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ZARATHUSHTRA'S LEGACY TO JUDAEO-CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

"Should we in a future world be permitted to hold high concourse with the great departed, it may chance that in the Bactrian sage [Zoroaster], who lived and taught almost before the dawn of history, we may find the spiritual patriarch, to whose lessons we have owed such a portion of our intellectual inheritance that we might hardly conceive what human belief would be now, had Zoroaster never existed."

(Frances Power Cobbe in "Studies, New and Old, of Ethical and Social Subjects", circa 1890)

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EDITORIAL

When a small group of Zoroastrians came to India from Iran some ten centuries ago, they had to adopt new language, dress, and living conditions. By adapting their customs, religious practices, and rituals to the needs of a new country, they were able to preserve the basic tenets of their religion. The hallmarks of these Zoroastrians were their spirit of adventure, their openness to new ideas and cultures, and their high ethical standards. They prospered. They became known as "Parsis".

Later, through interaction with Europeans in India and other parts of the world, the Parsis adopted some Western lifestyle and culture. But through all this, they retained their identity and ties with their Iranian origin. In the 20th century, the success of the Parsis was paralleled by the enterprising and ethical Zardushtis, the Zoroastrians of Iran who had also retained their religious identity in the face of great hardship.

Now Zoroastrians are settling in the West. This is not an isolated family or two coming to America for trade or business. They are raising families, buying homes, and looking toward the future with eager expectation of repeating their successes in other parts of the world. They are no longer Parsis or Zardushtis. They have come together as the North American Zoroastrian community. Us. The common denominator is our religion; not language, culture or race.

In the 17th century, the Quakers came to America under similar circumstances. In their zeal to preserve their ideals and religious beliefs, they continued to receive direction from their leaders in England, and refused to adapt to the harsh realities of American frontier life. Their intransigence ultimately led to their failure to become a part of American colonial life. The Quakers still exist today, but only as a minor and insignificant Christian sect. Historian Daniel Boorstin writes (*The Americans: The Colonial Experience*) that their failure can be attributed to their inability to find solutions to the peculiar problems of self-government, and their neglect in developing effective leadership from among themselves in America.

Our success or failure as North American Zoroastrians will depend to a great extent on how we are able to govern ourselves. We will not be taken seriously if we continue to rest on our

laurels, be indecisive about our future, and continue to look for direction in all matters from "back home."

In a democratic society, self-government and acknowledgement of leadership are synonymous. Leaders in this sense are the officers and trustees of our associations, *anjumans*, and FEZANA. When we elect them and they accept the job, they indicate their willingness to spend their time and energies for the community without remuneration. To the outside community, they are our spokespersons. We must let them know what we are expecting and then give them a chance to show their worth. Only when we have courageous leaders who will listen to us with fairness, and only when we are willing to work with them with zeal, will we start to take our destiny in our own hands. Only then will we be able to say that we have really "arrived" as responsible citizens.

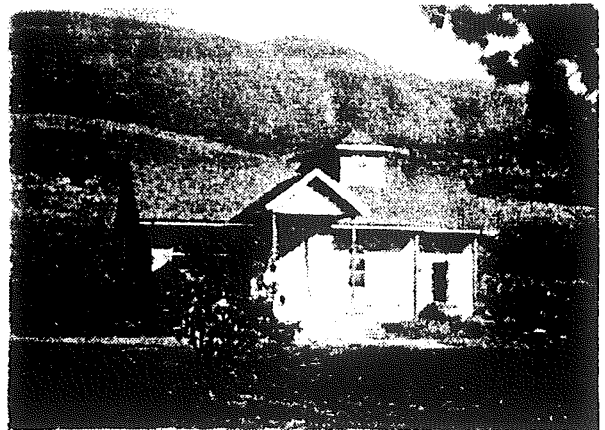
Rustom Kevala

Editor, FEZANA Journal

ON THE NORTH AMERICAN SCENE

San Jose Dar-E-Mehr Nearing Completion

On Feb 21, 1991 ground was broken for the Atash Kadeh in San Jose, California. A sealed box was placed in the foundation containing: copies of newspapers and Zoroastrian newsletters, coins, local flora, prayers and goodwill messages, and remembrance of late Arbab Rustam Guiv and Morvarid Khanum Guiv. With this auspicious beginning, construction has proceeded well and inauguration is expected on March 21, 1992.



Atash Kadeh Building

The 67' X 27' building is a traditional wood frame structure constructed of strong earthquake resistant materials. The construction cost will be \$150,000, of which \$52,000 was used from the Cemetery Fund donated by Arbab Guiv Trust. The building stands on 10 acres of property purchased a few years ago for \$520,000 funded largely by Arbab Rustam Guiv. There is another two-storey house on the property with a library, meeting rooms and caretaker's quarters.

*Darius Captain
San Jose, California*

Morvarid Khanum Guiv — Death Anniversary
Morvarid Khanum Guiv, wife of philanthropist Arbab Rustam Guiv, was remembered with prayers in Darbe Mehrs across North America on her death anniversary on January 12, 1992.

Exploring Zoroastrianism — in Syracuse

The First Universalist Society of Syracuse presented a mini conference "Exploring Zoroastrianism" with Prof. Kaikhosrov Irani, in October 1991. The program included discussion on the place of Zoroastrianism among the living religions of today, and dialogue with Prof. Irani on theological issues surrounding the many translations of the Gathas. The contributions of Zoroastrianism to the religions of the world were the focus of the Sunday service the following day. Readings from the Zoroastrian scriptures were complemented with modern western music and readings.

UCLA Concert

In November, the American Youth Symphony directed by Mehli Mehta presented a concert at Royce Hall, UCLA. The soloist was violinist Eric Gruenberg of the London Academy of Music. His stradivarius was recently stolen, and fortunately recovered to the relief of all concerned. Mr. Gruenberg is married to a Parsi lady, Khorshed, who is a violinist in her own right.

[ZAC, California Newsletter, October 1991]

Homeopathy Heals

Dr. Farokh Master, Bombay homeopath and professor at Bombay University, presented a lecture on principles underlying homeopathy, at La Palma, California, in October 1991. Author of several medical books, he has successfully treated patients suffering from paralysis, cancer, coma, arthritis, asthma, allergies and other illnesses, using homeopathy. Contact: Dr. Khushroo Lakdawala, tel: (805) 298-8554.

Visit of Ervad Godrej Sidhwa

Vancouver Zoroastrians enjoyed a fascinating talk by Ervad Godrej Sidhwa, acting High Priest of Karachi, since the death of Dastur Dhalla in 1956. Ervad Sidhwa, author of *Discourses on Zoroastrianism*, was recently presented with a "Manpatra" honor for his distinguished services to the Karachi Parsi community.

[ZSBC Newsletter, September 1991]

Zoroastrian Presence at India Day Parade

The Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York participated in the 1991 India Day Parade on August 18, 1991. A group of 30 Parsi men, women and children dressed in traditional Parsi attire marched in the parade.

[ZAGNY Newsletter, September 1991]

Religious Education Youth Camp

The Council of Iranian Mobeds hosted the 1991 winter Religious Education Youth Camp in December, 1991. The program included sudreh/kushti prayers, lectures, team activities, sports, camp-fire, and other special events. The youth felt they left the camp with a much better understanding of their glorious heritage and a feeling of unity with other Zoroastrians. Contact: Fariborz Shahzadi (714) 830-5248.

New Association in Kansas

The 60 to 70 Zoroastrians of Kansas have recently formed the Zoroastrian Association of Kansas (ZAKA). Dastur Dr. Kersey Antia flew in from Chicago to officiate at the inaugural Jashan ceremony. Under the leadership of Dr. Daryoush Jahanian (President), the young Association has done commendable work, including production of bi-lingual slides for children's education.

Columbia University Program Closes

The program in Zoroastrian Studies at the Department of Middle East Languages and Cultures at Columbia University, New York, will close in June 1991. Lack of funding, and a re-organization of priorities to emphasize Islamic studies, are responsible for the closing. The last to head this program, founded over a hundred years ago, is noted scholar and friend of the community, Professor James Russell.

PASS IT ON ...

To help reach a wider readership for this Journal, after you read it PLEASE PASS IT ON TO A FRIEND!

AROUND THE WORLD**Seminar in London**

The World Zoroastrian Organization (WZO) organized a seminar on Zoroastrian Religion, Culture and History in London on September 22, 1991. Speakers were Shahin Bekhraduia, "Who is a Zoroastrian?"; Sousan A. Heifetz, "Our Adaptive Challenge"; Dina McIntyre, "A Question of Paradise"; and Yasmin Jhabvala, "Zarathushtra, History and Historicity".

Property Purchased for WZO Headquarters

In August 1991, WZO purchased property for their headquarters in South Norwood, London. After renovation, estimated to be 15,000 pounds sterling, the property will be used as the WZO offices and for meetings.

Formation of Council of Federations by WZO

At the FEZANA AGM, Members adopted a resolution to coordinate a dialog with WZO and other national bodies to work towards structuring the world body to more broadly represent the global community. The structure proposed is a Council comprising Federations (or local Anjumans where Federations do not exist). Such a Council would provide a forum for discussion of issues with global impact, ensuring that Zoroastrians around the world follow a common direction.

On September 21, 1991, Rohinton Rivetna, President of FEZANA, met with 10 members of the WZO Committee, including Dr. Shirinbanoo Kutar (Chairperson) and Shahpur Captain (President). The WZO committee was amenable to forming such a "Council of Federations" comprising representatives of national bodies from major areas (Iran, India, Europe, Australia, the Far East and North America). Voting power would be based upon the number of Zoroastrians within each Federation, but no constituent part would have an overriding majority. The WZO will follow-up by calling a convention in London in 1992, to discuss constitutional details.

Soviet City Holds Clues to Zoroastrianism

Under pressure from archaeologists, historians and public bodies, the Soviets have given up their program to build an irrigation system that would have destroyed historical monuments and flooded the area where experts believe Zoroaster lived and preached 3,500 years ago.

The town of Arkaim, the ancient center of Indo-Iranian civilization, believed to be 4,000 years old, was spotted in U.S. space photographs, where circular shapes like wheels with a rim, a hub and spokes, were detected. In excavations two years ago, the "rim" was a circular defensive wall, the "spoke" radial streets, and the "hub" a central citadel.

Archaeologists believe the city's population of about 2500, practiced the religion of Zoroaster. This agrees with Mary Boyce who states (*The Zoroastrians: Beliefs and Customs*) that the origin of the religion should be sought east of the Volga on the steppes of Northern Kazakhstan. Soviet architects see in Arkaim the prototype of architecture of the future: "The shape of a wheel is not only highly functional but ideal for urban construction. Perhaps Arkaim will provide inspiration for town planners and mankind will return to ring cities which fit in better with surrounding nature."

Peoples of two continents — Europe and Asia — originate from these Aryan tribes. How did they succeed in increasing their numbers and in settling such vast territories? Experts believe with developed livestock farming, there was abundance of food, infant mortality was low, and with horses and chariots available, these people could embark on long journeys.

The struggle to save this monument has been successful, but what lies ahead? Scholars at Chelyabinsk University are proposing that one section of the ancient city be restored and opened to tourists; and the other section remain a proving ground for archaeologists.

[Extracted from an article in a London newspaper, submitted by Mehr Soroushian, New Jersey]

IN COMING ISSUES ...

The themes for the next two issues of the FEZANA Journal are:

May 1, 1992: Zoroastrian Calendar.

August 1, 1992: Ecology and the Environment.

Letters and articles on the above themes are invited. Submission deadline is two months prior to the date of issue.

