silver hair and if we were

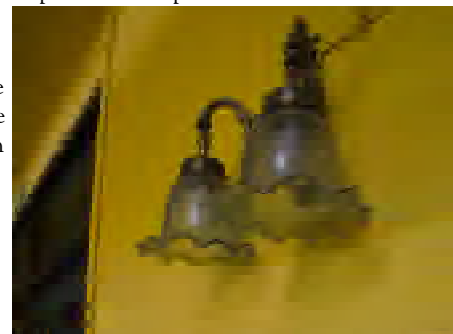


The Roots participants - first group photograph outside the Kaikhushru Pallonji Katrak Daremeher in New Delhi.



A view of the Shroff Eye Centre in New Delhi which provides exceptional free treatment.

An antique light setting at the SodaWaterBottleOpenerWala Cafe, one of the many adornments which mimicked interiors of old Parsi homes.



lucky, a glimpse of a *kusti*. As we lapped up the scrumptious Irani cuisine at Britannia Restaurant and took a ton of photographs with the owner we made our way to the Dadar Parsi Colony. For many of us, seeing and experiencing hundreds of Parsis living together was surreal – even for us Karachi girls, the sheer number of beautiful *baugs* and town houses in Dadar was unprecedented. Amongst the sweet homes in Dadar stands the colossal Della Tower of Jimmy Mistry and while the structure seems to be extremely displaced in the tranquil streets of the colony, the tower is a reminder of how economically diverse the Parsi population is in Mumbai.

One of the most impressive people from our RTR trip was Ervad Dr Ramiyar Karanjia at the Dadar Athornan Institute for young priests. As a religious scholar, principal and practicing priest, Dr Karanjia had a reservoir of information and stories to tell. While the group discussed the diminishing stature priests had in our Zoroastrian community, some of the students were kind enough to join us and even read out excerpts from the Vendidad in Avestan script. I was not the only one who was taken aback by the regulated and difficult lifestyles of priests in training with the demands of a modern day education alongside memorizing the Avestan prayers – it seemed that their entire day had a strict timetable to be followed. As we walked through the corridors and glanced at a series of framed photographs which featured graduating batches of priests since the beginnings of the institution from 1919, I wondered at how much history the Dadar Madressa professes. Our expeditions in Mumbai included a guided tour of the Doongerwadi Towers of Silence by Khojeste Mistree in which we walked through some of the most ancient structures in the city which are part of the Doongerwadi property. We were lucky enough to have an extremely detailed discussion with Khojeste about the after-life and the Zoroastrian eschatology which many of us had endless questions about – and all were answered happily. The serene beauty of Zoroastrian heritage and the warmth which we were welcomed with



The quiet and green streets in Dadar Parsi Colony, Mumbai.

Young priest reading an excerpt from the Avesta at the Dadar Athornan Institute in Dadar Parsi Colony.



Below: The upper floor of the historic First Dastoor Meherjirana Library in Navsari



continued through the Ratan Tata Institute and it was lovely to just meet and converse with the resident Parsis.

Perhaps the highlight of the trip for many of us was Gujarat. The RTR team had recruited archaeologist Rukshana Nanji to explain her fascinating excavations in Sanjan and its correlation to her study of the hallmark text, the Qisse-i-Sanjan. Rukshana unraveled the many myths and blurry details of our ancestors migration from Hormoz (Iran) to Nargol (India) and we were all absolutely in awe of her wealth of knowledge and her candid yet rational way of explaining her findings. As we took a boat ride of the Varoli river, climbed towards the first settlements and walked underneath the shade of the Sanjan mango tree it seemed that we were really tracing our ancestors steps. Although facts and figures continue to be vague until further research is done, standing on those archaic lands acknowledging the personal attachment each one of us had with the very soil we stood on was a phenomenal experience.

While the trip encompassed countless interesting visits such as the Meherjirana Library in Navsari with their priceless resources and a talk with Dastur Dr Kotwal, most of us were looking forward to Udvada. The eerily quiet streets and curious Parsis on their balconies conjured an aura of nostalgia even though most of us had never visited the town before. Our experiences in the little towns such as Udvada, Navsari and Sanjan were – at the risk of sounding terribly cliché – magical. We stood together in fuzzy darkness to witness the *boi* ceremony at 1:30 in the night as the gleaming Iran Shah hinted at the maroon carpet guided us around the space. Strangely enough, the quiet moments where we just meditated with the flickering Atash Behrams in agyaris were some of the best times spent together.

The Return to Roots trip obviously rekindles one's connection with their history and expounds upon cultural growth and the Parsis threshold in India. However, thanks to the sensitivity of the young organizers

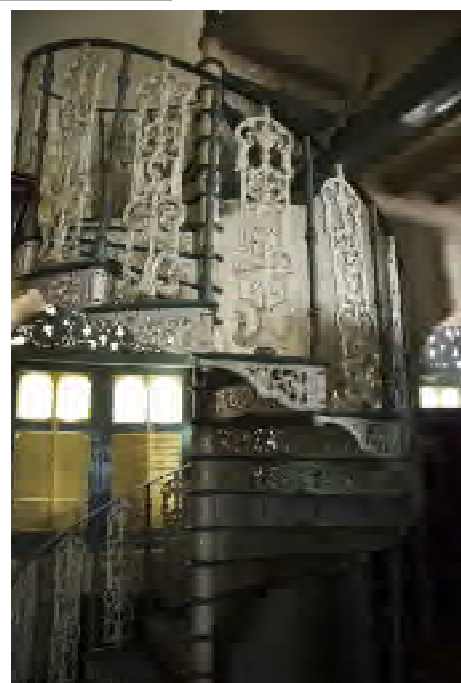
and patrons, RTR arranged for the participants to visit Parsi orphanages in Surat, old people's homes and infirmaries, in hopes that perhaps we could make a minor contribution. For many of us, especially the North American and Karachi Zoroastrians, it was difficult to register that people from our community came from very poor families and had suffered economic repression in India. Although the flourishing wealth of the Tatas, the Poonawallas and the Bombay Parsi Punchayet is synonymous with Indian Parsis, it seems that our global community has forgot about the pockets of poverty and loneliness Parsis still endure in India.

It was evident though by the end of our trip, community and kindness are entrenched values in the Zoroastrian religion. There are numerous families and ordinary Parsis who arranged fantastic days for us and their humility and generosity is something we could never reimburse. Our key organizers Aban Marker Kabraji, Shireen Havewala, Rosheen Kabraji, Dinsha Mistree, Kaiyan K Mistree and Arzan Sam Wadia are also fantastic examples of how the Zoroastrian diaspora continues to give back to society.

While the Return to Roots trip was an amazing adventure, the organizers are in need for support by the global community to finance participants and expenses for the trip. The RTR philosophy is to give back to the Zoroastrian community and the hard working organizers would appreciate any kind of support to continue the cycle. Do visit their website www.zororoots.org and send an email to contact@zororoots.org if you would like to facilitate this one of a kind venture.



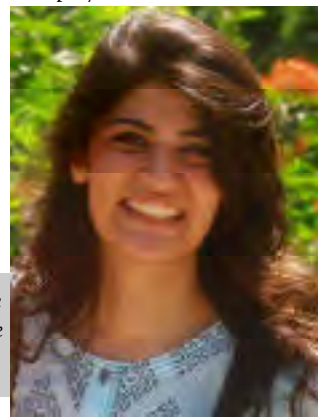
Veera Rustomji is a Fine Art student in Karachi, Pakistan at the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture. She has perused freelance writing with publications such as the Herald, ArtNow and Jang.



An ornate staircase leading to the upper floor of the First Dastoor Meherjirana Library in Navsari



One of the many original handwritten letters on display at the Tata Archives



Understanding Early Zoroastrian Settlements in India



The history of the Parsis of India has derived mainly from the *Kisse-i-Sanjan*, a Persian poem written by Bahman Kaikobad Sanjana in 1599 CE. The telling and retelling of this narrative since generations has produced its own variations and versions. Several other oral traditions, not included in the *Kisse-i-Sanjan*, such as the milk and sugar story, have become so deeply entrenched in popular imagination that most Parsis are almost completely convinced it is a historical fact. The rather simplistic view taken by most Parsis about the Zoroastrian migration may be due to the fact that few people have actually read the *Kisse-i-Sanjan*. Most depend upon narratives by family or community elders and Parsi scholars.

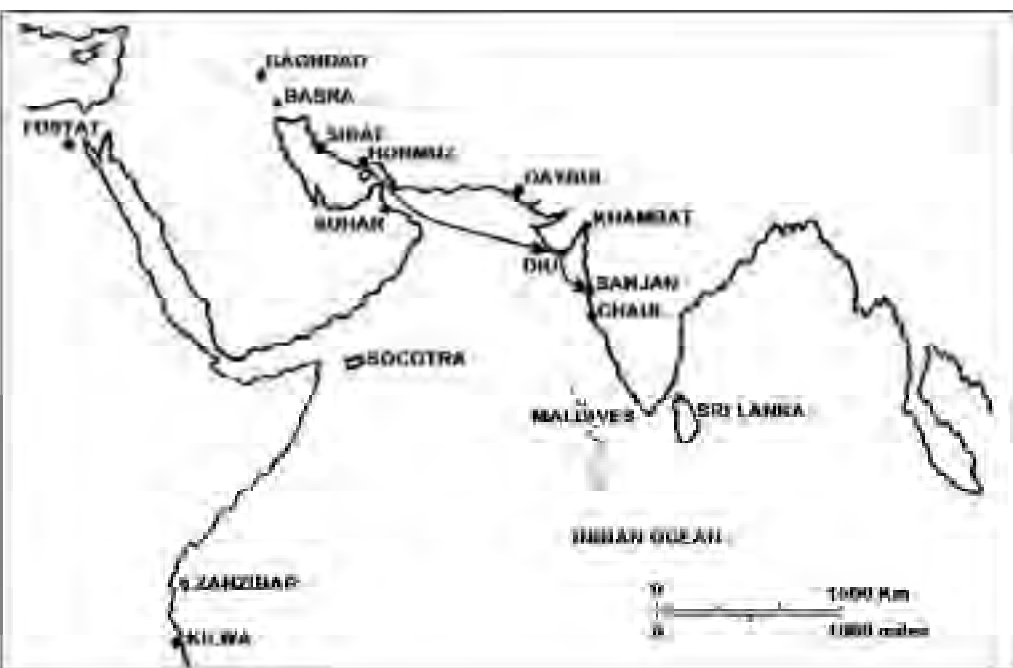
by rukshana nanji

Even fewer Parsis attempt to go beyond the simple narratives and understand the migration and settlement of Zoroastrians in India in the context of the circumstances and ethos that prevailed during the terminal Sasanian and early Islamic periods. The common belief that the Zoroastrians of Iran fled their homeland immediately after the Arab invasion, landed at Sanjan, met and impressed the local king Jadi Rana, made him some promises and settled down to peaceful life in India needs to be reconsidered in light of more recent historical and archaeological research. If one were to set aside the Parsi connection to Sanjan for a moment and simply review the history of the settlement itself, a whole new perspective presents itself.

The fall of Yazdegerd III, the last Sasanian king, and the advent of Islam changed the configurations of power not only in Iran and the Persian Gulf, but also through the entire Indian Ocean. Maritime trade had always existed in the Indian Ocean and the far reaches of its littoral were linked by networks of well established routes. However, it was the establishment of the Caliphate, first by the Umayyads and later by the Abbasids that gave an added impetus to the movement of people and goods across the ocean. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the early Islamic period introduced the most dynamic and

active phase of maritime trade and socio-cultural interactions which extended from the coastline of Africa to the South China seas and beyond. Persian and Arab dhows as well as Chinese junks criss-crossed the waters of the Indian Ocean bearing rich and exotic cargo as well as people of different cultures. Arab and Persian sailors, geographers and travellers have left fascinating accounts not only of voyages and adventures, but also detailed records of ports, towns, trade goods, political situations and cultures. These records form an important source of historical information.

It is in these Persian and Arab sources that we find descriptions and frequent mention of the port town of 'Sindan' or Sanjan on the west coast of India. The routes to this important thriving port, description of the town and its people, the goods traded from and to this entrepot and other details make it easy to identify Sindan with Sanjan. Al Biladuri mentions in the mid 9th century that Fazl, son of Mahan, a slave of the Samma house subdued Sindan in c. 820 CE and sent to Khalifa Al Mamun (813 -833 CE) the gift of an elephant. He built a Jama Mosque in Sindan. He was succeeded by his son Mohammed who after a brief squirmish with his brother, sent from Sindan to the Khalifa in Baghdad the longest teak ever seen.



The migration route

Shortly after this, the people of Sindan overthrew him but spared the mosque where Muslim residents continued to worship. Biladuri also mentions the presence of Hindu temples, fire-temples of the 'fire-worshippers' and a Jewish community in Sindan. Other writers such as Ibn Haukal mention the rule of the great king "Ballahara" over Sindan in 982 CE. His work titled *Hudud al-Alam* or Regions of the world mentions Samur / Saimur (Chaul, near presentday Alibag), Sindan (Sanjan), Subara (Surat) and Kanbaya (Cambay / Khambhat) as the four ports on the Indian coast where Hindus and Muslims reside. He describes their lifestyles, exports and imports of the port towns and different communities that make up the population, 'fire-worshippers' included. Al Ishtakhri, Al Idrisi, Al Biruni all give descriptions of Sindan and its people. Buzurg Ibn Shahiyar al-Ram-Hurmuzi, a Persian sailor who collected stories of voyages from mariners along the wharfs of Siraf, wrote *Kitab Ajaib al-Hind* or Wonders of India, which formed the basis for the famous Sindbad stories. He wrote of high adventures and voyages of ships from the Persian Gulf to India and China, frequently mentioning Saimur, Sindan, Tana (Thana), and other ports. Most of these sources mention that teak, bamboo, precious aloes and woods, honey, precious stones, forest

produce, palm sugar and other goods were exported from Sindan / Sanjan. Another important piece of information comes to us from Jewish records, the Geniza documents. The records of the Jewish business house of Ibn Awkal (980 -1030 CE) mention that Sindani indigo or indigo from Sindan / Sanjan was most expensive and sought after in the trade between India and the Persian Gulf and Egypt.

The records of the Arab and Persian mariners and merchants can be seen alongside Indian epigraphical records which date from a very early period and mention Sanjan. Kshaharata king Nahapana's (32 – 77 CE) inscription in cave number 10, Nashik mentions Nargol as Nanagola which comes within the same estuarine area of Sanjan. The Nagarjunakonda inscription of Abhira Vasusena (278 CE) mentions Sanjan as Sanjayapura. The Sanjan copper plates of Buddhavarsha (671 CE) and copper plate grant



Kollam copper plates

of Amoghavarsa I (871 CE) mention Sanjana and describe it as a “chauvisi” or group of 24 villages, “nav ter nagari” or a town that covers 9 x 13 mile area. The Chinchani copper plates are perhaps the most important source of information on Sanjan. These plates number nine in total and consist of three separate grants made by Silahara kings between 926 and 1053 CE. The first of these grants is from the time of king Indra III (926 CE). It refers to Sanjan as ‘Sanjanamandala’ and provides some interesting information. It mentions that in the time of king Krishna II (878 – 915 CE), a Tajik / Arab Muslim general Mohammed Sugatipa (Madhumati in Sanskrit) was appointed the governor of Sanjan as appreciation for his success in bringing all the neighbouring ‘velakulas’ or ports under the control of his king. Mohammed Sugatipa was a benevolent governor who gave generous grants to monasteries and temples. Prominent communities of Sanjan were called upon to witness one such grant. The demographic composition and important communities of Sanjan are clearly spelt out in this document – Panchagauda Brahmana, Modha Baniya, Koli-Mahar, Tajikas / Arabs and “Hamjamanpaura” or Persian Anjumana. Most scholars have identified this last group with the Persian Zoroastrians who had settled at Sanjan, although in the light of recent evidence from the Malabar Coast, the word ‘Anjumana’ could include Zoroastrians, Christians and /or Jews. The second grant in this series belongs to the time of Chamundaraja (1034 CE) which also calls upon the mukhyas or elders of the “Hamyamana” or Anjumana to bear witness to his largesse. The third grant is dated to 1053 CE and mentions Sanjan as “Samyanapattana”. This is of great importance because ‘Pattana’ means riverine port as well as market town. Evidently, the settlement of Sanjan appears to have grown from a small chauvisi and nav ter nagari to a much larger administrative unit, mandala and commercial hub, pattana. The port had a cosmopolitan population of Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians, all living and trading in peace. Sanjan appears to have had spells of Arab / Muslim control in the early 9th and early 10th centuries.

The archaeological excavations conducted at Sanjan between 2002 and 2004 by the World

Zoroastrian Cultural Foundation (WZCF) uncovered ample evidence to corroborate the information one finds in the above mentioned historical records. The reports of most aspects of this excavation have already been published in three volumes through the British Archaeological Reports (BAR), Oxford. The ancient site of Sanjan is located on the north bank of the Varoli River and is badly disturbed by human activity. The present fisherman’s village or Machhiwad is built squarely atop the ancient mound, making it extremely difficult to find space for excavation. Nevertheless, the excavations uncovered a large settlement of brick-built structures, platforms, wells, ringwells, walls, human burials and an ancient dokhma with human remains. Amongst the rich trove of antiquities were beads, bangles, coins, artefacts of metal and stone, rings, glass vessels and fragments and a very large quantity of ceramics from West Asia and China. Some of the coins were extremely rare and had never been found before. A large amount of glass and some of the beads were of West Asian origin and dateable to the 9th – 10th century CE. However, it was on the basis of the ceramic collection that a sequence and chronology could be built up for the site.



Structures found during the Sanjan excavations

Glazed earthenwares from the Persian Gulf and Chinese porcelain, celadon and stonewares have a well documented and established chronology since they have been found at most Indian Ocean sites outside India. At Sanjan, the chronology provided by the ceramic sequence could be corroborated with two radio Carbon dates. To put it briefly,

the archaeological evidence indicates that Sanjan was continuously occupied from the late 7th – 8th century CE onwards until the late 12th – mid 13th century CE. In the initial phase of occupation, Sanjan was a small settlement with some limited contact with the Persian Gulf region. Amphorae, large storage vessels and Turquoise glazed ware jars and vessels indicate that goods carried in these containers were the focus of trade. Gradually finer unglazed tableware such as Eggshell ware goblets and flasks make an appearance, suggesting that there is now a component of the population which requires such wares for their lifestyle. One may also note that the Persian Gulf vessels found in these lower levels of excavation have a long history and were in use from Sasanian times and continued in use during the early Islamic period. Almost none of these continued after the 10th century. Further in the sequence, the first evidence of Chinese contact appears. Changsha underglaze painted stoneware, Dusun jars, celadon and very early porcelain represent this phase of more intense trade. A Radio Carbon date from this phase indicates 740 CE. This date corresponds very well and corroborates the ceramic sequence. For a long period, the sequence suggests, trade continued to grow and the settlement prospered with intense structural activity and increased evidence of trade. Contact with the Persian Gulf appears to have been more intense than with the Far East. Then there is a dramatic and sharp increase in both the types as well as the quantity of ceramics coming from the Persian Gulf. Almost all the beautiful glazed pottery found for this phase is chronologically specific to the 9th century CE and belongs to what is called the Samarra Horizon. These include the elite table wares such as Lustre Painted ware, Cobalt Painted ware, White glazed ware, Splashed white glazed ware, Sgraffiato ware, etc. The assemblage indicates that not only the goods contained in large storage vessels but also smaller more refined vessels themselves had become important trade items. Clearly, there was a large component of the population with a lifestyle that required such expensive and varied types of ceramics. A second Radio Carbon date comes from a sample just before the deposit ends. It indicates 1120 CE. The

shallow deposit above it and the lack of any material for the later centuries is indicative that the settlement did not continue for very long after and probably ended by the late 12th – mid 13th century. Geological survey of the area indicates that the Varoli river has changed course and silted along the bank of Sanjan Bandar. The formation of sandbars at the mouth of the river at Nargol-Umbargam may have made the port unviable, leading to a decline in trade. This would have resulted in Sanjan losing its significance as an important maritime settlement.

