



ZANZ Gazette

P.O. Box 251128, Pakuranga, Auckland, New Zealand www.zanz.org.nz

2006 - 2007

Editorial

One evening in March, I got a call from a ZANZ members asking me if I had read an article that had appeared in a local newspaper, concerning the plight of a young Zarathustee family living in Auckland. I started making some enquiries, asking around if anyone knew how we could get in touch with the family. My first instinct was to call them up and ask what assistance, I personally or ZANZ could be to them. Even at that point of time, I was still quite unaware of the seriousness or urgency of the issue at hand. A phone call and a couple of us went to the Mehta household to meet with them personally.

I came home that night looking at life differently.

The enormity of the problems that this family was facing left me troubled and immensely disturbed. It could so easily have been any of us in a similar situation.

I had already made a firm commitment and promise to Friar Mehta, that I was going to put in all my efforts, time and energies in raising much needed funds for the very expensive and ongoing medical treatment for her little son Khushru. But I did not even have a plan in mind. That would come later.

Friar & Burzin Mehta were a young Zarathustee family, who like most of us came to NZ in the hope of a better life for themselves and the kids that they would have here.

Little did they know what fate had in store for them...

Khushru was born profoundly deaf in both ears and was also diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorder and had global developmental delay. In addition he also has a rare genetic disorder called DOOR syndrome, because of which he has underdeveloped fingertips and nails, developmental delay, and a recent history of seizures and the possibility of vision retardation in later life.

His only chance of hearing and having some normalcy in his life, was with a cochlear implant in both ears. The Public Health System in New Zealand initially dismissed their application for the implants. After much perseverance, They finally approved funding for only one implant and his parents would pay for the second one, which would be at a very large financial cost.

Khushru's surgery was scheduled for May.

The cochlear implant process was not the end of the road but required extensive follow up with audiology and habilitation sessions after surgery. The only centre offering a program for children like Khushru is in Sydney, Australia. The family would have to also bear the cost of taking him to Australia for treatment after the surgery.

Friar is unable to work, due to Khushru needing constant personal care and Burzin is the only earning member of the family. Little Khushru deserved every chance possible to improve the quality of his life.

I was not even quite sure of how to go about collecting the very large amount of funds that were needed. I knew one thing for sure, I had to send out appeals to the larger international community and hope and pray that the community would come through for one little Zarathustee boy in this far corner of the world.

This is when I realized how vitally important my position as President of ZANZ was.

When the Mehta's had appealed individually there was no response at all. We hoped that people would respond differently when the appeal was made by ZANZ.

President
*Rashna Dorab
Tata*

Vice President
Tanaz Siganporia

Treasurer
Yasmin Katki

Secretary
Mino Arsiwalla

Committee Members
*Merzin Ghadiali
Riaz Dadabhoy
Shernaz Darukhawalla*

Co-opted Member
Parizad Dantra

I have said it over and over again.

"The Association is the life line that bonds us to one another as a community"

I experienced it first hand once again.

We are all away from family and friends and it is the community that will rush to your aid when you need help. Gathering every email id I could possibly lay my hands on , I started sending out appeals to International Zarathustee Associations. In a matter of a few hours, I was flooded with responses and queries. Both " ZANZ" and "little Khushru" were known to every Zarathustee Association of any significance.

Money and pledges started coming in soon after. Emails were being sent out and forwarded to others by friends of friends and total strangers were calling me up on the phone from far flung corners of the world with offers of help. The community opened their hearts and their wallets both in New Zealand and internationally. The Zarathustees of Sydney went so far as to find accommodation close to Khushru's hospital , pay the rent and even offered to stock up groceries, provide transport and any other assistance for the Mehta's, when they got to Sydney.

We encountered little angels of mercy every step of the way!!.

It was an enormously emotional and humbling experience for me personally, as it was for the Mehta family.

Our community may be divided on various matters concerning the religion and may be extremely vocal and critical about opinions and attitudes. However when the need arises not one person or association cared to ask me what my beliefs were or what ZANZ stood for .We could be right wing or left wing ... no body frankly cared !!.

WZO - UK , FEZANA, Dastur Kutar Funds UK, The Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York, the Hong kong Anjuman, Zoroastrians of Western Australia (ZAWA) , the Zoroastrians of Sydney (AZA)& Dubai responded immediately.

Individuals in New Zealand and other parts of the world amazed us with their generosity.

Today we have raised a very handsome amount and it frankly still amazes me that we could achieve this.

It has taught me a great lesson in life ... never to question the innate generosity and goodness that exists within each one of us.

The Special Fundraising Nite in Auckland organized by a few well wishers ,was the absolute icing on the cake. A sum of \$6000/- was raised in just one evening.

For me there as a special contentment... that we had come this far. For one of our own.. we stood together in unity and harmony. At heart we are all true Zarathustees.

It has become fashionable and convenient to discredit some one who thinks differently and the incessant quarrels in the name of religion are tearing the fabric of our wonderful community.

We have become so intolerant with our religious bigotry.

How easy it is to push our kids away from the community and we must all accept responsibility for it. But when something like this brings the community together it is indeed a revelation of who we are and what we stand for.

For me my four years as President of ZANZ have been the most gratifying and enriching years of my life. It has been a learning curve of great magnitude .

I am humbled by this opportunity, to make a small difference in some one else's life.

If at all I have learnt much from the courage and determination of the Mehta's.

ZANZ is not there just to provide you with a dinner and dance on New Year.

It is a part of who we are and how we live.

I have had the pleasure and honor of working with a great and dedicated team of people.

It has been an amazing journey.

It has made me realize how important my community is to me and how wonderfully supportive they have been of all that I have wanted to achieve.

Their words of encouragement and advice to me were priceless.

We have wonderful bright kids and our youth will take us forward in this new world we call our home . They will look to us for guidance and let us not fail them.

I am eagerly anxious to see ZANZ become an international organization.

We have made a small beginning.

Let us put aside our petty differences . Let us enrich and empower ourselves with our unity and let us ensure we remain in harmony with each other.