COMING EVENTS***First World Zoroastrian Youth Congress***

The Helping Hands Zoroastrian Youth Communication Network of FEZANA, is pleased to announce they will be hosting the first World Zoroastrian Youth Congress in South California, September 4 - 6, 1993. The theme is: "UNITY AMONG ZOROASTRIAN YOUTH FOR PRESERVATION OF ZOROASTRIANISM IN THE 21st CENTURY." The committee is developing an Executive Board and seeking sponsors for talented youth speakers from around the world. Contact: Meher Dadabhoy Amalsad, Chairperson, Helping Hands Committee, 15842 Villanova Circle, Westminster, CA 92683, U.S.A., tel: (714) 895-3097.

1992 Vancouver Congress — an Update

The Eighth North American Zoroastrian Congress, sponsored by the Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia, will take place at the Vancouver Trade and Convention Center (VTCC), 999 Canada Place, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, September 4 - 6, 1992. The theme is "Looking Ahead to the 21st Century."

The FEZANA AGM will be held on September 3, at the Arbab Rustam Guiv Darbe Mehr, Burnaby, B.C. and will continue on the morning of September 4 at the VTCC. Delegates of the Member Associations are invited; other interested persons are welcome to attend as observers.

There will be special interest workshops during the afternoon of September 4, which delegates are encouraged to attend. The formal opening will be on September 5 and the closing on September 6. The two day program will include presentations by speakers, a question/viewpoint period, and a session in Farsi. Translations (from Farsi into English, and vice versa) will be made available, wherever possible.

Congress attendees are invited to contact local travel agents (see Zoroastrian Enterprise, next section), for hotel accommodations and travel arrangements. Several tours of Vancouver and neighboring areas are available, including a 7-day cruise to Alaska, and various bus/train packages.

Nominations (from Zoroastrian residents of Canada or the U.S.) are solicited for awards, either through associations, individuals, or self-

nominations. The award categories (see FEZANA Journal, November 1991 for details) are: Student, Young Zoroastrian, Humanitarian Service, Excellence (professional), and Outstanding Zoroastrian. Deadline for the award: March 21, 1992.

Contact: Bella Tata, Chairperson, #401-840 Broughton Street, Vancouver, B.C., V6G 2A1, CANADA, Tel: (604) 681-5250.

Mobeds Council Meeting

The North American Mobeds Council meeting will be held on the Easter weekend, April 17 - 19, 1992, at the Arbab Rustam Guiv Darbe Mehr, Chicago. Prior to that, on the morning of April 17th, FEZANA Member Associations are invited to a meeting with Kobad Zarolia (President of NAMC) and Mehraban Zartoshty (President of The Council of Iranian Mobeds) to present the views of the laity. For information, contact: Kobad Zarolia (416) 896-2217.

ZOROASTRIAN ENTERPRISE

As a service to readers, Zoroastrian businesses are listed in this section. Please support our Zoroastrian entrepreneurs.

Pujet World Travel.

Manijeh Deboo, 2934 Panaview Blvd., Everett, WA 98203, tel: (206) 353-3438.

After the Vancouver Congress, join fellow Zoroastrians on a cruise to Alaska on the Holland-America luxury liner, "Noordam" Sept 8 - 15. This virgin land has glaciers, mountains, rivers, icebergs and unspoken breath-taking scenery. With early bird discount, group rates start at \$1,095 per person.

The following Zoroastrians in the Vancouver area are also in the travel business, and will be happy to help Congress participants with their travel needs:

Fourways Travel.

Freddy Amrolia, 9341 120 Street, Delta, B.C., V4C 6R8, Canada, tel: (604) 584-1411.

Uniglobe

Rukhsana Daroowala, tel: (604) 980-0531

Save-On Travel.

Shahpur Mehrabani, 1238 Marine Drive, N. Vancouver BC, V7P1T2, tel: (604)984-7122.

ZOROASTRIANISM AND WESTERN RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

Exploring the influence of Zarathushtra and His doctrine on the development of Western religious thought through the centuries.

ZOROASTRIANISM and JUDAISM — INTERACTIONS BETWEEN TWO GREAT TRADITIONS

Ties through the Centuries

Zoroastrianism and Judaism have ties knotted centuries before Christianity appeared on the religious stage of this planet. Due to the historic overlap in their evolution and sequential origin of the two religions, many well-known Iranists have expressed sentiments that it is unreasonable to doubt that the genesis of many important elements of Hebrew traditions lie ultimately in the religion of Zarathosht.

Cyrus and Babylonia

The era of Persian history most intimately associated with profound interaction of the two traditions is the middle of the sixth century B.C. — the period when Cyrus the Great was enthroned as King of Anshan in 558 B.C. At the time, chaos and anarchy prevailed in Babylonia, leading to tyranny over the subjects and imprisonment of the "people of Israel" in that country. A proclamation appeared as an oracle from the Babylonian deity Marduk (the God of Babylon) calling upon the just and tolerant monarch Cyrus to liberate Babylon. In the Hebrew scriptures of IInd Isaiah, the Zoroastrian king Cyrus is also prophesied to liberate the "people of Israel" from Babylonian tyranny. History has recorded that when Cyrus and his troops arrived at the city gates, the Babylonians welcomed his dominance with open arms. King Cyrus is thus the only non-Jew for whom the term "Messiah" has been used in the old testament.

Story of Creation

It was in the book of IInd Isaiah that certain ideas, hitherto foreign to early Hebrew literature, suddenly find frequent expression. For example, before the time of IInd Isaiah, the notion that "Yahweh created the world" plays little role in Hebrew literature. IInd Isaiah on the other hand consistently returns to this doctrinal concept. One also finds a striking resemblance both in style and substance of the cosmological accounts of IInd Isaiah (chapters 40, 45) and those of Yasna 44, for example:

"This I ask thee. Tell me truly which craftsman created the luminous bodies and the dark spaces? Which craftsman created both sleep and activity?" (Ys 44.5).

and

"Forming light and creating darkness, making peace and creating calamity, I Jehovah am doing all these things." (Is 45.7).

Moving on along the historical tract, the era of Darius the Great, overlaps with the Hebrew period of the Prophet Ezra. The Achaemenian rulers have an established record of unbroken chain of generosity toward the "people of Israel" and Darius and Artaxerxes were no exception.

The story of creation in the two traditions also has some common threads of comparison. Here we refer to the literary origin of the first five books of the Old Testament, also known as *The Torah*. The first of these five books is the Book of Genesis. The creation story as described here bears marked resemblance to that in the Zoroastrian "Bundahishen", e.g.:

"In the beginning God created heaven and earth" (Gen 1.1).

"First he produced the shining and visible sky" (Bun 1:6).

and

"Let the expanse come to be between the waters and let a dividing occur ..." (Gen 1.6)

"He created the water out of the substance of sky" (Bun 1:7).

Theological Parallels

The writings of the post exilic era (after the liberation of the Jewish people from their exile in Babylon) may have a bearing on the closeness of the Zoroastrian contacts. For example, comments about life after death, eschatology and resurrection, appeared in the most fragmentary manner in the early Hebrew scriptures. Very little direct mention is made in *The Torah* about the doctrine of resurrection.

Zoroastrian cosmogony speaks of the doctrine of *Frasho Kereii*, a period when the ideal existence

shall prevail: "If during times after this ... one shall defeat deceit by truth ... then one shall increase thy glory, Lord, during those times of salvation" (Ys 48.1). The first time we read about resurrection clearly, is in IInd Isaiah (26.19): "Your dead ones will live ... they will rise up, awake and cry out joyfully ..."

Another interesting example noticeable in IInd Isaiah is the reference to the term "righteousness". This attribute expressed as *Asha* is the fundamental ethical code of life prescribed by Zarathushtra. This term appears only once in all of the first five books of the Old Testament, and 13 times in all of the other 60 books of the scriptures. In contrast, in the book of IInd Isaiah alone, the term appears 8 times!

Major Differences

The omnipotence of Ahura Mazda, pervades through the Gathas (Ys 28.5, 28.7, 33.11, 43.1). This view however, has significantly eroded over the centuries to give rise to another school of thought, that contends that Ahura Mazda is less than omnipotent in the present *Gumazishn* period. This lack of omnipotence is totally rejected in Judaic scripture.

Another area of divergence is in the concept of theodicy. Zoroastrianism uniquely recognizes the reality and existence of "evil" in its doctrine of duality expressed in Ys 30 and 45. However, it is also important to recognize that the God of Zarathushtra and the existence He created are absolutely good and perfect. In Judaism, however, the God of Israel by being omnipotent is the creator of all — not just good, but also what is not good. "Making peace and creating calamity", all is due to Him.

Finally, another stark contrast between the two traditions is that of ethnic and universal nature. The God of Israel has made a covenant that He will give his chosen people a land of inheritance, the land of Canaan (Gen 12.7). The ethnic character of Judaism is deeply rooted where the term Israel pervades through the scriptures. In contrast, the universality of the Zoroastrian religion is evident in the *Gathas* and surfaces in various *Yasna* as well as *Yashts* and later scriptures. The local nature of Zoroastrianism results mainly through the millennia of association with its land of origin. One finds no mention of that land or the people in the Avestan scriptures. Much of the corpus of the *Gathas* is addressed directly to humanity in general — a powerful testimonial to the universality of Zoroastrianism.

In a recent paper by James Barr, he discusses the question of the claims of "influence" of Zoroastrianism on Judaism. He is perfectly justified in his discussion since, theological thinking, regardless of its origin, often converges toward a single ultimate force. To this end, commonalities in the thought processes may very well surface irrespective of their genesis. To establish novelty in religious thought with any degree of certainty is not an easy task. Only the statistics of certain occurrences in an era, relative to the knowledge of the earlier scriptures, may suggest the element of influence.

Jehan Bagli

Princeton, New Jersey

ZOROASTRIANS AND JEWS

Historical Contacts

Jews and Zoroastrians were in historical contact at various times: many Jewish exiles of the early 6th century B.C. were settled in Media, and Israel later became a province of the Achaemenian Empire. Talmudic texts mention Parthian Jews whose culture was thoroughly Iranian; and there is a large Iranian Jewish community to this day. Jews under Roman rule looked to the Parthians as liberators; and the legend of the journey of the Magi may be based partly on visits of Parthian emissaries to Jerusalem.

Whereas great nations have appeared on the stage of the world and then gone, both Hebrew and Avestan survive on the lips of the faithful. Scholars have perceived many similarities: the Parsis were called the "Jews of India" because both peoples are minorities who have shunned outsiders, linking religion to ethnicity, and have demonstrated extraordinary achievement, particularly in business and the professions.

Secret of Survival

The historical memories of both peoples, for all their glorious antiquity, have been strongly colored by persecution; and in both, persecution hardened the will of the faithful never to surrender. Despite the frequent grimness of their historical position, the two peoples affirm, cherish, and celebrate life, rather than seeking to escape the world. Perhaps the secret of their survival may lie, to some degree, in this attitude. Both religions consider man a fundamentally good creation whose salvation is the result of a lifetime of work, of learning, of love.

Attitude toward Conversion

It is perhaps because the ancient faiths are rooted in a particular way of life, and tolerant of the diversity of the world around them, that they do not approach conversion with the missionary zeal of Christianity or Islam. Both regard their revelatory scriptures as universally true, and consequently both have accepted, or even on rare occasions, encouraged proselytes. Judaism, particularly in the cosmopolitan Roman Empire in the later part of the Second Temple period, seems to have been far more receptive to converts than Zoroastrianism, which for centuries was an imperial faith.

In the new environment of secular, democratic society, where intermarriage is common and religious belief and practice more a matter of personal preference than of birth, conversion arises as an important issue, but one for which neither religion has had many precedents for at least a thousand years; and neither faith has a universally accepted hierarchical authority which might decide competently on a single policy.