If one were to place Parsi history according to the *Kisse-i-Sanjan* in the context of Sanjan's history, one is immediately struck by certain facts. Firstly, the Indian epigraphic



Lustre painted ware (Level II)

records and inscriptions make it evident that Sanjan existed since several centuries prior to the traditionally accepted date of Zoroastrian migration. It is possible that the migrants may have established a colony / suburb / extension to a smaller settlement that already existed. Secondly, the body of evidence to suggest an early date of the migration is overwhelming. According to the Arab and Persian sources, fire-worshippers and their fire-temple were already established in the port of Sanjan by the late 8th – early 9th century. Besides, Sanjan appears to have had interminant Arab / Muslim rule in the 9th and 10th century and the port was then at the peak



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of its prosperity. Many Zoroastrian scholars suggest a date as late as 936 CE for the migration. This seems completely impossible if one accepts the *Kisse-i-Sanjan*'s version of events which claim that the migrants established the town. The archaeological evidence as well as the historical records make it absolutely clear that a thriving settlement dependent on maritime trade with the Persian Gulf existed for at least two centuries prior to the 936 CE date suggested by scholars. If the Zoroastrians migrated in the mid tenth century as these scholars suggest, they would have arrived at an extremely populated and well-established busy port with large numbers of Arabs, Persian Christians, Jews and other communities already settled there. The whole part of the *Kisse* narrative which describes the arrival of the Parsis, their encounter with the king, the wilderness of the land etc would then stand disproved because the Persian Zoroastrians would not have appeared strange to a king already familiar with Persians and Arabs who had settled in his territory. Moreover, it appears illogical that a community fleeing persecution at the hands of the Arabs would choose to settle at a port which had interminant Muslim rule. It appears much more likely that the migration may have taken place much earlier, perhaps in the early decades of the 8th century CE or even earlier. Hence later political events may not have affected them as they were already established in the settlement. Another important factor to note is that the migrants need not have settled permanently in Sanjan merely because they made landfall there after a storm. They could well have moved on from the port once the storm abated. However, they chose to settle in Sanjan permanently, indicating that it was their desired destination and not an accidental landing. All their settlements in the following centuries were concentrated along the coast. This clearly indicates that they concentrated their numbers in port towns because they were traders and merchants who depended upon maritime trade. It was in later centuries that agriculture became an occupation. Alan Williams makes a significant observation that the *Kisse-i-Sanjan* never mentions agriculture at all.

The migration of the Parsis to the Gujarat coast and their subsequent settlement is generally accepted as the only migration to have taken place. The truth is perhaps quite different. Recent epigraphic evidence from the Malabar coast confirms at least one group of Zoroastrian

merchants had settled there as early as the 9th century. This would make the settlement contemporary to the one at Sanjan. The Kollam copper plates record a generous grant made by King Sthanu Ravi in 849 CE to a catholic church. As was the custom, important groups and communities are called upon to witness this grant. This record is unique because the twenty-five signatures of witnesses are in different languages and scripts representing diverse components of the population. These twenty-five signatures are in Arabic, Pahlavi / Middle Persian and Judaeo-Persian. The communities represented are Muslim, Jew, Zoroastrian, Christian. Two trade guilds or associations are mentioned – *Manigramam* and *Ancuvannam* and they appear to be prominent groups invested with the power to fix the prices of goods, tax the commodities arriving or leaving by boat or land. *Manigramam* is known to have been an association of south Indian merchants who traded with South-east Asia. *Ancuvannam*, it is now believed by scholars and historians, was a guild of merchants from across West Asia. The Zoroastrian signatories are part of the *Ancuvannam*. It is not known what happened to this group of Zoroastrians in the later centuries. That the sea played a very large part in the lives of the early Parsi settlers is seen in their concentration along the coast. While there is no evidence as yet to suggest they were involved in navigation, boat-building and sailing in the early centuries of their settlement on Indian soil, it is evident that their trading activities were centered in ports and entrepôts. Parsi Ship-building and maritime trade during the colonial period is well documented. It is quite likely that the tradition goes back earlier than believed. It appears that the mainstay of the migrating groups was trade. However, it may also be noted that it was only the group that arrived at Sanjan which had accompanying Dasturs with them and were able to establish an Atash Behram.

Much more archaeological work needs to be undertaken for a comprehensive and well documented history of the community. It is essential that the findings of recent historical and verifiable archaeological research be taken into account so that a more comprehensive and balanced understanding of the Zoroastrian migration may emerge. ■■■

Acknowledgements:

My sincere thanks to Dr Homi Dhalla, (Late) Dr Mani Kamerkar, WZCF, (Late) Dr S P Gupta, the entire excavation team of the Sanjan excavations. My thanks also to Dr Lambourne, Dr Tomber and several other scholars and institutions for their help, research and information.

Abyaneh, the Zoroastrian habitat

- Mira Pawar

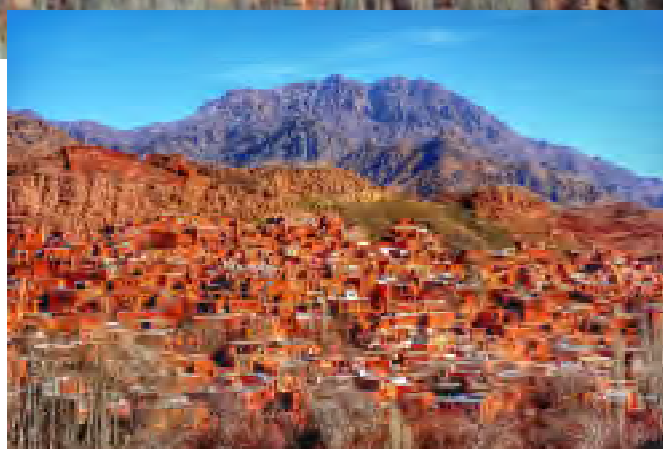


Abyaneh, the red village. On the right, a close up

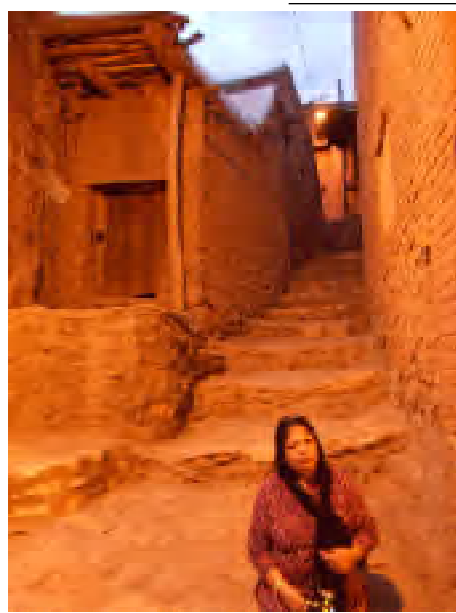
On my recent visit to Iran, I was looking forward to catch a glimpse of the Persian opulence but had no idea that I would accidentally come across a small village with a red hue that was absolutely fascinating. This astounding Zoroastrian village called Abyaneh is located in the central district of Natanz county, Isfahan province. Abyaneh is about 327 kms from Tehran and can be reached by road via Kashan.

Zoroastrians have had a very long history and is considered the oldest religious community of Iran that has survived to this day. The people of this village have maintained their traditions and rituals, which makes their community proud of its existence. The history dates back to the Sasanid dynasty which ruled Persia for 400 years until the Arab invasion in 651 AD.

The population of Abyaneh is barely 306 in number. There was nothing phony about the existence of this place and it seemed so very authentic. Unlike other tourist destinations, there was no entry fee to this village. One could ramble around the streets and greet the residents if you wished, who in turn smile back and reciprocate. It was permissible to enjoy the sights and take photos, visit the souvenir shop and buy a couple mementoes to take back home.



On entering Abyaneh, it seemed like entering an ancient civilization. The buildings appeared hundreds of years old but strangely enough, all modern amenities were present. The presence of satellite dish, ATM machine, telephone and electricity connection established their progressive status. The narrow streets were illuminated with the street lights; there was trace of ample water availability and I happened to see a gas pipeline running through as well. The narrow and sloped lanes with houses located on the slopes seemed like they are placed on a stairway. The roofs of some houses functioned as a courtyard for other houses, as the land was on a slope. The walls of buildings were made of clay that appeared a rusty red colour due to the rich soil of ferrous oxide. The windows and doors were made of wood and seemed like they were erected a very



Abyaneh, narrow street with electric light



Ladies in traditional attire

long time ago. There was something very interesting about the doors here. Every door had two door knockers (an alternative for door bells) – one for men and the other one for women. The knocker meant for men were heavier and made a strong sound and the one for women a lighter sound. The difference was made to identify if the visitor was a man or a woman thereby enabling them to accordingly answer the door.



Terraced housing

The source of water in Abyaneh is from the River of Barzrud and the supply is ample. The climate here is mostly very cold. It has a prolonged spring season creating suitable conditions for agriculture. However, being located in a valley, there is limited agricultural land in Abyaneh and therefore, the residents also rear animals for a living. The main agricultural products grown in Abyaneh are wheat, barley, potatoes and fruits such as apples, pears and apricots. Of late carpet weaving has also become popular in the village.

The natives of Abyaneh are believed to be very highly educated. Most of them pursue professions such as engineers and doctors. They work in larger cities like Kashan and Tehran and the language spoken is Parthain Pahlavi, a different dialect of Farsi.

It was fascinating to see men and women wear clothes so different from the rest of the population in Iran. What they adorn is believed to be their traditional costume that has been carried on for centuries. There have been pressures from the government to alter their traditional form of clothing but most of the residents still wear their traditional costumes. Unlike other parts of Iran where the ladies don black chador, the ladies in Abyaneh wear a costume which consists of a white scarf with floral design



Door showing two types of knockers



Male in traditional attire

that cover their shoulder extending to the waist, and waist downward they wear a pleated skirt/pant. The women in Abyaneh are emotionally attached to their wedding gown that they inherit from their mother. This gown is passed on from mother to daughter until the gown is in a wearable condition. Men wear a felt hat, a long garment called *ghaba*, a pair of loose pants and a pair of special shoes called *giveh*.

Traditional food of the people in Abyaneh is a kind of stew called *gipa* made of mutton much like the Scottish dish – *haggis*. Another specialty called *jovin* is made of barley. Also popular is *karvani* which is made of yoghurt and fried onions. There is a dish prepared of local vegetables and yogurt called *ardine*.

In the village there is a Zoroastrian fire temple which dates back to the Sasanid period. One of the mosques also has an inscription on its door which specifies that it dates back to the early Safavid period (approximately from 1501 to 1722). I got goose pimples thinking about the fact that I was looking at such an old edifice but on the other hand I also thought it was a great privilege to have visited an ancient but habited village.

UNESCO has proposed Abyaneh to be included in the list of UNESCO's World Heritage site. However, as per some reports there is a proposed hotel construction in the pipeline and therefore this status might be at risk.



Tips to Remember:

If you travel to Iran, it is advisable for ladies to carry few scarves which is very essential. The minute you step out of the house, you have to cover your head.

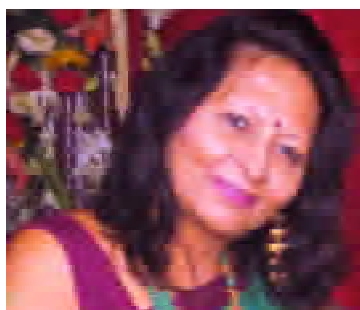
As far as safety is concerned, it is 100% safe. Whether it is the crowded bozar or mall, you will never experience any Eve's teasing. People are very timid and courteous.

The currency of Iran is Toman but at some time it was also called Riyal. One dollar is Toman 3,000.

At the local market place, bargaining is quite common so you can haggle and try your luck for at least 25% discount but please ensure too refrain from bargaining inside the malls where all prices are fixed.



Firetemple in Abyaneh



Mira Pawar is a freelance writer with an extensive writing experience. She worked for Gulf News Paper from Dubai, N Magazine and Hans India News Paper from Hyderabad, India. She has contributed to the Chicken Soup Series and has also written for a book called "How the Phoenix Rose". She is an avid traveler and loves writing travelogues.



Blindspot and Biases

- a review

In Zarathushtra's *Gathas*, he talks about two types of mentalities that we possess – Spenta Mainyu or Divine Mentality, which is rational, progressive, balanced, non-judgemental, and Aka Mainyu or Angry Mentality, which is negative, regressive, resentful, biased. In the very first verse of the *Gathas*, (Ahunvaiti 1.1), Zarathushtra prays that he be guided by his good mind. "Mazda, Wise God, with a bow and uplifted arms, I pray. First, I ask for support through progressive mentality. Then I pray that I may perform all my actions, based as they are on the wisdom of good mind, precisely according to the laws of righteousness so that I please You and the soul of the Living World."

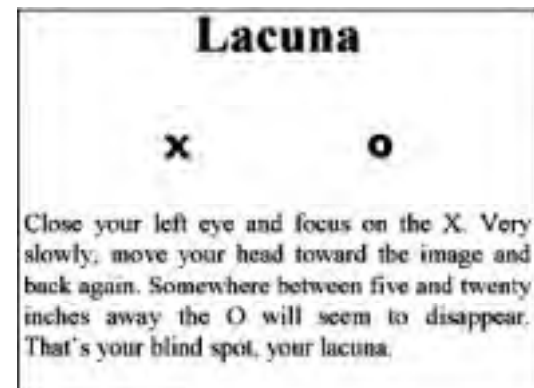
by farishta dinshaw

He passes this obligation to use our "good mind" to us as followers of his message. Whatever choices we make should be made using our calm, balanced reason rather than be governed by negative emotions like fear, hatred or anger. In one of his most quoted verses, (Ahunavaiti 3.2) Zarathushtra says, "Hear the best with your ears and ponder with a bright mind. Then each man and woman, for his or her self, select either of the two [choices]."

This seems simple enough and obvious enough. Choices made while we are in the state of high emotion are skewed and we may regret them later ... no arguments there. But what happens if what we perceive as our reasoned and rational mind is not as reasoned or rational as we had thought? In their book, "Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People" (Delacorte Press; 1 edition, 2013), Mahzarin Banaji and Anthony Greenwald explore hidden biases that we all carry from a lifetime of experiences with social groups – age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, social class, sexuality, disability status, or nationality – based on their thirty-year collaboration to understand how minds operate in social contexts. Their special focus has been on the unconscious, automatic, less reflective

aspects of the mind and the decisions humans make about themselves and others in society.

The "good people" in the title refers to those who are well intentioned and try to live their lives in alignment with their intentions. If asked, they would be the first to deny biases so the authors use "blindspot" as a metaphor to capture that portion of the mind that houses hidden biases. We know that the human eye has limitations – we cannot see ultraviolet or infrared lights like many animals, birds and insects – but even with our limited vision we believe that what we see is actually out there and that "seeing is believing". However, that's not true. Each human eye has a blind spot or a missing area, and the brain fills in the blank by borrowing from the surrounding area to make it appear seamless. To test your blindspot check out the exercise in the accompanying box.



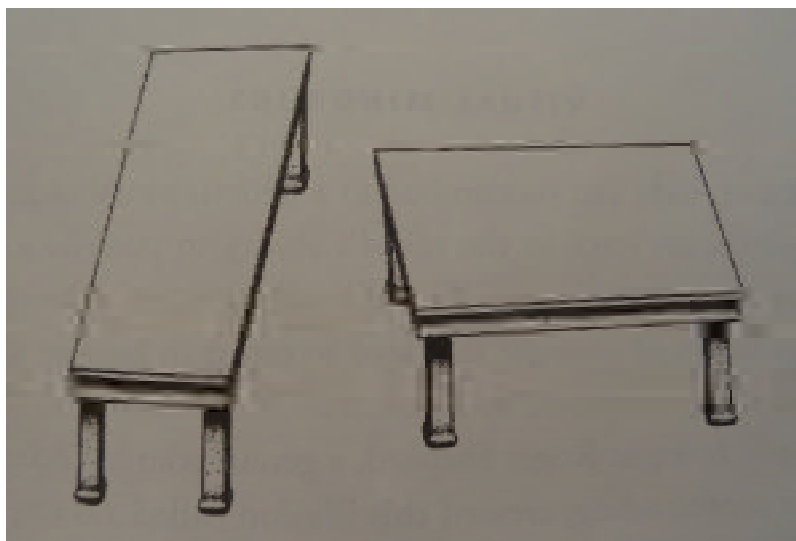
Mindbugs

The first exercise in the book strikingly illustrates a “mindbug” or what the authors describe as “ingrained habits of thought that lead to errors in how we perceive, remember, reason, and make decisions” (p4). Take a look at the two table tops in the illustration. They are the same size. Difficult to believe? Trace the outline of one table using thin paper and then transpose it on the other. This is an example of a visual mindbug, pretty much putting paid to ‘the seeing is believing’ axiom by which many people live their lives.

In the first few chapters, Banaji and Greenwald explain ways our rational minds may have hidden biases, including “two famous mindbugs”, availability heuristic and anchoring.

Availability heuristic, first coined in 1973 by Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman, refers to our human tendency to form judgments on the basis of what is readily brought to mind. Twenty-four hour news channels and the mushrooming of social media play an important role in this. In a CNN report, Christiana Amanpour shared numbers compiled by Tom Diaz, a senior analyst at the Violence Policy Center: In 2010, 13,186 people died in terrorist attacks worldwide; in that same year, in America alone, 31,672 people lost their lives in gun-related deaths. Yet despite these statistics, average people, “good people”, still allow governments to make foreign policy decisions based on fear of terrorist attacks. Another likely example of availability heuristic is gossip and conjecture which often ends up being perceived as fact if it is repeated often enough and frequently brought to mind.

Tversky and Kahneman also identified another mindbug called anchoring, in which we rely on the first piece of information offered (the “anchor”) as the baseline for making a decision. Once an anchor is set, people may adjust away from it to get to their final answer, but their final guess will be closer to the anchor than it would be otherwise. In their study, test subjects were told the number 65 and then asked to estimate what percentage of African nations

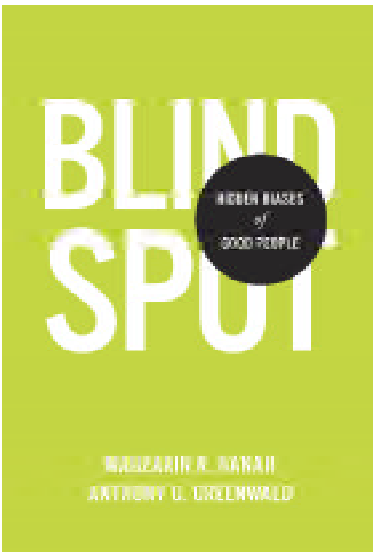


were members of the UN. The average response was 45%. They then tested a second group who were given the number 10, and their average response was 25%.

The authors also explain other forms of mindbugs such as stereotyping and in-group privileges, and how they operate subconsciously to promote discrimination as well as privileges. “... discrimination of even the most well intentioned kind – helping members of the in-group – has significant impact on both those who are not part of the in-group *and* those who are” (pg 143). This point is important to keep in mind for Parsi-Zoroastrians who base their identity on being part of an in-group. Results based on the responses of over a 100 self-identified Zarathushtis in North America who responded to a Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA) survey in 2013 indicated that many respondents made emotionally-based and self-enhancing comparisons with other groups, singling out Zarathushtis as ‘the best’ or ‘unique’ and belonging to the group as “an honor and a privilege” (Dinshaw, F M, 2013, pg23). These attitudes may subconsciously promote discrimination against those whom we see as ‘others’ and offer privileges to those we see as belonging to our group.

Project Implicit

The core of the book shares information about Project Implicit. It was founded in



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Book cover & image of
Mahzarin Banaji,
courtesy
Christopher Dial

1998 by three scientists – Tony Greenwald (University of Washington), Mahzarin Banaji (Harvard University), and Brian Nosek (University of Virginia) and is based on the Implicit Association Test (IAT) designed by Greenwald. Their findings demonstrate that “despite explicit assertions to the contrary, most of us harbor implicit biases, which may take the form of racism, sexism or classism, among others” (Project Implicit website). To test your own hidden biases on a variety of topics ranging from race to weapons, you can go to the “virtual laboratory” on

Harvard's Project Implicit website (<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>).

I took the Religion IAT test. It seems I belong to the vast majority for whom the following disclaimer is stated on the website, “I am aware of the possibility of encountering interpretations of my IAT test performance with which I may not agree.” Proving that I am indeed not unique, I then proceeded to test myself again. The subsequent results were marginally different but overwhelmingly the same. The authors explain that the differences in the results are similar to blood pressure readings taken one after the other - they establish a range, but you do not see drastic differences. Finally accepting that I did indeed have a bias, I was able to reflect and understand, based on my experiences and socialization, why I perceive some religions as more positive than others. In this, I fulfilled the purpose of the book, which is “... to bring the dissonance between the reflective and automatic preferences into conscious awareness. From there it is at least partly up to each individual to use the knowledge to move beyond dismay and to find ways to understand hidden biases and, if desired, to neutralize them before they translate into behaviour” (pg 70).

The authors are also clear that we can use this new knowledge about ourselves to circumvent the mindbugs to bridge the gap

between intention and action. “[The reflective mind's] power derives from its abilities to observe itself and to use those observations to guide conscious action. The reflective aspects of our mind allow us to imagine a future that improves on the present state of affairs, and to achieve settled upon and consciously chosen goals and values” (pg70). In this, we can adhere to Zarathushtra's message of using our Spenta Mainyu to choose the best path.

