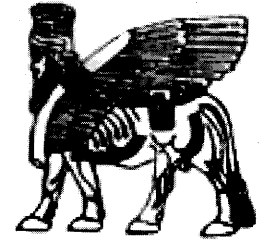


# Ze Zend



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## **EDITORIAL :**

Meher Ginwalla

We now live in a world that is dominated by technology, that becomes more advanced with every passing day. Severe competition goads multinational companies to better themselves as they are pitted against each other. Ever so often there is a new innovation that makes the world go goo-ga. The new generation simply thrives on the information and entertainment that is available at the click of a button. Family and friends thousands of miles away, are in front of your eyes. Sharing thoughts, experiences, family occasions, are all possible at your fingertips. There may be a party, an engagement, a wedding in another part of the world. Who says you have missed it? It's there for all to see, pictures and all complete. STD booths which had mushroomed at every corner, and that too not so long ago, have completely vanished from the ~~facelands of our cities. There is now such a brilliant~~ way of staying in touch, and that too for next to nothing, or for free. Our lives are made so comfortable, and yet ....a little impersonal as well?

The feeling of Touch is there, but not to our dear ones, to our screens. We are so dependent on our new friends, that our work ceases and disorganisation sets in if one of our many gadgets stops working. Our presence, our eyes, the unspoken words, express less than do our messages.

Bonding time is about being in one room, but each one's eyes are down, doing their own thing. A sudden simple social meeting is less exciting, so much simpler to punch in a few numbers while lazing on the sofa.

On the flip side, amidst all this, we find the younger generation leaning more towards religion, faith, meditation, spirituality.

The oft asked question is, "Did our prophet Zarathustra believe in meditation? Folklore says, Zarathustra went in search of The Truth at the age of 30. On Mt. Ushi - Darena, he received Divine Revelation over a period of 10 years. Ushi-Darena can be variously translated as "Sustainer of Inner Wisdom". The prophet must have surely reflected on the Truths of Nature using his inner wisdom.

But did Zarathustra propagate a life of denial or renunciation? The answer is a firm 'NO'. His message is simple and clear....Practice both Active and Silent Meditation for the cleansing of the soul. In the Gathas, he clearly mentions Silent Meditation, (Tishna Maitish) which is the best practice for a peaceful mind. But He also clearly suggests the Active Meditation as a balm to our troubled selves.... Be Happy and make others Happy. Marry, have a family, be kind to pets, be merry, create wealth, but be charitable and do not forget those less fortunate than yourselves.

Be positive and exercise the right choices.

And therefore as a true believer of our Zoroastrian faith, our form of meditation should be Simple. It does not require any complex practices.

When we are travelling and look at nature's beauty with awe, we are meditating.

When we enjoy the food we eat, or enjoy our drink, we are meditating.

When we embrace a loved one, we feel a sense of oneness.

When we carry an infant in our arms, we rejoice in the miracle of life.

At any place of worship, we try to absorb the energy, light, and beauty of that place, with eyes wide open, rather than shutting them and being in darkness in search of the elusive.

As Zoroastrians our meditation should be Simple, whether Active or Passive, to be in this world and of this world, making it a better place to live in with the eternal practice of Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds!

Life is for Living, Live it to the fullest, so that there is no regret at Exit!

## **EVENTS :**

### **NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS :**

On 14<sup>th</sup> August, as a preface to New Year's day, the Entertainment Committee had organized a musical evening at Godrej Hall. All were well entertained for about two hours with instrumental and vocal music, arrangements for which were made by Trustee Shri Aspi Vazifdar. It was a welcome change, followed by packet dinner by Smt. Ruby Khajotia and team.

Khordadsal was celebrated on 22<sup>nd</sup> August, with Jashan at Umrigar Adarian in the morning. In the evening there was housie and dinner at Godrej Hall.

On Khordadsal, there was also a morning Machi at Sayajigunj Agiary.

On 4<sup>th</sup> September, as every year Sir Dadabhoj Navroji's birth anniversary was celebrated by garlanding the statue at Sayajigunj. The Mayor, trustees of the Parsi Panchayat and some members of our community attended the ceremony. The police band too was in attendance.

On 25<sup>th</sup> September at 10.30 am, the AGM (ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING) of Shree Parsee Panchayat Vadodara, was held at Godrej Hall. President, Shri Baman Cama, presided over the meeting.

The meeting started with prayers by Ervad Hormazdiar Bhesania.

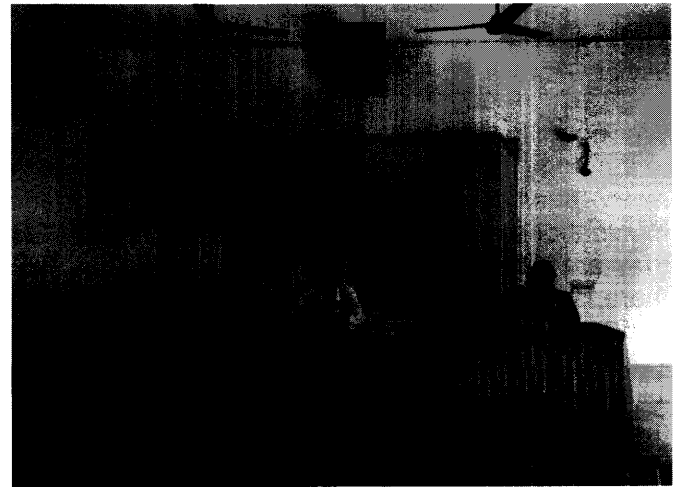
One minute silence was observed as a mark of respect for the departed.

One minute silence was also observed in remembrance of our brave soldiers who have laid down their lives for the glory of our country.

Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting held on 27/9/15, annual report of 2015-16, audit report of 2015-16, report of the various committees were read out by Trustee Hon. Secretary Shri Phiroz Patel.

The report was on the lines of Panchayat circular No. 5/15-16 dated 2/9/15.

Further as per Circular 7/2016-17 dated 31/8/16, following discussions took place :



The Secretary read out the events taken place in 2015-16. No questions were asked from the audience and the same was treated as read and approved.

The President Shri Baman Cama briefed the audience on several of the projects taken up by the trust in 2016-17....Renovation work done on Doongerwadi wall, new cement concrete pathway at Doongerwadi, plastering of servants' quarters and water connection in kitchen and toilet provided, and plastering of the toilets....approx. Rs. Six Lakhs.

The Board proposed to purchase a new Hearse (Ambulance) for which special sanction may be required, as the old one was around 23 years old and even spares are not easily available.

One of the important cause for concern put forth, was the decreasing income of Godrej Hall and Faraskhana.

Board proposed to raise the limits of eligibility under various categories for aid available to members as under :

	Present	Revised
Medical	4.20 lakhs	5.20 lakhs
Education	3.20 lakhs	5.20 lakhs
Relief to Poverty	2.50 lakhs	3.60 lakhs

Caps may be further revised after detail deliberation and availability of funds.

Trustees after deliberation decided to increase the membership fees ...Annual Fees from Rs. 50/- to Rs. 100/-. Life membership from Rs. 1000/- to Rs. 2000/-

The President briefed the gathering about vaccinations, that would benefit the community.

One Studio flat has been allotted to Katy D. Bhagat, purely on humanitarian grounds, as she cannot see.

The President briefed the gathering about the status of the various legal cases of the Panchayat.

The President thanked his Trustees and volunteers for their continued efforts and support....Trustee Cyrus Bhesania for his efforts during Dharamshala Renovation, Trustee Aspi Vazifdar for arranging for donations in and out of Vadodara, Chairpersons and members of all the Committees, Dr. Bhikhaji Udwadia, Dr. Rummy Mistry, Mr. Hosi Elavia, Miss Khorshed Doctor, Past President Shri Jal Patel for his valuable advice on financial matters, Ervad Hormazdiar Bhesania for his 40 years of selfless service to Umrigar Adaran, Mobed Sahebs, volunteers who help keep the Adaran clean, Mr. Homi Patel, Mr. Phiroze Dariasa and all the other office staff, Mrs. Ruby Khajotia, and all the young men without whose loyalty the Dokhmenashin system could not have survived.

The President concluded by thanking the gathering for being present.

Delicious snacks were served.

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On 30<sup>th</sup> September the AGM of BUZY, was held at 7 pm at Godrej Hall.

Audited Reports of 2015-16 were presented and new proposals were put forth.

### 3 4<sup>T H</sup> M E R I T A W A R D S SCHOLARSHIPS FUNCTION:

The Vadodara Parsi Panchayat Annual Awards and Scholarships Function was held on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2016, at Hirabaug. The Chief Guest of the evening was Shri Jamshedji Peshotan Dotivala, President of Surat Parsi Panchayat, Lion (Past) District Governor. He was accompanied by his gracious wife (Lion) Mrs. Yasmin Dotivala.

Also present were JIYO PARSI representatives from Mumbai, Ms Katy Gandevia and Ms Pearl Mistry.

The function began with a prayer by Mobed Saheb Ervad Hormazdiar Bhesania.

President, Vadodara Parsi Panchayat, Shri Baman Cama, felicitated the Chief Guest Shri Jamshedji Dotivala, and his wife Mrs. Yasmin Dotivala, with shawls and bouquets and a silver salver.

Mrs. Kamal Patel felicitated the two JIYO PARSI representatives, Ms Katy Gandevia and Ms Pearl Mistry with bouquets and Umrigar Adaran memoir silver coins.

On behalf of his co-trustees, The President, Shri Baman Cama, welcomed Lion and President of Surat Parsi Panchayat, Shri Jamshedji Peshotan Dotivala, his dear wife Yasmin, Ms Katy Gandevia, Jiyo Parsi Programme Co-ordinator, Ms Pearl Mistry, Counsellor at Tata Institute of Social Sciences, the Awardees and the community gathered for the evening at Hirabaug grounds. He regretted the absence of Past President, MurabiShavaksha Patel and immediate Past President Shri Jal Patel.

The President said that this Annual Merit Award function is held every year without fail, for the last 34 years, with the sole purpose of giving impetus, *prerna*, to young minds TO STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE. We believe that Education is the best investment which can never go wrong.

The inspiration to encourage and reward the deserving youth in this manner, came way back in April 1983, from Late Prof. Noshirwan Kekobad of Tata Institute of Social Sciences, when at a Federation meeting of the trustees of a few Panchayats in Mumbai, he said the inspirational golden words, why don't today's Parsi youth "*Strive For Excellence*". The President said, that at this meeting with him was Past President Shri Shavaksha Patel, and a germ of an idea took root in their minds. On their return to Vadodara, they put the proposal before the board of trustees, it was immediately accepted, and thus started, and will God willing continue in the years to come, the policy of distributing Merit Awards and Scholarships to the deserving. Alongside the Awards, The Panchayat distributes Education, Medical and Relief Aid to the poor. The President expressed his gratitude to the donors without whose contribution the evening's function and gambhar would not be possible. As also to the Education Committee and a standing ovation to Shri Rumi Mistry, the team of doctors Dr. Bhikhaji Udwadia, Dr. Navaz Bhesania, Dr. Ruby Udwadia, Dr. Minoo Patel, to Mrs. Leena Wadia for painstakingly writing the beautiful certificates, to the board of trustees for their continuous support and hard work.