Idea of Freedom

Both Judaism and Zoroastrianism have influenced profoundly the development of liberal humanist ideas in the West. One of the teachers of the wisdom of the Magi, was of course the *priscus theologus*, or earliest theologian, Zoroaster. The so-called *Chaldean Oracles of Zoroaster*, to which the Renaissance philosophers turned, is in fact a Neoplatonic text, but some of the "Zoroastrian" teachings to which they adhered, such as the radical difference between good and evil, the symbolism of light and wisdom, and the innate dignity of man, seem to be genuinely Iranian. This philosophical stance was essential in order to liberate both experimental science and political thought from the shackles of the Catholic Church; without it, the Protestant Reformation and the American, French, and Russian Revolutions might never have happened. It is curious to watch the progress of one symbol, like a tracer element, through the history of this expansion of the idea of freedom.

Of Freemasons and Freedom

In ancient Rome, the Iranian god Mithra was the center of a religious fraternity to whom he represented, as in Iran, the Sun, justice, and the friendship of equals. In Mithraic art, the god is shown in a red "Phrygian" cap; since emperors and slaves met as brothers in the Mithraic temple, the red Phrygian cap came to be a symbol of freedom. The Freemasons, a religious brotherhood with some resemblances to Mithraism, whose

present structure can be traced at least to the early 17th century, adopt a number of ancient symbols of Persian and Egyptian origin; for they, like the other Renaissance philosophers, attempted to break the domination of the Church. One of these, as it seems, was the red Phrygian cap of Mithra. It appears as the symbol of revolution in France in 1789; and after that, the "Liberty Cap" can be seen on most state seals in the Americas — until recent decades, it appeared on U.S. coins. We have Iran and Israel to thank for some of the roots of our democratic heritage as Americans.

Learning from Each Other

Jews had good times, basking in the Sun of the Persian lion. Zoroastrian Iran was generous, and perhaps the Jews can still learn from the Zoroastrians how to be a little more joyful. And in return, the Jews can offer their methods of study through discourse, now that modern Zoroastrians are turning to the Avestan and Pahlavi texts with new questions, in this new world.

They are both ancient, complicated, difficult peoples of the Middle East, at the same time committed irrevocably to the values of Western civilization. They are both worldly and as contradictory as a Zen koan. No one knows where the end is; but history has brought the two together again here in America. It could be a great relationship!

[Excerpted from a paper, "Zoroastrians and Jews", by Professor James R. Russell, of Columbia University, New York, presented at the Seventh North American Zoroastrian Congress, in Houston, September, 1990.]

ZOROASTRIANISM AND THE JUDAEO-CHRISTIAN HERITAGE***Zarathushtra's Contributions***

Many Judaeo-Christian traditions and beliefs have their origin in the ancient religion of Zarathushtra, which was dominant during the era before the birth of Christ. The words "satan", "paradise" and "amen" all have Zoroastrian origins. Few are aware of the fact that the Three Magis who heralded the birth of Christ were Zoroastrian priests. Zoroastrians had a belief in the coming of a Savior, born of a virgin mother, at least a millennium and a half before Jesus was born. Most scholars agree that Christ was not born on December 25, which was reckoned as the winter solstice in the Julian calendar. The Romans celebrated it fervently as the Nativity of Mithra, the Sun-God that they had adopted from Iran.

Mithraism was a corrupt form of Zoroastrianism, but even in this form it stood for values such as Truth, Justice, and Loyalty, which inspired allegiance among millions of Romans. Franz Cumont writes: "Never, perhaps not even in the epoch of Mussolman invasion, was Europe in greater danger of being Asiaticized than in the third century... A sudden inundation of Iranian concepts swept over the Occident... and when the flood subsided, it left behind in the consciousness of the people, a deep sediment of Oriental beliefs, which have never been obliterated."

Zoroaster's major contribution to our present day religious heritage was a belief in an all-wise, all-powerful and eternal God, heaven and hell, resurrection, Last Judgement, life everlasting for the united soul and body, the coming of a Saviour, the triad of good thoughts, good words and good deeds, and equal rights and respect for women, one of the chief attributes of the Lord being feminine. Zoroaster discovered that the whole universe was governed by a cosmic law of Asha (righteousness), and enjoined his disciples to follow this law to make this earth a better place for all mankind. His scriptures revere the souls of all good men of all times and all nations, who follow this law and further the kingdom of God on this earth.

Persian Emperors

How Zoroaster's doctrines shaped the course of history is most evident in the conduct of the Persian emperors Cyrus and Darius, who are the first empire builders known to recorded history. It was King Cyrus who freed the Jews from Babylonian captivity. Cyrus allowed the Jews to rebuild their temple in Jerusalem, and encouraged his subjects to live a good life according to their own tenets. The Jews regarded Cyrus as a Messiah, one who acted in Yahweh's name and authority. Dr. Mary Boyce, (*Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*), observes "... it was of particular moment for the religious history of mankind; for the Jews entertained warm feelings thereafter for the Persians, and this made them the more receptive to Zoroastrian influence."

Future Life

The Jews embraced many ethical and spiritual concepts during the Babylonian captivity. Perhaps the foremost among these is the belief in Future Life. The pre-exilic scriptures scarcely mention it. They knew no reward for their deeds other than what they found on this earth. It is after the exile that we find in their scriptures the expression of a hope in the other world.

Zoroaster and Western Philosophers

The influence of Zoroaster's teachings was so profound on western thought that intellectuals in Europe referred to him time and time again. In one of Faust's stories, Zoroaster is depicted as the author of a book which Faust studies so well that he earns the title of "a second Zoroaster". Later the book receives the same attention from his famous student, Christopher Wagner.

The Greeks made a practice of sheltering a philosophic or "scientific" theory under the guise of Zoroaster's authority. This practice was continued during the Renaissance with a book on Zoroaster written by Jessenius, a physician to Fanciscus Patricius, editor of the Chaldean Oracles, who says: "Zoroaster, first of all men, came near to laying the foundations, however rudimentary, of the Catholic faith." In *Thus Spake Zarathushtra* in 1887, Nietzsche shows that "Zarathushtra was the first to see in the battle of good and evil, the prime mover of all things".

In his book on Goethe in 1938, Schaeder writes: "With the knowledge of the Avesta, there arose a temptation to search the religion of Zarathushtra for the hidden sources of primitive Christianity." The French sent Anquetil Duperron to India to study the Avesta. He lived among the Parsis in India for many years and published his book, *Avesta* in 1771. How much the European philosophers were excited by Anquetil's trip to India, and how much it raised their hopes, especially of Voltaire and Diderot, to find anything in the Avesta that could be used against Christianity is depicted in Raymond Schwab's *Vie de Anquetil - Duperron*. However Anquetil's findings negated their expectations, and Voltaire relieved his disappointment by his famous comment: "People speak a lot about Zoroaster and will go on speaking about him."

Dr. Kersey Antia
Orland Park, Illinois

COMING EVENTS

"Looking Ahead to the 21st Century": Children's Art Competition

There will be an art competition for Zoroastrian children under 16 years of age. Art may be in the form of painting, drawing, etching, collage, or any other creative format. Cash prizes will be awarded in 3 age categories. For more information contact Bella Tata at (604) 681-5250.

ZOROASTER AND THE GREEKS, ROMANS AND EARLY CHRISTIANS

The Greeks

The name "Zoroaster" was given to Zarathushtra by the Greeks, who venerated the Persian "philosopher" dating him "5,000 years before the Siege of Troy" (*Plutarch*, 46 - 120 A.C.). Zoroastrian doctrine and practices are mentioned by Greek writers, Plato, Socrates and Aristotle, who are said to have studied under the Magi of their times. In his book *On Philosophy*, Aristotle refers to the good spirit Zeus or "Oromasdes" and the evil spirit Hades or "Areimanus". During the Achaemenian period, a number of books circulated through the Greek world under the name of Zoroaster to lend them authority.

The long saga of the wars between the Greeks and Persians is recorded in Herodotus's *History*, (5th century B.C.). One of those battles is immortalized in the "marathon" race, which commemorates the feat of a Greek soldier who in 490 B.C. ran from Marathon to Athens to announce the Greek victory over the Persians. Herodotus's description of the couriers on the "Royal Road" built by Darius, reads:

"... these are stayed neither by snow nor rain nor heat nor darkness from accomplishing their appointed course with all speed."

These words can be seen 2500 years later, engraved on the U.S. Post Office building in New York City.

The Romans

In Hellenistic and Roman times the image of Persia was a land of mystery, wisdom and learning, so that its religious teachings appealed to the conquering Roman soldiers, who then transferred it across the empire in the form of Mithraism.

Mithraism, woven around the Indo-Iranian deity Mithra, God of Light, was one of the intriguing religions that arose about the same time as Christianity. It quickly spread as far west as England and as far east as India, until it succumbed to the expansion of Christianity in the 4th century A.D. Recent scholars (*Origins of the Mithraic Mysteries*, David Ulansey, 1989), lend an astrological significance to the icons and symbols found in these Mithraic temples, hundreds of which have been discovered across Europe, the latest one unearthed by construction workers in London just a few years ago.

Birth of Christ -- The Wise Men

The Bible states (Matthew II,1-12): "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea ... there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem bearing gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh." The Wise Men were The Magi — Persian priests credited with profound religious knowledge. In the course of centuries, a variety of traditions have developed concerning the Wise Men -- their origin, their names, dress, appearance and age.

In some Syriac, Armenian and Persian sources, the Wise Men are given Persian names: Hormizdah, Izgarad (Yazdegerd) and Perozadh. In early Christian art (e.g. the 2nd century Catacombs of Priscilla in Rome) the Magi are shown in Persian garb and are often depicted wearing a Mithraic cap. The gifts were significant to the early Christian communities where Zoroastrian concepts and beliefs had been for a long time tenacious and ubiquitous; gold is a royal attribute; myrrh had healing properties; and to this day, frankincense is offered at the altars of Zoroastrian temples.

In Savah, on the caravan route between Tabriz and Yezd, Marco Polo, the thirteenth century Venetian traveler reports visiting monuments to the three Magi. He tells the story of the Magi: "They presented their offerings to the Christ child. In return, the Magi were given a stone as a symbol of faith which should abide in them as firm as a rock. Not understanding its significance, the Magis cast it away. Thereupon there descended from heaven a fire, which they carried to their own country and placed in a rich and beautiful fire temple and kept it continually burning". In this story, Marco Polo provides a strange fusion of Zoroastrian and Biblical traditions.

Genesis of Christmas

The commemoration of December 25 as the birthday of Christ has its origins in early Mithraic observances. December 25 was the date of a Mithraic festival in Rome, chosen by the Roman Emperor Aurelian in 274 A.D. to celebrate *natalis solis invicti*, the birthday of the unconquered sun, which, following the winter solstice, once again begins to show an increase in light. At some date prior to 336 A.D. the church in Rome established the commemoration of the birthday of Christ, the sun of Righteousness, on this same date. Prior to that, Christmas was celebrated in the spring, in the early part of the church year.

Dead Sea Scrolls

A wealth of information about this period in history is to be found in the Dead Sea Scrolls. The 2,000 year old secrets of these scrolls may soon be uncovered, as the prestigious Huntington Library in San Marino, California has made photographs of the scrolls available to reputable scholars worldwide. This has disturbed the small coterie of Catholic and Jewish scholars who have for the last 50 years, had exclusive access and rights to deciphering and publishing the ancient Hebrew and Aramaic texts. A series of new publications (see BOOKS ... this issue) are now available for the interested scholar.

Discovered in the late 1940s, in Judaen desert caves along the shores of the Dead Sea, the Scrolls, at present stored in Israel, were hailed as one of the most important finds of biblical archaeology. They consist of hundreds of manuscripts of the Old Testament, dating from 200 B.C. to 100 A.D. Ever since their discovery, there has been a high-stakes struggle for control of the materials. Critics (*The Dead Sea Scrolls Deception*, by Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh, 1991) contend that information from the scrolls is being suppressed because it undermines established Christian doctrine.