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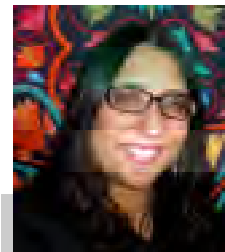
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Farishta Dinshaw works as a Community Development Worker with ethnocultural communities in Toronto to raise awareness about problem gambling and family violence. She also teaches at Ryerson University. She is the author of the insightful story of a fictional boy befriended by Zarathushtra called “Discovering Ashavan”. Farishta has edited a cookbook “Eat, Live, Pray: A celebration of Zarathusti cuisine and culture” available for free download at <http://www.fezana.org/>

Professor Mahzarin Banaji

- Farishta Dinshaw

Mahzarin Banaji was born in 1956 in Secunderabad, India. She attended St Ann's High School and completed her BA from Nizam College and her M.A. in psychology from Osmania University in Hyderabad. Later, she earned her MA (1982) and PhD (1986) in Psychology (with a specialization in Social Psychology) from Ohio State University, and taught at Yale University from 1986-2002 where she was Reuben Post Halleck Professor of Psychology. Currently, she is the Richard Clarke Cabot Professor of Social Ethics in the psychology at Harvard University.

In an unpublished biography for the Guggenheim Foundation, she wrote, "Individuals are created and shaped by social circumstances far more than they or their observers are able to recognize. Mainly in retrospect, I see my career as a textbook case of how fortuitous circumstances and responsive bystanders eased the path for my growth." One such fortuitous incident was buying five volumes of the Handbook of Social Psychology edited by Lindzey and Aronson for a throwaway price of five dollars. She finished reading one volume on a train journey from New Delhi to Secunderabad, and was fascinated by its focus on social process with an experimental approach.

This sparked her own interest. For two decades, she has been researching the nature of our implicit, unconscious biases, particularly as they unfold in a social context. According to her, most people show an unconscious preference toward their own social group. Bias, she has found through her experiments into memory and its associations, is a part of being human, and she is not immune – she has found that she favours women over men, and Harvard over MIT. Mahzarin studies unconscious thinking and feeling as they unfold in social context. She has primarily studied social attitudes and beliefs in adults and children, relying on multiple methods including cognitive/affective behavioral measures and neuroimaging (fMRI). With these, she explores the implications of her



work for questions of individual responsibility and social justice in democratic societies. Her current research interests focus on the origins of social cognition and applications of implicit cognition to improve organizational practices. For her contribution to research, Mahzarin has been awarded a James McKeen Cattell Award, the Morton Deutsch Award for Social Justice, and fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study and the Santa Fe Institute.

Mahzarin is recognized as an exceptional teacher and mentor. She is devoted to undergraduate and graduate education, serving as Director of Undergraduate Studies at Yale, as Head Tutor at Harvard, and won Yale's Lex Hixon Prize for Teaching Excellence. At both Yale and Harvard, she has been involved in dozens of faculty and university committees focused on faculty development, academic programs, ethics, and quality of education. She particularly goes out of her way to support young women who aspire to be scientists. Dana R Carney, her former post-doctoral student, gave

her impressions of Mahzarin for a write up in the Harvard Crimson, “As a young woman, I cannot tell you how she has influenced the generations after her. She is like the Madonna of our field: masculine, feminine, fierce, warm, irreverent, creative, inspiring.” She recalls hearing Mahzarin’s speech as a first year graduate student, five years before she became her post-doc student.

“I remember going up to her ... and I shook her hand, and I told her that it’s so rare as a young woman you’ve got to model yourself after those people that sort of defy gender stereotype. She is just a scientist. She is not a woman. She is not a man. She is just so inspiring.”

In addition, Mahzarin has received numerous grants from national and international institutions, is a sought-after international speaker with over three dozen invited lectures a year, has maintained active roles as editor, reviewer, and board member for numerous academic journals, and has contributed to over 400 book chapters, articles, and peer-reviewed conference papers. Her work has been recognized by receipt of a Gordon Allport Prize for Intergroup Relations, and her career contributions by a Presidential Citation from the American Psychological Association and the Carol and Ed Diener Award for Outstanding Contributions to Social Psychology.

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Law and Identity in Colonial South Asia: Parsi Legal Culture, 1772 – 1947 by Mitra Sharafi

- A review by Ferzeen Bhadha

Mitra Sharafi's latest offering to the literary world traces the lives and times of the Parsis in Colonial India and their forays into the legal world, with a great many references to case laws and publications and legal treatises. The book takes the reader through the winding corridors of the courts of Colonial South Asia and provides an insight into days bygone.

Law and Identity in Colonial South Asia is replete with historical references and provides as yet unknown insight into how the Parsis were at the forefront of many a legal battle not only as the litigants but as counsels and judges. The cases ranged from insolvency and matrimonial suits, to inheritance and trust suits. While commercial suits were rare, no one was shy in fighting over principles – what Vilhelm Aubert would call conflicts of value, in contrast to conflicts of interest (p58). Sharafi poses the questions about how did colonial Parsis think about going to court? When and why they had a legal and not a social problem? What made them turn to law when they did or hold back when they did not? (p58). The cases that Sharafi narrates, are on various issues and are interesting and she is able to conclude that the Parsis had no hesitation in approaching the colonial legal system as they probably never regarded it as an outside forum, with so many Parsi lawyers, judges, law clerks and court officials, the colonial courts must have felt like home. (p83).

The role of the Parsis was not limited to litigating. The Parsis were also instrumental in shaping and drafting colonial law and also changing the law that applied to the Parsi population. The Parsis from the 1830s lobbied for a new and entirely different



because of the sheer number of Parsis engaged in the legal profession. Although the Parsis constituted only six percent of the population of Bombay, between a third and a half of all lawyers (including Europeans) and roughly one sixth of the High Court judges in Bombay were Parsis. This prompted the legal profession in Bombay to be described by a Parsi law clerk as “the Parsees are the life and soul of litigation in Bombay and in one shape or the other they are connected with the majority of the suits in the High Court.” (p98) Sharafi also discusses in great detail the matrimonial and the inheritance acts.

The principle underlying the inheritance laws was to ensure that there was no concentration of wealth in the hands of a single person. This was the basis on which the English principle of primogeniture (which entitled the eldest son to inherit all of the father's real estate) and the English doctrine of coverture (which recognised the husband and wife as a single legal person, making the man [upon marriage] the sole legal owner of the woman's property before marriage) was rejected by the Parsi lobbyists. In rejecting these doctrines of English law, the new legislation recognised a larger group of heirs and endeavored to secure the interests of widows and parents in inheritance matters. The matrimonial acts on the other hand increased the powers and privileges of Parsi husbands and fathers in a manner that wielded more control over wives and children and through the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act of 1865, polygamy was prohibited and by the 1936 Act, the grounds for divorce were equalized between men and women.

Further, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, conflicts of Parsi charitable trusts relating to religious funds and properties made their way to the upper courts. Unfortunately litigation involving the Parsi charitable trusts ended up into full blown disputes that shook the very core of the litigants and their families. The court processes not only destroyed relationships but it gave a negative impression of the Parsis to the world and exposed the



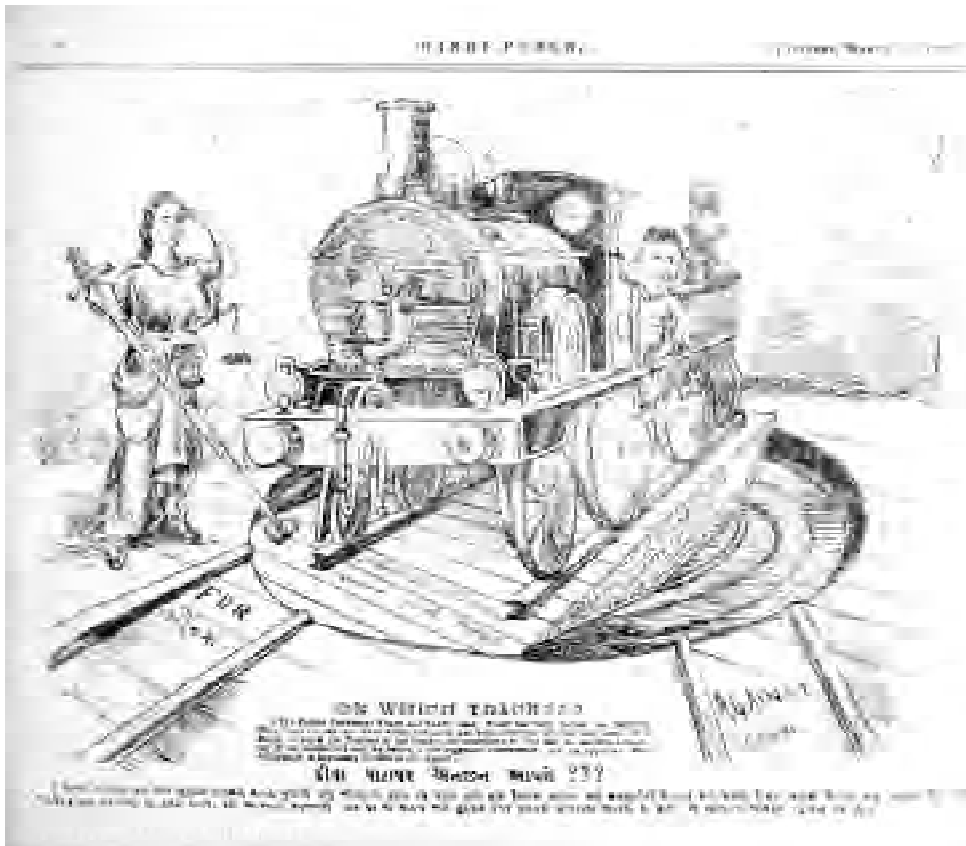
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Mitra Sharafi

‡Justitia: Here you are, sir! A good round sum of 82,000 odd. May it do you much good! [Parsi General Hospital] Fund: As many thanks as rupees, ma'am, and more than I can tell! (Hindi Punch, 29 Sept. 1907, 23)

legislation for governing the community on matters of marriage and inheritance. It was however not until 1865 (after much effort and perseverance) that the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act (XV of 1865) and the Parsi Intestate Succession Act (XXI of 1865) were passed. The following quote from one British newspaper sums up the tenacity of the community in achieving the success of the passage of the separate legislation “The Parsees act under no European instigation, for no European has any personal interest in the question. They have benefited by no European guidance, for no European knew anything of the matter in hand. They did their own work by themselves. They used their own language to express their own thoughts. They appointed a Committee entirely of their own race, and their speeches were, for the most part, the free expression of the Parsee ideas. In short, they originated instead of merely imitating.” (p91). It took another seven decades before the Acts of 1865 were amended. The Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act (XV of 1865) was amended in two parts – the main Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act of 1936 and thereafter the Parsi Marriage and Divorce (Amendment) Act (XIV of 1940) (dealing with divorced wives' alimony). The lobbying for changes in legislation was also managed



‡On which track??? The Parsee Punchayet Funds and Juddin case+has been postponed+to allow the Trustees+to lay before [the community] the suggested compromise+ (Hindi Punch, 15 March 1908, 10)

intimate details of the lives of the Parsis, their religious rituals and customs. The book also scrutinizes the first Parsi judge of the Bombay High Court, Dinshah Dhanjibhai Davar, who during his decade long tenure on the bench passed a number of land mark judgments which in most instances were deeply rooted in orthodoxy. Justice Davar in the case of *Petit v. Jijibhai*, (which dealt with a challenge to the initiation into the Zoroastrian faith of a French woman named Suzanne Briere who had married into the Tata family) distinguished between the terms “Parsi” and “Zoroastrian” and opined that Parsi was a racial term and Zoroastrian was a religious one and based on which a Parsi could cease to be Zoroastrian by converting to another religion but could not change the fact that he or she was ethnically Parsi. (p269). Justice Davar opposed allowing the conversion to Zoroastrianism of ethnic outsiders and then to benefit from Parsi trusts, on the grounds that in order for a person to be initiated in

the Parsi faith it was not enough that the person had a Parsi father, it was also required that both parents of the initiates be ethnically Parsi.

In the course of active litigation, the Parsis also went to court (against other Parsis) over defamation, alleging amongst other issues, racial impurity. The case of *Saklat v. Bella* originating from the Parsis of Rangoon focused on this issue. The case involved a 14 year old girl named Bella who was adopted by a Parsi couple and whose navjote was performed by the Zoroastrian High Priest of the Deccan Plateau. Bella was presented to the world as the child of an Indian Christian man and a non- Parsi woman. The truth about Bella’s lineage was kept a secret – she was probably

the daughter of her adoptive father’s brother who was a married man and a highly successful lawyer. However, Bella’s initiation and entry into the Rangoon fire temple came at the center of a controversy that started in the Chief Court of Lower Burma and eventually concluded in the Privy Council in London. The orthodox Parsis which included one Mr Saklat, urged the Chief Court of Lower Burma to stop Bella from entering the fire temple in Rangoon – the plea in the case was based on the concept of ritual privacy which meant that only members of the Parsi community could enter the sacred temple and see the sacred fire (p288). But the case raised the questions of who was a member of the community? The plaintiffs argued that one who was religiously Zoroastrian and was also ethnically Parsi through the paternal line was a member of the community and hence Bella being the child of a non-Parsi father desecrated the fire temple by entering it and the plaintiffs also claimed

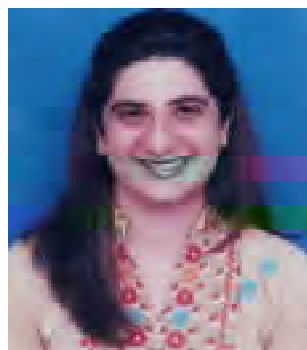
that their right to exclusive worship had been sullied by allowing Bella to enter the fire temple. The case went up in appeal to the Privy Council where the judgment of Justice Davar in *Petit v. Jijibhai* was used as a precedent and judgment was given in favour of the plaintiffs on the basis that there being a distinction between Zoroastrian and Parsi (Zoroastrian being a religious label and Parsi being an ethnic or racial label), the trusts created for the benefit of the Parsis was racially restricted. The Privy Council thus held that the Rangoon Fire Temple had been established for the benefit of ethnic Parsis who were also religiously Zoroastrian and while the trustees were free to allow Bella to enter the fire temple at their discretion, Bella was not entitled to enter by right.

Law and Identity in Colonial South Asia: Parsi Legal Culture, is a good read and keeps the reader interested enough to know more about the Parsis and their role as catalysts of the legal fabric in Colonial South Asia. As Sharafi puts it “Not only did Parsis make law ... At the intersection of

Hindi Punch images from
the public domain



‡In Praise of the Dead‡In the days of muktad, just ended with the advent of the New Year, the Parsees offer prayers and recite the good actions of their dead. (Hindi Punch, 19 Sept.1909, 20)



Ferzeen Bhadha is based in Karachi, Pakistan. She is a lawyer by profession and is an associate in the law firm of Vellani and Vellani. Her primary focus of work involves corporate and commercial matters. Ferzeen is actively involved in the Parsi community in Karachi and has since a number of years been a member in one of the committees of the Karachi Zarathosti Banu Mandal.

Her book manuscript was the winner of the Mellon-sponsored—‘First Book’ workshop at the University of Wisconsin in 2010–11. In 2007, her dissertation (also on Parsi legal history) was awarded the Canadian South Asia Council’s Dissertation Award Grand Prize.

And as we go to print, Mitra Sharafi’s book has been awarded the Law and Society Association’s 2015 J Willard Hurst Prize for best book in socio-legal history published in the past two years. She will receive the Award in Seattle on 30th May 2015. http://www.lawandsociety.org/prizes/2015_award_winners.html - Ed.

Mitra Sharafi writes on her blog and wishes to share with the readers of Hamazor:

I was recently struck by the strangely inverted but parallel lives of two young women, both tragic figures in early 20th-century Parsi history.

Ratanbai Petit and Bella Captain were born in 1900. Ratanbai or "Ruttie" lived in Bombay. She was the only daughter of the Parsi heir to a textile mill fortune, Sir Dinshaw Petit. Bella was an orphan girl who was adopted by a Parsi couple in Rangoon, Mr and Mrs Shapurji Cowasji Captain.

One of these women suffered for leaving the Parsi tradition: Ruttie married her father's friend and future founder of Pakistan, Mohammad Ali Jinnah. To do so, she converted to Islam, causing an outcry within the Parsi community and the severing of her relationship with her father.

The other young woman suffered for trying to get in: Bella and her Parsi family went to court for her right to enter Rangoon's fire temple as a member of the Parsi community. Bella lost her case, which dragged on for 11 years and went on appeal to the highest court in the British Empire, the Privy Council in London.

Ratanbai died at the young age of 29, ill and separated from Jinnah. They had one daughter, Dina. Ironically, Dina later married into the Parsi Wadia family – against Jinnah's wishes.

Bella withdrew from Parsi society after losing her case, which had been highly publicized and led to a series of acrimonious libel suits over racial purity. She too died young – some time in her 30s.

These two women probably never met, living as they did on opposite sides of British India. But they must have read about each other in the newspaper. We can only wonder if they too spotted the curious similarities in their lives, which were deeply affected by conflict within the Parsi community. ■■■

<http://hosted.law.wisc.edu/wordpress/sharafi/2015/04/22/ruttie-bella/>



Ruttie Jinnah

photo credit: <http://imgarcade.com/1/maryam-jinnah/>



‡Bella the waif: Hindi Punch (7 June 1914), 13
From the public domain.

Darioush Winery -

An inspired blending of Persian old world traditions and modern entrepreneurial vision

- Shahrokh Mehta

HISTORIC REFERENCES TO WINE :

The making of wine has been documented in Chinese, Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Persian, Greek and Roman civilizations, with earliest evidence dating back to over 7000 years. Since ancient times, people have drunk wine during ritual sacrifices to gods and ancestors and also at official ceremonies celebrating victories, announcing official feuds, and taking oaths of allegiance before battle. Wine has had a long tradition at festivals and banquets and in customs associated with birth, marriage, departures, reunions, and death. Wine consumption has been well recognized in ancient to contemporary religious practices. The Greeks and Romans worshipped Dionysus and Bacchus - gods of grape harvest. The consumption of wine as part of Jewish practices has been present since Biblical times as part of Holy Communion commemorating Jesus' Last Supper and later became central to Christian observances as well. Although Islam forbade the production or consumption of wine, during its Golden Age, alchemists such as Gerber (Jabir ibn Hayyan) pioneered wine's distillation for medicinal and industrial purposes such as the production of perfume. According to Prof McGovern, "Viniculture stretched out its tentacles and entwined itself with one culture after another and laid the foundation for civilization itself. As medicine, social lubricant, mind-altering substance and highly valued commodity, wine became the focus of religious cults, pharmacopoeias, cuisines, economies, and society."¹

PERSIA AND WINE :

Persian wine, known as *mey* and *badeh*, is a cultural symbol in Persia and has had a significant presence in Persian mythology, poetry and miniatures for many centuries.



Apadana Palace reliefs, Persepolis Iran

was traded extensively by early Persians. "Discoveries dating to 5,000 BC in the Zargos Mountains of Northern Iran show that winemaking emerged as permanent communities replaced nomadic life and a new age of wine culture began."² Archeological and chemical evidence of the production of wine from fermentation grapes dates from 5400 BC in a region between Eastern Turkey, Trans-Caucasia (including Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia), and North West Iran.

The Persian city of Shiraz, known for its poets, literature and beautiful gardens with flowing waters had also come to be renowned for the wine it produced. According to legend, a Crusader named Guy de Sterimberg brought cuttings of Syrah (synonymous with Shiraz – type of red grape wine) from Iran to France's Rhone region and made wine from that



Persian wine goblet - 5th-3rdBC
Achaemenid Empire

grape. It was the Shiraz grape, again, which was brought to Australia in the nineteenth century, and now has become well-known throughout the world.

Herodotus, the Greek historian, writes that the Persians were very fond of wine and that they made important decisions in the following manner: First they became drunk, since they believed that only when you are drunk do you tell the truth.

Then, the next day when they were sober they reconsidered the matter. Similarly, if they made decisions when they were sober, they revisited them while they were drunk.

NAPA VALLEY :

Today, the top three wine producing countries of Italy, France, and Spain together produce half the world's wine. Ranking fourth in the production of wines is the United States with the state of California producing 90% of its wine. Napa Valley, located near San Francisco is one of the well-known wine producing regions of California and it is believed that the combination of Mediterranean climate, geography, and geology of Napa Valley is conducive to growing a variety of fine wine grapes. Although Napa Valley is only 30 miles long and 5 miles wide at its widest point, it is renowned for its "world-class wines, breath taking panoramic views and sense of elega

elegance and escape from reality."³

Winemaking in Napa Valley dates back to early 19th century and today, its more than four hundred wineries are visited by over five million people each year. Among the internationally acclaimed wines produced in this small region are Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Zinfandel and Cabernet Franc. Winecraft here as well as elsewhere is both a science and an art involving the harvesting of grapes at the precise moment of ripeness, followed by creativity in the crushing, fermentation, ageing, and bottling processes.

