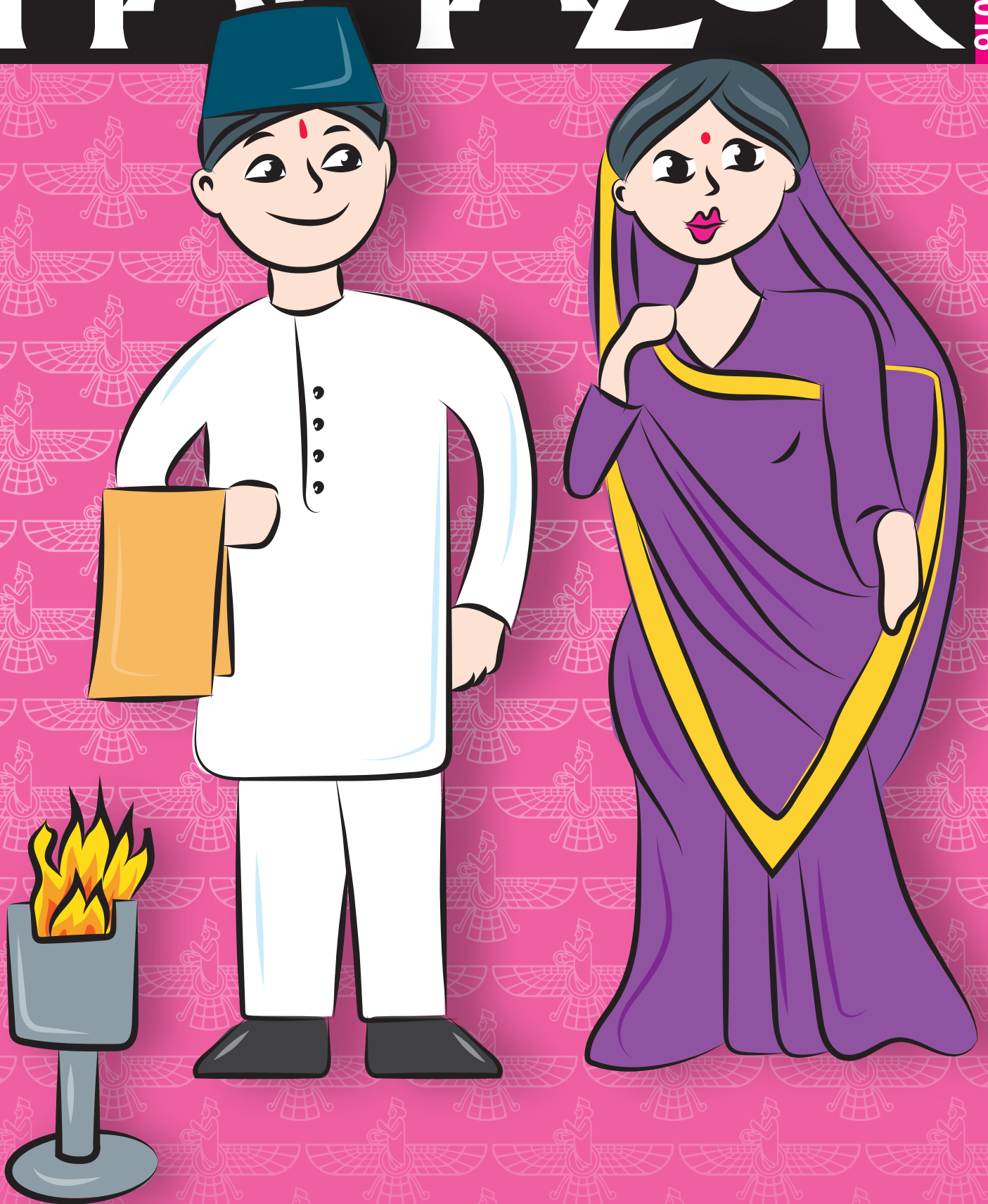


publication of the world zoroastrian organisation

HAMAZOR

3
Issue 2016





The half-buried stone plaque/marker which reads: "Presented by H. Bomonjee Jeejeebhoy to Bandora Municipality ~ 1879", p 43

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COVER

Image has been reproduced and illustrated from the winner of the Jiyo Parsi Saal Mubarak Competition.

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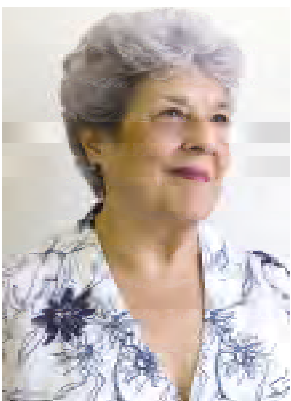
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From the Editor



As each quarter comes around, I wonder what meaningful comment I can make.

Thankfully for us, Zarathushtis' lives are good in most parts of the world where we reside. Through integrity and hard work we have carved a niche for ourselves within the place we reside.

Each issue of the Hamazor showcases amazing individuals sharing with the readers how perseverance and striving for excellence pays off. There seems to be no dearth of exceptional individuals in our small but vibrant community.

Thankfully animosity and mudslinging seems to have abated in Mumbai, though occasionally the 'ugly serpent' raises its head! The only issues that seem to be unresolved in the sub-continent are the declining numbers and the usage of the time-barred dokhma.

Jiyo Parsi for all its valiant efforts to increase numbers, cannot by any stretch produce thousands of children. There just aren't enough young women to be 'baby making machines' and so far human beings thankfully still have a mind of their own. The only solution would be to welcome the children of mixed marriages with good grace, so that they would voluntarily wish to be a Zoroastrian. Possibly because it's a simple solution, the people who hold the strings cannot and will not loosen the hold they have.

The positive side of the Jiyo Parsi scheme is that families who have not been able to have children and could not afford the treatment or expertise are now in a position to be blessed with a family. That in itself is an achievement.

The saga of the vultures and dokhma will it ever end one wonders? At least now there is an option in Mumbai where the majority of Parsis reside in the sub-continent; who are one of the last bastions holding on to a tradition, which has no meaning today. Now, more and more people will opt for the crematorium since it has the benefit of having the facility for our last rites to be performed, and eventually the day will come, when the dokhma has to seal its gates due to lack of 'patronage' both of bodies and birds.

On the other side of the world, our community is thriving, building centres, places of worship, holding bi-annual congresses and games, so that the Zarathushtis have a link with each other and preserve their religion. With this positivity we will survive!

Ben Gungie

Sponsored by Hilda & Rumi Sethna



WZO's Seminar on Zoroastrian Religion, History and Culture Sunday 5th June 2016

a report from sammy bhiwandiwalla



Alexandra Buhler is in the final year of her PhD at SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies), University of London. After graduating from Oxford University where she completed a BA in Theology, Alexandra obtained an MA at SOAS in the Study of Religions. During her MA Alexandra's interest in Zoroastrianism developed and it became the focus of her studies.

In her talk Alexandra drew on some of the findings of her doctoral research which concerned the impact of the **Iranian Constitutional Revolution, 1906-1911**, on the Zoroastrian community.

The Constitutional Revolution was significant for Zoroastrians in Iran as it resulted in the political representation of the community in the Iranian Parliament.

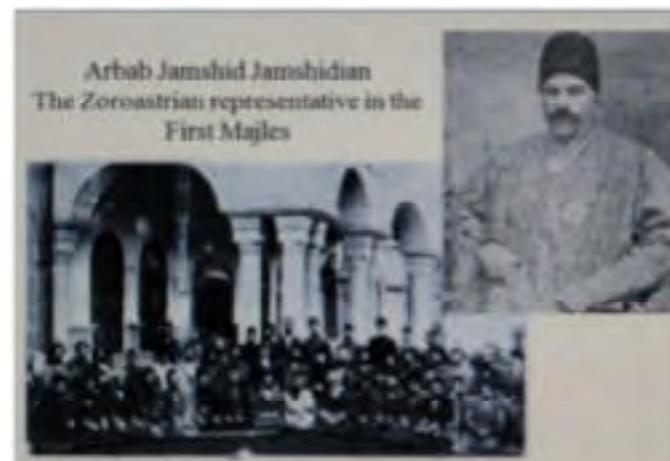
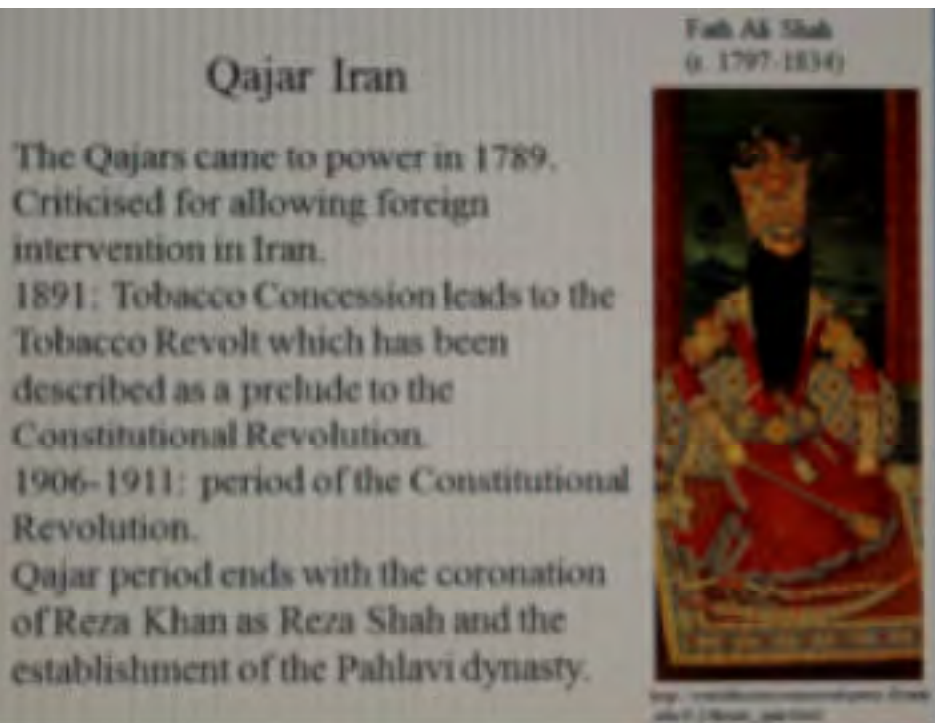
The revolution led to the establishment of a parliament in Persia (Iran) during the Qajar Dynasty thus replacing the absolute power of the Shah.

The Revolution opened the way for cataclysmic change in Persia, heralding the modern era. It saw a period of unprecedented debate in the press. The revolution created new opportunities and opened up seemingly boundless possibilities for Persia's future. Many different groups fought to shape the course of the Revolution, and all sections of society were ultimately changed in some way by it.

Alexandra presented the historical background to the eventual establishment of the national assembly and what part it played within the Zoroastrian communities in Iran and in creating long standing links with the Parsees in India and in the UK.

Zoroastrians now had a representative in the Majles. Article 8 of the supplementary laws stated the people of the Persian Empire are to enjoy equal rights under the law and Zoroastrians were linked to the pre Islamic Period and were regarded as true Persians and compatriots.

Trade links between the Iranian Zoroastrians and Parsees were established which helped to improve living conditions among the Iranians. This led to the establishment of the Amelioration society which set up schools, preserve the ethnicity of the Zoroastrian community and eventually to the abolition of the Jizia tax mainly through the efforts of Maneckji Limji Hataria.



Watch the full lecture on <https://www.w-z-o.org/news/wzo-seminar-on-zÖday-5th-june2016/>



Professor Simon James read archaeology at the London Institute of Archaeology, where he also took his PhD, by which time the Institute had become part of University College, London. He moved to the British Museum, first as an archaeological

illustrator and then as a museum educator, responsible for programmes relating to the later prehistoric and Roman collections.

After a decade at the British Museum, he decided to seek a career in research and teaching. Having held a Leverhulme Special Research Fellowship at the University of Durham, he joined the School in January 2000, was promoted Senior Lecturer in 2002, and Reader in 2005. In April 2012 he was awarded a personal chair.

A major theme in his research has been the military archaeology of the ancient city of Dura-Europos on the Syrian Euphrates. This became a Roman military garrison, which was besieged and destroyed by a Sasanian army c.AD256.

He has published the remarkable finds of arms and armour from the site, mostly belonging to the Roman defenders, but also including rare and very important early Sasanian remains.

Further related research into the siege, which led to burial of these artefacts, led to identification of probable use of 'chemical warfare' by the Sasanians during the fighting.

The evidence from Dura has led him to examine more widely Roman interactions with the Partho-Sasanian world, in both war and peace.

Professor Simon James, in his presentation **'Of Mithras and Magi, Cataphracts and**

Crowns: the forgotten influence of Sasanian Iran on the Roman World,' set the historic and geographic scene of the Roman Empire in the west and the Arsacid Empire (Parthia) to the

North East which the Romans never conquered. When the new Sasanian Empire overthrew and replaced Arsacid Parthia it shocked the Romans and it immediately became the Romans' most dangerous foe since Hannibal and Carthage—and one they were never able to overcome. The Romans soon realised that there was an important and highly prestigious religious power in the east and not just a military/political power.

The Roman World was at its height in the 2nd century AD and spanned the Mediterranean. Professor James went on to explain the practice of Mithraism an eastern religion by the Romans and the subsequent development of Christianity. Between the 3rd and 5th century the Romans suffered numerous defeats by the hands of the Sasanians. This resulted in the considerable fragmentation of the Roman Empire.

There was not as much written or archaeological material from the Sasanian period in comparison to the Roman period. However, in Prof. James research and excavations there was the Sasanian siege of the Roman-garrisoned, Greek-speaking Syrian city of Dura or Europos on the Euphrates, c256. This had led him to an abiding fascination with the Arsacid Parthian and Sasanian empires, the importance of which for Roman and indeed world history remains underappreciated.

The evidence of military equipment and the use of cataphracts (armoured cavalry) by the Parthians which was subsequently adopted by the Romans was a fascinating



Sammy Bhiwandiwalla together with his wife Ursula started their own company in 1970 supporting the foundry and industrial model making industry. After 35 years they decided to call it a day and devote some time to the second generation.

Ursula and Sammy have always taken an active interest in community matters in the UK and were greatly influenced by the actions and sincere beliefs of individuals such as Noshirwan Cowasjee, Shirinbanoo Kutar, Shahpur Captain and many others, that in a changing world it was necessary to create a more balanced and equitable community within the UK. He joined the WZO Board in 1988 and since then has served in various capacities including Chairman of WZO.





subject. Also there was evidence of the first use of chemical warfare by poison gas and smoke generation by the Sasanians to defeat the Romans in numerous battles.

Professor Simon James concluded his talk on the note that the Roman and Sasanian empires were not just on a collision course but there was also a lot of interaction between the two advanced and developed societies marked by complex social and political organizations, and material, artistic and religious progress.

Watch the lecture

<https://www.w-z-o.org/news/wzo-seminar-on-z...day-5th-june2016/>

Professor Dr Macuch was until her retirement in 2015, Professor of Iranian Studies and head of the *Institut fuer Iranistik* (Institute of Iranian Studies) of the *Freie Universitaet Berlin*.

She was President of the main association of European Iranologists, *Societas Iranologica Europaea*, from 2003-2007, is a member of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum* since 2007 and editor of the Series *Iranica* since 1993.

Main areas of research: Pre-Islamic Iran; Zoroastrian and Sasanian law and its impact on other legal cultures, especially

Christian, Rabbinic and Islamic law; Pahlavi literature and classical Persian literature.

The Zoroastrian Background of Sasanian Law :

Professor Macuch explained the law as it was practiced 1500 years ago in the

Sasanian Dynasty. Zoroastrianism known as the Good Religion was the religious foundation upon which the State's legal system was based for almost five centuries. Iranian law was based theoretically on Zoroastrianism up to the Muslim conquest of Iran in the 7th century. As in other pre-modern religious legal systems, such as Talmudic and Islamic law, the fields of theology and jurisprudence remained intertwined to a very large degree. Zoroastrian norms comprised in an early historical period two main areas dealing with moral, ritual and purity rules on the one hand, and civil and criminal law, on the other. Although jurisprudence gradually developed into an individual discipline by the Sasanian period (3rd-7th centuries) religion remained its theoretical foundation and a large number of important legal institutions were founded on Zoroastrian norms. Her presentation gave an overview of the historical development of Zoroastrian law and discussed how basic tenets were integrated into the legal system of the Sasanian state.



The Sasanian legal system reflected basic tenets of Mazdaism in all fields of law: personal, family and property law, civil proceedings and criminal law.

In effect there was a close connection between theology and jurisprudence. Zoroastrian priests were engaged as judges in the Sasanian legal system besides other

state officials. Highest legal official: *mowbedn mowbed* (head of the Zoroastrian Church).

Many important legal institutions would have been impossible in a society confessing any other religion except Zoroastrianism. There was a code of ethical behavior requiring a fulfillment of religious and personal duties together with good deeds. One should assist others in their need by charity and generosity.

Different meanings of *adwadād*

1. "leaving on the road; abandonment";
2. "withholding maintenance; depriving another person, animal or fire of nourishment";
3. "withdrawing spiritual nourishment";
4. "inability to maintain; lack of food" (a state of emergency resulting from a shortage of supplies).