The scrolls lead scholars to believe that "(a) the early Christian church grew upon Jewish soil to a far greater extent than previously supposed; and (b) a large number of the early Christian beliefs and practices than previously suspected were not unique to it". (*Biblical Archaeological Review*, November 1991). There is certainly every reason to believe that these manuscripts could shed new light on the late Achaemenian and Parthian eras, the crucial period in history that spawned modern Judaism and early Christianity.

Zoroastrian Ideas In Early Christianity

Though it has not been given the recognition it deserves, Zoroastrian ideas have played a vital role in the development of western religious thought. As Dr. Mary Boyce writes: "So it was out of a Judaism enriched by five centuries of contact with Zoroastrianism that Christianity arose in the Parthian period, a new religion with roots thus in two ancient faiths, one Semitic, the other Persian. Doctrines taught perhaps a millennium and a half earlier by Zoroaster began in this way to reach fresh hearers."

Rohinton Rivetna
Hinsdale, Illinois



The 'Cyrus Legend'

Cyrus II—called "the Great"—was king of Persia from c. 558 to 529 a.c. He brought the whole of the Near East—including mighty Babylon—under his rule, from the Aegean Sea to the Indus River. Significant among his deeds was his granting of permission to the Jewish captives in Babylonia to return to their homeland.

That much is history. But what is not widely realized is that almost two centuries before Cyrus, the prophet Isaiah recorded (Isaiah 44:28) that a man named Cyrus would permit the exiled Jews to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple—which, in Isaiah's day, had not yet been destroyed! Isaiah also prophesied Cyrus' overthrow of Babylon (Isaiah 45:1-3).

Not only did God call Cyrus by name long before he was born, he saw to it that Satan the devil was prevented from putting the infant Cyrus to death and thwarting his plan. Greek sources—Herodotus, Xenophon and Ctesias—provide considerable information about Cyrus' early life. Notice the remarkable story surrounding Cyrus' birth and childhood, according to a version related by Herodotus in his *History* (1.107-130):

Astyages, king of the Medes, was overlord of the Persians.

Astyages gave his daughter Mandane in marriage to his vassal Cambyses, king of the Persians.

From the marriage of Mandane and Cambyses, Cyrus was born. Astyages, however, had a dream that the baby would grow up to overthrow him. So he ordered his adviser, Harpagus, to personally kill the infant. Harpagus, however, entrusted the execution to a herdsman named Mitrdates.

On finding that his wife had just given birth to a stillborn child, the herdsman substituted Cyrus, and reared him as his own son. When Cyrus was 10 years old, Astyages discovered the deception. In spite of the dream, the king was persuaded to let the boy live.

When he reached manhood, Cyrus ascended the Persian throne (c. 558 a.c.). In 553 he led a rebellion against his maternal grandfather. In 550 Astyages marched against Cyrus, but his army deserted him and surrendered to the Persians. Astyages—the last ruler of Media—was captured and dethroned, though he was permitted to live out his life in peace. Thus Cyrus became king of the Medes and Persians, firmly established on his throne and poised to fulfill his amazing prophetic destiny.

From "Babylon", Worldwide Church, 1990

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ZOROASTRIAN INTERACTIONS WITH NEAR-EASTERN RELIGIONS

A conference on "Zoroastrian Interactions with Near-Eastern Religions" was held November 10, 1991 at the University of Maryland, sponsored by the World Zoroastrian Organization, the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington, and the World Zarthushtrian Trust Fund. The presentations of the distinguished panel of speakers are summarized in this article.

RELATIONS BETWEEN ZOROASTRIAN AND NEAR-EASTERN RELIGIO-ETHICS

During a period when divinities needed appeasement through ritual prayers and sacrifices, Zarathushtra preached a highly philosophic religion with revolutionary ethical concepts. Ahura Mazda created the world in two forms, the ideal or *mainyu* world and the physical or *gaithya* (Pahlavi *geti*) world. The material world was constructed on Ahura Mazda's plan for creation, *Asha*, or Truth, which was promoted by *Spenta Mainyu* or Holy Spirit. But within the material world arose the will of opposition, named *Anghre Mainyu* in later Zoroastrian literature, which frustrates the promotion of *Asha*. Ultimate victory of *Spenta Mainyu* will result in the material world achieving *Kshathra Vairyo* or Holy Dominion.

Promoting *Asha* is an act of devotion to Ahura Mazda. Zarathushtra did not prescribe what we need to do or not do to promote *Asha*. Zarathushtra's religion is therefore a reflective religion. Each person has to decide with his or her own mind, what he or she must do to promote God's plans. This is a heavy burden, but that is what Zarathushtra places on humans to achieve *Haurvatat*, Perfection, leading to salvation.

The ten commandments of Moses, on the other hand, are prescriptive. The followers of Moses are required to act in certain ways because Jehovah requires them to do so. If a follower disobeys, there is punishment. The Christian ethic is predominantly an ethic of virtue. It specifies selfless love to become acceptable in the eye of God. This also occurs in later Judaism as a prophetic modification. In Islam, we again have a prescriptive system. Islam means submission, obedience to the will of the God. The injunctions of God are to be obeyed without question. Disobedience is considered sinful.

Zoroastrian ethics are teleological — related to the achievement of natural design and purpose, which is the implementation of *Asha* in this world. Its essence is given in *Yasna* in the blessing of Zarathushtra: "May we be like those who bring the world to perfection." Ultimately, however, the

message became encrusted with a large number of prescriptions, so that the conception of Zoroastrian thought by the time of the Arab invasion is a very confused one indeed.

*Professor Kaikhosrov Irani,
New York, New York*

ZOROASTER IN THE EYES OF WESTERN SCHOLARS

The existence of Zoroastrianism as a living religion was not known to Europe and the western world until the 17th century. Attempts by western scholars to interpret Avestan, Pahlavi and other Zoroastrian literature can be traced from reports about both Iranian and Parsi Zoroastrians. During the past 150 years, some western scholars have been favorable, some neutral, while others have bitterly attacked Zoroaster and his religion. Zarathushtra has been taken to be a teacher, a prophet, a reformer, a ritual priest composing invocation, a social moralist, a politician, a religious moralist, a pretender, a mystic, a witch-doctor, a shaman, a drug and medicine addict, a theologian, a poet, a philosopher, or some combination thereof (based on K.D. Irani — *Acta Iranica*, 1990).

A turning point in the study of Zoroastrian scriptures occurred when in 1843 Wilson attacked Zoroastrianism in his book: *Parsi Religion*, and succeeded in converting two Parsi boys to Christianity. This action resulted in a renaissance of the study of Zoroastrian scriptures by Parsi scholars like Khurshedji Cama and his disciples Dhabar, Anklesaria, Kanga, and Dhalla, using the tool of philology that had been developed in the west.

At the present time, there is a surge in Iranian studies and in the religion of Zarathushtra and the Gathas. In England, scholarly works have been published by Sir H. W. Bailey, W. B. Henning, Illaya Gershevich, Mary Boyce, John Hinneals, R. C. Zaehner, and others; in Budapest, Prof. Harmata; in Sweden, G. Widengren, Wikander; in Denmark, Karl Barr, J. Rasmussen; in France, R. Ghirshman, M. Mole, J. Duchesne-

Guillemin; in Germany, Johannes Hertel, Helmuth Humbach, F. Wolff; in Israel, Shaul Shakheed; and in the U.S.A., Richard Frye, S. Insler, Boyd, C. G. Cameron, James Russell, Gemot Windfuhr and others.

I believe (1) it is impossible to explain how the extant Avesta was compiled over the centuries; and (2) it is unproductive to attribute modern attitudes and present ritual practices to the development of Zoroastrianism over the last two and a half millennia. Zarathushtra's religion is our living faith, which western scholars do not share. In addition, western scholars appear to have ignored philological standards to Avesta and the Gathic language that have been rigorously applied to other languages. They have not examined the deep ethical philosophy abounding in the Prophet's message. Whatever they may feel about our great prophet, to us he is forever our living guide, a *Yazata* in the garb of the perfect man, a true messenger, and the chosen of Ahura Mazda.

Dr. Pallan Ichaporia
Womelsdorf, Pennsylvania

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JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN INDIA

Like the Parsis, the Jews came to India in small numbers, most of them by the sea route. Their exact dates of arrival and origin are a mystery. They began to thrive after the arrival of the British in the 19th century, spreading out for trade to Hong Kong, Singapore, China and Burma. Both communities though tiny compared to the mass of Hindu populations that gave them refuge, did well as captains of industry, scientists and journalists.

There are some interesting legends surrounding the Jewish community in India. Hundreds of years ago, 7 men and 7 women were shipwrecked off the coast of Konkan near Bombay. They were Jews who had come from Arabia, Yemen, or Persia. They found hospitality in India and settled there; by 1940, their numbers grew to 30,000. There is a Brahmin equivalent of this

legend; according to them, when the local people built a funeral pyre for the shipwrecked Jews, they came to life and decided to convert to Hinduism. These Brahmins even today have identifiable Semitic features with gray eyes, and occasionally red hair. It is possible that there were two shipwrecks of Jews off the Konkan coast. The trade route between the west coast of India and Arabia, Ethiopia and Persia has been well known for about 3000 years, and the Jews could have followed these routes in small boats. There is much speculation as to the date of their arrival, which may be 1000, 2000 or over 2500 years ago. The community calls itself B'nai Israel. Interestingly, they have adopted one Hindu custom: equivalent to the *pooja* or food offering, which they call *malida*. They offer *malida* during certain holidays as offerings to Elijah.

A second Jewish community is settled in Cochin on the south coast of India. Their ancestors came at least 1000 years ago, possibly from Persia over the trade routes. Like the Parsis, they became bankers, entrepreneurs, and mediators between the incoming European powers and local potentates. A third group, known as *Baghdadi Jews*, came in the 19th century from the middle-east to avoid persecution, and settled in Bombay and Karachi. The famous Sassoons are *Baghdadi Jews*. Finally, mention should be made of several hill tribes in Assam in north-east India, who claim to be descendants of the lost tribes. They surfaced in the early 1970s when Christian missionaries went to the tribal areas of Assam; on learning about the Bible, they realized their Jewish ancestry.

There are several facets of Zoroastrian and Jewish faith that are remarkably similar:

- Moses saw God face-to-face in the form of a burning bush that did not get consumed by the fire. The importance of fire in Jewish homes is translated into the Friday night candle-lighting ceremony. The significance of fire is very similar to Zoroastrian ideas — source of light, symbol of purity.
- Both faiths stress the importance of doing good and charitable deeds, not just talking about it. The Jewish term for this is *mitzvah*.
- Founders of both religions were obsessed with the principle of truth. Zarathushtra calls it *Asha*. It is repeated throughout the Bible and the Talmud.
- Communal togetherness is important. There is no proselytization.

The followers of Abraham and Zarathushtra both fled to India and are now joining together in this country, as friends and fellow pilgrims, united in the search for truth.

Charles Fenyvesi

[Columnist for U.S. News and World Report and Washington Post; author of books on Jewish family life.]

INTERACTIONS WITH ISLAM

Iran's history can be divided into two parts: pre-Islamic and post-Islamic. Under the Achaemenids, Zoroastrianism had widespread influence. Zoroastrianism was probably influenced by Hellenic thought after the destruction of Persepolis by Alexander in 322 B.C. After the Hellenic period the Sassanians came to power. The first Sassanian ruler Ardeshir Papak made Zoroastrianism the state religion, but his son Shahpur I brought Manicheism, and tried to discard Zoroastrianism from Persia. Later, there was a revival of the Zoroastrian religion, but many rituals were introduced, and the power of the priests increased. Towards the end of the dynasty, Khushru I (Anoushirawan the Just) brought Zoroastrianism back. Mohammed was born during his reign.

It is said that Mohammed invited Khushru II, grandson of Anoushirawan the Just to his religion, but the king laughed and sent back some Iranian soil with the messenger. This displeased Mohammed, as he interpreted this to mean the king had given him Iran. When the Arabs invaded Iran, there had been 10 rulers in 2 to 3 years due to internecine warfare and intrigues. The people were tired of discrimination from the ruling class and religious rigidity imposed by the priests. The Iranian Zoroastrians gradually converted to Islam, but they changed Islam also, as the division into Shi'as and Sunnis began in Iran.

