

BASZA newsletter Issue 7/2019

The House Journal of **Borivli & Suburban Zoroastrian Association** (Registration no. F-3992)

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Views expressed herein are not necessarily the views of BASZA



**Wishing all
BASZAites a
Very Happy
Jamshedi
Navroz**

Your Executive Committee had planned to hold a gala Jamshedi Navroz Celebratory Function on 5th April, 2020. However, looking to the pace at which the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) is spreading all over the country, including in Mumbai, we have decided to call off the function in the interests of everyone's health and safety. We trust you will bear with us.

BASZA celebrates NY

Amateur singer, Khushnuma Desai, a resident of Dahisar, stepped forward to entertain a gathering of about 45 Parsi-Iranis at the Rustomjee School on Sunday, 5th January under the auspices of BASZA, singing a number of Bollywood and western songs including the adaptation, "Ahura Mazda". Her husband, Adil, was always at her side helping her with the Karaoke technology on his laptop. The action-packed celebration was held to greet the onset of 2020!

Following Khushnuma, the evening saw Kersi Daruwalla presenting a mimicry of popular Bollywood actors. Even more than his voice, it was his arresting and energetic body movements which caught the fancy of the crowd that frequently burst into laughter and applause. A couple of rounds

of the ever-popular Housie ensued, with BASZA's nonagenarian founder president, Dhunmai Minocher, creating minor history by winning both the first full house and the second full house of the same game on multiple tickets.

The pre-dinner events wound up with Antakshari where Farida Toorkey who, far above everyone else, was the toast of the town with her beautiful voice and a huge library of songs in her repertoire.

Looking after the aged¹

There is a large number of Parsis who spent the better part of their youth in caring for and looking after every need of their children but find themselves abandoned to adverse fate when those children grow up, have their own families, and at times leave India to live a

¹ BASZA expresses gratitude to publications like Parsi Khabar, Jam é Jamshed, Parsi Times, Parsiana, Times of India, Mid-Day, Parsi Bol, and others, from where we may have condensed the published items, with or without embellishment.

comfortable life in the West. Many do not even support their old parents financially despite earning large salaries abroad.

There is a strong case for converting the PGH, or at least a significant part of it, into an infirmary.... provided admission to it and stay is limited to the ailing and it is not prohibitively priced

Then there are other Parsis who never married and therefore have no children who they may hope to look after them in their old age.

Given the ripe old age to which our Community lives – an average of about 80 – and given certain genetic illnesses to which we are prone, many become immobile or bed-ridden and need help.

We therefore need more of old peoples' homes and infirmaries than we currently have, particularly infirmaries where ailing Parsis are admitted and well looked after.

Following the withdrawal of the generous donation offered to revive the Parsee General Hospital, it is more likely than not that this beautiful building will go the abandoned way of the Parsi Lying-in Hospital. There is a strong case for converting the hospital, or at least a significant part of it, into an infirmary. That would serve a very valuable purpose provided admission to it and stay is limited to the ailing and it is not prohibitively priced. In fact, it should be heavily

subsidized for the average low/middle-class Parsi.

Apart from this, old peoples' homes are needed for those who are otherwise reasonably fit. Many of the dharamsalas and sanatoria around Mumbai and South Gujarat that are not being patronized as much as they should, could be partly converted into old peoples' homes with related infrastructure and funding to care for the aged.

The initiative taken by Kolkata in having the Parsi youth visit old people and give them care and company is also worth emulating in Mumbai and other cities with a sizable Parsi populations like Thane, Pune, Surat, Ahmedabad, etc.

This may be taken up as a Project by the Bombay Parsi Panchayet with a combined sub-committee of Trustees and non-Trustees to spearhead it.

It was only recently in the press that an 87-year old, Dinshaw Gandhi, whose wife had died and who had no children, willed his entire estate to his Tardeo physician, Dr Veena Patel, who looked after him and whom he is said to have considered as his daughter.

Poonawalla working on COVID-19 vaccine

Following the outbreak of the deadly Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) across the

world, the Serum Institute of India of Pune has developed a vaccine candidate in collaboration with American Institute of Biotechnology firm, Codagenix. The vaccine candidate has progressed to the pre-clinical testing stage – ie the animal trial phase. It is expected that the vaccine candidate will be tried out on humans in 6-months' time. It may be noted that no vaccine or cure has yet been discovered in the world to combat this variety of Coronavirus.

The Poonawalla led Serum Institute of India in Pune is the world's largest vaccine manufacturer by number of doses produced and sold globally

Speaking about the development, Adar Poonawalla, CEO of Serum Institute of India, said, "I am glad to share that our combined efforts with the team at Codagenix have borne fruit, and we hope to save millions of lives with this vaccine".