The concept of Adwadd or "abandonment or desertion and its many interpretations were examined and explored by Professor Macuch and the legal obligations placed on its citizens to maintain charitable giving and also the creation of Fire Foundations (places of worship).

To conclude Iranian Zoroastrians shared a common purpose in life through collective effort in ethical behaviour and the creation of pious and charitable institutions which would ultimately play a part by being adopted into the Islamic constitution even after the fall of the Sasanian Empire.

Watch the full lecture on:

<https://www.w-z-o.org/news/wzo-seminar-on-z...day-5th-june2016/>



Dadi Engineer

It was with deep regret, we heard of the sad demise of Dadi Engineer, a lifelong member of the WZO International Board on Sunday 29th May 2016. Dadi also held the position of President of WZO (India) since its inception in 1980 for over 25 years with great dynamism and statesmanship.



Dadi had a multiplicity of achievements and numerous accolades showered upon him during his lifetime. He was a shining example to the present generation on leadership, diplomacy and the highest level of professional achievement through perseverance, dedication and hard work. Dadi had achieved high prominence at both a professional and a personal level.



Besides being an eminent Solicitor and an Advocate, he was a senior partner with the renowned firm of Crawford Bayley & Co and a Director of a number of public and private bodies. He was a renowned expert in the field of indirect taxation. His comments after the Union Budget were greatly sought after by industrialist, businessman and those who were interested in the subject of Indirect Taxation. Dadi brought humour and witticism into the dry subject of Indirect Taxation.

It was very fitting that, as a Professor of Law, Dadi passed on his vast experience and knowledge gained over the years, to new Law graduates at the University of Bombay.

At a social level, he had devoted himself to charitable work for Zoroastrians and non-Zoroastrians communities alike. He had served on the Board of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet for 14 years, latterly as a Senior Trustee. As a fellow member of the International Board of the World Zoroastrian Organisation, we admired his skills, his judgement and his perseverance in guiding us through the good and turbulent times in our history. At our 25th Anniversary ceremony, we were delighted to confer on him a special Award for his long and distinguished services to the Zoroastrian community.

Amongst the various posts he had held, Dadi had been -

- President of Bombay Incorporated Law Society
- Chairman of the Indirect Taxation Committee of the Bombay Chamber of Commerce.
- Managing Committee member of the Indo-Italian and the Indo-German chamber of Commerce.
- Vice President of the Forum of Free Enterprise, President of the All-India Bank Depositors' Association and the past-President of the Bombay Gymkhana.
- A Rotarian and a Freemason. He was conferred "The Order of Service to Freemasonry", which is the highest honour conferred on a Freemason in India.

The growth and success of WZO (India) had been in no small measure to the guiding hand of Dadi Engineer. With his support, the Managing Committee members of WZO (India) had established an organisation that was well respected by the Zoroastrian community in India.

On 6th February 2009 at a glittering awards ceremony, Dadi Engineer was presented with WZO (India)'s "Lifetime Achievement Award". - sammy bhiwandiwalla

"The Committee of the World Zoroastrian Organisation passed the following Resolution unanimously at their meeting held in London on 19th June 2016.

"Resolved that WZO Committee, London was shocked and saddened to hear of the passing away of our long standing Committee Member Dadi Engineer from India and wishes to convey the Committee's feeling of loss of one of its active members.

"May Dadi's fravashi rest in Garothman Behest and may Ahura Mazda grant peace of mind and heart to Silloo, his life companion and dearest friend.

"With much love from all the members of the Committee.

Mr Shahpur F Captain
Chairman

Signed for and on behalf of
The World Zoroastrian Organisation"



Vada Dasturji Dr Peshotan Dastur Hormuzdyar Mirza

Vada Dasturji Dr
Peshotan
Dastur
Hormuzdyar Mirza

passed away in Mumbai on Sunday 26 June 2016 after a tenacious battle with cancer. The funeral was held the same day at the Doongerwadi.

We at the World Zoroastrian Organisation pray for his soul to rest in eternal peace and our sincere condolences to his family.

Dr Peshotan Dastur Hormazdyar Mirza† was a fantastic combination of religious fervour and technical excellence. Born at Udvada in November 1944, Dr Peshotan Mirza acquired his priestly education and training at Seth Sorabji Manekji Damanwala Madressa, Udvada and at the M F Cama Athornan Institute, Andheri.

Ordained into the Zoroastrian Priestly orders of Navar, Maratab and Samel; he performed higher liturgical services and 'Boi' ceremony of Holy Iranshah Atash-Behram, Udvada.

As for his academic and theological education; he passed his SSC examination and joined St Xavier's College Mumbai and obtained BSc (Honors), M.Sc and PhD degrees in Chemistry from the University of Bombay.

He studied Avesta-Pahlavi and Iranian History at Sir J J Zarhosti Madressa and Mulla Firoze Madressa, Mumbai, alongside University studies in Science.

He was appointed to the exalted position of Dastur (High-Priest) of Iranshah Atash

Behram; Samast Anjuman, Udvada on 13th May 2004.

Apart from being a priest of the highest calibre, few in the community know that he was a lecturer in Chemistry at St Xavier's College, Mumbai, Development and Documentation Scientist at International Draxon Industries, Tehran, Iran. He retired from the post of General Manager - Technical Services in a Chemical manufacturing company in Mumbai.

He held the following positions:

- Former member - Science and Technology Sub-committee, Bombay Chambers of Commerce and Industry.
- Member – Research Committee – The K R Cama Oriental Institute, Mumbai
- Member of Managing Committee – M F Cama Athornan Institute and its ex-student Association.
- Trustee – Athornan Mandal and Udvada Anjuman.

He attended and participated in religious and technical seminars and conferences. He was an invitee to the world conference on spiritual regeneration and human values at Bangalore in January 2003, and addressed the gathering there on spirituality and science. He also attended a conference of world religions dialogue and symphony at Mahuva, Bhavnagar in 2009.

A great orator, he lectured on Zoroastrian religious and historical subjects at various places of Parsi settlements in India, Singapore, Dubai, Karachi and Iran.

Till the end Vada Dasturji Dr Peshotan Dasturji Hormazdyar Mirza served the community with integrity, scholarship and commitment. May his soul always bless us from his abode in Garothman Behesht.

Mr Shahpur Captain,
Chairman

[All WZO members who have email ids with us were sent this obituary notice in July]



Dr Noshir Wadia

Our former teacher Noshir Wadia, known to us as "Prof", who has died aged 91, was a pioneering figure in Indian neurology.

He was born in Surat, Gujarat, one of five children of Hormusji, a timber merchant, and his wife, Dinamai. He attended St Xavier's school and obtained his medical qualification from the Grant Medical College in Mumbai (then Bombay). In 1951, after completing an MD, he travelled to the UK to train in neurology, spending four formative years as registrar to the pioneering neurologist Lord (Russell) Brain at the London hospital.

At the age of 32, he became honorary neurologist to the JJ hospital and Grant College, Mumbai, with a mandate to establish the first neurology department in India. What started with six beds had grown into a 45-bed neurology department with a formidable reputation by the time he retired in 1982. In 1973, while still at the JJ, he also set up a neurology department at the Jaslok, a private hospital recognised for its postgraduate training.

He was a keen observer and a careful researcher. When he returned to India he noticed that the prevalence of neurological diseases was different from those in the standard textbooks. He felt that Indian neurologists should identify and document the prevalence of local diseases. His studies ranged from the neurological complications of manganese poisoning in Indian miners, to the high Indian prevalence of craniovertebral anomalies, Wilson's disease, tuberculosis presenting primarily as spinal meningitis, and nutritional disorders of the nervous system. He identified two unique Indian diseases later recognised elsewhere - a new variant of hereditary ataxia with slow eye movements,

and adult poliomyelitis due to a new virus (Enterovirus 70) associated with conjunctivitis.

Prof was also responsible for training a generation of neurologists. His “boys and girls” are now scattered around the world. His skill in clinical neurology was matched by his flair for teaching and bringing the subject alive. He was a charming, humble man with a quick smile and always had a kind word. He forged lifelong friendships with many British neurologists. Some of them regularly visited his unit in Mumbai.

He also served the World Federation of Neurology through several of its committees and research groups, finally being elected vice-president. He received many national and international awards, including the Padma Bhushan, India’s third highest civilian award, in 2012.

He is survived by his wife, Piroja, a pioneer of clinical neurophysiology in India, by two stepsons, and by two brothers.

- Peter Misra and Shanti Vijayaraghavan
Wednesday 4 May 2016
Courtesy of Guardian News & Media Ltd
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/may/04/noshir-wadia-obituary>

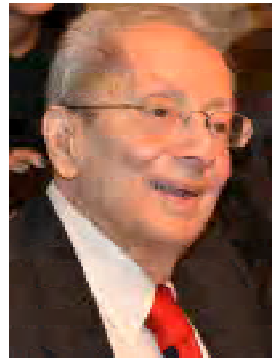


photo credit : Bob Urban - Iran May 2015

Fact-filled & Thought-laden : Keki Bhote on Zoroastrianism

reviewed by farrokh vajifdar

Every now and again a thoughtful book on Zoroastrianism by Zoroastrians makes its welcome appearance. Among the latest is an ambitious, fact-filled volume by Keki R Bhote who, sadly, did not live to see his finalized printed work. An additional burden had been his deteriorating vision that slowed his work considerably, despite which he soldiered on to brilliantly complete his set purpose.



Keki’s work was transcribed from his own written out manuscript by his devoted sons and daughters, and fondly dedicated to his wife Mehroo. Their imaginative idea was to decorate the end-papers with extracted folios in the author’s hand, and very appealing it is too.

Of Keki’s 20 listed books, none has previously dealt with Zoroastrianism – they were concerned with the arcana of business techniques. The present volume contains twelve chapters sectioned in three parts: “Our Aryan Heritage”; “Zarathushtra’s Theology and Seminal Contributions to Mankind”; and, (taking the hint from Zaehner’s popular volume), “Dawn, Twilight and Morning in Zoroastrian History”. For the author there could only be a high noon future for his beloved Zoroastrianism. The additions of Epilogue and Appendix embrace the substance of his tome. An important List of Tables and Figures (with useful maps) is included.

The ups and downs of Zoroastrianism’s current state are summarized in a Force Field Analysis which ingeniously presents Keki’s diagnosis in diagrammatic form. By the very nature of events rapidly evolving at varying rates and times, however, it cannot

be stretched towards any certainty of prognosis. The author takes the route of the current schisms between the mainly Parsi self-styled “orthodox” – who are nothing of the sort! – and the persistently misapplied tag of “liberal” which suggests a broad-mindedness lacking in the former. He pinpoints the conversion quarrels of the two opposed factions, indicative of an engineered irreconciliation and demise of these divided communities. This schism nevertheless signals a renaissance of genuine Zoroastrianism the world over.

Force Field Analysis leads to a variant use for “force”: when discussing the theology in Zarathushtra’s Gathas where theisms are debated. To be borne in mind is that the early Greek *theos* originally signified “power; force”, and not “god”. Keki’s description of Ahura Mazda as a Monad is exactly right – few authorities are in agreement on this! – and by its precise application to Mazda, “Wisdom”, is a fundamental singular metaphysical entity and, with His various agencies (later collectivized as the–*Amesha Spentas*), the ultimate unit of Reality. Zarathushtra’s practical philosophy pivots around this complex monadism.

On the antiquity of Zarathushtra’s time and homeland, Keki has regaled his readership with the various and widely differing suggestions followed up by 19th century text-based scholarship and research through to the archaeological discoveries, mainly by Russians of the 20th and current century: from deSovietization to the independent “-stans”. For some, dating the Sage farther back into pre-history, the more hallowed does his religious system become. They lean on the slender and equally vague linkage with the Old Indic RigVeda which itself has attracted much number juggling in the pre-dawn of history – its revisionist historians, commencing with B G Tilak of Polar origins and 5000 BCE fame. Keki has wisely desisted from such fantasy figures and settled for the more conventional 2000 BCE. The span from 1000 BCE to 600 BCE now suits better!

The equally problematic question of Zarathushtra’s homeland remains unanswered. Keki has rightly described it as “more fantasy than reality”. Several pre- and proto-Aryan Central Asian multiple layered civilizations – candidates ranging from Arkhaim to Azarbaijan – are given a good airing although, unsurprisingly, consensus thereon has not yet crystallized.

Keki and Mehroo had both visited several sites in south Central Asia over the years. They interacted with the locals, some of whom claimed themselves to be Zoroastrians; others stressed their ancestral roots in the “old Religion”. The newly independent transCaspian “-stans” all put up improbably vast numbers of State-sponsored Zoroastrian institutions. The late Russo-Greek archaeologist Viktor Sarianidi had insisted on seeing Zoroastrian traces and influences everywhere throughout southern Central Asia!

Recently excavated ruins of early cities and buried settlements like Gonur, Arkhaim, Balkh, Sintashta and others, any of which could have been suitable entrants, have yielded finds placing them several millenia before the advent of Zarathushtra in an unspecified area to the north-east of present-day Iran. In its first chapter the late Avestic Vandidad provided a list of regions, mostly identifiable on modern maps, where Zoroastrian missions had spread. The whereabouts, however, of the original Aryana Vaejo remain unclear, save that it was located towards the Arctic Circle. Its second chapter retailed the story of Yima / Jamshid and his three-stage southward expansion, and is a view reinforced by indications of the lengths of shortest and longest days in the Bundahishn’s calendrical chapter. The Vandidad provided an intriguing insight into the layout of one such ancient city – it was uncannily like the reconstructed ground plans of Togolok-21! Arkhaim has a circular ground plan as does the later Firuzabad.

The author has provided credible potted histories of the three major pre-Islamic Iranian dynasties – the Achaemenid, Parthian, and Sasanian whose official religion was Zoroastrian / Mazdayasnian. The Arab invasion and occupation wrought their terrible toll on the Zoroastrian populace under the Umayyad Caliphs directing their crushing persecutions from Damascus. When the Abbasids usurped control in 750 CE there were brief periods of respite. Much of the Pahlavi literature that survived was painstakingly copied out, redacted and studied. Keki's accounts of intermittent murderous attacks on the diminishing numbers of Zoroastrians is well worth reading to gain clearer perspectives on the Islamic oppressions and hate-filled pogroms. He takes us away from these frequent genocidal episodes under various Islamic rulers before easing us into the emergent Parsi migrations and their later history in India.

Zarathushtra's Theology as argued in Part 2 directs us to his ageless Gathas. Keki sees them as deeply religious and deeply psychological – again something unappreciated by those who regard these sacrosanct poems solely as coded ritual texts. An explanation of mysticism is convincing: some Gathas are formulated at both literary and metaphoric levels seen as exoteric and esoteric. Furthermore, they are deeply social and deeply ecological: being unswervingly ethical, they provide guidelines to moral right-living for like-minded humanity (for the first), and respect for the environment and its protection from rapacious exploitation by uncaring commercially driven interests.

Environmental issues tend in some cases to metaphysical interpretations: coupled with mystical traces, they lead towards theosophy (e.g. Taraporewala) before employing anachronistic items as "Mother Earth" and "Soul of Creation" whereas straightforward renderings as "Soul of the Kine" (all cattle species) fall by the wayside. Yasnas 29 and 31.10 directly refer to the peaceful, pastoral life. It is recalled that Zarathushtra lived and taught among cattle-

barons and labouring pastoralists, herdsmen, and agriculturists. The author's case, nevertheless, is convincingly presented.

The Amesha Spentas are explained through Professor Stanley Insler's ingenious analysis of the parallelism of the Gathas and the modern-day comprehension of the double helix DNA as the fundamental building elements of all living organisms. The author's own analysis does not show their Old Indic origins (excepting for Vohu Mana) and how these became transfigured in the Sage's Gathas.

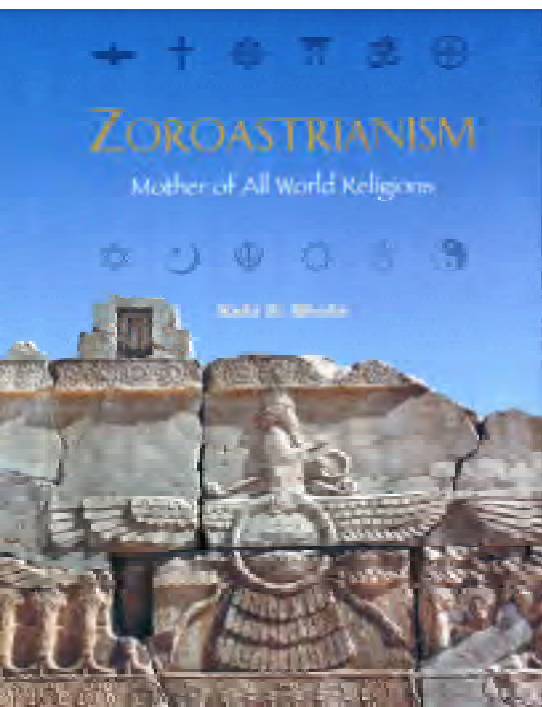
Readers will have to verify for themselves, given Keki's basic Gathic summaries, as to how this Ancient Iranian religion infiltrated and influenced many doctrinal developments in Judaism and Christianity, and differently within Islam. The karmic religions of Jainism, Hinduism, and Buddhism all found several points of similarity with original and evolved Zoroastrianism. It is indeed lamentable that some Parsis have embraced karmic, pessimistic notions whilst remaining untutored in the profundities of an optimistic religion they claim to have preserved, not within the Iranian Fatherland, but in their *madar vatan* Indian confines.