Shri Baman Cama lamented the sorry state of affairs within our community at present...we are now only a miniscule part of society, and yet instead of strength in unity, we are divided on petty religious and legal issues, when in reality our very existence is in jeopardy. Who knows whether in a few decades, we

will be history! Why not try and salvage the best of what we have, the best of what the government and the Ministry of Minority Affairs are trying to do for us. The President requested Shri Jamshedji Dotivala, who at the helm of the second largest Panchayat in India, should lead the way for the survival of the community.

Our community has always been richly appreciated for our contribution to our Mother Land. The Jiyo Parsi Scheme is the government's way to repay the rich heritage of Parsis in India and all over the world. Stepping back into the past to 16<sup>th</sup> December 1971, the President reminded us of the historical victory of India over East Pakistan in just 13 days when Mrs. Indira Gandhi was the Prime Minister. But the main architect of that victory, the soldier who led from the front, was none other than "*apro Sam*", Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw M.C. Like him, there have been several illustrious Parsi names in the pages of history.

The President, Shri Baman Cama, concluded by urging our community, one and all, to come together, and save ourselves from extinction. He appealed to those present to honour the JIYO PARSI efforts, and attend the workshop the next day on 18<sup>th</sup> Dec. at Godrej Hall.

Lt. Col. Adi Chinoy introduced Shri Jamshedji Dotivala as an eminent LION and Parsi Philanthropist, well known for his service to our community and to humanity at large. He said, Jamshedji is modest to the core, humble and rather quiet, but hard working and diversly efficient. His family owns the famous Dotivala Bakers and Confectioners of Nanpura Surat, for decades. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Nanpura held the famous Dutch factory, well known for its bread and cakes. When the Dutch factory closed, one of the Parsi bakers known as Faramji Pestonji Dotivala continued to bake and supply bread. Jamshedji's family are his decendants, and are proud of their heritage and their business. Today, his dynamic eldest son Cyrus continues and expands their business.

Jamshedji is also well known as a very active LION and has served LIONISM in various capacities as President of the Surat Lions Club, Zonal Chairman, Regional Chairman, District Chairman, Vice District Governor and District Governor. He has received several National and International Awards in recognition of his selfless service to the "SIGHT FIRST" Programme and his contribution to the "LIONS CANCER DETECTION CENTRE" at Surat.

Both Jamshedji and his wife Yasmin have received the MELVIN JONES FELLOWSHIP from the MJ FOUNDATION for their generosity towards the Lions cause.

May this noble couple and their family, be blessed and prosper.

Ms. Pearl Mistry, then gave a short introduction on the JIYO PARSI PROGRAMME, implemented through the PARZOR FOUNDATION, NEW DELHI. She talked about the growing need for saving and increasing the Parsi population, and elaborated on the economic and emotional help given to childless couples, by the Jiyo Parsi Foundation and the Government. She said this was the only scheme of its kind in the whole world to increase population. Otherwise there was always a need to curb population. Youngsters of our community face so many problems, the main ones being education for their children which has become so expensive, and housing. She said the Tata Institute of Sciences, for which she works, has done extensive serious research, and then come up with this programme. Parsi thy name is "Charity", but at this time, the greatest charity would be to increase our population. The government and the Ministry of Minority Affairs, has promised medical aid of five lakhs to childless couples to help with the fertility treatment. Since 2013, with this "JIYO PARSI" scheme and financial aid, 80 children were born. She said, not all of our community excels in life, there are so many wastrels, but then on the flip side, there are achievers, entrepreneurs and business men too. The "JIYO PARSI" representatives therefore, do not only help the childless couples, but also run other programmes like workshops for 'Drug Abuse', 'Anger Management', 'Inter Personal Skills', 'Family life in Modern Times', etc.

Mrs. Katy Gandevia, of 'JIYO PARSI' said, that in Mumbai they go from one venue to the other, from one Baug to the other, to spread their message. She was delighted to see here in Vadodara, such a large gathering of our community at one place, and congratulated the Vadodara Parsi Panchayat for making this possible and for encouraging and rewarding our deserving youth. She requested our members to attend the 'JIYO PARSI' workshop to be held the next day, 18<sup>th</sup> Dec., at Godrej Hall.

The Awards were then presented to the deserving children for their achievements in academics and sports....The School Awards were presented by Mrs. Yasmin Dotivala and the citations were read out by Mrs. Dilnaz M. Homawala. The College and Sports Awards were presented by Shri Jamshedji Dotivala and the citations were read out by Mrs. Meher A. Ginwalla. As always, Mrs. Firoza R. Cama, Shri Firoze Dariasa and Shri Homibhai Patel helped behind the scenes. The certificates were beautifully calligraphed by Mrs. Leena Wadia. All this was possible due to the continuous contribution of Shri Rumi Mistry, supported by the Education Committee, and Shri Mistry was sincerely appreciated for his time and efforts by the President Shri BamanCama.

In keeping with the importance of the merit awards,

the Chief Guest kept his speech short, simple and motivating. Beginning by thanking the Vadodara Parsi Panchayat for extending him such a warm welcome, Shri Jamshedji Dotivala said that it was indeed a privilege for him to be a chief guest and give awards to the deserving children. In his time of youth, there was competition, but not so stiff, so today's generation has to work doubly hard with a purpose, in order to reach their goals. He said, Thanks to the Panchayat function, we have seen young boys and girls going on to become Chartered Accountants, Engineers, doctors. The road may be long, it may be tough, 'but never give up and keep trying till you succeed', should be the motto. Always be positive even in adversity. To illustrate his point, Jamshedji took a page from the life of the great Tennis player, Sir Arthur Ash. After reaching great heights in his Tennis career, Sir Arthur Ash got bogged down by cancer. He received many letters from fans and friends wishing him a speedy recovery. One such letter sympathized with him and asked him why God had singled him out and put him through this ordeal. To which the great man replied, that in this world there are crores of people, perhaps 5lakhs play tennis, 5000 reach Grand Slams, about 50 reach Wimbledon, only 2 reach the finals, and only 1 lucky winner wins the Championship. When I was lucky to hold the trophy, I never questioned God's motive 'Why Me?' So now how can I ask God this question!