The Safavids were the first Iranian dynasty to come to power after the Arabs, of whom Shah Abbas was the most famous. He collected most Zoroastrian texts and moved over one million Zoroastrians from Yezd and Kerman to Isfahan and other areas. The number of Zoroastrians declined significantly after that. Many Atash-Kadehs and sacred places were converted into mosques and tombs of Imams. Zoroastrians had to pay high taxes and were not allowed to wear the same clothes as Muslims.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, when Zoroastrians from India began to take interest in the conditions of their Iranian co-religionists, conditions began to improve. Now we are all coming together in

Canada and the U.S.A. We have much work ahead. Most important, we need to clearly understand and interpret the scriptures. We need to correct the mistakes that have been made in translating the Gathas. We need to be understood by the west. We need to leave a legacy for our children to be proud of, the same way we are proud of our forefathers.

Dr. Kaikhosrow Harvesf

Jacksonville, Florida

PARALLELS IN ZOROASTRIANISM AND CHRISTIANITY

Both Zoroastrianism and Christianity encompass a wide range of beliefs and practices; this discussion will focus only on the "cores" of the religions as contained in the Gathas and the Christian Gospels.

Both prophets can be perceived as disappointments to those of their contemporaries who saw them to be potential agents of sudden change in prevailing conditions. Furthermore, the new moral visions taught by each prophet were a source of irritation for and cause of hostility from the priestly and ruling classes. But despite initial scorn and opposition, both Zarathushtra and Jesus did ultimately find sympathetic listeners.

The world views of Zoroastrianism and Christianity share many similarities. Both visualize God as being personal and accessible through prayer. In both religions, God is the Creator and Sustainer; the creative activity of God is attributed to a spirit; and it is personal righteousness that is the highest form of worship of God. The use of the metaphors "God's Will" and "Kingdom of God" by Jesus is close to the cosmic principles of truth, justice and universal morality, *Asha* and *Ahura Mazda's Good Dominion*, as defined by the term *Kshathra*. Similarly the force opposing *Asha* is given a name, *Ahriman* in Zoroastrianism and *Satan* in Christianity. Both religions see a final resolution of the struggle between good and evil and the establishment of *Kshathra Vairyo* or The Kingdom of God. In the case of Zoroastrianism, the final conquest of evil by good is seen as an evolutionary process worked out in history. Christianity, however, finds its ultimate answer to evil in the cataclysmic events resulting from abrupt divine intervention into history at the parousia, the Messianic "return of Christ".

There is hope for a renaissance of Zoroastrianism due to the recent immigration of Parsi and Iranian Zoroastrians to the west. Religion is a highly

personal matter and religious community must ultimately be based upon shared interpretations of doctrines, their relative primacy, and how they are to be acted out in ritual and day to day life. These factors have historically been a basis for divisions within all religions (Christianity is a good example). Zoroastrianism will soon enter its period of "ecumenicism" during which time there will be emphasis upon those things that unite rather than divide.

*Dr. James Lovelace
Washington, D.C.*

[A student of religion and philosophy, Dr. Lovelace has spoken on Zoroastrianism and Christianity in the U.S. and Pakistan.]

PERSONAL PROFILE

MURZBAN MORRIS — A Success Story



"I am the first American Morris" prides the 18 year old Murzban ("Murzy") Morris of Spotswood, New Jersey, who was inducted July 9, 1991 to the prestigious U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis. He plans to be a surgeon in the Navy.

This distinction was a sequel to a long string of high school honors and awards: the Presidential fitness award, a Jaycee Community award, Excellence in Science award, a Foreign Language award for German, the Star-Ledger Scholar's award, the Louis Armstrong Jazz award, and the 1991 Citizenship award. His achievements were well summed up by his principal: "Murzy is the type of student every parent would like to have ... he is a true citizen in the true sense of the word".

Balancing these academic achievements, Murzy also excelled in extra-curricular activities and athletics. Besides being the managing editor of the school newspaper, active with the Science and Math League, an Eagle Scout, and Student Council President, Murzy was also co-captain of the varsity soccer team that reached the State finals, and a Junior record holder on the track team.

After ten essays and a grueling round of interviews, Murzy was selected last year to receive the Japan-U.S. Senate Scholarship from New Jersey. He spent a month in Japan, an experience that he summed up in two words "beyond belief." He also represented New Jersey on the US Senate Youth Program for which he received a \$2,000 prize, and met President Bush.

Murzy is one of the three sons of Fred and Zahver Morris, whom he credits for his success. Coming from a dedicated Zoroastrian family, Murzy has retained a strong sense of Zoroastrian identity and values. He recognizes: "Zoroastrianism is not something we are privileged to" and continues: "if we all just tried to open ourselves up and give a little of ourselves to take a little of someone else in, wouldn't this place be so much better?"

At a young age, Murzban Morris has achieved what many wish in a lifetime. His will be a continuous saga of success, which all Zoroastrians can truly take pride in. It is individuals like him who will be the subjects of Zoroastrian history on this continent in generations to come.

*Jehan Bagli
Princeton, New Jersey*

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ERRATA: Jamshid Soroushian's book [see "Zoroastrians in China ...", Journal, Nov 1991] correctly states that Yazdegard III was killed in Eastern Iran and only his family fled to China. The editor regrets the error.

WHO IS A ZOROASTRIAN?

At the 1991 FEZANA Annual General Meeting, it was resolved that FEZANA make a compilation of definitions of "Zoroastrian", as they appear in the constitutions of Member Associations. A partial compilation is presented here.

Zoroastrian Association of Alberta

The term Zoroastrian is not defined in the constitution. Membership to the Association is open to all legal residents of Alberta.

Zoroastrian Association of Arizona

A Zoroastrian for the purposes of this constitution is a person who is a believer or a follower of the religion as propounded by Prophet Zoroaster, and one who has not only signified his willingness to be initiated into the Zoroastrian religion, but has been so initiated in accordance with the practices followed by Zoroastrians.

Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia

A Zoroastrian, for purposes of these bylaws, is defined as: A person who is a believer or a follower of the religion as propounded by our prophet Zoroaster and one who has not only signified his willingness to be initiated into the Zoroastrian religion, but has been so initiated in accordance with the practice(s) followed by the Zoroastrians.

A 1984 proposal by Mr. J. N. Panthaky:

1. A person who is born of Zoroastrian parents and is initiated in the religion according to the tradition and customs of the Zoroastrian religion and has not later converted to any other religion.
2. A person who is born of Zoroastrian parents and is initiated according to the tradition and customs of the Zoroastrian religion, who has married a non-Zoroastrian, but has not given up his/her faith in the Zoroastrian religion, or has not been converted to any other religion upon marriage.
3. Children of such marriages may be brought up as Zoroastrians if initiated in the religion according to the traditions and customs of the Zoroastrian religion.
4. A person who is not born of Zoroastrian parents, but believes in and practices the faith of Zoroaster and shows his/her willingness to be accepted as a Zoroastrian by being initiated according to the tradition and custom of the Zoroastrian religion.
5. Children not born of Zoroastrian parents but adopted by either both parents being Zoroastrians or either one of the parents being a Zoroastrian, and such children being brought up as Zoroastrians and initiated according to the tradition and custom of the Zoroastrian religion.

Zarthoshti Anjuman of Northern California

"Zoroastrian" is a person who is a follower of the religion as propounded by the Prophet Zoroaster and who has been initiated (Navjote) into the Zoroastrian faith or has been born of a Zoroastrian parent.

Zoroastrian Association of Met. Chicago

The bylaws define a Zoroastrian (for the purposes of the ZAC constitution and the bylaws) as a person who is a believer or a follower of the religion as propounded by the Prophet Zoroaster, and one who has not only signified his willingness to be initiated into the Zoroastrian religion, but has been so initiated in accordance with the practices followed by Zoroastrians.

The Zoroastrian Center of Chicago and the Darbe Mehr are open to all. Reservations for private functions, however, are restricted to members only. The ZAC recognizes the Navjote ceremonies of children whose parents are either, both Zoroastrians by birth, or one of whom is a Zoroastrian by birth (father or mother). The ZAC recognizes the wedding ceremonies of partners, both of whom are Zoroastrians by birth, or one of whom is a Zoroastrian by birth. ZAC's membership is open to all Zoroastrians, their spouses and children and all persons who express deep interest in the objects of the Association and agree to abide by its constitution and bylaws.

Zoroastrian Association of Houston

Definition of "Zoroastrian" as it relates to FEZANA, proposed by ZAH at the 1991 AGM:

- Whereas FEZANA is a federation of various Zarthushti Associations of North America;
- Whereas the establishers of these Associations trace a distinct line, traditions and a rich heritage, established by their forefathers in India, Iran and Pakistan;

- Recognizing that "strictly technically" anyone who practices Zarathushtra's religion could call themselves a Zarthushti;
- Also recognizing that the religion of Zarathushtra has been preserved for over 3,000 years by the Rules, Practices and Traditions of the Zarthushti's of India, Iran and Pakistan;
- Also recognizing that FEZANA has been established to preserve, protect and perpetuate the Zarthushti community and not dilute it;
- Resolved that for purposes of FEZANA, a Zarthushti is defined as one who has descended from Zarthushti parents and has been initiated into the Zarthushti religion by a traditional Sudreh-Pushin or Navjote ceremony.

Zoroastrian Society of Ontario

"Zoroastrian" is a person who is a follower of the religion propounded by the Prophet Zoroaster and who has been initiated into the Zoroastrian faith.

Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania

"Zoroastrian" is not defined in the constitution. Any Zoroastrian and his or her spouse, widow or widower and children may become members of the Association.

Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania and New Jersey

The constitution states that membership would be granted to all Zoroastrians.

Persian Zoroastrian Association, California

No definition of Zoroastrian is given in the constitution. Zoroastrians can become members and non-Zoroastrians become associate members.

Zoroastrian Association of Quebec

A Zoroastrian for purposes of these bylaws is defined as "a person who is a believer or a follower of the religion as propounded by our Prophet Zoroaster, who has not only signified his willingness to be initiated into the Zoroastrian religion, but has been so initiated in accordance with the practice(s) followed by Zoroastrians and whose parents and/or grand-parents have been initiated into the Zoroastrian religion."

Commentary: This definition ensures a greater commitment on the part of the member to being a Zoroastrian. It permits acceptance into the Association of people whose parents and/or grandparents have been initiated into the Zoroastrian religion; this implies acceptance into the Association of co-religionists from Iran who due to local circumstances and customs have not officially had their Navjote done, but who are

nonetheless as dedicated in their beliefs.

Zoroastrian Association of Met. Washington

"Ordinary Membership of the Association shall be open to all persons who have been formally initiated into the Zoroastrian religion, and their spouses and children, whether natural or adopted. Any person supporting or believing in the fundamental principles of Zoroastrianism shall be eligible for Associate membership. Only Ordinary members have voting rights."

Position of ZAMW:

This constitution was written in 1979. Since then, following the Iran-Iraq war, a large number of families arrived from Iran. There was no doubt that they were Zarthushtis, but many of them had not been formally initiated with a sudreh-push ceremony. The Board decided to accept them as Ordinary members without questioning them. The consensus of the present Board is:

- A Zoroastrian is anyone who believes in and follows the teachings of Zarathushtra. He/she must have made a declaration that they accept the religion. But one cannot expect a 40 year old woman to have her navjote done, or even to stand before an audience and say that she is today accepting Zoroastrianism. A private commitment should be acceptable.
- If a person applies to become a voting member of the Anjuman, how does one then determine whether he or she is a Zoroastrian? The Board feels that that should be left up to the community. Do they accept them? If so, then they should be accepted as a Zoroastrian on faith. That is the only choice.

