

publication of the world zoroastrian organisation

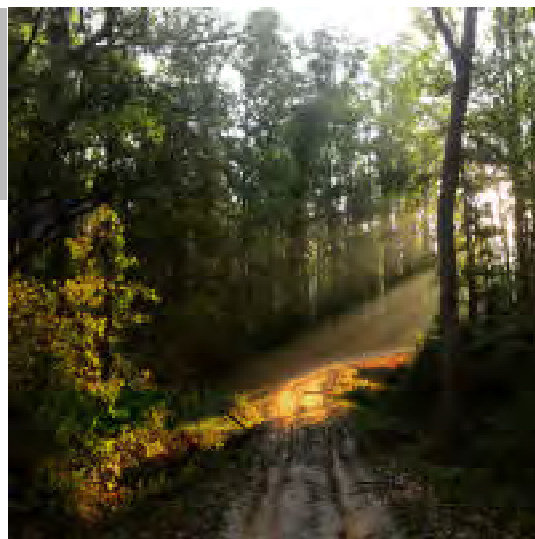
HAMAZOR

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issue 2016



The Everlasting Flame

3 E X H I B I T I O N S



Forest Track, Shergarh p 45

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COVER

A collage of artifacts at EFIP, Delhi. images courtesy of Dr Cyasp Noshirwani & Dr Shernaz Cama

PHOTOGRAPHS

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From the Editor



The Everlasting Flame International Programme which has recently been hosted by New Delhi and sponsored by the Ministry of Minority Affairs, and Ministry of Culture, Government of India, under a scheme “Hamari Dharohar”, has achieved what it set out to do. Shernaz Cama the lady behind this vision to bring out the best of our culture, philosophy and art through three Exhibitions each with their own curators, with on-going series of workshops, entertainment during these past three months, conducted tours for school and college students; needs to be commended for her outstanding role in bringing the community to the forefront.

Cyrus Poonewalla also needs to be acknowledged for his continued generosity in once again sponsoring all the events held during this period. Hamazor has managed to share with its readers a fair portion of these going ons, considering its magnitude.

With today's instant tool of receiving news and happenings through the Internet I keep wondering whether producing the Hamazor is an exercise in futility and waste of time. With Parsi Khabar and Zoroastrians.net giving up to date information practically daily, and various newsletters sent out monthly to their respective areas, by the time this quarterly publication reaches the subscriber, most things are 'old hat'. The flip side of the coin is that most people don't seem to remember what they have read earlier. But the writing is on the wall - publications will altogether cease.

We need to thank our members for gradually opting for the e-Hamazor, which saves considerable cost in postage and prevents the frustration of non delivery. It truly is much better as all images are in colour and one receives it immediately, though this issue is fully in colour owing to some lovely images. The die-hards who need to hold a hard copy, please do consider opting for an e-copy, especially if you have a tablet.

Levy Gungie

Bombay Parsi Punchayet Trustee Election, 2016

bombay bawa writes ...

Only 17% of the electorate vote. Is it apathy or disillusionment?

Mrs Armaity Tirandaz seeking re-election for a second term of seven years retained her seat by a close margin of 61 votes edging out Mrs Arnavaz Mistry, also an ex-Trustee (2008 to 2015). Five candidates had filed their nominations for the lone seat.

From a total electorate close to 30,000 registered voters, only 5,101 (17%) chose to exercise their franchise.

The final break up of votes were:

Mrs Armaity Rustom Tirandaz:	2516 votes
Mrs Arnavaz Jal Mistry:	2455
Er Rayomand Burzor Joshi:	305
Mr Eric Nariman Dhatigara:	61
Mr Kersi Gustad Sethna:	16

From the General Register 4,849 individuals voted, whereas 252 voters from the Donors Register exercised their franchise. With members on the Donor Register having two votes each the total votes cast were 5,353.

The expenses on the one day event is reported to have reduced the BPP treasury by Rs3,800,000 which translates into approx. £40,000 or \$59,500.

One wonders whether the low turnout was due to voter apathy or the community's continuously growing disillusionment with the BPP, probably both. The Trustees elected for the term 2008 - 2015 were split into two groups, being more or less in perpetual conflict. It was a pathetic situation. Legal complaints were filed against the then Chairman on charges of misappropriation of funds. Come October 2015 five new Trustees were elected with Armaity Tirandaz being the only continuing Trustee, as she was elected on the demise of her husband. The position of Muncherji Cama, elected in 2011, upon the resignation

of Noshir Dadrawalla, remains uncertain whether he is Trustee or not. Mr Cama resigned midway through his term but thereafter wished to withdraw his resignation that had already been accepted by a majority of the Trustees. With the majority of the Trustees of the 2008-2015 Board not concurring with Mr Cama's request to consider his resignation as withdrawn has led to the issue being deliberated before the Charity Commissioners office. Unfortunately the stalemate continues.

Sadly, since the beginning of this century, elections for BPP Trusteeship have been reduced to farcical status with some candidates preferring to malign those contesting against them.

Equally sad is the fact that Parsis of Mumbai seem to have got caught in a time warp, oblivious that the world is passing them by. Questions posed and answers sought by certain pressure groups from candidates contesting the elections, focus not on welfare, development or progress but on issues far removed from the present day realities.

No surprise then that individuals who are excellent Trustee material, do not come forward to serve the community through the aegis of the BPP.

Many feel it is a criminal waste to spend sizeable amounts that could be better used for welfare are frittered away on Trustee elections. Since the scheme for election of BPP Trustees has to be sanctioned by the Bombay High Court, those not pursuing any personal agenda hold the view that some important changes such as the following should be introduced in the election scheme and approval of Bombay High Court taken: -

1. Terms of all seven Trustees should be concurrent without any by-elections being

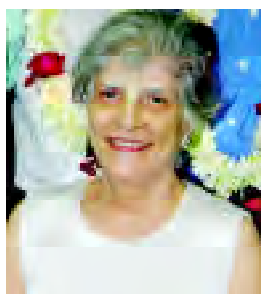
held upon the demise or resignation of a Trustee.

2. Term of office should be reduced to five years from the present seven years.

3. No individual who has served two terms of five years each should be allowed to re-contest.

4. A code of conduct to be introduced and made an integral part of the election scheme whereby a level playing field for all candidates would be created, with the election commissioners having the authority to take punitive action against those violating the code.

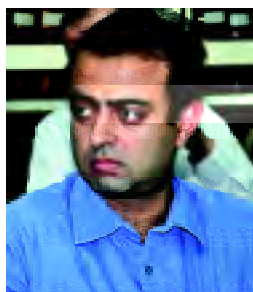
If the present Board achieve these objectives BPP will once again be on the road and slowly begin to regain a semblance of lost credibility.



Armaity Rustom Tiandaz



Arnavaz Jal Mistry



Rayomand Burzor Joshi



Eric Nariman Dhatigara



Kersi Gustad Sethna

Images courtesy
Parinaz Gandhi,
Parsiana



The Right to Lead

The *Right to Lead* is about people who have earned the right to lead others. Because of the courage they found and the character they displayed, other people recognized their admirable qualities and felt compelled to follow them. This book shares many stories about leadership from unlikely sources and leaders from all walks of life. An internationally recognized leadership expert and author, John Maxwell has sold over 13 million books and trained over two million leaders worldwide.

We would like to share with you the preface from *The Right to Lead* by John C Maxwell.

What gives a man or woman the right to lead?

It certainly isn't gained by election or appointment. Having position, title, rank, or degrees doesn't qualify anyone to lead other people. And the ability doesn't come automatically from age or experience, either. No, it would be accurate to say that no one can be given the right to lead. The right to lead can only be earned. And that takes time.

The Kind of Leader Others Want to Follow.

The key to becoming an effective leader is not to focus on making other people follow, but on making yourself the kind of person they want to follow. You must become someone others can trust to take them where they want to go. As you prepare yourself to become a better leader, use the following guidelines to help you grow:

1) Let go of your ego.

The truly great leaders are not in leadership for personal gain. They lead in order to serve other people. Perhaps that is why Lawrence D Bell remarked, "Show me a man who cannot bother to do little things, and I'll show you a man who cannot be trusted to do big things."

2) Become a good follower first.

Rare is the effective leader who didn't learn to become a good follower first. That is why a leadership institution such as the United States Military Academy teaches its officers to become effective followers first - and why West Point has produced more leaders than the Harvard Business School.

3) Build positive relationships.

Leadership is influence, nothing more, nothing less. That means it is by nature relational. Today's generation of leaders seem particularly aware of this because title and position mean so little to them. They know intuitively that people go along with people they get along with.

4) Work with excellence.

No one respects and follows mediocrity. Leaders who earn the right to lead give their all to what they do. They bring into play not only their skills and talents, but also great passion and hard work. They perform on the highest level of which they are capable.

5) Rely on discipline, not emotion.

Leadership is often easy during the good times. It's when everything seems to be against you - when you're out of energy, and you don't want to lead - that you earn your place as a leader. During every season of life, leaders face crucial moments when they must choose between gearing up or giving up. To make it through those times, rely on the rock of discipline, not the shifting sand of emotion.

6) Make adding value your goal.

When you look at the leaders whose names are revered long after they have finished leading, you find that they were men and women who helped people to live better lives and reach their potential. That is the highest calling of leadership - and its highest value.

7) Give your power away.

One of the ironies of leadership is that you become a better leader by sharing whatever power you have, not by saving it all for yourself. You're meant to be a river, not a reservoir. If you use your power to empower others, your leadership will extend far beyond your grasp. In *The Right to Lead*, you will hear from and read about people who have done these same things and earned the right to lead others. Because of the courage they found and the character they displayed, other people recognized their admirable qualities and felt compelled to follow them. The followers who looked to these leaders learned from them, and so can we. As you explore their worlds and words, remember that it takes time to become worthy of followers. Leadership isn't learned or earned in a moment. ■■■

Valuable seven pointers received through a forward by email. - Ed

Non-Conventional Wisdom - Parsis bitterly divided when they should be multiplying

by bachi karkaria, reproduced with her permission

Printed in The Sunday Times of India on 27 April, 2016.

Our Persian empires, our fabled fortunes during the British Raj, the drum-roll of greats, all this and high praise from the PM too. The Everlasting Flame Programme (March 19 - May 29) in Delhi on Parsi history, culture and achievements reminds culture the nation that 'minority' doesn't have to be a dangerous disgruntled word. Sorry to be a party-pooper, but not all the glories of the past can save us from our present quicksand. What's sucking down the country's most sophisticated clan is that same, familiar, primitive killer called identity politics.

Su kechh, sala? We have nothing in common with those Backward Class agitations; our alabaster Abans reveal us as the Other Backless Classes. No 'incendiary cocktails of caste' for us; we are quite happy quaffing the 'Parsi peg'. We gleefully forward WhatsApps praising our 'peaceful coexistence', and 'contributions disproportionate to our numbers'; not like those grubby quota-grabbing agitations. True, by the current standards of the republic, we do stand out, but none of our legendary humour can laugh away our fall. It's not just of numbers. The worse decline is of our USP: civilized debate, even decency. We are losing it. Blame that lethal combo of past pride and present paranoia.

The gloves have been off since Boxing Day 2015. A former advocate-general of Maharashtra chose the wrong forum to voice an audacious message. Speaking at the first-ever Iranshah Udvada Utsav - held to celebrate Zoroastrianism's most sacred, 12-centuries-old fire - Darius Khambata logically argued that Zoroastrianism is a universal religion, and should be thrown

open regardless of ethnicity. This was both blasphemy and sedition to the Parsis who claim exclusive rights to community as well as their religion. Khambata's hasty clarification only fanned the flames. He explained, 'My speech was in the context of Parsi women married outside the faith and their children, and my opinion was that they should be permitted to enter our places of worship if they have been initiated into the faith through a navjote ceremony.' (The 1908 Davar-Beaman judgment accorded this right only to the offspring of Parsi fathers.) A fortnight later, seven high priests issued a stunning statement saying that no inter-faith marriage was acceptable under Zoroastrianism, thus effectively throwing all their children into illegitimacy.

However hysterically the orthodoxy may cheer, turning the clock back is suicidal. We Parsis are disadvantaged on the whole existential tripod of hatches, matches and dispatches. In 2013, there were 175 births in the community hub of Mumbai against 735 deaths; intermarriage has climbed to 38% - and become our obsessive compulsive disorder. Going by the hounded Polish sociologist, Zygmunt Bauman, 'identity' is at its most robust – and rabid – in matters of community and religion. So to marry a 'parjaat' is double jeopardy, it threatens both 'Parsi-panu' and Zoroastrianism. Dangerously, this bogey has diverted attention from the serious problems of young and old, skill sets deteriorating as rapidly as the medical profile of an inbred community where longevity is a curse.

Ironically, in India's most progressive community, 'liberal' has become a hiss word, most virulent when directed at this Enemy No 1. The omnipotent Bombay Parsi Panchayat spent over Rs 2 crore of community funds in a long, legal battle to debar three priests who presided over rituals involving intermarried couples. The 'settlement' brokered by a Supreme Court-appointed mediator has reinstated the priests, with conditions.

The 'Trump' card is identity's flipside, the fear of the other. Our sacred exclusivity is

strengthened by some rather unedifying secular dread of having to share the enviable legacy of housing, hospitals and scholarships with 'half-breeds'. Strident traditionalists buy full pages to pass off their bigotry as news. The cybersphere bristles with damnation; parts of the diaspora are often more hysterical. Reasoned opinion gets battered by the hateful tide.

But it's turning, as it has to, pulled by the inevitable force of intermarriage in a community of increasingly narrowing options. Indian outposts such as Delhi and Kolkata do it more discreetly, but even Mumbai now has a hall to offer the grace of traditional rituals to those barred from the Towers of Silence, or unwilling to submit to their compromised efficiency.

The true hope of saving ancient Zoroastrianism from expedient power-games lies with the snowballing immigrant community. Prayer halls abroad are open to all spouses, and where all children can imbibe this enlightened religion. Soon, Ontario may grant them a fully consecrated fire temple. It has 6,000 believers; only 531 are left of the once-vibrant Kolkata community.

India's Parsis are trapped in the Catch 22 of accepting mixed-race children and diluting identity, or rejecting them and becoming demographically unviable. We may not repeat the recent horror of the Andamans' Jarawa tribe killing a mixed-race baby to preserve 'purity', but identity politics will be the death of our exemplary community – and of the beautiful religion our forefathers fled Persia to preserve.



Bachi Karkaria is an author, columnist of The Times of India, and regular panelist on news channels. She created and edited some of the country's most innovative papers. Her specializations are urban and social change. She is festival director of the prestigious Times of India Carnival, Mumbai

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Nowruz in Yazd

A photographic journey by minocher vakharia

I went to Iran for a holiday during Nowruz of this year and one of the places I spent time at was Yazd. Iran has their National holiday to celebrate the thirteen days of Nowruz when these photographs were taken.



Before sunrise of Nowruz, the community gathers on the rooftops of their homes, which are all connected to each other. Each family prepare their own fire and pray for the souls of their dearly departed.



The head of the family takes some of the fire he has lit on the roof in a small Afaringan to the local firetemple and the priest places it on the Dadgah.



Lighting of the agarbati, which is believed to prevent unwanted bad energy from entering the home.



The priest emptying the Afaringan into the Dadgah



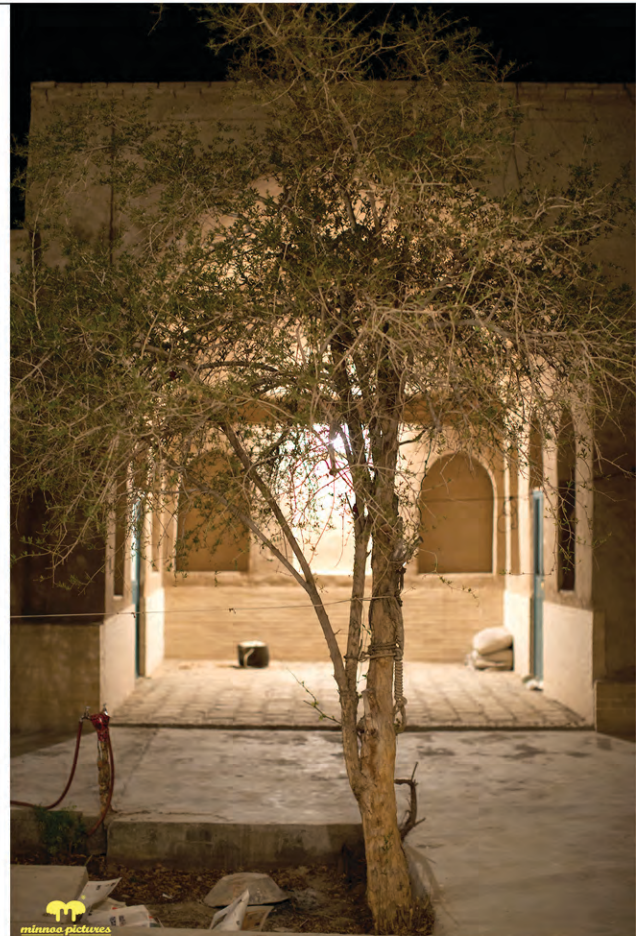
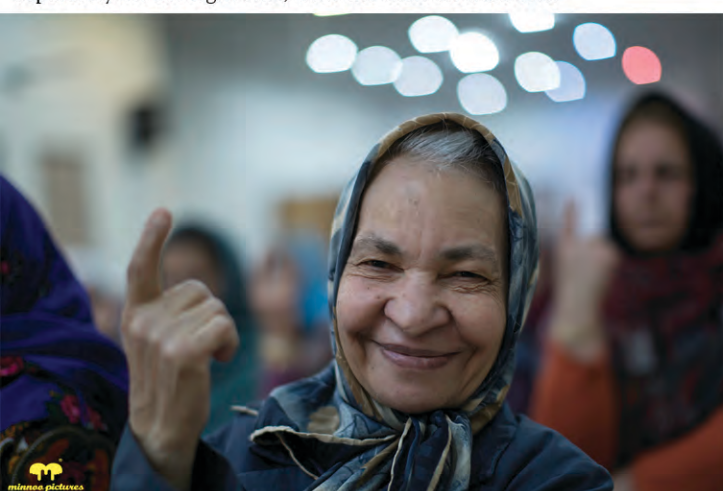
The Nowruz table (Haft Seen) at the Yazd Atash Behram also known as the Atashkadeh which is the largest one in Iran. It was built in 1934 and enshrines the Atash Behram meaning "Victorious Fire" dating to 470AD. This table is set up in readiness of Nowruz and once the festival is declared, the divas, and the seven items starting with "S" are put into place. The table is at the entrance of the Atashkadeh for all to see.



Goldfish in a bowl on the Haft Seen table represents life, originally a symbol of the Chinese New Year.



Women during the Gatha days prior to Nowruz at the fire temple of Sharifabad. Women sit separately on the right side, with the men on their left.



Courtyard of a 70 year old home in Sharifabad which is about 70 km from Yazd, a typical home of any Zarathushti of this area.

Minocher Vakharia is a freelance 30-year-old photographer and video maker, living in Karachi. He is the creator of Karachi Parsis' Facebook page, which is about seniors of the community. He enjoys making documentaries on various issues and has been photographing professionally since 2013 under name of, "minnoopictures". He says, "I never want to be someone who takes predictable photographs. To combat this, I ask myself after every photo: is this good enough for a gallery, a museum or a photo book? If so, I'm happy".



Walking his dog in one of the streets of Yazd. Today it is a rare sight to see any dogs in Iran.

New York Tri-States opens its new Community Centre

by arzan wadia

The inauguration of a new Dar-e-Mehr anywhere in the world is very big event, just because it seldom occurs. However when it does it is the culmination of many factors that all aligned perfectly for it to happen. That in a nutshell is what happened one gorgeous sunny spring morning in New York. Saturday March 26, 2016 shall forever be etched in the memory of the over six hundred Zarathushtis, their friends and families from the tri-state area of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut who came together to celebrate a once in a lifetime event – the opening of a Zoroastrian religious and cultural community center in Pomona, NY.

The inaugural event held during the week of Jamshedi Navroze, the start of the Persian New Year also coincides with the birthday of Zarathustra.

North America's first and oldest Dar-e-Mehr, the New York place of worship moved into its third home, but the first purposely built from ground up. It has been a long road for this community who has fought against the odds for its spot in the New York area community. Thirty nine years ago, the first Zoroastrian Dar-e-Mehr in North America opened in New Rochelle on December 3, 1977 with little over 200 in attendance. A generous donor, Arbab Rustam Guiv contributed \$180,000 to purchase the simple house that was converted to a community center and served the community for 23 years. The ZAGNY and IZA community soon outgrew that building and in 2001 sold that property.