SantKabir has said 'In happiness and sorrow remember God.' Trials keep us strong, Sorrow makes us human, Failure makes us humble, Success keeps you glowing, and always you have to remember God. Swami Vivekanand has guided us not to stop till you achieve your goal.

Jamshedji narrated a short story about two brothers, ~~one a vagabond, drunkard, wastrel who beat and swore at his family and did nothing for a living.~~ The other was a good hardworking soul, a good citizen. The neighbours always wondered how two sons belonging to the same parents and having the same upbringing could be so different. Finally they voiced their curiosity out loud to the two brothers. The first said that he was only following in his father's footsteps. His father too would beat his kids, his mother, swear at them and do no good work for a living, so that the family was always starving. The second said that he had seen horrible filthy days in his childhood, starvation, fear of thrashings, and had vowed that when he had his own wife and family, they would never suffer such fate. So one had taken motivation positively and one negatively.

Talking about LIONS Club and its activities, Jamshedji said that in 2017, Lions would celebrate its centenary and Shri Naresh Agarwal, an Indian, would be the President. Jamshedji said, that during his own tenure as District Chairman, Lions had worked relentlessly for the "DRISHTI" programme, and they came to be known as "Knights of the Blind". The government had given them a target of performing 5000 cataract operations, but they achieved the stupendous figure of 60,000. They also cured patients with Diabetic Retinopathy.

The LIONS CANCER DETECTION CENTRE in the Civil Hospital at Surat is only one of its kind in Gujarat, giving free treatment to cancer patients. During his tenure Jamshedji said he had helped collect 17 crores for the hospital and even helped fund and acquire a Linear Accelerator Machine to provide modern cancer treatment at half cost to patients.

Jamshedji humbly said that the religion of the LIONS Club is 'SERVICE', and the two pillars on which the foundation stands firm are 'SERVICE' and 'FELLOWSHIP'.

Jamshedji ended his enlightening talk by saying that as Vice District Governor, his area extended from Umargaon to Kheda to Dahod to Khambhatt, and he therefore always had a special affinity to Vadodara. He expressed his gratitude to the trustees of the Vadodara Parsi Panchayat for extending him this invitation and for the warm hospitality to himself and his wife Yasmin.

Vote of thanks was given by Trustee Shri Aspi Vazifdar, who reiterated the need for an increase in our population, and encouraged our youth to strive to do better and keep up their good performance.

This was followed by '*Chaiye Ame Zarhosti*' and '*Jana Gana Mana*'

Delicious Gambhar by Mrs. Ruby Khajotia followed, and she never disappoints us for sure.

### JIYO PARSI WORKSHOP :

On 18<sup>th</sup>. Dec. 2016, JIYO PARSI workshop was held at Godrej Hall at 10.30a.m. under the capable and experienced guidance of Ms Katy Gandevia and Ms Pearl Mistry, counsellors at Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai.

A Power Point presentation was shown on the JIYO PARSI SCHEME. The government and the Ministry of Minority Affairs has sanctioned 10 crores, to be used for the implementation of various programmes under this scheme, over a period of 3 years. From a peak population in 1951, there has been a steady demographic decline in population, due to various reasons like Late Marriages, Housing Problems, Marrying outside the community, Wanting only one child, Expensive Education, to name a few. 'The **objective** of this programme, is to reverse the decline in Parsi population by adopting scientific protocols and structured interventions, to stabilize and increase the population of Parsis in India'. Financial Assistance will be provided for various fertility treatments, including counselling and detection. The Scheme may end on 31/3/2017. About 50 people participated and had to fill feedback forms at the end of the lively and fulfilled presentation.

The two main topics were (i) Interpersonal Relationships and (ii) Anger Management.

'Interpersonal Relations', means how to maintain harmonious relations within Family and Community, for the betterment of social and professional skills, and was explained in the form of games. 'Know Your Partner' was played between couples, with questions and options being put to husband and wife, and the correct answers had to be given.

'Communication', which is so crucial for a solid working and social platform, was explained by playing the game 'Chinese Whispers', where everyone is made to sit in a circle. You begin by whispering something to the person right next to you, and he in turn to the person next to him, till you come to the end of the circle, but by the time the sentence comes back full circle, it is quite another thing. This was exemplified in another way by making a volunteer back the gathering, and give drawing instructions...draw various shapes like circle, triangle, rectangle, and also shapes within shapes. It was difficult to comprehend and many were confused. Then, another volunteer was made to face the audience and give the same drawing instructions again. This time one could ask questions, clear doubts, in other words, there was interaction between the gathering and the volunteer,

and the task was done simply and well. Thus was explained the importance of 'Communication and Comprehension'.

Understanding the difference between *LISTENING* and *HEARING* was underlined. Even in normal conversation how many of us really take in everything we hear from another? We let our minds wander if the topic doesn't interest us, or if we want to attend to something else, or if we want to interrupt and say something ourselves. The art of good conversation is to be a good listener.