Rashna Dorab Tata

THE FIRE WITHIN!!

The Zarathustrian Association of New Zealand, (ZANZ) in collaboration with WZO, organized a two day Seminar and Lecture series on the 5th and 6th of May, 2007 in Auckland.

Dina McIntyre and Farrokh Vajifdar, both extremely knowledgeable Zoroastrian scholars and famous speakers, were invited to conduct the lectures on the Zoroastrian Religion , History and Culture.

An extremely diverse range of topics were covered over 8 sessions encompassing various aspects of the religion. Topics of great general interest such as, “The Significance and meaning of the Yatha Ahu Vairyo Prayer”, “Harmony in Paradox” , “The Application of the Gathas in Today’s World” & “Zarathustra’s Puzzles” were well balanced with issues of great controversy such as “Conversion and Acceptance”, “Death and Disposal of the Dead” & “The Future of Zoroastrianism”.

Both Dina and Farrokh belong to a rapidly growing group of rational thinkers and educated scholars who are fluent in the scriptures , written texts , ancient languages and their dialects. Their presentations rely on hard evidences, references and quotes from ancient texts , the Gathas, Yasnas, Yashts , Niyaeshes, Rivayats and various texts spanning a time frame of 1000 years and also include references from later day research, as opposed to relying on rabid prejudices and misconceived notions based on hearsay which is often mistaken for “tradition”.

Dina a retired attorney from Pittsburg, has been a student of the teachings of Zarathustra since the early 1980’s and was the Editor of a 12 lesson course on the Gathas called “An Introduction to the Gathas of Zarathustra”. Her writings have appeared in various Zarathustee Journals and websites. She is a much sought after speaker and has lectured at various seminars and conferences all over the world.

Farrokh Vajifdar converted from Parsiism to Zoroastrianism at the age of 19 and has not ceased studying Indo – Iranian civilizations since.

He specializes in the history, languages , literatures and religions of Ancient Iran.

He categorizes himself as an independent researcher and has collaborated with noted non Zoroastrian and aspiring Parsi authors on translations, articles and books. Farrokh is a Fellow (and former Vice –President) and (Fellow- in -Council) of the Royal Asiatic Society and a review contributor to its journal.

The immense wealth of knowledge that these two speakers collectively brought with them, promised the people of Auckland an exhilarating and enriching two days.

What was absolutely remarkable was that the intent and purpose of both the speakers was to put forth information that was derived through long years of diligent and scholarly analyses and it was for the listener to absorb it, weigh it and balance it against existing preconceived fallacies and finally arrive at their own conclusion. They most certainly were not fanatical preachers raving from the pulpits!!



Youth Session with Farrokh & Dina on 7th of May, 2007

Dina in her soft and gentle manner cited chapter and verse, to present and prove that “Zarathustra’s Zoroastrianism” was meant for all mankind.

Her thorough and detailed study of the Gathas brought to life the Yatha Ahu Vairyo prayer . The depth of meaning and significance behind every word of the prayer was unfolded with such simplicity that it left the audience feeling humbled, by the intensity of this basic prayer known to every Zoroastrian of every age.

“The Yatha Ahu Vairyo, sets you on the path of Truth and Good Thinking.

This prayer is a mantra , a nugget of wisdom the purpose of which is to remind us of certain truths as we recite it”.

“Good thinking is the key to accessing the factual truths of our universe. It is the key to understanding the truths of the mind and spirit, it is the key to accessing the divine and good thinking, which according to Zarathustra requires that we think for ourselves ... not blindly follow or accept what others tell us to.

After all even Zarathustra when asking for Mazda’s guidance, requests that it be given through good thinking”.

Zarathustra says “ instruct through good thinking (the course) of my direction, in order to be the charioteer of my will and my tongue” .Y50.6

“ When we create light, the darkness ceases to exist. We create light by bringing the divine to life with our choices. Our choices of who and what we worship our choices in thought, word and action stemming from an understanding of Asha”.

“Zoroastrianism today... but what of its future??”, was Farrokh’s earnest plea to the people of New Zealand. The sincerity and passion with which he spoke was missed by none.

“If you do not think of a future you most assuredly will not have one. To forecast the future of our wonderful religion we need to take into account its current circumstances. Each land of our new Zoroastrian Diaspora, forms for us it’s own special circumstances and challenges. The myth of ritual being every thing is slowly but surely receding”.

“Divisions between the so called reformists and orthodox sections of our diminutive community have led to disillusionment and even desertion.

The common perception about us amongst our youth, is one of incessant and pointless quarrel”.

How true his words were... Sadly enough a majority of the community, the world over, see themselves as belonging to two categories “ Traditional” or “ Modern”. There is a thick grey line that separates the two and there is no “ in-between”. Have we lost the will to erase this line ?. Do we really need to classify ourselves as one or the other?.

Unfortunately this same scenario also exists in New Zealand today.... and in spite of the best efforts of many to erase this division. Amongst such a small group of people, most of whom are still first generation migrants... we already have irreconcilable differences.

Two Zarathustee Associations, who cannot even come together on the basic definition of a “Zarathustee”.

Dina very rightly stated, “Unless we start teaching Zarathustra’s original teachings we will loose our kids, as we are living in a society today where our kids will question everything”. Zarathustras’s teachings are so relevant to life , we wont have any problems keeping our kids . In the Gathas lies the “key to our survival”.

“The promise of Frashokereti is only as near as you can make it happen. There is strength in Good and there is strength in Harmony and together we can fulfill our aspirations and destinies”.

The recent bitter controversies surrounding “Death and Disposal of the dead” have torn the very fabric of our community in India, going so far as to raise a stink in the cosmopolitan media.

Yet don’t we deal with the disposal of the dead in other parts of the world, where “dakhmenashini” does not prevail, in a sensible and pragmatic manner making use of alternate systems.



ZANZ Managing Committee with Dina & Farrokh

Where “dakhmenashini” is simply not an option, have we not started new traditions based on the times and circumstances of our new homeland.