It is understood that this first hardback print run has become exhausted, and that a second run, in paperback, is mooted. If so, could the Bhote family be prevailed upon to have the several transcription errors duly corrected and issued thereafter as a second edition proper? Transcribed passages should be redrafted in places. Keki's entire text, maps and diagrams would remain unchanged.

To conclude this review of Keki Bhote's masterly opus, it is fitting to quote Robert Zaehner's end-piece on Zoroastrianism: ".... much of what the Iranian Prophet <taught> lives on in no less than three great religions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam. ... In those vital but obscure centuries that preceded the coming of Jesus Christ, Judaism had absorbed into its bloodstream

more of the Iranian Prophet's teachings than it could well admit. ... *Zoroaster was one of the greatest religious geniuses of all time ...* " (1959).

Some sixty years later it becomes evident that much of what Keki Bhote has presented at gratifying length is well vindicated! Here indeed is a volume to attentively peruse and treasure.



"Zoroastrianism : Mother of All Religions"

Keki R Bhote

Bhote Press, Wilmette, Illinois, 2015.

Pp.xvi + 462

Hardback, cover price US\$65



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

An Appeal to Endow an Oxford University Teaching Post

from elizabeth tucker

Study of the Avestan language and the Avesta, and also of Old Persian and the inscriptions of the Achaemenid Kings, has existed and been taught to students at Oxford University since 1886 (see two part article in *Hamazor* 2012 for details). For the past 42 years I have been the only teacher for these subjects, but now I have to retire and I do not have a full teaching position which could be reappointed.

Therefore, together with a colleague from the Faculty of Linguistics, Dr Philomen Probert, and the Development Office of Wolfson College, I am planning a fund-raising appeal to create a permanently endowed Oxford University post in 'Indo-Iranian Philology'. This post would cover teaching (lectures, classes, tutorials; supervision of graduate research students) in Avestan, Old Persian and the earliest Vedic, which is closely related to the ancient Iranian languages and essential for their study.

The sum needed to endow an Oxford University teaching post in perpetuity is substantial (around £3 million sterling). The post could bear the name of the benefactor or that of a person he/she wishes to commemorate. Alternatively, perhaps a consortium of donors could be formed, as was done in 1898 under the leadership of Bai Dinbai Nasarvanji Petit to create an Oxford professorship for L H Mills.

Oxford is uniquely placed to support the study of Avestan, Old Persian, Vedic and the surviving records in these languages, as it possesses world-class expertise in many ancient Indo-European languages and in the languages, culture and history of the Ancient Near East. Above all there is a strong Oxford tradition of studying ancient

scriptures and literature, and an interest in developing new methods to interpret their meaning.

The focus at Oxford will be on the original Avesta dating from the first millennium BCE (or earlier, in the case of Zarathustra's Gths): a focus on explaining via historical linguistic methods what the sentences and verses of the Avesta meant at the time at which they were composed, rather than a focus on the much later manuscript traditions and the role of Avesta recitation in religious ritual. It would be the only University post in the world dedicated to precisely this area of language and textual interpretation, and would serve to train young scholars who will carry the study of this aspect of the Avesta forward in the 21st century. There is a vital need for 'new blood' to ensure the health of future Avesta scholarship.

Finally, a personal appeal: I have devoted my professional life to encouraging students to study Avestan, Old Persian and Vedic, because I believe that knowledge of these languages and their ancient literature has value today, as they are part of the heritage of all humanity. Hence I would be extremely grateful for any advice or suggestions about how it might be possible to ensure that they continue to be taught at Oxford.

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Elizabeth Tucker is a Research Fellow in Indo-Iranian Philology at Oxford University. She has taught Avestan, Old Persian and Vedic language and texts to Oxford undergraduates and graduates since the 1970s. Her publications are mostly on Indo-Iranian and Indo-European historical linguistics. At present she is revising A.A.Macdonell's *Vedic Grammar for Students* and Vedic Reader for Oxford University Press.



Two Zarathushtis receive Honorary Degrees from University of East Anglia

On 20 July, 2016, Lord Karan Bilimoria CBE, DL and Bahram Bekhradnia were invited alongside other notable figures from the fields of business, literature, science and charity to attend UEA's week of graduation ceremonies, offering advice to graduating students and sharing their success stories. Each received an Honorary Doctorate of Civil Law.



Lord Bilimoria is the founder of Cobra Beer, chairman of the Cobra Beer Partnership Limited and of Molson Coors Cobra India. In 2006, he was the first Zoroastrian Parsi to sit in the House of Lords. He received an Honorary Doctorate of Civil Law, the tenth honorary doctorate he has received to date.

Honorary degrees are presented each year by the University to honour those who have made an impact in fields such as the arts, science, and civil society, but this is believed to be the first time that two Zoroastrians have been honoured at the same ceremony in the UK.

Lord Bilimoria, who unveiled The Enterprise Centre at the University of East Anglia in October last year, shared some words of advice with fellow graduates. He said:

"I have been able to see first-hand why UEA is one of the UK's top universities. It is such an honour and privilege to receive an Honorary Doctorate and I am truly humbled.

"In the United States, graduation ceremonies are often called commencement ceremonies, as graduating signifies the start of your career and the start of the rest of your life. Throughout your career, what will make the difference is your attitude. Our vision at Cobra is to aspire and achieve, against all odds, with integrity. It is a vision that has served me well and I hope that you are all able to emulate it too."

Bahram Bekhradnia became the first director of the Higher Education Policy Institute in 2002 following the course of a career devoted to the higher education sector both nationally and internationally and also received an Honorary Doctorate of Civil Law. He said:

"I was delighted to be asked by the University of East Anglia to accept an honorary degree, not least because UEA is a university I have long and greatly admired. It is unique among English universities being extremely successful at research, but at the same time attaching such importance to undergraduate education. It provides a model for other universities, and I am proud now to be associated with the University.

"If there is one thing your university experience should have taught you it is that hard work pays off – the tortoise doesn't always win, but you'd be surprised how often she does."

Vice-Chancellor of the University of East Anglia, Professor David Richardson, said:

"We take great pride in honouring those who make valuable and notable contributions to society alongside our

newest cohort of graduating students and it's always a delight to hear the words of wisdom they can impart at our graduation ceremonies."

The ceremonies took place from 18-22 July, with more than 4,000 students graduating. Honorary degrees are awarded each year by the University to noteworthy figures who have made an impact in fields such as the arts, science and civil society.



photo credit : Bob Urban - Iran May 2015



In Iran, A Zoroastrian Awakening Stirs

by zenobia ravji



Zoroastrians pray at the Pir-e-Sabz shrine in Yazd, Iran

Ask someone about the Zoroastrian religion and – assuming they've heard of it – you will typically get three responses. Your interlocutor might inaccurately describe followers of the Zoroastrian faith as “fire-worshippers.” He or she may recognize Zoroaster, the priest who founded the religion, as the protagonist of the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche's classic work, “Thus Spoke Zarathustra.” Finally, there's the oft-quoted “fun fact” that the late Freddie Mercury, the flamboyant vocalist of rock group Queen, was and still is the world's most famous Zoroastrian.

Much less well-known is that Zoroastrianism is a living faith, with communities in India, Europe, the United States and the Middle East – especially Iran. Ten years ago, a study by the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of America concluded that there were, at most, 190,000 followers of the faith around the world. However, as Laurie Goodstein noted in the New York Times at the time, there was reason to be

skeptical of this number because of the “wildly diverging counts in Iran, once known as Persia – the incubator of the faith.”

In common with other religions, Zoroastrians in Iran have confronted both persecution and a concerted attempt by the Islamist regime in Tehran to destroy the very foundations of their faith. One critical consequence of this – no doubt unintended by the ruling mullahs – is that growing numbers of Iranians inside and outside the country are exploring a faith that crystallized two millennia before the Prophet Muhammad appeared on the scene. “Converting back” to Zoroastrianism, as many refer to the process of rediscovering their roots, has encouraged a view of Islam as an alien, Arab faith that was imposed on the unwilling Persians during the Muslim conquest of the seventh century.

For most of his childhood in pre-revolutionary Iran, Dr Ali M (he withholds his full name out of concern for family members

still living in the country) heard virtually nothing about his family's religious heritage. But when Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini seized power following the 1979 revolution that overthrew the Shah, Ali's family left for Germany. Experiencing a foreign culture for the first time, Ali, who now works as a physician in southern California, began to ask questions about his background. "When I lived in Germany, I was going through my teenage years. I tried to find out who I am and what was going on around me in a world of chaos and displacement," he explained.

Ali began asking his parents about their religious heritage and ancient roots. That's when he found out through conversations with his mother that his grandfather's family was descended from the Zoroastrian priestly lineage.

Anxious to acquire more knowledge about his hidden faith, Ali began studying Zoroastrian teachings. He learned about the three principles propagated by Zoroaster/Zarathushtra: Humata, Hukhta, and Hvarshta, "Good Thoughts, Good Words, and Good Deeds" in Avestan, an ancient Iranian language. He learned too that the fire which plays such a central role in Zoroastrian religious ceremonies represents the divine light of wisdom.

At first, the priests whom Ali met in America were apprehensive about converting him, pointing out that doing so would be regarded as apostasy by Iran's ruling Islamists, and therefore cost Ali his life in the event that he returned home. According to the official record in Iran Ali's father is registered as a Muslim. Under Iranian law,

children automatically take their father's religion. Those Iranians who depart Islam for another faith face imprisonment or even execution.

Ali was devastated and angry. "I was in tears, I was actually crying. I said I don't need these people to prove who I am. I was going to find somebody to do this for me, so I could formally declare my belief," he said. Eventually he found a Zoroastrian priest to perform his Navjote.

"I felt that I'm the same person and have always been a Zoroastrian," he said, reflecting on the experience. "Even though I grew up in a household where religion didn't play a central role and was never forced on me."

Neither his father nor his mother pushed him in any direction. Ali believes in asha, a Zoroastrian concept meaning "the path of truth and righteousness"- that things always fall into place if you follow the right path.

In the seventh century, Arab tribes armed with the Quran patched together the former territories of the Sasanian Empire, the last pre-Islamic Persian dynasty, forcing the conquered population to adopt Islam. As a result, some Zoroastrians fled Iran for lands as varied as China, India, and the Balkans. But many stayed behind, resisting the Arabs for 200 years, in what some call "The First Arab Occupation."

"Students were taught that Zoroastrian priests and the Sasanians were barbarians, and that the Arabs had to come in to 'civilize the people,'" said Dinyar, a Zoroastrian historian who travels regularly to Iran, and therefore uses a pseudonym.

Despite continued persecution, Zoroastrians continued to resist conversion. By the fifteenth century, a sizeable portion of the population of Iran still remained Zoroastrian, especially in the northern provinces of Gilan and Mazandaran. Their continuing presence raised concerns among the Muslim clergy that others might probe their roots and family backgrounds and leave Islam.



“Those who did not convert had to pay jizya, the infidel tax,” explained Dr Daryoush Jahanian, a leading Zoroastrian scholar. “If they could not afford the tax, they were subjected to torture, confiscation of property and even threats to their life.” Another humiliation imposed on the Zoroastrians, along with other religious minorities, was a law compelling them to wear a yellow patch on their clothing to mark them out – a badge of inferiority that the Jews of Europe were all too familiar with. Many Zoroastrians were shepherded into ghettos known as gavrestan. “In Persian, that word is reminiscent of ‘Goorestan’ or cemetery,” Dr Jahanian added. “In this hostile environment Zoroastrians were even blamed for natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods.”

Iranian scholars point to 1979 as the year that reignited the innate curiosity of many Iranians regarding their roots and origin. After the Islamist revolution, Iran became estranged from the Shah’s western allies, forcing ordinary Iranians to examine their national and spiritual identities.

The revolution dislodged the Pahlavi dynasty, founded by Reza Shah Pahlavi in 1925, who was then succeeded by his son, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi. The Pahlavis combined brutal authoritarianism with secularism and an embrace of western norms and customs. For the Zoroastrians, this meant recognition of their faith and even the official adoption of some of their traditions, like Nowruz, the Iranian New Year, and the celebration of the spring equinox.

In the early 1970s, the Shah encouraged the return of Zoroastrians known as Parsis who had been living in India for centuries. Iran’s Prime Minister, Asadollah Alam, met with several Parsi businessmen who were urged to invest in Iran. Many Parsis did just that, including

a significant number who relocated to Iran.

Dr Ali M recalled this period before the revolution. “In the 1970s, ancient Iranian stuff was really in and cool,” he said. “People wanted to connect to that – especially educated people, who thought Islam was more of a regressive factor in Iranian culture. That’s still a very strongly held belief, especially among the younger generation, hence the animosity and misplaced anger toward Arabs and Arab culture.”

Ali continued, “In the 70s when I was growing up in Iran, and somebody was wearing a chador, a full body covering worn over regular clothes by women, or even a headscarf, they were either thought to be a maid, a peasant, or somebody who’s very uneducated. And that association kind of remained.”

Once Khomeini was in power, the tentative revival of Zoroastrianism in Iran was suddenly halted, and Zoroastrians started to flee the country. In the main Zoroastrian temple in Tehran, the portrait of Zoroaster was replaced with a portrait of Khomeini. As far as Khomeini himself was concerned, Zoroastrians were “dishonorable, fire-worshipping knaves.”

Continued Khomeini: “If this fire of dirt that has risen from the temples of Fars is not extinguished, soon the trash will spread and they invite all to join the Zoroastrian creed.”



A graduation ceremony for Zoroastrian priests-in-training

As Dr Jahanian pointed out, scholars of Zoroastrian and ancient Iranian studies were effectively criminalized after 1979. "Many suffered physical, psychological and financial punishments," Jahanian said. "Some were arrested, jailed and beaten. Others lost their jobs and even suffered the loss of a dear one."

Furthermore, Zoroastrians, including other religious minorities, were by law prohibited from holding senior government or military positions and were discriminated against in the legal system. This included receiving more severe punishments than Muslims and receiving lower settlements in lawsuits. Today, Zoroastrians are still subjected to apartheid-like legislation, such as a restriction on printing more than 3,000 copies of any religious text and a regulation that the principals of Zoroastrian schools must be Muslims.



An ancient Khordeh Avesta [Zoroastrian prayer book]

Even so, many Zoroastrians have clung stubbornly to their beliefs and practices, even performing conversions in private. Those who fled abroad experienced a similar awakening. "I felt that I had found my identity," said Shahrooz Ash, born in Tehran to secular Muslim parents who emigrated to England. "I felt I had returned home to who I really was, to my roots. A lifelong search of who I was and where I came from had finally reached its destination."

Ash has not returned to Iran since the revolution. After his time in England he came to America, where he studied philosophy at UCLA. An encounter with a philosophy professor, who asked him about pre-Islamic Iran, a subject about which he knew almost nothing, spurred him on to further study. "I was ashamed that I did not know my own roots, the glory and powerful ancient people I came from," he said.

Ash said that his true identity, like many Iranians, had been overwhelmed by the impact of the Islamist revolution. "Iranians are," he said, "conflicted between these two identities, between being Iranian and being Muslim."

Dr Daryoush Jahanian describes the arrival of the internet as a "miracle" because of its role in the Zoroastrian awakening – just one of myriad reasons why the Iranian regime exercises such strict control over its own sphere of cyberspace.



Mobeds from Kerman, Iran

Among the leaders of this information revolution is Dr Shahin Nezhad, an academic who specializes in ancient Iran. Nezhad and a group of scholars and cultural activists are the founders of the Persian Renaissance Foundation, the main backer of the Iranian Renaissance Movement (IRM), which produces content aimed specifically at audiences in Iran.

Nezhad, now 48, was born to non-practicing Muslim parents in Iran. “My parents were not Muslim by belief or by practice, but since I was not in any other category, I was recognized as Muslim. This is the case for millions of Iranians,” he said.

Nezhad pursued a career in petroleum engineering and transferred to Houston to work for an oil company. He had always been interested in history, politics and his ancient Zoroastrian roots.

“I had a very strong tendency to Zoroastrianism as a philosophy, as a national heritage, and that’s the tendency among many, many Iranians. So they look at the Zoroastrian culture and religion as something that really belongs to their ancient, Persian heritage or old Iran.” Nezhad started to consider himself a Zoroastrian in his early twenties, following the Gathas, the most sacred Zoroastrian texts, consisting of 17 hymns composed by Zoroaster. They are essentially a philosophy on how to create a balanced and peaceful life.

Nezhad eventually decided to perform his Navjote, initiation ceremony, in his early 40s – one day after marrying his wife, who is a Zoroastrian herself. However, Nezhad always felt that in his heart he was Zoroastrian, and that he didn’t need some sort of formal conversion to tell him so. “For Iranians, you feel that being Zoroastrian is like being Iranian,” he said. “Being Muslim is not really being Iranian. It is a kind of an identity crisis for them. It’s very complicated.”

