


# FEZANA JOURNAL



Volume I, No. 2 December 1988

## LONG TERM GOALS OF FEZANA'S SUBCOMMITTEES

### 1. Coordination and Planning Committee (C&PC)

A questionnaire prepared by Homi Homji, Chairman of this Committee is presently being circulated within the community through the auspices of FEZANA's member associations. The questionnaire addresses current issues on religion and culture, social and community development, community welfare and guidance, youth, economics, education and other miscellaneous needs of the community. These needs will be assessed and dealt with according to the priorities specified by this survey. The responses to the questionnaire will be analyzed by Mrs. Dhurmal Dalal and a completed report is tentatively scheduled to be received by October 31, 1988. Meanwhile, Mr. Homji has had a few reactions to this questionnaire from some members of his committee and we share them with you.

Mr. Jamshed Pavri feels that we need most importantly to first define a "Zoroastrian." The need to educate FEZANA's membership of the advantages of a unified calendar, mode of worship and ceremonies, and also to make the North American Zoroastrian community realize that it must have control over its own destiny were next in line of priority.

Mrs. Farangis Shahrokh recommends under the heading of religion and culture two priorities: ways and means of promoting acceptance and the need for trained Mobeds. Under the social aspect of the questionnaire, she feels that promoting Zoroastrian marriages and children, better Parsi-Irani integration, a retirement plan and care of senior citizens were important priorities. She follows this up with the needs of the youth, e.g., scholarships and get-togethers. Economic planning and religious education follows and miscellaneous plans such as the formation of a World Zoroastrian Federation and links with other federations takes last place among her priorities.

Mr. Mehraban Zarthoshti of Vancouver does not view conversion and acceptance as critical factors. He suggests for the moment that we forget the question of retrieving Zoroastrians who have left the religion.

Mr. Adl Davar, another member of the C&PC from the Washington area expresses his action preferences under the following heads. (a) Unification of Iranian and Parsi Zoroastrians into a well-knit North American community; (b) providing better teaching materials for children and adults with a proper balance of religion, philosophy, ethics, practices and history; (c) ways and means of promoting 'acceptance' in North America; (d) projection of better understanding of Zoroastrianism and North American Zoroastrians to Government and other communities on this continent and to Zoroastrians abroad, and (e) intellectual get-togethers and travelling educators (priestly and lay) on religious, cultural and communal aspects of Zoroastrians. In addition, he also commented on some technical aspects of the administration of the Committee's function.

Based on the correspondence and communications he has had with the members of his Committee, the Chairman of the C&PC, Mr. Homji has tentatively arrived at a sequence of his own thoughts. They are as follows:

1. To issue a brief pamphlet for wide circulation on the concept and rituals of (a) navjote, (b) wedding, (c) funeral, (d) essence of basic prayers in dignified language in English and Persian.
2. Step by step programme of acceptance and conversion, based on rational understanding of our scripture and society.
3. Broadly and sociologically trained mobeds and paramobeds.
4. Unification of calendars and rituals.
5. Promotion of Zoroastrian marriages and incentive for more progeny.
6. Demographic studies and all North American Directory covering members and non-members.
7. Utilization of retired personnel.
8. Job and business assistance.
9. A central charity trust fund.
10. Intensive discussion, step by step, of our community's societal problems at all forthcoming North American Seminars.
11. Standardized texts for teaching with judicious balance on philosophy, ethics, rituals and scriptures.
12. Participation at all levels of Government.
13. Assisting in the formation of a World Zoroastrian Federation.

To complete the picture of the long term plans, the President of FEZANA, Mr. Rohinton Rivetna has added some of his own thoughts.

1. Establishment of a Seminary for training priests.
2. Fuller utilization of our existing people resources.
3. Building a National (Zoroastrian) centre.
4. Review and establish a strong infrastructure (for FEZANA as a supportive).

After all this detailed, thought-provoking and intellectual exercise, the C&PC Chairman still awaits action-plans and budget figures from the other sub-committees for the year 1988-89.