DARIOUSH KHALEDI AND HIS WINERY :

One of the newer tenants of Napa Valley distinctly recognized for its award-winning wines and unique architecture is "Darioush Winery." The winery was founded by Darioush Khaledi and his wife Shahpar in 1997 and the visitor's center, winery and tasting room were opened to the public in 2004.

Darioush Khaledi, a trained civil engineer from Shiraz, Iran, immigrated to Southern California in the late 1970s. Pooling his resources with his brother-in-law, they



Darioush Winery, side view to the visitor centre

purchased a failing grocery store in the city of Los Angeles and thirty years later they operate 25 stores and employ over 1500 people. Fascinated at an early age by his father's winemaking efforts and the cultural history of winemaking in Shiraz, Darioush with an entrepreneurial vision, began crafting fine wines in Napa Valley. The philosophy of the winery is meticulous attention to detail in the vineyard and minimal handling in the cellar.

The Darioush winery estate is spread over a 22,000 square foot area. The monumental building took five years to construct along with 16 elaborate 18-foot high freestanding columns with Persian bulls at the capitals (tops). The columns are reminiscent of Persepolis, while the surrounding gardens remind the visitor of the Persian *Bagh* (garden) with water fountains and greenery, famous in Shiraz. The yellow stone for the columns and the building structure was quarried near the region of Persepolis and exported to Turkey and later to Italy for cutting and tumbling. Inside the winery, visitors will find Persian artifacts, architecture, and decor.

Khaledi says that the design of the winery “allows us to shape how the world views Persians. We like to share a bit of our history and proud heritage with people who are unfamiliar with our culture. We try to create a warm atmosphere with great Persian hospitality so that our guests can enjoy themselves to the fullest. What better way to teach them about Iran than through good wine and a welcoming environment?”⁴

DARIOUSH WINES :

The crown jewel of Darioush winery, “Darius II” is a Cabernet Sauvignon that has been produced since 1999. Each of the signature brand wine bottles contain elegantly designed vintage labels with Persian art and the Darioush website describes the art on each of these labels with detailed historical references. For example, the description of the **2002** label woven in deep red and black silks, mentions: “Parsi textiles from the 19th century often used motifs of birds, vines and

flowers to symbolize a specific season.” The description of the **2004** label refers to: “intricately embroidered early 20th century ladies garo, hand selected for its great symbolic patterns, with birds of paradise, flitting amidst dense flowering vines and bunches of grapes.” The **2008** label tells the story of “early 19th century valiant Persian hero, Rostam. Protected by divine favor over 500 years, the legend of Rostom is detailed in the epic Shahnameh (Book of Kings) by poet Ferdowsi. Rostam’s courage, chivalry and reason are most notably on his Seven Quests, in which Rostam slays the dragons and demons to rescue his country’s captured sovereign. Rostam’s rose-colored stallion, Rakhsh (‘luminous’ in Persian) is also renowned for his strength, intelligence and loyalty.” And of particular interest, is the description of the **2010** celestial pattern label that states, “For millennia, humankind has scanned the heavens for existential meaning. Zarathustra, an ancient Persian prophet and father of astrology, believed good thoughts, words and deeds brought eternal bliss.”



Darius II Wines - Signature Series

Although the descriptions of the Cabernet Sauvignon labels have references to Persian heritage, the description of the Late Harvest Shahpar has a different type of reference. It is noted that grapes used in

crafting this wine are harvested late, well into cool winter months - ‡their fortitude lends deep character, grace and poise fi so suited to share its name with Darioush,,s wife Shahpar.

Darioush wines are generally sold for between \$40 to over \$100 per bottle, depending on vintage and the year of production, though some rare bottles are listed with prices as high as \$1900.

PERSEPOLIS, SHIRAZ, ALEXANDER AND WINE – A TRAGIC IRONY :

Persepolis is located 42 miles northwest of Shiraz. The construction of Persepolis began in 515 BC by Darius I and was built in terraces up from the river *Pulwar* to rise on a larger terrace of over 125,000 square feet, partly cut out of the Mountain *Kuh-e-Rahmnet* (the Mountain of Mercy). This capital city of the Achaemenid Empire contained an impressive palace complex as part of a grandiose architectural creation.

According to a 2009 paper on Persepolis, scholar Joshua Mark provides a detailed account of the burning of Persepolis: ‡Alexander held games in honor of his victories. He performed costly sacrifices to the gods and entertained his friends bountifully. While they were feasting and the drinking was far advanced, as they began to be drunken, a madness took possession of the minds of the intoxicated guests. At this point one of the women present, Thais by name and Athenian by origin, said that for Alexander it would be the finest of all his feats in Asia if he joined them in a triumphal procession, set fire to the palaces, and permitted women,,s hands in a minute to extinguish the famed accomplishments of the Persians. This was said to men who were still young and giddy with wine, and so, as would be expected, someone shouted out to form up and to light torches, and urged all to take vengeance for the destruction of the Greek temples, burned by the Persians when they invaded Athens in 480 BC.⁵

Persepolis was the grand symbol of the Achaemenid dynasty, and it is for this

reason that it was looted and burned by the Alexander in 330 BC. According to Greek historian Plutarch, they carried away its gold and silver treasures on 20,000 mules and 5,000 camels. The barbaric destruction of Persepolis by soldiers of Alexander's army was so devastating that only columns, stairways and doorways made of yellow stone remained. It is ironic that under the drunken influences of wine, a tragedy of monumental proportion took place some 2300 years ago in the burning of one of the most beautiful places of the ancient world, a tremendous loss of accumulated learning, art and culture of the ancient Persian civilization. Yet, today half way around the world in Napa Valley, California, in a setting that honors wine crafting and wine tasting, a grand structure also depicts the glorious past of the Persian Empire. Alexander's attempt to erase the traces of Persian glory from map and memory in a sense was unsuccessful, as more and more people from all over the world now have the opportunity to experience Darioush Winery in Napa Valley where they can begin to visualize the magnificence of the ceremonial capital of Darius the Great and appreciate fine wines that continue to be made in the rich Persian tradition.



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Shahrokh Mehta is originally from Karachi and lived in Iran for 15 years. He has a passion for history and over the years has written a number of articles on Iran and Iranian history including "Alexander, Farohar, and Hollywood: much ado about nothing?" "Forgotten Empire: the World of Ancient Persia." "The Pahlavis of Iran." "The Parsi/Zarathushtis and the American Encounter!" Shahrokh lives with his wife Gool in Syracuse, NY.



Marquee magic hits a century

Cinema city Mumbai sees one of its Parsi first families of the theatre trade celebrate a landmark century this year. As the Dubashes, owners of the iconic single screen hall Paradise, host a jubilee commemorative function, Meher Marfatia comes away with vignettes to chronicle a fascinating era of movie history.

It felt rather like a Navjote. The ceremony to celebrate the long innings of a Parsi-pioneered institution is replete with quite the same staples... fresh flowers, fragrant sandalwood and sonorous lilting prayers, followed by a feast, music and revelry. The lovely jashan ceremony to mark the platinum anniversary of Paradise Cinema was followed by a screening of Aamir Khan's controversial film *PK*. In the interval of the show, as I enjoyed viewing archival posters on the walls, my mind took me on a cinematic journey. For most of us growing up in the beautiful Bombay of half a century ago, movies watched in plush carpeted cinema halls had an almost total hold over our entertainment.

by meher marfatia

Some of us have a more personal connect... Imagine staying calm in a traffic jam in car-clogged Mahim. Yet, that's how it was for me sometimes. I waited for the car crawling along Lady Jamshedji Road to slow down at specific spots. One was where I leaned to admire lurid posters announcing Paradise Theatre's latest change. Mean-muscled Mithun Chakraborty grimaced "in and as *Boxer*" on a hoarding I was once stuck staring at till bell clangs ringing from Sitladevi Temple across the street startled me.

The Dubash brothers Framroz (Fali) seated 3rd from left and Jamshedji (Jemi) 5th from left, with Piroshaw Arya who is 6th from left, and sound engineers Homi and Manek Karanjia who are 7th and 8th from left.



Years later that fascination got a family connection. My cousin married Niloufer Dubash, whose grandfather Shavaksha decided to buy Paradise in 1955 from Sorabji Bhathena who built it in 1939-1940.

Dubash and his brother Bapuji had begun creating movie magic much before. Though they were a promising engineer and doctor by training respectively (Bapuji was FRCS-qualified), the brothers were decidedly keen to venture into the film line as exhibitors. They erected Royal Cinema, holding Licence No. 1, in 1914 in the Play House theatre district on Grant Road. Ably supporting the



Meherzin Turel, mother Alloo & Niloufer Dubash Dastur. Photo credit Framroz Ghaswala / IPR

venture was Pirojshaw Arya, their Lamington Road neighbour who was as close as family. He started as an assistant to the Dubash brothers but went on, along with his son, to partner them and later to own cinemas such as Roshan Talkies. The company's surviving partners — Niloufer Dubash Dastur, sister Meherzin Turel and mother Alloo — are proud to mark the Dubashes' centenary in showbiz and 75 years of Paradise.

Royal Cinema still stands rooted at its original spot. Back then it was no more than a mere tin shed with a hand-cranked projector and even provided a zenana section for women wanting seclusion from a diverse clientele. Leading lawyers and chartered accountants Niloufer happens to meet today, who were once regulars at Royal in their boyhood, confess that Shavaksha would thoroughly indulge young Parsi patrons like them. "As school children, we saw films there for free every week, on displaying a bit of our *sudrehs* to the Pathan doorman who was instructed to let us in." Faced with a post-war slump, Shavaksha

won back viewers with schemes that included a wristwatch lottery.

Next, the brothers built Krishna Talkies at Grant Road. It was renamed Dreamland on being bought by the Kukas, the family my mother-in-law hails from. Coincidentally, now Dreamland is associated with E-Square, the Pune chain which joined hands building at Worli to rotate for us as he said 'That D is for Dubash.'

"Who wouldn't like to get spoiled with the best seats possible or folding seats put up in a houseful show? To top it all, wafers and Mangola drinks were brought to us without fail in the interval. If the movie was supposed to be exceptionally good or a thriller whose start was essential to catch ('Don't miss the beginning' the publicity blurbs read), we'd go by train even in rush hour. Scary mystery movies were meant to be seen through a handkerchief covering our faces."

Collecting old ticket stub booklets and posters and pretending to do business with them was a preferred pastime for the sisters. As was acting out dance numbers in their room at home — Meherzin loved moving to the song '*Mera naam hain chameli*' from *Raja Aur Runk*.

Niloufer cannot stop smiling as she recalls: "When I started working for Air India, Jemi Mama teased me saying, 'You're doing the same as my booking clerk — selling tickets.' He really encouraged me to visit regularly to learn the ropes. 'Always run any business in a way you can rest your head peacefully on your pillow every night,' he told us. '*Saaru naam* — that is a good reputation — was far more important than wealth.' Both uncles had an amazing ability to hand over responsibility with full authority and knew when to fully let go.



Fali Dubash. Photo credit Bharat Chanda / Economic Times

Fali Mama was always there to guide but not nag us. And he made us promise to celebrate our 100-year journey grandly with loyalists who travelled the distance with us."

After Fali Dubash passed on in 2011, his niece's chartered accountant husband Noshir has been a pillar of support, keeping a hawk eye on the finances. "He yells in case of anything being even slightly amiss!" Niloufer adds although the gratitude is amply evident in her voice. "A major advantage has been our ability to create an atmosphere and pricing structure which allows everyone a great time at the movies at the same time. Our theatre is patronised by the upper class in the Balcony, alongside the middle class in the Stalls, in their own comfort zones. You could say the middle class is our butter and the elite our jam!"

The Dubashes are aware their theatre's location is an asset to the trade, working-class Mahim an accurate barometer of public taste. The snack counters registered how many people didn't move out in the interval of the engrossing *Pa*. For the most, it is wild whistling and whooping as the marbled interiors shake with very vocal responses. Songs are mouthed and dance matched to screen stars in the aisles. An Ajay Devgan fan just jumped onto a POP ceiling decoration to ape the impossible *Singham* pull-up.

One Khan sending Paradise customers of both sexes in a swoon is Salman. A full-wall mirror on the stairs leading to the luxurious Balcony section never fails to make men whip out pocket combs to copy his style. Cut to the hit *Tere Naam* packing the hall with frenzied audiences. A local boy perched on the parapet begged for an unavailable ticket. Having already seen the film twice, he wore his hair straight-flicked yet slanted the way his hero famously had in that hit. Niloufer consoled him saying he looked like Salmanbhai himself. The compliment thrilled him enough to tell her canteen staff, "*Madam ko meri taraf se ek Mangola pila do* (Give the lady a Mangola drink, it's on me)!"



Exterior of the old Paradise before 2008. Photo credit Framroz Ghaswala / IPR Consultants



Paradise today. Photo credit Bharat Chanda / Economic Times.



The auditorium. Photo credit Framroz Ghaswala / IPR Consultants

The family has enjoyed enough years in the field to indulge in cinema speak. Niloufer notices, "The public wants comfort but it's finally about a movie. Swishy trappings will not make a film run, its intrinsic worth will. We have to move with the times because change is the only constant. But we won't compromise on quality and squander the precious legacy we have been handed down."



The old and the ultra modern Christie projectors. Photo credit Framroz Ghaswala / IPR Consultants



Anurudh Prasad, projection operator & senior most employee of 40 years. Photo credit Framroz Ghaswala / IPR Consultants.



Meher Marfatia is the author of *Laughter in the House: 20th-Century Parsi Theatre*. Her book in collaboration with Sooni Taraporevala, *Parsi Bol*, is being readied for a second edition after the successful sell-out of the first run. Sooni and she are now researching a project on Bombay's old single-screen cinema halls, for which they welcome anecdotal information from families associated with such theatres.



Leading to the Balcony - diamond & platinum seats. Below mirrored walls. Photo credit Framroz Ghaswala / IPR Consultants



To Be or Not To Be

- Farrukh Dhondy



As a Parsi I was initiated into the rituals and instructed in all the confusing paraphernalia of religious disciplines while not understanding their purpose or relevance to contemporary existence. I take pride in the fact that I graduated from being a 'dhansak Parsi', satisfied with the comforts of the cuisine, the

I don't believe in spirits, afterlife, heaven, hell or for that matter God. I am aware that one can play semantic, eschatological games with this last quantity: he is a bearded judge, he is a spirit upon the infinite waters, he is the impulse of each individual heart, he is the creator whose presence is unknowable, he is the son of Zurvan, he is Ahura Mazda self-created ... etc.

Yes, I am a Parsi, born to Zoroastrian parents in India. For me the religious impulse is the fount of ethics, even though I know that throughout history and to this day it is the progenitor of the worst inhumanity and cruelty the world has witnessed. People are still raped, crucified, beheaded, burnt alive, sold into slavery, thrown off cliffs in the name of the Almighty.

Nevertheless, for me the injunction "humata, hukta, huvareshta" contains within it 'do unto others as they would do unto you', 'turn the other cheek', 'only cast the first stone if you are free from sin'. IT also contains for me following the dictates of karma and dharma and having faith in your fellow human, hope in your life and charity towards those who share the planet. I don't suppose, alas, it covers the ability to turn water into wine.

entertainments of the dialect, the sense of humour and community to enquiring, as best I could, about the history of Zoroastrianism, the Achaemenid dynasty, the interlude, the Magi, the Sasanians, the heretical beliefs and the possible origins of our traditions. I have to confess that reading a few books gives me absolutely no claim to scholarship and you must keep that in mind as I describe in the following paragraphs, the film I have written.

Writing a film means composing its screenplay and, for those not familiar with the trade, it means describing in every detail the scenes, actions and supplying the words the characters speak as the narrative progresses from beginning to end. The rest of the team, the director, producer, the art directors, editors, costume designers, set designers and a hundred others do the rest. Our film is called *The Path of Zarathustra*.

It's a lyrical, aspiringly poetical story in which a young woman who inherits a mysterious book of Zoroastrian teachings from her reclusive, scholarly grandfather, sets out to discover what his dying words "keep the flame alive" mean.

Her journey takes her back to the family she and her grandfather left behind in Mumbai.

the path of ZARATHUSTRA

A Film By OORVAZI IRANI

A SBI IMPRESARIO PVT. LTD. Presentation

Screenplay by Farrukh Dhondy

Featuring OORVAZI IRANI . TOM ALTER

RUSHAD RANA . SHISHIR SHARMA . DARIUS SHROFF . FIRDAUSI JUSSAWALLA

Does every search for God
end in love ?

The mysterious book seems to attract, or even generate, characters that are real and at the same time echoes of the past. She interacts with voices from the Zoroastrian past – the supposed heretics Mani, Mazdak and Zurvan the spirit of Time itself given an avatar. (Though he hasn't a name in the film should he perhaps have been called Polly Watchmaker?)

The characters spell out the dilemma facing the Parsi community. My narrative is not so much a story-telling vehicle as a device to introduce this dilemma to the viewers through the vision of the director (Oorvazi Irani) and force this debate on the Parsi communities of the world.

The dilemma is easily stated. There is no belief without believers. If there are no Zoroastrians, there will be no Zoroastrianism – except in history books.

Religions, like animal species, have become extinct before. The religions of the Aztecs or of the Pharaohnic religions are no more. But Zoroastrianism is a living if diverse and unreformed religion and the simple contention is that to keep it alive there must be Zoroastrians. But who will these torch-bearers of the threatened eternal flame be?

The Parsis of India claim to be the heirs of continuity, but our numbers are dwindling. To put it in its easily conceived form, there are at the most 30,000

Parsi women of childbearing age. My great-grandmother had seventeen children. She was a virtual baby-making machine and

SBI IMPRESARIO PVT. LTD. PRESENTS IN ASSOCIATION WITH A PARSI PHILANTHROPISTS' CONSORTIUM
A SBI IMPRESARIO PVT. LTD. PRODUCTION . A FILM BY OORVAZI IRANI PRODUCED BY SORAB IRANI AND OORVAZI IRANI
FEATURING OORVAZI IRANI . TOM ALTER . RUSHAD RANA . SHISHIR SHARMA . DARIUS SHROFF . FIRDAUSI JUSSAWALLA
CINEMATOGRAPHY BY SUBHADEEP DEY EDITED BY TUSHAR GHOGALE PRODUCTION DESIGN BY POOJA SHETTY
MUSIC COMPOSED BY VASUDA SHARMA COSTUME DESIGN BY SUVARNAREHA JADHAV POSTER DESIGN BY SAMVIDA NANDA
WEBSITE WWW.THEPATHOFZARATHUSTRA.COM  ©2014 COPYRIGHT SBI IMPRESARIO PVT. LTD. INDIA

Poster image, courtesy Sorab Irani, SBI Impresario Pvt. Ltd. India © 2014

obviously my great grandfather didn't believe in contraception or in restraint.

It is highly unlikely, to the point of impossibility, that the contemporary Parsi woman, educated in modern ways, sophisticated, independent as never before, will go the way of my great-grandmother. Nothing will induce even a quarter of this valiant 30,000, our progenitive hope, to have more than four children each. Do the sums. There are 70,000 Indian Parsis, according to the last government census, but possibly only 50,000 today. It's an ageing population and not difficult to see that more of us will pass through the chinvat pool into the next world (or down the infernal drain - depending on what nastiness we do) than will be born into this world. And how many of those babies will be the next and then the next generation's mothers?

No amount of induction through advertisement, encouragement through pious strictures or other persuasion can reverse the prophetic statistic. The race will die.

So what can be done?

Let me clarify my own question or detail it. What is it we want to do? Is it that without believers Zoroastrianism will die out and we don't wish that on history? Or is the evolutionary tragedy that the racially pure Parsi species will die out in a few generations? What do we want to preserve if anything? The religion or the supposedly pure race?

Religion is a matter of faith and not a matter of blood. Parsis can't stop Joe Bloggs, Harry Potter, Queen Elizabeth II or indeed Abdul Abdulla believing that Ahura Mazda is God, that Zarathustra was his prophet, that humata-hukta-huvarashtra is a great moral doctrine, that the prayers in the books can be learnt by heart and that they have the freedom, as did King Darius the First, to declare their allegiance to Ahura The Truth and abjure Ahriman The Lie.