"This breakthrough also shows the country's preparedness to counter global epidemics like the novel coronavirus (COVID-19)," Poonawalla added.

He also said that the vaccine candidate has been developed using a laboratory-made synthetic virus, which is an important breakthrough as it will significantly reduce the time taken to build a shield against the virus.

"We hope to be ready with the vaccine by early 2022. Our vaccine-virus strain is

identical to the original virus and can generate a robust immune response," Adar Poonawalla said.

The Poonawalla led Serum Institute of India in Pune is the world's largest vaccine manufacturer by number of doses produced and sold globally.

The vaccine-virus strain will be the fastest 'Made in India' such vaccine to progress to the human trials phase within six months. The cost of the project is upto Rs 300 crore, SII aims to secure external funding for the project via various global partners.

Adding to the above, Adar Poonawalla, CEO of SII, said, "By August-end, we will have data on mice and primates to submit to regulatory authorities to enter into the human trials phase."

ZYNG 2.0 launched

25th January marked the launch event of a new version of the community youth group, ZYNG (Zoroastrian Youth for the Next Generation) with a gala on the Rustom Baug grounds.

While it was in keeping with the original ethos of ZYNG 1.0 – to make intermingling between young boys and girls of the Community a whole lot of fun, it also showcased a lot of great talent.

A new committee has taken over ZYNG management: Farad Daruwalla, Fiona Karbhari, Farhad Cooper, Delshad Navalmanek, Shanaya

Boyce, Delzin Irani, Pourushashp Mehta, Burjis Zaveri, Zenya Pavri, Burzin Engineer, Bianca Engineer, Natalia Dalal an Zubin Fanibanda.

Kainaz Amaria wins Ethics Award

The NPPA (National Press Photographers Association) has awarded the John Long Ethics award to photojournalist Kainaz Amaria in recognition of her “efforts that have upheld, shaped and promoted ethical behaviour in all forms of visual journalism”...a proud moment for Parsis who have traditionally been looked upon as upholders of ethical behaviour: More so in these days of proliferating “fake news” journalism.

Parsis of Calcutta

After a three-year research into the 240 years old history of Parsis who came and lived in Calcutta, Prochy Mehta has published a book called “Pioneering Parsis of Calcutta”. Following the launch of the book at a function at Olpadvala Memorial Hall, Chowringhee, was a panel discussion moderated by Sam Balsara of Madison World.

Interestingly, Prochy (66) was an avid sportswoman in her youth, having represented Bengal and India in hockey and basketball. She was the first president of the Calcutta Parsi Club, and her family runs one of the biggest outdoor advertising agencies in India.

“Urban Myth” shattered

Vispy Kanga, a scientist in global technology with more than 35 years’ experience, writes that while hydration (drinking water) is important, especially in hot weather, the urban myth that one should drink at least 6-8 glasses a day to survive is absolute bunkum. And though this myth is widespread in magazines and WhatsApp advisories, there is absolutely zero scientific basis to the claim.

That we must drink at least 6-8 glasses per day is absolute bunkum

Each person’s water needs are unique, he says, and one should remember that apart from the liquid we drink, nearly every food that we eat has water in it, and many of us end up getting much of our required liquid intake just from the meals we eat. In short, we may be more hydrated than we need to be.

He cites the Mayo Clinic advice:

- Drink water or other liquids regularly, including with meals;
- Drink any time you feel thirsty or hungry;
- If you are exercising, drink extra before and after a workout;
- It should be easy enough to tell whether you’re hydrated. Thirst, fatigue, and overtly yellow urine are signs of dehydration. Aim for a routine of daily water intake that matches the energy you expend.

“Once Upon A City”

Meher Marfatia, the prodigious columnist has published a book called “Once Upon A City”, containing fifty nostalgic memories of old Bombay’s nooks and corners that have either vanished with the passage of time or are on the verge of it.

GII – The Global Iranshah Initiative

With a 5-star vision statement, the Global Iranshah Initiative has kicked off. It is a global Zarathushti convergence meant to safeguard our Holiest of Holy Atashbehram and its surroundings in perpetuity.

The project has the support of various organisations like FEZANA; ZTFE; Tehran Zorthoshti Anjuman; the Incorporated Zoroastrian Charity Funds of Hong Kong, Canton & Macau; The Parsi Zoroastrian Association of South East Asia in Singapore; Zarathushtrian Association of New Zealand; Karachi Parsi Anjuman Trust Funds; and the Zoroastrian Association of UAE in Dubai. Spearheading the Indian contingent are Noshir Dadrawalla and Vada Dasturji Khurshed Dastoor.