A second center in Pomona was purchased in 2001. Based on the rapid growth of the community and unrealistic maintenance of the existing center, a new Dar-e-Mehr building was conceived – one that reflected a Zarathushti ambiance and created a sense of belonging, so as to preserve the faith and culture, growth of the community,

and create a legacy for future generations to enjoy and cherish.

In 2010 at the Annual General Meeting of the Dar-e-Mehr Zoroastrian Temple Trust, Edul Daver stood up and asked the Trustees what the plans were to build a new centre. And as the proverbial saying goes, the rest they say is history.

Edul Daver formed the New Dar-e-Mehr Initiative (NDMI) along with 20 other families each putting in \$25,000 as seed money to jumpstart the project. Architect Dinyar Wadia, a longtime ZAGNY member was pulled in to propose designs for the new building, and the community began to dream. And what a big dream it turned out to be.

With designs finalized and the overall ballpark costs estimated, the community overwhelmingly voted at a Special General Body Meeting in December 2013, to get the ball rolling.

The Fundraising process started in earnest in 2010 itself, to raise the nearly US\$ 5 million it would eventually cost to build the building. No stone was left unturned to raise the money. No amount or effort was too small or big. Large donors from within the community and those all over the country and abroad were courted, as were the kids who did everything from cookie sales to candy fundraisers.

The Building Committee was appointed and got to work immediately. From township permissions to competitive bidding, everything was done in-house by those in the profession. Farrokh Patel led the construction process that saw the Groundbreaking ceremony in July 2014. Bulldozers moved in and the old structure was gone in a flash. And in its place rose the foundations of what would become this new edifice.



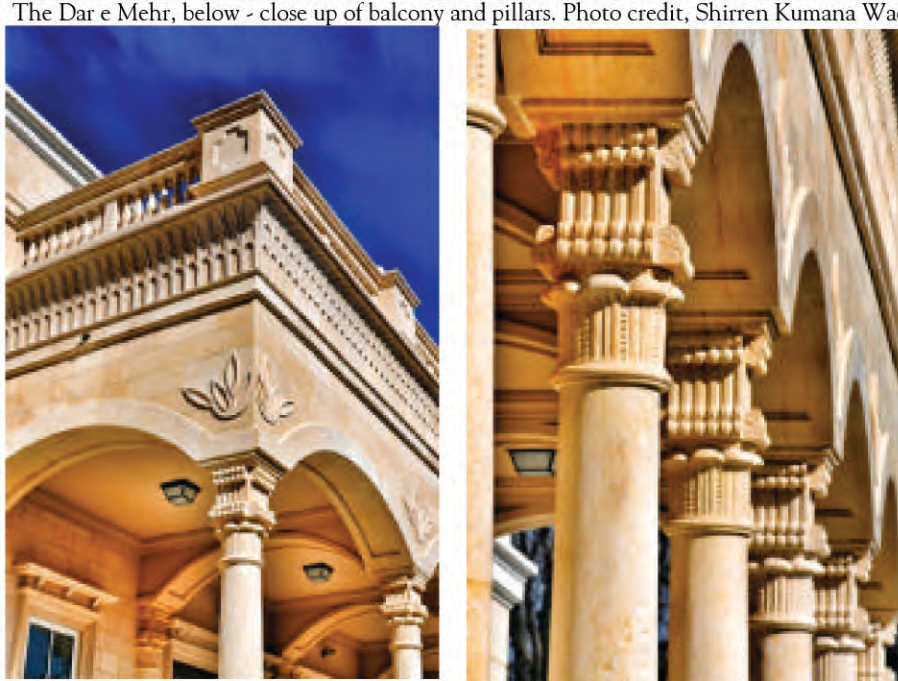
After the initial euphoria of a new project came the long haul to reach the target of raising the money need to see the project through. This is when the local community came together like never before and with a

few weeks left to opening crossed the first finish line. The certificate of occupancy was received a couple of weeks before the opening and the community was now in full-on celebratory mode.

Various committees had been planning for the Inauguration since January and weekly conference calls sometimes lasting three hours made sure that no detail was too small to be discussed and finalized. And the effort paid off when everything went like clockwork on the Inauguration Day.

When registration opened online, the organizers did not anticipate the rush to get registered. However for many of those present, it had been a lifelong dream they had waited for to materialize. For some the wait was several decades.

The Inauguration Day started with a procession of 30 priests from all over North America, carrying a "divo" into the Dar-e-Mehr after the ribbon cutting by Prof Kaikhosrow D Irani, Past-President of ZAGNY and the Guest of Honour at the function.





The entrance, foyer and the prayer room. Photo credit Maharfreen Mistry



The Jashan ceremony was led by Dastur Khurshed Dastoor, the Vada Dasturji of the Pak Iranshah Atashbehrām in Udvada, India. Ervad Pervez Patel, the head priest of ZAGNY served as the Raathvi in the Jashan. The Jashan was followed by the very first Atash Nyaesh in the “Kebla” of the new Dar-e-Mehr.

Post-Jashan, the event was interwoven with music, food prepared by community restaurateurs, performances by children as well as formal speeches by local dignitaries including officials from the Mayor of Pomona’s Office, respected academicians and revered community members. The event was made accessible to viewers worldwide and broadcast by a live stream – it was viewed by 1,500+ households in 32 countries.

Inspired by ancient Persian and Zoroastrian architecture of the fire temples of India and Iran, the new building was designed by award-winning architect Dinyar Wadia of Wadia Associates. It features a stone facade with a colonnaded portico, and decorative capitols, evoking the architectural style of Persepolis (the ancient Zoroastrian city and heritage site) as a nod to the long road traveled. It is a 22,000 square foot structure which has four classrooms, three meeting rooms, a library, a traditional prayer hall, chef’s kitchen, recreation room and a main hall that can accommodate up to 400 guests. Special features include an Afarghanyu (fire vessel) based on the 250 year old prototype found at a historic temple in Mumbai, India, a custom crafted WinterstoneÆ panel inspired by the ancient Tripylon Palace in Persepolis and a traditional Persian-inspired water fountain (that is yet to be built).

The building took two years to construct and approximately \$5M. The small but unwavering and dedicated community fundraised locally, nationally and internationally for close to six years to construct and complete the building. Zoroastrian populations are growing in numbers and acceptance generating a need for cultural and community centers throughout North America.

By no means is the project totally complete. Phase II of the fundraising programme will go towards furniture and other enhancements on site. Phase III will see the implementation of solar panels and other sustainable and renewable sources of energy.

The completion of the building and its inauguration has been a personal milestone in my life. Having been involved in various aspects of design, planning and then as part of the Building Committee, its construction, the building goes way beyond the stone, brick and mortar that goes into it. The building embodies the hopes and aspirations of a community who through this Dar-e-Mehr have firmly laid their roots in the new diaspora. The building signifies the beginning of a new chapter in the Zoroastrian community, not only in the Tri-State but also in North America. It is a standing testament to what can be achieved if everyone gets behind a dream and makes the impossible a reality.

"Today we take a moment to appreciate what we have built as a community," said Astad J Clubwala, President of ZAGNY. "This will be the legacy of our generation and can be seen as a gift from the generation that was born in our homelands of India, Iran and Pakistan to the generation of Zoroastrians born in North America."

The above sums up well what the "first" generation of Zarathushtis in the New York area have achieved. How the coming generations build upon this, only time will tell. That they will do it in the beautiful environs of this new Dar-e-Mehr will be a treat to watch. ■■■■



Arzan Sam Wadia is an architect, urban designer and a technology evangelist, living in New York with his wife Shirrin. He serves as the Vice President of FEZANA and is a Board Member of ZAGNY. He is the co-founder of Parsi Khabar an online portal.

Fresh flower torans.
Photo credit Mahafreen Mistry



Astad Clubwala addressing the gathering. Photo credit Mahafreen Mistry



Dastur Khurshed Dastoor and the mobed sahibs. Photo credit Urmez Davar



Guest of Honour, Prof Kaikhosrow D Irani with Framroze Patel. Photo credit Urmez Davar

Progressing with Continuity: A Legacy for Our Next Generations

phil sidhwa, chairman, PWAC, OZCF shares their vision

In 2004, the Ontario Zoroastrian Community Foundation purchased a 10-acre plot of land in Oakville, near Toronto, Ontario, Canada, to advance the teachings of the Zoroastrian faith, and the religious tenets, doctrines, observances and culture associated with the faith.

In 2011, the Ontario Zoroastrian Community Foundation (OZCF) appointed a Place of Worship Advisory Committee (PWAC) to investigate the feasibility of developing a consecrated place of worship in Ontario and to identify the community's views around building such a facility.

After three years of public consultations and town hall meetings, the membership voted unanimously to go ahead with plans to build a consecrated Atashkadeh (Agiary) with enthronement of an Atash-e-Adaran Fire. Neither a consecrated Atashkadeh with Yasnagah and Bareshnum facilities, nor a consecrated Atash-e-Adaran fire currently exists in N. America. Typical Atashkadehs such as those that currently exist at the OZCF along with many others across Zoroastrian associations in N. America are not consecrated. In a consecrated Atashkadeh, one can ordain priests which is deemed an important aspect towards the sustainability of Zoroastrianism on this continent. The consecration of the Atashkadeh is also an essential step that must be completed prior

to enthroning a consecrated Atash-e-Adaran fire. The construction would take place in two phases:

Phase One: a consecrated Atashkadeh will be built to house an Atash Dadgah fire. It will be equipped with Yasnagah and Bareshnum facilities to ordain priests and perform the higher liturgical ceremonies; and elaborate prayers such as Vendidad and Yasna.



Phase Two: the consecrated Atash-e-Adaran fire will be enthroned within the consecrated Atashkadeh and the fire will be attended to 24 hours a day, seven days a week. After thorough investigation with authorities in India and Iran, we will be performing elaborate rituals over a period of time. Thereafter a purified, eternal flame, collected from the fire within four households of an Athravan (Priest), Rathaestaran (Warrior), Vastryosan

(Agriculturist) and Hutokhsan (Artisan), will burn proudly in our Atash-e-Adaran.

Focus Group Meetings:

The committee met exhaustively and developed a strategy to maximize public input through an open and transparent process. Six town-hall type focus group meetings were held where Zoroastrians were able to attend, ask questions and voice their views through a structured and focussed interactive process. Written submissions were also received. Notice of meetings were distributed, through the OZCF website, by telephone calls to the membership, in newsletter announcements, to the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO) and by invitation letters to Fezana to inform all Zoroastrian associations in North America. The Focus Groups included: Mobeds; Youth 18 – 34; Adults 35 – 60; Seniors 60 +; ZSO membership; Open Meeting. The proceedings of these meetings are on our website at www.ozcf.com, (Projects).

Amongst the issues identified, the community had many discussions on the subject of who would be allowed into the consecrated Atashkadeh with Atash-e-Adaran fire. The community decided that all will be welcome, subject to following certain customs, conduct and etiquette. This will be a House of Ahura Mazda, open to all, a place to feel God's universal presence, to experience spiritual peace, to worship and join a community in prayer. However the inner sanctum sanctorum (Kebela) will be restricted to ordained priests only. While priests are being ordained and during the performance of the inner liturgical ceremonies, the Yasnagah will be restricted to only ordained priests who have undergone the Bareshnum ceremony. We

will diligently maintain the Zoroastrian doctrine and liturgies; and the customs and conduct to be followed by all within the Atashkadeh can be found on our website.



'House of God' with a consecrated Atashkadeh and Atash-e-Adaran fire

Our mobeds have provided considerable input in consultation with experts in India and Iran to ensure we comply with the religious requirements of building a consecrated Atashkadeh enthroned with an Atash-e-Adaran fire.

Project:

This facility will be the only place outside of India and Iran where priests can be ordained. It will be a focal point in North America for Iranian and Parsi Zoroastrians to come together to worship, as we set a religious foundation in the western hemisphere to keep our faith alive for future generations. By building this, we are creating a dedicated space where our children can learn more about their heritage; be versed in their religion and its teachings; and create a place of pride to share with friends and those of other faiths and beliefs.

Cost:

The capital cost of the project is Cdn. \$2.7M (approx U.S. \$2.0M). We have developed annual operating costs to ensure that we can afford to continually maintain the Atashkadeh. We have developed various sub-committees of volunteers to look after

the many facets of the project including: finance, governance and by-laws, religious, construction, fundraising, architectural and planning, IT and entertainment. We are working closely with municipal and provincial authorities to obtain the necessary approvals.

The OZCF Advantage:

The OZCF is well positioned to successfully lead and fulfill this initiative in the North American diaspora, together with support from the ZSO:

- We own the 10 acres of land where the consecrated Atashkadeh with Atash-e-Adaran will be built.
- We live in a geographic area (the Greater Toronto Area) that is home to the largest Zoroastrian community in North America, with 5,000 Zoroastrians living within a 60 km radius.
- We are blessed that within this area there is the largest number of ordained priests in North America, able to serve our community and support our Atashkadeh 24 hours a day / seven days a week.
- Since 2004, our vibrant community has raised the funds to purchase the land and build a centre that is at the heart of many of our community's celebrations and events.

Future Vision:

Since 2013, the OZCF has been debt-free. In addition to our centre and our Agiary, which will form the heart of our community,

in future years we envision a complete, self-sustaining complex devoted to ensuring Zoroastrianism thrives in North America and provides a true sense of community. Such income potential alleviates any concern that our future generations may not be able to support such a facility. The location of the land is in the vibrant heart of major residential and commercial activity to be built in the near future, near major highways, close to Toronto airport and the new hospital, thus making it very valuable for future development and income generating sources. It is noteworthy that the land is already zoned for the proposed future uses, once water and wastewater infrastructure is in place in the next few years.

This vision includes:

- A 40,000 sq. ft. Seniors' retirement complex complete with health & medical support services
- An enlarged Banquet Hall & Cultural Centre (15,000 sq. ft)
- A Zoroastrian Library, Museum, and Education Centre
- Revenue generating Commercial & Office building with ground floor retail space (70,000 sq ft)
- Recreation facilities and green space
- Powered by renewable energy

Conclusion:

Today, Parsi and Iranian Zoroastrians are coming together to build this consecrated cornerstone of our religious community.



Future Concept

Places of worship form the foundation of a community's wellbeing and survival – there is a sense of communion in the ritual liturgies that transcend generations and bring us all closer to the guiding light of our faith: good thoughts, good words and good deeds. With this in mind, we hope to educate our youth and future generations in the beauty of our religion and how well the teachings of our religion apply in their daily lives.

Please be a part of history and join us in this noble and historic endeavour. We welcome your generous support towards this project. We have developed a gift giving guide, and are pleased to work with donors to discuss how you would like to be recognized at your preferred gift level. On June 17th, 2016, we are launching our project at a Black-Tie Gala where we hope to raise funds. For more information, please contact Phil Sidhwa, Chairman, Place of Worship Advisory Committee, OZCF (philsidhwa@ozcf.com).

With Ahura Mazda's blessings.



Phil Sidhwa is the Chair of the Place of Worship Advisory Committee of OZCF. He is a founding member and past president of the organization. Phil has been an active member in the Zoroastrian community since his

family arrived in Canada from Tanzania in 1972. He is the owner of Orgatec Energy Inc., creating environmentally sustainable solutions for communities in the water, wastewater and bioenergy sectors.

How you can help

Major Donor	\$1 M plus
Kebla Donor	\$500,000
Prayer Hall Donor	\$400,000
Yasnagah Donor	\$300,000
Prayer Room Donor	\$200,000
Bareshnumgah Donor	\$100,000
Nahn Room Donor	\$ 50,000
Office Donor	\$ 50,000
Servery Donor	\$ 50,000
Patrons to the Atashkadeh	\$100,001 plus
Diamond Donor	\$ 50,001 - \$100,000
Platinum Donor	\$ 25,001 - \$ 50,000
Gold Donor	\$ 10,001 - \$ 25,000
Silver Donor	\$ 5,001 - \$ 10,000
Bronze Donor	\$ 2,500 - \$ 5,000
In Memory Donor	\$ 1,000 plus
Buy a Square Foot	\$ 500
Buy a Fixture(s)	\$ 250 - \$999
Monthly Atashkadeh Building Fund Supporter	\$30 / \$75 / \$150

A prominent Donor Wall will be a feature within our Atashkadeh (Agiary) honouring those who will help to build it.

All gifts are most gratefully accepted and all donations will receive an official tax receipt.

Contact gifting@ozcf.com

The Everlasting Flame International Programme

19th March - 29th May 2016, New Delhi

by meher marker noshirwani

The Everlasting Flame International Programme (EFIP), began in New Delhi on 19 March 2016, and will continue till the end of May, with three exhibitions, a range of cultural events, a film festival, a fashion show, lectures, discussions and workshops on Zoroastrianism. How does one capture the range, substance, and sheer beauty of the exhibitions and the first three days of this impressive festival? The only answer is to go and see it yourself, because words and photographs will not do it justice. So, being fortunate to attend the first few days of the Everlasting Flame International Programme, I have tried to capture the scale of the events to illustrate the first and largest Zoroastrian festival.

The Everlasting Flame International Programme, sponsored by the Ministry of Minority Affairs, and Ministry of Culture, Government of India, under a scheme "Hamari Dharohar", commemorates and celebrates the contribution of Zoroastrians and Parsis to world culture, philosophy and art. Three exhibitions: *The Everlasting Flame*, *Zoroastrianism in History and Imagination*; *Painted Encounters, Parsi Traders and the Community* and *No Parsi is an Island*; and *Threads of Continuity, Zoroastrian Life and Culture*, "narrate the story of the beginning of Zoroastrian culture spread across the world, and continuity of traditions among communities through historic, artistic and civilizational objects from India, UK, Iran, Russia, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, and other private donors."¹

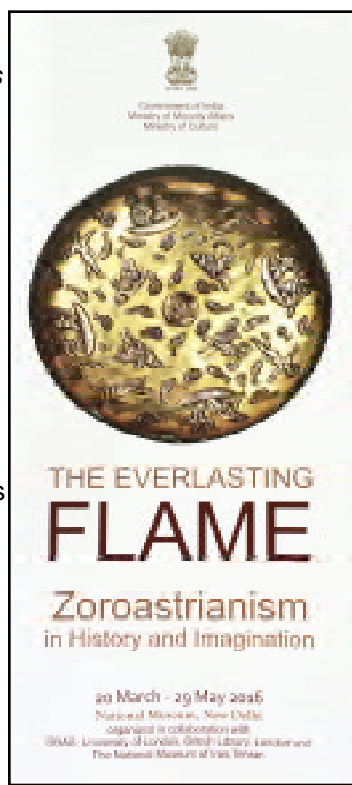
The Opening ceremony took place on 19th March, at the Parliament Library Building, where we Parsis has a special gate from which to enter the auditorium. Wearing saris and duplees, or embroidered kurti's we entered the GMC Balayogi auditorium. Representatives of the Parzor Foundation, the British Library Trust, the School of

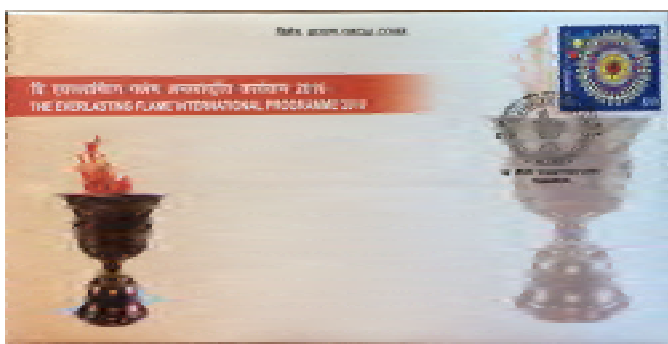
Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), and the Government of India, introduced the Everlasting Flame Programme, describing how in 2014, UNESCO Parzor initiated the idea for organising the exhibition.

Dr Najma A Heptulla, Minister of Minority Affairs, spoke of how "the Parsis have been an integral part of India and have contributed immensely to society over the past 1200 years. Although, unfortunately, over the years this community has substantially reduced in number which has been a major cause for concern," she added.² Baroness Valerie Amos, Director of SOAS, said it was the "first SOAS University of London exhibition to be taken on tour. The exhibition will display a fascinating and diverse collection of artefacts, texts, paintings, and textiles." Recognising the contribution of the Parsi community, Dr Mahesh Sharma, Minister of State for Culture and Tourism, and Civil Aviation, said the Parsis had "contributed to the arts sciences, literature, and most of all to philanthropy."³ And that this type of exhibition would raise awareness

about culture, and that "people had always been related across continents and civilizations have developed in conversation with each other."⁴ An interesting aspect of the morning was the release of a First Day Cover commemorating the EFIP, with an Atash on it.