Nezhad does foresee “an Iranian” Iran with a significant Zoroastrian population, which, he believes, will pacify the region, reducing tensions between the other nations and people.

“There is no state where Zoroastrians feel at home,” he argued. “Iran has to be their state, their stronghold, their center of attention and interest. And perhaps Iran can be the defender of the rights of Zoroastrians all around the world.”

Nezhad believes that a cultural revolution from within will gradually degrade the foundation of the current Islamist system of government. “Rather than going 180 degrees and opposing the establishment, we try to oppose them by awakening people to their real heritage and real identity, rather than what they are told by the current system,” he said. “Therefore, for time being, at least until we figure out something else, our strategy is education, education, education.”

The determination of Iranians to use the very online tools that the regime has actively tried to close down is a powerful signal that this learning process is finally underway. Scholars like Jahanian and Nezhad say that there are currently 25,000 open Zoroastrians in Iran, with a further 100,000 who are formally registered as Muslims but practice Zoroastrianism. This, they say, is the cusp of a broader awareness among Iranians that their pre-Islamic past provides the grounding for a post-Islamist future in which all religions will coexist in equality.

Initially published in The Tower Magazine, an online publication, Issue 38, May 2016. Zenobia now kindly shares it with Hamazor readers.



Zenobia Ravji is a reporter based in New York City.

Zoroastrians' Part in World War I

During the First World War the forgotten Zoroastrian community in India played a vital role in supporting the British. The Zoroastrians volunteered their service through money, properties to treat the wounded, doctor, and positive vibes whilst the duration of World War 1. Yet why are they forgotten?

Who were the Zoroastrians in India?

In the ninth century a group of Zoroastrians fled Iran because of religious persecution and sailed to India, arriving at the port of Sanjan in South Gujarat. The Hindu King Jadiv Rana gave them sanctuary and they integrated seamlessly into the society. The descendants of these Zoroastrians refugees are known as Parsees in India meaning those who come from Persia. Although numerically small the Parsees have always volunteered their services for India whenever it has been faced external aggression, at times sacrificing their lives in the process.

Role of the Zoroastrians in the First World War :

The Zoroastrians like their other sister communities in India participated in the First World War. The Zoroastrians casualties were significantly smaller in comparison to the other communities from India but this was because of the fact that they are a very small community only numbering in tens of thousands. Nevertheless the First World War did have an impact on the Zoroastrian population. According to the 1921 census the Zoroastrians population saw a slow growth rate due to the death of Zoroastrians serving in the First World War.

Doctors in the Indian Medical Service (IMS) :

Military records show Zoroastrian officers mainly in the Indian Medical Service (IMS) serving in the Mesopotamia, Egypt, Palestine as they were decorated for their bravery and gallantry. One of the soldiers

who fought in the war Kershasp Ardeshir Naoroji, the grandson of Dr Dadabhai Naoroji - the first Indian elected MP to the House of Commons in 1892 and ZTFE founder member in 1861.

Soldiers from the Zoroastrian community :

Some of the Zoroastrians decorated for bravery -

- Major Ratansha Nariman Kapadia was awarded the Military Cross, French Croix de Guerre and the Belgian Croix de Guerre.
- Colonel Phirozshah Byramji Bharucha served with the 14th Ferozepur Sikhs and was the first Indian to be awarded the Distinguished Service Order.
- Captain Heerajee Jehangir Manockjee Cursetjee also served with 14th Ferozepur Sikhs and was also awarded the DSO.

Use of Zoroastrian properties for treating the wounded :

Zoroastrians were known to allow the use of their property to treat the wounded. Noted examples were 'The Willows', a large estate in Windsor with its own private race course, belonging to Lady Frainy and Sir Dhunjibhoy Bomanji Kt. The various estates and properties of the Tata group, including the 5-star Taj Mahal Hotel in Mumbai, were used to treat the wounded during both World Wars. Parsee owned hospitals, including the well known B D Petit Parsee General Hospital in Bombay established in 1912, were used during both World Wars.

Zoroastrian monetary help :

Many Zoroastrian families contributed large sums of money to the war effort during both World Wars, and included the families of the Bomanjis, Tatas, Petits, Jeejeebhoyas, Wadias as well as the apex body of the Zoroastrian community. In the Second World War the Parsees including the ZTFE gave in excess of seven million pounds. This resulted in the ZTFE nearly going bankrupt after the war.

The Tata Iron and Steel Company (TISCO) supplied over 1500 miles of steel rail in

Mesopotamia, as steel for armaments during the First World War. This led the Viceroy of India, Lord Chelmsford, personally visiting TISCO in Sakshi Bihar after the war and renaming it Jamshedpur in honour of the late Jamshetji N Tata.

The German propaganda :

The then ZTFE President Sir Mancherjee M Bhowanaggee KCIE, who was the first Indian to be elected a Conservative MP in 1895, upon request by his friend Sir George Birdwood of the India Office, authored the booklet titled; " The Verdict of India". The Verdict of India was written to counter German propaganda that Britain was mistreating its Indian soldiers and they should change sides and fight with the Germans.

The records of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE) show Lieutenant Dr Sorab B Warden of the IMS served in Mesopotamia, later was elected ZTFE President in 1954. Hence the Zoroastrian have participated with the British in many theaters of war though unlike other religions and ethnicity of those serving in the Indian Army which were correctly recorded, it was not uncommon for the Zoroastrians to be recorded under another religion. In fact In 1926 the Parsee War Memorial in Kharaghat Colony, South Mumbai was inaugurated to remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

It is due to this India1914 - remembering Indian soldiers a project supported by Golden Tours Foundation and the Heritage Lottery Fund are pushing smaller communities like the Zoroastrians to receive recognition.

<http://www.india1914.com/zoroastrians-contribution-during-ww1.aspx>

AND recognition did take place on 1 July 2016, at Westminster Abbey, UK, as the article that follows will show.

Westminster Abbey service honours Parsi/Irani Soldiers

A service was held in remembrance of the 100th Anniversary of the Battle of Somme 1916-2016. Many Indian soldiers sacrificed their lives during this devastating war and 19 Parsi soldiers died on the battlefield of Somme, writes FIROZA PUNTHAKEY MISTREE

On July 1, the British Government was set to hold a full service at Westminster Abbey to commemorate lives lost and the unparalleled courage shown, by those who fought at the Battle of Somme in France during World War I.

Few know, that in this terrible battle, a million soldiers died fighting in service of their country. Many Indian soldiers sacrificed their lives during this devastating war and 19 Parsi soldiers lost their lives on the battlefield of Somme. The Parsi Battalion was the only fighting force in British India that was granted the same status as the British army.

But it all seemed to be so far out in time and place that one paid little attention to the upcoming event. Then, quite out of the blue, I received an email from Col Sohrab Rusi Dalal (son of Rusi and Roshan Dalal, ZTFE, UK). He was invited to participate and read a passage at the National Remembrance service to mark the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Somme, at Westminster Abbey.

Colonel Dalal wanted a passage, a letter or a write up that he could read on the Parsis to mark their presence at the battle of Somme. I knew of only one person who had compiled and chronicled the history of Parsi Irani soldiers who gave their lives in World War I. I turned to Marzban J Giara's recently published book, The Contribution of the Parsi Community during the First World War (1914-1918).

There I discovered the names of the Parsi Irani soldiers who fought in the many theatres of the Great War, the most

hallowed being the battlefield of Somme. In the book compiled by Giara I found just what I wanted, a moving poem addressed to "Ye sons of Zal and Rustam" a reference to the great warriors in the epic poem, Shahname.

The poem, composed by the eminent Parsi scholar and author Rustom B Paymaster, and found in his book The Voice of the East on The Great War was published by Giara in his book.

Giara is a determined chronicler of community history and heritage and we thank him for it and the Sorabji Burjorji Garda College Trust Navsari that sponsored the book.

This poem in honour of the Parsi Irani soldiers, was read by Col Sohrab Rusi Dalal and was the first of 39 pieces read out at the Westminster Abbey service, a moving tribute of remembrance, of those members of our community who gave their lives during the Great War so that we may live in freedom.

For the record, the soldiers of the Parsi Battalion, according to Giara, carried with them a small Khordeh Avesta, which was given to them before they left the shores of Bombay and before every mission they would perform their Kusti before going into action.

This poem was composed by Shams-Ul-Ulma Dastur Dr Darab Peshotan Sanjana, High Priest of the Parsis, who exhorted them to take up arms for their King and the Empire (vide The Times of India, 12th August 1914). This poem is from The Voice of the East on The Great War, by Rustom B Paymaster, Bombay 1916.

**Ye sons of Zal and Rustom, now's the
time,
For you to show your loyal zeal sublime.
Take Mazda's name, and quick gird up
your loins,
Up! Up and do what duty now enjoins,
Ye Parsees, sooth, the very life-blood
owe,**

**Which in your pure Iranian veins doth
flow,
Your flesh and bones and skin, your
freedom full,
Nor pearls nor diamonds have such
wealth contain.
So, Parsees awake! When called for fight
prepare,
Unfurl your Gavian standard in the air!
Fling the light saddle on your charger's
back,
Not one, when called to arms, must spirit
lack.
Ay, walk with British soldiers pace to
pace,
March to the battlefield with manly grace
Draw your proud ranks by your brave
ruler's side,
Unmindful in what future maybe-tide-
What matters it if o'er you mountains
slip!
Or foe men's hateful Swords your bodies
rip?
What matters it if you in sea are
drowned,
Or in the air you're shot to plunge
aground?
To your great fame brave deeds will e'er
rebound,
Return or die with lasting glory crowned
In just and righteous cause your sword
unsheathe,
To future times your brilliant fame
bequeaths.**

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Different & Equal : An Insiders view of working with difference and diversity in Psychology

by zenobia nadirshaw

With an estimated 14 million from ethnic minorities living in England and Wales, Britain has become a multiracial, multi-ethnic society. As a clinical psychologist working in an NHS setting for over two decades, I make no excuses for dealing with issues of power, values and diversity from a race, culture and ethnic perspective, although I do acknowledge issues of class, sexual preference and gender as being a part of the wider debate of inequality and imbalance in society. Working with diversity and difference based on colour, sexual orientation and gender is complex. There is a problem with psychology. I believe that many of the problems arise from ignorance, misplaced confidence in false beliefs and refusal to attend to evidence.

Problems with psychology / failures of the West :

Eurocentric bias

Prilleltensky, in a well-argued paper in 1989, presented a convincing argument about psychology. He stated that:

- Every community has a ruling group
- It sets up mechanisms to perpetuate its own power, which included setting up cultural mechanisms to support social order.
- Psychologist are socialized into working with the system
- Psychology supports the status quo
- Psychology supports the interests of those in power in society
- Psychologists welcome the status quo and rarely challenge prevailing beliefs, thereby allowing negative stereotypes to affect their thinking, diagnosis and selection of psychological work
- Psychologists focus on the individual rather than society
- Psychologists unconsciously support an implicit ideology

The above views accord greatly with the authors views. Psychology by its very tradition

works with the individual on the majority (ethnic) groups in Britain. It continues to use the majority (ethnic) population as the norm against which variations in behaviour are determined, explained and categorised. There is a tendency to assume that the majority (ethnic) view is naturally superior. Eurocentric theories and methods in the training and clinical practice continue to privilege the majority (ethnic) population and the experiences of minority ethnic and socially excluded groups are judged with strong prejudice, beliefs and myths.

Psychology and its practices are laden with Western beliefs and value systems, making sense to someone coming from the Judaeo-Christian cultural tradition where there is premium on the understanding of the individual to determine his or her own destiny and achieve independence. Other cultural forms/ groups that do not value these things highly or indeed have alternative value systems with other forms of behaviour and social relationships being emphasized, may not find the goals/ practice of psychology appropriate for them. Psychology is practiced by majority of psychologists of European cultural background from a training in which the whole nosology of the subject matter is worked within a Euro-American bias. The cultural / colour blind approach school of multi-racial practice leads into the trap of cultural imposition and a lack of appreciation of the relationship among psychological, intergroup, ideological and social contexts of people's lives. There is a lack of use of ecological models / approach in psychological theory and practice and to the importance of the interactions among the family, community, individual and society, and of social study and power and the political context. There is, to the author's knowledge, a lack of understanding and appreciation of the 'real' world of people and the situations that they find themselves in. There is lack of

understanding of the impact of sociocultural / political forces as well as the psychological and developmental influences on the behavioural expressions of people from socially disadvantaged groups. Psychology and psychologists continue to use a theoretical and applied framework for practices that have dealt more extensively with those concepts, which are more appropriate to the problems encountered by minority ethnic communities and the black population of England.

Issue of power

Having worked for the National Health Service for over 2 decades, I cannot help but ruminate on the issues of professional power.

Professional power resides in:

- Access to relevant knowledge, experience and expertise, which it is claimed is available only to members of the professional group
- The authority to take decisions over the lives of others
- Being able, on terms favourable to the professional, to dispense with or withhold information from service users
- Being able to structure face to face interaction (interviews, meeting, reviews) in ways that are advantageous to the professional person (content of agenda, procedures to be followed, other staff invited, time and location of meeting)
- Successfully perpetuating the mystique and notion of exclusivity surrounding professional knowledge and expertise, and hiding behind the language of inclusion.
- The maintenance of overt and covert hostility and prejudice via the use of a colour blind approach

Psychologists are in positions of power and privilege and they belong to the caring face of mental health settings. The interplay between power and principle of caring can perhaps be best understood within the overall context of the main principle that is fundamental to service agencies. There can hardly be any argument that the principle of caring is merely the appreciation of an abstract ideology, without which the practical undertaking is not worthy of credibility.

Institutions set up structures and mechanisms to transfer the principle of caring into the practice of caring, into the provision of service, but most important of all, into providers who are to fulfil the aims and objectives of the caring services to which they belong, to carry out the duties and responsibilities designed to achieve those aims and objectives.

Inherent within the processes of setting up and administering services is the principle of power of those who are in a position to plan and programme the institutions. There is power to determine the ethos and ideology framework of the institutions, to design policies and procedures, to decide on the nature of practice, and to delegate duties and responsibilities, to determine the content and allocation of resources, to define the criteria of need, selection and recruitment, to prioritize areas of action, etc. There is also power to pressurize to conform to norms and values, aspirations that mainstream people set for themselves. There is power in the arrogance of white colonization and fitting individuals into a social system that continues to oppress certain segments of society.

Against the existing evidence and experience as a psychologist, it seems apparent to me so far that the principle of power has and continues to have adverse effects on the principle of caring when applied to black and minority ethnic communities.

Values of the profession

More and more people are beginning to recognise that a value base now undermines the very existence of the welfare services which exerts a powerful influence on everyday life and practice. Issues such as fairness, equity, equality and racism are not the result of neutral, objective and dispassionate intentions, but one's own subjective experience and/ or interest or intentions to maintain the status quo. There is now agreement that psychology has always been affected by the racism of wider society and that the discipline of psychology does not operate in a social, political and historical vacuum. Indeed, it is very clear that different form of racism have characterised the history of psychology over the years. Racism is not

static. It changes and shifts at different moments in history. The worry is about the new racism that appears to be operating within society, i.e., the emphasis on difference and the negative value attributed to this difference. The well-intentioned, politically correct statements that say one thing but means another has taken over the more old-styled, vulgar form of biological or hierarchical racism which characterised the early days. British society's obsession with mystifying and devaluing anything that is non British and to consider things as 'odd', 'bizarre' or 'deviant' if they do not prescribe to established norms and patterns of behaviour blunts psychologist's moral sensibility and responsibility in fulfilling their promise to all sections of British society. Needs of black and minority ethnic service users do not fit into standard service provision and therefore run the risk of being ignored and devalued. They continue to remain as an oppressed and vulnerable group in society, suffering discrimination and disadvantage in the course of everyday lives through socially constructed concepts of 'difference' and 'differentness'. The relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed is not necessarily one of intention but because of a perception that weakness is the fault of an individual rather than the result of the structure of society. Black people become a problem because they are simply 'different'.

Teaching and training

It is my concern, both as a past practitioner within the British Health Service and as a member of past and current committees and working parties, that within the field of diversity, difference, social inequality and cultural diversity:

- Psychologists are poorly informed about the issues of race, culture and ethnicity and often remain unclear about the role of the British Psychological Society in these issues. Where that leaves the psychologists in question is uncertainty, embarrassment, fear of threats of industrial tribunal and being accused of racism.

- That, despite a convincing case being made

in relation to undergraduate and post graduate courses; they show very little change in academic content and curriculum. This, to the best of the author's knowledge is the result of the weak institutional support that is received for such change. At present, issues based on racial and other inequalities continue to be found only at the margins of mainstream teaching, being done in a one off manner.

- That, despite the experiences and wishes of students wanting to learn about and research social inequalities and cultural diversities, very little motivation is offered. As a result, this area of research still continues to remain unpopular and unfashionable.

A major challenge and reality now is openness and readiness of teachers, tutors and supervisors to consider these issues throughout academic teaching and training, in a sustained manner, while reflecting on the risks and anxieties that are bound to surface.