Zoroastrian Association of North Texas

A Zoroastrian is a person who is a believer and follower of the religion as propounded by Zarathushtra and one who has been initiated in the religion in accordance with the customs and religious practices followed in the community in which he or she currently or previously resided.

Traditional Mazdayasni Zoroastrian Anjuman

The definition which has been the salvation of our community for the past thirteen centuries and which we propose is: The term "Zoroastrian" refers to a person who has descended from both Zoroastrian parents, who are the Zoroastrian descendants of those inhabitants of Iran who remained faithful to their ancestral religion even after the downfall of the Sassanian Empire or the Zoroastrian descendants of those inhabitants of Iran who remained faithful to their ancestral religion but who later settled in India and became

known as the Parsis and Iranis of India; and who has been initiated into the Zoroastrian faith by virtue of a traditional Navjote or Sudreh-Pushin ceremony performed by qualified mobeds; and who continues to follow the teachings and practices of the Zoroastrian faith in his/her daily life.

We cannot stress enough the need for the parentage requirement. Departing from that in any way will bring about disastrous repercussions for our community ending in its eventual dissolution, since it will send a clear signal to our upcoming generations that marriage outside the community is now acceptable. It should also be borne in mind that any departure from the accepted definition will have world wide implications for our community and cannot be implemented without global popular consent.

Zoroastrian Society of Washington State

- A person who is born of Zoroastrian parent(s) and who is initiated into the Zoroastrian faith, is a Zoroastrian.
- A person who is born of Zoroastrian parent(s) but is not initiated due to the prevailing social and political conditions, is also a Zoroastrian provided he/she has practiced the Zoroastrian faith since his/her birth.
- A person who is not born of Zoroastrian parents, but who is a believer or a follower of the religion as propounded by Zarathushtra, has studied our scriptures, has learnt the Navjote (Sudreh and Kushti/ Sedreh poshi) prayers and has been initiated into the Zoroastrian faith in accordance with Article III of the Articles of Incorporation, is a Zoroastrian member of the Society approved by the majority vote of the Board of Directors.

Membership to the Society is open to all Zoroastrians. Also, all other persons who express interest in the objectives of the Society, and agree to abide to the Articles of Incorporation and bylaws of the Society, do qualify for membership.

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READERS' FORUM

Letters for the Readers' Forum should be sent to Adel Engineer, Editor -- Articles and Letters, FEZANA Journal, 1959 Bristol Court, Naperville, Illinois 60565. They should be less than 600 words and must include the writer's full name, address and telephone number. The Journal reserves the right to edit letters for clarity and space. This column is a forum to present information, views and opinions, and should not be used for conducting ongoing dialogue with other letter writers, for repeatedly making the same statements, or for criticizing any individual or his/her views.

Universality of the Religion of Zarathushtra

The message of Zarathushtra is simple and profound. The cardinal principle of the good mind (*Vohumana*) leading a righteous (*Ashavahista*) and benevolent (*Khshathra*) life uplifting the soul (*Spenta Armaity*) towards perfection (*Haurvatat*) and immortality (*Ameratat*). Ahura Mazda, the Supreme Wisdom is the guiding power, a spark of Whom within us (*Fravashi*) helps us make our own informed choice between right and wrong. For this choice we bear the full responsibility, the consequences of which are ours to face and endure.

This message is for all living beings endowed with the thinking mind. It is adopted over and over again in all religious teachings that have followed — Judaic, Christian, Islam and lately Bahai. By a process of rational deduction the followers of these faiths are also the followers of the message of Zarathushtra.

Who is a Zoroastrian? One who studies, accepts and follows the basic tenets of Zarathushtra. Proselytizing, conversion, acceptance or any other form of intervention by another agent between an individual and Ahura Mazda are alien and hence undesirable in the true Zoroastrian thought. Navjote is one step in the sojourn of a Zoroastrian life — not a means to make one Zoroastrian. It is rather a socio-cultural event analogous to a graduation from the stage of playful childhood to one of responsible free choice.

*Dr. Mehroo Patel
Oak Park, Illinois*

A Definition from the Gathas

Let us first look at the definition of a Parsi as outlined by K. B. Chargemana of Bombay and published by Dharma Prakash, Vol 4, 1982:

1. A Parsi or a Parsi priest should be one who believes in the Zoroastrian religion, its customs and beliefs as practiced till

Dokhmanishini and should not be a convert to the Zoroastrian religion.

2. Be born of both parents who are Parsi Zoroastrians who profess or professed till their death the Zoroastrian religion.
3. Be one who has passed through the Navjote ceremony and still believes in the practices and the principles laid down in the Navjote ceremony.
4. No one should be considered as Parsi Zoroastrian if one's Navjote ceremony has been performed by a renegade Zoroastrian practicing priest and whose one or both parents is/are not Parsi Zoroastrians.
5. One should be considered as ceasing to be a Parsi, although born of Parsi Zoroastrian parents as soon as he/she marries one who is not a Parsi Zoroastrian or who has a spouse who is not born of Parsi Zoroastrian parents as per terms given above.

The reason I am reproducing the above definition verbatim is the suggestion made by some to define a "Zoroastrian". Some have suggested definitions, but leave the final version to the High Priests in India. From the stands taken by the High Priests in India on religious issues since the beginning of this century, I am afraid they will be more in line with the above unrealistic, highly prejudiced definition. Also, I am puzzled why no mention is made of the High Priests of Iran in this matter.

We can find numerous definitions of a "Zoroastrian" in the *Gathas*. Humbly I will plant a few here:

A Zoroastrian is a person who makes a wise choice with the Holy Spirit, who thwarts the destructive form of the Evil Spirit, who identifies the Good with God, who acquires the Good Mind and follows the path of *Asha*, who imbues the inner self with the cultural and spiritual values of Zarathushtra to establish the *Vohu Khshathra* of God, who understands truth and justice with the Divine Essence of the soul in fairness to all, who brings happiness to others, who contemplates on *Vahishtem Thwa* through Ahura Mazda's attributes and becomes *Vahishtem Yem*, who sees the Divine Light and illumines others, who works towards the rejuvenation of the creative purpose of Ahura Mazda, who maintains the sanctity of home with wisdom, love and devotion, and who overcoming all earthly limitations, transcends to Perfection (*Haurvatat*) and Immortality (*Ameratat*).

You cannot lock in the human spirit — the Berlin wall came down, communism toppled and discredited its heroes. In the end, the freedom of the human spirit won and prevailed. Let us not polish the barrel of the gun. We live in a free society where Parsis as well as non-Parsis have freedom of practicing Zoroastrianism. And that is our constitutional right. A right that must be respected by all regardless of race, color or nationality.

Behram Deboo
Everett, Washington

Advice to Foreign Students

Zoroastrian students planning on studying in North America should understand that living conditions are very different than in the mother countries:

- They cannot simply be full-time students, but must get a job however small to get some income. This could be working in a restaurant, grocery shop, gardening, housecleaning, painting, etc.
- They have to try for admission in state colleges where the fees are substantially less.
- Most colleges have work study programs on campus and all students have a chance to get part time work.
- There is no need to buy all the expensive books; there are libraries all over to help a student study.
- Students need to learn to do their own cooking; that will save a lot of money.
- Students need not buy brand new clothes; there are thrift shops where one can buy nearly new clothes at a fraction of the price.

These are some pointers. If a student needs financial help, they should learn to economize. Many of us have come far in our careers practicing some of these thrifty habits, and we are proud of it.

Dr. Nergish R. Surti
Edmond, Oklahoma

Ideal Opportunity to Move to Fasli Calendar

On behalf of the Council of Iranian Mobeds of North America (Kankash-e-Mobedan), I sincerely thank Dr. Jehan Bagli, editor of *Gavashni*, and appreciate his efforts in providing articles, comments and authentic evidence regarding the three calendars which have existed among the Zoroastrian community (see *FEZANA Journal*, March

1991). Dr. Bagli says: "March 21, 1992 will present an ideal opportunity to consolidate the three Zoroastrian calendars, because the *roz* (day) of the three calendars will be *HORMAZD* on the same day with the month Farvardin (Fasli), Aban (Shehenshahi) and Adar (Qadimi). This phenomenon occurs every 120 years. We Zoroastrians, who have understood the errors of our history and waiting for a suitable time for change, should take this valuable opportunity and switch from Shehenshahi or Qadimi, to the Fasli calendar".

By shedding light on the calendars and their historical background, Dr. Bagli once more proves that the Fasli system of computing is the most precise and accurate of the three calendars.

The Iranian Mobeds' Council also feels that unifying into one Fasli calendar is the most plausible, sensible and meaningful way to put order into the confusion that has been generated over the past 800 years. It is not only desirable, but necessary in the interest of the perpetuation of the religion of Asho Zarthosht, that we make this change, which will surely bring about more harmony, unity and cooperation among the Zoroastrian community.

As this is an important issue, it is suggested that Zoroastrian Associations world-wide unify their calendar. FEZANA can provide informative materials, in order to be able to choose and make possible the transition to the Fasli calendar.

May Ahura Mazda guide us and help us in this great endeavor.

Mobed Bahram Shahzadi
for Council of Iranian Mobeds of North America

[The May 1992 FEZANA Journal will be devoted to a discussion of Zoroastrian calendars. Letters and articles on this subject are solicited from readers by March 1. This subject will also be a topic of discussion at the upcoming Congress in Vancouver — Editor].

Need for Retirement Homes

I am writing in connection with the lack of retirement home facilities for Zoroastrian seniors in North America. Since we have a fairly sizable community living and prospering in the U.S. and Canada, I believe the time has come for us to think about planning for a retirement home for seniors like the ones which other religious groups have established.

In California there is Leisure World at Laguna Hills, and in Pennsylvania there are retirement colonies built by Marriott Hotel and by the Friends

(Quakers) to help senior citizens own their own homes and simultaneously to obtain the benefits of medical care and facilities for recreational activities and fitness programs.

Such a colony for seniors can be located in a place that has a salubrious climate as in San Diego or Vancouver and that is not overly expensive in living costs as well as in real estate values. An additional facility could be provided with a prayer room and one of the seniors could officiate as the mobed when needed.

I shall be thankful if you will bring my proposal to the notice of your readers and give it some consideration when you have your congress next year in Vancouver.

Mehroo Jussawalla
Honolulu, Hawaii

Ameratat (Immortality) — Gift of Life

Zarathushtra teaches environmental preservation and charity. Our unique and ecologically sound method of disposal of the dead, though age-old combines these two important teachings. It has served us over centuries past, but has become difficult to follow in its major stronghold in India and Iran, and impossible in other parts of the world. Zoroastrians in North America have generally resorted to cremation as the next appropriate, widely-available method. Burial is practiced less extensively.

More recently, a method highly technical, equally sound ecologically, and beneficial to mankind, hence ultimately charitable has become available. I am alluding to donation of organs and tissues to other human beings whose survival is threatened by disease or destruction of their own. According to donor-transplant programs one person can thus help as many as 10 to 12 people in need. The program is administered in a humane, sympathetic and revered manner with care and concern for the grief of the survivors. The remains are put together in a sensitive and cosmetic way so that viewing at the wake or funeral can be performed as planned. The remains can then be cremated or buried as wished.

Taking this concept one step further, I would also like to make a plea to consider donating their body after death and ceremonies, to medical schools and universities for the advancement of research and education.

I am convinced that this is the ultimate Zoroastrian act of charity, in absolute accord with Zarathushtra's teachings and encourage

everyone to ponder and act upon it during your lifetime. It cannot be done by surviving relatives.

The Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago organized a lecture with the Regional Organ Bank of Illinois, which was very informative and well received. I urge other Associations to follow this example to encourage their members in this direction.

Dr. Mehroo M. Patel
Oak Park, Illinois

PLEASE GIVE FROM THE HEART ...