Later that evening, the main exhibition, entitled *The Everlasting Flame; Zoroastrianism in History and Imagination* opened at the National





Commemoration 1st day cover

Museum, New Delhi. The same officials were present and spoke of the contributions the Parsis had made to India, the support the Indian Government was giving the community to increase its population through its Hamari Dharohar scheme and the recognition of a specific Parsi identity, of tolerance, institution building, honesty integrity, hard work, and the unique ability to adapt to the country the Parsis choose to live in, and who still maintained their own identity amidst other larger communities. A catalogue of the Exhibition was launched which is a supplement catalogue to the original catalogue of the Exhibition in London in 2013, which contains a beautiful account of the items in the exhibition. As one of the speakers said, that although the numbers and size of the community are disappointing, the body of knowledge on Zoroastrianism has grown over the last few decades and an awareness of the community, its customs, traditions, food, and culture, and information of both Parsis and Zoroastrianism is more now than ever before.

As one entered the rooms where the exhibition was held, it felt as if we were being transported back into time, to the early days of Zoroastrianism, to the time when the religion began, and the way it influenced the major world religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. 'Unfolding chronologically, the exhibition offers a journey from the earliest days of the religion to its emergence as the foremost religion of the Achaemenid, Parthian, and Sasanian empires.'⁵ There were over 300 objects on display, and it was a rare opportunity to see ancient scripts from Iran, and textiles and paintings, in one place. The exhibition was

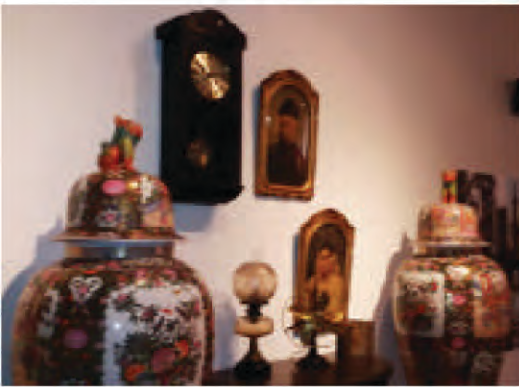
jointly curated by, Sarah Stewart (SOAS), Firoza Punthakey Mistree, (Zoroastrian Studies, Mumbai), Ursula Sims- Williams (British Library), Almut Hintze, (SOAS), Pheroza Gogrej (Independent author and curator), and Shernaz Cama (UNESCO Parzor). Apart from the international range of lending institutions, many private lenders also gave their precious personal items for display, which for the first time brought the private and public heritage of Zoroastrianism together.

One of the main attractions of the exhibition was the Replica installation of a Fire Temple, based on the front entrance of one of the oldest fire temples in Mumbai, built by Manekji Navroji Sett. According to history, the Agyari as we know it, "grew out of the ritual tending of the ever-burning hearth fire, a custom that goes back to the Indo-Iranian times, when the fire in the home was



Replica of a Fire Temple

kept alight for the duration of a man's lifetime.'⁶ Walking through the rooms, one felt a sense of awe and respect of the ancient world and like in most museums people spoke in hushed tones. I noticed a woman touch the glass case which held an Avesta in reverence, and I could not stop myself from praying Ashem Vohu and Yatha Ahu Vairyo, when I stood in front of the prayer fragment of the Ashem Vohu from the 9th century AD, written in Avestan, and discovered in China in 1917. It was almost as if some of us were reaffirming our spiritual identity as we made our way through the different rooms. And to really do



justice to the exhibits I needed more time, and more days to absorb the different details which was not possible in a few hours. Illustrations from the Shahnameh, an enamelled reliquary casket portraying the Magi, or the biblical Wise Men, also known as Three Kings, stoned reliefs of winged figures, and Zoroastrian coins were part of the ancient world section of the exhibition.



Then came the Parsi textiles and embroidery, the garas, the jhablas, the topi's and sapats. Furniture and Chinese porcelain, portraits and paintings, a clock with a wooden casing, a marble bust of Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata, and Meherbai Dorabji Tata, and numerous other items from the culture and tradition of the Parsis as they became traders, and entrepreneurs. As I walked out of the last room into the glare of the sunlight streaming through the balcony of the outer side of the museum, it took a few minutes to come back to reality.



Jhabla

The next exhibition, was divided into two parts: *Painted Encounters Parsi traders and the Community*, curated by Pheroza J Godrej and Firoza Punthakey Mistree, and *No Parsi is an Island*, curated by Ranjit Hoskote, and Nancy Adajania with Pheroza J Godrej. This opened on 20th March at the National Gallery of Modern Art. The catalogue for this was not available at that time to everyone, only a few copies had been printed



Opening of Painted Encounters Parsi Traders and the Community and No Parsi is an Island

for the speakers, but the copy on display contained beautiful photographs, especially of the paintings by Parsi artists. *The Painted Encounters* section had a collection of paintings, engravings, and photographs, and traced the evolution of Parsi traders



who 'built ships and facilitated trade with Canton in the 19th century. This exhibition examines the changing styles and influence of the genre loosely termed as





Dhanjishah Shroff with his grandchildren
Private Collection

Parsi portraiture and explores the interesting historiography and times of the leading Parsi traders whose activities boosted capital accumulation and helped shape 19th century Bombay

into an international, financial metropolis.”⁷

Among those who spoke at the opening of this exhibition, the ability of the Parsis to ‘laugh at themselves’ was mentioned as another characteristic of the community, which gave them a distinct identity, and ensured humour as one of the important aspects of life. It made the Parsis resilient in difficult times. This exhibition, was also a lovely display of all the culture and tradition of the Parsis in the early days of Bombay. It made one realise how rich the culture is, its diversity, and the legacy we have inherited. The exhibitions were also a humbling experience, and made one question what sort of individual contribution are we making today, in the place we work or live, and does it come anywhere near what our forefathers and the women of those days achieved in far more difficult circumstances than we live in today? So although it instilled a sense of pride in the past, can we really continue to live on past glory? Or do we have to ensure that we teach the youth to uphold the principles of those individuals and families who built cities, nations, and created wealth for themselves and others.

As the entrepreneurship within the community declines, we must try not to become complacent, or we will lose the quest for knowledge, adventure, and the particular trait of what it means to be a Parsi.

The work of 14 Parsi artists across 150 years, from Pestonji Bomanji, (1851-1938) and extending to Mehli Gobhai (b.1931) to Gieve Patel (b.1940), showcased the works of these artists, and displayed their varied contribution to poetry, theatre, film, classical dance, crafts activism, and children’s literature. Usually one sees paintings of portraits in many Parsi homes, but not often does one get to see unusual or modern works by Parsi artists. As the introduction to the exhibition stated: “the focus is on the artists from the late colonial period to the present, who happen to be of Parsi origin, but whose work connects them to larger questions, concerns and urgencies. The artist today lives in a country which has opened its economy, where the old gives way to the new, where paradigms are swiftly changing in a confluence of both tradition and modernity, and a cultural assimilation of several millennia influenced each one of them. Hence the title, adapted from the Metaphysical poet John Donne: No man is an Island.”⁸

The speeches given at different occasions always referred to the ‘Sugar in the Milk’ story which was repeated many times, to illustrate ‘the subliminal message conveyed on absorption, harmony, and concord, which is an insignia of the Parsis of India.’⁹ A statement which reflects the way the



Jehangir Sabavala - ‘Trapped Lakes’, 1990. Collection NGMA, Bombay



Piloo Pochkhanawala - ‘Monsoon’, 1983. Collection NGMA, Bombay

Parsis have lived and adapted to many different parts of the world. A poem entitled Migrations by Keki N Daruwalla, was also showcased and its opening verse says;

*Migrations are always difficult:
Ask any drought,
Any plague;
Ask the year 1947.
Ask the chronicles themselves:
If there had been no migrations
Would there have been enough
History to munch on?*

The works of these artists made one realise how little is known about the Parsis contribution to poetry, and art.

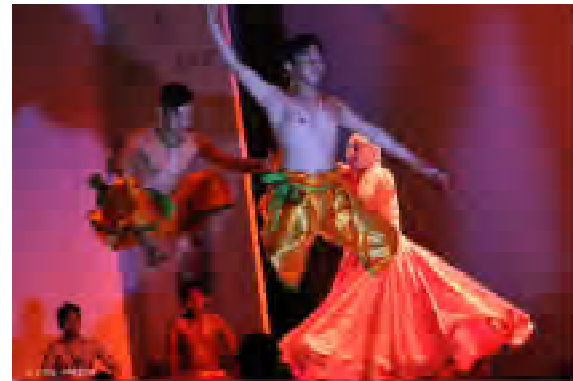


An installation of TOC. The concept is that a link of past, present and future keep us followers bound to the faith itself. Zoroastrianism, through the symbol of the kusti weaves a girdle around the wearer which is tied at the word 'shyathonenam' or 'to work/act'. The central image in the Installation is the reef knot we tie as we utter the word. The circle also stands for the visible Sun and its radiance of enlightenment and energy which knits life together. The design was done by Neeraj Sahai to Dr Cama's concept. [1]

dance performance by Astad Deboo and his Troupe, and ended with a Navroze dinner in true Parsi style. In the gardens of the IGNCA to celebrate Navroze a number of tables had been set up showing the different kinds of

The installation of divas: An exact replica of the 12 petals of the Pir e Sabz also called Pir e Chak Chak Shrine in Yazd where the youngest Princess Nekbanoo disappeared into the protection of the mountain. It is seen as a symbol of the power of nature and is also a very sacred site in Iran. Each petal represents a month of the year. We have added Parsi Divya's to the gravel and loban sticks which are lit to make it represent all Zoroastrians. [S Cama]

Navroze tables. Some had fish on it in Irani style, others had more dry



Astad Deboo & Manipuri dancers. [2]

fruit, and some had the traditional fruit and vegetables. The atmosphere was one of festivity, with music from the 50's to the 90's, but the kind you only hear at a Parsi Navjote or lagan. The oldies, songs which make our children cringe, but have us tapping our feet, and swaying to the tunes, and singing every line of 'Those were the days,' and 'Delilah', added to the typical atmosphere of a Parsi event.

Parsi and Iranian food has seen a revival in the last decade, and there is a focus on preserving this part of the culture as well. Restaurants such as Sodabottleopenerwala, and Rustom's, were also represented in the lawns, and were a treat to visit.

The Threads of Continuity exhibition, consisted of a beautiful display of Parsi/Zoroastrian culture. As one entered the main hall there was a display of diva's outside, and the focus was on 'the philosophy and culture of the ancient Zoroastrian faith from its origins in Central Asia, tracing a geographical and chronological continuum till the present. Rare artefacts and manuscripts, video recordings and installations, representing spiritual as well as environmental practices in material life, highlight the holistic nature

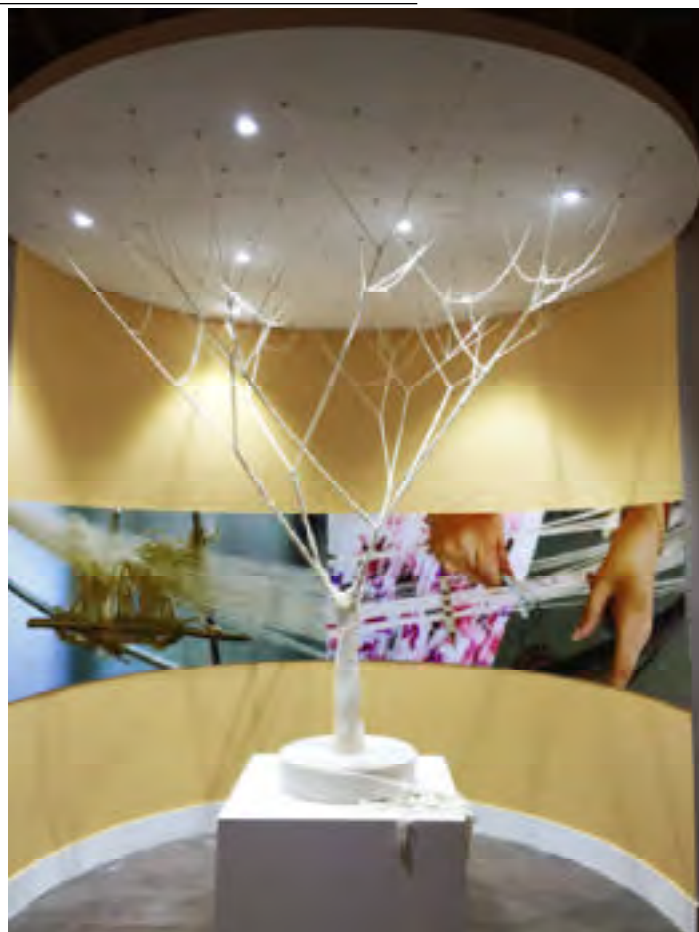


of this faith.'¹⁰ The catalogue for this exhibition was also not available at that time, but the display copy contained many research articles, photographs, and diverse information on culture and tradition. The most unusual display of this exhibition was the Tree of Life made from kustis, which illustrated the current journey of the community: 'the threads of continuity, which bind together this small community, their capacity to adapt to circumstances, while keeping their core beliefs intact, has enabled this population of less than 100,000 individuals across the world, to integrate both East and West, drawing colour and strength from the warp and weft that weaves together a unique tapestry of humanity.'¹¹

One particular gesture I noticed from a number of individuals both men and women, including myself was the automatic urge to bow our head in front of the various portraits of Zarathustra, to say a prayer, and follow the same rituals we observe when we are in an Agyari or Atash Behram. Being surrounded with so many beautiful religious objects, it was difficult to separate the spiritual from the fact that this was just an exhibition which took us through history, the arrival in Gujarat, and to modern times.

In addition, there were video recordings to watch, prayers to hear, and with so much detail, it was again impossible to do justice to this exhibition in one evening. The exhibits from Iran were very impressive, and it was a rare opportunity to see these valuable items in one place. One could imagine the effort, hard work, and most of all the dedication involved to bring together these artefacts to raise awareness about Zoroastrianism and Parsi culture. There was chalk and torans to see, familiar household objects, and I left the exhibits wanting to stay longer in Delhi, to experience the variety of events which had been organised over the next month. As Dr Shernaz Cama, the inspiration and force behind this festival said, 'while palaces and texts had been destroyed; songs, stories and prayers of the Oral tradition preserved the teachings of the faith – the most

The Tree of Life: Itis woven out of white Kusti wool, created by skilful weaving of single strands of 72 threads and is divided into many intricate and symbolic sections, so the Tree of Life too grows from a seed - an idea - and links all Creation through intricate, tiny links and growth.[S Cama]



Jehangir A Lalkaka
Collection Mr & Mrs Mulla



Meher Noshirwani has an MA in Sociology from the University of Essex, UK. As a sociologist she has worked in the field of women, development and environment since 1985. She is currently working as a Consultant and Researcher on Gender and Environment issues and is the Regional Vice Chair for Asia of the Commission on Environmental, Economic, and Social Policy (CEESP) of IUCN and is also the Technical Advisor to the Trust for Conservation of Coastal Resources (TCCR).

important of these being that “Happiness comes unto him who brings happiness to others” (Ys 43.1) ¹²

The three exhibitions, the various events, and the magnitude of the festival also reflected the words of Lord Karan Bilimoria, who spoke of partnerships, institution building, and the creation of wealth, and said ‘if you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far go together.’ An exhibition of this kind symbolises the essence of our identity.

So, on to the Lagan-nu-bhonu, sponsored by Dr Cyrus Poonawalla, and the sheer joy of eating on partras, (banana leaves), and drinking Pallonjii’s raspberry, and ice cream soda. As the music played, I glanced around at the crowd, young and old, enjoying themselves, and I felt reassured that in spite of the odds we face in terms of numbers, somehow, the Zoroastrian religion, and Parsi traditions and culture remains alive.

Notes

1. The Everlasting Flame International Programme Invitation card.
2. The Everlasting Flame; Zoroastrianism in History and Imagination. Supplement, edited by Sarah Stewart, Ursula Sims-Williams, and Firoza Punthakey Mistree.
3. Ibid
4. Ibid
5. The Everlasting Flame, Zoroastrianism in History and Imagination. Exhibition leaflet.
6. Ibid.
7. Painted Encounters Parsi Traders and the Community and No Parsi is an Island. Invitation card.
8. Painted Encounters-Parsi Traders and the Community and No Parsi is an Island. Prof. Dr. Rajeev Lochan Director National Gallery of Modern Art New Delhi.
9. Ibid.
10. Threads of Continuity; Zoroastrian Life and Culture. Invitation card.
11. Ibid.
12. Threads of Continuity; Zoroastrian Life and Culture: Introduction to exhibition.



Photo credit : Dr
Cyasp
Noshirwani
Two images
bearing 1 & 2 :
courtesy
Dr Shernaz Cama

Detailed captions,
courtesy Dr
Shernaz Cama

Exhibitions & Entertainment during the EFIP

My Family and Other Parsis: Photographic Exhibition by Sooni Taraporevala between 29 April – 8 May at India International Centre. Sooni has carefully captured the everyday lifestyle of the esoteric Parsis. The photographs speak unabatedly of the charming persona of the Parsis, their eloquent and warm disposition to one another and their passion for life. Sooni has photographed people as they go about their daily lives, successfully narrating emotions of her subjects as they make conversation, attend family functions, at home or in the streets of Mumbai - a city which is considered a Parsi bastion.

Udvada: A Photographic Exhibition by Shantanu Das held at India International Centre from 14 April - 20 April. Udvada, the historic ground for the Parsi community in India is known worldwide for its significance to the Parsi clan’s growth, housing the Atash Behram (from Middle Persian Atash Warharan for “Victorious Fire”, the highest grade of ritual fire of the Zoroastrians) in the fire temple located here. Udvada has a unique culture, a serenity and simplicity that are worth a watch.

Puppet Theatre Performance by Dadi Pudumjee and the Ishara Puppet Theatre Trust: Based on Zoroastrian religious scripts and teachings, the universe is shown as a battle field between good and evil in this electrifying puppetry performance, with far reaching consequences for humanity, depending on which side they choose.

Fashion Show by Ashdeen Lilaowala & Wendell Rodricks: **The Scent of The Orient** - For this show, Designer Ashdeen Z Lilaowala created a cinematic journey in which magnificent examples of Parsi Gara embroidery explored the long history of interaction between the Parsis of India and China.

The Gireban Collection: Goan designer Wendell Rodricks brought to Parzor the Gireban Collection based on the Zoroastrian pocket of good deeds, also called the Kisse-e-kerfeh, in the Sadra vestment worn by Parsis.

Iranian Choir with traditional Instruments from Tehran on April 2 at India International Centre: Basha Ensemble, a choir from Tehran performed traditional folk songs of local seasonal celebrations and Navroze in traditional Iranian costumes.

The Looking Glass, Stained Glass Workshop by Katayun Saklat from 3 April – 10 April at IGNCA: Katayun Saklat, the renowned Stained Glass Artist from Kolkata held his workshop for the first time in Delhi. The workshop included an introduction to the basic principles of design as well as the craft of making of stained glass.

Behram-ni-Sasu (Behram’s Mother in Law), a Gujarati Parsi Natak by Yazdi Karanjia’s troupe of Surat on 30 April, India Habitat Centre: It is a hilarious play directed by Yazdi Karanjia, an octogenarian Surti and one of the doyens of Parsi theatre in Gujarat. The play took the audience directly in the centre of a Parsi household as actors presented relationships and societal issues in trademark Parsi Gujarati style.

Lec-Dem on the Teke Ceremony and Puppets from Azerbaijan by Poupak Azimpour Tabrizi on 6 May at India International Centre: Spring is a symbol of life and regeneration in many civilizations and cultures. Teke is the name of a puppet which announces the coming of spring. The real aspect in the meaning of ‘teke’ summons up a background of allegorical associations surrounding the beginnings of the showings of the whirling teke.

The programme will conclude on 27 May with a valedictory address by the eminent author Amitav Ghosh.

The Shroff Medical Centre - Mumbai

by yazdi parekh

The groundbreaking ceremony for the Shroff Medical Centre of the B D Petit Parsee General Hospital was held on February 28, 2016. The Shroff Medical Centre will be a brand new seven storey multi-disciplinary hospital with a 200-bed capacity. It will be built on unused land within the grounds of the current Hospital. This momentous day for the Parsee General Hospital and the Parsi community of Mumbai was due to the philanthropy of Pervin & Jal Shroff of Hong Kong.

This new hospital will be a grand achievement in three ways. Firstly, it will be a world class cosmopolitan hospital in its own right. Secondly, it will greatly enhance the care of the Parsi patients in the current Parsee General Hospital by allowing them onsite access to a modern diagnostic centre. Thirdly, it will transform the Parsee General Hospital into a self-sustaining institution by guaranteeing that income from the Shroff Medical Centre is used to provide free and subsidized beds to Parsis.