Difference and diversity and the politics of recognition

Social scientists have used and continue to use conceptual and research frameworks that inappropriately address racial minority ethnic groups from a biased and negative perspective. Difference does not become a neutral factor when the following are considered:

- The social pathology or deviance paradigm assumes that so-called problems (i.e. the deviance from some generally accepted and popular norms) are the result of a social disease; in much the same way as the disruption of normal bodily functioning is the result of physical disease.

- The social disorganisation model interprets existing problems as a result of the disintegration of values and rules that govern everyday behaviour, as exhibited, in this case, by the minority ethnic person.

- The cultural deficit paradigm takes a very blatant ethnocentric perspective and assumes that one's cultural group is strong and good and highly valued, whereas

members of other given groups, or more specifically their culture are considered inferior. An over-emphasis on culture gives the impression that culture remains static and is inflexible, and that there is little cultural variation among individual and behaviour to meet the changing needs and circumstances. Concentrating on cultural and ethnicity can lead to discriminatory discourse and practice because it involves overlooking the common need that people share.

- The genetic deficiency model has been used frequently in the past to explain the observed differences in scores obtained in traditional intelligence measures by people.

It is now incumbent on all psychologists concerned to show a duty of care by recognising the limitations of the above models and to reflect critically on the politics of recognition and liberalism.

The politics of equal recognition assumes or indeed asserts a common humanity in which we share common universal needs. This foundational universalism has been central to many equal opportunities, multicultural policies, in which showing respect for others has essentially meant treating all people the same, in the spirit of tolerance.

As stated before, 'difference' is not a neutral fact. Difference whether of style, appearance, stress, behaviour, looks or skin colour, have value attached to them. The dilemma of negative value attached to maintaining one's own religious, cultural reference versus the urgent need to conform to specific norms of mainstream society that ascribes to be the very essence of ethnocentrism, in the knowledge that one's group norms are right and others are wrong, is clearly a complex area. Husband (1999) argues that 'tolerance is the exercise of largesse by the powerful ultimately on behalf of the powerful. It is the generous extension of forbearance towards someone who is intrinsically objectionable or not deserving of the privilege being allowed'. Tolerance in Britain (and elsewhere!) is treated as a property to be exercised by the majority, rather than as a right to be invoked by minorities. Blommaert and Verschueren

(1988) note the construction of an idea of 'the threshold of tolerance'. This is an idea that in essence asserts that there is a threshold (limit) beyond which it is not reasonable to expect majority populations to continue with their 'normal' level of tolerance.

The second challenge to the universalism of the politics of equal recognition comes from a new political philosophy often associated with minority identity politics. Taylor (1991) calls the politics of difference. He argues that: 'the development of the modern notion of identity has given rise to a politics of difference. There is of course a universalist basis to this as well, making for the overlap and confusion between the two. Everyone should be recognised for his or her unique identity. However, recognition here means something else. With the politics of equal dignity, what is established is meant to be universally the same – an identical basket of rights and immunities; with the politics of difference, what we are asked to recognise is the unique identity of the individual group, their distinctiveness from others. The idea is that it is precisely this distinctiveness that has been ignored, glossed over, or assimilated to a dominant or majority identity.'

How do psychologists, teachers, trainers, practitioners and providers of psychological services recognise this distinctiveness and respect the politics of difference of minority ethnic groups' refusal to be assimilated into a homogenizing universalism? In effect the politics of difference insists that the black and minority ethnic person has to be treated equally but differently; by recognition of this difference is meant relating to the person through that difference. How do we get psychology services to recognise that difference when, in the acknowledgement of that difference, one runs the risk of dissolving what was already in existence?

The challenge is to manage and work through the difference by:

- Articulating commonality of the experiences of oppression and domination without creating hierarchies of guilt and suffering in others

- Using difference and diversity as a source of learning rather than as a source of division and destructive conflict

- Working with the potential and actual loss of a mind-set that has been taken for granted and that has acted as a source of security for many psychologists in the past
- Having to examine basic presumptions and pre-existing frameworks that no longer have the capacity to explain the world once 'difference' is openly acknowledged.

As psychologists, we need to move away from the retention of the status quo and being bystanders. We need to remove the reinforcers that are around and to speak out against the 'colonization' of the oppressed, against the definition of 'normal' and 'normality' experience of being white and taking whiteness for granted. Taylor's (1991) politics of difference inevitably have implications for the overall health and social care provisions within the organization of psychology. It should imply a willingness to develop specific policies, rather than what is sometimes called the 'victimization of the majority!' this leads to renewed attempts to assert the 'limits of tolerance' as natural, reasonable and necessary for the survival of contemporary British society.

Reconstruction of British psychology: The challenges

Reports or statements made by the British Psychological Society (BPS) shows increasing awareness among the profession of the need to address issues of black and multi-ethnic health care. Although awareness has resulted in the formation of Task groups, Working parties and ad hoc Project groups, there is very limited evidence that the profession is seriously dealing with these issues in a coherent and systematic manner. The tendency for rhetoric in mission and value statements is frequently not backed up by action plans. The language of exclusion and segregation, hiding behind the language of elitism and inclusion, still continues to blame the victim for his or her own problems. The activity of planning services still feels uncomfortable in dealing with issues of race, ethnicity and equality, the covert assumption being that it is not feasible or possible to provide equal opportunity and set up equal partnerships.

It is of the utmost importance that the BPS is absolutely clear about its commitment to equality issues based on social inequalities and cultural and ethnic diversity. It seems untenable to think that the Society, whilst in the twenty-first century, does not have a clear commitment to taking hold of these issues and grappling with the difficulties and complexities that issues of social inequalities based on race, culture, ethnicity and gender bring.

We are now in a position to understand clearly the context in which British clinical psychology needs to be reconstructed. One should imagine a range of activities that can be undertaken by the BPS, the Division/Subsystems and individual practitioners.

Just as the government is calling on the Health Services to contribute to the social exclusion/inclusion agenda and objectives in tackling causes of ill-health, joblessness, low pay and social exclusions, the BPS and its Divisions and Subsystems should offer or create services that are fair and equitable. It needs to ensure the following:

- Ideas of greater inclusion and participation by promoting greater input from consumers, users, clients, patients and subjects
- Inclusion of themes of difference, diversity, social justice equality- all of which are not mutually exclusive. All these themes have common elements which should be actively promoted through the Society and through its membership.
- That the workforce and leadership is:
 - ✎ Drawn from all sections of society
 - ✎ Informed and knowledgeable about all sections of contemporary British society
 - ✎ Able to respond effectively and appropriately with the knowledge and insight to diversity, difference, disadvantage as a result of 'race', gender, sexual preference, class, etc.
 - ✎ Credible in the eyes of its users and students about the ethnocentric course content and curriculum
 - ✎ Confirms that the value base of psychology is 'neutral' and not closely aligned to those values held by the dominant culture

To the author's knowledge, some steps are being made to redress the balance. Recently, the Professional Practice Board of the BPS have received some findings of a study undertaken by Professor Turpin to assess the degree of understanding and knowledge of psychology by different ethnic communities and identify barriers either to psychology as a career or to psychology as a helpful resource in the community. The recommendations made relating to this objective are:

- Assertive promotion within ethnic local and national media
- Promotion of role models from ethnic minority backgrounds
- To encourage departments of psychology via their accreditation process actively to monitor progress of ethnic minority students
- Greater efforts in the recruitment of psychology graduates on to professional training courses via promotional materials targeting under-represented groups
- The entry requirements for postgraduate clinical psychology courses to be reviewed
- Effective support provided to trainees from other cultures or ethnic backgrounds
- Clinical psychology postgraduate courses to review how they assess academic potential at selection - in the light of difficulties relating to degree certifications or discrimination as a result of the educational establishment attended

Similarly, the Division of Clinical Psychology should also address the issues of cultural diversity within the profession. The objectives to be are:

- To ensure that clinical psychology services have clear policies and guidelines to address issues of diversity within the local community
- To ensure that clinical psychology courses demonstrate that trainees have significant direct experience of working with black and

ethnic minority people and that course accreditation should be dependent on clear evidence that the course teaching programme provides the theoretical perspectives necessary for working with black and ethnic communities

- To develop inclusive clinical psychology services via seminars/workshops by the Standing Committee for equal opportunities and Ethics Committee and the Professional Practice Board

Time is up for psychology and psychologists and the Society. We need to confront the issue of racism, difference, power imbalance and inequality. We need to react to attacks on the cherished self-image in a less defensive manner. We need to acknowledge and promote ideas of greater inclusion and participation, which means changing the nature and culture of psychology. The Society must become more robust to the themes of difference, diversity, inclusion, equality and social justice- not all of which are mutually exclusive. Clinical psychology and counselling psychology do not operate in isolation.

Almost invariably, psychology is a small part of a larger matrix of psychological services within the National Health Service. Given the context of community care legislation, support for change within the profession and professional practice of psychology should arise from the following considerations:

- An increasing knowledge of the changing nature of British society (approximately 14% of the population of England and Wales, coming from a black and minority ethnic population)
- An increasing appreciation that there will never be enough psychologists from black and minority ethnic backgrounds
- The Government's social inclusion agenda includes topics such as early interventions, and broader understanding of the causes of mental and physical health, poverty etc.
- The potential to demonstrate effectiveness of new psychological and counselling models

and to challenge the unquestioned nature of some treatment methods.

- An increasing commitment to the idea of partnership between professionals, between statutory and non-statutory agencies and between these agencies and the public/community groups
- A greater emphasis on user involvement in the planning and delivery of the mental health services with the tokenistic aspect of such 'politically correct' exercises needing to be addressed, identifying a **Paradigm Shift** within the British Psychological Society:

From:	To:
Issues being treated separately	Issues being integrated into mainstream agenda
Emphasis on consultation	Emphasis on action
Eurocentric models of care and counselling	Culturally competent models and services with identified core competence and knowledge base
Issues treated as problems	Issues being recognised as part of the solution
Emphasis on the individual	Emphasis on community strengths

Obviously, there can be no single prescription for achieving this organisational paradigm shift. One is reminded on more than one occasion about the role and function of the British Psychological Society and its varied Divisions and Subsystems, and the apolitical nature of the organisation. Equality, difference and diversity are affected by the politics of instructional racism—through its theorising, research, writing and practice.

Minority ethnic politics in contemporary British Society are now highly mobilized and charged with emotional energy. The historically legitimised privileged is now being questioned. Nadirshaw and others have provided advice to the BPS and its divisions with reference to its understanding its complex nature of minority ethnic issues and the politics of difference and diversity. One is aware that barriers to action are, in many cases, the result, not of lack of commitment to principles, but of the perceived difficulties of an imagined than real situation. However, one hopes that this article has given a new edge to the demands of equality, difference and social justice within the profession of psychology and its caring face. For too long, vulnerable and disadvantaged sections of British society have carried the burden of being at the receiving end of unfair and unjust services. Moral and social justice demands that issues of equality, diversity and difference are long overdue. The silence of the organisation of psychology can no longer remain.



Professor (Dr) Zenobia Nadirshaw is a consultant clinical psychologist with 40 years of clinical and management NHS experience of Health and Social Care Services in Learning Disabilities and mental health care – influencing service planning, provision and delivery at local, national and international levels. An educationalist, health professional and manager committed to multi-agency, multi-disciplinary working at all levels of with extensive experience at NHS Trust Board Senior Management Levels and has been chair of several Health and Social Services Groups/Committees and directing and leading substantial organisational change at local and national levels within the London borough of Kensington and Chelsea and in the British Psychological Society (BPS) and the Division of Clinical Psychology (DCP). She is committed to influencing service delivery issues and impacting on the profession of Clinical Psychology.

She is a Trustee and Patron of several national and international organisations and a recipient of several awards, the latest ones being the Honorary Life Fellow award from the British Psychological Society and the Migrant Inspirational Woman of the year award.

Dr Hirji Adenwala - The Road Less Travelled and its Rich Rewards

by tehnaz bahadurji

*A violet by a mossy stone half hidden from the eye! -
Fair as a star, when only one is shining in the sky.
- William Wordsworth*

What if I told you there was a little old Parsi doctor sitting in a quiet corner of South India, operating on thousands upon thousands of patients, restoring their minds and bodies, and giving them a chance at a fulfilling life rather than being a burden? That he's been beaver away there for 50+ years, and is revered worldwide in his area of expertise and is considered a colossus by his peers? That his chosen workplace used to be just short of a wilderness, but it's grown under his aegis into a multi-specialty 1700-bed Hospital? And that, even today, at the redoubtable age of 86 years, he wants publicity only for his mission, never for himself? Would you say - this sounds like an interesting person?

EARLY DAYS



Dr Hirji Sorab Adenwala, originally of Ahmednagar, was inspired by Dr Albert Schweitzer and wanted to join his mission. In Africa in the 1950's. But he was soon to be married to his childhood sweetheart, Gulnar, and no one would let him take a young girl there. Africa's loss, has

been India's gain, however trite that sounds. For Dr Hirji, is today a globally celebrated cleft palate surgeon, transforming the lives of countless patients, restoring their dignity and self respect and giving them an infinitely better quality of life.

While working at the Jerbai Wadia Hospital in Mumbai as Registrar, Dr Hirji participated

in and aced a three-interview process for a doctor's post at the Jubilee Medical Mission in Thrissur, Kerala. He triumphed over



Jubilee Mission at Thrissur

others higher qualified than himself, and got the job at a princely monthly salary of Rs 500. At the professional level, it was great learning and experience as he was the only doctor, so he had to turn his hand to all medical and general surgical work, including gynaecology and obstetrics, for which he had only basic training. He had no lab technician or radiologist, so he did the lab work and X-rays himself. He had no anaesthetist, so Gulnar helped out, unofficially. And since there was no watchman, he opened and closed the hospital gates everyday too.

On a personal level, they had no running water, fans or toilets indoors. To compensate, they had frogs, snakes and even civets sometimes. Late night trips to the outdoor loo were an adventure, with a torch, an advance party and a sentry. They make light of it, but can you imagine giving up not just the charms but the most basic comforts of Mumbai, to live in a place like that, if surgery had not, as he says, "captivated my heart, fired my imagination

and fostered an obsession that has lasted a lifetime”?

“Madras”, as his good Zarthosti mother naturally called it, was a full substitute for Africa. The language, food, dress habits, culture, everything was alien to them. His mother had given them her blessings saying they should never worry about money; it would come; but the family worried about his prospects, and his father had been dead set against the whole business right from the start. Gulnar wore dresses, and was taken for a foreigner. There were no English medium schools then, so the kids were sent off to boarding schools at tender young ages, returning during the holidays, when the highlight was Sunday visits to the (admittedly not great) Zoo. Yet these two idealists describe these difficult times as wonderful years. Somehow, they never felt deprived. Their needs were small. There was always enough.

CLEFT LIPS

One day, there came to Thrissur, a young girl with a cleft lip. The mission nuns were not in favour of surgery. When the stitches were removed, the surgery would fall apart - they had witnessed it several times. But he assured them, his would not. When the foetus is in the womb, the face forms in separate bits, which normally come together along a central line as the foetus develops. Sometimes this system fails. The result is a cleft lip or cleft palate (roof of the mouth), but the deformity usually includes gums, upper jaw, nose and sometimes even eyes.

The old surgical process was to simply cobble the two halves together, which would often fail, or if it succeeded, continued to look grotesque, and fail functionally. But Dr Hirji had learned from one of his mentors, Dr Charles Pinto, a technique that could work. Cuts were made all over the face, in a pattern that seemed to make no sense, and skin and muscle and bone were manipulated incomprehensibly, but when the whole thing was put together again, out of nowhere, a normal face emerged. And what was more important, held, even when the sutures were removed.

A cleft lip is not just an appearance issue. It is defined as “a mild deformity and easily repairable, but devastating if left unattended”. Beyond the looks, the baby can’t nurse, since the cleft palate does not permit sucking. So feeding this child in poor countries becomes an instant issue. Such babies were historically considered a curse, and often tragically abandoned and left to die. If the child survived, it would drool from the mouth and nose, always have difficulty swallowing, often bringing up through the nose, have severe speech defects, and sometimes vision problems. The child would be kept hidden, be a burden to the family, and feel utterly miserable and worthless. Dr Hirji decided to dedicate his life to this sad scrap of humanity.

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

Dr Hirji had a coronary in 1984, and had to change his life and work schedule. By then, the Thrissur hospital had developed around the pioneering couple, with more doctors and nurses and departments, and he could be freed up to specialise into a narrow field where he could make a significant contribution. So he opened a special unit for cleft palates, that he, with typical modesty, named after his mentor, the Charles Pinto Centre for Cleft Lip, Palate and Craniofacial Anomalies. Dr Pinto visited for 10 days every year, continuing to teach new techniques. But Dr Hirji’s was the sole centre that performed only cleft lip and palate surgeries and nothing else. This singular focus meant he quickly made great strides. He pioneered numerous advances in technique, in surgical treatments, and most importantly in the success rates of his patients.

