
**THE UNVEILING OF A 4 METER HIGH NUDE BRONZE
FIGURE AT McCLELLAND GALLERY, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA
ON 1-4-2006.**

**The Name Intended to be Given Was 'Zarathushtra', but Dropped at the
Request of the Parsi Community.**

The Agony of a Great Sculptor Peter Schipperheyn and Reflections on the Episode.

The last week of March 2006 had caused a little agitation in the Parsis, particularly of Australia and other foreign countries. McClelland Gallery and Sculpture Park at Zang Warren, Victoria, Australia, published the following announcement in the Media :

"A magnificent 4 meter high bronze figure of Zarathustra will be unveiled by Dame Elisabeth Murdoch on 1st April at McClelland Gallery and Sculpture Park. The eminent Melbourne sculptor Peter Schipperheyn was selected to undertake the mammoth commission. The sculpture will sit in pride on an island in front of the McClelland Gallery."

The inter-net pictures of the figure displayed a beautiful bust of a man standing and looking up above in the skies with uplifted hands; the palm of the left hand has open fingers pointing upwards; the right hand fingers are closed as in a clenched fist, which is placed on the left hand palm. It is not the usual homage position where the palms of the hands touch each other in parallel. The head is taken upwards with the eyes gazing vertically in the sky. This results in a standing posture bent up from the waist to the head in an obtuse angle-waist at about 70° going upto the head reaching 60°. The face is beautifully handsome with a short beard giving a Christ like impression. The whole standing figure looks up as if asking with painful devotion "How is all this my Lord?" The body angles are gravitationally so perfect that the viewer almost hears the question.

And the sculpture has no garment on the

body. It is fully naked and the private part is prominently visible, in perfect manly shape and size.

Art is a transfer of feelings from the artist to the viewer as Tolstoy put it. Here is the figure of a man, spiritually agonised, looking to God and asking : Oh God! What is this human drama? What is this struggle between good and evil, and light and dark? Are not the humans spiritual beings trying to comprehend the mysteries? Show me Thy Light, oh Lord." He is calling for "Light, More Light."

The Parsis were upset because the bronze figure was to be named : "Zarathushtra" and it was stark naked. The Inter-nets vibrated, some violently, some appreciating the beauty but pointing out that Z was our Prophet and the nakedness was offending our religious sentiments.

It appears that the sculptor, Peter Schipperheyn, as also the McClelland Gallery, never dreamt about the agitation. They were taken aback. They had no intention to harm anybody's sacred sentiments. The Gallery in its media announcement for the unveiling of the bronze figure on April 1st, had, after stating the genesis of the sculpture and paying deserving tributes to the sculptor Peter for his formidable artistic talents and achievements, written :

"Zarathustra as a single male figure represents a metaphorical struggle between the forces of dark and light, good and evil. Symbolically locked in tormented pose with his hands aloft, the figure gazing skyward for

redemption, Zarathustra is in part inspired by the 6th century Persian Prophet Zoroaster, who founded the dualistic Philosophy of good and evil."

This information about Z is all wrong. Yashta - Faroharey Zarathushtra Spitmaan was not 6th Century Prophet, but a Divine Messenger of Ahura, who adored the Earth by his divine presence 9000 years back - 7th century B.C. He was not a founding "philosopher" of the "philosophy" of good and evil. The divine Paigambaras are no philosophers having wild thought - conjectures on universe and man. They are the Harbingers of Truth emanating from God. They come to reveal Truths in Nature and teach man-kind how to go back to God. Good and evil, darkness and light, the alchemy of evil into good, the teachings to the humans how to so alchemise are the matters of hidden mysteries, which are not just to be thought out, but are to be lived and experienced.

Yet no blame lies at the door of the art gallery. The Western thinking is out of gears with God. Its foundations are history, geography, philology, etymology, and so called "critical" study of "comparative religions", (which for instance, led Max Muller to term "Zarathushtra purely as a mythical name." ("Collected works" - V- Chips from a German Workshop - Vol. I, page 474.) It has no idea about the mystical Science of human souls' journey towards God, and how to tread the prescribed Paths.

However, the Gallery graciously and gracefully, agreed to drop the name of Zarathustra. Just a couple of days before the unveiling on 1-4-06, the Director of the Gallery announced :

"To whom it may concern.

Thank you for your email. Peter would never have considered naming the sculpture after your prophet had he

"LETTER TO THE GLOBAL ZOROASTRIAN COMMUNITY

I have received quite a number of emails regarding my sculpture. Firstly my sculpture is strictly speaking not a depiction of the Prophet Zarathustra.