'ANGER MANAGEMENT' was the second important issue discussed. What drives us to Anger What do we do when we are angry and to what extent do we vent it out? Do we make an effort to control our Anger? If NO, then why not? If YES, then how? Tips were then given to help tame our Temper....Think before you speak, give yourself time to calm down and then speak and express your displeasure. Take time out, breathe in deep, practice relaxation technique, and try to see humour in any situation. Don't hold a grudge and let bygones be bygones. If nothing works, don't hesitate to take professional help.

At the end of the absorbing interactive session, the participants gave their feedback. Tea and snacks were served.

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## FROM THE 'PARSIANA' POINT OF VIEW:

*Fwd : Meher Ginwalla*

'Seldom in a short span have so many major community developments happened. On July 24, 2016, the West Zone B representatives on the Federation of the Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India were told at the meeting held at Valsad, that utilization of doongerwadi lands for burial purposes was ill advised and to be avoided.

The next day, the Govt. of India Census Department released the devastating Parsi population figures from the 2011 census : 52,264, a drop of 18% from the 2001 figure of 69,601.

On July 29, the World Alliance of Parsi Irani Zarthoshtis, alleged it had proof the former Bombay Parsi Panchayat chairman Dinshaw Mehta, had sought part cash payment for a tenancy transfer at the BPP owned Dady House.

On July 30, the Parsi Times (PT) carried an announcement that they were taking over the management of the 184 year old Jam-e-Jamshed (JJ) publication.

All the above are alarming and newsworthy, but the local, national and international media chose to focus on what they termed to be the most alarming: the precipitous drop in population. In comparison to that steep fall, everything pales in comparison.

Parzor director, Dr. Shrenaz Cama, who spearheaded the Govt. of India promoted JIYO PARSI Programme aimed at increasing numbers, noted in a message, "With the census results out, we have to work much harder and encourage and support and help our young to find partners. Most importantly, we must consciously realize the urgency to save a precious world heritage from disappearing." But tragically that heritage pertains only to the offspring of Parsi fathers, not mothers if they have married out of faith. As Hyderabad anjuman trustee Jehangir Bisney commented, "When faith is sacrificed for ethnicity, the outcome is there for all to see."

The attitude of the traditionalists has always been, "We want quality, not quantity." But with the Parsis slowly fading out of public and professional life, the community is fast falling behind in both areas.

Our fire temples are bereft of priests. Small anjumans bemoan their inability to pay salaries to the priests, and have to seek the assistance from larger ones to subsidize them. A priest in Bharuch travels to four agiaries in a day to perform 20 bois.

The census figures show a decline in fertility from the 1850s. A negative growth rate was recorded since 1940. A report in The Times of India of July 26 states that the population in Maharashtra and Gujarat, where there are a good number of Parsis, is also on the decline.

But if the community cannot come to terms with the reality, what hope is there? Religion is important, the individual is not.

The Times of India of August 1, carried a column by Gautam Bhatia titled, "Mr. Prime Minister, now's the time to have a ministry of the future." The writer noted, "Five years ago, the Swedish Govt. set up a department whose only concern was the future." Parsi governing bodies are still looking at the past.

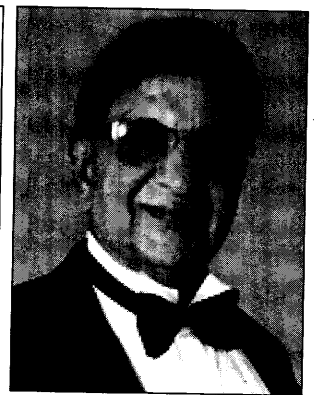
Hence the future eludes them.'

## STOKING THE FLAME :

*Excerpts by : Meher Ginwalla*

From March to May 2016, Four Exhibitions and over 20 Events were organized in Delhi to create awareness amongst our community, that the dwindling Zoroastrian Community is not only to be relegated to the museums but to be experienced on stage and screen, through cultural events under the flagship of "THE EVERLASTING FLAME PROGRAMME"(TEFP). It was the brainchild of PARZOR director Dr. Shernaz Cama, and was supported by the Ministry of Minority affairs.

All the PARZOR cultural events were sponsored by Dr. Cyrus Poonawalla, chairman of the Serum Institute of India, in loving memory of his wife Villoo. Talented artists from India and Iran entertained an estimated audience of 80,000 people, with their prowess in music, theatre, puppetry, cinema, photography, art at the India International Centre (IIC), Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA), and The India Habitat Centre.



The cultural programme began with a dance performance "Elemental Divine" by Astad Deboo and his troupe on Jamshedi Navroze on March 21<sup>st</sup>. The other events at IGNCA included "Spenta – Magical Manifestations", featuring a puppet performance by Dadi Pudumjee and The Ishara Puppet Theatre Trust, a fashion show by Ashdeen Lilaowala and Wendell Rodricks.

A parallel exhibition "Ferdowsi's SHAHNAMEH" curated by Silloo Mehta was on view from March 29 to April 4.

Kusti weaving, toran making, Parsi embroidery, were some of the other workshops held. And while all this was going on, the aroma of Parsi food wafted over the scenario. SodaBottle Openerwala had

organized a food cart throughout the duration of the exhibition.

## Magical Manifestations :

Inspired by Zoroastrian scripts and teachings, Pudumjee presented an electrifying melange of puppetry and dance titled "Ma'arfet – The Awakening."

Ahura Mazda the kind and just Creator, was opposed by the evil Angra Mainyu, who filled the universe with unhappiness and destruction. Ahura Mazda then created the Amesha Spentas as Guardian Spirits to protect the material world from such disparity.

Goan designer Wendell Rodricks presented an abstract spiritual aspect through his purely white fashion collection titled, "The Gireban Collection". The clothes spoke of purity, fluidity and sanctity from the "pocket of good deeds" in the sudreh. All in white, he sought to transport the audience with accompanying music from an Iranian repertoire "back to a time in Persia, where beauty and peace, spiritual harmony and soulful sanctity reigned supreme."