Pervin & Jal Shroff, together with their children: Rasheed and his wife Amy, Zarina



L to R: son Rasheed, Pervin, Jal, daughter Sharmeen Sidhar & son-in-law Deepak Sidhar

and her husband Raman, and Sharmeen and her husband Deepak, have committed to donate US\$22.5 million for this impressive project. US\$20 million of the donation is for the construction of the hospital while a further US\$2.5 million is for



a state of the art oncology department within the hospital. Cancer treatment is a matter very dear to the heart of the Shroff family and they wanted to make sure Parsis would have access to ultra-modern facilities.

Pervin & Jal have been quietly contributing to the Parsi community in Hong Kong, in India, and around the world, for a long time. Their charity has been done not seeking any recognition or prominence but only for the welfare of those in need. That is why until now their charitable works have not received publicity. However, this project is too massive for their typically self-effacing approach and has received wide coverage not just in the Parsi community but in the secular press as well.

These charitable contributions are all the more remarkable because of the background of Jal Shroff. The Shroff family story begins over a hundred years ago in Valsad, Gujarat where the family was originally from. Around 1890 an entrepreneurial member of the Shroff family moved to Shanghai, China to seek his fortune by opening up his own shop. Then in 1918, Jal's father, Soli Framjee Shroff, aged 18, joined his uncle in Shanghai to help with the shop.

Jal Shroff was born in 1937 in Shanghai. He and his family came to the then British Colony of Hong Kong in 1939 temporarily during World War II. They lived there through its nearly four-year occupation by the Japanese. Once the war ended they went back to Shanghai in 1946. Then in 1949 when the communists took over China they lost everything and had to flee back to Hong Kong as refugees.

Jal got admission to King George V School, the top English school in Hong Kong at the time. He excelled there, becoming the school's only Head Boy to serve two years instead of one. He then went on to London University and obtained a degree in Business Administration. Upon graduation in 1959 he returned to Hong Kong and

joined his father's trading business, S Framjee & Co Limited. Jal helped his father build up his business over the years but was also very interested in sports, particularly cricket. He was a member of the Hong Kong national cricket team for 17 years and served as captain of the team from 1965 to 1971.



Pervin & Jal Shroff

Pervin Shroff grew up in Bombay and obtained her BA in Economics from St Xavier's College. She worked for Tata in Bombay before marrying Jal in 1971 and moving to Hong Kong. In addition to raising their three children, Pervin also joined the family business in 1978. In fact it was she who made first contact with someone who would be the key to their future success.

In 1984 Pervin contacted the Kartsosis family from Dallas, Texas who were interested in setting up a watch business. At the time S Framjee & Co was dealing in the export of watches and it would have been easy to act only as a supplier as many of the import/export businesses in Hong Kong were doing at the time. Instead the Shroffs decided to take a gamble and became partners with the Americans. Together they started the Fossil watch business and it has expanded over the last 30 years to become one of the premier companies in the world.

Fossil is now a global design, marketing, and distribution company that specializes in consumer fashion accessories. In addition to watches it also sells jewelry, handbags, leather goods, belts, sunglasses, and accessories. In 2015 Fossil sold 30 million watches, 20 million pieces of jewelry, 6 million pieces of leather goods, and over half a million other accessories. It has 619 company-owned stores and 59 offices around the globe. It operates in 150 countries with 15,000 employees. Fossil not only sells its own brands, such as Fossil, Relic, Skagen, and Zodiac, but has exclusive manufacturing and worldwide distribution agreements for watches of other brands such as Adidas, Armani Exchange, Burberry, Chaps, Diesel, Emporio Armani, Karl Lagerfeld, Marc Jacobs, Michael Kors, Michele, and Tory Burch. Fossil is a NASDAQ listed public company and a component of the S&P market index. In 2015 Fossil had net sales of US\$3.23 Billion. Despite this great success, Jal Shroff in his typical humble style, takes no credit for the success instead attributing it to 75% luck and 25% guided by gut feeling.

In addition to their business successes both Pervin and Jal Shroff have greatly contributed to the community in Hong Kong. Jal was the President of the Incorporated Trustees of the Zoroastrian Charity Funds of Hongkong, Canton, & Macao for 24 years. It was during his tenure that the ZCF evolved from a small Trust mostly managing local affairs and doing small charitable work to supporting thousands of needy Parsis worldwide every year and donating large sums to major projects. Part of this was due to his vision and tireless work in redeveloping the old 3-storey Zoroastrian Building into the revenue generating 23-storey commercial tower it is today.

Jal was also Chairman of the English Schools Foundation (ESF) for 11 years. The ESF has grown out of one school, his alma mater King George V, to include 22 institutions now. As a recognition of his service to Hong Kong he was made a Justice of the Peace by the Hong Kong SAR Government in 2001. Currently he is also a Director of the Vision 2047 Group.

Pervin was also a Trustee of the Incorporated Trustees of the Zoroastrian Charity Funds of Hongkong, Canton, & Macao. She has become a Master Teacher in Reiki, Sekhem, and Magnified Healing. She also started the Healing Circle, a free centre for yoga, healing, and alternate therapies. Since 2007 she has been working with cancer patients and those with physical and emotional problems.

It was through their other charity work and trips to Bombay that they came to realize that the Parsee General Hospital did not have a sustainable financial model. Changing demographics and the fact that over half the beds in the Parsee General Hospital were free or subsidized meant the Hospital ran large deficits every year. In addition the Hospital didn't have any advanced diagnostic facilities and patients had to be sent to other hospitals. The Hospital would pay for the free patients' tests elsewhere incurring even greater cost. The inconvenience of having to go to a different hospital for tests also led paying patients and doctors to choose other hospitals over Parsee General, leading to even less revenue.

About five years ago Pervin & Jal Shroff and the Hospital first spoke of setting up an advanced diagnostic centre open to all communities to ease the burden on patients as well as generate revenue to cover other costs. While this would have helped the situation it would not have been able to generate enough revenue on its own to cover the annual deficits. Then two years ago the Hospital approached the Shroffs with a grand plan to build a much larger full hospital rather than only a diagnostic centre. While this would mean a considerably larger donation than first anticipated, the Shroffs decided to support the new plan for the long-term well being of the Parsi community.

On March 15, 2015 the Shroffs signed a legally binding agreement with the relevant authority of the Parsee General Hospital to donate the US\$22.5 million. Donor responsibility is very important, especially

considering the massive size of this charitable commitment. So Pervin & Jal wanted to make sure that the project had a smooth construction and the new hospital was professionally managed and efficiently run. The Shroffs ensured in the legal agreement that they would have adequate representation on the Board of Directors and have a voice in the running of the new hospital. The Shroffs would be consulted on all major issues and have a say in major appointments including the new CEO. They have no ulterior motive in this, only to ensure the hospital is on par with the best in the world in quality of medical service and patient satisfaction.

While the new Shroff Medical Centre will be open to all communities, the main goal of the donation is to help Parsis. The agreement guarantees income is paid annually from the Shroff Medical Centre to the existing exclusively Parsi hospital. Sufficient income will be transferred to allow the current Parsee General to comfortably continue its charitable work. This means Parsis will be able to receive free and subsidized medical care into the foreseeable future. In addition all Parsi patients of the existing hospital will have, on favorable terms, use of the diagnostic facilities of the new hospital. Another agreement is that the lobby of the new hospital have a good-sized etched glass figure of Zarathustra prominently displayed. This display will subtly remind the cosmopolitan population of Mumbai of the philanthropic nature of the Parsi community in providing the facility.

The architect appointed to design the Shroff Medical Centre is the multi-award winning Brinda Somaya, a well-known Mumbai based architect with almost 40 years of experience. She has designed a variety of buildings throughout India from corporate campuses to schools and colleges to private housing. She has also done a number of major restoration projects of heritage buildings.

Once again Mumbai has been marked with a great display of Parsi charity, rivaling the

great works of bygone eras. This donation by Pervin & Jal Shroff may very well be the largest single cash donation to the community in its history. This remarkable generosity is only matched by the humility of the Shroff family. The Shroff Medical Centre of the B D Petit Parsee General Hospital looks to set the standard in serving the community for the foreseeable future.



Yazdi Viraf Parekh is a third generation resident of Hong Kong. He moved to California to obtain his MBA and MAcc. He moved back to Hong Kong to join his family's business and currently resides there with his wife

Chermeen and daughters Sanaya & Ava.



Pir-e-Banu where once seven holy fires burned, 115 km from Yazd. Legend has it that Banu Pars, the youngest daughter of King Yazdegird III as she was fleeing from the Arabs, fled to the mountains, lifted her arms praying to be saved. The mountain responded by opening its side, and she disappeared into its embrace. Photo courtesy - Minocher Vakharia

An Interview with an Astrophysicist

Dr Nergis Mavalvala, is a Pakistani-American astrophysicist known for her role in the first observation of gravitational waves. She is the Curtis and Kathleen Marble Professor of Astrophysics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), where she is also the Associate Head of the Department of Physics. She was awarded a MacArthur Fellowship in 2010. On 11 February 2016, she was on the team of scientists who announced to the public that for the first time they had observed ripples in the fabric of space-time called gravitational waves. The detection confirmed a major prediction that Albert Einstein had made a century ago regarding the general theory of relativity. Farishta Murzban Dinshaw interviewed her for Hamazor about her work and amazing discovery.

Please tell Hamazor a little about your memories of growing up in Karachi.

I grew up in Mehrabad, a compound of apartment buildings where most families were Zoroastrian. I went to a Catholic school, Convent of Jesus and Mary, and had many friends who were neither Zoroastrian nor Catholic. I also had a beloved Hindu ayah. So I grew up as a gender-bending kid from a Zoroastrian home within a loving Zoroastrian community, going to a Catholic school, and living within largely Muslim social networks, all while being shaped by a Hindu ayah whom I adored. We grew up marking holidays that were Islamic, Zoroastrian, Christian and Hindu. This was culturally rich and also made me a bit of an outsider in all the micro-worlds I occupied. Being an outsider gave me the freedom to not fully conform to any of these micro-worlds, a freedom I have cherished in all my life's work. It has allowed me to question dominant culture and values, preexisting ideas and norms, to think differently, to take risks, to embrace my outsider status in everything I've done. As a woman doing physics, I'm a minority, and I have a certain comfort with that.

Did the "outsider" experience translate to when you went to America? How has your experience as an immigrant impacted your work?

It has shaped certain choices I made, mostly for the better. As a student and earlier in my career, because my visa status didn't allow it, I never took any time off from single-mindedly pursuing education and a career in physics. Now, looking back I'm glad for it, since there's nothing I'd rather be doing and it kept me very directed and focused.

Why did you become an astrophysicist? Please share a turning point or defining moment in your journey.

I was always curious about the origins of the universe, and I found the explanations and religious narratives about this quite unsatisfying. One of the very influential moments in my childhood was when I was unhappy that I had to learn some prayers. My great uncle asked me why I was so morose and I told him that I was being made to pray.

"Pray to whom?" he asked.

"To God," I replied dejectedly.

"Why do they want you to pray to God?" he asked.

"Because they say that God made the world and we must thank him."

"What nonsense!" my great uncle exclaimed. "If anyone tells you that God made the world, then you just ask them who made God."

I have never forgotten that conversation. In that moment, I gained license from an

esteemed elder to question belief, dogma, and indeed anything that didn't make sense to me. As I grew older I turned more and more to science for answers to questions about our origins and how the physical world works. It helped that I showed some ability at science and math, and of course my parents encouraged me (and my sister, who I adore, who is also a science / math type) to follow my interests. Given the things that captured me intellectually, I think it was inevitable that I would be a scientist.

So, what is your take on the God versus science debate?

I am an atheist, and have not found the need to reconcile science and God. Participation in formal organized religion is not important in my life, but leading a life of values that include social justice and treating people with kindness and respect is very important to me. Even though it's not for me, I've come to respect that religion is important to others.

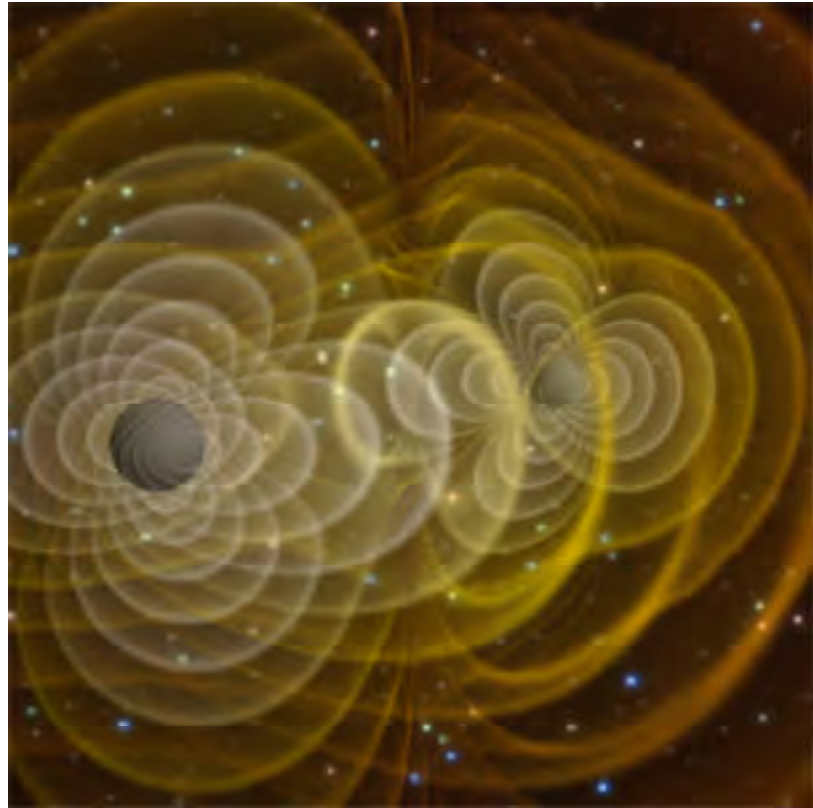
The February announcement rocked the scientific world. Could you explain the work you do on gravitational waves as if you were explaining it to a 10 year old?

Gravitational waves are ripples of space-time. Just as there are ripples on the surface of a pond when we drop a rock in it, space-time itself — the very thing our universe is made of — can also have ripples. Those ripples are caused by very heavy stars or black holes, which are stars with so much gravity that even light cannot escape their gravitational pull. These waves travel across the universe, just as light waves do, so we can use them to observe distant objects in the sky.

Why is your research important?

This discovery marks a number of important milestones.

(i) For the first time gravitational waves were directly observed. At last we have detectors sensitive enough – and I mean spectacularly sensitive – to see these



This visualization shows what Einstein envisioned. Researchers crunched Einstein's theory of general relativity on the Columbia supercomputer at the NASA Ames Research Center to create a three-dimensional simulation of merging black holes. This was the largest astrophysical calculation ever performed on a NASA supercomputer. The simulation provides the foundation to explore the universe in an entirely new way, through the detection of gravitational waves. Photo credit NASA, Wikimedia Commons.

ripples of space-time. The gravitational wave we measured moved the mirrors of our detectors by a few attometers ($4 \times 10^{-18} \text{m}$), that's 1000 times smaller than a proton!

(ii) For the first time, we observed a black hole system like this one. It's hard to imagine these objects 30 times more massive than our sun whipping about each other at almost the speed of light before crashing into each other. And for a brief instant, more energy is released than all the shiny stars in the universe put out. We have never before seen this process unfold in real time.

(iii) And, third, we have never before been able to compare it to theory. This is the first confirmation that Einstein's theory works even for a system like this one, where gravity is extremely strong.

But perhaps most importantly, we have turned on a completely new sense with which to study the universe.

Scientific discovery plays an important role in the “real” world by fueling technology development, training generations of scientists and engineers, and feeding human hunger for knowledge and understanding. Arriving at applications with immediate utility is not a linear process usually. In fact it's often hard to predict how a discovery will change the world, but when clever people invent and have ideas, something good is bound to come of it. Along the path to discovering gravitational waves, we've invented new lasers, optics and vibration isolation technologies, and new computational and signal processing techniques — those are tangible outcomes.

But we've also learned how to make very precise measurements, and many of the researchers trained in the field have gone on to work in the high tech industry and even in finance and the life sciences. There's lots of “real” world impact that's not directly visible or tangible at first glance.

Is there controversy about your findings or opposing schools of thought?

Remarkably, no. There's a number of reasons why our discovery has been uncontroversial. First, we have two separate detectors that both saw the signal independently, which makes it hard to be an instrumental artifact or malfunction. Second, the signal we measured was loud and clear; this was a gift from nature, that the very first signals we recorded were so unambiguous. Third, we have a large team that checked and double checked and then checked again that we were not doing something stupid and fooling ourselves. Fourth, we had multiple independent codes and techniques that verified the results. Fifth, the signals behaved as predicted by Einstein's theory, a theory that had been confirmed in other ways by scientific community over the past 100 years. So our discovery has been quickly and widely accepted.

You work as a member of a team of scientists. What is the best and the most challenging part of being part of such a team?

Working in a team is for the most part fantastic. You get to learn from the collective expertise of so many talented people. And if everyone is excited by the same end goal, of unlocking the secrets of nature, then the sum of those talents is greater than the parts. I have worked with dedicated and driven people, and I learn from my colleagues and students every moment of the journey.

Working in large teams is also not without challenges, of course. Not everyone is like-minded or brings the same level of commitment and talent. And, as it is the case among any group of people, there can be interpersonal dynamics that need to be dealt with. However, for the most part, we as a working group have remained highly collaborative and team-oriented, a reality I attribute to a project leadership that actually lives and models those values, a situation that filters down to all levels of how we work. So the pros of working in a team far outweigh the cons.

What is your favourite aspect of your work? What excites you about it?

It is an absolute privilege to be paid to do what I love to do. Scientific inquiry and discovery are interesting, challenging, exciting. The everyday work is also great fun: building experimental apparatus, at times pushing to the very edge of what is technically possible, at other times inventing new techniques out of necessity. Being an academic researcher, working with students is one of the most rewarding aspects of my work. I learn from my students at least as much as I get to teach them. I have had the pleasure and privilege of working with some of the smartest, most hardworking young people ever, and that is an amazing and humbling experience.

Your work has got a lot of coverage around the world, but also in Pakistan.

Do you have issues about the way your work / your profile has been covered? In this day and age of sound bites, if you could give one take away message to the public, what would it be?

It's rare that a scientific discovery garners so much attention among the general public and press, so we've all been delighted that our discovery has received so much positive attention worldwide. I have, however, been surprised and baffled by the level of attention that my role in the discovery has gotten, especially in Pakistan. The coverage has been largely excellent, the dialog around the findings thoughtful, and the level of interest in the workings of our universe truly wonderful to see.

The candidates for the US election in November debate on many topics, but science is not one of them. If you could ask the next US President one thing related to your work, what would it be?

I would make my request broader than my own work. It is important for any US president to know that national investments in science are one of the pillars of the US economy and society. This discovery took four decades of effort and cost, but now we know something new and amazing about the universe that we did not know before. Along the way, we have invented technologies that have made their way into society, and we've trained entire



L-R : Albert Einstein, Hideki Yukawa, John Wheeler (the one who coined the word 'black hole') and Homi Bhabha at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Princeton (Image Credit: Princeton University) Blog on http://www.huffingtonpost.in/karan-pankaj-jani/why-we-need-to-thank-homi_b_9250308.html



Nergis Mavalvala's breakthrough in 2016. Einstein envisioned this in 1915.

generations of scientists and engineers who are working in various hi-tech industries. I would encourage the US government to continue to fund not only science, but all types of creativity that make a society thrive. And I would include in that the arts

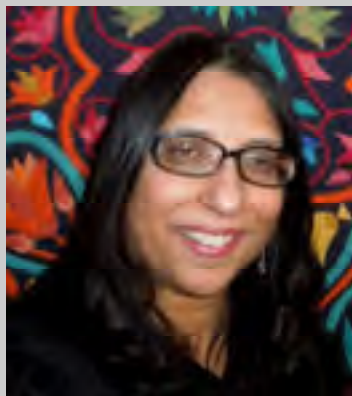
and humanities, all the human creative and cultural activities that enrich our lives, feed us emotionally and spiritually, and help us to question norms and push the boundaries of what humans can do.

What do you like to do when you aren't working? What makes you get up in the morning?

My family. My partner and our 8 year old son are the center of my universe. I am also an avid athlete. I love to play squash, bicycle long distances - anything that involves being in motion and working a goal.

In your interviews you have said that you are a product of good mentoring. What advice would you give children, particularly girls, who want to become scientists when they grow up?