I would like to put my position my beliefs and reasons for making this work in some form to discuss further. I believe we are all spiritual beings, I am delving into what are my own Western traditions and spirituality which as you would know has been influenced by Zoroastrianism.

The starting point for my sculpture was the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche's book "Thus Spake Zarathushtra". He wrote this book in the 19th Century. At the time I did not know who Zarathustra was, I wondered why Nietzsche called the protagonist of his book Zarathustra, this led me to research who Zarathustra was. And when I began to understand a little of [I humbly submit I am not a scholar, my knowledge is limited] the power of his ideas and from reading the research of scholars in these areas it is plain to see the influence of his legacy re: Judaism Christianity and Islam.

As an artist I have swum against the tide of Modernism and of Secularism. The ancient world has exerted a power over my imagination; these understanding came to me in good part via the sculpture of Ancient Greece who as an aside portrayed their Gods nude, and this sculptural language set for me a precedent. Even though I have called my sculpture a name, and that you have taken this as an intention by me to depict the Prophet Zarathustra, my sculpture is not an attempt to portray an individual, indeed my sculpture is not a depiction of the Prophet Zarathustra.

It is rather my attempt to portray the essential drama of what it means to be human, of the struggle between good and evil, of light and dark, these are issues common to all peoples and of course there is long a history, hence my reason for naming the sculpture as I have.

In conclusion I apologize for the upset that I have inadvertently caused, however I am concerned that my intentions are being misconstrued and misread, this greatly concerns me. I have not worked so hard for so many years to simply upset people. I feel that I have a responsibility to the world and the beauty of creation to do good, to inspire, to live a purposeful life.

The Gallery [who are not responsible for the naming or otherwise of my sculpture] where this sculpture will be installed has asked me to erase the name, I have agreed to this but I am saddened that this must be done. In my eyes the sculpture remains, but "he" will be stripped of something powerful that I think empowers the viewer, especially the western viewer. I have been so wound up in my own thoughts and excitement about the significance of what I am trying to do that I did not countenance that my artwork would stir up the opposite of what I hoped for.

I thought that I was being provocative to Western Culture by trying to present a work whose message is we are spiritual beings!

Peter Schipperheyn"

known that it would be so insensitive.

He is renaming the work so that there will be no reference to Zarathushtra.

Our apologies for this misunderstandings.

Regards,

Simon Ambrose."

Parsis were supposed to heave a sigh of relief. Internet vibrated again, this time with many thanks.

THE AGONY OF THE ARTIST

But what about the Sculptor himself? What was his reaction? And what had led him to spend three long years to build this beautiful masterpiece, a monument in perhaps the most difficult branch of fine art?

On page 6, is set out a statement dated 28-3-06 addressed to the Global Zoroastrian Community by the sculptor Peter

Schipperheyn. Please read it. It portrays a genuine artist's agonised heart. He has agreed to drop the name of Z, with some pain, some reluctance, some sadness. He believes, as he says twice in his statement, that **the humans are all spiritual beings**; and that his piece of work was intended to be provocative to Western Culture. He implies clearly that the Western Culture and its official thinking are far away from this great Truth that the humans are not mere body machines, they are spiritual beings. So true so right, Peter! We are here on this motel, called earth, temporarily, as a part of our journey towards God. The West is too Satanic to comprehend this. But there do exist Western traditions and spirituality, though like a "Chieen Chieen" of a parrot in a drum house where 1000 drums are beating. Peter wanted to be critical and even censorious to the West for its non-spiritual ignorance, through his sculpture and naming it as "Zarathushtra". He believes that spirituality in the Western traditions have been influenced

by Zoroastrianism; and that Zoroaster's legacy has influenced Judaism, Christianity and Islam. As an artist, he says, he has "swum against the tide of Modernism and Secularism. His imagination is energised by the ancient world. Ancient Greece had portrayed their Gods in nude, and they are the precedent of Peter's extraordinary talents. (Why! there are nude sculptures and paintings in Jain, Buddhist and Hindu traditions.)

How did Peter embark upon Zoroaster? He says, his starting point was Fedrich Nietzsche's book, "**Thus Spake Zarathustra.**" That led him to research amongst the modern scholastic writings. It seems that what appealed to him most was that the human drama on earth shows "the struggle between good and evil", "light and dark"; and the solution to the riddle is hidden in ancient traditions, which show the way "to live a purposeful life."