Ashdeen Lilaowala has taken Parsi embroidery to a larger canvas with his new collection "The Scent of the Orient". Each sari and garment has been inspired by Chinese decorative art, especially the Blue and White theme which is seen on Chinese porcelain. Then there were "The Garden of Paradise" and "Black and White" collections, and his signature "Flying Crane" motifs on saris and various other garments.

The cultural events at the IIC comprised amongst others, the solo performance of actor Boman Irani, which was punctuated with humour, mimicry and music. In his baritone, with his strumming guitar, he regaled the audience with "*We are the World*" and "*Give me some Sunshine*."

Also at the IIC was the first time in India performance of the Tehran based five member Basha Ensemble from Iran, who with their lilting music in Persian, mesmerised the audiences, celebrating the arrival of Spring and Navroze, and Zarthustra's teachings of good thoughts, words and deeds.

Also from Iran, were the puppets from Azerbaijan, and from the University of Performing Arts in Tehran. The 'Teke' puppet was made much of. It is in the shape of a decorated male goat dressed in red to symbolize happiness. The 'Teke' announces the

coming of Spring and the concept of life, fertility and prosperity. The 'Teke' ceremony is a very unique and ancient ritual in Iranian puppetry.

Justice Rohinton Nariman's talk on "Outlines of Persian History – The Achaemenian and Sassanian Empires", drew a full house. He said in his lecture, "Out of the five Persian Empires, the Peshdadanian has no recorded history at all. Prophet Zarathustra belonged to the second dynasty called 'Kayanian' which again has no particular record. The first Persian Empire in recorded history is the Achaemenian Empire which had 10 kings....The most known of them being Cyrus the Great, who wanted to be known as a liberator and not a conqueror. The second was Cambysis who added Egypt to the Persian Empire. The next great ruler was ninth in line, Darius I, and in his time the Persian Empire stretched from The Indus River to the Mediterranean Sea, and from the Caspian Sea to the Red Sea. ~~However he could not defeat the~~ Greeks and lost his huge Persian army. The 'Book of Esther' in the Old Testament of the Bible is devoted to Persian king Xerxes whose campaign against the Greeks met with complete failure. The longest reigning monarch of the Achaemenian dynasty was Artaxerxes II.

The Sassanian Empire had 48 rulers and saw a great revival of the Zoroastrian religion in Iran and Armenia."

This inspiring talk of Justice Rohinton Nariman was followed by the screening of Homi D. Sethna's sensitive documentary "Happiness unto Others", that traced the journey of the Parsis from Iran to India.

Parallel to these, there was the screening of cultural documentaries, dance, drama, music, lectures and talks by renowned personalities like historian Rusi Sohrabji, Prof. of Theatre and Performing Arts Rustom Bharucha, an interactive talk on 'Zoroastrianism and Ecology' by Dr. Homi Dhallal, photographic exhibitions on 'Udvada' and 'My Family and other Parsis'. Dr. Oindrila Raychaudhuri, chief archivist at Bombay's Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, took the audience along the corridors of the prestigious Science Institute to view the priceless collection of very high quality art which makes it unique among similar institutions in the world.

As a fitting curtains down to 'The Everlasting Flame Programme', was the lecture of renowned author Amitav Ghosh on May 27, wherein he spoke of "The Parsi connection with China and its role in the making of modern India." The China trade led to the foundation of many important Parsi business houses including the Tatas. The Opium trade was



the crucible of modern Parsi enterprise and formed the basis of modern India capitalization and shaped modern India.

Dr. Shernaz Cama explained the programme was visualized in 2013 following the government's involvement with the "Jiyo Parsi" project. She felt the time had come to educate the world about Zoroastrianism and Parsi culture. She added, "The Ministry of Minority Affairs brought back the Zoroastrianism discourse into public domain and stressed that advocacy was needed to make the world realize that Parsis are a race worth saving".

### GOLDEN WORDS:

By: Percy Bharucha

These are some golden words of advice that I have penned for the younger generation who wish to grow on the career path and move up on the challenging ladder of modern times :

- 1) Learn to appreciate the meaning of Time. If we look after Time, then Time will look after us.
- 2) Do not postpone till tomorrow what you can do today.
- 3) Embrace Honesty and Ethics. In order to be one up on another, do not wrongly embrace the wrong and unethical path of greed and wrong doings.
- 4) Do not hesitate to be sorry and admit it if you have been in the wrong.
- 5) Have sympathy, kindness and a generous head and heart, be humane, for our religion says that even a rich person without generosity is actually poor.
- 6) Do plan today every work you need to start tomorrow or sometime in the near future, regardless of whether it is in connection with your business, employment, job, pleasure trip, ~~purchase of costly asset or an important life decision.~~
- 7) Cultivate desire for knowledge and development of skills. Form regular habits to read newspapers, listen to T.V. news, interviews, so that you do not cut a sorry picture in public.
- 8) Be inquisitive and interested by attending useful talks, lectures, seminars or conferences. Keep notes, digest and implement useful sermons learnt therefrom. Don't miss any chance to learn new things.
- 9) Cultivate new contacts within and outside your organisation with a helping and enthusiastic attitude. Visit places of worship, schools, friends, social organisations, professional seniors etc. to stay in touch.

- 10) In today's world, email has 95% replaced the handwritten word. Try to keep even your email language polite and respectful.
- 11) Please do practice the freedom of expression but gently, with self discipline and control over words. Be careful and moderate with the spoken and written words, at all times.