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## 2. Information Receiving and Disseminating Committee (IRDC):

This Committee has had its work fully cut out with the rich supply of information provided by other sub-committees. This Committee has, however, put its mandate into action and in collaboration with Rohinton and Roshan Rivetna has worked out a logo for the Journal, a FEZANA seal and the FEZANA letterhead. All this material is presumably available for the perusal of FEZANA's officers.

September 1988 saw the publication of the inaugural issue of FEZANA's Journal. Fifty copies of the Journal were printed and distributed to the member associations and to other Zoroastrian bodies. It is strongly felt that if this Journal information is not efficiently disseminated to the grass root community through photocopy and circulation the entire effort of the publication will be defeated.

The editorial staff, therefore, suggests that in order to achieve the purpose, and to make the work of the Associations a little lighter, we mail at least three copies to each member association - to the President, Secretary and the Treasurer. A mailing list of the FEZANA Journal will be generated in the near future and distributed to the Executives for suggestions.

The Journal takes this opportunity to invite associations and individual members to contribute with 'letters' in order to initiate a 'Letters to the Editor' column. Letters should be addressed to the editor, Dr. Jehan Bagli, 7 Cleveland Lane, R.D. #4, Princeton, N.J. 08540. It must be realized that this is a Journal of the Zoroastrians, by the Zoroastrians, for the Zoroastrians. All your grievances, appreciations and suggestions for alterations, will be duly dealt with and deeply appreciated. Mailing three copies in place of one will triple our costs, but then, what is more important: conserving money or hoarding information that may be advantageously utilised when properly disseminated. We are sure that each one of the grass root member would gladly contribute a dollar per copy to find out what their FEZANA officials are planning for the future of their community. This is the future plan of this Committee, and that is to make available a copy of the Journal to each Zoroastrian on this continent. We cannot do this, if you, the community, do not want it done. It must be done, but with your willingness, your enthusiasm, and your support. The present IRDC sub-committee consists of the following members:

Dr. Jehan Bagli (New Jersey, U.S.A.)  
Ms. Sabar Balsara (Ontario, Canada)  
Ms. Dolly Dastoor (Quebec, Canada)  
Mr. Aspy Deboo (Illinois, U.S.A.)  
Dr. Ali Jafarey (California, U.S.A.)  
Mr. Gev Karkaria (Quebec, Canada)  
Dr. Shavak Katrak (New York, U.S.A.)  
Mrs. Roshan Rivetna (Illinois, U.S.A.)

A financial statement and budget for the coming year will soon be available for the perusal of the C&PC Chairman.

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## 3. Committee to Serve Small Groups of North American Zoroastrians

The chairperson, Mr. Firdosh Mehta of the above committee, reports that letters have been sent out to various isolated groups of Zoroastrians, introducing them to FEZANA and to the function of this sub-committee. He feels that at this point in time it is of utmost importance to publicize the existence of this sub-committee. He urges the readers of this journal to do so by any means of communications they see fit. He also hopes that readers would markedly contribute to the cause of FEZANA by bringing to the attention of this sub-committee any isolated group of Zoroastrians on this continent. A list of such groups of Zoroastrians is presently being compiled. The following are members of the Committee:

Mr. Firdosh Mehta (Alberta, Canada; 403-438-4371)  
Mrs. Freney Ranji (Pennsylvania, New Jersey, U.S.A.; 609-854-2251)  
Mr. Rohinton Dhondy (Massachusetts, U.S.A.; 617-371-1632)  
Mr. Homi Damkewala (Ontario, Canada; 705-737-1646)  
Mrs. Perin Antia (Ontario, Canada; 416-497-5679)

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## K.R. CAMA ORIENTAL INSTITUTE'S FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS — AN UPDATE

### PROGRAMME:

The Congress begins on Thursday, January 5, 1989, with the registration of delegates between 9 and 10 a.m. This will be followed by the inaugural ceremony (10 to 12 noon), sessions (2-3:40 p.m.), a tea break and discussions (4-5:30 p.m.). A similar schedule will be followed on January 6, 7 and 8. There will be a summation on Sunday, January 8 (2-3:40 p.m.), followed by the closing session of the Congress (4-6:00 p.m.).