Passing the Plate

According to a survey by *Investment Vision*, November 1991, Americans give \$41 billion a year to religious organizations. Among the religious groups, Jewish households lead with an annual charitable contribution of \$1,800 or 3.8% of their income. Then follow the Presbyterians and Baptists with \$800 (2.2% of household income), and the Catholics with \$500 (1.3%).

Where do Zoroastrians lie in these statistics? If 2000 North American Zoroastrian households donated at the same rate as the Jews, we would raise over \$3 million annually! More than enough to educate our students, build our Darbe Mehrs, care for our elderly, and provide medical assistance to the stricken. This is not an outlandish dream. North American Zoroastrians have the destiny of the Zoroastrian world in the palm of their hands.

FEZANA Funds Policy

FEZANA continually receives appeals for financial aid, mostly from students and for medical emergencies. The current practice is to react to each request by collecting contributions from the community as each appeal is received. This crisis-driven, reactive approach is often "too little, too late". To avoid approaching the community with urgent appeals every month, FEZANA's goal is to build up funds from which these requests can be met in a more timely and equitable manner. The fund categories are:

- Welfare Fund (immigrants, medical, aged and needy)
- Religious Education (priests, religious studies, books, materials, seminars)
- Student Aid (loans/scholarships)

- Properties Fund
- General Fund
- Helping Hands (ZYNA)

Your donations will be most gratefully accepted. Please send checks to: FEZANA, 626 West 56th Street, Hinsdale, Illinois 60521, tel: (708) 325-5383.

Student Appeals

Appeals have been received from four students, studying at U.S. Universities seeking financial help. Donations will be gratefully accepted. Please send checks payable to FEZANA marked "Student Aid" to: Dinshaw Joshi, FEZANA Welfare Committee, 4515 Willard Ave, #1609-S, Chevy Chase, MD 20815.

Mother Pleads for Son's Life

FEZANA has received an urgent appeal from Feroza Nowrojee, mother of three year old Hormuzd of Bombay, who was born with serious heart defects. Though physically weak and underweight, his mental prowess and intellect are above average.

Doctors have advised open heart surgery at the University of Alabama Hospital in Birmingham, AL. This surgery is expected to save little Hormazd's life and give him an almost normal life span. Feroza writes: "Time is of the essence. If the pressures in his heart change he will become inoperable. Daily he is experiencing more and more difficulty in breathing."

Hospitalization and professional fees for 15 days will be in excess of \$37,500 (Rs. 10 lakhs). The Lioness Club of Byculla has collected over Rs. 7 lakhs.

FEZANA appeals to Zoroastrians in USA and Canada to assist in giving a new lease on life to little Hormazd. Please send checks payable to FEZANA, marked "Welfare - Hormuzd" to: Dinshaw Joshi, FEZANA Welfare Committee, 4515 Willard Ave, #1609-S, Chevy Chase, MD 20815.

Acknowledgements

FEZANA most gratefully acknowledges the following donations received since the last publication. Donations will be accepted for the fund categories: Welfare, Religious Education, Student Aid, Properties, Helping Hands (ZYNA), General, or for a specific appeal.

For Welfare (Medical Aid - Burzin Shroff):

R. K. Balsara, PA (\$101), Dara Homavazir ONT (\$40CD), Rostam Kavoussi, TX (\$20).

For Welfare (Gujarat Farmers):

Sheroo Daruwalla, IL (\$21).

For FEZANA Journal:

Homi Amrolia, BC (\$12CD), Ardeshir Bakhtiani, VA (\$10), Threatee Baxter, NY (\$15), Jamshed Bhatena, MI (\$8), Sheraz Bhesania, BC (\$12CD), Keki Bhote, IL (\$8), Dr. N. Camay, CA (\$40), K. F. Chothia, MD (\$8), Farobag Cooper, IL (\$8), Edul Daver, NJ (\$8), Hoshi Deboo, CA (\$15), Behram Dhunjishaw, NY (\$10), Homi Gilan, BC (\$12CD), Dr. Pallan Ichaporia (\$20), Rustom Irani, FL (\$8), Mehernaz Jamzadeh, SC (\$20), Mehroo Jussawalla, HI (\$8) Shahrukh Kermani, MD (\$8), Binaifer Kermani, MD (\$8), Aspi Maneckjee, ONT (\$12CD), Dina McIntyre, PA (\$8), Rubina Patel, MD (\$16), Farhad Sahiar, OH (\$8), Jehangir Shroff, TX (\$8), Behram Shroff, OH (\$8), Framroze Sidhva, FL (\$10), Bella Tata, BC (\$16CD), Natalie Vania, MN (\$8), Mehraban Zartoshty, BC (\$120CD)

For ZYNA (from "Navzote: Master" Cassettes):

Ardeshir Anoushiravani, CA (\$50), Shahriar Banki, CA (\$20)

For Student Aid:

Anonymous (\$500), Khushroo Patel, CT (\$101), Well-wisher (\$50).

For General Fund:

Shahrukh Kermani, MD (\$15).

BOOKS, TAPES AND OTHER MATERIALS***Interfaith Calendar***

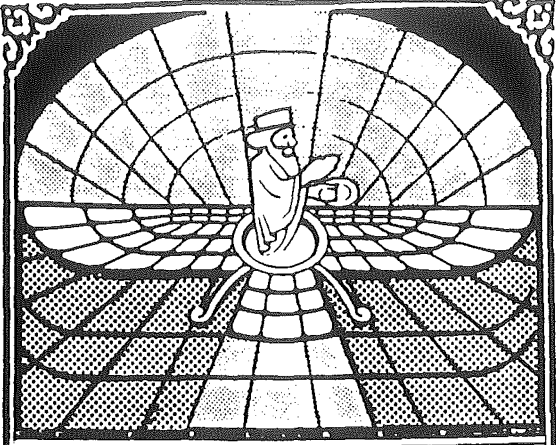
Following the precedent set last year, one month of the Interfaith calendar published by the National Council of Christians and Jews, is devoted to Zoroastrianism. Copies may be ordered for a suggested donation of \$10 payable to FEZANA. Contact: Rohinton Rivetna, 626 West 56th Street, Hinsdale, Illinois 60521, tel: (708) 325-5383.

"Vohu Visions" — a Novel Enterprise

"Vohu Visions" (Good Visions) is an exciting new endeavor in the graphic expression of Zoroastrian culture using art and design to reflect and communicate ancient Zoroastrian concepts and values through modern creations.

"Vohu Visions" specializes in cards, calendars, T-shirts, stained glass, color Zarathushtra frames, Fravashis and magnets. We also welcome customized design orders for New Year, Navjote and Wedding Cards, stained glass projects, letter paper, logos and personalized stationery. For a

free color catalog, contact: Kaizad Irani, 1201 E. Main Street, Urbana, Illinois 61801, tel: (217) 344-8626.



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Navzote Master — a Different Approach

"Navzote Master" — a composition of two prayer cassettes is developed especially for infants and toddlers to learn the fundamental Avesta prayers and their meanings. The meaning is recited first, word by word; and again, with a Rock-a-Bye Baby instrumental in the background. It is recorded on 21st century state-of-the-art sound retrieval system.

I am very proud to say that my daughter Anahita is recorded praying Ashem Vohu at 16 months and Yatha Ahu Vairyo at 2 years. Presently she is learning Din-No-Kalmo at 25 months. Seeing such exceptional results with Anahita, I am now dedicating Navzote Master to the children of the world Zoroastrian Community.

Navzote Master is a presentation of Helping Hands Zoroastrian Youth Communication Network of FEZANA. Proceeds will be used for ZYNA (Zoroastrian Youth of North America). A donation

of \$15 is suggested. Checks payable to "FEZANA — Helping Hands", marked "Navzote Master, ZYNA Funds", may be sent to: Meher Amalsad, Chairperson, Helping Hands Committee, 15842 Villa Nova Circle, Westminster, California 92683, USA.

CRACKING INDIA

by Bapsy Sidhwa, 1991, Milkweed Editions, U.S.A.

Bapsy Sidhwa, author of *The Crow Eaters* (in 1980) and *The Bride* (in 1983) has written another book. Published in Britain and India in 1989 as *Ice Candy Man*, it will be published in the U.S. by Milkweed Editions as *Cracking India*. This book narrates the story of the "cracking" of India, as Muslims, Hindus, Christians, Parsis and Sikhs fight for their land and their lives. The London Review of Books says: "This marvelously vivid book describes what happens when political decisions tear a society to shreds and humane values disintegrate."

Sidhwa is well respected and recognized in literary circles, and has received awards and honors in the U.S.A., Germany and her native Pakistan. In 1991 the President of Pakistan conferred upon her the prestigious "Sitara-I-Imtiaz" (the best). She was a Bunting Fellow at Radcliffe College (Harvard), and taught at the University in Houston and Columbia University, New York.

[ZAC, California, Newsletter, October 1991]

FERDOWSI: A CRITICAL BIOGRAPHY

by A. Shapur Shahbazi, 1991, 149 pp., \$19.50, Mazda Publishers

This study offers the first critical biography of Ferdowsi who, ten centuries ago, gathered historical traditions of various Iranians and recast them in epic poetry into a coherent "national history" which the great Orientalist, Theodor Noldeke described as monument "unrivalled among other nations."

The above title draws upon references from *The Shah-Nama* to show that Ferdowsi lived in Tos, the life of a country squire, riding, feasting and studying, and while he admired ancient Iranians and their ideologies, he adhered to Shi'ism and advocated reason and tolerance.

Shahbazi elucidates the problematic relationship of Ferdowsi and Soltan Mahmud Ghazna. Posing as a defender of Iran and resurrector of her ancient glory, Mahmud was hailed by Ferdowsi as

worthy of receiving a memorial such as *The Shah-Nama*. Later, the Soltan's pro-Abbasid policy, his wars against Shi'ite princes and his holy wars in India gave him the stature of an Islamic hero king, less interested in ancient Iran than in propagating his faith.

Later chapters explain the contents of *The Shah-Nama*, and it is argued that through it Ferdowsi intended to preserve ancient Iranian history in flowing epic form, to vindicate Iranians of the old ideologies, and to revitalize Iranian national feelings. *The Shah-Nama* is thus characterized as the history of the Iranian nation, based on written sources and faithful to them without advocating their religious tendencies, and as a work of enormous poetical embellishment. To order contact: Mazda Publishers, P.O. Box 2603, Costa Mesa, California 92626. Tel: (714) 751-5252.

GRAPHIC CONCORDANCE TO THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

by James H. Charlesworth, 1992, \$150, ISBN: 0-664-21969-1, Westminster/John Knox Press

This monumental work represents the fruit of a generation of scholars. It is the first comprehensive edition of the Dead Sea Scrolls, containing over 59,000 entries, drawn from 223 texts and over 3,500 scroll fragments. Each entry is shown in its attested form, as it was written by the original scribe, along with a brief context.

Four further volumes, will present new editions of all previously published texts. Each text will be critically presented using improved methodology and enhanced photographs. On facing pages, the reader will have a transcription in computer generated fonts of the text and a parallel English translation. The first volume will be ready in 1993.

This series of publications will be of inestimable value for Qumran specialists, biblical and rabbinic scholars, and individuals dedicated to a better understanding of the period that spawned Christianity.

[From a review by the Westminster/John Knox Press]

K. R. Cama Oriental Institute Collection

A collection of about 50 books on Zoroastrianism is available for sale from the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute. Included are works by J. J. Modi, Dastur Dhalla, K. R. Cama, Chatterjee, B. Anklesaria, J. Guillemin, H. Mirza, Dhabhar, F. Giuseppe, P. Shroff, P. Vachha and others, as well as a set of

the Institute Journals. The total cost is approximately Rs. 2,500 plus Rs. 500 for shipping by sea to North America. To order, contact: Mrs. Hornai Modi, Secretary, K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, 136 Bombay Samachar Marg, Fort, Bombay 400 023, India.