### WOULD TODAY'S YOUTH WANT TO BE A SOLDIER, OR A CRICKETER ?

Fwd : Col. Adi Chinoy

I have a course mate from the Army days who gave me some surprising news. In his younger days he had played cricket for the Services at the Ranji Trophy level. His younger brother, a civilian, was also a cricketer and played one Test match for India.

The news was that both these guys were on the pension payroll of the BCCI. My friend, who had played more than 25 Ranji Trophy matches, was getting Rs 15,000 per month as pension and his brother with his single Test match was getting Rs 3,75,000 per month. In addition the BCCI has given a lump sum going up to Rs 1 crore to ex-Test cricketers to help them in their sunset years. Well, I thought that this was indeed a grand gesture of the BCCI to recognise their effort.

It got me thinking on the value system that prevails in our country. I was a soldier in the Army for close to 29 years before I called it quits.

During this period I fought in the 1971 Indo-Pak war and was awarded the Vir Chakra for gallantry. This is the third highest gallantry award after the ParamVirChakra( PVC) and the MahaVir Chakra (MVC).

The government gives a decoration pay while in service and later as part of the service pension.

It started at a low amount which increased with each pay commission. At present I get Rs 3,500 per month as the decoration pay. For a MVC it is Rs 5,000 and a PVC it is Rs 10,000.

What set me thinking is the value put on a soldier's life. Most of the gallantry awards are given posthumously. So the awardee is already in the happy hunting grounds and his heirs are left to handle the situation.

The dead soldier's family gets a lump sum amount of a few lakhs from the group insurance fund and the pay/pension. All this is a pittance compared to the BCCI dole to ex-cricketers.

I remember getting Rs 25,000 in lieu of 5 acres of land from the Punjab Government for my gallantry award. Compare that with the lakhs and crores you can make for getting medals in Olympics, Asian Games and Commonwealth Games.

The conclusion is that a soldier's life is cheap.

Which brings me to a comparison between a soldier in the battlefield and a cricketer on the pitch. Both face projectiles of differing variety. For the cricketer it is a red/white ball which could be coming at you at a speed close to 150 km. For the soldier it can be a bullet, a bomb or a missile travelling at speeds beyond the speed of sound.

The cricketer can hit that ball for a six or just duck under it, or at worst, get hit on the well-protected body.

The soldier can just pray that the bullet, splinter or missile misses him. Both the soldier and the cricketer are doing something for the nation.

The cricketer on losing a match just says "It is only a game". The soldier just cannot think or afford to lose in the battlefield.

**Also consider that as a cricketer you can get a 'Bharat Ratna' for your outstanding achievement.**

**But Field Marshall Sam Manekshaw has not been given that honour despite leading the Army to its greatest military victory which resulted in the formation of Bangladesh.**

I sometimes wonder what would be a greater catastrophe to the Indian psyche: losing a cricket match or losing a war to Pakistan? It makes you

think: to be a soldier or a cricketer?

(General Pushpendra Singh V.C.)

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## CONTRIBUTE FOR THE BETTERMENT OF OUR PRIESTS

(Letter to Editor JameJamshed By : Mr. Marazban Giara)

In your editorial column of Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> May you have hit the nail on the head by comparing the negligence of our priests by our Parsi community to Nero playing the fiddle when Rome was burning. Our community has not been paying our priests adequately. They earn even less than class IV staff. *Navars* and *Martabs* because of reciting prayers by heart have good memory.

The talented *Athornans* switch to other professions which are financially more lucrative and do not practise *mobedi* thereby reducing the number of priests available. You stated "There is neither the intent nor the resources." Their remuneration needs to be linked to cost of living index. Provident fund, gratuity, Medi-claim insurance, education aid, pension needs to be provided.

Our community has some good fund raisers. We also have several large hearted donors and philanthropists. What is needed is the will and action oriented leadership. For several decades schemes are put forth for betterment of our priests. Lakhs nay crores of rupees are frittered on fixing marble/granite and renovation of our fire temples whereas our keepers of the flame continue to be neglected.

We offer sandalwood, *kathi*, light multiple divas, offer flowers, torans. If a fraction of the money spent on such offerings is set aside for welfare of our priests they can be adequately compensated. We need to mobilise public opinion and channelize funds for welfare of our priests.

We may not be able to give our priests a knighthood. The least we can do is to give them respect. Our beautiful Parsi girls (and their parents) are most reluctant to marry priests. The vocation of a Parsi priest is both demanding and challenging. It is a tough life which calls for sacrifice.

Let us pray that your wake up call is answered by our community with positive response. Let every Parsi Zoroastrian individual member and family contribute for the betterment of our priests.

## 1) AN INSPIRING WILL :

forwards by : Meher Ginwalla

Noble thoughts, mentioned in the will of Shri Nani Palkhiwala, worth a mention here...

He says :

When I die...

Give my sight to the man who has never seen a sunrise.

Give my heart to one who has known the agony of the heart.

Give my blood to a youth pulled from a wreckage of a car, so that he might live to see his grandchildren play.

Let my kidneys drain the poison from another's body.

Let my bones be used to make a crippled child walk.

Burn what is left of me and scatter the ashes to the wind to let the flowers grow.

If you must bury something, let it be my faults and my prejudices against my fellowmen.

Give my Sins to the Devil, Give my Soul to God.

If you wish to remember me, do it with a kind deed or word to someone who needs you.

If you do all I've asked, I'll live forever.

He then asked his second wife, but she said, "I'm sorry. I can't help you this time. At the most I can accompany you till your grave."

His heart sank. He turned cold with worry and loneliness. Then a voice called out, "I'll go with you no matter where you go."

The man looked up and there was his first wife. She was skinny, neglected and underfed. Greatly grieved, the man said, "I should have taken better care of you, not neglected you so, while I looked after the other three so well."