Go for it. Do not let anything stop you. Believe in yourself. Focus on excellence in whatever you do. Ignore the critics. Find mentors who will support you and care about you and believe in you. And once you've made it yourself, be a mentor to the young people coming up, especially those who come from circumstances that tell you they are special and had to work extra hard to get to where they are. Be loving and kind and stretch to understand the perspective of others. Stand up for yourself. Remember all the people who helped you get to where you are: your teachers, your family, your mentors, the educational institutions where you learned, and all the people and institutions whose shoulders you stand on. And give back.



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/>

The Attempted Hijack of Pan Am Flight 073

A recent film made and released in India titled "NEERJA", is about true to life incident of a failed hijack attempt of Pan Am Flight 073 at Karachi airport on 5 September 1986.

The hijack attempt commenced at around 5:40am and ended at approximately 9:30pm with a shootout inside the aircraft by the hijackers killing 20 and injuring 130.

Neerja the senior flight attendant was one of the victims of the shooter.

Since the film depicts the happenings inside the aircraft, Hamazor interviewed the head of Pan Am at that time Viraf Daroga (Director Pakistan/Iran/Afghanistan) for his account of what happened outside the aircraft during those hours.

Here is his account ...

Pan Am flight 073 aircraft N-656PA a B747 originated from Bombay (Mumbai) India with a transit stop at Karachi and then onwards to Frankfurt / London / New York.

The flight landed at Karachi around 5:15am and was to depart at 6:45am. Shortly around 6:00am I was awakened via VHF radio call from Pan Am office at the airport to notify that some armed persons had forcibly seized flight 073.

My first priority was to inform the US Consul General. At the airport I was briefed by my staff that the Karachi bound passengers from India had disembarked and the transit passengers from India were on board. The aircraft cleaning and catering services were almost done as well as the aircraft fueling.

In those days aircrafts were remote parked at various ramped spots as there was no facility

of airport building to bridge concept. The passengers were bussed to the aircraft and boarded via passenger steps. Pan Am boarded passengers from L1 and L2 doors. The two bus loads of joining passengers from Karachi had embarked. The third and last bus-load had not reached the aircraft. It was at that point when a high speed vehicle in the livery of Airport Security Force (ASF) reached the aircraft from which four heavily armed individuals, three of them dressed in ASF uniform and one in shalwar / kameez jumped out, pushed aside the two ASF guards posted at the foot of each stairway and rushed into the aircraft shouting and terrorizing passengers.

At the time when the hijackers had taken control of the aircraft, there were on board 357 passengers plus five infants, seven Pan Am ground staff and 13 flight attendants. Soon thereafter, the cockpit crew of three evacuated using the emergency device via the hatch in the cockpit.

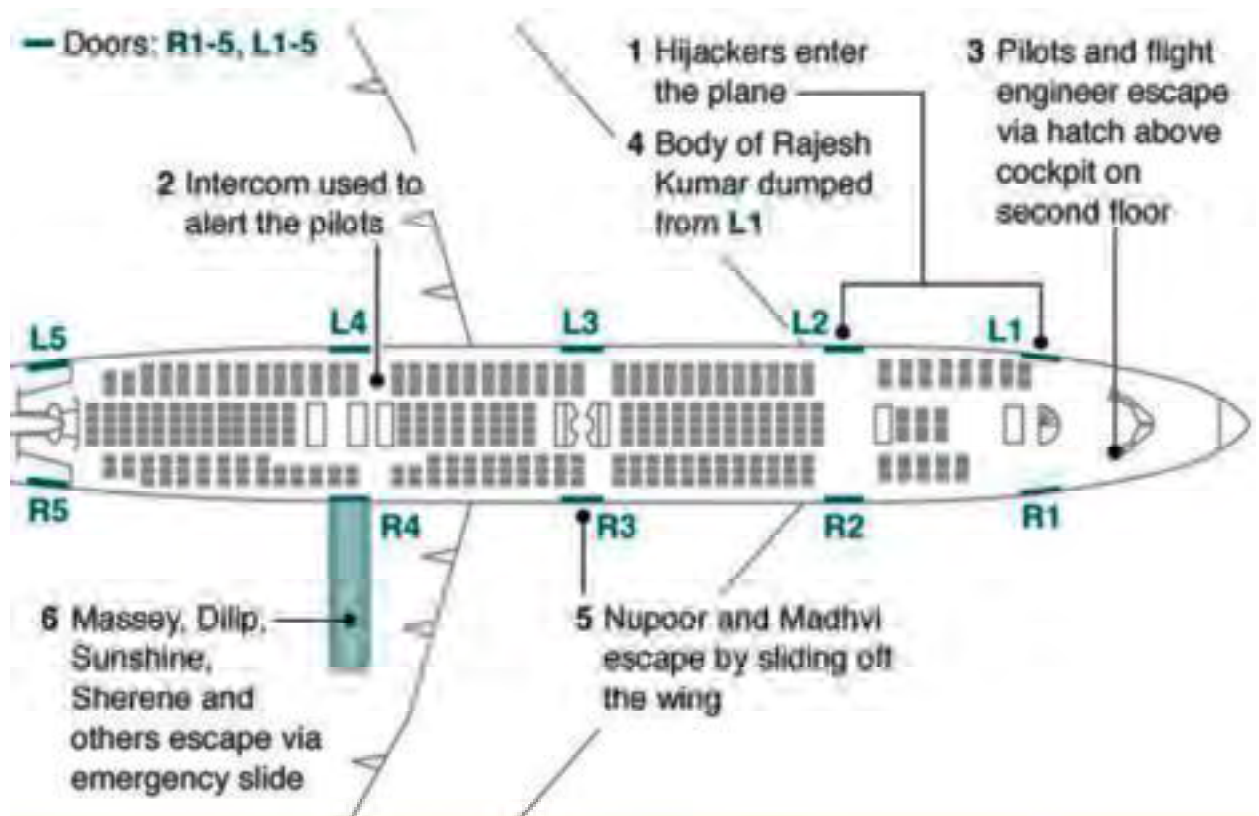
The catering service vehicle at door R2 and R4 moved away and all doors of the aircraft

were shut. The boarding steps for the passengers at L1 had been removed but the steps at L2 were still in place although the door was closed.

Six ground staff (cleaners) and mechanic Meherjee Kharas were also trapped inside along with the passengers.

The cockpit crew had lodged in Pan Am Operations office and I instructed they should be sent to US Consulate office for safety. This later in the day proved to be the best decision.

By this time the Head of ASF Brig Rafi (SSG decorated) from the army, Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), and Air Vice Marshal Khursheed Anwar Mirza -arrived at the plane site, as well as some other Government and CAA officials. The vehicle in which the hijackers had arrived was still parked near passenger step 2. My staff and I saw some weapons, briefcase, and clothing in the vehicle and we decided to push the vehicle away from the aircraft. As we started to move the vehicle at that point the L1 door was



opened and a flight attendant behind whom a hijacker stood (he was using her as a shield), shouted that the vehicle would explode if we moved it. It was a bluff as we not only moved it but the officials retrieved many things from it including explosives and weapons. I believe it upset the hijacker no end and the door was shut.

A few minutes later the door opened again and in the same manner called out to say that they wanted to talk to someone. There was no response from any official present at the aircraft to this request.

If any dialogue had to take place it would have to be between the government officials and the hijackers, which was the norm, anywhere in the world. They called out three to four times, each time receiving no response from the officials. Since no official was coming forward to talk to them I turned to the force commander if he would speak to them. He refused on grounds I don't care to mention.

After they called out for the fourth time to speak to someone, I felt that this would only aggravate the hijackers further as their mission to fly the aircraft to their choice destination was now wrecked having no one to fly the plane.

I once again asked the officials if they would speak to them but none showed any desire. It was at that point I said I would speak to them as I could no longer wait and since it was a Pan Am flight it would be my responsibility to secure the safety of the passengers.

With a megaphone I stood in front of the L1 door and for the first time faced the hijacker who had the flight attendant as a shield. He wanted to know who I was, to which I responded that I was the duty manager of Pan Am on that day and asked him as to what he wanted to convey. To start with he wanted the cockpit crew to be brought back to fly the plane out. I told him I did not know the whereabouts of the cockpit crew as they had left from the airport. He also asked to remove the passenger stairway which was at L2 door. He wanted to see this happen while speaking with me. I signaled to one of my operators to

remove the stair. As the stair was backed, a grenade which they had dropped half way up when they rushed in to take the plane, dislodged and came rolling down and stopped a foot behind me. My staff standing near the nose of the plane were shouting and waving to me to run but I felt if I did that he would shoot me in panic. I looked down and saw the pin was still in the grenade so I continued to speak to him. He shut the door, I picked up the grenade using my pen and handed it to the officials. I told the officials as to what they had demanded but also added that the demand would not be met.

The best thing that had happened was that the aircraft was on ground and not in the air as one could deal with the situation better than having the aircraft fly from one point to another.

Twenty minutes later I was in front of the hijacker and informed him, there was no success in finding out where the cockpit crew was and needed more time. I also told him to allow me to hook up the Ground Power Unit (GPU) which provides electrical power to the aircraft and air-conditioner truck so that in the event the Aircraft Power Unit (APU) shut down there would be a back-up. But he totally refused and mentioned he did not want to see any equipment close to the aircraft. He gave me some more time and closed the door. I could sense the pressure was building up.

In meantime the government officials had collected photocopies of the guests' passports who had stayed in various hotels in Karachi and asked if I would be able to identify the hijacker from it. It did not take long to tell them who that person was. The four of them had checked in more than two months before the incident. They had spent that time in getting the uniforms stitched, acquiring a car on rental and painted in ASF livery; and visiting Karachi Airport at night several times to figure out how they would make their entry when the time came.

They made the entry from the cargo facility where the barrier gate was manned by ASF who check before allowing entry, but was not done in this case because of the vehicle and uniform. In the reenactment, from the point of entry at the barrier

gate to the aircraft the time was 12 seconds. At the next meeting I informed him that there had been no success in finding the cockpit crew but perhaps an arrangement for an alternate crew could be made; but in order to get the government officials to agree, would he consider letting women and children go and would he inform as to where he would want to fly to. His response was no to release of women and children and he wanted to go to Larnaca. I asked him why Larnaca? He said that there were several friends of his who were incarcerated there and he wanted them freed. I said if he would give the names of the persons he wanted freed, I could convey to government officials who in turn would speak with the authorities in Cyprus. He refused to give the names and said he just wanted the cockpit crew.

During the next meeting he complained he could not hear me properly and wanted a better mode of communication. I offered him three choices.

■ I could speak to him standing on top of the stair instead of the ground from a short distance. He rejected that.

■ I could give him a walkie / talkie. That too was rejected.

■ I could give him an army field phone. Rejected and door closed.

It was now 8:45am. The next time when the door opened, he had a passenger in front of him on his knees and he had a gun against his head behind the right ear. I pleaded not to harm him as it would make things difficult for me to convince the officials to agree to any of their demands. He gave me 15 minutes to talk to the officials and come back, but as I turned around to walk, I heard a gunshot. He shot the passenger and threw him out of the aircraft and also the gun he had shot him with. I helped pick up the injured person, to put him in the ambulance. Although he was still alive, he died before reaching hospital.

The next time when the door opened he had another passenger brought forward to be shot, if I did not offer a better mode of communication. The passenger was an Englishman named Mike Thexton. He said he would shoot one passenger every 15 minutes. My feeling was having shot one person he would have no hesitation to carry out what he mentioned. I asked him if he would

agree and accept Aircraft Radio Communication. He agreed but he needed to know, how to use it. I was to make the most difficult decision of my life in order to save many lives. Faced with Hobson's Choice, I informed him that there was a Pan Am staff who could operate the aircraft VHF radio to set up communication on frequency 131.4, and identified Meherjee Kharas.

The radio frequency I mentioned was for the radio in Pan Am's operations office. Pan Am worldwide had set up a radio in the operations office which could communicate between aircraft and operation's office. Once the aircraft entered the airspace of the country it was flying into, it would contact the operations office to notify its landing time and also if there was a maintenance item that needed to be corrected or any other info for security etc. The added advantage to that was a cassette tape recorder which came on and off every time the mike was keyed to record what was being communicated between the aircraft and the operation office. The reason I asked for Meherjee to use that frequency and not the Airport Tower Frequency (118) was to record the conversation between the hijackers and the person in the operation office. The cassette recording (five cassettes) of the entire conversation between the hijackers and the negotiator was key evidence in the trial of the hijacker.

Meherjee was brought to the cockpit and he called out on the radio. I was in the operations office and after exchanges of agreeing that the radio was working to everyone's satisfaction, the next and a different phase of the incident began, which meant no longer speaking from standing in front of the aircraft but with radio communication.

For the next eight to nine hours negotiations with the hijackers continued. Initially the conversation was in English but the hijackers wanted to speak with a negotiator in Arabic. A manager working for Saudia Airline who spoke Arabic was requested by the government officials to speak with the hijackers. The instructions on what to tell them came from the officials.

When I first spoke with Meherjee the hijacker present in the cockpit recognized my voice and

asked Meherjee as to who I was? Meherjee not knowing what information I had given the hijacker to understand, revealed my position and authority. This infuriated the hijacker and swore he would shoot me next time if and when I would be in front of him. However one of the flight attendants also in the cockpit had his thinking changed by denying and convincing him that I was not that person.

Before handing over the mike to the Saudia manager to carry on in Arabic I managed to inform Meherjee to lower the wing flaps as and when he had the opportunity. He managed to do that, as at times he was alone in the cockpit. The flaps were only partially lowered none the less it helped considerably when the shooting started and every one tried to escape by jumping on the wing and sliding down from the area of lowered flaps, including Mike Thexton.

For the next eight to nine hours the negotiations went on via radio communication. At 7:30pm the APU failed and the radio communication lost. I knew we would lose the emergency lights in 15 to 20 minutes and with no AC and all doors shut the temperature in the aircraft would rise and people have difficulty in breathing. I had to make an attempt to once again talk to the hijacker from the ramp. I was only 50 yards away from the plane when I heard gun shots and explosions. The hijackers had taken position and started shooting everyone in the darkness. The R4 door was the first to open with the slide inflating almost simultaneously, L3 and R3 door opened. Everyone was trying to save themselves by any form of escape, considering that the shooting carried out with automatic weapons and grenades lobbed the loss of life of twenty and injuries from severe to incidental to 130 amongst a large number of persons confined in a tight space.

It all ended around 9:30pm.

FOOT NOTE FOR THE RECORD:

■ ■ ■ When the hijackers got into the aircraft, the cockpit crew was alerted from R4 door by flight attendant Shireen Vicajee (Parsi).

■ ■ ■ The passport collection with hiding or not collecting them of US Nationals of the

occidental community (an act of bravery) was done by Sunshine Mascaranus Vesuwalla (Husband Parsi).

■ ■ ■ Mike Thexton's life was spared because of my relentless pressure on the hijacker.

■ ■ ■ When the APU shut down Meherjee and Shireen who were in the cockpit were asked to come down and sit with all others who had squatted on the floor in the aisle. Meherjee (Parsi) lost his life in the random shootout.

■ ■ ■ Neerja was injured in the shooting as well and helped by Sunshine and flight attendant Massey to slide her down R4 door. In the ambulance taking her to the hospital she was accompanied by Pan Am staff of airport passenger service Jamshed Minwalla. He stayed with her till she passed away with the injuries in the abdomen and legs.

■ ■ ■ The R4 door first to be opened was by the Pan Am ground staff mentioned earlier (cleaners). They collectively knocked one of the hijackers to the ground and opened the door. Cleaner Kalu hit the ground before the slide had fully inflated. He received head injuries. Cleaner Munnawar was shot in the back and survived. Cleaner Jivan Naga received bullet injuries to his legs and died few months later due to shrapnel poisoning.

■ ■ ■ The lead hijacker was accidentally shot by his own men. He was in the hospital for almost a month. At the hospital they found he had a belt round his waist of plastic explosive, battery in his trouser pocket and detonator in the shirt collar.

■ ■ ■ THEIR MISSION to fly the aircraft to Larnaca was a decoy. The mission was to blow up the plane over Israeli airspace to create worldwide uproar. If the aircraft would have flown out of Pakistan everyone on board would have been killed.

TAIL PIECE:

Viraf states ...

■ ■ ■ Having now seen the movie "Neerja", over 95% pertaining to the happenings inside and outside the Pan Am flight is inaccurate.

■ ■ ■ It is an insult to all other flight attendants who were Neerja's colleagues on the flight; with over exaggerated attitudes shown of the hijackers with crew and passengers.

■ ■ ■ Only portion of the film I have no comment, are the parts pertaining to Neerja's private and family happenings.

■ All flight attendants were real heroes who faced the challenge with duty, dedication and courage. BRAVO!



■ A lot happened between all that has been mentioned here on that day, with various agencies and myself, which remain classified.

■ Discovery Channel made a TV programme of about 50 minutes called "Get Out Alive", one can Google to view it.

■ Mike Thexton has written a book called "Whatever Happened to the Hippy Man". If one has interest to know more then what I have mentioned and what I could not mention, then get hold of the book.

■ In Mike's book on page 94, last paragraph he mentions about the mystery of two bullet marks on the aircraft's wind shield on the Captain's side that remained unexplained. Allow me to solve the mystery. The aircraft

was parked with its nose facing the fuel facility office of Caltex, approximately 500 feet away. An army sniper was on the roof of the Caltex building stationed there. When the APU failed I went to check and noticed there were three persons in the cockpit - Meherjee, hijacker and a flight attendant. The flight attendant was holding a paper to cover the brightness of the cockpit emergency light that came on when the APU shut down. The light had illuminated the cockpit and the hijacker

asked the flight attendant to hold the paper in order to diminish the brightness. Till that time the cockpit windshield was intact. I informed

the authorities to switch on the tarmac lights as we did not have much time. I suspect that the army sniper who was at a height in line with the cockpit window perhaps felt he could take out the hijacker with a clear shot and fired two shots at the cockpit window. What he did not know, the bullet considering the distance and the fact that the window is made of several plies, would not penetrate, and ended up making merely cobwebs on the window with a bang. It was then that the three left the cockpit and went down. It is conceivable that the hijacker reported to the leader of the happening. They may have suspected that this may

follow with a raid by Pakistan Commandos and as such they preempted the shooting and killing of passengers.

■ BBC.com on 31 March 2016, shared the story "Inside a hijack: The unheard stories of the Pan Am 73 crew". <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-35800683>. A collective input from the crew of what happened during the hijack.



Hamazor is delighted to share with you the accolades Viraf Daroga received for his brave and timely action taken during the attempted hijacking of Pan Am Flight 073.

■ Aside from Pan American World Airways, Viraf also received citations from the US government.

In addition, the following was mentioned:

"Member, Viraf Daroga is honoured with a presidential award by George W Bush of the United States of America at an Annual Award Ceremony held in Washington DC in April 2005, which honours victims, survivors, good Samaritans, Law Enforcement Officers and community members."

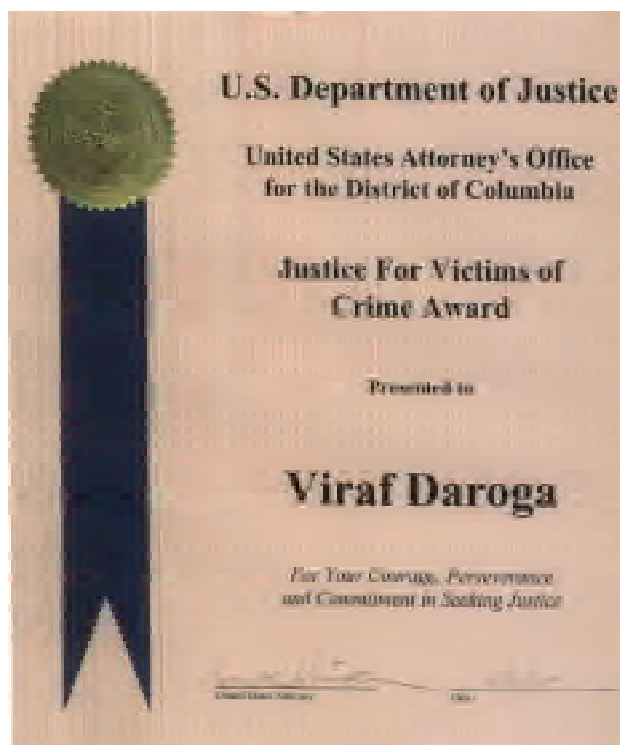
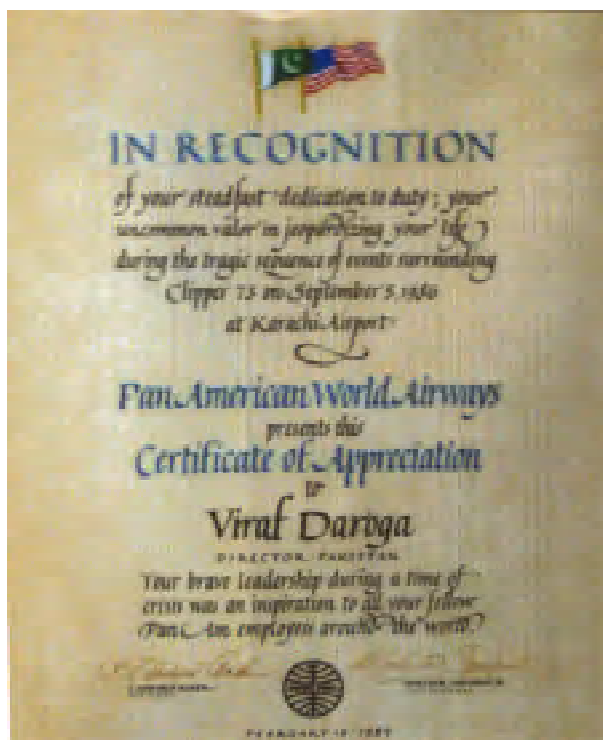
■ Viraf was bestowed with this honour for his tireless efforts in working closely with the FBI / CIA and the justice department of the USA,



Mike Thexton

in order to successfully prosecute the hijackers of Pan Am flight of September 5, 1986 at the Karachi airport.