No power of any Panchayat can stop them. What such a Panchayat can do is declare

that these 'faith-rather-than-blood' Zoroastrians will not be accepted into the community over which they have some control. Even so, Harry Potter, Joe, Elizabeth and Abdul can go further and declare themselves to be 'Parsis', just as I can declare myself an Ahrimani if I so wish and no law of any country, except those which adhere to Wahhabi Islam, will forbid it.

On the other hand what our notional, noble Panchayat can do is to lay down criteria for being accepted into the Parsi fold. For instance they can specify that anyone married to a blood Parsi and their children can be Parsis. Or they can specify that a ceremonial conversion after six months of studious apprenticeship to Parsi-ism will open the door.

The film introduces these arguments in oblique ways and, being a narrative, is suggestive rather than definitive. Shakespeare didn't believe that 'to be or not to be' was the only question — he, unlike his character, probably asked himself very many others. And just so, the characters in our film put forward arguments and enunciate paradoxes.

The real paradox facing the Parsi community is 'to change or not to change'. And on this change depends the question to be or not to be. One option is to survive. The other would mean following the Brontosaurus and the Dodo into oblivion.

Change how? Surrender certain ideas:

1. That the Indian Parsi community is racially pure. Ask any Sethna from where the surname comes.
2. Abandon the silly idea that a sperm is more determining of a child's race and religion than the ovum.
3. Realise that sky-burial was not a God given ritual — otherwise why do Darius, Cyrus and Xerxes, whom we claim as followers of Ahura Mazda, have tombs?
4. Realise that the Achaemenid and Sasanian empires spread Zoroastrianism to converts in most territories they conquered.

Asking a Muslim to abandon the belief that the Koran was dictated by God means

asking him to renounce Islam. Asking a Catholic to believe that Jesus was just a human being born in the normal way and not the son of God, is asking him or her to abandon Christianity.

The surrender of beliefs that are necessary to save the Zoroastrian religion and even retain a mixture of races among the believers is the giving up of prejudices. None of the changes have anything to do with the teachings of Zarathustra.

And, allow me one bugbear – for Ahura's sake, stop the farce of an idiotic calendar, acknowledge a historical blunder, add a day to the annual count every four years and get back to Jamshedji Navroze, the vernal equinox of the 21st of March as the universal New Year!

Dada Hormuzd ni madad for my argument!



To know more, please visit the film website www.thepathofzarathustra.com

The film is shot in the environs of Mumbai, India.

The main credits :

Director: Oorvazi Irani

Producer: Sorab Irani and Oorvazi Irani

Screenplay: Farrukh Dhondy

Production Company: SBI Impresario Pvt. Ltd. India (C) 2014

Cast: Oorvazi Irani, Tom Alter, Rushad Rana, Shishir Sharma, Darius Shroff, Firdausi Jussawalla.

Oorvazi Irani writes: ‡As director of this film it has been my primary endeavor to create a contemplative lyrical work of Art to reintroduce to the world at large the Parsi Zoroastrian identity, ethos, and the ethical code of the message of the first Prophet, Zarathustra. The Parsis are the smallest religious community in the world yet they hold within them an ancient wisdom which is most relevant today. The main thrust of the film from the point of view of a young Zoroastrian exemplifies the universal quest for the meaning of life, truth and faith shared by one and all.

As the Director, Producer, Actor of the film I appeal to all Parsis / Iranis / Zoroastrians and well wishers to actively support the cause of my film wholeheartedly.

From Opera House to Hospice - Canadian Soprano Meher Pavri

- In conversation with Teenaz Javat in Toronto.

You can hear her singing the US and Canadian National Anthems to a giddy audience of 17,000 at The National Basketball Association (NBA) game in Toronto's Air Canada Centre (ACC). You can also find her at the Kensington Hospice serenading the sick and dying with a request of Ave Maria. Canadian-born opera singer Meher Pavri is equally comfortable in both settings.

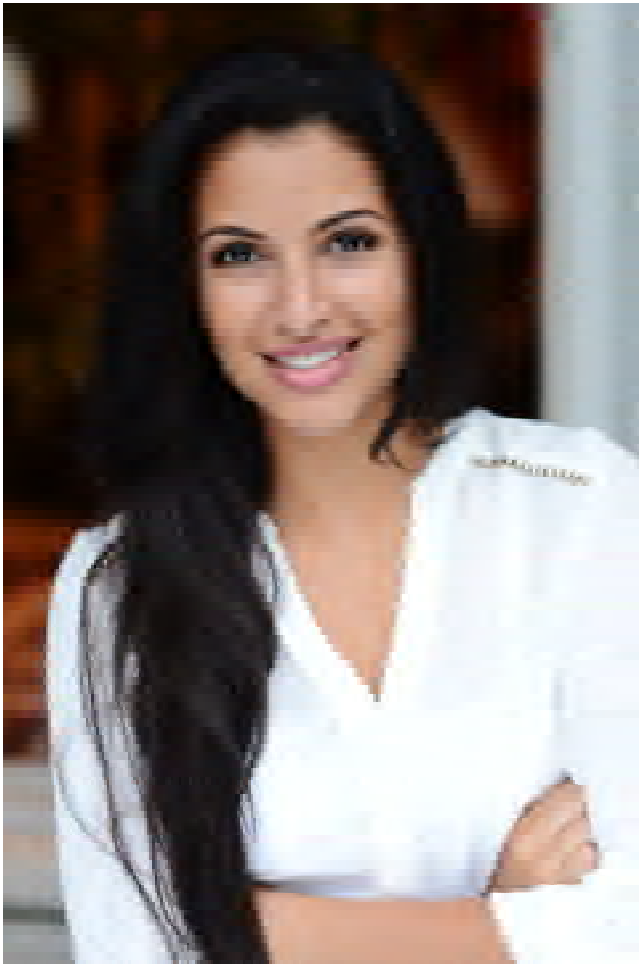
A graduate from the Bachelor of Music (BMus) programme from Western University in London, Ontario, Pavri the third of four children, was raised by a doctor mother and an engineer father who had little time or taste for anything classical.

"I cannot say I grew up immersed in classical music. In fact, we hardly ever heard music growing up," she says. And one busy household it must have been for working parents raising four kids with little or no domestic help.

"All I remember is my dad listening to Elvis songs. Pretty much that was the extent to my exposure to music, classical or otherwise."

That changed one day when my parents and I were watching the three tenors (Spanish singers Placido Domingo, Jose Carreras and the Italian singer Luciano Pavarotti) in concert with Zubin Mehta on TV.

While Pavri was just 12 years old, she recalls just how moved she was by the power of music. Her parents on the other hand were watching simply because Zubin Mehta was conducting. "The singing just blew me away and it was then that I decided I wanted to sing for a living and started taking piano and singing lessons."



Once Pavri shared her interest with her parents, they whole-heartedly supported her. So from a pretend orchestra at home with her three siblings, Pavri's musical journey began with piano, music, singing and dancing lessons, culminating in a BMus from Western University.

Pavri's latest gig is a role in the Canadian Stage Company's *Workshop of Mozart's Requiem*.

That said, Pavri is under no illusion that she can rely only on her music to make a living. A yoga lesson she happened to take just off the chance while still in university, instilled a love so profound that she decided to learn more and is now a certified yoga instructor. She teaches yoga in the morning to supplement her income from music.

"It may all look very glamorous when I get up on stage and sing, but as performing

artists, our lives lurch from one gig to the next. In the early years or until you break in, it is hard to make ends meet."

Her parents are extremely supportive and worry about their daughter. She moved to Toronto for work and living by herself is hard and her parents have pitched in ever so often and for that she is eternally grateful.

The glamorous life beckons and while not new to it, (Pavri was crowned Miss India-Canada in 2007) a still small voice in her heart always urged her to give back to communities underprivileged than her. She supports charities in Malawi under a Much Music-World Vision programme and performed at a benefit concert in Mumbai, India when she visited as part of her Miss India-Canada campaign tour.

"But that was a one-off act of kindness. I figured I wanted to do it on a more regular base, so I chanced upon this opportunity to perform at the Kensington Hospice an end of life facility in Toronto. A live pianist accompanies me and I sing to the request of my clients. And for many of them the sound of my voice might just be the last bit of music they ever hear."

As devout Parsis, her father and brother are ordained priests and her older sister is married to a priest and lives in Udvada, India, Pavri feels blessed by her supportive family and abides by the Zoroastrian tenets of sharing and in her case it is the beauty of her voice.



Teenaz Javat is an award winning journalist at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and a part-time instructor at Sheridan College, Oakville. Born in Mumbai, India, Teenaz has had the enviable position of having worked as a journalist in India and Pakistan before moving to Canada in 1997. Her work has appeared in several print and online publications in Canada, India and Pakistan. She lives in Mississauga, Ontario with her husband and two kids.



The last of the Hadvaids - Traditional Healers

M

Much of Mumbai's skyline has undergone a dramatic change over the last decade but the precincts of Fort still retain much of their character. Dating back to the 18th century this area, protected by laws on heritage, can still boast of elegant art deco buildings. In the narrow lanes one comes across old bakeries, eateries, local shops and dispensaries that, somehow, precariously continue to survive despite the onslaught of globalisation and changing lifestyles.

In one such lane – Janmabhoomi lane – to be precise, is a small clinic which bears the board – Late Dr Sohrab Hadvaïd (Bonesetter). The clinic also sports the names of Dr Noshir S Hadvaïd and Dr Cyrus N Hadvaïd.

by freny manecksha

Inside the clinic I meet with Dr Noshir Hadvaïd, aged 73, who with his son, Dr Cyrus and a handful of others scattered in the city and other parts of Gujarat, are the last practitioners of this traditional form of healing.

Once an important profession of many Parsis, a *hadvaïd*, which literally means a doctor of the bones, was one who had perfected the means of bone-setting through manipulation and who could diagnose correctly because of his highly evolved sense of touch. Most *hadvaïds* learnt under a guru and it was a hereditary profession as Dr Noshir Hadvaïd explains to me.

"My father Sohrabji learnt his skills from his father Shahpurji who was known as the Suratwalla bone-setter. My father's two brothers Nanabhai the elder one and Dinshawji the younger one were also bone-setters. We lived in Girgaum, opposite Central Cinema. In the forties there were not too many orthopaedic surgeons and he handled all kinds of cases – simple and compound fractures.

"I learnt under my father. I was studying at Bharda High school here in Fort and in the summer vacations I would sit in his dispensary and observe how he would handle these cases."



photo credit - author





Late Shapurji ,Suratwalla,, photo credit - author

Later Dr Noshir went on to study homoeopathy and acquired a degree which qualifies him to practice officially and combine both forms of healing. His son Dr Cyrus has done a post-graduation

in homeopathy from London.

Many bone-setters still practising today also have degrees in homoeopathy.

Dr Noshir explains the expertise of a bone-setter as one who can bring the bone into proper alignment. Once that is achieved healing takes place quickly. He has an interesting observation, though, to make of a current trend whereby healing is now becoming complicated because of calcium deficiency.

"I prescribe homoeopathic medicines to help calcium assimilation. We are seeing many cases in which healing is hampered because of lack of vitamin D. It is a consequence of change in lifestyle and because of the increasing number of highrise buildings in the city that block sunlight – the natural source of vitamin D."

Besides fractures Dr Noshir, like other *hadvaids*, deals with cases of spondylosis, sprains, strained muscles, arthritis, dislocations and so on. Special ointments using herbs and oils are applied and gently manipulated. *Laeps* or poultices are also commonly used.

The formula and content of these ointments and *laeps* are not disclosed, he explains,

because *hadvaids* adhere to the early principle that their healing expertise and skills should not be exploited for commercial interests.

Parzor, the Unesco Parsi-Zoroastrian



Dr Noshir Hadvaid - photo credit Chandita Mukherjee

organisation that aims at recording and preserving Parsi-Zoroastrian heritage has conducted research and field work on *hadvaids*. It notes that there is a special system for the application of these *laeps*. A white *laep* which is first applied has cooling properties. Meant to reduce inflammation and swelling it has a soothing effect. Thereafter red and black *laeps* which are stronger are used.

Like a chiropractor, the *hadvaid* places much emphasis on correct manipulation for injuries like sprains. Whilst Dr Noshir uses the hand for manipulation, there were many *hadvaids* who had mastered the art of manipulation using the leg in the form a kick.

Writing in Parsi Khabar Dr Kayomerz Patel, a *hadvaid* who is one of last few who practices this form of manipulation, describes it as a move whereby the *hadvaid* places his foot on the hip of the patient lying face down on the floor. A forceful high-velocity thrust is given with the kick that stretches the spinal column beyond its normal range of movement to increase its mobility.

Needless to add that whilst it looks deceptively simple the kick requires huge skill and calls for intense concentration and an extremely high degree of precision and accuracy. More importantly it also requires expertise on the part of the practitioner to



Dr Madhivala. Photo credit Parsi Khabar

decide whether such a kick will be beneficial or not.

The most famous exponent of this kick as a form of manipulation was Dr Manchershaw Madhivala who had a sprawling bungalow in Madhi, near Bardoli in Gujarat. It is said that Vijay Merchant, cricketer and philanthropist had made arrangements for Dr Madhivala to travel to Bombay (as it was then known) and treat patients at a clinic set up in the mill premises.

Another famous practitioner of the kick was Dr Jal Amaria who learnt under Dr Madhivala. Dr Amaria is believed to have seen and treated some 200 patients per day. What was particularly noteworthy was that both Madhivala and Amaria stressed on the need for philanthropy and refused to commercially exploit their expertise, laying emphasis instead on giving relief to thousands of patients.

This emphasis on service by *hadvaids* as part of their ethics is reiterated by Dr Noshir Hadvaid who points out how patients would sometimes come even in the middle of the night for relief. "Shoulder dislocations are extremely painful and patients with those dislocations would seek out my father and me to get the shoulder back in alignment." He adds that as long as it is possible he continues to be available for emergency services even at night.

He recalls another particular episode from his father's days. "It was in 1950 and a driver suffered a terrible accident. Both the tibia and fibula were broken. I had gone with my father and we could see the bone sticking out of the skin. My father treated him till he made a recovery. Those days it was the Number One tram that ran upto Victoria Terminus and the charge for a ticket

was half anna. My father would stop the tram and tell the conductor not to charge for the ticket."



Dr Noshir dispensing medication - photo credit Chandita Mukherjee

The sense of philanthropy that prevailed within the profession is further exemplified by the fact that the clergy from any religion, doctors, those serving in the fire brigade and police personnel were treated free by *hadvaids*. For Dr Noshir Hadvaid the gratitude of so many policemen and those in government service is ample satisfaction for a profession he continues to practice.



Freney Manecksha is an independent journalist from Mumbai interested in covering issues on development, human rights and culture.

Cancer - A modern-day plague

F

Five years ago, I was diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukaemia, a form of Blood Cancer. My world turned upside down and the nine months that followed were a whirlwind. Hospital visits, blood tests, chemo and that scary pit in the stomach became the new normal.

Through it all my family and I decided to live a day at a time and miraculously, we survived through it all. Positive attitude played a very important role in our lives and we all made sure that no one in the family talked about it all day long.

by shernaz petigara

Two things that we as a family learnt was to have consistent faith in our journey to recovery. Faith of my husband and faith of my daughter helped me fight this fatal illness and deal with each day with a smile and not panic anymore.

Second were the two 'P's – Patience and Perseverance. 'Patience mum', said my daughter and 'Perseverance said my husband'. Both these words were a reassurance that we would fight this illness together and bring me out of it completely. This made me stronger and ready to fight back whatever came my way not knowing however, what difficult times were in store for me.

After fighting and not giving up for more than seven months, I saw a dream to write my experiences in a little book. It was all put together and is called Two Steps to a New Life. The book will stir powerful emotions in the reader, and unleash tears in the eyes as well as propound courage, faith, cheerfulness and positivity.

The book shows to all that huge troubles, immense pain and deep anxiety can be combated with grim determination and deep faith. It may sound crazy but, I personally took my illness as an experience one can be grateful for. Not only did it bring my

family closer together but today I live each day more fuller, say 'I Love You' more, speak my mind and spend more time making my dreams come true than I do dreaming them.

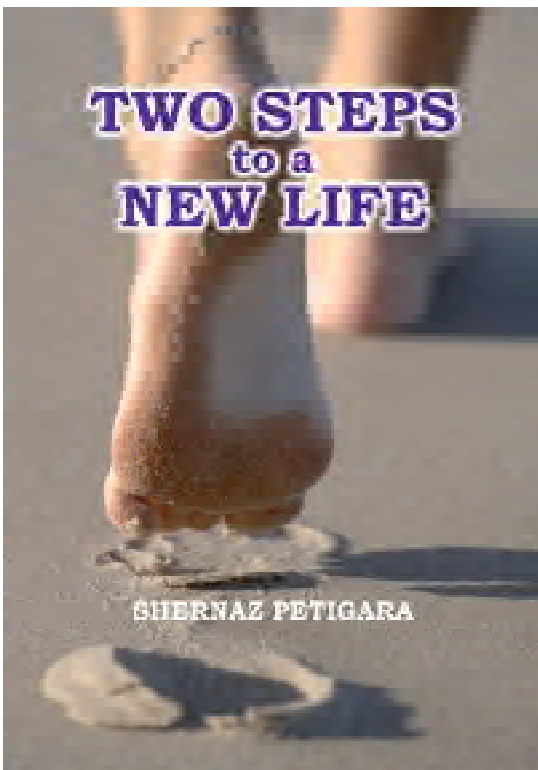
I had a relapse of the same illness in August 2014. It was yet another shock once again because the doctors had declared me cancer free in March, 2014 when I wrote and published my first book referred above. My family and I once again took the diagnosis in our stride and faced it all with our chin up in the air and a smile on our faces. My family has supported me in my decision of not going through the bone marrow transplant which was the only solution according to the haematology doctors at the hospital.

I have now chosen to take the High Dose Vitamin C treatment which an angel friend who came to see us at the hospital recommended. It is expensive but worth it because it is light on my mind, body and soul.

We all have to go to our final destination, our home or the Land of Peace one day and thought it would be nice to go in a refined way rather than go through the harsh treatment of a bone marrow transplant followed by abrasive chemotherapy sessions and its after effects.

Let me end this article with a small thought to the readers.

"Let your first thought of the day simply be peaceful, Plant this seed, water it with attention, and you will gather the calm required for the rest of the day."



The Copy Press
ISBN: 9780473277888
54 pages
Soft cover NZ\$14.95

Your contribution towards the price of this book will go to the Cancer Patients Aid Association, India.

Simply Google the title of the book and it could be yours.

Shernaz Petigara did her BCom from the University of Bombay and post graduate diploma in marketing from the University of Auckland where she lives. Having worked for large companies, she currently is at Kidz First Community Health as their Admin Assistant. Shernaz with her husband Sarosh, has designed and are the webmasters of www.ahuramazda.com and prior to her illness she was very active within the community. What she wants from life is 'just live and let others live'.



Researching Zenobia Bamboat Mistri

- Shireen Baria Isal

We are currently researching information, with the purpose of writing her life story, on Zenobia Mistri (nee Bamboat), a renowned teacher of French language and culture in 20th century Bombay (now Mumbai). She was born in Karachi, daughter of Goolbai and Jamshed Bamboat and was one of five siblings, whose names were Khorshed, Maccoco, Sabar and Gai. She, along with her family, moved to Mumbai where she met and married Mr Pirosha Mistri, who worked at the House of Tata for 61 years in his capacity as Personal Secretary to Sir Ratan Tata and Secretary of the Ratan Tata Trust. She passed away in Mumbai in 1998.



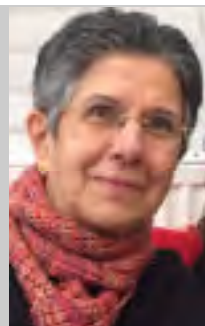
Pirosha & Zenobia, courtesy of the family

Zenobia Mistri was, in her lifetime, one of the leading teachers of French language and literature in Mumbai. Over the several decades that she taught there, scores of her students benefited from her immense knowledge and devotion to her profession. She was also known for her commitment to several charitable causes.

We would be extremely grateful if readers could contact us at the address below with any information on Mrs Mistri's life, her formative years in Karachi, her teaching and other engagements in Mumbai and any personal recollections of this remarkable lady, whose generosity of spirit and devotion to her work touched many hearts. Documents and photos for insertion in the story will be welcome and duly acknowledged. ■■■

Contact : Shireen@associationsargam.com

Shireen Isal, nee Baria, born in Bombay, where she did her graduate and post-graduate degrees in French, before leaving for Paris, France. She studied extensively under Zenobia Mistri, whose unique method of training, she believes, stood her in good stead in the decades that followed. Her interest in writing Zenobia Mistri's life story stems from her belief that her beloved teacher's contribution to the propagation of the French language and culture in India, her unique love for, and commitment to, her innumerable students over several decades need to be told and recognised!