Peter says sadly at the end,

"I thought that I was being provocative to Western Culture by trying to present a work **whose message is we are spiritual beings.**"

One thing, my dear Peter. Your message can be clear even without naming the figure as "Zarathustra." It is the supreme artistic instinct and feeling within you, which prompted you to remove the name. We are thankful to you for your supreme sacrifice and sorry to give you pain. To us, the faithful group of the Parsi Zarathushtrians, Lord Zarathushtra is the personification of Ahura mazda (God)'s Divine Light in a radiant human form. The picture of our Lord which the Western scholastic University world has drawn, is all wrong, confused and full of wild guesses and conjectures. According to them He was just a shepherd of Cow-herds in a primitive age. They are unaware of His divine spiritual and mystical stature and Message.

THREE YEARS OF ARTISTIC MEDITATION.

In an earlier announcement, Peter had stated about the statue, "**The gesture of the open hand and the clenched fist I came to me in a dream.**" He says, he had sketched the gesture in his journal. That was 20 years back when his son was 4 months infant. He is now a handsome young man, and became the principal model for the present sculpture.

Peter has worked on the huge bronze figure 4 meters high, for more than 3 years. All the time he was engrossed and "wound up" in his own thoughts about Zarathustra. He must have kept Z in his mind and heart every moment. God's Prophets are instantaneously receptive to the thoughts of human beings. For three years Peter was in telepathic communication with Lord Z. His hands, his mind, his heart, his whole personality was immersed in Him. Peter did not have much idea of Z's lofty spiritual stature as described in numerous Holy Avesta Scriptures. Yet His name was constantly pouring its divine music in him. I wonder whether any of us the Parsis may have remembered Z constantly like this for such a long period of time. The music of His name had so much gone into every particle of his personality, that he thought it to be "something powerful", - too powerful to be "stripped of". I, for one, am sadder than thankful to Peter. But as the great Punjabi Sufi Saint, Baabaa, Bulleshah said,:

"Break down a temple, breakdown a mosque

Break down anything your head may think

But never break the heart of any one

Because God lives in the heart."

Here was the matter of a Community's heart.

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So the episode is over. It however raises two divergent issues.

KHOJASTEY MYSTRY'S FILM ON ZOROASTER

One is : somewhere in eighties Khojastey Mistery had a publicity stunt in the august company of Zubin Mehta, the musician, and some Bharucha film maker from Washington (who desired to float sali-boti in the American Food Market). They had made a film on our Prophet, where in one of the scenes, an American actor playing Zoroaster was shown full naked except a bare loin cloth! No comments for the time being.

The other issue is : **are we, all the Parsis aware of the high Roohaani (Spiritual) status, stature, position and level of our Prophet?** Are we aware that He was a channel of Yazatic Light, a Yazata, in human form? Are we aware that this is born out by numerous references and passages in our Holy Manthric Scriptures and other writings

viz. Yazazhney including 'Gatha's, Vendidad, Visperad, Yasht's, Niyash's Pahalvi Writings, Pazend Prayers and Persian Monaaajats? Are we aware that He was not an ordinary human, and that we are all 27 spiritual steps below Him? Even in the communications sent to the sculptor Peter and the Gallery, all that was said was that His was a simple message of Good thoughts, words and deeds, as if other Great Religions and their Prophets taught bad thoughts, words and deeds! Religion can never be simple. Its subject matter ranges from a speck of dust to God.

Verily, this Peter episode points out where we are as a community. All we know is the mere dry pronouncement of the names : Daadaar Ahuramazda and Asho Zarathushtra, without knowing a jot about Them and without receiving Them within us and within our consciousness. Religion has suddenly become a sealed book to us.

- Candour

WHITHER, WE, THE PARSIS?

The heart of the faithful Parsis is bleeding.

What has happened to us?

Why are the tolls of extinction pealing louder and louder?

For a millenium, we were intensely conscious that Life is a spiritual journey towards Ahura; and that our Din vibrates with divine, spiritual, mystical Institutions, like Sudreh Kushti Manthra Prayers; a strict ethical code of righteousness, Armaiti, Hutoxi, Maher Patet; Dokhm-e-Nashini and the Purity of the Racial Gene - Boonak Paasbaani.

Most of us are throughly ignorant of these, the very foundations of our existence.

We are perhaps the only community which has no machinery to teach Religion to our children at their receptive age; and the parents themselves are flabbergasted at their children's questions in the matters of Religion.