Do these “Zarathustee souls”, not find the peace they deserve simply because they did not die in India?.

Farrokh laid bare the fears and ignorance that generations of gullible people have been susceptible to. He did this by presenting factual history, as opposed to so much of the fiction that unfortunately prevails.

Some of our so called time honored tradition, were in fact neither of great antiquity nor had they formed part of our “religious traditions”. They were simply social phenomena which grew and faded with the passage of time. Change does not mean a break in continuity!!

The most fruitful part of this entire lecture tour, was the Special Youth Session that was organized for the youth of Auckland at my house.

Again no efforts had been spared by the traditional lot , to ensure that the youth stayed away.

However not only did the youth turn up in large numbers, they stayed talking with Farrokh and Dina till late at night , totally immersed in a most thought provoking and captivating debate, on various topics of interest to them.

The energy and interaction that night was simply amazing.

Both Farrokh and Dina had nothing but praise for the high level of awareness and interest and thirst for knowledge, exhibited by our youth in New Zealand.

They went so far as to mention, “The future of Zoroastrianism is in safe hands in New Zealand”.

My question to all those judgmental individuals, all over the world has always been, why do you have so little faith in our youth... to do the right thing in taking our religion forward ?.

Our youth have an inquisitive , intelligent and enquiring mind. It is in the interest of the community to keep this curiosity in the religion an open, accountable and answerable dialogue.

Let them ask the questions and let there be a healthy debate on all issues that concern them.

For the ZANZ Managing Committee, these lectures were not meant to be an attempt to preach , convert or influence any one.

But provide a forum for our members to have a healthy debate on all matters that concern us as a community.

We do not make any assumptions about the right of people to choose and adopt what they think is appropriate for them.

Let their choices be made, after hearing from both the traditional and modern lobby.

Let us assimilate and understand the information we get.

Let each one of us be the judge of what is right and wrong.

Let us be in touch with reality and yet never forget the essential core values of our religion .

Allow each individual to make the right choices, as only then will they have strong convictions in their faith and beliefs.

We are all members of an intelligent community that thrives on knowledge.

We all stand to gain by learning and sharing our knowledge with each other.

Let us make informed decisions and let our choices be based on facts and knowledge and not ones based on hearsay and fear of man- made consequences.

This lecture series and Dina and Farrokh personally ,gave this and so much more to the people of Auckland.

The feedback from the people who attended the lectures, was brilliantly positive and it made all our efforts worth while.

The Q& A sessions after each lecture were intensely thought provoking and enriching.

The fire within each one of us who were there ...has been ignited!!

We sincerely appreciate the initiative taken by WZO ,and their world wide efforts in creating awareness of our faith, enhancing the understanding between all Zoroastrians , and reigniting our pride in our Zoroastrian identity and values.

***“ May the Fire of Ahura Mazda’s Truth prevail everywhere
in the blest New Homelands of our Zoroastrian Diaspora !!”***

By

Rashna Dorab Tata

ZANZ Prayer Class Activities : 2006 - 2007

ZANZ has been conducting prayer classes year after year and they have been extremely successful and well attended. I personally have been associated with the classes since the last four years.

My sincere thanks to our priests Hormazd Patel & Freddie Gonda, who have given their valuable time and efforts to the community and its children.

The major highlights of 2006 were the "Navruz Table" competition and the skit on Navjote & the Importance of Sudreh & Kusti performed by the children of the prayer class.

The Annual Speech Competition was a great success, and 45 enthusiastic young Zarathustis took part and spoke on various topics, learnt in the prayer class during the whole year. The evening was well attended by parents and there were prizes for the winners and all participants.

I would also like to acknowledge all the generous donors, who contributed by way of financial donations to keep the prayer class going.

By popular demand from the kids, the Navruz table competition was also conducted in 2007, where the children were divided into four groups and competed with each other. The judges were absolutely amazed by the wonderful presentations and efforts taken by the different groups.

Throughout the year various topics of great religious interest such as the Power of Prayers, Sarosh Baaj and other Basic Prayers with their meanings, the importance of our twelve months of the year etc.

On a personal note, I wish to thank all the parents who took a keen interest and also participated in the events and made sure that their children attended regularly. The ZANZ prayer class is an asset to the community and is contributing towards the spiritual and religious development of our kids in Auckland

Ushta—Te'
Shernaz Darukhanawalla



Our first prize winner, Miss Natasha Wadia at the Annual Speech Competition



The young participants at the Annual Speech Competition of the ZANZ Prayer Class

(This article on ZANZ appeared in the 'Parsiana' issue of October, 2006)

Zoroastrians abroad - Bonding in New Zealand.

"The Zoroastrian Association of New Zealand (ZANZ) plays a very significant part in the lives of the local Zoroastrian community of Auckland and its popularity can be judged by the large crowd turnout and easy camaraderie among its members," notes a writeup by ZANZ president Rashna D. Tata, giving details of their different activities.

"It is a matter of great pride and joy that at an age when most young people resist going to events where their parents are present as well, here in Auckland all ZANZ events have a huge youth presence and they thoroughly enjoy being a part of all community events," she writes. In addition to one social function organized by ZANZ every month the fortnightly prayer class attended by over 40 kids is also very popular.

Sixty Zoroastrian youth from 14 to 30 years of age came together for "**Saints N Sinners**", the Valentine's Day Ball in February organized by the youngsters with support from the managing committee which is presently in its third year of office. The committee includes Tanaz Sigantoria, Yasmin Katki, Minoo Arsiwalla, Shernaz Darukhanawalla, Riaz Dadabhoy, Merzin Ghasiali and PARizad Dantra, besides Tata.

The Navroz Jashan was attended by over 130 people in spite of it being a working day. For those anxious to get their annual dose of natak nostalgia, a special Fund Raising Nite was organized on April 22 at the Bucklands Beach Hall when the Gujarati natak "**Chalo Jeher Paiyee**", directed by Shahanaaz Patel, was performed after which a four course *lagan nu bhonu* (wedding feast) was served.