Tinaz Karbhari of Hong Kong, the youth leader who was the Chair of the 6th WZC in New Zealand in 2015, is leading the special portal created for the purpose: www.IranshahInitiative.com that showcases the details of the Project and

also has a donation collection link. A YouTube video can be seen at <https://youtu.be/6V52oT8oMMA>

The 5-star vision of this excellent Initiative is:

- To PRESERVE the sanctity of Iranshah by supporting the caregivers;
- To CREATE a monetary incentive for the present mobed sahebs;
- To INSPIRE future mobeds to pursue mobedi as a bonafide career;
- To KEEP the flame alive by providing a continuous stream of kathi; and
- To PROVIDE round the clock security services for the premises o Iranshah.

On plan is a Global Birth Anniversary Celebration honouring Iranshah on Adar Roj, Adar Mahino on 21st April, 2020. And, a special get-together for the Project at the 2nd World Zoroastrian Youth Leaders Forum in UK at the ASHA Center on 21st may, 2020.

Lal Chimney restoration

The Garib Zarathostiona Rehthan Fund (GZRF) is performing yeoman service by taking up restoration of dilapidated buildings in which low income Parsis

It is far easier and cost-effective to repair old buildings than to go in for redevelopment

reside. One such property was the Lal Chimney Compound in Marzban Colony located in front of Nair Hospital. It has five buildings that have been restored.

The Lal Chimney restoration was the second project undertaken by the GZRF, the first being the Sethna, Gamadia, Patel and Dadiseth buildings off Wadia Street.

The exercise has proved that it is far easier and cost-effective to repair old buildings than to go in for redevelopment, that is obviously more popular with the builder lobby as it rewards them with FSI and TDRs.

3 bids for P L I H

The Parsi Lying-In Hospital (PLIH), built in 1895, where many of the senior citizen generation of Bombay Parsis were born, has been defunct since over three decades. Efforts made in 2011 to convert it into an orthopedic super specialty hospital fell through due to a tussle between the then BPP trustees and the PLIH managing committee for the professed reason that the agreement signed with the healthcare operator was kept secret.

Disposing of community properties is highly problematic...It's definitely not for the faint-hearted

This time both BPP and the PLIH have made public announcement saying that the hospital will be given on sub-lease basis after demolishing the dilapidated structure. "The hospital has not been in use for more than 30 years; the annual liability towards collector's rent and other outgoings is upwards of ₹ 3.5 crores." The bidder will place an interest-free

refundable security deposit and pay quarterly lease rent computed with reference to the percentage of gross revenue of the new hospital. Also, provision will be made for free or concessional treatment for deserving Parsi Zoroastrians.

Following the bid offer, it is said that three parties have expressed an interest to construct, equip and operate the hospital.

"Disposing of community trust property is highly problematic. The interested party needs deep pockets, plenty of patience, a willingness to fight legal battles and attempts to malign his or her name and that of their organisation. It's definitely not for the faint-hearted," said Jehangir Patel, editor of *Parsiiana*, which has an office on the ground floor of PLIH. The J.J. College of Commerce also occupies a few rooms on the second floor. BPP's Yazdi Desai agreed that someone from the community may raise objections. "But we are now better prepared," he said.

2nd workshop of Empowering Mobeds

On 15th and 16th February, "Empowering Mobeds" hosted its second offsite workshop in Sanjan with 30 young mobeds and senior madressa students from Dadar Athornan Institute and some of the older mobeds obtaining insights into topics like communication skills, positive thinking, etiquette, and physical fitness.

The objective of the Empowering Mobeds Programme is to transform mobeds into leaders, rather than mere reciters of payers and performers of ceremonies, and boost their number.

Colaba Agiyari cancels navjote

Following an agitation by a number of community activists, the J D Agiyari at Colaba cancelled the navjote ceremony of two children of a non-Parsi father and a Parsi mother. The ceremony was then reportedly held at the family's home instead.

Scholar Ichaporia passes away

Pallan Ichaporia, an erudite religious scholar, has passed away in Oklahoma. He was a student of avesta and gathic texts, and has contributed numerous presentations and publications over the years. He was a co-founder of SSZ (Society of Scholars of Zoroastrianism) and wrote a thesis on "The Doctrine of Afterlife as Expounded in Avesta, Pahlavi Texts and the Gathas".

6th Return to Roots 2020 kicks off in Mumbai

18 youth from US, Canada, UK, UAE, Pakistan and India gathered at Cusrow Baug Pavilion for the 6th Return to Roots

trip under the aegis of PARZOR. Four alumni will be accompanying the group on the trip.