There is no organisation whatsoever of priests, or Mobeds or Dastooros to guide the community on any issue relating to the Din or any of its Seven spiritual foundations. Often one so termed "high priest" is observed to give 2 or 3 conflicting "opinions" on the same point, depending on who asks him the question. We do not even have a set definition of a preiast or mobed (high or low).

With all our resources, we do not have conviction and strength to face and remedy the gloomy situation. Is nothing left except to wait for the advent of the Saviours?

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE AND HIS "THUS SPAKE ZARATHUSTRA"

The Story of a Brilliant Genius, Who Died Insane.

Page 5 of this Issue, carries the story of the great Australian Sculptor Peter Schippenheyn, whose monumental 4 meter long bronze figure adorns the McClelland Gallery at Victoria (Australia), since 1st April 2006. He wanted to name it "Zarathushtra" but at the earnest request of the Parsis, he gracefully agreed to drop the name.

In his message of 28-04-06 he said that he came across the name for the first time in Fredrich Nietzsche's book "**Thus Spake Zarathushtra.**"

Who is this? And what is his book?

Nietzsche's name occurs in the list of the prominent philosophers of the 19th century. (1844-1900). That, however, is too simple a statement. He was a medley, a ground mixture of several curiosities and idiosyncracies. Here is the fascinating list. A poet, musician, a soldier, a philosopher, a man of science, a bursting thinker, with a stormy psyche trying to digest the contradictions of life, a humorous atheist, a Christian as also non Christian viewer of humanity, a Darwinian and Bismarckian with violent ideas about strength and survival of the fittest, a narrator of huge failure of the human beings, a swinger between virtues and vices, and waiting for a strong formidable heroic race of supermen and later for an individual superman arriving through deliberate breeding and careful nurture rather than through natural selection or survival of the fittest.

The cauldron of all these ideas and imaginations boiling in this genius of an exceptionally brilliant brain led to the first serious sign of a mental breakdown just at the prime age of 35! He even told his sister,

"Promise me, that when I die only my friends shall stand about my coffin... See that no priest or any one else utter falsehoods at my graveside..." This was in 1879.

But he recovered, emerged stronger - so he thought, had a couple of womanly romances that failed, resulting in an apparent war against tenderness. He then went into a search for solitude and arrived on the Alps at Sils-Maria (in the Upper Engadine) and there he met "Zarathushtra".

"I am there waiting - waiting for nothing.

Enjoying beyond good and evil, now

The Light, now the shade; there was only

The day, the lake, the noon, time without end.

Then, my friend, suddenly one became two

And Zarathustra passed by me."

Zarathustra? Oh brother! From where do you get this name? Not even "Zoroaster," the Greek philological pollution? He actually passed by you!? A mystery?

The mechanical psychologists, however, might have a non-mysterious explanation. This man of passionate imagination and many illusions had at his young age of 23, joined the military but had to leave it due to the injuries from a fall from his horse. And what next? From military to academy! He became a **philologist!** It is possible that he might have come across the then philological exertions of the newly born academies of Zoroastrian religious scriptures in Europe, effectively starting from Anquetil Duperron's first translation of Zend Avesta in 1771, which created a violent dispute in the European

Academies. Translations and philological rigmaroles were amply available to Nietzsche. But by no stretch of imagination they presented Zarathushtra's teachings or ideas as Nietzsche purported to convey. There were stray references to "Soshyos" in some works (e.g. Anquetil's) but the "Superman" of Nietzsche was (and is) far far away from any saviour predicted in the Parsi traditions or for that matter in any other Religions. It is almost a set belief that he presented his own philosophy of Superman or a race of supermen in the name of "Zarathushtra".

Yet, whatever be the inherent merit or value of his philosophy, his book, "Thus Spake Zarathustra" is acclaimed as one of the best sung philosophy in poetry. His intense imagination might have materialised into a divine figure which passed by him in the high altitude of Alps; and it may be that that figure might have been caught in the artistic psyche of our friend Peter. Human mind and consciousness are many splendored things as the mystically inclined psychologists and psychiatrists like Stanislav Groff and Karl Pribram and Brian Weiss tell us.

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A word about Nietzsche's philosophy.

Calling him as "child of Darwin and the brother of Bismarck," Will Durrant in the "The Story of Philosophy" narrates it thus :

If life is a struggle for existence in which the fittest survive, then strength is the ultimate virtue, and weakness the only fault. Good is that which survives, which wins; bad is that which gives way and fails.