A special souvenir was brought out that evening and a sponsorship deal with Vision Asia (the providers of Zee, Star Plus and Sony TV in New Zealand) helped the Association make a handsome profit which will be put to use for future community events. As notes the report by Tata, a self confessed natak buff, "The cast comprised of local ZANZ members, a very talented lot, who had spent many evenings over the previous two months rehearsing in their garages, emoting dramatic Gujarati dialogues loudly till late at night, much to the consternation of their Kiwi neighbors."

Zoroastrian Sports Day, elocution and talent competitions were the other attractions planned by ZANZ. The annual telephone directory of all Zoroastrians in New Zealand as also their annual news letter, the ZANZ Gazette are popular amongst their members.

With a membership of 141 families, most of them being first generation immigrants from India, Pakistan, South East Asia and the Middle East, the Association is "the lifeline that bonds us to each other and allows us to hold on to our Parsipanu. It provides an opportunity for our children, some of whom are born here, to experience a Zoroastrian way of life," sums up Tata.



Children of the ZANZ Prayer Class performing on Khordadsal



ZANZ DIARY

JAN 2006 TO JUNE 2007

February, 2006 - The Valentines Day Ball in February at Pakuranga Country Club.

The ZANZ MG Comm. was extremely keen to bring together the Zarathustrian youth of Auckland and Valentines Day seemed a perfect opportunity to have a function for the age group of 13 to 30.

A group of kids got together to organize the entire event and put in considerable effort in making it a very successful evening.

"Saints N Sinners", provided a platform for 60 Zoroastrian Youth to come together socially and bond as fellow community members. It was an absolutely enjoyable evening and "the evening rocked!!" so the kids claimed. Some very enterprising kids dressed for the occasion as the pictures prove.



March 21st, 2006 — Navruz Jashan at Te-Tuhi The Mark

The ZANZ Navruz Jashan, always a very well attended event, was performed by 9 Dasturs this year, some as young as 11 years and attended by over 130 people inspite of it being a working day.

After the jashan there was a feast of Malida, Rawa, Sev and fruits which were contributed by the ladies of the community.

ZANZ DIARY

JAN 2006 TO JUNE 2007

April 22nd, 2006 — ZANZ Special Fundraising Nite

Parsi Natak & Dinner at the Bucklands Beach Hall

The Association organized a Special Fund Raising Nite on the 22nd of April at the Bucklands Beach Hall .

On the agenda that evening was the eagerly anticipated Gujarati Natak " Chalo Jeher Paiyee " .

It was followed by a full four course Lagan nu Bhoonu, comprising of Sas ni Maachi, Saali Murghi , Mutton Palav dal, Lagan nu Stew accompanied by Kolah nu acchar, rotli and ice cream.

The hall was packed well before the actual show time of 7 pm, with the audience eager to get front row seats .

It was a " House Full" crowd, anxious to get their annual dose of "natak nostalgia" cheering for the show to start.

The cast comprised of local ZANZ members, a very talented lot, who had spent many evenings, over the previous two months rehearsing in their garages, emoting dramatic gujarati dialogues loudly, till late at night , much to the consternation of their Kiwi neighbors.

The natak was performed with great professionalism and show manship.

Heavy doses of Bawaji humor , coupled with characters like "Kali kasari", "Tehmul Tight" , "Pesi Papao" and " Shakey Sethna" , the entire three act performance had the audience in absolute splits.

The loud applause was just rewards for the talented cast members comprising of Shahanaaz Patel , Benifer Irani, Shahazad Contractor, Tehmasp Munshi, Rashna Tata, Tanaz Sigantoria, Jal Mehta, Eric Powvalla, Kersie Khambatta, Jazeel Mistry and Bahadur Kaikobadi.

ZANZ also brought out a Special Souvenir for the evening and obtained a special sponsorship deal from Vision Asia , the providers of Zee, Star Plus and Sony TV in New Zealand.

The association made a handsome profit , which will be put to good use for their future Community programmes



ZANZ DIARY

JAN 2006 TO JUNE 2007

June 24th, 2006—ZANZ Annual General Body Meeting at Te-Tuhi The Mark

A very well attended affair with over 85 members present that evening. A number of valid constitutional changes were discussed and resolved unanimously. On the whole a very productive and fruitful evening with members showing a great interest in the affairs of their organisation.

The members were full of praise for the work put in by the ZANZ Managing Committee.

August 20th, 2006—Parsi New Year Celebrations

The morning started with a celebratory jashan at the Bucklands Beach hall. A very well attended affair with over 200 people. The jashan was performed by ten dasturs from the community and the morning ended with a feast of sev, malido, rava and fruits. It was wonderful to see the community come together to celebrate this auspicious day.

This was followed by a Dinner-n-Dance function at the Howick Bowling Club.

A very joyful and enjoyable evening with over a 180 people in attendance. Various prizes were won by some very deserving participants for “Best dressed traditional male and female” ; “Best dancing couple”; and “Best dressed child”.

The prizes were sponsored by , Shenaaz & Homi Mistry of Bharat Roofing.

The food was catered by Garam Masala and the koliwada fish was a great hit.

September 30th, 2006— ZANZ Bowling Evening at Panmure Super Bowls

A very competitive and fun event for both young and old. Eight teams gave each other a tough time with some fabulous individual performances.

Winners in the Junior category were Daisy Powvalla and Farshid Daruwalla.

Female senior category winners were Tanaz Siganporia & Monaz Bharucha.

Male senior category winners were Minoor Arsiwalla & Shahrukh Khambatta.

At the end of the evening, members were already clamouring for more similar events



ZANZ DIARY

JAN 2006 TO JUNE 2007

December 2006— Zoroastrian Directory

Year after year, ZANZ takes pride in putting out a directory with details of Zoroastrian families living in New Zealand. It is a public service venture which is well appreciated by the community.

December 9th, 2006—ZANZ Annual Christmas Party at Te- Tuhi The Mark

49 young Zarthusti children with parents and grand-parents in to, enthusiastically attended the evening and waited for Santa's arrival.