Viraf was selected by the US Department of Justice to receive the 2006 Special Courage Award presented by the Attorney General of the United States, which is the highest award presented to crime victims.



**DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
SPECIAL COURAGE AWARD**

**Presented to
VIRAF R. DAROGA
Pan Am Flight 73
For Demonstrating
Extraordinary Courage
and Heroism
by**

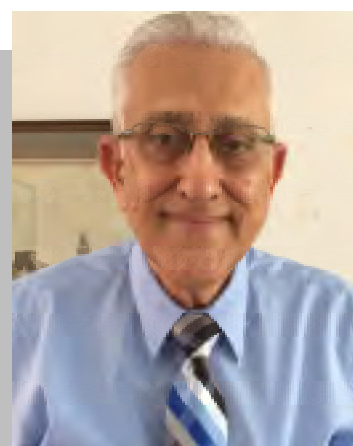
**Attorney General
of The United States
(signed)**

**Director
Office for Victims of Crime
(signed)**

**VICTIMS' RIGHTS: STRENGTH
IN UNITY
NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS
WEEK
April 21, 2006**

Viraf Daroga initially studied in the College of Mechanical/Electrical Engineering, but the love of Aviation Engineering over-powered. During 1952-1960, he gained tremendous practical experience with an European carrier. Thereafter he joined Pan American World Airways, enrolling in Pan Am's Aircraft Engineering School in London. In 1970, Viraf took over the Pan Am Engineering Department in Karachi and other aspects of Airport Operations till 1980 when he was made head of the entire Pan Am structure in Pakistan and by 1982, he represented Pan Am for Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan.

Viraf remained with Pan Am till its eventual closure in 1990. Presently he works for ARA Travel Services, GSA for American Airlines Pakistan as Executive Director.



Jim Sarbh

by beyniaz edulji

Those who have watched the Bollywood film 'Neerja,' a Bollywood film made in Hindi and based on the true story of an aeroplane hijacked at Karachi can't stop raving about the role of Palestinian terrorist Khalil played by Jim Sarbh. He plays his part with such menacing evil that he actually steps into the role of the sociopath. He is the actor people love to hate.

The film dates back to 5th September 1986 when PanAm Flight 73 takes off from Bombay and lands in Karachi. Sonam Kapoor, playing Neerja Bhanot, has just been promoted to Chief Purser. Four terrorists belonging to Palestine's dreaded Abu Nidal Organisation which was so effective in the 1980s, manage to board the flight along with guns, ammunition and grenades in Karachi. However, their plan goes awry when Neerja manages to alert both the pilots, who escape from the cockpit hatch. The rest of the story shows how the crew and 360 passengers are dealt with by the terrorists who cannot get the plane to leave the tarmac at Karachi and gets increasingly frustrated and violent dealing with the negotiators. Neerja, the model and air hostess rises to the occasion and loses her life but saves most of the other passengers and crew.

Neerja is directed by Ram Madhvani, written by Saiwyn Quadras and Sanyuktha Chawla Shaikh and the film features Sonam Kapoor in the title role. It also features Shabana Azmi, Yogendra Tiku and Shekhar Ravjiani in supporting roles. The film produced by Atul Kasbekar under the banner 'Fox Star Studios,' was released worldwide on February 19, 2016 to both critical and commercial acclaim. It was made on a budget of Indian Rs 200 million (US\$3.0 million) and went on to earn over INR 1.35 billion (US\$20 million) worldwide.

Despite having a star-studded cast, Jim Sarbh in the role of Kalil, the evil and



Jim Sarbh as Khalil



Late Neerja

unstable terrorist, has managed to hold his own in his debut film. Son of a Master Mariner and grandson of the legendary Kali Pundole, the person who first brought modern art to India, Jim Sarbh has always marched to the beat of his own drummer. Sarbh did his schooling in Mumbai and Australia, went to the United States where he studied psychology at the Embry University and worked on theatre projects in Atlanta. When he got back to India, he visited an Ashram in Bihar, back-packed in the Himalayas and then got cast in a lot of plays, made a few ad films until he got his big break in films. Sarbh was in Bombay, since 2012 and has acted in numerous plays such as *Ok Tata Bye Bye*, *Stories in a Song*, *Limbo*, *Death of a Salesman*, *Gates to India*, *Song, Cock (as F)*, *Noises Off*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Cock (as John)*, *EAT*, *Bull*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Living Room*, and *What is Done is Done*. Sarbh says, "I really enjoyed *Cock* as John, *The Glass Menagerie* as Tom, and *What is Done is Done* as Julio, because they were challenging roles. But all the plays have stretched me and helped build skill sets and confidence. I directed *Bull*, a version of *Cock*, and *Untold Stories*. *Cock* is a really painful and enjoyable play to work on: Mike Bartlett writes dialogue so arrestingly, and his characters are all so perfectly conflicted."

Asked if working in theatre must have helped him in the film, Sarbh says, "It did, especially on this particular shoot. Long takes, lots of spontaneous action, we rehearsed the scenes amongst the hijackers well, and an emphasis on reality. It's not that different it's just a matter of volume. Turn the volume on the action up, or turn the volume on the action down depending on the frame or the stage."

Of his growing up years, Sarbh says, "I was born in Bombay, and I spent my time shuttling between Mahim and Colaba. My father was a captain on a cargo ship, and so he'd be away for long stints of time, and so I would move to my mother's house in Colaba. I spent almost a year, when I was two, sailing around with him, visiting

countries all over the world. My immediate family migrated to Australia, when I was three. We lived in a tiny suburb of Sydney called Turramurra, and I remember enjoying my time there a lot. In Australia I went to a local public school – I don't remember much about it, frankly. It was a nice big school, open fields and eucalyptus trees. I liked this one girl with blonde hair and freckles and blue eyes. I don't remember her name. When I was eight, I moved back to Bombay, and was there till I left for undergraduate university. In Bombay I went to the Bombay International School, it was nice. I think I was bullied because I had an Australian accent, and then because I liked girls. My parents thought we would move back to Australia, so they switched me to the American School of Bombay. I

used to do pretty well in school. Then I went to Emory University in Atlanta and I studied Psychology. My father's name is Jimmy Sarbh: he is determined, smart, and hard working. My mother's name was Lale Pundole, Lale Sarbh now: she is loving, generous, and a perfectionist. I have a sister named Simoneil Sarbh, she is a teacher in Boston: she works with young children who have learning disabilities. She is perfect. I used to have a basset hound named

Eddie, but like most highly bred pedigrees, he was a little slow. He enjoyed eating



Photo credit : Shivaji Sen

packets of nails, and wound up with renal failure.”

Since he belongs to a family of famous art promoters, when asked if he takes an interest in the running of the family owned Art Gallery, Jim says with his tongue firmly in cheek, “No, my uncle Dadiba Pundole seems to be doing very well without my help.”

Sarbh had been doing theatre in Bombay for about three and half years, before getting the role in Neerja. Kanika had auditioned him for an ad earlier and thought that he looked Palestinian. Sarbh has easily managed to play such a terrifying bad guy with consummate ease. Asked if he had to prepare a lot for his role, he has this to say, “I don’t know, I just turned up the volume on all of my worst behavioural traits. I responded to the way he was written: impatient, violent, no real regard for human life. I like to do things well, I can be a little distant and aloof, I’m at times very practical, I like efficiency of action: I just turned the volume up on all of these things, made them extreme and violent. We work shopped with Vinod Rawat, and the other hijackers were a great support. Poor Ali Baldawala, playing Mansoor, counted 34 slaps over the course of the workshops and shooting. Abrar would be left slightly flabbergasted post rehearsal, wondering what suddenly got into Jim. But they always pushed me to keep going, to keep exploring. And so I did. And Ram made me feel free, like I could really do what I wanted. We also had weeks of Arabic coaching for our lines, and I did quite a bit of research on the type of people the Abu Nidal Organization would recruit, usually children in Palestinian refugee camps, children who’ve seen their families murdered in front of their eyes and are looking for revenge, or just something to belong to.”

Being featured on Forbes was the icing on the cake. Jim says, “It was great to be on the list. I was taken completely by surprise; I didn’t even know there was such a thing. That said, I would have done everything

exactly the same if I hadn’t been selected, and I don’t think much changed post being selected.”

His life has changed after Neerja has been released. Jim says, “I now have Twitter and Instagram accounts. I have been swayed. Truth be told, I’ve been so busy since the release, I haven’t been able to properly sit back and see how the changes are affecting me. When Neerja released I was shooting near Ranchi for Konkona Sensharma’s *A Death in the Ganj*, then I flew back to Bombay to do six shows of the *Living Room* at Prithvi, and now I’m back here. I spend quite a lot of time doing interviews, I’m going to be represented by Bling, I’m preparing for a couple auditions, and I’m reading scripts. It’s like suddenly being swept up by a wave, and I’m moving so fast, I barely know what I’m passing.”

In his spare time, he likes to practise yoga, watch movies and walk. His other interests are collages, dogs and football.



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.

Our Forest Home - Shergarh

by katie bhujwala

When I travelled to India as a young twenty-something fifteen years ago, the idea was to immerse myself in a culture completely different to everything I knew back home in England. I'd recently completed my studies in psychology and anthropology and had planned to spend a year travelling and working before returning home and settling down. During that year, a fantastic opportunity of volunteering at a renowned wildlife lodge arose, and I was very much taken by the idea of working alongside forest-dwelling communities. When I arrived, I found myself enchanted by the rural lifestyle. Life was so inextricably woven with nature and the changing seasons – it seemed both harsh and beautiful at the same time. My first safaris inside the Indian jungle were in the company of people who had spent years in conservation. It was an incredible introduction to an area I knew nothing about.

Kanha is one of the world's finest tiger habitats. It is a strongly protected area of pristine forests and open grasslands, home to a rich biodiversity of flora and fauna: deer, gaur (the world's largest wild cattle), wild dog, sloth bears, leopard and tiger all reside here. Indeed, it is these forests which inspired the setting for Rudyard Kipling's 'Jungle Book'. Kanha was one of the first national parks to be given special status as a Project Tiger Reserve, back in the 1970's when India's tiger population had dropped alarmingly low. The population is a little more stable today, but with more than 90% habitat loss over the past century and increasing demand for tiger parts in the lucrative Chinese traditional medicine industry, the tiger remains a highly endangered species.

It was here in Kanha that Jehan and I met. He was a self-taught naturalist from Bombay who was living nearby on his own

little piece of forest, planning to set up a wildlife camp of his own. Over those months, we spent much of our time together, talking endlessly about his project and sharing our thoughts and ideas. At the time, it was hard to admit that I was drawing myself in, but by the time summer arrived and my volunteering post came to an end, neither of us could imagine anything other than for me to stay and for us to continue the project together.

In those scorching summer days we lived in a simple mud hut without electricity, sketching our plans under a shady gazebo, and drenching ourselves in cooling buckets of water from our well. Our evenings were spent outdoors, watching the fireflies and reading to each other under the glow of a hurricane lamp. We strung a mosquito net



Shergarh 2002

down from a tree branch and lulled ourselves to sleep to the cacophony of frogs croaking from our forest pool. Flashes of electric purple began to appear across the sky, while the cooling breeze carried the comforting scent of fresh rain on parched

earth, a sign that the monsoon was approaching. For company, we had two pariah dogs, a cat that thought she was a dog and a trusty 100CC Hero motorbike to access the world beyond. A lovely old man cooked up our daily staple of dal-chawal-subji-roti on an open-fire, and in the late afternoon we would rest our backs against our cosy mud-hut, look out over the day's work and drink chai, dipping in the sweet-salty biscuits that were sold in the little shack at the crossroads. What simple, idyllic days they were planning Shergarh. In youthful bliss, we hadn't comprehended quite what a life we were creating together, and we'd certainly not considered our two delightful



Four tiger cubs



Main house today

children who would soon grow up with the forest as their play-ground. It took just over a year to build our camp, Shergarh, although it's a project that continues to evolve to this day. We wanted to keep it small and personalised, so we created just six tents with a common house where our guests could congregate and share their experiences. On our land, we had tracts of eucalyptus – a non-indigenous trees which degrades the growth of native species, so a huge part of the project has

been nurturing the land back to life. Today our young woodland is flourishing: a jungle cat resides in our grassland raising her kittens each year; wild boar scuffle through on a night-time root raid; jackals have denned; and the langur monkeys have set up their own camp messily picking through the fig and guava trees! Due to our small, spring-fed lake we have a beautiful array of birdlife. And a few years back, a young male tiger wandered in and took refuge in the dense foliage of our woodland. It is immensely satisfying to watch nature restore itself, especially to consider that you gave it that chance.

To build the camp we needed masons, carpenters, plumbers, a workforce and construction materials. We were keen to source everything as locally as possible. Much of the team came from our own village, a cluster of 20 families who had been relocated from inside the reserve as

part of Project Tiger. Kanha's people are mostly Gond and Baiga tribes, the original hunter-gatherers of the region. Every family constructs their own home using earth, bamboo and timber, so they have an inherent sense of rural architecture and aesthetics which we were able to incorporate in our camp. A handful stayed on to become permanent members of the camp. At that time, there were few other lodges so it was almost impossible for them to envisage how the camp would operate. Tourism and hospitality were such new concepts, as was the idea that you had a duty to turn up for work! Over the years, they have grown into such a wonderful team handling most aspects of the daily operations on their own.

Raising our two children in this remote and beautiful environment has been the most challenging and without doubt the most rewarding aspect of our lives here. In fact it has shaped my life beyond my wildest imagination. The space and physical freedom that Kai and Ella enjoy, pedalling their bikes through the tall grass and clambering through fruit trees, is a basic childhood joy that is sadly disappearing in the new technological era. Through them, I have become infected by their enthusiasm for snakes and bugs and I can only imagine how dull our little cottage would be without the tree-frog popping out his cute face from the centre of the toilet roll, the spider under the kitchen sink (who reminds me how far I have come in overcoming such an irrational fear) and the cumbersome rhino beetle that buzzes around like a Hogwart's snitch!

Good access to health and education are the two big concerns of any family. Kanha is such an idyllic environment until someone falls sick, and it has been more than once that we've had to make the long dash to the nearest big city. The nearest town is 280km away from us! It's a kind of 'occupational hazard'. But the early education that our children have been able to receive is incomparable. Natural wonders are happening around them all the time, whether it's a butterfly emerging from its cocoon, a keelback snake swallowing a bull



Forest Track



Ella on the raft

frog whole or a tigress crouched in hunting mode. Growing up within a working environment is an education in itself, and we often wonder how their involvement in the 'ordinary' daily discussions about which tiger has been sighted or how the local witch doctor claims to cure a snake bite, will manifest in their later life. The language and cultural exposure they receive, from their affectionate playfulness with the staff to the visitors that stay with us from all over the world, is equally precious. Home-schooling is not something Jehan or I had ever imagined until it came to the point of being necessary, and we've loved it – you learn so much! Just seeing ideas or concepts appear in their minds and having that freedom to explore a topic that has nothing to do with what you set out to teach, has made us realise that too much joy and creative energy is lost in rigorous schooling that has to follow a set curriculum and time-frame.

People often ask us what it is like to raise children in an inter-cultural relationship. It makes me think of the educationist, Krishnamurti's quote: "When one loses the deep intimate relationship with nature, then temples, mosques and churches become important." To us, our inter-cultural roots only add richness to the natural environment that actually binds and inspires us. Many people fear mixed-partnerships, they believe it will create conflict and confusion. In a nurturing relationship it does quite the opposite. Your existing



Kai with a bull



Ella with a baby mouse, Kai with garden lizard



Kai, Ella & Mowly



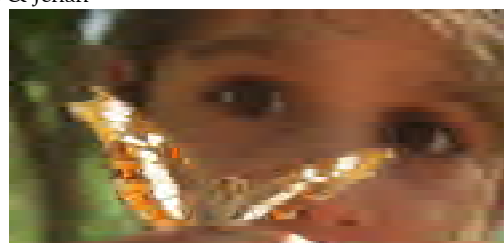
Ella with a kid



Katie & Jehan



Copper headed trinket snake



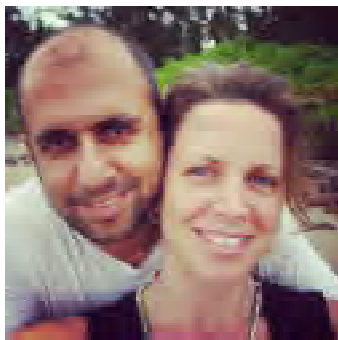
Ella with a Commander butterfly

belief system is pulled apart and from then on lives out an organic, never-ending journey of discovery and acceptance. Our children are not there to be fed our beliefs. If anything, it is their unique observations that help us along our own great journey.

Shergarh is twelve years old, the same age as Kai, our eldest. Just as we have tried to give our children the opportunity to explore their own interests, so have we tried to allow camp to find its own direction and place. The gentle personalities of our staff and the wonderful support we receive from our many visitors, some of whom return again and again, are a huge contribution to that. If we can continue to strike the right balance between providing a great experience to our guests while staying sensitive to our community and natural environment, then in our minds, we've made it.



From the Ed: Readers may wish to go on their website which is www.shergarh.com to read more about facilities offered. Ideally people interested should book four months in advance as that is when the safari permits come online, and they are sold on a first come first basis. The tents which are really like small cottages, are set up for two persons, but space is there to add two extra beds if a family of four are interested.



Katie Bhujwala is the co-owner of Shergarh, a wildlife safari lodge on the edge of Kanha Tiger Reserve, Central India. Katie grew up in the English countryside and travelled to India after completing her degree in Psychology. In India she met her husband, Jehan, a self-taught naturalist from Mumbai.

Together they created Shergarh, where they reside with their two children, aged 9 and 11.

Top to bottom : Tent, verandah, bedroom, bathroom. All rooms are part of the tent.



A Play on Shakespeare

by tehnaz bahadurji



This play is intended as a tribute to a poet and dramatist I admire hugely, in this, his 400th death anniversary year. It never ceases to amaze me how his words, written so long ago, can continue to be fresh and relevant to us today. And how so many of the great man's coinages of words and phrases have passed into common parlance! We use them every day without even knowing we do. Working on this little piece has been a joy and a privilege for me.

(To be performed like a play of Shakespeare's own time, with minimum props.

A balcony for Jaya in scene 1. Can be a curtain in front of a high backed chair, so she can rest her hand upon the backrest.

A table and chair for scene 3, to be placed stage left and then stage right, to represent the two homes.

A lectern for the Narrator, to stay on all through. Stage front, any side. Optional. He can walk on and off, if preferred)

Introduction

Narrator : Friends, fellows, countrymen. Lend me your ears. We come to praise Shakespeare, not to bury him, we hope.

They say Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player That struts and frets his hour upon the stage

And then is heard no more: it is a tale Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, Signifying nothing.

Now that's too harsh, we feel.

What is true is that All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players:
So we thought The play's the thing wherein
we'll catch the conscience of the gathering.
An honest tale speeds best, being plainly told,
so let's get on with the show without much
ado about anything.

Let me introduce Ravi and Jaya, our star crossed lovers. Barely out of their teens, met at inter-college fests, and very aware that both their families will be unsupportive of their passion, for the course of true love never did run smooth.



Scene 1

Jaya : Oh Ravi, Ravi, wherefore art thou?
Deny thy father and refuse thy name
Or if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love and
I'll no longer be a Kuppusamy.

After all, what's in a name, that which we call
a rose by any other name would smell as
sweet.

So I can take the name of Manohardas and
be happy with it.