This is a revolt against all Religions (including Zarathushtra's). No meekness, no gentleness, no "give the other cheek", but give him two or more fists till he faints or dies. No Armaiti, no Hutoxi, no compassion, no altruism. And Nietzsche attributed these inverted virtues

to Zarathushtra and declared him as his superman. Energy, intellect and pride - these make the superman. The ego is whole and holy, selfishness, blessed. Good is to be brave; bad is all that comes from weakness. "All war is good in spite of the vulgar pettiness of its causes." (Hitler liked this). It is not given to men to love and be wise. Vows of lovers should be declared invalid. Democracy is a "mania for counting noses". "It means the lapse of coherence and interdependence; the enthronement of liberty and chaos; worship of mediocrity and the hatred of excellence".

These are the products of this brilliant man's inverted psyche presented in the name of Zarathustra's poetry. Will Durrant says "We perceive that something of this brilliance is due to exaggeration, to an interesting but at last neurotic egotism, to an overfacile inversion of every accepted notion, the ridicule of every virtue, the praise of every vice; he takes, we discover, a sophomore's delight in shocking." All these "reveal a mind that has lost its balance and hovers on the edge of madness."

And the madness arrived again and was accelerating. The body affected, diseases entered it. His blindness was increasing. He became less and less aware of his insanity. He wrote such messages to his friends that they rushed and took him to an asylum. But that symbol of God's love, his mother, took him in her arms. She was a devout and dedicated Christian, who was all along full of pain at his son's revolt against Lord Jesus Christ. But at the moment of her son's pitiable condition, she rushed to him in selfless love. She and her husband had named him Friedrich, as he was born on 15th October 1844, the birthday of the then ruling king of Prussia, Frederick William IV. Both the Nietzches belonged to long lines of priesthood. After the early death of her husband, she had nurtured Friedrich with immense delicacy and sensibility; so much so that he himself remained "pious and puritan, chaste as a

statute to the last". (W. Durrant). That was how his inherent nature behaved with him and the mother nature was merciful to him in keeping his mind at peace and bliss, though insane. His mother died in 1897 and he was taken by his sister to live in Weimar.

He died in 1900. No better tribute can be paid to him than Will Durrant's last line in his chapter on Nietzsche :-

"Seldom has a man paid so great a price for genius."

WHITHER, WE, THE HUMANS?

In this first decade of the 21st century, mankind is trapped in a destructive maze. Humans are killing each other, mercilessly, cruelly. Nature is on a rampage.

Somewhere in about 15th century, the Western thinking germinated a concept : man can explore and arrive at the Truth by mere intellectual exertion. God was sent on a holiday. By the end of the 19th century, the concept expanded like the proverbial frog. As the 20th century set in and travelled about three decades, the frog's belly burst.

The Science diverted in two branches : the theoretical and the technological. The former pursued its aim of finding out the pure Truth in Nature, but failed. The latter manufactured technological machines, which succeeded and brought in many amazing miracles. But a queer situation developed. The theoretical Science presented two theories - Relativity and Quantum. Some technological machines worked on one theory and some on the other; but it became obvious that both cannot be right in Nature. Here lies the failure of Science.

Another frightful situation developed. Every Scientific discovery or invention had a military angle. Genetic Science brought forth many medicines to cure serious diseases but the same science provided biological weapons to kill! Computer technology is very useful for life but has frightfully invaded the human character and psyche. Numerous other examples can be cited.

Such is the state of this allegedly "progressive" age. (The word comes from Jafri Irani Dhalla Caucus). Open the morning paper. Today is worse than yesterday. As Sir Martin Rees, the Astronomer Royal of U.K. points out, the doomsday is fast approaching the humans on this globe. (See Parsi Pukar Vol. 10 No. 4).

We present the same question as we did on page 9 while talking of the Parsis.

Is nothing left for the humans to do except waiting for the arrival of the Divine Saviours?

- **Scientix**

FOOD FOR THOUGHT - FOR SCIENTISTS AND KSHNOOMISTS

"If our solar system's entire life cycle, from its birth in a cosmic cloud to its death throes in the Sun's terminal flare up where to be viewed "fast forward" in a single year, then all recorded history would be less than a minute in early June. The twentieth century would flash past in a third of a second. The next fraction of a second, in this depiction, will be critical : in the twenty-first century, humanity is more at risk than ever before from misapplication of science. And the environmental pressures induced by collective human actions could trigger catastrophes more threatening than any natural hazards."

- **Sir Martin Rees
in Our Final Hour.**