The evening's activities started with face painting, games, music, dancing and lots of delicious treats. Our female Santa, Anahita Gonda provided great entertainment and enjoyment to the kids.

A hoard of smiling kids went home after a thoroughly enjoyable evening already anticipating the next Christmas Party.

February 24th, 2007 —ZANZ Annual Picnic

About 50 members got together to enjoy a lovely summers day amidst the surf and sand at Long Bay.

March 21st, 2007—Navruz Celebrations

Evening jashan at Te-Tuhi The Mark followed by a Dinner & Dance function at the Howick Bowling Club. A lovely menu catered by our popular parsi chefs Hoshi & Maharukh Katki.



May 5th & 6th, 2007—ZANZ Seminar & lecture series conducted by Dina McIntyre & Farrokh Vajifdar.

On the Zoroastrian religion, culture and history. A very enlightening week end for the Auckland Zarathustis

May 7th, 2007—Special Youth Session at Rashna Tata's residence



Welcome to this world little Zarathustis!

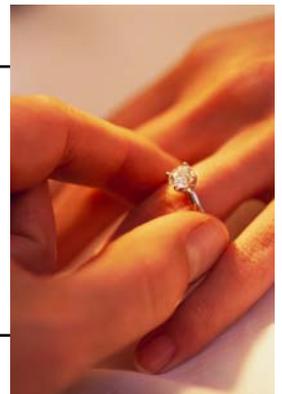
- 1) Sanaya to Schezarine & Raveen Mehra
- 2) Aaryan to Khushru & Kashmiri Umrigar
- 3) Kayan to Frian & Burzin Mehta
- 4) Nadia to Navaz & Paetarasp Mistry
- 5) Jasmine to Delna & Jamshed Mistry
- 6) Mirhan to Daliah & porus Kermani

Our young Zarathustis who were initiated into the faith -

- 1) Kayomi Patrawalla
- 2) Sanaya Hansotia
- 3) Jehangir Homavazir
- 4) Sanaya Damania
- 5) Daisy Powvalla

Weddings :

Sherveer Engineer & Perveen Enty



Young Achievers :

- 1) Delnaz Patrawala was awarded the Junior Trophy and the Most Promising Student Award for Ballet at the Maree Montford School of Ballet (Cascades Dance Centre) for 2006 for examinations held by the Royal Academy of Dance, UK
- 2) Zubbin Navroji Completed the NDBC (New Zealand Diploma in Business Computing) and got a Top Student of the year award for 2006.
 He achieved a 95% merit in the final year project & was awarded the NZCS (New Zealand Computer Society) Trophy 2006
 He graduated with a Bachelor of Information Systems degree in Software Development

 He currently works as an analyst programmer for Simpl, a leading IT company & uses his IT knowledge to help fellow Zoroastrians with their PCs.

(This article appeared in "Upper Crust" Vol 4 No. 2)

Where The Fires Are Always Burning

The holy town of Udvada is where the sacred fire of the Iranshah Atashbehran is burning since Zoroastrians came to India, writes CYRUS H. MERCHANT.

The 20th day of the Zoroastrian calendar is not just another day, but a date with Victory. For, it belongs to the angel Behram Yazata who presides over triumph, success, and victory of all and any sort. Small wonder then that this day sees more bent knees and lowered heads, petitions and pleas... and more than anything, kept promises to Iranshah, as there is little else that bears the Heaven and Earth combo of Behram and Iranshah; McParadise indeed!

Passed down to a generation of us from folklore and the folds of our grannies' sarees, Behram roj and Udvada together signal the arrival of good times, changing times, a turn in a devotee's tide. All through the month you pray around this landmark day, a crescendo of wishes or one single wish which if Behram, favours' clashes with cymbals within the keblah room as a bell is rung ten powerful times. So auspicious is this day that there are more Behrams in the community than there are, say, Cyruses.

There are regular Behram Roj-Iranshah goers, so regular in fact that legend has it that the railway tracks leading to the coastal town of Gujarat are familiar with their names. The pathway to good fortune indeed is a familiar friend to those seeking it.

For over 20, 25 years they go every single Behram Roj, not a roj is missed. I know them by face, name even, but some part of piety is pricked when the privacy of a worshipper is invaded.

There is something about Parsis and food; even on a pilgrimage. The pora (sorry, omelette is no substitute for the onomatopoeic rendition of this word), the akuri sandwich, the baffela ida (boiled eggs), the appetite! Train compartments resemble Cusrow Baug, as throngs make the journey to what Nairyosangh Dhaval established as the most anointed fire in the world.

They have their train pass, their pudhina-chai flask, their faith. Armed with these three and little else, they board at 5.40. Mostly from Bombay Central, full of vim even at that hour, eagerly awaiting Dinshaw from Dadar Parsi Colony to join them in ten minutes at the next stop. Somedoze through the ride, many pray, most eat.

There is something about Parsis and food; even on a pilgrimage. The pora (sorry, omelette is no substitute for the onomatopoeic rendition of this word), the akuri sandwich, the baffela ida (boiled eggs), the appetite! Compartments resemble Cusrow Baug, as throngs make the journey to what Nairyosangh Dhaval established as the most anointed fire in the world. One that takes within it's golden flames all the lusts, longing and unspoken shadows of the human mind and heart. The Fire that burns, also cleanses.



More than Behram Roj, on Adar Mahino Adar Roj (which is the jashan day of Fire and the birth anniversary of the miraculous Iranshah), and on the biggest calendar day of November 24th, additional trains, a genial legacy of the late Homi Taleyarkhan, carry these faithful and their breakfasts. A quick shower and off we go into the sanctum sanctorum. From next door's Globe Hotel and around the globe, they come for even an hour in front of the King Of Fires.

On Behram Roj there is little standing place while the Machi is being performed, chants of Behram Yashts and litanies to Ama Yazata the co-angel of Courage, tan-dorastis, a golden Fire leaping and reaching out to the angels above. It is mesmerising. The evening Aiwisiruthrem Geh even more beautiful as it allows no electricity (quite like Boyce Agiary, Tardeo, Bombay), there are only burning divos and the Iranshah.