MATRIMONIALS

The FEZANA Welfare Committee maintains a file of matrimonials and will coordinate the initial contacts between interested parties. All information will be kept in strictest confidence. Submissions and responses to this column may be made to: Roshan Rivetna, FEZANA Welfare Committee, 626 West 56th Street, Hinsdale, Illinois 60521, (708) 325-5383.

Zoroastrian gentleman, 42, 5' 7", at present chief engineer of ship working out of London based company, living in Bombay. Fond of music, reading, art and cinema; cheerful disposition. Interested in corresponding with lady in USA or Canada. [#M92-1]

Zoroastrian male, 28, good character, positive outlook and involved lifestyle seeks telephone, letter or personal contact with Zoroastrian girl. Call him at (203) 846-9320, his parents at (602) 275-3597, or his sister at (714) 848-9566. [#M92-2]

"C" Factor International (CFI)

CFI is a computerized personality matching service. Each registrant will receive a confidential data matched profile of other members three times per calendar year. CFI is gravely concerned about the decline of the Zoroastrian population worldwide, and will therefore provide its service free of charge to Zoroastrians. Registration forms are available for payment of \$5 (the annual dues of \$10 are waived for Zoroastrians) from: "C" Factor International, P.O. Box 404, Toronto, Ontario L5G-4M1, Canada.

JOBS

As a service to the North American Zoroastrian community, FEZANA Journal will print jobs / positions in this column free of charge. Names will be withheld upon request. Please send complete information with full address and telephone numbers, to: Dr. Rustom Kevala, Chairperson, FEZANA Information Receiving and Dissemination Committee, 16525 Comus Road, Dickerson, Maryland 20842.

MILESTONES

FEZANA Information Receiving and Dissemination Committee needs your help in developing reliable and complete records of all births, navjotes (sudreh-pushii), weddings, deaths, and other major events such as graduations, navar and martab ceremonies, and other honors, pertaining to Zoroastrians in North America since the days of the earliest known Zoroastrian settlers on this continent. Please see Journal, May 1991, for details on the type of information sought, or provide as much information as possible.

Please send information to: Rustom Kevala, Chairman FEZANA Information Receiving and Dissemination Committee, 16525 Comus Road Dickerson, Maryland 20842, U.S.A. Tel: (301) 972-7295

All organizations and individuals who are publishing newsletters, compilations or commentaries are requested to send one copy regularly to the above address.

The following notices are provided from recent publications of Zoroastrian Associations in North America:

Births

Daisy, a girl, to Sanobar and Dinyar Daver, of Montreal, Quebec, on June 9, 1991.

Riah, a girl, to Pervin and Rustom Sethna of Ontario, on July 13, 1991.

Natasha Shanaya, a girl, to Behroze and Dinyar Panthakee of Ontario, on July 21, 1991.

Jaime, a boy, to Coombi and Darius Karanjia, of Ontario, on July 22, 1991.

Delna, a girl, to Ernaz and Mahyar Irani of Northern California, on July 13, 1991.

Nadia, a girl, to Shehrzad and Sorab Irani, in Ontario, on September 5, 1991.

Carmin, a girl, to Bakhtawar and Cyrus Press, in Chicago, on October 1, 1991.

Alexander Martin, a boy to Anita Balsara and Russel Wolf of Houston, on October 10, 1991.

Sharlene, a daughter to the Petigara family of North Vancouver, on October 12, 1991.

Kevin, a boy to Fiona and Rustom Setna of Houston, on October 15, 1991.

Eric Michael, a boy, to Niloufer and Mike Hagen, of Chicago, on October 21, 1991.

Zuri, a girl, to Mahnaz and Parvez Irani of Southern California, in November 1991.

Rishaad, a boy, to Diana and Rohinton Taraporewalla of Southern California, in November 1991.

Shireen, a girl, to Bakhtavar and Faredoon Desai of Southern California in November 1991.

A girl, to Lily and Daraius Mistry of Southern California, in November 1991.

Navjote (Sudreh-Push) Ceremonies

Shireen, daughter of Shernaz and Farhad Cama, in Pittsburgh, in May 1991.

Sherna, daughter of Veera and Sarosh Bharucha, grand daughter of Mithoo and Jehangir Bharucha and Sam Battliwalla, in Toronto, on July 6, 1991.

Burgess Dastur of Vancouver, British Columbia, on July 20, 1991.

Mantreh, daughter of Shehriyar and Manijeh Atashband of Toronto, on July 21, 1991.

Anahita, daughter of Limjee Hemati and Kian Jamaspi; and Shayagh, daughter of Khodayan and Shahnaz Azarbeki in a group ceremony in Toronto, on July 28, 1991.

Vinifer, daughter of Nergish Pardiwalla, in Chicago, on August 24, 1991.

Gita Yazdani, Amitis Khorsandi, Shirin Kiani, Ramtin Jamshidi, Nooshin Kiani, and Tooka Shahriari, in a group ceremony during the Youth Congress in Vancouver B.C. in September 1991.

Neville, son of Roda and Hoshang Patrawalla, in Pittsburgh, in October 1991.

Rayomand and Dinamai Collector of Houston, on November 17, 1991.

Weddings

Kaizad and Ferzana Irani of Champaign, Illinois, on July 7, 1991.

Farhiz and Sheila Guzder of Montreal, Quebec, on July 20, 1991.

Daryoush Vafadari and Simin Abadi, in San Diego, California, on October 12, 1991.

Khorshed, daughter of Moti and Russi Balsara, to Darin, son of Shirley and Clifford Tooth, in Toronto, on October 19, 1991.

Deaths

Jimmy Lashkari, 10, son of Goolu and Dinyar Lashkari, passed away peacefully, after a long battle with cancer, in California, on July 20, 1991..

Behram Bhavnagri, husband of Banoo, and father of Rati Noshir Mistry, in Ontario, on July 23, 1991.

Piroj K. Patel, brother of Khorshed Jehangir Panthaky of Burnaby, B.C. and Jai Noshir Panthaky, in Bombay on August 9, 1991 after a brief illness.

Naoroji Darashaw Kooka, husband of Jini Kooka, father of Nerges, Yezdee, Farrokh and Rashna Charania, in Victoria, B. C., on September 20, 1991.

Maneck Fardoonji, uncle of Dinoo and Zarir Pavri, and Mickey and Manoj Bhatia, in Ontario, on October 1, 1991.

Father of Rustom Deshmukh of Vancouver, B.C., in Bombay, on October 8, 1991.

Ratton Dubash, mother of Zarine Meherwan Boyce and sister of Nina Jimmy Sethna of Houston, on October 15, 1991.

Homai Engineer, mother of Mike Engineer of Chicago, in Hubli, in October 1991.

Roshan Umrigar, 69, mother of Farida Shroff, in Chicago on November 27, 1991.

Mr. Nariman N. Guzdar of Seattle, WA, passed away on December 17, 1991. He is survived by his wife Perin, and his three sons, Rohinton, Parvez, and Yezdi and their families.

ORBITUARIES**Freddie Mercury**

Rock idol Freddie Mercury, 45, died peacefully at his home in London, on November 24, of pneumonia brought on by AIDS.



Born Farrokh Balsara, son of Bomi and Jer Balsara of Zanzibar, Mercury rose to fame during the 1970s as the flamboyant singer for the popular rock group "Queen", that has been ranked second only to "The Beatles." Their "Sheer Heart Attack" album gave them a big hit with "Killer Queen", but it was "A Night at the Opera" that gave them a No. 1 hit with "Bohemian Rhapsody." Mercury's flamboyance on stage was equaled off-stage, with after-show parties that went on for days. But in recent months he had retreated into a quieter lifestyle, that he insisted, was the real Freddie Mercury.

Dr. Shari Merabi

The North American Zoroastrian community mourns the untimely death from heart failure, of Dr. Shahriar (Shari) Merabi, in California on October 21, 1991. Born in Kerman, Iran, Dr. Merabi received a doctorate in pharmacology from Tehran, and later from Columbia University, New York. He worked at Bristol and Meyer in New Jersey for many years until the family moved to San Jose, California a couple of years ago.

An honest and sincere gentleman, Dr. Merabi was an original trustee of the Arbab Rustam Guiv Trust in California, the Arbab Rustam Guiv Foundation in New York, and the Mehraban Guiv Darbe mehr in Toronto. With integrity and hard work he served the Zoroastrian community well and earned their respect. The Zoroastrian community mourns his untimely death; sincere

condolences to his wife, Mehri, their two daughters, Firoza Holly, and Shahrzad Helga, and their families.

Jalbhai F. Dastur

Jalbhai F. Dastur, 92, father of Piroja Amrolia and Nari Dastur, passed away in Vancouver on August 26, 1991. Born in 1899 in Bombay, Jalbhai was a successful businessman in East Africa for half a century, until his arrival in Vancouver, with wife Threatymai in 1972 to avoid the dictatorial policies of Idi Amin. An incident demonstrates the character of this large-hearted gentleman. During World War II, when Mombasa was under threat of Japanese bombardment, Jalbhai who had earlier formed the Uganda Zoroastrian Association, sent a telegram offering shelter to their co-religionists in Mombasa: "Whole Anjuman Welcome". On being informed by return telegram that there were 187 Zoroastrians in Mombasa, the Dasturs responded with another telegram that read, once again: "Whole Anjuman Welcome".

EVENTS AND HONORS

FAUD ENGINEER, son of Gulzarin and Sam Engineer of San Ramon wrote his first book as a teenager in Malta — *The Flight of the Last Maltese Falcon*. His latest work, *Each According to His Own Conscience*, has been accepted for publication by Carlton Press of New York. [Fed Newsletter, August 1991]

NAUSHAD TAVARIA of Southern California earned his Brown Belt in Karate. He is the youngest in his class to achieve this honor. [TMZA Newsletter, July 1991]

KAIVAN JESUNG of Huntington Beach, California, is on a 6 week study tour of Cambridge University, England, through the University of California Education program. [TMZA Newsletter, July 1991]

KAYOMARSH MEHTA was honored with a gift and flowers during the Navroze festivities by the Zoroastrian Association of Chicago for his continued extraordinary services to the religious education program for over 10 years. [ZAC Chicago Newsletter, September 1991]

FERZANA IRANI, a member of the Desert Storm team who served in the U.S. Armed forces in the Middle East for six months, was honored by the Zoroastrian Association of Chicago. [ZAC Chicago Newsletter, September 1991]

RIYAZ DESHMUKH, son of Mahrookh and Rustom, has achieved the distinction of being the first Zoroastrian to be selected to the prestigious Royal Roads Military College (RRMC) in Victoria. Riyaz has selected to serve as a pilot navigator with the Royal Canadian Air Force.

Born in Tehran, NOOSHIN KIANI, 18, who moved to British Columbia at the age of five, has consistently excelled in both academics and extra-curricular activities. On the school honor roll, and the recipient of silver and gold medals for straight "A"s, Nooshin is also a gymnast, and received trophies for the yellow belt in Karate. [ZSBC Newsletter, August 1991]

BINAIFER KAPADIA, daughter of Freny and Noshir of Edmonton, Alberta, was given the Sterling Award for "Outstanding Music Director", for directing the music for the theatrical production "Diamond Studs". Kapadia not only directs and conducts music, but has also written several musical scores.

DOLLY DASTOOR of MONTREAL was invited to present a paper in New Zealand on a new technique developed by her for measuring dementia in the aged.

DR. MINOO ADENWALLA, professor of Government at Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin, was awarded the "Excellent Teaching Award" and a \$1000 prize. The citation read: "We salute you in all your personae: as Dr. Adenwalla, feared for your provocative erudition; as political commentator on American life; as an aristocratic Parsi known for your gentlemanly care and concern ..." Adenwalla holds the Mary Mortimer Chair in Liberal Studies. [Parsiana, August 1991]

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