Later, they went on a tour of Doongerwadi where Zoroastrian scholar Khojeste Mistree guided them on the method of disposal of the dead. Following this, they went to the Ratan Tata Institute to witness the intricate embroidery work being done by Parsi seamstresses, and then tried their hands at making bhakhras and dar-niporis. A visit at the WAPIZ Cama Baug Sale ended the day.

Over the next 14 days the group travelled to Lonavala, Pune, Nargol, Sanjan, Udvada, Navsari, Surat, Baroda and spent a full day in the villages of South Gujarat with the WZO Trust Funds India.

આ અઈરએમાં ઈશ્યોની બંદગી

બનામે યજદે બક્ષાઠ્ઠેહ બક્ષાયશગર મહેરબાન, યાનીમ મનો યાનીમ વયો યાનીમ ક્ષ્યોશ્નેમ અષઓનો જરથુસ્ત્રહે.

“આ અઈરએમાં ઈશ્યો રફેદ્રાઈ જંતુ નેરેબ્યસ્યા જ્ઞથુસ્ત્રહે વન્દેઉશ રફેદ્રાઈ મનન્દહો યા દરેના વૈરીમ હનાત મીજદેમ અશહિયા યાસા અસીમ. યામ ઈશ્યામ અહુરો મસ્તા મઝદાઓ.” (આ ફકરો ૪ વાર પઘવો)

અશેમ વોહુ (૩)

ઐર્યમનેમ ઈશીમ યઝ્માઈદે, એમવ્તેમ વેરેશ્ત્રાજ્નેમ વિત્બએશન્દેમ, મજુસ્તેમ અશહે

સ્રવંઘહામ, ગાથાઓ સ્પેન્તાઓ રતું-ક્ષત્રાઓ
અશઓનીશ યઝમઈદે
સ્તઓત યેસ્ત્ય યઝમઈદે, યા દાતા અંઘહેઉશ
પઓઉરૂયેહ્યા, યેહન્દે હાતામ આયત યેસને પૈઈતી
વહ્ન્દો મઝ્દાઓ અહુરો વએથા અશાંત હયા
યાઓન્દ્યામ્યા તાસયા તાઓસ્યા યઝમઈદે.

Ā Airyemā Ishyo Prayer

Commentary and translation by Erv Dr Ramiyar Karanjia:

Airyaman Yazad: The word Airyaman means “noble mind.” Airyaman Yazad is a co-worker of Ardibahesht Ameshaspand. He is regarded the chief Healer Yazad among all Divine Beings. He was created to counter the innumerable diseases in the world (Vd. 22). He helps in healing diseases that arise out of internal imbalances and also gives overall health.

He also presides over relationships and is invoked for a fulfilling relationship in friendship and marriage, for mending strained relationships as also for compatibility with friends, colleagues and marriage partner. He is invoked for help to find the right marriage partner. He also protects against untimely death, against black magic and all sorts of unseen evils.

In the Vendidad this prayer is referred to as chathrushāmruta “recited four times.” In the prayer of Havan Geh, Airyaman Yazad is invoked as strong, victorious and

one who keeps away harm. The prayer of Airyaman is regarded as second only to the 5 Gathas in efficacy.

Yasna Hā 54 is called the Hā of Airyaman Yazad. It contains the prayer of Airyaman which can be recited separately as the Ā Airyemā Ishyo prayer. This prayer is also a part of marriage benedictions showered on the wedding couple. If the marriage couple practice the teachings of this prayer with a noble mind (airya “noble”, man “mind”), and give love, care and affection to each other, they will be able to have a happy married life.

In the third paragraph of Ardibahesht Yasht it is stated, “the prayer of Airyaman (Hā 54) is the best and most excellent, as it helps overcome pain and disease, especially when the person who prays is righteous.”

The meaning of the Ā Airyemā Ishyo Prayer is:

“In the name of the kind, forgiving and merciful God. Worthy of reward is the thought, worthy of reward is the word, worthy of reward is the deed of righteous Zarathushtra.

“May the much-desired prayer giving happiness and peace of mind reach us for delight and goodness of the Zarathushtrian men and women, who venerate the religious laws and pray for the exalted reward of righteousness which is much desired by exalted Ahura Mazda.

“We revere the much-desired prayer giving happiness and peace of mind, victorious, malice removing, the most exalted in the righteous order of prayers.

We revere the righteous exalted Gathas having power. We revere Staota Yasnya which created the supreme existence.”

DROP

If undelivered, return to:

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