Never mind if a prayer is answered or not, but on Behram Roj in Iranshah, a heart finds its peace, a lover, it's beloved and a dreamer his or her dream. You are renewed. Refreshed and you trouble trouble with prayer!

Troubles, like a mistress that haunted you just because you spent some time with her, are finally discarded. All evil is eliminated as you raise the special Udvada garland of pink roses and while (I-don't-know-their-name) flowers. You can't beat the magic of this day, the memories associated with it.

Of love and family and rare togetherness. Fanta bottles, mothers in garas, children running around on the red carpet in their frills and whites, the elderly bent into the blue Avesta books, good-looking young boys in jeans keeping the Parsi gene alive, pretty girls with scarves tied across their faces like Italian maidens on breezing Lambrettas, the NRI parsis so easily distinguishable with their accents and flow of philanthropy. But above all, you see people with faith, Eyes with faith. Yes, it will be done, Behram Yazad and Iranshah will do it for us, they have done it for countless before. More than the perfume of sandalwood, you smell Faith, Hope, Peace. For anyone who erroneously believes that the community is dying, you need to be in Udvada on Behram Roj.

Having fed the soul, you return to your Ratanshah Katila Lodge, amidst gleaming trees in the monsoon and easily the prettiest place to stay in Udvada, you call for the boi and the rickshawallah (who knows every visiting Katy and the prowess of her haggling) and you head back home, always but always by the 3 o'clock train. And turning right towards the walls of the Atash Behram in an ancient symbolic gesture of returning, with eye and heart gazing at the calendar you wait for another calling, on another Behram Roj because I like Life, like Iranshah, something just have a date with destiny.

The more things remain the same, the more they change. Yes you are alarmed, yes you are worried, yes you feel regret and an ineffable sadness and wonder what will happen to your community, your religion. Then on this day, or any other day, you go to Iranshah and you look and you see and you feel, that all is not lost as yet, that in some recess of every mind is a loyal seed waiting to sprout under the splendour and strength of Behram. That like the Gujarat Mail that no matter how late, comes to its platform, the lost will return home... to a waiting Father who knows that as far as bad times go, always is not forever.

By - Cyrus Merchant

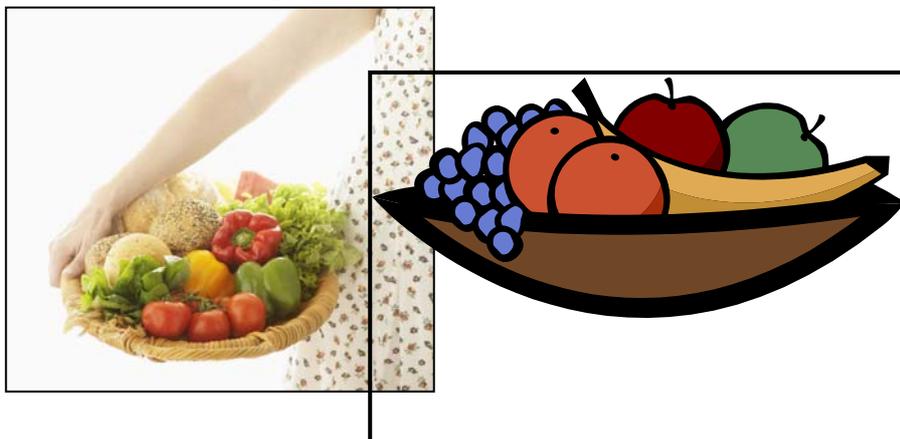


5 GOOD REASONS WHY ONE SHOULD YES TO FRUITS & VEGES - What does it do for you

	1	2	3	4	5
apples	Protects your heart	prevents constipation	Blocks diarrhea	Improves lung capacity	Cushions joints
apricots	Combats cancer	Controls blood pressure	Saves your eyesight	Shields against Alzheimer's	Slows aging process
artichokes	Aids digestion	Lowers cholesterol	Protects your heart	Stabilizes blood sugar	Guards against liver disease
avocados	Battles diabetes	Lowers cholesterol	Helps stops strokes	Controls blood pressure	Smoothes skin
bananas	Protects your heart	Quiets a cough	Strengthens bones	Controls blood pressure	Blocks diarrhea
beans	Prevents constipation	Helps hemorrhoids	Lowers cholesterol	Combats cancer	Stabilizes blood sugar
beets	Controls blood pressure	Combats cancer	Strengthens bones	Protects your heart	Aids weight loss
blueberries	Combats cancer	Protects your heart	Stabilizes blood sugar	Boosts memory	Prevents constipation
broccoli	Strengthens bones	Saves eyesight	Combats cancer	Protects your heart	Controls blood pressure
cabbage	Combats cancer	Prevents constipation	Promotes weight loss	Protects your heart	Helps hemorrhoids
cantaloupe	Saves eyesight	Controls blood pressure	Lowers cholesterol	Combats cancer	Supports immune system
carrots	Saves eyesight	Protects your heart	Prevents constipation	Combats cancer	Promotes weight loss
cauliflower	Protects against Prostate Cancer	Combats Breast Cancer	Strengthens bones	Banishes bruises	Guards against heart disease
cherries	Protects your heart	Combats Cancer	Ends insomnia	Slows aging process	Shields against Alzheimer's
chestnuts	Promotes weight loss	Protects your heart	Lowers cholesterol	Combats Cancer	Controls blood pressure
chili peppers	Aids digestion	Soothes sore throat	Clears sinuses	Combats Cancer	Boosts immune system
figs	Promotes weight loss	Helps stops strokes	Lowers cholesterol	Combats Cancer	Controls blood pressure
fish	Protects your heart	Boosts memory	Protects your heart	Combats Cancer	Supports immune system
flax	Aids digestion	Battles diabetes	Protects your heart	Improves mental health	Boosts immune system
garlic	Lowers cholesterol	Controls blood pressure	Combats cancer	kills bacteria	Fights fungus
grapefruit	Protects against heart attacks	Promotes Weight loss	Helps stops strokes	Combats Prostate Cancer	Lowers cholesterol
grapes	saves eyesight	Conquers kidney stones	Combats cancer	Enhances blood flow	Protects your heart
green tea	Combats cancer	Protects your heart	Helps stops strokes	Promotes Weight loss	Kills bacteria
honey	Heals wounds	Aids digestion	Guards against ulcers	Increases energy	Fights allergies
lemons	Combats cancer	Protects your heart	Controls blood pressure	Smoothes skin	Stops scurvy
limes	Combats cancer	Protects your heart	Controls blood pressure	Smoothes skin	Stops scurvy