Ravi : (aside) What light through yonder
window breaks? It is the east, and Jaya is the
sun.

We no sooner met, but looked; no sooner
looked, but loved; no sooner loved, but sighed.
O, What fools we mortals be!

See, see how she leans her cheek upon her
hand! O that I were the mehendi upon that
hand, that I might touch that cheek!

(Shuddering with excess of emotion) This is
the very ecstasy of love!

(Aloud) Doubt that the sun doth move, Jaya;
doubt truth to be a liar, but never doubt I love.

Jaya : (Aside) Is that Ravi? His voice comes
o'er my ear like the sweet sound That breathes
upon a bank of violets.

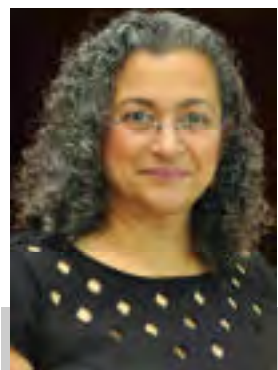
(Aloud) Mine own true love, Mislike me not
for my complexion.

For fair is foul, and tan is fair.

Have I not hands, organs, senses, affections,
passions; fed with the same food, subject to
the same diseases, heal'd by the same
means, warm'd and cool'd by the same winter
and summer? If you prick us do we not bleed?
If you tickle us, do we not laugh?

Ravi : Jaya! Jaya! Jaya! This is very
midsummer madness!

I am a man more sinned against than sinning.



Convinced that lifelong learning is a window through which one looks upon the world. Believe that one should keep an open mind, but not so open that one's brains fall out.

Agree with Shakespeare that there is nothing good or bad, but thinking makes it so, and with Picasso that art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life.

Love to read, travel, help and empower people, and to rejoice in family, friendship and the many splendours that life has to offer.



My pretty, Love looks not with the eyes, but
with the mind, and to my mind, you look like
the innocent flower.

Forsooth, you bear a charmed life, Jaya, for
you are too full of the milk of human kindness.
Yet, what's to come is still unsure,
In delay there lies no plenty
So come and kiss me, sweet and twenty,
Youth's a stuff will not endure.

(The lovers embrace)

Narrator : But love is blind, and lovers cannot
see the petty follies that themselves commit.
My pretty young chickens, you cannot thus
wear your heart upon your sleeve for daws to
peck at.

The green eyed monster doth mock.
The world is grown so bad, and nothing will
come of nothing!

Ravi : Good night, goodnight! Parting is such
sweet sorrow, that I shall say goodnight till it
be morrow.

In sooth, I know not why I am so sad. It
wearies me.

When shall we two meet again, my sweet
queen?

Jaya : Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and
tomorrow, my love.

Ravi, this above all : to thine own self be true.
And it must follow, as the night the day, thou
canst not then be false to any woman.

Remember, there is nothing either good or
bad, but thinking makes it so.

Ravi : O upright Jaya! O learned Jaya!

The fault, dear one, is in our stars, not in
ourselves.

Yet fear not, and be of good cheer, for I return
anon.

Come what may, time and the hour runs
through the roughest day.

(Exit both separately)



Scene 2

Narrator : (Split stage) The Kuppusamy home.
The Manohardas home. Both sets of parents
are irate.

Pa K : Who is this Ravi? Fit only for treasons,
stratagems and spoils.

O, what a goodly outside falsehood hath!
Off with his head!

Ma K : She has made me a soft and dull-eyed
fool!

How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to
have a thankless child.

Pa K : 'Tis neither here nor there, woman. Get
thee to thy bedchamber, girl! But hark, wisely
and slow; they stumble that run fast.
And not stepping o'er the bounds of modesty,
mind.

Clamber not you to the casements then, Nor
thrust your head into the public street.

Pa M : Was the hope drunk wherein you
dressed yourself?

Out, damned spot! Out, I say.

(Aside, to himself) When sorrows come, they
come not single spies but in battalions.

It is a wise father that knows his own child.

Ma M : (shuddering) My own flesh and blood
to thus rebel!

Out of the jaws of death!!!

(trying to protect her beloved son from Pa's
wrath)

Still, what's done is done, Pa.

The quality of mercy is not strained;
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath.

'Tis mightiest in the mightiest;
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice.

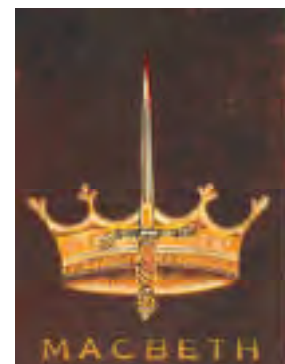
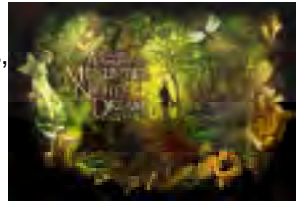
Therefore, Pa, Though justice be thy plea,
consider this,

That, in the course of justice, none of us
Should see salvation.

Ravi : Et tu, amme! What judgement shall I
dread, doing no wrong?

Ravi and Jaya : (holding their heads in their
hands and intoning together) Now is the winter
of our discontent.

(Exit parents, separately)





Ravi : (dismissively) Soon the hurly-burly's done, soon the battle's fought and won.
So screw your courage to the sticking place,
Jaya, and we'll not fail.

(Jaya blows him a kiss as she leaves. Exit Ravi and Jaya)



Scene 3

Two weeks later. Kuppusamy home. (All to be mimed as the narrator narrates)

Narrator : Ma K, who has hurt her wrist, asks Jaya to help cut dried fruits for her popular Christmas cake. Jaya stamps her foot and refuses. Ma K pleads. Jaya agrees reluctantly. Ma K bestows a kiss upon her brow and exits. Jaya makes a call and soon ushers Ravi into the kitchen.

Ravi : Is this a dagger which I see before me, the handle towards my hand?

Narrator : He sits himself down at the kitchen table and gets busy cutting the dried fruit in a very professional manner. While Jaya sits and looks admiringly at him.

(As he finishes) Jaya : Hie thee! A little water clears us of this deed.

Narrator : Ravi scrubs. But to no avail.

Jaya : (lamentingly) Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this red clean from thy hand?
No, this thy hand will rather the multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red.

(Exit together)

Manohardas home (To be mimed as the narrator narrates)

Narrator : Pa M asks Ravi for some help in firewalling his new computer. Ravi is not inclined to be helpful, with Pa being so opposed to his romance.

Ravi : Respected Papa, many a time and oft In the last fortnight you have rated me (About

my ways and my usances:
Still have I borne it with a patient shrug,
For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe.
You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog,
And spit upon my jeans and tee shirt.
Well then, it now appears you need my help:
Go to, then; you come to me, and you say
'Ravi, we would have tech support:' you say so;

What should I say to you? Should I not say
'Hath a dog skills? is it possible
A cur can set right a computer?' Or
Shall I bend low and in a bondman's key,
With bated breath and whispering humbleness, Say this;
'Fair sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last;
You spurn'd me such a day; another time
You call'd me dog; and for these courtesies
I'll lend you thus my tech skills?'

(Exit Pa M, looking ashamed)

Narrator : Ravi makes a phone call. Enter Jaya.

Sits down at the computer and works furiously at the keyboard. While Ravi looks adoringly upon him.

Ravi : (full of admiration) Bring forth men-children only, for thy undaunted mettle should compose nothing but males.

(Exit together)



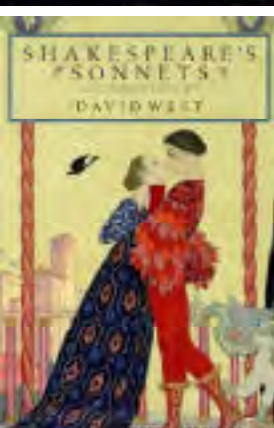
Scene 4

(All 6 characters on stage. Parents on either side. Couple in the middle)

Narrator : The Kuppusamy and Manohardas parents have come to be aware that it was not their own child but the other that solved their little domestic problems.

Pa M : So wise, so young! Verily, she is a Daniel come to judgement!
I never knew so young a body with so old a head.

Ma M : (holding Jaya's hand in hers and stroking it incessantly) All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten more this little hand.



Pa K : Methought yond Ravi had a lean and hungry look.
But lo, Ravi is an honourable man.
It's not that he loved his father less, but that he loves my Jaya more.
Then let me not to the marriage of true minds admit impediments.

Ma K : What a piece of work is this man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculty! In action, how like an angel!

(Jaya and Ravi, hold hands coyly in the presence of their elders)

Jaya : My bounty is as boundless as the sea,
my love as deep;
The more I give to thee, the more I have, for both are infinite.

Ravi : So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, (blows a flying kiss) and this gives life to thee.

(Exit parents)

Conclusion

Narrator : Truly it has been said : Some are born great, some achieve greatness
And some have greatness thrust upon them - by their children.

(Exit Ravi and Jaya)

So friends, Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
Are melted into air, into thin air;
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve;
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

Verily, brevity is the soul of wit, and so, I hie me hence.

Fare thee well, good friends, and good morrow!

(Bows deep and leaves)



Ardeshir Yeganegi Library

information sent from Tehran
translated by minocher vakharia

Ardeshir Yeganegi Library was founded in 1958 by Farangis Shahrokh, wife of Ardeshir Yeganegi and daughter of Keykhosrow Shahrokh which was built on the lands of the Zoroastrian Anjoman of Tehran.

It was later given to the Anjoman in the name of Ardeshir Yeganegi Library. The first books given to the library were by Banu Khorshid Homji in the name of late Manuchehr Homji and Farangis Shahrokh. The library has about eighteen to nineteen thousands books. Until twelve years ago this library was taken care of in a traditional and primary way.

Ms Nooshin Faramarzian, then a member of board of directors of Tehran's Zoroastrian Association, was appointed as the honorary head of the Library. Born in 1953 in Kerman Province, Nooshin Faramarzian is a Zoroastrian cultural activist who has been the head of the Library now for 14 years.

In 2005 with her determination to make improvements in the overall look of the library, to make it a better place for scholars, to have easy access to books and areas for browsing; she began the renovation of the library with the help of the Yeganegi family, especially Mr Kambiz Yeganegi and the Zoroastrian Anjoman of Tehran.

"The books especially the old ones have been catalogued in the Library of Congress Classification system. An index of the articles on Zoroastrianism including their titles, authors and the place of publication, is also available in a digital format and has been made accessible to the public", said Ms Faramarzian.

They were successful in finding the fourth oldest Avesta book called, "1072 Yazdgerdi" which was written by Dastoor Rustam Goshtasb Ardeshir Goshtasb. This book was given from the Havaresht library of Yazd to be restored in a better way.

Further Ms Faramarzian says that the Yeganegi Library is among the few libraries of Iran in which restoration of books are done in a well-organized manner. The library is open to the public and information is available through email: yeganegi library@yahoo.com



Parsi Bol 2

PARSI BOL 2 is an expanded edition, containing Parsi Bol 1 (which was published and compiled by Sooni Taraporevala and Meher Marfatia in December 2013) and about 350 fresh phrases which make up Parsi Bol 2. The USP of this combined book is an accompanying audio CD.

Apart from adding delightful new phrases under each of the 15 “categories” introduced in Parsi Bol 1, the second book has a small selection of Gujarati limericks under an added category called Nonsense Rhymes. Needless to say, the compilers found plenty of fresh phrases crowding sections like Insults and Food – truly representative of our quirky, hearty community.

The Twin Words selection is also particularly well represented, replete with absurdly rhyming or alliterative teamed syllables like *hej vej, oopra sapree, hureem dhureem* and *omtoo gomtoo!*

Making the phrases on the pages of Parsi Bol 2 sparkle and taking them to another level this time round is a fun audio CD which has actor Boman Irani voicing the phrases of the sequel and vintage Parsi theatre stars Dolly & Bomi Dotiwala do the same with lines from the first edition.

“I feel it’s been a tough but great exercise putting together this book simply because it continues to make so many people just plain happy! The phrases we’ve run with are mad, crazy, colourful – yes – but they also have amazing archival value because this kind of colloquial, picturesque, typically ‘Parsi Gujarati’ may soon die out if we neglect showcasing and celebrating them. What we’re both also completely delighted by is the fact that non-Parsi speakers of Gujarati and, believe it or not, even those uttering not a word of our language, are devouring it ... Armed with multiple copies, one Tamil-Sindhi family we know actually played a boisterous (and, they insist, hysterical) version of ‘Parsi Bol dumb charades’ with their kids. And then there is this dour Gujarati lawyer, known never to

smile, who was caught laughing out loud with his head buried in the pages of *Parsi Bol!*” Meher

“When I proposed this idea to Meher so many years ago, she coincidentally had the same idea along with her friend, the psychiatrist Dr Pervin Dadachanji. So it was a book that was meant to be. I never ever imagined it would be as hugely popular as it has been – also had no idea how much tedious effort would be involved in putting it together. But two books down the road I can still say it was entirely worth it and I am sure Meher agrees with that as well. It all came together really nicely – thanks to our sponsors – the ever-ready Cyrus Guzder and Dinshaw Tamboly, our fabulous illustrators – Hemant Morparia and Farzana Cooper, our translator my aunt Rutty Manekshaw, the walking-talking encyclopedia of all things Parsi, and our great printer – Khushru Patel of Jak Printers.” Sooni



Parsi Bol 2 is available at Kitab Khana, Crossword, Strand, Wayword & Wise, the Parsiana Shop (Fort) and Happy Book Stall (Bandra). Priced at Rs 500/- it also sells online through Amazon and Flipkart



TTFL
Tumeh Tumahroo Foree Lev
You do your own thing



L - R: Meher Marfatia & Sooni Taraporevala



Meher & Sooni flank Rutty Manekshaw, the translator of Parsi Bol



Bomi Dotiwala, Meher Marfatia, Sooni Taraporevala, Rutty Manekshaw, Boman Irani, one of our sponsors Dinshaw Tamboly and illustrator Farzana Cooper



Book signing



Boman Irani

Photo credit :
Firdaus Bativala

Trauma Redefined

reviewed by zehra bharucha



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.

The Oxford Dictionary defines 'grit' as 'courage and resolve; strength of character'. Other definitions include words like 'positive' and 'determination' and phrases like 'powerful motivation' and 'perseverance of effort'. It is quite possible that readers of this book might be tempted to add 'Pervaiz Taraporewala' as yet another definition. His story is a powerful one of true grit, determination to beat the odds and the power that humans can harness through the power of love, the bonds of family and the conquering of one's fear.

Pervaiz was born and brought up in the North West of Pakistan and grew up in the beautiful area of Mardan. It seems to have been an idyllic childhood and the young Pervaiz grew up with a very special affinity to animals of all kinds. Blessed with a loving family and an interest in a variety of subjects such as numerology, he was greatly influenced by the loving proximity of grandparents and family.

The story that makes up *Trauma Redefined* begins on the night of 9th October 2007 when Pervaiz, now living in Dubai, accepts an invitation to dine with an old friend. His beloved mother in law asks him to cancel his plans, telling him that this is the Night of No Moon - Amavas, the night where Satan works his evil deeds. Laughing this off, Pervaiz attends the dinner and stays talking at his friend's apartment long into the night.

Leaving the apartment to get back to his car which he had parked at the site of an under construction building, everything was pitch black outside as there were no street lights and Pervaiz tripped over a cobblestone and fell. Picking up his dropped things and continuing on his way, he had no idea what was to happen next. In his own words, "Just fifteen feet away from my car, I found myself face-down on the pavement. Not knowing what to think, at first I supposed the scaffolding above me collapsed, and the supported wall of the under-construction building had crumbled over me ... The pain was immeasurable,

beyond excruciating. I opened my eyes with great difficulty, but my vision was nothing but a hazy blur of red. Gasping for breath, I was greeted with the nauseating smell and smoke of exhaust fumes."

He had been hit by a three-ton van.

What happened next was even more horrifying.

In a panic and aware of the harsh penalties that would await him, the van driver reversed the van, running over Pervaiz's chest and dragging him onto the road in the process, and sped away into the night. Now lying in the middle of the road and exposed to oncoming traffic, it seemed that there was little hope of survival. Salvation appeared to come in the form of a passer-by on that deserted road, but it was not to be. Finding Pervaiz's phone lying in the middle of the road, the man stole it and disappeared. In Pervaiz's words, "This stranger, I assumed, was an angel in disguise, come to my aid when I needed him. But bless his heart, he turned out to be the very Devil Granny had warned me about, the one and only Prince of Darkness, robbing me of my only lifeline – my phone."

It is hard to keep one's faith in human nature intact while reading this.

Help finally arrived in the form of two young men who called an ambulance. And Pervaiz, who had managed to keep alive through sheer strength of will and the summoning of happy memories of the past, had an out of body experience that saw him looking down upon his inert body while paramedics tried to revive him. Telling God that this was not his time to die, he recalls coming back into himself and into excruciating pain. But as he puts it, "From that moment on, I knew for certain that I'd get out of this alive."

Today Pervaiz is restored to health and is a walking miracle, a testament to sheer determination, the power of prayer, the

restorative effect of family and the skill of his doctors. His recovery was by no means easy; the morphine given to dull the pain resulted in a series of bizarre hallucinations, some of them terrifying in their intensity. The accounts of his wife and children that follow reveal the seriousness of his situation, the helplessness felt by loved ones watching him and the support they received from friends and family in Dubai and abroad. In fact, one of the things that the reader will take away from this story is the importance of family, the vital necessity of spending time with loved ones and the feeling that life is not a gift to be taken lightly. As the author says, "A split second is all it takes for fate to challenge you to a game of life and death."

Trauma Redefined, as the author says, it is not meant to traumatise anyone. It is simply a narrative of events that happened over one night and the repercussions of that event that rippled over so many lives over so many months. It is a testament to one man's will to live and his determination to beat the odds. Above all, it is a story of forgiveness and faith and the fact that miracles do occur and should serve as an inspiration to us all.

Proceeds from the sale of the book [75%] are being donated to three causes close to Pervaiz's heart: an orphanage in San Jose in the Philippines and an old people's home in Santo Domingo Neuva Ecija, also in the Philippines; and 25% to Dar-ul-Sakoon, Karachi, Pakistan. ■■■■

Available from:
Partridge Publishing Singapore,
JBailey@partridgepublishing.com
Hard cover : S\$34
Paperback : S\$24
Kindle : S\$7
& Amazon.com



My Mother used to Say

a review from farobag cooper

If delightful nostalgia came in a hardcover one hundred and fifty-five pages, and an adorable Parsi family on the front cover, with a *toran* of beads gracing the top invoking the help of Ahura Mazda ("Pak Dadar Ahuramazd nee Mudad") – then it has to be FEZANA's recent publication "**My Mother Used to Say**".

Deeply committed to preserving the Zoroastrian (Parsi and Persian) religion, customs, culture and traditions in the Diaspora, Dinaz Kutar Rogers and Roshan Rohinton Rivetna have captured and recorded – lest future generations growing up in the West forget – this collection of priceless heirlooms.

Having grown up in Karachi for the first few years of my life, speaking Gujarati was the norm at home, English at school, and a smattering of Urdu and Punjabi in order to effectively communicate with those around us. Once I immigrated to New York City, I was asked by my father not to speak Gujarati, in order for my sister, to effectively learn to speak English. While she, being just four years of age, caught on very well in a few months, my fluency in my mother-tongue was severely compromised. Reading this book, I found myself discovering hilarious characters and recognizing pithy phrases from the past.

The authors have collected over 1,000 Parsi and Persian quotations, fun phrases and timeless words of wisdom, as well as vignettes of our lifestyle, culture and idiosyncrasies. Categorizing the Sayings guides the reader, if he/she needs to dip into the Contents for a quick reference. From "Achievement" to "Wisdom", we are enlightened and entertained.

We laugh at phrases like "*Da(n)t ma khasroo apyoo*," literally "Gave a shoe in the teeth" referring to someone who gave you a hard time. At times, we learn about little bits



of our history and background stretching back in time to Motherland, Iran. In fact, the section on Sayings begins, fittingly, with a quote that has its roots in the *Shah Nameh* – “*Budee jum-jumavee Aspandiyar!*” (“Great job. Great show, Aspandiyar!”) This is just one example of the many references to this cherished Iranian-Zoroastrian legacy.

The section on Persian Greetings is instructive, and raises the sentiment in both the Parsi and Iranian communities about using Pahlavi rather than Arabic words, as did Firdowsi, when he composed the *Shah Nameh*. This is well put in the explanations of the greetings *Doroud* and *Khoda Hafez*.

There are many cultural references – like the “*lhai-ni-sari*” with tie-and-die designs of maroon dots traditionally worn by Parsi women in mourning. As a young child you might have seen this but no one sat down and told you about this interesting piece of our unique culture.