Noshir Mehta - The Man with the Golden Arm

In November 2014, at Hyderabad, India, Noshir Mehta completed the astonishing feat of having played competitive cricket for fifty years continuously. Asked if he knew of any other cricketer who has achieved this feat, Mehta says, "In the early days there were sports persons playing even after they had crossed the age of 50 years but someone playing for 50 years on the trot and competitively, I have not heard of." His longevity as a cricketer is mostly due to his disciplined life and extraordinary physical fitness. He has been mentioned in dozens of newspapers and in the Wisden Cricketers Almanac.

by beyniaz edulji

He describes the day when he achieved the feat: "When I got up that morning, it sort of dawned on me as to what was I doing playing 'A' Division cricket and risking injury at this age with no career to look forward to but the passion for the game I love; and which has given me so much in life made me don those whites and the thought of trying to bowl my side to victory even today spurs me on. Even when I coach I bowl to the boys because I want them to get their basics right. On the day of the match to mark my 50 years of playing cricket, I had invited most of my old friends with whom I started playing cricket and with whom I have shared so many ups and downs on the field. Present on that day were S P Misra (India Davis Cup Tennis Captain and now chief selector), Mansing, the manager of the victorious 1983 World Cup Indian team and who encouraged me a lot during my formative years as a cricketer, Pragyan Ojha Team India's left arm spinner whose presence made my morning even more special. The press were there in full attendance and I thank them for all the support and wonderful write ups of me over the years. My wife Yasmin was also there without whose support I don't think I would be playing today. I missed my Dad who was instrumental in making me a good spin bowler and a disciplined human being. Then started the match and the icing on the cake was that we won and I got four valuable wickets."

Mehta was born on February 5, 1948, and his unique bowling talent was discovered when he was very young. He was part of the Ranji Trophy Hyderabad team for ten years from 1967 to 1976 and has taken 147 wickets. He played for India's South Zone in the prestigious Duleep Trophy from 1971-72 and was a member of the team in 1972-73. He represented All India Subsidiary Banks in 1971, 1973, 1977-1980, 1983, and 1985. He also played for Hyderabad in the Moin-Ud-dowla Gold Cup from 1965 to 1976 with a gap of two years when he represented All India Banks in the tournament. He has played in the Rest of India Team in 1972 against the Indian Team, for the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister's XI against the touring Sri Lankan team in 1971 and has visited Malaysia, Singapore, Colombo, East Africa, Bangkok, Hong Kong, Manila, Australia and the Fiji Islands as a member of the Indian Hyderabad Blues team on foreign tours. He was a member of the Indian Veterans XI which played



Pakistan in the Independence Cup at Hyderabad in 1997. As Captain of the Hyderabad Veterans Cricket Team, Mehta has toured Sri Lanka in 2008. He was also a member of the Hyderabad Veterans team which toured Dubai in 2010.

Asked who was the greatest bowler of all times, Mehta says, "it is very difficult to pinpoint anyone as there were some great fast bowlers of yesteryears and also some good spinners like Shane Warne, Prasanna, who with all their guile and variations used to fox even great batsmen who would fall prey to their magic which they used to weave around them. Among the fast bowlers, Freddie Trueman, Larwood, Lindwall, Lillie, Sir Richard Hadlee, Holding, Marshall, Roberts, Imran Khan, Mcgrath were some of the best to have played the game."

Asked to recollect his interactions with Parsi greats, Mehta has this to say, "I never really had that much of an interaction with our legendary Parsi cricketers as they were much senior to me. During the single wicket tournament in which I created my batting record, I got a few valuable tips from Polly Umrigar Sir. I have had quite a bit of interaction at the Parsee gymkhana Bombay with Nari Contractor Sir, Polly Umrigar Sir and also sometimes with Farrokh Engineer. My meetings with them were always very informative as they possessed so much knowledge of the game."

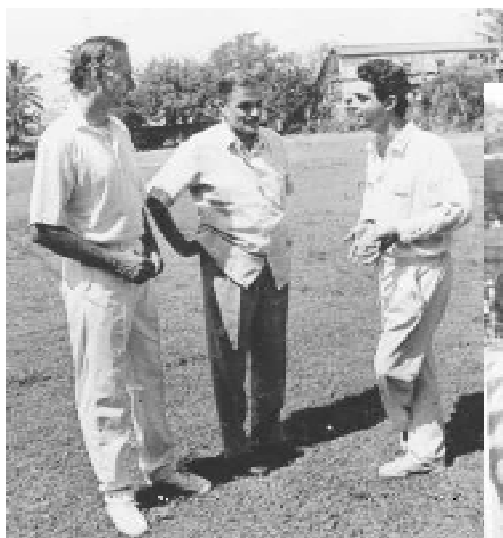
Cricket runs in Mehta's blood. His father, Soli R Mehta was in the police, Director of the Finger Print Bureau, a much disciplined and highly respected person at work and in cricketing circles. He was considered along with Ghulam Ahmed as the finest spin bowling pair in the country in those days and was a member of the Hyderabad team that won the Ranji Trophy for the first time in 1938. He was a very able cricket administrator as well as the Secretary of the Hyderabad Cricket Association for many years. He was also the captain of the Hyderabad team. Mehta says, "Whatever I have achieved in my cricket and career is because of him. He was always there for me

and all that I learned as an off spinner is only because of his valuable tips and coaching."

Eddie Aibara, his grand uncle, was his batting coach. Noshir tells us that Eddie "was like my Dad, a much disciplined human being who devoted his entire life for the game he loved so much. It was because of his innings of 136 (not out) that Hyderabad won the Ranji Trophy in 1938. He was a very stylish batsman and lots of people who have seen him play say that he is the finest batsman to have ever played for Hyderabad. He was a much respected coach and a very senior National Institute of Sports coach who has produced many a legendary cricketer."

The game of cricket seems to have changed a lot since Mehta first started playing. Asked if it is still a gentleman's game, Mehta informs us, "Cricket has undergone a marked change these days with the rules favouring batsmen more. Earlier there were no covers and it was that much more difficult to play some of those great fast bowlers of yesteryears without a helmet. The equipment of today is far superior to what we used – be it bats, shoes, or any other protective gear. Today, the image of this great game has been severely dented with some of the match fixing scandals and the amount of money that has come into it. There is a lot of sledging going on and heated exchanges take place on the ground. Earlier there was no need for umpires to step in and break up run-ins which take place quite frequently these days.

Mehta has done some modelling assignments and has also played the role of a cricket selector in the Bollywood film Iqbal directed by Nagesh Kukunoor. Commentating and being on television panel discussions have been a good and different experience for Mehta. Being a coach and knowing the basics well enough has made it easy for him to talk on the finer points of the game. In fact in a panel discussion before the World Cup, he had correctly predicted that the semi final line up would most probably be Australia, India, New Zealand and South Africa.



With Nari Contractor & Zubin Bharucha in B.,bay

Winning performance in 1970



Pragyan Ojha, NM, Narayan Das



Yasmin & Noshir Mehta celebrating 50 years of competitive cricket in Nov ,14 at Hyderabad

He lists out the world class cricketers that he admires. "Dennis Lillee who defied a very bad back injury, spent two years in the gym, changed his action to become one of the best fast bowlers to have played the game. Others whom I admired were Sir Richard Hadlee, Marshall, Holding, Prasanna and Shane Warne and two of the greatest all rounders the game has seen - Sir Garfield Sobers and Jack Kallis."

When asked who he emulated or did he always play his own game, Mehta says, "I did try to learn a few variations of Prasanna after seeing him from close range to try and become a better bowler, but I never copied anyone. Today, in my opinion, the most versatile cricketer in the world is A B de Villiers."

Mehta was a coach with the Hyderabad Cricket Association where he coached youngsters from the under-14, under-16, under-19, under-22 and State senior players and was appointed by HCA as a State Selector for the under 17 and under 19 teams during the years 2003-2006. Mehta has been the Spin Bowling Coach at the Hyderabad Cricket Academy of Excellence. His advice to any youngster just starting to play cricket is this: "The upcoming youngsters of today have more opportunities to play as their careers start from the under-14 stage. They must play the game with single minded devotion, dedication and discipline and keeping that one ambition in mind – that is of playing for the country. They should also remember that whatever they achieve, it is always a learning curve as no one is perfect and they should remain humble and open to advice from their seniors. The quality which a youngster should have in abundance and which separates the men from the boys are to have plenty of confidence in one's own ability to succeed at all levels, be it in their games or in their careers." ■■■■

Photographs courtesy of Noshir Mehta

Beyniaz Edulji lives in Secunderabad, India. A Law Graduate from Mumbai, she also has Master's Degrees in Economics and Politics from Mumbai University. She has written many political commentaries, sports articles (especially on cricket) and features on various personalities, travel, food and Geospatial Technology for magazines and newspapers in India and abroad. Her interests include adventure sports, cooking and travelling.



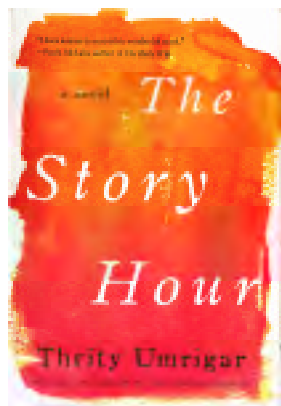
The Story Hour – Thrity Umrigar

- A Review

T

Thrity Umrigar's sixth novel is about two women from different worlds who find themselves bound together in a relationship that neither could have ever foreseen. Maggie is a successful psychologist who easily maintains an emotional distance from her patients. But one day she encounters Lakshmi, a young Indian woman who has tried to kill herself and ends up in the hospital where Maggie has her clinic. Trapped in a loveless marriage, forced to break all contact with her family and confined to a world divided between a poky little apartment and her husband's grocery store Lakshmi is withdrawn and uncommunicative. Lakshmi is initially hostile toward Maggie and Maggie approaches Lakshmi with her own prejudices intact. They soon discover that they have some very similar life experiences. Both are married to Indian men and both lost their mothers at an early age. In their vastly different ways both are outsiders as well, struggling with feelings of guilt and shame. Unaccountably moved by the young woman's distress, Maggie soon finds that her professional distance eroding and a bond quickly grows between the two.

by zehra bharucha



In an effort to help Lakshmi, Maggie offers to treat her for free at her home. Lakshmi is introduced to Sudhir, Maggie's Indian husband and becomes a regular visitor to their home. Maggie teaches her to drive and the two women swap stories of their lives. When Lakshmi brings food for them as a thank you, Maggie and Sudhir encourage her to broaden her horizons and consider starting up a catering business. In the manner of a chrysalis emerging from its shell, Lakshmi gradually finds herself in demand as a caterer for all their university friends. The friendship between Maggie and Lakshmi grows and the bond between them deepens. Maggie tells her stories about her childhood and her conflicted relationship with her father. Lakshmi reciprocates by telling her about the village she grew up in, Mithai the elephant and the hopes and dreams she once had. Yet in spite of this closeness, these two women come from vastly different mindsets and backgrounds and their expectations of each other and of their friendship are poles apart. When both

of them reveal long buried secrets to each other, the impact this has is devastating, not just for themselves but for all those around them. Lakshmi's impulsive act on learning Maggie's biggest secret fractures not just their friendship but has profound implications on their marriages and their lives as well.

This powerful novel proves that Thrity Umrigar just gets better and better with each book. Her ability to evoke the sense of desolation and loneliness experienced by Lakshmi is astounding. Moreover she gives Lakshmi a very distinctive 'voice', a voice that anyone familiar with the Subcontinent will recognise immediately. Lakshmi's opinions, mindset and language all bring the immigrant experience vividly to life. Her broken English and distinctive pronunciation are poignant reminders that she is an outsider in this immense, yet unfamiliar country. Yet it would be a mistake to read this novel with any preconceived notions. Lakshmi may appear downtrodden, ignorant

and submissive, but it would be a mistake to cast her as a victim. And Maggie, in spite of advantages that Lakshmi could never imagine, may not be quite as free as she thinks she might be.

A sensitive and delicately drawn novel of friendship, secrets, redemption, forgiveness and second chances, *The Story Hour* will appeal to a wide variety of readers and cements Thrity Umrigar's reputation as a voice of the immigrant woman and as a masterful story teller of the immigrant experience. ■■■



Originally from Karachi, Zehra Bharucha has lived in Sydney, Australia for the last 15 years. When not working as an editor in the legal publishing business she can usually be found reading or cooking elaborate banquet style feasts for family and friends.

In an article written by Tom Jackson on Thrity Umrigar which appeared in *Parsi Khabar* of 2nd April, writing from Cleveland, Ohio where Thrity lives, he writes: „Perhaps our best-regarded local writer is Thrity Umrigar. She„s a journalist, critic and college professor, but for readers, she„s most of all a novelist, the author of seven novels, including 2014„s well-reviewed *The Story Hour*„.

Jackson shares with the reader why Thrity chose to make Ohio her home ... „How she wound up in Ohio is an amusing story. ‡I was sitting in my living room in Bombay, checking off a list of American universities that offered a MA in journalism, when my eyes fell on „Ohio State University„. There was a Joan Baez record playing on the turntable and right then, her song, *Banks of the Ohio*, came on. I looked up and thought, „It„s a sign„, and decided to apply there.„.

Thrity is writing her next novel which is about a young African-American boy who is adopted by a white politician after he is locked up in his apartment by his mom who is a drug addict. The story plays with our notions of morality, and deals with issues of racial appropriation. It is a story about competing claims of love, betrayal and forgiveness.

No doubt another read to look forward to! fi Ed.

Keki N Daruwalla: poet, short-story writer and novelist

An excerpt from Dr Acharya's speech, introducing 'An Evening with Keki Daruwalla' at The Nehru Centre, London, on 28 November 2014

It is my great pleasure and privilege to introduce Keki N Daruwalla. He is the author of twelve volumes of poetry, five short story collections and a novel. His poems figure in major anthologies, such as *Scanning the Century* (Viking, London) and *Uncommon Wealth* (OUP, Toronto). His poems have been widely translated and along with his short stories they are included in school textbooks in India.



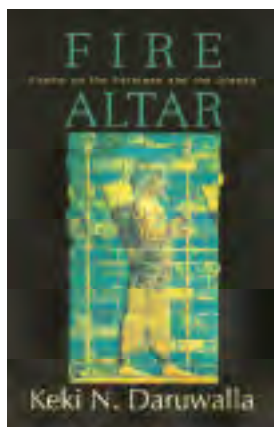
Keki's first book, *Under Orion*, published in 1970, established him 'as a name to reckon with in Indian poetry.' Nissim Ezekiel wrote that Daruwalla "was born full-grown from the head of some hitherto unrecognised goddess of poetry." Poets like Robert Graves, Wole Soyinka, Michael Hulse, among others have commended his work.

In 1984, Daruwalla won the Sahitya Akademi Award for *The Keeper of the Dead*, and in 1987 *Landscapes* won him the coveted Commonwealth Poetry Prize for Asia. His novel, *For Pepper and Christ*, was shortlisted for the Commonwealth Prize (Asia-UK) in 2010. And his latest poetry book, *The Fire Altar*, has been shortlisted for the Khuswant Singh Memorial Prize for Poetry 2014. Earlier this year, he was awarded the Padma Shri by the Government of India for his services to and achievements in literature.

Fire Altar, Keki Daruwalla's latest collection of poems, "celebrates the histories and legends of the Persian Empire with its emphasis on tolerance and its significance as the birthplace of Zoroastrianism." These poems mark a journey in search of roots and meaning – religious, social, personal. Born in Lahore in 1937 to a Parsi family, he received his Master's degree in English Literature from the



Shanta Acharya DPhil (Oxon) was born in Orissa. She has published five collections of poetry, a doctoral study, and three books on asset management. An internationally published poet, critic, reviewer and scholar, her latest poetry collection is *Dreams That Spell The Light*.



University of Punjab. Having lived in rural India as an officer of the Indian Police Service as well as in various cosmopolitan cities of the world, Daruwalla's poems capture a worldview that is not necessarily centred in an Indian philosophical tradition. It is his mix of ancestry and upbringing that fostered in him a cosmopolitan sensibility that enables him to remain detached and write about Indian themes from an alternative perspective.

In an interview in 1995, Daruwalla described this sense of not being rooted in any Indian tradition as "a Western sensibility". He went on to explain: "If I'd been brought up in Sanskrit, or even in my own *Avesta*, I'd have been a different person. But being brought up on the Roman script, on Anglo-Saxon history, colonial history and literature, how do you expect me to be different?" In his poem, "The Poseidonians," he says: "All it takes to blight a language / is another sun..." In his 1995 interview, he noted: "When I move out of the country (meaning India) I can't write poetry." This tension between his country, his life and upbringing, his evolving sensibility lies at the crux of his work.

Like all great writers, he mines his personal experiences. Having spent most of his career in the Indian Police Service and latterly in the Intelligence Service, it is not surprising that power and its consequences engage his imagination. There is both fascination with power and the recognition of its limitation, the havoc it leaves. His verse travels like the eye of the storm; his hawk, like Ted Hughes' before him, emerges as a symbol of power and mastery. Only that Daruwalla's hawk is "a rapist in the harem of the sky." ("Hawk," *Keeper of the Dead*).

There is tremendous energy, movement, change, transformation in his poetry as we move across the canvass – from his poetry, short stories to fiction. We are caught in the – 'shifting nature of things'. In his poem, "Sidelines", (in *Night River*), he exhorts us: "Live on the fringe, but die at the centre./ A good aphorism is one / which is true on the flip side as well./ So die on the fringe but live at the centre./ But don't for Pete's sake / live

on the fringe and die there too." It will be safe to say that Daruwalla has and always will occupy the centre.

Before The Word

- Keki Daruwalla

Corn is great, on the cob or otherwise,
but before corn in the ear there was life.
Fire is holy especially for Zoroastrians,
but before fire too there was life.
Before the bowstring and the flint arrow sang,
there was life.

The word is great,
yet there was life before the word.
We can't turn romantic and say
we were into bird speech or river-roar then,
into the silence of frost
or the language of rain.
But forest speech and swamp speech
came through easier to us.
When lightning crashed,
the cry of the marsh bird was our cry,
and we flung ourselves to the other branch
like any other baboon.

As winter whined on windy cliff,
we shivered with the yellow grass.
In winter-dark a hundred eyes
flared yellow in the jungle scrub.
When seasons changed, blood coursed with sap
and flowered in meadows. We were at home.
Nor eyes nor bat cries bothered us.
What if we didn't know
a bat assessed reality
from the ricochet of its cry?

Though there were no words,
fear had a voice with many echoes.
Worship was quieter, adoration
spoke only through the eyes or knees.

What was it like before language dropped like
dew,
covering the scuffed grass of our lives?



The Buzz about

Khojeste Mistree conducts a heritage walk in Mumbai, as he wants to instill a sense of pride in the community. It's a 2.5 hour walk organised by Jiyo Parsi which commences at the Bhikha Behram well ending at the Irani restaurant, Kyani & Co. As Parsi history is not taught in schools, Mistree feels it will be beneficial especially for the youth to know the background of the various institutions and individuals who have contributed in making Mumbai what it is today.

Tata Sons has tied up with Bombay Heritage Walks to organise weekend walking tours for its staff from its various firms. The walk begins at the Taj Mahal Hotel which goes for 3.5 kms through Kala Ghoda, Flora Fountain, Horniman Circle and Fort making 24 stops. The talk is prolific on anecdotes making it a pleasure and learning experience for the staff members.



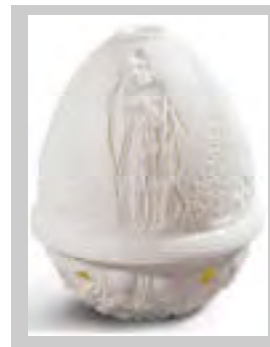
Ashoka Chakra awardee Brig Cyrus Addie Pithawalla has been approved for the next rank of a Major-General. Brig Pithawalla is among the only four such awardees – two Ashoka Chakra and two PVC – currently serving in the army. India's highest gallantry award the Param Vir Chakra in war and its peacetime equivalent Ashoka Chakra have mainly been given posthumously, for laying down

of lives while displaying "most conspicuous bravery" in battling the enemy or terrorists.

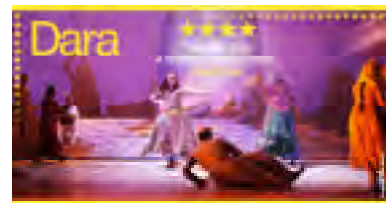


ZAGNY has brought out a Zarathushtra votive especially designed by Lladro as part of their Lithophane Votive Light Series. These are handmade in Valencia, Spain with an intricate engraving of Asho Zarathushtra on one side and a Farohar on the other. It is 4.75" high and 3.5" wide, with a high intensity tea light made especially by Lladro giving an

intense glow. ZAGNY is offering these for US\$100 minus tax or shipping charges. The proceeds will go towards their new Darbe Mehr project. Contact: Behroze Clubwala – bclubwala@aol.com / Ferzin Patel – ferzpsych@aol.com / Piroja Press – pirojapress@gmail.com



Zubin Varla performs in the much talked about Shahid Nadeem's play, Dara at the National Theatre, London gaining rave reviews. It is a story of two brothers at the head of the Mughal Empire in 1659 but Dara is more than just a family drama. Whatsonstage comment: 'At Dara's core is a court scene – right up there with Galileo's or Shylock's'.