(Cont'd)

	1	2	3	4	5
mangoes	Combats cancer Controls blood pressure	Boosts memory	Regulates thyroid	aids digestion	Shields against Alzheimer's
mushrooms		Lowers cholesterol	Kills bacteria	Combats cancer prevents constipation	Strengthens bones
oats	Lowers cholesterol	Combats cancer Promotes Weight loss	Battles diabetes		Smoothes skin
olive oil	Protects your heart Reduce risk of heart attack		Combats cancer	Battles diabetes	Smoothes skin
onions	Supports immune systems prevents constipation	Combats cancer	Kills bacteria	Lowers cholesterol Straightens respiration	Fights fungus
oranges		Combats cancer	Protects your heart		
peaches	Protects against heart disease	Combats cancer Promotes Weight loss	Helps stops strokes	aids digestion	Helps hemorrhoids Aggravates diverticulitis
peanuts	Strengthens bones	Relieves colds	Combats Prostate Cancer	Lowers cholesterol	Blocks diarrhea
pineapple	Slows aging process	prevents constipation	Aids digestion	Dissolves warts	Protects against heart disease
prunes			boosts memory Conquers kidney stones	Lowers cholesterol	
rice	Protects your heart	Battles diabetes		Combats cancer	Helps stops strokes
strawberries	Combats cancer	Protects your heart	boosts memory	Calms stress	
sweet potatoes	Saves your eyesight	Lifts mood	Combats cancer	Strengthens bones	
tomatoes	Protects prostate	Combats cancer	Lowers cholesterol	Protects your heart	Protects against heart disease
walnuts	Lowers cholesterol Promotes Weight loss	Combats cancer	boosts memory Conquers kidney stones	Lifts mood	
water		Combats cancer Promotes Weight loss		Smoothes skin Helps stops strokes	Controls blood pressure
watermelon	Protects prostate	prevents constipation	Lowers cholesterol	Helps stops strokes	
wheat germ	Combats Colon Cancer	prevents constipation	Lowers cholesterol	Helps stops strokes	improves digestion
wheat bran	Combats Colon Cancer	prevents constipation	Lowers cholesterol	Helps stops strokes	improves digestion
yogurt	Guards against ulcers	Strengthens bones	Lowers cholesterol	Supports immune systems	Aids digestion



Life in the 1500's

The next time you are washing your hands and complain because the water temperature isn't just how you like it, think about how things used to be.

Here are some facts about the 1500s:

These are interesting...

Most people got married in June because they took their yearly oath in May, and still smelled pretty good by June. However, they were starting to smell, so brides carried a bouquet of flowers to hide the body odor.

Hence the custom today of carrying a bouquet when getting married.

Baths consisted of a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice clean water, then all the other sons and men, then the women and finally the children Last of all the babies. By then the water was so dirty you could actually lose someone in it.

Hence the saying, "Don't throw the baby out with the bath water."

Houses had thatched roofs-thick straw-piled high, with no wood underneath. It was the only place for animals to get warm, so all the cats and other small animals (mice, bugs) lived in the roof. When it rained it became slippery and sometimes the animals would slip and off the roof.

Hence the saying "It's raining cats and dogs."

There was nothing to stop things from falling into the house. This posed a real problem in the bedroom where bugs and other droppings could mess up your nice clean bed. Hence, a bed with big posts and a sheet hung over the top afforded some protection. That's how canopy beds came into existence. The floor was dirt. Only the wealthy had something other than dirt.

Hence the saying "dirt poor."

The wealthy had slate floors that would get slippery in the winter when wet, so they spread thresh (straw) on floor to help keep their footing. As the winter wore on, they added more thresh until when you opened the door it would all start slipping outside. A piece of wood was placed in the entranceway.

Hence the saying a "thresh hold." (Getting quite an education, aren't you?)

In those old days, they cooked in the kitchen with a big kettle that always hung over the fire. Every day they lit the fire and added things to the pot. They ate mostly vegetables and did not get much meat. They would eat the stew for dinner, leaving leftovers in the pot to get cold overnight and then start over the next day. Sometimes stew had food in it that had been there for quite a while.

Hence the rhyme, "Peas porridge hot, peas porridge cold, peas porridge in the pot nine days old."

Continued..

Sometimes they could obtain pork, which made them feel quite special. When visitors came over, they would hang up their bacon to show off. It was a sign of wealth that a man could "bring home the bacon." They would cut off a little to share with guests and would all sit around and "chew The fat."

Those with money had plates made of pewter. Food with high acid content caused some of the lead to leach onto the food, causing lead poisoning death. This happened most often with tomatoes, so for the next 400 years or so, tomatoes were considered poisonous.

Bread was divided according to status. Workers got the burnt bottom of the loaf, the family got the middle, and guests got the top, or "upper crust." Lead cups were used to drink ale or whisky. The combination would sometimes

knock the imbibers out for a couple of days. Someone walking along the road would take them for dead and prepare them for burial. They were laid out on the kitchen table for a couple of days and the family would gather around and eat and drink and wait and see if they would wake up.

Hence the custom of holding a "wake."