It starts with cleft lip repair as early as six months of age. Cleft palate at one year. Correction of nose deformities at five to six years. Alveolar bone grafts for proper eruption of teeth at seven years. Surgery to bring forward the upper jaw using grafts from the thigh bone at 16-20 years. Psychiatric counselling for patient and family. Speech therapy all along. Orthodontics, more often than not. And I

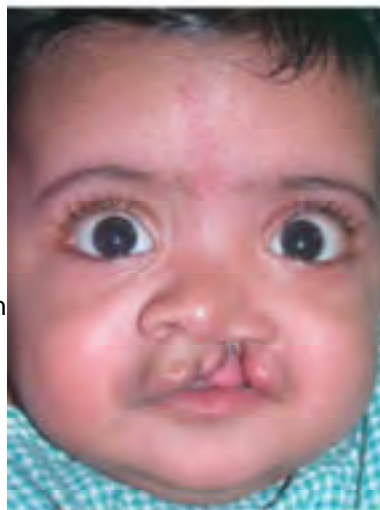
haven't even got to the eye treatments as yet. So when I quoted earlier, that it was "easily" repairable, that's a subjective term.

SMILE TRAIN

Dr Hirji started the Centre on a hope and a prayer. The treatment involves two decades of commitment from each family, multiple surgeries and a whopping bill. And clefts run in families, so if you have one child with a cleft, your next is likely to have it too. He received some funding from Simavi and Rotary, but his ambitious work outstripped their funds. But "when the student is ready, the master appears", and so, unbeknownst to Dr Hirji, three American philanthropists founded a charity called Smile Train and dedicated it solely to cleft repair work. Earlier, Western surgeons swooped into developing countries for camps and performed even hundreds of surgeries, but didn't share their skills, so the dearth of skill remained a problem. Smile Train planned to train local doctors so the skill could spread and make a lasting impact. They also determined to fund everything. Not just the surgeries and treatment, but training, the centres, equipment, patients' travel and incidental expenses, everything!

In 2000, Gulnar quietly wrote to Smile Train, to which some friend had alerted them, and shared the work Dr Hirji was already doing there. They were hugely impressed by the good doctor's high standard of work and dedication, and it was the proverbial match made in heaven. It had taken decades, but Dr Hirji would finally be free to work as much as he wanted to. The Charles Pinto Centre now has four operating theatres, four surgeons plus Dr Hirji, who is semi retired. (But as Gulnar says, that 'semi' can mean anything. He started off his semi-retirement, working seven days a month. It's now up to 15, and might go up further.) There's a full complement of nurses, a lab with a pathologist, speech therapists, orthodontists, cardiac anaesthetist and even an ICU only for cleft patients, and all state-of-the-art and fully funded by Smile Train.

Technical improvements are shared and there are vital peer reviews, because Smile



Krishnan F 35585/06 pre op



Unilateral Cleft Lip



Unilateral Cleft Lip - complete



Median Cleft of Upper Lip



Very rare - Congenital Hemi absence of nose with lateral Proboscis with cleft lip and palate

Train functions in 87 countries, and has 170 centres in India alone. Dr Hirji's centre is one of the largest hubs. Hundreds of doctors across India, Asia and even Europe, come here, year upon year to learn at the hands of the master. Doctors, surgeons, nurses and anaesthetists learn here, then go out and save millions of lives from falling into despair. Dr Hirji avers, as gratifying as it is to see each satisfied patient and family, the teaching is far more important. This is his true legacy, of which he is proudest, in his quiet, humble way.

Free is often taken to be shorthand for substandard. Here it means not just world class, but setting the world standard. Patients in Kerala were always demanding, and even more so now, so Dr Hirji sometimes teases them that if they are unhappy, he can always put things back the way they were before. Still, Gulnar says, he's happiest there; he's never going to retire or stop working. If he ever did, he might just fall to pieces. Dr Hirji chimes in with – I can repair flush tanks too! Looking for an alternate career in his post-semi-retirement, would you think?

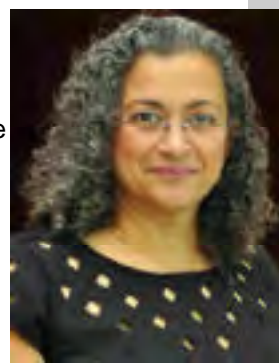
The incidence of cleft births in developed and developing countries is the same, one in 700, but children in developing countries often don't get treated, so this medical issue actually becomes an economic issue. India produces 35,000 cleft babies every year

and there is an estimated backlog of 10 lakh patients. The yeoman work Dr Hirji has been doing in Thrissur, before and now with Smile Train, means they hardly see adult cleft patients in South India anymore. Which is a good thing, because in adults, you can never restore the speech as you can with kids. This year alone there will be 1.25 lakh cleft surgeries across India. Smile Train has a long-term vision, to start off the process with funding, training and creating social awareness, but ultimately each country should raise its own funds and become self-sufficient. And that is Dr Hirji's only reason for agreeing to any publicity. He hopes to generate awareness and bring in donations, from corporates and individuals.

STILL AHEAD

In his own peer community, he is considered a doyen. He's received dozens of accolades and awards, not least the Joseph McCarthy Award, considered the Oscar of plastic surgery. He's spent his whole life learning, teaching, sharing, serving and healing. And he's not done yet! Surrounded by a loving family, wife, children and grandchildren on the one hand, and by the hospital that has grown from an acorn to an oak under his watchful eye on the other, he looks forward to continuing to contribute meaningfully. Gulnar has been at his elbow since they were both in school; a partner in the truest sense. "She's an Irun, you know", he told me as if that explained everything.

She's probably been his fiercest supporter, critic and defender all rolled in one. The two have made a wonderful life for themselves out of what anyone else would have spurned as a meagre handful of beans. Like Frost, they chose the road less travelled by, and that has made all the difference.



Tehnaz Bahadurji

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.

An Interview with Tanya Balsara

by meher billimoria

I met Tanya Balsara five years ago, while co-authoring my book, Cuisine for A Cause. If I hadn't been told that she had a condition called Retinitis Pigmentosa, I would never have guessed that she was almost completely sightless.

Warm, cheerful and living life to the fullest, her work embodies the phrase 'our eyes are our window to the world'. Through her computer centre she offers the visually-impaired an opportunity to experience a whole new world. It's both my pleasure and privilege to share her journey with you, in her own words.

S(L)IGHTLY – EARLY DAYS

One day, when Tanya Balsara was just an infant probably a year or two, when she was playing with toys her family discovered that she could not see properly. What followed was a series of visits to various ophthalmologists and it was confirmed that she was afflicted with Retinitis Pigmentosa, a progressive eye disease and that her eyesight would worsen with time. *"Of course I did not know at the time. My parents knew, but were hopeful that with so much progress in medicine a cure would be found. They tried various alternative therapies some as far away as Russia and Cuba, but to no avail. What has helped me the most is Acupressure done under the guidance of Dr Sanobar Irani of Pune."*

Tanya attended mainstream school and college, where she studied and played with sighted peers. She had slight vision then, so playtime was not a problem. For the academics, she expresses gratitude to her dear sister Lara and her many friends - who would help her and thanks to them her entire academic school life was smooth and comfortable. *"In school, in the early classes I could not see the blackboard clearly. Although I sat in front and during dictation, I could not keep up the speed and would lag behind, but I would remember what the teacher had dictated and would patiently finish writing after everyone else had*

finished. By the time I reached SSC, I was totally blind."

OVERSIGHT - MOVING ON

Thanks to family, friends and teachers, Tanya's school journey was smooth and comfortable. A dear friend Priya would write her notes in school and her mum would help her with homework. Like any visually impaired individual she availed of exemptions such as having a writer for exams and was excused from Algebra, Geometry and practical exams in science. *"Until class 5 or 6, my mom would read my notes to me several times until I learned the answers. However, later as the notes became voluminous, they were recorded on a tape recorder by my mom and other wonderful people in the colony, like Mahit"*

The only skill Tanya didn't hone in her childhood was to learn Braille and mobility, although she picked it up in later life. Braille is a script of six dots that are embossed and mobility is taught usually to young kids to help them use the white cane confidently. *"I don't think any of my friends ever treated me differently. Nor did they ever make me feel that there was something lacking in me. I never was conscious that I was disabled. In fact, I have virtually been all over the world with my family who encouraged me to live life to the fullest."*

Most of us today communicate largely via the email, phone and other screens. How then does Tanya manage without sight?

"JAWS, a screen reading software is the wonderful invention of the 20th century that has changed the lives of so many visually challenged. It works on all MS Office applications. As the name suggests, it reads out what we type or as we navigate the various options. It also reads what is on the screen.

Like JAWS there is a similar screen reader Talk Back that enables me to spend quality time with my first love, my mobile! Earlier I was dependent on someone to read a phone text message to me, but no longer. It is interesting to know that both Talk Back

and JAWS also read †many Indian regional languages.”

FORESIGHT

Tanya heard about a computer course for the Blind run by IAVH, 30 kms away from where she lived. Her mother took her religiously thrice a week to the course and hung around in town while Tanya finished each 3-hour session. “2000 was a watershed year for me, as that was the year I got computer literate just after my graduation. After I completed the course, I really felt good, empowered and connected to the world.”

The idea of Tanya Computer Centre was sparked when her father once saw her help and teach another blind person how to use the computer at home. He encouraged her to start a more formal Centre where she could teach more blind people to use computers. A stone’s throw from their home was MNB Home for the Blind, a very old institution which provided accommodation to the blind and gave them vocational training. Her father approached Mr. Burjor Thanewala, a trustee there to consider a proposal under which they would donate a small sum of money and would get a room to start TANYA COMPUTER CENTRE. “I ran the Centre at MNB Home from January 2006 to March 2015 when MNB home itself closed operations, following frequent agitations by its inmates against the management. Not daunted by its closure and after giving adequate time for it to restart, my DAD generously suggested we convert our garage, into a state of the art TANYA COMPUTER CENTRE and of course I readily agreed. That’s where I operate from since August of last year.”

Today Tanya Computer Centre is over a decade old and 200 plus students have passed out. It has now also expanded its curriculum to include English speaking and Personality Development classes. The Centre has fulfilled its purpose by helping students get a vocation in life and most are employed with public sector or private sector. What is remarkable is, that it has empowered the students to be economically independent and opened up a new world for them. For many of the students who come

from faraway places and are from a financially weak background, the monthly salary they now earn is vital. “The Centre gives me tremendous satisfaction and a purpose in life. Like every founder, I am thinking about scalability & how the activities of my Centre can benefit a larger number of blind people and make them technologically savvy, well-equipped to face tomorrow’s world and ready to live life to the fullest and be financially independent.”

HINDSIGHT – LOOKING BACK

Tanya says she did not experience any self-pity either earlier or now. She has a positive outlook and is happy to take things as they come. She considers herself lucky that her family is extremely supportive and helps her participate in everything not allowing her lack of sight to hinder living her day to day life. “My mom and my sister Lara have to go through some additional work to help me with things I cannot do and my dad is always there to egg me on to achieve more in life and help others like me, but who are less fortunate. My family never makes me feel that I am a burden on them and are extremely supportive. Thanks to this, I have no regret whatsoever.”

A typical day in the life of Tanya is as routine as it is exciting and fulfilling. Weekdays follow pretty much the same pattern - Mornings are now spent with her darling four month niece, Kaira, who is the centre of attention in their family, followed by an acupuncture session with her mum, then a quick visit to the Agiary (fire-temple) and then a one hour session at the gym. The second half is at the Centre which she enjoys. “All my students past and present are also my friends in a way. Of course I love chatting on the phone in my free time and I must confess that bugs my mom quite a bit!”

Weekends are relaxed and spent with family and outings such as movies and plays. Lunch with her friends who are not sighted is fun and she says surprisingly they manage quite well as everyone is so helpful, including the restaurant staff. “It’s a good life, I feel. And am blessed more than some of my other blind students and friends who have to struggle quite a bit to get through life. God is great! And whilst my father and Lara are the earning

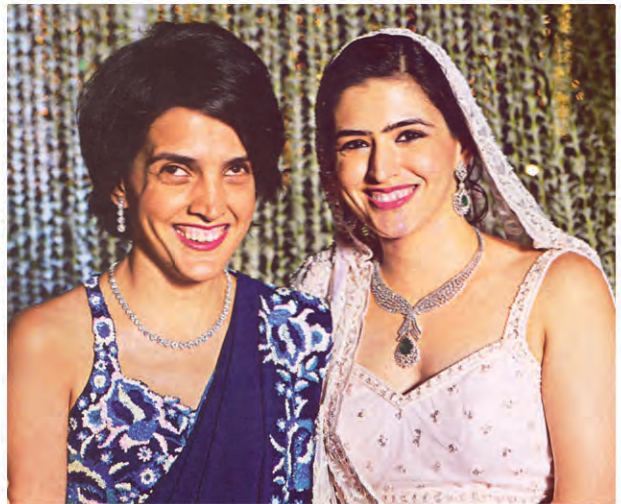
members of the family, God has given me the responsibility to spread happiness among the blind. I am inspired by Helen Keller and want to do a lot more than what I am doing now, with the help of my wonderful family."

Tanya strongly feels there is no reason to be depressed and nobody should feel depressed. Nothing good can be achieved by feeling depressed about one's ability. God has given different capabilities to different people. "I have some capabilities that the sighted don't have. And I don't have some abilities which the sighted have. Some have very good memory. Some can run very fast. Some can swim fast. Some are highly creative with good lateral thinking ability. Some have the ability to think logically. Some are poor, some are rich. Some don't have shelter. Some don't have food to eat. God has given each person different abilities and different circumstances under which he or she has to live a life. And most importantly God has made us all extremely adaptable to live, survive and thrive within the limitations of our abilities and circumstances. So I have nothing to be depressed about.

I have to be grateful for what I have got and make the best of it for the benefit of everyone and society. Remember I may not have sight but I have so much more - VISION."



Tanya Computer Centre



L to R: Tanya and her sister Lara



Tanya with her family



Meher heads Operations at Centre for Advancement of Philanthropy – a non-profit that offers compliance related advisory to the social sector. Meher is also Trustee of Catalysts For Social Action, a non-profit that promotes child adoption. She has co-authored the book, Cuisine for a Cause which showcased non-profit founders, with their favourite food recipes and recipes for success. Her previous experience includes working at Patana – The British International School in Thailand and Head of Education at The Akanksha Foundation.

The Unsung Hero of Pan Am 73

by rubina patel

Pan American World Airways

respectfully presents this

Certificate of Appreciation

in loving remembrance of

Meherjee

who lost his life aboard Clipper Flight 73 on September 5, 1986 at Karachi Airport. His extraordinary dedication to duty, his bravery in the face of tragedy and his heroic and gallant efforts resulted in hundreds of passengers and fellow employee lives being saved. His unselfish and loyal devotion to his fellow man is an inspiration to all peoples the world over and should bring great pride to his beloved family.

February 15, 1987

Meherjee followed the ideals of simple living and high thinking. He was kind, compassionate, thoughtful, considerate, open, friendly, humble, practical and down-to-earth. An alumnus of Karachi Grammar School, he looked after his family and all living beings who crossed his path.

Meherjee loved the aviation industry. Working for Pan Am was a dream come true. He was a certified Airframe and Powerplant Mechanic, enjoyed his work at Karachi airport, and wanted to excel professionally.

On the fateful morning of September 5, 1986, Meherjee had taken the fuel manifest to the cockpit to be signed by the Captain when the hijackers stormed the aircraft. Alerted by the flight attendants the pilots and flight engineer escaped via the cockpit hatch leaving flight attendants, passengers, and ground crew on board. Three hours later, frustrated that their demands were not being met, the hijackers shot a passenger and threw him off the aircraft. They threatened to shoot a passenger every 15 minutes. Before a second passenger could be dealt the same fate, Meherjee was identified as being capable of establishing contact between the hijackers and negotiators via Aircraft Communication Radio. The radio frequency that Meherjee



used allowed for the conversations to be recorded and provided the key evidence in the US trial of the hijacker 18 years later. At opportune moments Meherjee also lowered the wing flaps that enabled the passengers who escaped onto the wings to slide down to safety.

For nine hours Meherjee kept the lines of communication open. He warned the hijackers that the Aircraft Power Unit was about to fail. When the emergency lights also failed the aircraft was plunged into darkness. The hijackers began firing into the crowd of people who had been herded into the middle section of the aircraft. Meherjee was shot point blank and died in the hail of gunfire.

Meherjee was not officially scheduled to be on duty that day. He had substituted for a colleague who had taken some time off. In his wallet that was given to his wife she found a handwritten note that read: "I have so much to tell you of today when we meet." He was 25 years old with his whole life ahead of him. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends (John 13:15, KJV).

Senior Flight Purser, Neerja Bhanot, was awarded the Indian Ashoka Chakra for

bravery, the United States Special Courage Award, and Pakistan's Tamgha-e-Insaaniyat. Pan Am's Karachi Director received accolades from Pan Am and two Certificates for Crime Victims and Special Courage from the US Department of Justice. At a local function, Pan Am donated an ambulance to Mr Abdul Sattar Edhi; Meherjee's wife and mother were presented with a metal plaque and a framed Certificate.

Despite all the horror, personal trauma, and all-around indifference, for the past three decades Meherjee's family have maintained their quiet dignity and integrity. May Meherjee's beautiful soul protect and guide us from above, just as he looked after us during his time on earth.



Rubina Patel has a doctorate in Microbiology, is a coordinator of children's religious classes at the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington, and is a member of a Boy Scout troop in Silver Spring, MD.