This is a lesson for all of us... We all have four wives in our lives....

- a) The fourth wife is our Body. No matter how much time and effort we lavish in making it look good, it'll leave us when we die.
- b) The third wife is our Possessions, Status, Wealth. When we die, they go away to others.
- c) The second wife is our Family and Friends. No matter how close we are to them in our lives, the furthest they can accompany us, is to our graves.
- d) The first wife is our Soul. We neglect it in pursuit of worldly pleasure, fame and wealth. But it is entirely loyal to us and the only thing that stays with us, follows us, wherever we go.

## 2) THE NAKED TRUTH OF LIFE:

There was a man who had four wives. He loved his fourth wife the best, looked after her the most and took great care of her and gave her the best.

He also loved his third wife and always wanted to show her off to his friends. However, he always had a fear of losing her to someone else.

He loved his second wife too. He always turned to her with his problems, and she always helped him out.

He did not care too much for his first wife and scarcely gave her a thought, though she loved him deeply, was loyal to him and took great care of him.

One day the man fell seriously ill and knew his end would soon come. But death frightened him, so he thought to himself he would take one of his four wives along with him.

So he asked his fourth wife, his most favourite, to go along with him. "No Way"! she replied, and walked away without another word.

He then asked his third wife, his next favourite one, but she bluntly replied, "Life is so good here, I'll remarry when you are not there."

## ACHIEVERS:

We are all proud of our Dr. Minoo Patel, for the totally dedicated selfless service he has continuously given our community and humanity at large, without any thought for time and place.

On 17<sup>th</sup> July 2016, The Indian Medical Association, met at Oasis Hotel to felicitate Dr. Minoo R. Patel on Poornima Day. This is done every year where the Medical fraternity felicitates senior doctors who have contributed and given yeoman service to the community and public at large. Zend wishes this devoted doctor, all the best in his future endeavours.



Dr. Minnie Aarasp Bodhanwala, CEO of Nowrosjee & Jerbai Wadia Hospital, Parel, Mumbai, has been designated as a Doctor with a Vision and awarded for her Excellence in Leadership, and her achievement is that without losing sight of the philanthropic aspect of the medical profession, she worked hard to make hospitals profitable by increasing efficiency where she was a CEO. Zend wishes her further success in her endeavour.



**NAVJOTE :**

1) Malcolm and Kyra	Son and daughter of Mahazarine and Behram Ginwalla	22-02-16
2) Shehzad	Son of Farzeen and Bomi Paghdiwala	08-05-16
3) Shezaar	Son of Naaz and Rumi Paghdiwala	08-05-16
4) Jasmin	Daughter of Chiraag Zaiwala	30-04-16
5) Malcolm	Son of Anjali and Phiroze Commisariate	22-05-16
6) Navroz	Son of Kavita & Viraf Tavadia	12-11-16
7) Berjis	Son of Naznin & Hosheder Patva	30-12-16
8) Daryush	Son of Manisha & Cyrus Patel	14-12-16
9) Zahaan	Son of Harmit & Zaraius Contractor	15-01-17
10) Suhaan	Son of Saloni & Faiaaz Contractor	15-01-17
11) Tiyana	Daughter of Dilshad & Rustom Patel	30-01-17

**WEDDING :**

1) Arzaan	Son of Armin & Cyrus Tadiwala		
	With		With
Ripudama	Daughter of Narinderjit & Amriksing Rokhri	14-02-16	
2) Firoz	Son of Ruby & Rayomand Vimadalal		
	With		
Delnaaz	Daughter of Hufriash & Adil Bhatthena	11-12-16	
3) Zubin	Son of Zenobia & Dhanjisha Pardiwala		
	With		
Sherali	Daughter of Maharukh & Pervez Tadiwala	25-12-16	
4) Perzaan	Son of Rashna & Sam Patrawala		
	With		
Afrin	Daughter of Arnavaz & Viraf Randeria	01-01-17	

**BIRTHS :**

1) Farhad	Son of Monaz and Peterasp Kasad	13-12-15
2) Nilufer	Daughter of Yezdin and Ruzbeh Dalal	01-03-16
3) Amaira	Daughter of Yasmin and Berjis Ginwalla	30-06-16
4) Deyana	Daughter of Chalet & Farhad Wadia	21-08-16
5) Delina	Daughter of Dilmehar & Mehernosh Daruwalla	27-09-16
6) Ava	Daughter of Navaz & Vaspar Vazifdar	16-10-16

**DEATHS :**

1) Bepsy Firoze Elavia	18-02-16
2) Ruby Motabhai Chothia	09-03-16
3) Bamansha Cawasji Mistry	03-04-16
4) Farida Hormazji Charna	16-05-16
5) Homi Hirjibhai Kavarana	19-05-16
6) Bomi Fardunji Homawala	23-05-16
7) Frenimai Jalejar Bavaadam	25-05-16
8) Katy Behram Karanjia	27-05-16
9) Dinoo Pervez Contractor	03-08-16
10) Amy Nadarsha Hadvaaid	14-08-16
11) Soly Edulji Dastoor	18-08-16
12) Mehru Kharshedji Dangore	06-09-16
13) Roda Maneksha Kudianwala	28-09-16
14) Sheru Minoo Wadia	01-10-16
15) Nasarvanji Darasha Elavia	25-10-16
16) Rustom Darasha Guard	26-10-16
17) Aspi Sorabji Khurshigara	26-10-16
18) Rashna Adi Chinoy	27-10-16
19) Perin Behramsha Guzder	10-11-16
20) Roshan Homi Guzder	08-12-16
21) Homai Firoz Bawaadam	27-12-16
22) Dinu Keki Panthaki	29-12-16

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