If trying to figure out who we Zoroastrians are in the Diaspora, read “*Thoughts from a slightly-confused Parsi-Indian-Iranian-North-American Zarathushti*,” and swell with pride reading about “famous” *bawajees* set in the opening poem. Other poems extolling our love for food (and drinks) are entertaining.

The way Parsis talk using a mixture of Gujarati, English, Hindi and Marathi is well represented under “Our Inimitable Language and Culture.” It also speaks of adaptability of our people — after all we have been in India for over a thousand years. One of my favorites is about the *Bawaji* reprimanding the *dhobi* (washerman) for tearing his *sudrehs* in the wash with this hysterical

jumble of Parsi Gujarati, Hindi, and Marathi that defies translation: “*Toom dar vakhat aysaa sudra faar kay laigaa, toh humkoo kaisaa patla faavegaa?*”

Reading “Memories of Growing up in a Parsi Colony” gives a delightful glimpse into life in the Parsi colonies. What imagination we Parsis have along with that incorrigible sense of humour and our irrepressible propensity to give nicknames to everyone and everything – from “*Dookhi Dadiba*” “*Kaka Bomb*” and “*Katy Kuklaat*” to “*Napoleon pona-panch*” and “*Super Behsood*.”

In “What’s Ailing You,” remedies and health tips from the “Doctor” in every Parsi household are ingenious and funny; and

“Turmeric, One of Nature’s Most Powerful Healers” emerges the Queen. Some remedies, like smelling the bottom of a camel for whooping cough, or adjusting the dose of the ‘*karela* powder’ for diabetes, depending on how many ants gather by the urine drops, seem ludicrous, but have their staunch believers. One of the recurring themes is the abhorrence expressed by a few contributors toward the weekly quaffing of that cure-all — *Adiyoo* (castor oil) related in the funny “*Adiyoo Police*.” Amidst all this fun and laughter, a page is also devoted to the serious subject of “*A Death in the Family – Dos & Don’ts*.”

Needless to say, the illustrations in the book add



Dookhi Dadiba



Kaka Bomb



Katy Kuklaat



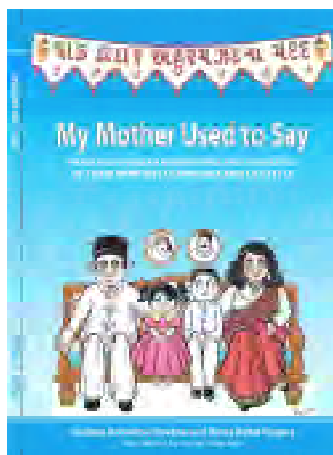
Napoleon Pona-panch



to the enjoyment of reading it. *Shabaash* to Kaizin Pooniwalla for lending this special sparkle to the book. “*Aapri Ran!*” (Queen Elizabeth II) never looked better though we’d have to forgive her for not having *shroodh* (perfect) Gujarati or Hindi; and Grandfather, so cuddly and cute and the *boodhi doshi*, such a darling *sansteeth*. I say *Vah! Vah!* to Zenobia Damania for the very striking cover design.

After an entertaining meander through a river of fun and laughter, the book ends with two words from the last page of the the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* whose theme is that one should live life to the fullest and have no regrets when it ends.

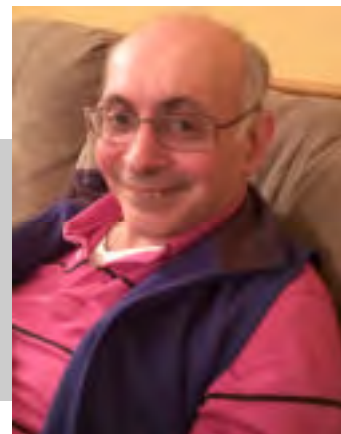
“**Tamaam Shud.**” It is ended.



MY MOTHER USED TO SAY
Parsi and Persian Quotations
and Vignettes of their Inimitable
Language and Lifestyle
by Roshan Rohinton Rivetna
and Dinaz Kutar Rogers
Illustrations by Kaizin Pooniwalla

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Zoroastrian Studies shop, Mumbai
(zstudies@gmail.com)

Farobag Homi Cooper is recovering from a severe stroke suffered in December 2014. Through the grace of Ahura Mazda he has retained his musical expertise and continues teaching Piano, Violin, Viola and Voice. He is in the process of introducing his fourth CD entitled Moonlit Visions in the next few months recorded by the Chicago Philharmonia Orchestra.



Rationalism in Zoroastrianism

reviewed by kersey antia

These days when works on Zoroastrianism by Parsis are rare or are concerned mostly with orthodoxy and orthodoxy, an octogenarian like Kersee Kabraji's booklet dealing with the real ethical and philosophical essence of Asho Zarathushtra's teachings is a welcome and very useful publication.

Anybody who reads it will agree that the message Zarathushtra gave to mankind at the dawn of history is as pertinent and inspiring to our own times as it was to his, if not more. Kabraji has taken trouble to vividly bring out various ageless and appealing aspects of our religion that should appeal equally both to the young and to the old interested in discovering their true essence. He succinctly explains the significant gems contained in Zarathushtra's Gathas, such as the principle of Free Will which is at the very heart of Zarathushtra's teachings, though such a concept was so unheard of not only in his times but also since.



Available Amazon.in & Amazon.com for US\$7 + shipping
Also available in Mumbai from Jame Jamshed, Parsi Times & Parsiana bookshop for Rs400.



Dastur Dr Kersey Antia is a clinical psychologist in full-time private practice in Chicago for many years. He is affiliated with many private hospitals in his area, published numerous research articles in his field and is listed in many Who's Who publications. He has received international honours and recognition and is the high priest for the Zoroastrian Association of Chicago, which he has served nearly 40 years. Kersey is happily married to Dilshad, and has three children, Anahita, Ervad Mazda, and Ervad Jimmy.

The booklet also contains the meaning of our three basic prayers to guide us, though no two scholars translate them the same way. The Avestan language in which they are written is so old, yet whichever way you translate them they still shine with the prophet's wisdom. Kabraji emphasizes the gender equality even as the prophet vehemently did in Yasna 53. "This truth (Haithya, Sanskrit Sathya) that I preach is true equally for men and for women".

The booklet mentions life after death – heaven and hell. The word 'paradise' is derived from Avesta and many of the eschatological ideas of Zoroastrianism found their way in the Judaeo-Christian tradition

as I have explained at length in my various essays and a forthcoming book.

Kabraji makes it clear that there is no concept of good or bad luck or merits or in so many words, of reincarnation in Zoroastrianism, which indeed the Indo-Iranians did not have until the advent of Buddhism centuries later.

The forewords and quotations about the loftiness of Zoroastrianism from various scholars are very illuminating and readers should be glad to enjoy reading them.

I find any criticism quite unnecessary for such a devoted work by an octogenarian layman who has inspired to study the real essence of his religion at a late age of 60. He felt that the coming youth, raised in a digital age, tend to favour reasoning and logic and thus religion rather than dogma, ethics rather than ethnicity, which is a theme that guides him all through.

Hail to Zarathushtra!



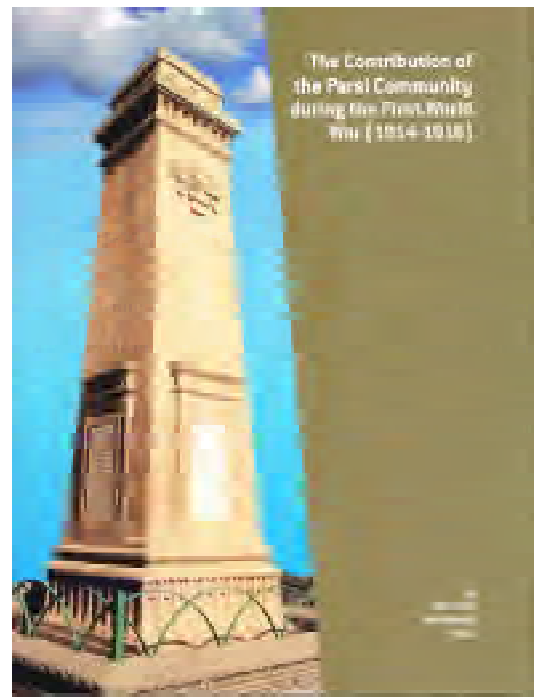
The Contribution of the Parsi Community during the First World War (1914-1918)

This book is the culmination of the author Marzban Giara's single minded determination and dedication to record for posterity the sacrifices made by Parsi doctors, soldiers, businessmen and philanthropists during the First World War. It vividly tells about the role of 700 Parsis with over 200 photographs. Little known facts about the Parsi Battalion and the War Memorial at Khareghat Colony, Bombay are well documented quoting the sources of information.

It narrates the part played by community leaders by appeals, speeches, logistics support, the Parsi Ambulance Division, doctors, nurses, motor drivers, storekeepers, accountants, postal service, finances, war loans, use of Parsi properties, Parsi contractors, recruitment assistance, books by Parsis relating to the War. There is a special mention of the part played by Tata Iron & Steel Co. Ltd. which resulted in Jamshedpur being named after its visionary founder.

This book is published by Sorabji Burjorji Garda College Trust, Parsi Cultural Division, Navsari.

Available from Mr Dara Deboo at Navsari. ■■■



Price: Rs.300 + postage
149 pages
illustrated
hard bound
printed on art paper.

Rule Britannia!

by meher marfatia

Fresh from meeting the British royal couple in Mumbai, 93-year-old restaurateur Boman Kohinoor keeps alive an internationally acclaimed legacy, serving thousands of happy customers both history and tradition on a plate.

Some men mellow ever more adorably with age. Every bit as spry and suave as I remember him from college days, 93-year-old Boman Kohinoor ushers me into Britannia and Company, the restaurant his family has owned since his father Rashid opened it in Bombay in 1923 (coincidentally the year Boman was born in

Yazd). Not a notch of his characteristic charm has dropped despite a slight stoop and

slower gait since the earlier days.

In an era that sadly sounds the death knell for Irani eateries in the city, Britannia at Ballard Estate stands tall in worldwide popularity thanks mostly to this dapper gent. Even today, bow-tie firmly nestled against the folds of his neck, he smiles taking orders from table to table covered with the cafe's typical red-checked cloths. Not only does he actively engage customers with the personalised attention he lavishes on them all, he also treats each to an utterly original rhyming couplet strung staccato-style

together. My favourite is when he recommends a cool drink to those walking hungry and hot into Britannia: "Try fresh lime soda sweet / to beat the Mumbai heat."

Putting other die-hard Anglophiles in the shade, Kohinoor is the biggest fan and follower of the British royal family. Supremely satisfied

for finally having an audience with the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, Prince William and Kate Middleton, in an out-of-schedule encounter at the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel, he cannot stop plying you with a pile of proudly laminated photos and press reports chronicling the realisation of his lifelong wish.

After endless years spent yearning for this moment, with a little help from social media, this came about as a result of a video of Kohinoor asking to meet the royal couple going viral within three days. Kohinoor took to Twitter with the heart-warming message #WillAndKateMeetMe, to find the wait paid off as he faced the royal



couple on their recent visit. Once he folded hands in traditional Indian Namaste greeting, his initial salutation to them was "Welcome to the home of your ancestors."



Then, of course, he brought up berry pulao, Britannia's signature dish. "I told them how it is made using my late wife Bacha's recipe. I requested them to give my love to the Queen, and their children Prince George and Princess Charlotte. I wish I had more time to speak, but I'm grateful to *Conde Nast Traveller* – whose office is

next door – for putting that video on the internet because of which this happened. They asked me if I could cook. I said no, but I serve my customers well."

That he certainly does, as legions of loyalists will vouch for. First off, Britannia's motto – printed quaintly circling the drawing of Robin the rooster, a beloved pet – acknowledges: 'There is no love greater than the love of eating'. Trust a hearty Zoroastrian to hit that kind of right note, my college friends would point out laughing. Going on to devour platefuls of the fragrant pulao as well as the famed *sali boti*, *boomla* (Bombay Duck), *kheema* and *dhansaak dal*, rounding off meals with ambrosial caramel custard.

Twinkle-eyed and flushed with the glow from his memorable encounter, Kohinoor offers me details of the discussion around berry pulao. The cafe once reflected only the family's Iranian heritage. His late wife Bachan being a Parsi introduced specialties like *dhansaak* and *patra ni macchhi* but ironically proved the force behind the very Iranian berry rice pulao too. Posted as a legal adviser in Iran, on her return she suggested that barberry pulao be introduced. To this day the Kohinoors import hundreds of kilos of this tart berry straight from Iran. But it has had to be a bit adapted to suit local tastes. Iran consumes this rice

delicacy dry and lightly flavoured, while Britannia's version is spicier, more like an Indian biryani, with gravy heaped over it. Orders are packed to take across the globe by satisfied patrons in Paris, London and as far as Canada.

Comfort food apart, Kohinoor and his sons, Afshin and Romin, have allowed the restaurant to retain its original look and feel. It is still easy to imagine Britannia as it was when it threw open the door to English officers stationed in the Fort area. Not much has changed, the family agrees, including the Bentwood furniture imported from Poland. "Three generations of us have run the business based on our Prophet's principles – in righteousness and truth," Boman Kohinoor shares, looking upwards in devotion.

Britannia occupies the ground floor of Wakefield House, the first private structure in Ballard Estate, a precinct with several such beautiful buildings owned by government authorities and shipping firms like Scindia. It has an interesting past and a thriving present, if a somewhat uncertain future. Before Britannia, Boman's father Rashid had opened Kohinoor restaurant bang opposite Victoria Terminus station in 1900, having reached Bombay shores in 1895. Boman was orphaned at a tender three years when he lost his mother and his father while he was a St Xavier's schoolboy of 14. His uncle Khodamurad ran the restaurant, roping him in.

In 1943 they were asked to vacate the premises, a military general informing them that the space was needed for official purposes. "They promised us back our place as soon as the War ended. And they truly stuck to their word," Kohinoor tells me. "Four days after peace was declared we got back our keys. Back then itself I began to respect the British."

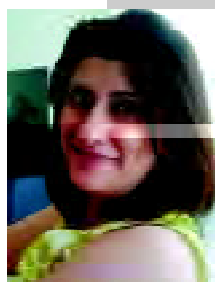
He would open the shop at 6:30 in the morning and down shutters at 9:30 at night. "These young rascals now only keep it functioning from 12 noon to 4 pm," he rues. Behind the cash counter, Afshin diligently copes with a deluge of orders before

coming across to where his legendary father and I sit, engrossing me in yet another tale: how Britannia came to be so named. "When my grandfather visited the municipal commissioner to apply for a licence, he was asked 'What will you be calling it? If it's a British name then we will give the licence within 24 hours, an Indian name after six months.' Rashid Pappa said 'Britannia' right off and the two men hugged each other over a stamped document."

Debatably jingoistic or not, the episode is yet clearly illustrative of what sparked it all for generations of this illustrious Irani clan – Boman Kohinoor needs the slightest nudge to embark on a description of how he received a signed letter from Queen Elizabeth II whom he had always dreamed of inviting here. Around the time of the 75th jubilee celebrations of the British Monarch, a life-sized, now framed, cut-out of the Queen was sent to him. His grand-daughter is actually christened Diana after Lady Di, an icon Kohinoor worshipped ("What a mind and heart she had!") and, keeping pace with history, the nonagenarian is simply awestruck by Kate Middleton ("She looked like a fairy to me!").

As he takes me through a bunch more of his sepia-tinged collection of treasures – carefully preserved letters and photographs with famous diners (posed selfies these days) – I don't miss the postcard sent by the Pope. Considering he wants to break records by living till a defiant 120, there will continue to add many more on his roster of distinguished travellers. What takes the cherry on the mawa cake, though, is the cool way he holds up a placard of vociferous political support. It is boldly emblazoned with the words 'I'm ready for Hillary.'

"I really am," he says with passion. We've no doubt he is. ■■■■



Meher Marfatia is the author of *Laughter in the House: 20th-Century Parsi Theatre*. Her book in collaboration with Sooni Taraporevala, *Parsi Bol*, a second edition has been released 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.

WillKat and Dilli Billis

bachi karkaria shares her wit with hamazor.
published on 14 April 2016 / erratica

*'Meowch!' say the cats from
the city of 'apro George'*

'British Mata ki Jai' has been the cry du jour, and even Anupam didn't Kher to protest. But here's a secret. The Colaba cats have smelt a rat. Some Bombabes have been baring their Very Berry claws in a Queenie-sized snarl over the importance being given to the Delhi leg of the WillKat visit. What did the TOI report mean by saying that the capital hosted a 'more discreet evening tete a tete' compared to the brassy Bollywood show we laid on. Helloh! You balle-balle Dilliwalles are fine ones to talk!!

Most of all, it's us Parsis who have been frothing like our famous 'doodh na puff'. Why should Prince William even have gone to Delhi? Isn't 'apri Mumbai' the one and only city of his great grandfather, 'apro George'. Wasn't our Gateway of India built to commemorate where he landed with Queen Mary in 1911. Upstart India Gate has nothing to do with royalty.

Does Delhi have a UNESCO heritage site originally dedicated to Prince Willsu's great great bapaiji? It may have been renamed after Chhatrapati Shivaji, but we Parsis will continue to call it Victoria Terminus till our dying-out day. We are not so ungrateful to forget that the Raj was our golden age. My Grampa still bows to the framed photos of Apro George and Apri Rani which hang right next to our prophet's in his Cusrow Baug flat. Bet maar, Bapsu, not even the old Delhi Brown Sahebs must still be honouring apro Willsu's ancestors.

My Mom, like her mum, is a member of Princess Mary Victoria Gymkhana built as a 'small clubhouse for Bombay's single and working ladies' in 1905, on land granted by apra Pherozeshah Mehta, who was Municipal Commissioner. Yes, he protested against Indians being barred from the Byculla Club, but when he helped set up one for Parsis Like Us, he named it after Lord Ripon. Does Dilli have anything to match its famous Wednesday dhansak? Pity WillKat couldn't get to eat it.

At least they 'fulfilled the dream' of the 93-year-old 'No 1 Fan of British Royalty'. Boman's father hadn't named his Irani cafe 'Britannia' in 1923 because he liked mass-produced biscuits! But, thank-god, old Boman used his bheja and didn't go on about his surname when Willkat met him. It's 'Kohinoor'. ■■■■

Stamps Illustrating Parsis since 1947 Issued by the Indian Postal Authority

acknowledgment to yazdi tantra - zoroastrians.net - for sharing and sending high resolution images. compiled by mahernosh damania



1st March, 1958 - 50th Anniversary of Steel Industry, Jamshedji Tata - Steel Plant



29 May 1948 - Air India - First Flight



15th April, 1959 - Sir Jamshetjee Jeejeebhoy (1783-1859), Philanthropist - Death Centenary



26th January, 1962 - Bhikhaji Cama (Patriot)- Birth Centenary



4th September, 1963 - Dadabhoy Naoroji (Parliamentarian) - Commemorative



7th January, 1965 - Jamsetji Tata (Industrialist) - Commemorative



4th August, 1966 - Dr Homi Bhabha (Scientist) - Commemorative



27th May, 1969 - Ardesheer Cursetjee Wadia (Ship Builder) - Commemorative



12th October, 1971 - 2500th Anniversary of Charter of Declaration of Cyrus The Great



15 October 1982 - Civil Aviation in India - 50th Anniversary - J R D Tata & Puss Moth



23rd October, 1984 - Dr D N Wadia - Birth Centenary - Institute of Himalayan Geology, Dehra Dun



1991 - Tata Memorial Centre



1993 - Dadabhai Naoroji Centenary of Election to the House of Commons



29 November 1994 - J R D Tata (Industrialist) - Commemorative



9th February, 1996 - Homi Bhabha - Tata Institute of Fundamental Research



4th August 1996 - Sir Pherozeshah Mehta - Philanthropist



15th December, 1997 - Jal Cooper - Philatelist



11th July, 1998 - Godrej Centenary - Ardeshir & Pirojshah Godrej



9 Oct 1999 - A D Shroff - India's march towards progress and development



14th December, 2001 - Pioneer of Indian Institute of Science.



18th December, 2001 - Field Marshal SHFJ Manekshaw



16th January, 2004 - Nani A Palkhivala (Eminent Jurist)



22nd April, 2008 - Tata Steel - 100 Years



2008 - Centenary of Indian Institute of Science



1st March, 2009 - Homi Bhabha (Scientist)



1st March, 2009 - J R D Tata (Industrialist and Philanthropist)



23rd December, 2010 - 100 Years of Central Bank of India



3rd May, 2013 - 100 Years of Indian Cinema - Sohrab Modi (Actor)

“... the distribution in the
good shall occur to both
factions through Thy bright
fire, Wise One. ”

Yasna 31.19

Insler translation



The World Zoroastrian Organisation