From the Ed: A full account of the attempted hijacking of Pan Am 073 was written in the previous issue, 2/2016, pp33-30. This is a tribute to Meherjee Kharas of Karachi, lest he be forgotten.

OZCF Gala raises a stunning \$2.24 Million for Atashkadeh

a report from phil sidhwa

Oakville, ONTARIO, July, 2016 - It was an evening of absolute magic as over \$2,240,000 was raised at the Ontario Zoroastrian Community Foundation's (OZCF) "Magic and Sparkles" fundraising gala to build a consecrated Atashkadeh / Agiary in North America.

During a night that truly sparkled with glamour and excitement, over 400 Parsi and Iranian guests and dignitaries gathered at the Oakville Convention Centre to launch the fundraising campaign to build a consecrated place of worship. The building of our consecrated Atashkadeh with consecrated Atash-e-Adaran fire is an important milestone in the evolution of our North American Zoroastrian community.



This Atashkadeh / Agiary will be the only place outside of India and Iran where Zoroastrian priests will be able to train and be ordained.

The importance of the evening seemed to create a genuine buzz that stirred the guests and heightened the celebratory air. The true moment of electricity happened, however, when a member rose after dinner and announced his family's \$1 million gift to the campaign. Greeted by a standing ovation, the guests were further elated when another guest rose almost immediately afterward to commit \$500,000. Donations of \$100,000, \$50,000, \$25,000 and many of lesser amounts were all graciously accepted as the long lines formed to make contributions. In fact, donations continue to pour in as news of the fundraising campaign to raise Cdn\$3M for the proposed Atashkadeh begin to travel.

This is truly a reflection of the passion of caring Zoroastrians to keep their faith alive and sustain our religion in North America for future generations. The Zoroastrian Society of Ontario as well as our Iranian community wholeheartedly supports this project. It is unbelievable how generous our Zoroastrian community and friends are towards achieving this religious goal and we hope it encourages others worldwide to help us get to the finish line. Never could we have imagined raising all this money in one event.

The completion of this project will greatly contribute to the survival of our faith. It will act as a focal point for our religion and our heritage as we renew the numbers within our Zoroastrian community for generations to come. Clearly the tremendous success of our first fundraiser shows how deeply committed our community is to see a consecrated Atashkadeh built. This is indeed our time.

The Greater Toronto Area (GTA) is home to the largest Zoroastrian Community in North America, with over 5,000 Zoroastrians living within a 60 km radius.

The OZCF intends to build the consecrated Atashkadeh / Agiary with a consecrated Atash-e-Adaran fire on the site of the 10 acre property that they own in Oakville, a suburb of Toronto. Everyone will be welcome into the Atashkadeh, subject to following certain customs, conduct and etiquette. This is 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. The inner sanctum sanctorum (Kebela) will be restricted to ordained priests only.

Ontario, Canada and the USA are fast becoming the centres of immigration for Zoroastrians worldwide and we want to be ready. Our children are our religion's future and, as donors to this campaign, it is our legacy that will ensure our heritage and religion can be sustained.

In future years, the plan is for a complete, self-sustaining complex devoted to ensuring Zoroastrianism thrives in North America and providing a true sense of community. Plans include a senior citizens home, large community centre, museum, library, classrooms, and rental of commercial and office building space to help subsidize costs. The Town of Oakville has already zoned the land appropriately to allow for the needed multi-purpose use once municipal services are installed.

We are all clearly thrilled by the level of support for our Atashkadeh. There is a fire

within all of us to see this consecrated Atashkadeh built and the OZCF is honoured and proud to lead this initiative to make it happen. By creating a dedicated space where our children can learn more about their heritage and be grounded in their religion, we are also creating a place of pride where they can show friends and those of other faiths and beliefs, their place in the world.

The resounding success of this fundraiser makes all the tireless efforts of the PWAC members, our many sub-committee volunteers and entire community in planning this project over the past four years worthwhile – with Ahura Mazda's guidance we will build our consecrated Atashkadeh with consecrated Atash-e-Adaran fire and Zoroastrians worldwide will enjoy the benefit.

For more information, please contact:

philsidhwa@ozcf.com or
marzibynamjee@ozcf.com

Phil Sidhwa

Chair, Place of Worship Advisory Committee
Ontario Zoroastrian Community Foundation



THE FIRE WITHIN



Jiyo Parsi Saal Mubarak Competition

Jiyo Parsi Saal Mubarak Competition had its second event this year. This competition is to encourage children to express their idea of the New Year (Navroze) and hopes for the community.

The prizes were sponsored by Dinshaw Tamboly of Mumbai.

The winners were Aliza Bhatena, Verzaan Ragina and Jehan Engineer.



Aliza's images on her card were reproduced on our cover of this issue. Thank you Aliza!

Poetry receives recognition - Farida Bamji

“Happiness Is To Those Who Seek Happiness For Others”

If we can share
His Precious Creations
With all of humanity
Then surely we
Humans can sprinkle
Seeds of Happiness
To those who reside
In utmost poverty

Neither having money
To keep a roof over our heads
Nor to buy groceries
Most important of all
How will they pay
Their medical bills
If sickness affects
The family

Money leads to power
Which in turn
Leads to greed
Why not share
And bring happiness
To those who are in need

We do hear of unsung heroes
Who regardless of their
Personal safety
Just don't stare & gape
They have a spine
To reach out to
Helpless undernourished victims
Of murder torture rape
By sprinkling seeds of Happiness
No matter how far they be

As we chug along
Life's Pathways
The true spirit
Of Selflessness
Is all that matter
'Cause:
“Happiness is to those
Who seek Happiness for others!”
[accepted by the Smithsonian Institute]

Freedom 2

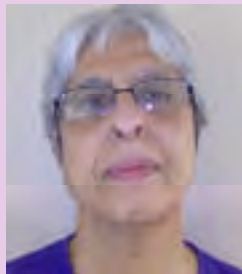
Nothing in this world
Is free
For everything there is a price
For the sake of Love of Freedom
Innocent lives get sacrificed
“Imagine if there is no Heaven
Or Hell below us”
Do good would be driven
As war rape murder
Suicide bombers rain upon us
We want to Break Free
From the iron shackles
That bind us
Or Racism Discrimination
As well as Bigotry
People are still kept (Behind barb
wire fences

Not being given Liberty
Respect or Equal Opportunity
How they must be itching to
Break Free
There should not be
Any Watch Towers
Or road blocks
Long the way
Nor guard dogs to
Guard the gate ('Cause reward
comes to those

Who only stand & wait!
[accepted by the Canadian Museum of
Human Rights, Winnipeg]

“We Want To Break Free”

We want to break free
From the shackles that bind us
Please unchain these chains
Of Racism Discrimination Bigotry
So we can live and breathe free
Women are a mound of clay
To be battered bruised abused
In everyway
We may be of any
Colour caste or creed
All we ask is love
Understanding Equality
Treated with Respect & Dignity
Closing the blinds
As well as the drapes
Is not doing women any good
By Stiffling the mind as well
As the soul
We want to survive
Function as a whole
'Cause we want to
Break Free
[for publication by the UN Journal]



Farida Bamji, a Zoroastrian of Indian origin has a Master's degree in Sociology and lives with her family in Ottawa, Canada. She loves to write poems on Zoroastrians and its religion, do crochet, ceramics and embroidery. In 2007 she was named Poetry Ambassador Associate by the International Library of Poetry and National Poetry Month Committee, receiving the 2007 Commemorative US Poetry Ambassador Medal.

Recently, her poem, “Happiness to those who seek Happiness for others” has been accepted by the Smithsonian Institute. Another called “Freedom” was accepted by the Canadian Museum of Human Rights, Winnipeg and “We Want To Break Free” accepted for publication by the UN Journal (Faith Initiative>Embracing Diversity) Women's Issues.

“Degrados de Bomonjee”

by sudha ganapathi

It was the golden hour before sunset a couple of weeks back and I was on a walk with my friend Rama on Mount Mary Road. We were generally chatting about that and this and as we approached the steps that leads one down to Hill Road, I noticed a half-buried stone plaque/marker on one side of the steps.

A closer look revealed this:



The half-buried stone plaque/marker which reads: “Presented by H. Bomonjee Jeejeebhoy to Bandora Municipality ~ 1879”

Wow! A 135-year old marker? And Bandra as Bandora? I was immediately intrigued and once I reached home turned to my good friend Google for helping me find out more about this slice of history.

And here is what I discovered.

The steps had a name: “Degrados de Bomonjee” or “Bomonjee’s Steps”, which were built by Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy

(Bomonjee’s son?) in 1879 to link Mount Mary Road and Hill Road. It is believed Jamsetjee wanted a daughter and prayed at Mount Mary Church for one. His wish was fulfilled and he built the steps on his daughter’s 8th birthday as an offer of thanksgiving.

This is not all that I found. Recently, I was back in the area, this time in the morning, to explore the various churches in the area. And as I approached Bomonjee’s Steps, I saw another stone plaque that I had missed the last time around. See the photograph below.

The arrows point to the stone plaques. The one on the right is the plaque I had seen before,



Notice the arrow markers in the photo, and the one on the left was this:

So there was a plaque that identified it as “Bomonjee’s Steps” and also that it was intended for public use. I wondered



This one reads: “Bomonjee’s Steps. For Public Use”. The rest of the words are buried under

what else was written on the plaques, but now lay buried under the road.

Herein lies my frustration at the way so many things work around us. In the case of these steps, the municipal corporation saw it important to leave the stone plaques in place, but not so important that they should be visible as the marker they were obviously meant to be. And why blame only the authorities? What about the people who lived there and passed the plaques every day when they used the steps? Why hadn't they tried to take care of their own local history?

There are actually two flights of steps connecting Hill Road and Mount Mary Road. The one on the right is Bomonjee's Steps and the other one must have been a later addition — these steps are easier to climb and must have been built during a road widening process.

The next time you're in Bandra, do make a little time to go and see Bomonjee's steps and the plaques. At the rate the roads are being repaired or rather the height raised, it won't be there for much longer. The plaques that is, not the steps.



Sudha Ganapathi is a Mumbai-based travel blogger, one of the founders of 'The Sunday Book Club', and someone with multiple interests. She spends her days in her full-time job, her evenings devoted to books and music, and her nights dreaming about faraway places to travel to. In between all this, she finds the time to blog about her interests at My Favourite Things.



The stairs to the left are Bomonjee's Steps.



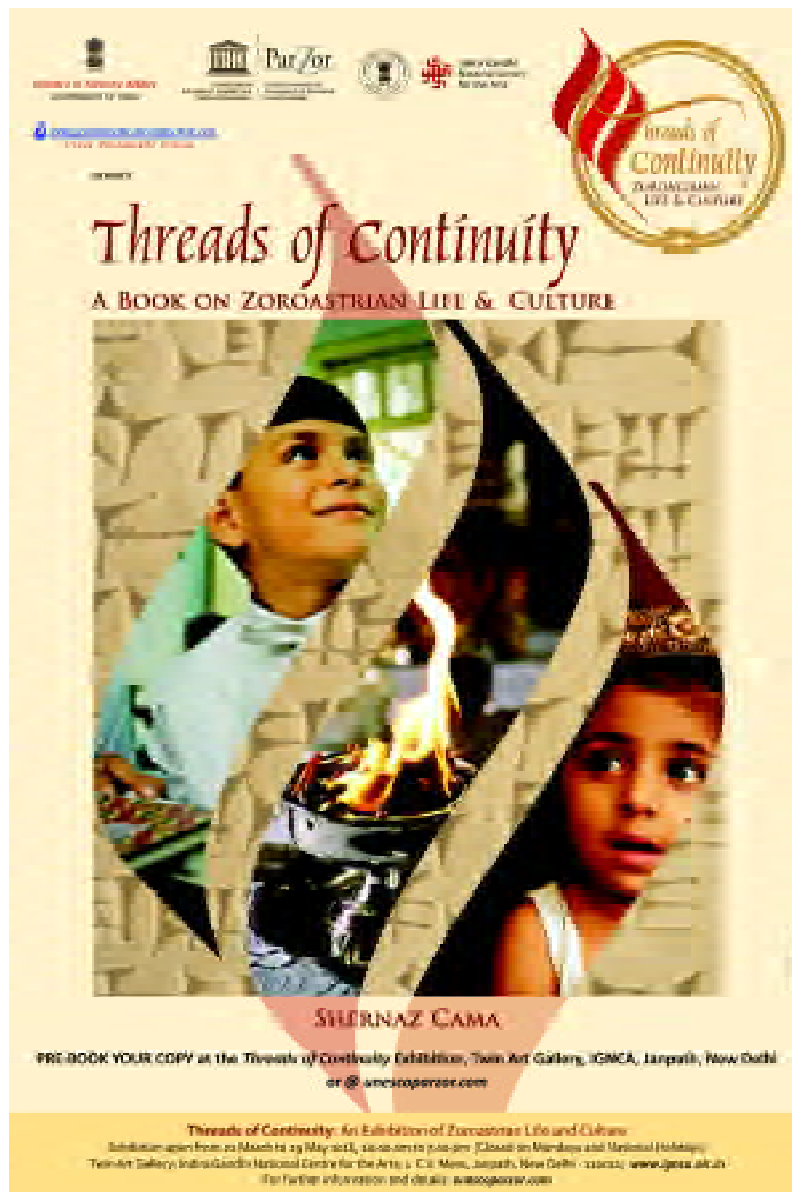
Bomonjee's Steps viewed from Hill Road

The Threads of Continuity Compendium

Sponsored by IGNCA, The Threads of Continuity Compendium is available for INR2,500 in Delhi through PARZOR, who are the distributors of the book. Contact - parzorfoundation@gmail.com

It is also available in Mumbai with Parsiana. Postage within India costs anything from Rs300 to Rs500 as the books are heavy, weighing approximately 3kgs. PARZOR is willing to post to other countries, but the cost will be determined at that time, though the postage will very probably be more than the book. As an alternative, it is possible to pre-order the books through Parsiana for collection when next visiting Mumbai.

"For those who have not had the opportunity to attend in person (*the recent exhibition at Delhi*) the compendium will provide a wonderful flavor of the extraordinary event. The tome however is so much more. Replete with stunning pictures, it provides an excellent context to trace the path of our Zoroastrian heritage, including its deep impact on communities in India and also its relevance to the modern world. This book with its insights and message about the tangible and metaphorical threads that bind us all will be of interest to so many, both within the Zarathushti community and beyond." - as Zubeen Mehta of FIRES so eloquently expresses.



An extract from the Foreword written by The Director & UNESCO Representative to Bhutan, India, Sri Lanka and Maldives - Mr Shigeru Aoyagi - in the Compendium :

“... Even before the UNESCO General Conference adopted the *Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage* in 2003, and the international community started talking actively about the link between tangible and intangible heritage, and links between culture and development, the PARZOR project had made this its strategy. It therefore managed to address the three vital areas of heritage preservation: Conservation of places of memory; Continuity of knowledge and skill; and finally, Community well-being.

The activities of the project are accordingly multi-faceted and include research into every aspect of the community namely: Living Heritage, Archival Material, Tangible Heritage, Meherjirana Library preservation, Medical Research and outreach, Demographics, Religion and Priesthood, the Arts and Crafts, and the Parsi Zoroastrian contribution as communities in Public and Professional Life in India, Iran and the Diaspora.

The project has gathered, archived and published in book and digital form, an impressive amount of audio-visual recordings of Parsi oral traditions and rituals as well as manuscripts, play scripts, paintings and photographs. The archival research has covered artifacts such as embroidery, jewellery, silver, traditional furniture and even old post cards and toys. The First Dastoor Meherji Rana Library in Navsari, a small yet important Public Library, established in 1872, was rehabilitated by Parzor, and its rare collections, such as Emperor Akbar's *Sanad*, Tansen's music and important manuscripts on Persian and Gujarati literature have been digitized, and made available to the world. ...”



A glimpse of a double page within the book

RIGHT
THE PISTONS/SHAHI SIKKA

BELOW
PARSI HEAD TITLES FROM COURT. HERE WE SEE NAWAB SOHRAB NAWAZ JUNG AND GOLBARNO CHENOI, 1910s, COLLECTION OF NAOSHIR VACHHA. THE SECOND SET ARE PORTRAITS OF KHAN BAHADUR SHAHPORE ERDUL CHENAI AND SONNA BAI. COURTESY: DARTIS SHAPER CHENAI. THESE PORTRAITS SHARED SPACE WITH VALUED GIFTS OF THE NIZAM'S FAMILY PORTRAITS: HERE ARE AZAM JANG AND MUKARAM JANG, SON AND GRANDSON OF THE 7TH NIZAM, 1933-36, COLLECTION NAOSHIR VACHHA CHENOI.

FACING PAGE
DORA SHAHPORE CHENAI PRESENTS NAZARANA TO H.H. THE NIZAM MAHMOOD ALI PASHA, 1904. COURTESY: PARZOR ARCHIVES



with history of this State for over a century and a half".⁹ At Court, in commerce, in administration and in charity, their name is synonymous with the spirit of the Hyderabad Zoroastrians. *Shapur Wadi*, built in 1879-1880, has Minton tiles, a ballroom, the best of artifacts from China as well as the West. The family received several titles and Sohrabji Chenoi was given the title Nawab Sohrab Nawaz Jung Bahadur. His son Erachshah was conferred the title Nawab Erach Yar Jung Bahadur in 1945. The Chenoi family retains a love for Persian language and literature, entertains in the grand style and can quote verses from Rumi, Saadi, Ghalib and other poets.