Justice Rohinton F Nariman is the fifth lawyer to be directly elevated to the bench in the Supreme Court. Besides being an astute lawyer, he is also a scholar of Zoroastrian and comparative religion, and of history and western classical music. Nariman could very well have selected to become a conductor but the gavel won!

Jamshed Dorab Nagarwala was the first IGP of Gujarat after becoming a separate state in 1960. He was one of the two officers investigating the Mahatma Gandhi murder case. At that time he was a young deputy commissioner of police with the special branch of Bombay police, when he was told to investigate the case "threadbeare". Apparently it took the home ministry almost two weeks to choose Nagarwala's name. Today, a police ground at Shahibaugh bears his name.



Kairshasp Nariman Choksy was the only Parsi to become Sri Lanka's cabinet minister. He was the Minister of Finance and also served as Minister of Constitutional & State Affairs. Mr Choksy was a Member of Parliament from 1989 to 2010 continuously. A prominent constitutional lawyer who from boyhood soaked in the legal atmosphere in his father's law Chambers. He passed away at the age of 82 on 5 February after an illustrious career.





Dr Dhun Noria, The Scarborough Hospital's Chief of Laboratory Medicine and Medical Director of Laboratories was presented with the Order of Ontario by the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario at an investiture ceremony on 3rd February. The order of Ontario is the province's highest official honour and Dr Noria was recognised due to her 'unwavering commitment and steadfast dedication to TSH, Scarborough and the Ontario medical community.'



The Khada Parsi in Byculla is the one of only two such cast-iron statues in the world, the other being in Cires, Chile. The statue has been under attack from drug addicts and thieves, who are cutting off pieces from the base to sell as scrap. The statue is of Seth Cursetjee Manockjee commissioned by his youngest son Manockjee Cursetjee in the 1860s.

The Dadar Parsi Colony, in Mumbai, which was built in the 1920s, thanks to Mancherji Joshi a civil engineer, who used his influence to obtain 102 plots and under a British-era covenant, and reserved it for the Parsi community. Over time fire temples, gymkhanas, schools and marriage halls were built within this area to become 'the world's largest Zoroastrian enclave'. Several years ago a mansion at the entrance of the Colony was replaced by builder Jimmy Mistry with his Della Tower, adorned with Avestan prayers, massive reliefs of Achaemenian design and nightly illumination. Now another 19-storey tower, the Nirvan Tower is to replace the two-storey Daruvala House. Efforts have been made to make the area heritage but so far it has not succeeded.



Ketty Shroff, 72 always wanted to be a post graduate but put this dream on hold due to financial constraints. Fifty years later she stood first among 2,342 students who appeared for MA in Avesta Pehlavi this year from the Institute of Distance Open Learning, Mumbai University. The next day after the convocation ceremony Ketty suffered a heart attack and was rushed to the ICU of a nearby hospital. Whilst recuperating in the general ward, Ketty said "My financial condition was not that stable. I completed my schooling and graduation with scholarships. I did my graduation in Economics from SB Garda College in 1964 at the age of 21."

Goolrookh Gupta a Parsi married to a non Parsi has been fighting along with her sister Shiraz Patodia for their rights for sometime. Can a woman be prohibited from practising her religion if she marries a man from a different religion? Is she bound to follow her husband's religion? Can her religious places bar her from offering prayers if she marries outside the community?



These are some of the questions 46-year-old Goolrookh M Gupta, nee Contractor, has asked the Supreme Court. Their parents live in Valsad, where suddenly in 2004 the Anjuman took a decision not to allow women married outside the community into fire temples, though in their case they have not changed their religion. The Supreme Court has agreed to hear the petition challenging the decision taken by the Valsad Anjuman, which is awaited.

Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport's (CSIA) T2 terminal is now undergoing the completion of its 'art museum' on the walls, set to be opened by second half of this year. The Parsiproscaenium theatre curtains of Mumbai, with their rich repertoire of street fascias and portals will also be part of the art work. The old Parsi style proscenium theater went into oblivion after the arrival and popularization of cinema in India. These curtains will add a layer of whimsy with three dimensional sections of stone facades and jharokhas.



Music maestro Zubin Mehta will perform with over 100 musicians of the Australian World Orchestra (AWO) in Chennai in October this year. This programme has been made possible in part thanks to funding support announced by the Australian Government. As part of the tour, the orchestra will also deliver an education programme to young Indian musicians and perform Haydn's *Toy Symphony* in a series of concerts for underprivileged children, with the involvement of a number of Australian and Indian cricketers.

Parsis are considering the option of surrogacy through the womb of non-Parsi women, under the government funded Jiyo Parsi scheme to boost the community's dwindling population. Dastur Khurshed Dastoor, who was consulted on the idea, said, "Surrogacy is fairly new and we don't have any religious texts on this topic. I don't see any problem as far as the sperm and the egg belongs to the Parsi couple seeking help for having children." Whereas, Ervad Marzban Hathiram, who is known for his orthodox views, is completely against the idea of surrogacy. "Our religious scriptures talk about development of foetus in the mother's womb and it talks about the process of nurturing the foetus by the mother. Is it not against the religion if the foetus is in somebody else's womb?" said Hathiram adding that the nourishment to the foetus is derived from the mother and thus the womb matters a lot. Hathiram said that act of procreation is a holy act and it shouldn't be brought down to petri dishes and rented wombs. "I would be against this even if the egg, sperm and the womb is of a Parsi," he added.

Dr Cyrus S Poonawalla (Chairman and Managing Director, Serum Institute Of India), who pioneered the development of affordable life-saving vaccines and is counted among the largest vaccine manufacturers worldwide, was named the EY Entrepreneur Of The Year 2014 recently.

Maj (Rtd) Noshir K Marfatia wrote to Parsi Khabar, that they were closing the first and oldest cinema of Rajasthan, the Majestic, after completing 86 years of entertainment to the public of Ajmer on 1st March 2015. It was started by his father and other past family members in 1929 as a tin shed, with the audience sitting on the ground and a few chairs for the first class section. These were the days of silent films, with a harmonium, tabla and sarangi playing, as background music. They moved on to the 'Talkie Movie Era' in 1932 with a total of four upgrades to this cinema house during the period of 86 years, but with the opening of modern cinemas with multiple screens, heavy losses were suffered due to the low rates charged by the New Majestic Talkies.

An unidentified person has created a fake email account cyrus.mistry68@gmail.com which has been misleading people and tricking them, including the conglomerate's

executives and various stakeholders. For some time now, the scammer has been interacting with the group's employees masquerading as Mistry. The group's attention was drawn to the online fraud after some Tata executives fell prey to it. The impersonator had sent letters to Jaguar-Land Rover and other Tata entities, recommending certain candidates for jobs. The executives responded to them, only to later realise that something was fishy.



Bombay Parsi Punchayet's (BPP) four-year legal battle against the two 'renegade' priests has finally come to an end. The battle proved rather costly for the community with the litigation costs going up to Rs 3.5 crore. On 20th February, the BPP issued a joint statement (Mumbai Mirror has a copy) that the ban on the two priests has been lifted and that "a settlement has been reached between both parties on the ban in the priests case". The two priests, Mirza and Madon told the Mirror, they have not been informed the terms of settlement!

Qissa e Parsi : The Parsi Story, is a film which explores the history of the Parsi community, the relationship to the Indian state and association with the city of Mumbai. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-HT10XKZbA#t=71>

Scouter Khurshed Dadiba Hathiram was awarded India's highest scouting honour, The Silver Elephant by the President of India. At a glittering ceremony at the Rashtrapati Bhavan on February 16, 2015, Scouter Hathiram was conferred the award for his service to the scouting movement in India. The President of India is the Chief Patron of the Bharat Scouts and Guides, the apex body of Scouting in India.



Malcolm Deboo, president of ZTFE, informs "It is anticipated that the Everlasting Flame

Exhibition will open in New Delhi in time for Jamshedi NoRuz 2016. There is all talk that Tehran, Beijing and St Petersburg are also interested in hosting the exhibition." One of the highlights of the budget for 2015-16 presented by Finance Minister in the Lok Sabha was that 'The Everlasting Flame' exhibition is to be launched. This exhibition was seen at the Brunei Gallery, SOAS in Nov 2013 – Jan 2014.



Er Soli Dastur of Florida, has audio recorded the Geh Saarna prayer and Farokshi prayer for all to use and share. Similarly the Pazand Ashirwad with Afrin Buzorgaan and Doa Tandoorasti and the Sanskrit Ashirwad are available for downloading at http://www.avesta.org/mp3/Geh_Saarnaa_Prayer.mp3 http://www.avesta.org/mp3/Farokhshi_Prayer_01.mp3 http://www.avesta.org/mp3/Pazand_Ashirwad_with_Afrin_Buzorgaan_and_Doa_Tandoorasti.mp3

http://www.avesta.org/mp3/Sanskrit_Ashirwad.mp3

Mancherji Edalji Joshi Memorial Trust are in need for donations for their Food Scheme to feed the old and poor infirmed of the community in Mumbai. When they first started they were supplying meals to ten persons, two meals a day. Today this service is extended to 126 persons in all. The cost of feeding one person per month is approx IRs3,000.

Enquiries are welcome via e-mail to: hnd@vsnl.com

Donations may be sent to : Mrs Mithoo Jesia, Jesia Building, 797 Jam e Jamshed Rd, Parsi Colony, Dadar (E), Mumbai 400 014. Ph 2414 9571. Mrs. Tina Patel, 623, Lady Jehangir Rd, Parsi Colony, Dadar (E), Mumbai 400 014. Ph: 2415 1354 and Mr H N Daruwalla, Sethna Building, 2/689, Dinshaw Master Rd, Parsi Colony Dadar E, Mumbai 400 014. Ph: 2411 2330.

After thousands of Izadis and Kurds have been forced to flee the onslaught of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, or forced to convert to Islam, or to be killed as "unbelievers", it was decided to send to them one thousand copies of "The Gathas, the sublime book of Zarathustra" by Dr Khosro Khazai

Pardis. This action was initiated by Shahrokh Vafadari and the translation from Persian to Sorani Kurdish language was made by Mansour Izadpanah.

Tata Steel observed the 176th birth anniversary of its founder Jamsetji N Tata on 3 March, with people from across the society and employees and officials of Tata group of companies taking part in the programme. Around 2000 participants took part in the pageantry that included tableaux from associate companies, social organizations, Jamshedpur Armed Force and Rapid Action Force.



Chairman Cyrus P Mistry speaking on the occasion said, "This also happens to be the year in which Tata Power, another of our Founder's visionary projects which is one of the key energy suppliers to Jamshedpur, observes its 100th anniversary."

A 78-year-old retired principal secretary to a former Chief Justice of the Bombay high court was murdered at his residence at Tata Blocks, Bandra (West), early on 8th March. His wife was bound, blindfolded and threatened by the killers before they made off with valuables worth Rs 8.09 lakh. Lily freed herself and went over to a neighbour's place for help. The police were called. Darius was later pronounced dead by doctors. The accused, both in their early twenties, were arrested by the Bandra police on the same day. One of them used to work at the couple's residence.

There are 30 Parsi colonies or baugs in the city, of which 18 are owned by the Bombay Parsi Panchayat (BPP). Of these, only Godrej Baug at Napean Sea Road and Captain Colony at Hughes Road have a CCTV network, according to Dinshaw Mehta, chairman of Bombay Parsi Panchayat.

Further to this crime and two more committed in early April at the Tata Blocks, a theft and an attempted robbery, the residents have



written to the Tata trust that manages the property, asking for enhanced security. The residents have appealed in desperation to Ratan Tata to intervene on their request, as his word will be final. A letter signed by 250

odd residents has been sent. The Tata blocks have over 290 flats in 25 buildings, in three compounds, with nearly 70% of the occupants being senior citizens.

Though the White House, [Washington] celebrated



Nowruz by having a true Persian feast in the State Dining Room of Chelo kabob, Asheh Reshteh, Salad Shirazi, Sabzi Polo baa kookoo sabzee, noon-o-paneer-o-sabzee, zoolbia bameeyeh, baghlavah, Ajeel and of course Persian tea, not a single Parsi or Irani Zarathushti were among the invited. A Persian feast to celebrate Nowruz 10 days before the big day in

The White House is so incredibly exciting writes one email forward.



A brewery established in the Punjab in 1860 to cater to British troops, 155 years later and the British Raj a distant memory, the Murree Brewery - now a flourishing enterprise listed on the Karachi Stock Exchange - is still churning out barrels of the frothy, locally-brewed lager along with whiskey, gin and Irish-Cream liqueur. The Parsi CEO of Murree Brewery,

Isphanyar Bhandara, also represents Pakistan's smallest minorities, the Parsis, Sikhs, Baha'is and the Kalash people, who

reside in the mountains of northern Pakistan in the National Assembly.

Bhandara's late father, also an MNA, took an active part in promoting Indo-Pak ties. His son also sees many untapped avenues for cooperation including visa-free travel for businessmen, the re-establishment of consulates in Mumbai and Karachi, and allowing Pakistanis to invest in India and vice versa. In fact, Bhandara has long been on the look out for an Indian partner interested in brewing Murree beer.

Mr Khodayar Attaie, Director of WZCC, Iran, has been organizing trips for Zoroastrians over the years, to Iran. He is offering a private tour for 15 days or 22 days, staying in four and five star hotels, three internal flights, two boat and one cable car rides from 12th May - 2nd June. Places of visit are: Tehran, Shiraz, Persepolis, Naqsh-e-Rustom, Pasargad, Yazd, Isfahan, Damavand, Azargoshnasb Fire Temple, Caspian Sea, Ali Sadar Caves, Hamedan, Kermanshah, Tabriz, Oroumiyeh, Zanjan, Sarein, Bandar Anzali, Fuman, Masouleh and Qazvin. Contact: khodayarattaie@gmail.com - ph: 8097003993.

In recent years the ZTFE, London, has felt the need to establish a Zoroastrian Senior Citizens Home for use by deserving senior citizens of our community in the UK. This project has commanded the attention of our community for some time. To help collect funds for the project a raffle of £10 per ticket was launched on NowRuz day.

ZTFE's member Mrs Shirin Simmons has gifted her new book "A Feast of My Persian Heritage" for Nowruz. One can download Shirin's book by clicking A Feast of My Persian Heritage or by going to her website <http://www.shirinsimmons.com>. It may take a little time to download as the book has almost 500 pages. She has written this cookbook in memory of her late husband Michael and late nephew Fashad.

Homi Gandhi of USA has sent this photograph of the Haft-Sheen table which was displayed at the UN for the celebration of the International Day of Nowruz on 20th March.



Jal & Pervin Shroff of Hong Kong have donated Rs135 crore to the Bomanjee Dinshaw Petit Parsee

General Hospital with the hope to halt its decline. A magnanimous gift on Nowruz Day. The endowment has been made with the intention to supplement the existing facility with a new 200-bed multispecialty healthcare unit that caters to Parsis as well as patients from other communities. The management decided to build a separate 200-bed multi specialty unit with an oncology department for “secular use without any discrimination of caste, creed or religion. The idea is to do some income management. Sustaining the existing hospital is difficult as the population of Parsis has gone down and its costs are subsidised. By allowing non-Parsis in the new hospital, there will be inflow of some profits through which the existing facility can be sustained too,” said an official from the hospital.



AirAsia India, on 21st March unveiled its fourth aircraft with a livery dedicated to JRD Tata, as a mark of respect to the pioneer of civil aviation

in the Indian sub-continent. The aircraft has been christened ‘The Pioneer’.



Vikas Dilawari, architect, has completed the conservation job on Esplanade House, opulent home of Jamsetji Tata which was built in 1885. It has taken a decade to repair and restore and the pains have gained fruit. The project received Honourable Mention at the 2014 UNESCO Asia Pacific Awards last year for Cultural Heritage Conservation. It is one of the rare buildings in the city that has wooden floors and a surviving example from late 19th century.

Firdaus Bhatena, an entrepreneur writes: “We created Bevy to solve a problem that every family has — we have too many photos and videos scattered across many different devices (smartphones, tablets, cameras, USB sticks, computers, external hard drives, etc.)

and it is frustrating and difficult to collect, organize, protect and enjoy these precious family memories.

Bevy is a connected device that is dedicated to solving this problem for you and your family. Once you bring Bevy into your life you can:

- *Collect and Organize* the entire family's photos and videos in one place, no matter who took the photo and on what device.

- *Protect* your precious family memories, with backup options both in-home and in a secure cloud.

- *Enjoy and Share* your digital memories, on your big-screen TV and on your mobile devices, both inside and outside the home.

There's much more information on our website, www.bevy.us and we have recently started taking pre-orders for Bevy.”



Astad Deboo, the celebrated contemporary dancer and choreographer, took the audience's breath away when he twirled on the parapet of the historic Mehrangarh Fort in Jodhpur during a fundraiser for the Indian Head Injury Foundation in mid March.

“The event was to raise funds for the head injury foundation and here I was doing some dance moves on a narrow parapet 30 feet high,” laughs Deboo, the pioneer of modern dance in India, who is not new to dancing on heights.

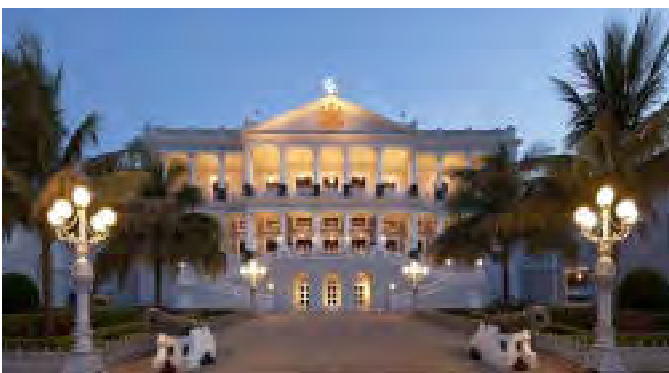
Parsis lobbied for seats in Parsi-endowed educational institutes, a museum in Delhi, two reserved parliament seats and the protection of community properties in a meeting with the National Commission for Minorities at Fort on 27th March. The chairman of the commission,

Naseem Ahmad, was in Mumbai to meet members of all minority communities. The issue of conserving heritage structures like the Bahrot Caves near Dahanu and a 1000-year-old Tower of Silence in Sanjan was also raised.



Tata Sons have appointed top-ranking investment strategist Farida Khambata as the first woman independent director in the company's 103-year history.

The controversial new development plan has failed to mark as many as 24 fire temples in Mumbai as Heritage Grade II A and Grade III A structures, thereby removing the protection that they enjoyed. This is yet another dubious move by the civic planners who prepared the development plan. It is unclear whether it is an oversight or an omission. "These fire temples, however, were not a part of the existing heritage list of 1995 and were an addition to the notified list. Many a times, these religious places have a higher FSI and therefore it's even more important that their heritage tag be protected. These places of worship are an integral part of the city," said architect Vikas Dilawari.



Hotel Taj Falaknuma Palace, Hyderabad, India, is the only Indian restaurant to be in the Elite Traveller top 100 list, entering as the hundredth.

Jehangir Sarosh OBE, of UK, is the new interim General Secretary of European Council of Religious Leaders. When asked

about his major achievement as a promoter of interfaith cooperation, he said "I'm proud of the fact that I invited five of the most prominent religious leaders from different faiths for a meeting and, with them as founding members, we started a process leading to the inauguration of ECRL-RfP".

Pakistani artist and social worker, Jimmy Engineer gave a talk organized by Harvard Pakistan Student Group and



South Asia Education Collaborative on 15th April at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Engineer has dedicated his life bringing awareness towards poverty and special needs children in Pakistan. He expresses himself through his paintings and commitment to bring awareness.

The Dr Tehmulji's Parsi Lying-in Hospital, near New Excelsior cinema off D N Road, has not been functioning for close to three decades now. The BPP, Mumbai's largest private landlord, has unsuccessfully tried to either sell the property or redevelop it.

Early April, six of the seven trustees of the Bombay Parsi Punchayat finalized an agreement with the private healthcare group Krimson Health Venture. But Punchayat chairman Dinshaw Mehta has opposed the deal and challenged it in the Bombay high court. Mehta said the BPP should have invited bids by making a public announcement to get the best deal from other players in the healthcare sector. His co-trustees denied the allegation, stating that the Krimson offer was the best they had received. The court is scheduled to decide the case by late April.