## REGISTRATION:

Registration for the Congress falls under the following three categories:

Patron: Rs. 10,000 (inclusive of admission with spouse to all sessions, tea, lunch and entertainment)

Delegate: Rs. 250 (inclusive of admission to all sessions, tea, and lunch)

Observer: Rs. 50 (inclusive of admission and tea)

Due to limited accommodation, registration forms for the general public will be issued after invitees have been registered. Invitees are therefore requested to enrol as early as possible.

## TOPICS

A broad spectrum of topics have been selected on which papers will be presented by speakers. They are:

1. Historical, Archeological, Cultural and Numismatic surveys and studies.
2. Comparative studies in mythology, religion and philosophy.
3. Language and literature with special reference to Indo-Iranian languages.
4. Art and Architecture.

Some specific topics for discussion are as follows:

1. Comparative studies of Gathic and Rig Vedic studies.
2. Study of Zoroastrianism during Gathic/Achaemenian/Parthian/Sasanian periods.
3. Comparative studies of Maurya/Gupta (India) and Achaemenian/Parthian Sasanian (Iran), civilizations.
4. Comparative studies of Imperial Systems of ancient Iran and India.
5. Art and aesthetics of Ancient Iran.
6. Factors in the co-existence of Hinduism and Buddhism from the 6th century B.C., to 1000 A.D.
7. Studies in pre and proto history with reference to the Pre-Harappan and Harappan cultures.

For any further information and for application forms, please contact Mrs. Homai N. Modi, Hon. General Secretary, K.R. Cama Oriental Institute - International Congress, 136 Bombay Samachar Marg, Fort, Bombay 400-023, India.

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## DIPLOMA IN ZOROASTRIAN RELIGIOUS STUDIES

The Department of Comparative Religions at the University of Manchester, England, has recently announced a new Diploma Course in Zoroastrian Religious Studies. Manchester is one of the few Universities in the western world equipped with specialist teachers and library facilities for the study of Zoroastrianism. Knowledge and understanding through a study of the past and the present are sure ways of solving the problems and challenges that the future holds for Zoroastrian communities all over the world. A one-year Diploma course will provide an entree into the academic study of the religion and will equip the student with knowledge and training to further his or her future work. Professor John Hinnells and Dr. A.V. Williams will be the principal teachers of this Diploma course. The course is open to graduates of any discipline, but the Department hopes that Zoroastrians in particular will enrol since understanding is a necessary part of preserving the heritage. An overseas student fee is currently 3,900; the figure for British residents is 1,730. Subsistence costs are obviously, in addition.

Professor Hinnells suggests that perhaps four wealthy Zoroastrians will agree to fund a scholarship on a rota basis - once every four years. The scholarship can be named after the donor, restricted to Zoroastrians, and each donor can define the Zoroastrian for the term of his or her scholarship. Such a scheme would certainly afford prospective students of the religion an opportunity to better their knowledge and understanding of Zoroastrianism.

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## THE REFUGEE CONNECTION

The Persian Zoroastrian Organization as a member of FEZANA's Unity and Welfare Committee has set up a Special Task Force to co-ordinate and facilitate the efforts of the various North American Zoroastrian Associations to allow Iranian Zoroastrian refugees who are temporarily domiciled in India and Pakistan to be legally transferred to the U.S.A. under the Government's immigration policy. Before the State Department can even consider such requests from us, we need to give proper assurance of our strength and capability in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding. We need to satisfy the State Department of FEZANA's structure, its efficiency and ensure that it is strongly supported by its membership in this project. The State Department's main concern is that the refugees do not prove to be a financial liability to the Government, by applying for any form of Government welfare payments for a minimum of two years after their arrival in this country. FEZANA is, therefore, required to provide assurances that the refugees will be well taken care of

upon their arrival, that food and shelter would be provided by the sponsor, that medical insurance costs would be met and that rehabilitation assistance, viz., language and vocational training and employment, will also be available and provided.