England is old and small and the local folks started running out of places to bury people. So they would dig up coffins and would take the bones to a "bone-house" and reuse the grave. When reopening these coffins, 1 out of 25 coffins were found to have scratch marks on the inside and they realized they had been burying people alive. So they would tie a string on the wrist of the corpse, lead it through the coffin and up through the ground and tie it to a bell. Someone would have to sit out in the graveyard all night (the "graveyard shift") to listen for the bell; thus, someone could be "saved by the bell" or was

KIDS CORNER - ACTIVITY : Shiny Farvahar

The farvahar is the symbol of Ahura Mazda. Each part of the farvahar represents a Zoroastrian idea. For example, its two wings are the symbols of Good and Evil. The man on its center portrays a person's mind. And the ring on his hand represents power. Now let's make a shiny farvahar to hang on your wall.

You will need:

Thick cardboard; Pencil. Craft knife; Yarn; Glitter; Glue

Directions:

1. Draw a farvahar on the cardboard. Ask an adult to help you cut it out.
2. Cut out two holes on the corners of its wings.
3. Spread glue all over it.
4. Sprinkle the glitter on it. Allow the glue to dry.
5. String a piece of yarn through the hole and knot the ends.
6. Hang the farvahar on the wall.



"Charity indeed begins at home"

A Special Fund Raising Nite to raise money for little Khushru Mehta, was organised by his well wishers on the 16th of June at the Riverina School Hall & was attended by over 185 kind hearted and charitable people.

Bilkish Vazifdar and Simonil Karai organised the evening and somemore large hearted individuals joined hands, to put up an evening of Great Entertainment and Fantastic Food.

All proceeds from the ticket sales were given to the Mehta Family and all organizational & food costs were met completely by the generous well wishers.

Three hilarious Parsi Nataks were performed and set the mood for the evening followed by some more dance items and vocal music.

The dinner was also cooked and catered for inhouse to save costs.... a fantastic effort .

Additional funds were raised with a great auction session.

The people present there that evening, were all there to help little Khushru and the auction fetched some great money.

It was an evening for a deserving cause and the lovely folk of Auckland rose to the occasion.

A total amount of \$6000/- was raised in that one evening and it was donated for Khushru's medical needs.

Frian & Burzin Mehta, Khushru's parents were also present and thanked the crowd and the people of Auckland profusely.

Bilkish Vajifdar & Simonil Karai
organizers for the evening



Frian conveying her thanks to the audience



Acknowledgement by Friian Wadia

Storms come and rip through our lives, and yet they pass away bringing about a peace and calm, a new beginning, a new way of life, new bonds and ties.....until there comes another storm! Through it all, I believe what carries us to the other side is the strength in our souls, the courage in our spirit and the love in our lives. On a lighter side,..... I believe it is the wind that carries us through to the other side (of course that is if we are light enough to be carried)!

A storm ripped us not a long time ago, and it changed our life forever! When Burzin and I found out the extent of problems our precious baby Khushru, (then 15 months old) was facing, we didn't know if we would ever find happiness again, ever be able to love like before, or smile and laugh the way we used to. Our dreams were crushed, because we knew we wouldn't be able to do a lot of the things we planned to and wished to with our precious boy. We were sad because our baby would not have the chance to live a normal life. We were sad because our happiness had been ripped away..... our happiness was our baby.

Why did it happen? How will we manage? Will he go to school? Will he ever play soccer? Will he be safe? Will he be happy? Will he go to college, get married, have children and live a life like we all do? So many questions and not one answer! It has been very difficult not knowing what to expect, not knowing what will happen or when it will happen.

The first few months were grim, filled with despair, hurt, anger, sadness and very little hope. Yet, the tiniest bit of hope kept us going. We struggled and did everything possible that could help our child in the slightest way possible. The love we shared held us together. We took turns feeling sad, because when one was down, the other had to cheer us up and hold us together. We soon learnt who our true family and friends were; a few walked away, but many stepped forward to stand by us. Their love and support gave us courage.

As the storm passed, the sky cleared and clouds parted. Soon things fell into perspective. Feeling sad would not change things..... so we learnt to smile! Chasing crushed dreams would bring no happiness..... so we learnt to dream again! Self pity would do no good..... so we learnt to be proud of our family, our life and most of all our precious children! When we did a stock take, the finding wasn't so bad. A quick look around us, told us we were better off than a lot others. We had love, family, friends, courage and most of all we had God listening to our prayers. So we learnt to appreciate the good in our life.

Our priority was always, and still remains, our children's well being and happiness. We decided to work towards doing what was best for Khushru and to help him with a good start in life. In spite of all the hurdles, it is quite amazing what human beings can do when they are determined and focused. (Just like a stubborn child.....the kind that Khushru is soon becoming! J)

It hasn't been an easy road for us, but we've had a guiding hand,.....the hand of God. He helped us in different ways, through different people. He opened doors, lit up the way, gave us strength, kept us in good health through all the running about for appointments and my pregnancy, gave me excellent ideas to tackle several roadblocks within the public health system, and he even helped me get net savvy to research the best medical options and intervention for Khushru. We also had some angels,.....well wishers and supporters who believed in us and helped us when we needed help the most. They gave us money, they gave us courage, and most importantly they gave us their good wishes and prayers.

At a recent stock take I believe we seem to be doing better than we did before the storm. We are stronger, we are larger (a family of 4 now, instead of 3 as of when the storm hit), we have more friends now than we ever did before, we are more knowledgeable and smarter than before and our precious angel Khushru is more famous than any other 2 year old I happen to know!

Of course, as life goes on we never know when the next storm might hit. We still have plenty of questions unanswered, lots of worries and fears, and a long journey of learning and living. But the support of family, friends and our community has meant that we can face each day with greater hope and lesser anxiety. When you are surrounded by caring people considerate enough to give you a helping hand, it is a lot easier to pick up the strewn pieces in the after math of a storm.

I wish to sincerely thank everyone here at ZANZ, the ZANZ Managing Committee and the members, as well as our larger Zoroastrian community in New Zealand and across the world. The ZANZ president, Rashna Tata's penmanship has helped us reach an exceptionally large community across the world. You have all helped our family through this storm, and allowed us to be better parents. Most of all, you have helped us give our precious little child, the best opportunity to cope with the multitude of difficulties in his life! God Bless you all!

Thank You!