The Ahmedabad Parsi Panchayat has requested the AMC for a plot just adjacent to the Parsi sanatorium near the riverfront, so that the Vakil Adariyan Agyari can be relocated. At the moment it is in the Walled City where it was built 131 years ago. The area is heavily congested with

encroachments all around making it difficult for the community comprising of 1,700 members to make use of the temple, especially as the majority now live in the western part of the city.



Dr Fereshte Bakhtiari, from Kerman, Iran has climbed Mt Everest. Dr Bakhtiari who is part of Asha, a Zoroastrian Group, has a PhD in Chemical Engineering and is an experienced mountain climber who has scaled many mountains in Iran including Mt Damavand. She was part of a team of six men and two women which ascended Everest.

An estate owned by Sorabji Kanga Trust estimated to be over Rs1,000 crore known as Silver Oaks, was converted for secular use in the 1990's. Now, the majority of the BPP Trustees wish to go to court to rescind the decision taken in the 1990's, as they are against the idea of the secular use of the property.



Dinshaw Mehta,

Chairman, feels charity funds should not be spent on legal fees to make it community-specific, especially after spending over Rs 3 crore on the renegade priests' issue.

Shapoorji Pallonji Group chairman, Shapoorji Mistry has pledged to the Telangana government to invest Rs20,000 crore in assisting to make Hyderabad a global city. Plans are there to construct grade separators at busy junctions and roads, a new secretariat in Erragadda, construction of Kala Bharathi near Indira Park and other such improvements.



Yuhan Sohrab-Dinshaw Vevaina, eminent Zoroastrian scholar at Stanford University, has brought out the much-awaited Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Zoroastrianism. This is the first ever comprehensive English-language survey of Zoroastrianism, evenly divided into five thematic sections beginning with an

introduction to Zarathustra and concluding with the intersections of Zoroastrianism and other religions. The book will be released on 29 May 2015 and can be ordered on Amazon for US\$149.25.

On April 15, the Israeli Government released a stamp with the image of Cyrus' Cylinder. On the stamp is written - 'The Cyrus Declaration' and at the base :

'Anyone of you of all His people ... And let him go up to Jerusalem Ezra 1:3'

The value of the stamp is Sheqel 8.30.

<http://mfa.gov.il/MFAFA/IranIsrael/Pages/20150415-Cyrus-Stamp.aspx>



April 23rd was Pak Iranshah Atash Behram Padshah Saheb's Salgreh – Adar Mahino and Adar Roj, Adar Mahina nu Parab. In Udvada, hundreds of humdins from all over India congregate to pay their homage to Padshah Saheb and then are treated by a sumptuous Gahambar lunch courtesy of the Petit Family, which is an annual event! ■■■

Information appearing in Buzzabout is during the frame time of, February - mid April 2015.

The header of this section – Buzzabout – has been designed by Rovina Sethna, of Karachi, Pakistan. - Ed.

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Parsi Khabar, ZTFE's emails to members, emails from friends

ZSM Cookbook Launch

A report from Beyniaz Edulji

The Zoroastrian Stree Mandal (ZSM) of Secunderabad and Hyderabad launched the sixth edition of its popular book, 'The ZSM Cookbook' at the Secunderabad Parsi Dharamsala on 8 February. The Dharamsala an old heritage building, the pride of the Parsis residing in the twin cities of Secunderabad and Hyderabad, was beautifully decorated with banners and lights. Even the table decorations were made out of vegetables to keep in sync with the cookery theme.

The ZSM cook book was launched by Chef Vikram Sinha, who is the famous corporate chef of the Ohris Group of Restaurants and Hotels in Hyderabad. He along with Goolbanoo Chenoy, President of the Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman of Secunderabad and Hyderabad and Nawsha Jalnewalla, culinary expert, judged the cooking competition in the categories of salads, main courses and desserts. The competition had an enthusiastic response from participants between the ages of 15 to 80, followed by a musical evening and a sumptuous three course Parsi dinner.

The cookbook was first thought of in 1962 during the Indo-China War to help War Widows and a few set menus were printed but the first official cookbook was published in the year 1965. A group of ZSM ladies would meet every fortnight. There would be two hostesses and a cooking demonstration followed by lunch. The recipes would be collected in the form of a menu of four courses. The earlier books contained sets of menus to help novices in the kitchen, avoid repetition and transform themselves from mediocre cooks to 'master chefs'.

The ZSM Cook Book has come a long way since its inception. The ZSM ladies have ensured that the latest edition of the cookbook has a varied and vast repertoire. Pinky Katrak and Shazneen Wadia started compiling, sifting through and typing the



L to R: Mrs Pinky Katrak, Chef Vikram Sinha, Mrs. Pervez Nalladaru, Mrs. Armin Wadia



Table decoration using various vegetables

recipes shared by enthusiastic cooks of Secunderabad and Hyderabad. Later, this task was taken over by Rashna Mistry who helped edit and proof read. Danesh Mistry designed the cover and lay out of the book. The launch and dinner was a combined effort overseen by the President of ZSM, Mrs P P Nalladaru and the ZSM committee members.

ZSM, a charitable trust affiliated to the Indian Council of Social Welfare, focuses on uplifting needy Zoroastrians, and contributes to national causes as well as charitable organisations in India. For more than fifty years, ZSM has been providing aid for the less privileged, making sure that no deserving or needy person in the community is left out. They donate medicines, get children educated and when asked for aid, help old age homes, orphanages and NGOs like Help Age India. The ZSM contributes towards relief funds during national emergencies such as floods, droughts, tsunamis or earthquakes. The revenue generated from the sales of this Cookbook will be used for their charity work.

The cookbook is hard backed with 290 pages, with an Appendices and Index, for Rs350 plus courier charges. It contains Traditional Parsi, Indian and International, Vegetarian and non-Vegetarian recipes. Booking and shipment of the cookbook can be done through the following committee members:

Mrs Rashna D Mistry
Mobile --+91 9849770066
E-mail : rashna@youdan.net

Mrs Pinky R Katrak
Mobile- +91 9912914345
E-mail : pinkykatrak@rediffmail.com



ZSM committee members

“Wise One, ... tell me the best
words and actions, namely,
those allied with
good thinking and
with truth ...”

Yasna 34.15

Insler translation



The World Zoroastrian Organisation

NOTICE

Ervads Khushroo Madan and Framroze Mirza will not be permitted to perform any obsequial ceremonies at the Doongerwadi Complex including bhoisarna, gehsarna and/ or any other rituals performed in or around the DadgahSaheb at the Doongerwadi Complex, unless and until they file an Affidavit / Undertaking that they will only perform the funeral and four days after death ceremonies and the Farrokhshi Ceremony for the Farvardin Parab each year, for the deceased members of their immediate family only, who opt to be consigned to the Dokhma (Tower of Silence) in accordance with the Dokhmenishini system. In the event of their failing to file such an Affidavit/ Undertaking, they are not entitled to perform any religious rites and ceremonies at the Doongerwadi Complex and/ or at the two Agiaris of the Parsi Punchayet Fund and Properties.

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THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA

Petition for Special Leave to Appeal (Civil) No. 9732 of 2011

(From the Judgement and Order dated 11-3-2011 passed by the High
Court of Judicature at Bombay in Appeal No. 256 of 2010 In Originating
Summons No. 1909 of 2009 In Suit No. 3091 of 2009)

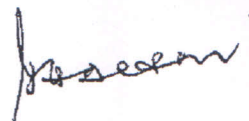
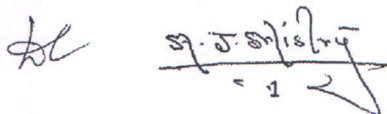
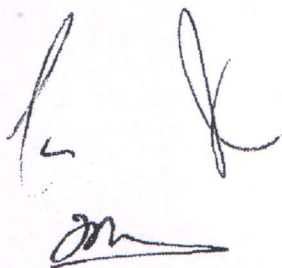
Parsi Punchayet Fund and Properties & Ors. ... Petitioners

Versus

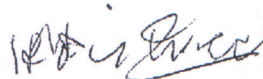
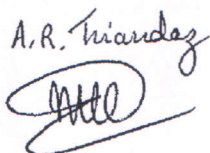
Jamsheed Kanga & Anr. ... Respondents

With a view to amicably settle the differences between the Petitioners and the Respondents
the parties submit the following Memorandum of Compromise and request this Hon'ble
Court to pass orders in terms of the same.

- 1) It is clarified that the issues in this litigation between the Petitioners and the Respondents are limited to the Doongerwadi Complex and the 2 Agiaries of the Petitioners and do not extend to any other property of the Petitioners.
- 2) It is clarified that the issues in this litigation between the Petitioners and the Respondents are not regarding the powers, rights or duties of the High Priests or their authority over religious matters. In the event of any disputed religious conduct by any priest within the aforesaid 2 Agiaries and / or Doongerwadi Complex, the opinion/s of the High Priests may be sought and considered.
- 3) The Petitioners state that they are Trustees of a Religious and Charitable Trust and have been vested with the Doongerwadi Complex (Towers of Silence) and the two Agiaries (Fire Temples).



A.R. Tiwari

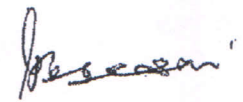

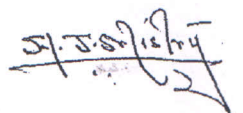


- 4) It is agreed that the Petitioners as Trustees shall permit and suffer the use of the Doongerwadi Complex by every Parsi Zoroastrian, who opts for the Dokhmenishini system, as a place for exposure of a deceased Parsi Zoroastrian and for the performance of Zoroastrian religious rites and ceremonies, carried out as per Parsi-Irani customs, by using a duly ordained Parsi Zoroastrian priest of his/her choice. Without in any manner limiting the aforesaid right of every Parsi Zoroastrian for appointing a priest of his/her own choice, only for Ervad Framroze Mirza and Ervad Khushroo Madon, an option will be given to these two priests to file an affidavit/undertaking that they will only perform the funeral and four days after death ceremonies and the Farrokhshi Ceremony for the Farvardin Parab each year, for the deceased members of their immediate family, who opt to be consigned to the Dokhmas (Towers of Silence) in accordance with the Dokhmenishini system. In the event of their failing to file such an Affidavit/Undertaking, they are not entitled to perform any religious rites and ceremonies at the Doongerwadi Complex and/or at the two Agiaries of the Petitioners. As a consequence, the ban notice dated 11.09.09 put up at the Doongerwadi Complex will be replaced with a notice in terms of Para 4 herein.
- 5) It is agreed that the Petitioners as Trustees are entitled to employ any duly ordained Parsi Zoroastrian priests of their choice at the Doongerwadi Complex and the 2 Agiaries vested in them.
- 6) It is clarified that the issue, as to how a duly ordained Parsi Zoroastrian priest ceases to be a priest, did not arise in this litigation between the Petitioners and the Respondents. It is also clarified that the issue of 'conversion' did not arise in this




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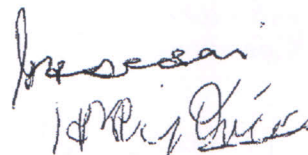





litigation between the Petitioners and the Respondents. Any observations on these two issues shall be treated as *obiter* and shall not be binding on the Petitioners.

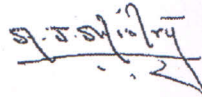
- 7) The Petitioners are not claiming the power to decide that a duly ordained Parsi Zoroastrian priest ceases to be a priest.
- 8) By and under the Deed of Trust of 25th September 1884 governing the Doongerwadi Complex (including the Sagdi) and the Godavara Agiary, as also the Jokhi Agiary, (collectively referred to as "the Trust Property") the Petitioners as Trustees have powers and duties pertaining to the religious and secular activities of this Trust. It is clarified that the Respondents do not seek to restrict these powers and duties to less than what the said Deed provides, and similarly the Petitioners as Trustees are not seeking to expand the scope of the Trustees powers and duties beyond the said Deed of Trust of 1884.
- 9) It is agreed that the Petitioners as Trustees have full power to regulate the performance of religious rites and ceremonies in the Doongerwadi complex and the aforesaid 2 Agiaries and accordingly can take suitable action including exclusion against any priest who, within the Trust Property, does any act contrary to religion or misconducts himself. The Petitioners as Trustees have powers and duties to ensure that a priest charge-sheeted or convicted of an offence involving moral turpitude should not be allowed to conduct prayers at the Doongerwadi complex and the aforesaid 2 Agiaries, unless such charge-sheet is dismissed or conviction set aside.
- 10) Suit (O.S.) No 511 of 2007 (Jamsheed Kanga V/s. Minoo Shroff), which is pending in the High Court of Bombay is dismissed as withdrawn.



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11) The observations and findings in the impugned judgment dated 11th March 2011 relating to the conduct of Petitioners 2 to 8 are set aside.

12) The decision of the Division Bench on the issue of maintainability of the Originating Summons shall not act as a precedent in other matters.

13) Save and except as modified above, the Judgment of the Hon'ble Bombay High Court stands. In case of any inconsistency between the Terms of Settlement and the Order of the Division Bench of the High Court, the above Terms shall prevail over the said Order.

14) There shall be no order as to costs.

Note: The above Memorandum of Compromise is subject to withdrawal of SLP No. 6664 of 2011, presently pending in the Supreme Court of India. The said SLP will be withdrawn by the petitioners¹ in terms of the following statement:

"Since the judgement under appeal does not deal with the rights and powers of the High Priests, and there is a settlement between the Trustees of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet and the Respondents, the Petitioners¹ are herewith withdrawing their Special Leave Petition."

¹ i.e. the High Priests

Dated this _____ day of February, 2015

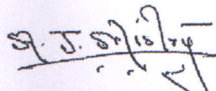
Parsi Punchayet Funds and Properties
Petitioner No. 1

Dinshaw R. Mehta
Petitioner No. 2 (Chairman)

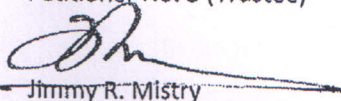
Jamsheed Kanga
Respondent No. 1

Homi Khusrokhani
Respondent No. 2

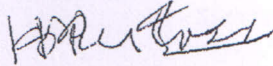
A.R. Tiwari



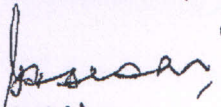
Arnawaz J. Mistry
Petitioner No. 3 (Trustee)



Jimmy R. Mistry
Petitioner No. 4 (Trustee)

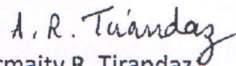


Khojeste P. Mistree
Petitioner No. 5 (Trustee)

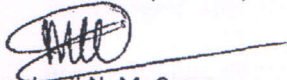


Yazdi H. Desai
Petitioner No. 6 (Trustee)

Noshir M. Dadrawala
Petitioner No. 7 (Erstwhile Trustee)



Armaity R. Tirandaz
Petitioner No. 8 (Trustee)



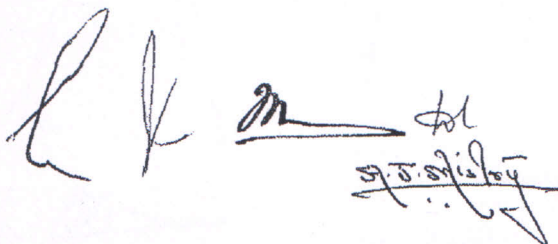
Muncherji N. M. Cama
Trustee of Petitioner No. 1

M/s. Karanjawala & Co.

Partner
Advocates for the Petitioners

M/s. Gagrat & Co.

Partner
Advocates for the Respondents



Clarification issued jointly by Jamsheed Kanga & Homi Khusrokhhan

There appear to be several misunderstandings concerning the Settlement entered into on 17.02.'15 in the matter of the Notice issued by the BPP in 2009 threatening a ban against other Priests and imposing a ban on two priests Er. Framroz Mirza & Er. Khushroo Madon, prohibiting them from praying at Doongerwadi and the two Agiaries under the BPP'S charge. Now that the Hon'ble Supreme Court on 27th April, 2015 has accepted the Settlement, we clarify as under:

1. We approached the Bombay High Court since the larger mobed community was under the threat of a ban by the BPP. The Notice threatened ***"similar action"*** against any other priest ***"found to follow in the footsteps of Ervads Madon and / or Mirza"***. It was for the first time the BPP had issued such a Ban Notice. We approached the Bombay High Court seeking an interpretation of the Trust Deed of 1884 on whether the Trustees had the power to issue such a ban. Striking down of the ban was in the interest of the community and was imperative for the entire mobed community. Our court action was not undertaken just for the benefit of these two priests alone. In fact Er. Mirza claimed on 2nd March 2010, by filing his own affidavit in the Bombay High Court, that he had no intention of defying the ban and had no desire to pray at Doongerwadi.
2. The Judgment of the Division Bench on March 2011 makes it abundantly clear that ***"Under the Deed of Trust of 1884, the trustees are not entitled to prevent any ordained Parsi Zoroastrian Priest from performing Zoroastrian religious rites and ceremonies in the premises of the Towers of Silence (Doongerwadi) and the two Agiaries"***. This ruling is of paramount importance and henceforth will hold good for ***all time to come*** - It has now become the ***'law of the land'***. Thus, we have achieved our primary objective of ensuring that no other Priest is subjected to any ban by the BPP.
3. Clause 4 of the settlement reads ***"It is agreed that the Petitioners as Trustees shall permit and suffer the use of the Doongerwadi Complex by every Parsi Zoroastrian, who opts for the Dokhmenishini system, as a place of exposure of a deceased Parsi Zoroastrian and the performance of Zoroastrian religious rites and ceremonies, carried out as per Parsi-Irani customs, by using a duly ordained Parsi priest of his/her own choice"***. By using the exact words, viz. ***permit and suffer***, found in the Trust Deed of 1884, we have re-emphasized in the strongest possible terms that whilst trustees may have certain rights & powers, they also have certain obligations & duties cast on them. There is no question whatsoever hereafter of their interfering in the choice of a priest by the family of the deceased.
4. In Clause 9 of the settlement the only right given to the Trustees to exclude a priest from praying at Doongerwadi is if the priest ***"within the Trust property does any act contrary to religion or misconducts himself."*** It goes on to say ***"The Petitioners as Trustees have powers and duties to ensure that a priest charge-sheeted or convicted of an offence involving moral turpitude should not be allowed to conduct prayers at the Doongerwadi complex and the aforesaid two Agiaries, unless such charge sheet is dismissed or conviction set aside."*** It should be noted the power to

exclude is therefore now confined to these 2 situations alone and that any act contrary to religion has to be ***within the Trust property*** and not elsewhere.

Items 2, 3 and 4 above affected the entire community, were of utmost importance and were 'deal-breakers' for us.

5. The Settlement expressly clarifies that issues of conversion, how a duly ordained Parsi-Zoroastrian Priest ceases to be a Priest, and the powers, duties or rights of the High Priests did not arise in the proceedings. Thus, the Settlement does not deal with these issues. The Trustees have stated that they are not claiming the power to decide that a duly ordained Parsi-Zoroastrian Priest ceases to be a Priest.
6. We have heard concern expressed about the statement in Clause 3 of the Settlement that the **"The Petitioners state that they are Trustees of a Religious and Charitable Trust"**. The Settlement does not confer any religious powers on the Trustees in their administration of the secular activities of the Doongerwadi and 2 Agiaries. The Settlement provides that the Trustees are not seeking to expand the scope of their powers and duties beyond the Deed of Trust of 1884. It needs to be explained that under Clause 26 of the Judgment of the Division Bench in our matter, it has been stated that **"The position in law is well settled. The administration of a religious institution or an endowment made for religious purposes is a *secular activity*"**.
7. That leads us to the last concern being expressed regarding the alleged discrimination against Er. Khushroo Madon. Unfortunately just as there were certain deal-breakers for us, this became a deal-breaker for the other side. Even at the last meeting considerable time was spent by us in trying to remove this requirement of an affidavit that restricts Er. Madon's presence at Doongerwadi to praying for members of his immediate family, but unfortunately our efforts were in vain and finally were compelled to take the difficult call that the benefit to ***every priest*** who gains from this settlement ***for all time to come***, far outweighs the benefit to a single individual. In every settlement there has to be some give & take and this unfortunately is one we had to 'give'. Looking at it positively, no mobed, including Er. Madon's sons, will ever have to undergo any bans from the Punchayet henceforth.
8. One continuing concern for us was the SLP filed by five of the six High Priests in the Supreme Court (though they had not appeared in the Bombay High Court). This SLP has also now been withdrawn by the High Priests. Thus, the erudite judgment dated 11th March 2011 of the Division Bench of the Bombay High Court, stands with the few modifications as agreed upon in the Settlement. **We believe this is a victory for the entire community.**


Jamsheed Kanga


Homi Khusrookhan