As in the case of other settlements, Parsis adapted readily to the local lifestyle. Their close association with the Nizam's Court at Hyderabad can be seen in their dress, a mark of social acculturation. Parsis adopted the *Decani angarakha* and as the Court dress changed, this developed into the *sherwani*, extending slightly below the knees with its four pockets and seven buttons. This *sherwani* was used regularly by Parsi courtiers, and made of *Khimkhab*, *Hinru*, *Zarbafti*, *Mushajjar* silk, embroidered with costly gold threads these *sherwanis* are now family heirlooms. The headdress was Turkish caps and courtiers were known by their different family designs. The "*Chenoi topi*" was the hallmark of this family during their long association with the Nizams. A popular ornament, the *Choodiyani* or glass bangles were a speciality of all women in Hyderabad along with gold and silver bangles. For men, a gold *Bucklasi*, a kind of sword belt, was essential while appearing at the Nizam's Court. Children of aristocratic Parsi families were taken to Court to present *Nazarana* of a gold ashrafi to the



15th Zoroastrian Games

June 30 – July 4th 2016 at Elmhurst College, Chicago.

Zoroastrian Games 2016 was a highly-competitive Olympics-style tournament for the international Zoroastrian community.

The four-day event was hosted and organized collaboratively by the Zoroastrian Association of Chicago and The Zoroastrian Sports Committee, a standing committee of the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America.

The Zoroastrian Sports Committee is the original and the official sports committee of FEZANA. ZSC was established in 1988 by a small number of enthusiastic Zarathushti youth who conceived the idea at a wedding celebration. Since then, ZSC has grown to become the largest Zoroastrian committee dedicated to promoting sports and sportsmanship among Zarathushti youth worldwide.

The first ZSC games were conducted in Los Angeles in 1988 with a small number of participants. This event has grown to become ZSC's largest, attracting participants and sports fans from the United States, Canada, India, Iran, Europe and other countries around the world. The Games are held on the 4th of July weekend of even years.

This year 236 athletes competed, of which 34% were females and 66% males, mainly from the US with a small percentage from Canada. There was a very small contingent of 2% from other countries. The age range varied from under 15s to over 50s though the majority were in the age group of 21-35 years.

The 15th Zoroastrian Games was co-sponsored by WZO London, and Jim Engineer [ZSC Media contact] in his appreciation for this Platinum Sponsorship, wrote to the Chairman, Shahpur Captain: "... WZO's important message of unity was on full display. Many of the attached pictures show

this unity in the form of smiles, camaraderie between teams, and through the truly fierce spirit of competition in each of our events. Our featured sports included competitive tournaments in basketball, volleyball, track, swimming, table tennis and tennis, and our surprise event: an 18-hole golf tournament that also was a success. We attracted approximately 250 Zarathushti athletes and their families from around the world. Our evening events were very well received, and our Chicago Zarathushti community stepped up and answered the call with amazing volunteer support. ..."

The next games will be held at Los Angeles in 2018. For further information or photographs please go to : <http://www.zgames2016.com>

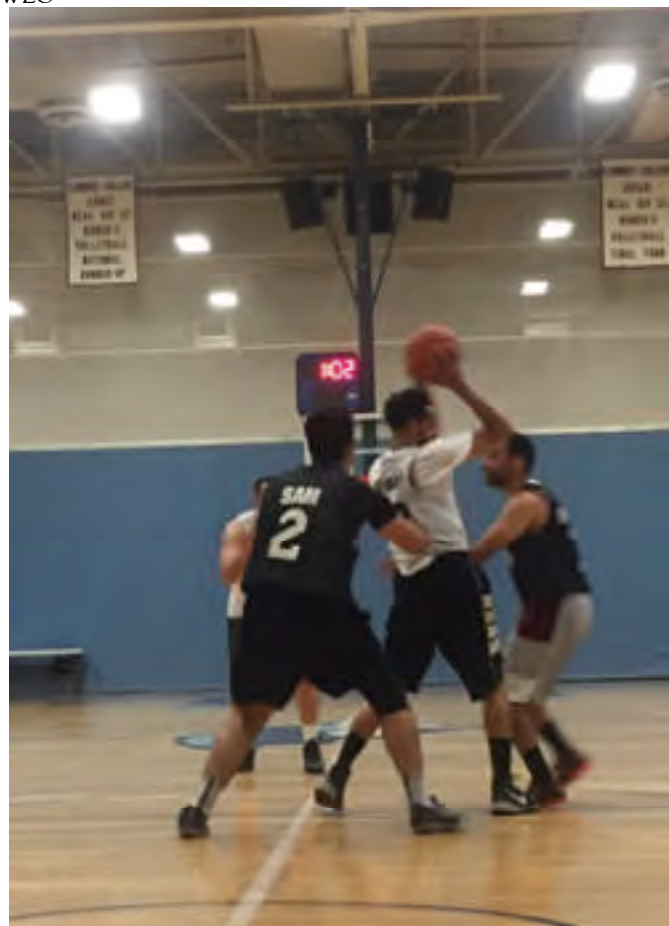




T-shirt and swag bag sponsored by WZO



Lighting of the Torch



Basketball finals



Group shot with the banner



Volleyball finals



Volunteer chow down



Red Carpet Gala

The Art of Parsi Cooking - reviving an ancient cuisine

a review by behroze clubwala

28 July 2016 was the launch of an extraordinary and beautiful cook book: "The Art of Parsi Cooking - reviving an ancient cuisine", authored by Niloufer Mavalvala. The launch of Niloufer's book is very timely and a part of a trend in revivals taking place in North America.

2016 has been an exceptional year of revival in North America for all Zoroastrians. All of us echo the need to create a legacy for our children in our Zoroastrian faith. First we saw a revitalisation of cultural centers to create greater awareness and anchor a home for the next generations of Zoroastrians to learn more about their religion, culture, traditions and practices. At this juncture, Niloufer's book is the ideal vehicle to help us focus on and perfect our Parsi cooking skills. Both the cultural centres and our traditional tasting food will create a synergy that will allow us to thrive and perpetuate our Zoroastrian traditions in North America.

Niloufer Mavalvala, born and raised in Karachi, Pakistan and now living in Toronto, Canada, has authored this book with much love and passion to preserve the authentic taste of traditional Parsi dishes. As you browse through the pages, you find yourself smelling the aroma of the foods grandma and your mother used to cook. It creates a yearning for those tastes and encourages the reader to grab their aprons and head on into their kitchens to recreate those familiar and mouth-watering dishes and tastes. The pre-launch party for this book at "Books for Cooks" in Notting Hill, London, UK, on 28 July 2016, with a sharing of some favorite foods (Khatai, Ravo and Green Chutney sandwiches) was a great success. The book brings to all good Parsi cooks an opportunity to sharpen up their skills; while to new aspiring Parsi cooks and brides, it offers a perfect blend of recipes and favourite dishes. Who does not like a good

Akuri anytime, or for lunch on a Sunday, Dhansak or Murghi (chicken) na Curry Chawal, or for a group invited to lunch a Jinga (prawn) no Palau, or on a birthday or special occasion our Dhun Dar ne Jhinga (shrimp) no Patiyo. Then there is also food for the soul: Batasa (Parsi butter biscuits) which Mamaijis (maternal grandmothers) and Bapaijis (paternal grandmothers) used to dunk in their choi (tea) – a practice which some of us nostalgically still indulge in even in North America. Then, there is a recipe for Khatai (Parsi sweet biscuits) or Kumas (Parsi cake) fond tea-time favourites. For many Parsis, the favourite part of their meal is dessert – Ravo (semolina made with eggs) on birthdays or for celebrations, Lagun nu Custard (Parsi custard served at weddings) and the always popular Mango Ice-cream or Kulfi. Something for everyone's palate!

What makes the book one that everyone wants to have among their collection is that the repertoire of recipes is perfect ... just what one would need to cook everyday meals or even for a party. The recipes are tried and tested over generations; they come from watching Mamaji and Bapaiji cook and they are fool proof. The recipes will not intimidate a new cook. The proportions are solid and have been prepared this way for generations; they blend the inheritance of our cooking styles from both Persia and India where the last Parsi generations have thrived and trust me, anyone will be able to impress their families and guests. Parsis also love edas (eggs), so there is a good selection of Papeyta (potatoes) per Edu, Bheeda (okra) per Edu or you could go for the blue ribbon and make Masala na Khekra (spicy crabs) for your next party!

I asked Niloufer what made this book come together at this time. Niloufer told me she grew up in a family where cooking together was a normal every day activity. Her mom



Behroze Astad Clubwala lives in New Jersey, USA. She retired, as a Human Resources Advisor, in October 2012, after 38 years of working for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). She now spends her time gardening, practicing Iyengar Yoga, playing pickleball and supporting the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York (ZAGNY).

Shireen had even taken courses at Le Cordon Bleu in London. Everyone in Karachi knew that when they wanted good authentic Parsi food or an outstanding cake, they should visit them in Karachi. Although there were only four family members, the table seated at least a dozen or more each night! The family welcomed everyone. Niloufer has continued this family tradition in Toronto where it is normal for many friends to satiate their cravings for traditionally tasting Parsi food at her home. She also runs classes and does cooking demos in Toronto. In Karachi, Dubai and now in Toronto, friends and family enjoy at her home not only the best Parsi food, but also cuisines from France, Spain, Morocco and delicacies from all over the world. So, from a childhood passion for sharing good food, stemmed this idea, to share with the next generations who are making North America and Europe their future homes, a treasure trove of delicious Parsi recipes.

The best part about the excellent hard cover book is that the presentation makes you want to start cooking right away. It is encouraging even to the new aspiring chef and those wishing to continue the good food they ate when they were growing up. Apart from the recipes and steps, the tips at the end of each recipe are worth their weight in gold! What is also important is that while many do Parsi cooking in North America and Europe, the trend among many is to find short-cuts in the interest of time, while trying to balance careers, growing families and "mom's car service" to baseball games and ballet, etc. The recipes in this book take you back to the true taste that should belong in a Dhansak or Curry or Jhinga no Pattiyo, not an abridged version that one tends to put together with the challenges of multi-tasking in North America.

Another aspect that impressed me is that the proportions in the recipes are key to creating "perfect" Parsi tasting food. I have tried some of these recipes myself and the authenticity of the taste is par excellence. This Niloufer learnt from her mother Shireen who has instilled in Niloufer the importance of preserving the traditional taste and

processes in cooking Parsi food. This makes the book different.

Most of all, this has been a labour of love, and became a reality when Austin Macauley the publisher in London picked up Niloufer's blogs from www.nilouferskitchen.com or www.facebook.com/nilouferskitchen.

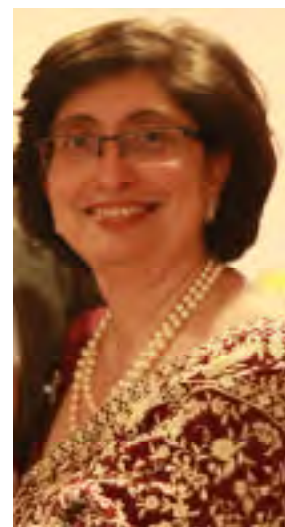
Niloufer has published ten online books as well which can be downloaded from Niloufer's Kitchen and through Amazon.com. They are insanely affordable. \$1.99.

A picture is worth a thousand words. In this book the mouth watering pictures of the dishes by Sheriyar Hirjikaka really urge one to start creating these dishes immediately. While the seasoned chef will find it easy to stir up a superb "Machi (fish) no Sas (tomato gravy) and Khichri (lentil rice), a new chef venturing into preparing their first dinner party will also find much inspiration from the pictures.

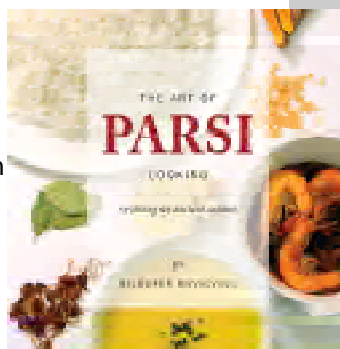
The grouping of the dishes in the contents is another useful tool It will help all of us to select a full dinner party menu easily and help us vary our daily meals with a rice dish one day and a rotli (chapatti) dish on another day of the week.

All in all ... the book is a treasure, a "must-have" to add to your collection next to the "Silver Palate" cook book, Ina Garten's cook books or "Daniel" by Daniel Boulud.

We owe it to ourselves to keep our traditional Parsi cooking alive and to keep these traditional tastes in our families not only today but in the generations to come. Thank you Niloufer for giving us this inspiration and this outstanding book. ■■■



Niloufer Mavalvala

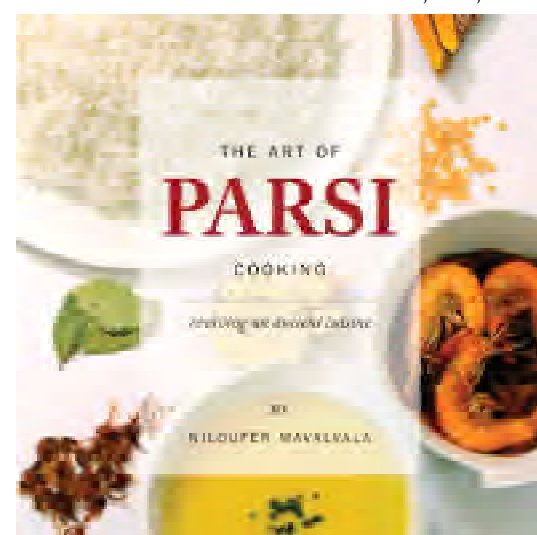


Available presently from Amazon.com and amazon.com.uk. The following outlets in UK : Cooks for Books, Waterstones, Foyles and W.H.Smith. After 30th January 2017 will be available worldwide. Hardback : GBP23.99 / USD31.95 / Euro 28.99 Paperback : GBP17.99 / USD27.95 / Euro 24.99 [the book is identical to the hardback, including paper and images.] Size : 210 x 210mm



At the book launch : clockwise top left, Niloufer at the window of Books for Cooks, rava, bakhra, cover of the book, personalised napkins.

Bottom : a sneak peak of pages 86 & 87



*Batasa and Chai
Tea and Batasa*

Batasa – Parsi Butter Biscuit

Batasas are simple teatime biscuits with a long history and a wonderful legendary story. As the Dutch colonisers left the shores of the Indian port city of Surat in the 1700s, a flourishing bakery was handed over to a local employee Faranji Dhotwala. This baker continued to produce the breads for the local British – the next set of colonisers.

Once the Brits too lessened in numbers, the breads' popularity diminished and the wasted bread was soon distributed to the local poor. Having the advantage of being fermented with an ingredient called Toddy, there was little chance of the bread ever catching fungus, prolonging the life of this staple yet making it harder in texture and more difficult to eat. Local doctors also started suggesting that this stale bread be given as a convalescent food to patients as it was easy to digest and kept their stomachs feeling full for long. Dhotwala started producing smaller specially dried bread buns for this purpose, and hence created batasas which were produced using the same 3 ingredients of today: flour and water! They were round balls of dough, baked and to be eaten with a cup of sweet tea. They were hard enough to be dunked into the tea and not fall apart.

Years later, the Batasa was changed to a richer version with an addition of butter and/or ghee (clarified butter). With alcohol prohibition taking place soon after, Toddy was replaced with yeast or even completely omitted in the recipe.

Besides the cities of Surat, Navsari and Pune where Batasas are rivalled to be called their own, it was and still is a staple sold in Irani Tea Houses in Mumbai and until recently even in Karachi. Sadly, these cafes are dwindling down in numbers. With a strong sense of revival of Parsi food, many of us hope to soon walk through the doors of the first wonderful Irani Tea House in the West!

Today, Batasas are still made from only a few ingredients, and can be crisp or flaky. There is even an amazing cheese omelette, popular among the Parsis of Canada. Adding cumin or caraway seeds, toasted silvered almonds are more traditional options. I like mine plain and simple.

The shape continues to be mainly round like the original buns!



- 4 cups sifted flour
- 1 tbsp semolina
- 3 tsp baking powder
- 1 1/2 tsp salt
- 226 gm/8 oz soft butter, cut into pieces
- 3 tbsp cold water
- Optional ingredients:
 - 2 oz toasted silvered peeled almonds
 - 1 tsp cardamom powder
 - 2 tsp caraway or cumin seeds
 - 1/2 cup hard strong cheddar while toasting the butter

In a bowl mix the dry ingredients. Add the softened butter in little pieces. With the tip of your fingers crumble the mixture until it resembles little beads. Add any options now. You can alternately use two butter knives or piece all of it in a food processor using the pulse button.

“...Through Thy most
virtuous spirit, Wise One,...
Thou didst create the
wondrous powers of good
thinking allied with truth.”

Yasna 43.2

Insler translation



The World Zoroastrian Organisation