The support of all FEZANA's member associations is earnestly sought to establish that we are a well settled, mature, and large enough community capable of handling such a project. Our task is made all the more difficult as we have first to establish our identity as Zoroastrians since we are little known in the community at large and then to establish our strength in numbers and resources. This is our first venture as a viable community in North America and we ought to put our best foot forward. Successful completion of this project will give us a standing and make us a viable force in community affairs in North America.

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#### THE DADAR ATHORNAN MADRESSA

The Dadar Athornan Madressa has embarked on a major project -the construction of an annexe to its existing building and seeks financial support for this from its well-wishers. The increasing needs and requirements of the Madressa have made it impossible to allow for a full and proper use of its present facilities. The Madressa started out as an educational institution for boys all across the country, providing them not only an academic education but also training to be full-fledged priests, and all this free of any charge. The Madressa continues to do splendid and commendable work and deserves all the financial support it can get.

The proposal to establish a Seminary (Madressa) in North America does not appear to be such a far-fetched idea. It is a well accepted fact that we need a strong, welltrained cadre of priests who can serve our spiritual needs and be spiritual leaders and counsellors to the community.

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#### SECOND NORTH AMERICAN ZOROASTRIAN YOUTH CONGRESS

The Second North American Zoroastrian Youth Congress hosted by the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago and held at the Arbab Rustom Guiv Darbe Mehr, Zoroastrian Centre of Chicago, over the Labour Day weekend (September 3-5, 1988) was a tremendous success. Over 250 youth were registered: from 22 States in the U.S.A. and from the various Provinces of Canada, with a couple of persons from India and West Germany.

The three day program started with the "Jasa Mey Avanghey Mazda" pledge by the ZAC priests. Participation from youth members was overwhelming, with speakers ranging from 14 years of

age and above. All the papers presented to the Congress were by members of the youth, and all sessions/workshops were chaired by them. Among those who presented papers to the Congress were Anahita Antia, Ervad Mazda Antia, Neville Billimoria, Shireen Daboo and Roxana Mehta - all from Chicago, IL., Shernaz Ghandhi (Grosse Pointe Woods, MI); Armaity Homavazir (Thornhill, Ontario); Shahriar Shahriari (Vancouver, B.C.); and Roxana Irani (Poona, India).

Another day's program was devoted to a "Point-Counterpoint" interview on questions of Zoroastrian youth by Shara Godiwalla, Dilnavaz Gazder and Aaron Rustom of Houston, TX, and a very lively panel discussion on the expectations of Zoroastrian youth. The panelists were Darius Captain (Newark, CA), Jerroo Chinoy (Flint, MI), Mr. Bozorgmehr (Rezida, CA), Zubin Panthaki (Montreal, P.Q.), Ervad Behram Daboo and Bachi Damkevala of Chicago, IL.

Over 450 Zoroastrians, young and old, attended the Banquet arranged as part of the Congress program. A sumptuous dinner, and a very lively entertainment program was enjoyed by all.

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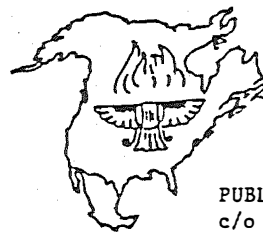
#### SOME REMINDERS

Newsletters: Member associations were requested earlier to send copies of their Newsletters to Sabar Balsara (Apt. 615, 43 Thorncliffe Park Drive, Toronto, Ontario M4H 1J4) to help her compile an item of "News" for the FEZANA Journal.

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Mobeds of North America: Members associations were requested earlier to forward the names and addresses of Mobeds in their area to Sabar Balsara. Since these have not yet been received, you are hereby reminded to do so at your earliest.

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