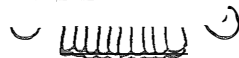


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VOLUME VII, NO. 4 — WINTER 1994  
ISSN 1068-2376

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## FIRDOWSI'S SHAH-NAMA EPIC OF THE KINGS

*I offer praise to the holy God  
Who confers the power of speech and vision  
To a clod of earth — a human being  
Who gives power to the tiny ant to bite the life out of a lion  
Who enables the tiny gnat to overcome a brave elephant.*

*[Firdowsi, in the Shah-Nama]*

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## EDITORIAL

*The Magic of Firdowsi**A man's character is his fate — Heraclitus*

Nowhere is this saying borne out more than in the stories of the Shah-nama. A deep insight of the human character, its triumphs, foibles, and failings; and a sense of history pervades the Shah-nama, the Epic of Kings.

According to a recent biographer, Shahbazi, [1] Abu'l-Qasem Firdowsi spent 25 years in composing the Shah-nama, hoping to earn the funds needed for a worthy dowry for his daughter — his only child. But it is said that when Firdowsi presented his verses to the Sunnite Sultan Mahmud, he was not adequately rewarded because he was a Shi'ite, and because he had glorified the pre-Islamic Zarthusti kings of Iran. Thereupon Firdowsi insulted the Sultan and fled. He then took his Shah-nama to Tabarestan, to the court of a prince who traced his descent to Yazdegard Shahryar. However, the prince turned out to be one of the vassals of Mahmud, who sent Firdowsi away with a meager reward of sixty thousand derams (silver coins). Eventually Firdowsi returned to his birthplace, Tus in the district of Tabaran, and spent the rest of his life in poverty. Sultan Mahmud later relented and sent sixty thousand dinars (gold coins) to Firdowsi. But alas, the reward came too late. Firdowsi's corpse was being carried for burial through the Razan gate as the couriers entered Tus through the Rudbar gate. His daughter refused the Sultan's gift.

But the story does not end there. The great Sheik Abu'l-Qasem Gorgani of Tabaran refused to give Firdowsi his last rites, saying: "... he composed a good deal, all in honor of an unworthy infidel (gabr), spending a life-time praising the infidels." The following night, the Sheik saw Firdowsi in a dream; wearing an emerald crown and a dress greener than grass. He reproached the Sheik for his act, and told him that just one verse of his in praise of God had earned him a place in Paradise. When the Sheik awoke, he rushed, barefoot and weeping, to Firdowsi's tomb, prayed there fervently, and remained there for a few days; then returning there every night for the rest of his life ...

There are many versions of this story, and many embellishments to the events in Firdowsi's life. Shahbazi states that "these elaborations reflect the desire of generations of Iranians to see in Firdowsi the ideal man. Each period formed its own

conception of him as the embodiment of what it regarded as heroism, righteousness, loyalty and magnanimity. He has thus become the personification of a millennium of cherished ideals ..." It is no wonder that most Iranian homes today proudly display a beautifully bound and illustrated copy of the Shah-nama.

The heroic stories of the Shah-nama are ageless and universal. In the introduction to his monumental seven-volume *Shah Namah of Firdaosi*, in English prose, Dr. Bahman Sohrab Surti writes: "... it certainly is not a mass of dry, dead wood and dehydrated facts, but a living document animated by the spark of life breathed into it by Firdowsi by virtue of his inimitable style, language and vigor of narration, his underlying faith in the greatness and goodness of God, and his unshakable belief in the ultimate triumph of Good over Evil."

But why is it that the stories of the Shah-nama are so ingrained among the Parsi Zarthustis of India, who cannot read the original Persian verse, and who have not lived in Iran for almost a millennium? Even in 'exile', the Iranian character has always been deeply ingrained in every Parsi. The names of the Iranian heroes and heroines, Hooshang, Rustom, Rudابه, Sohrab, Tehmina, Saam, Jamshid, Jamasp, are the proud names of Zarthustis. To be a Zarthusti is to have an Iranian name from the Shah-nama!

In *The Power of Myth*, Joseph Campbell says: "... the heroes of all time have gone before us. We have only to follow the thread of the hero path ... and where we had thought to travel outward, we will come to the center of our own existence. And where we had thought to be alone, we will be with all the world." The stories of the Shah-nama provide, on a heroic scale, an unbroken link with our brothers and sisters all over the world.

Our Sunday schools will do well to study not only the stories of the Shah-nama but also the characters of Jamshid, Rustom, Sohrab, Afrasiab, Kaoos, and others; and the mistakes and intrigues of the Sassanian rulers so plainly and unrepentingly revealed by Firdowsi. In understanding their journeys, triumphs, and heartaches, we will find our heritage. And we will find ourselves.

*Dr. Rustom Kevala*

*Chairperson, FEZANA Journal Committee*

1. A. Shapur Shahbazi, *Firdowsi, A Critical Biography*, Harvard University School for Middle Eastern Studies, distributed by Mazda Publishers, Costa Mesa, California, 1991.

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### FROM THE PRESIDENT:

HAPPY NEW YEAR! We are only five years away from the 21st century and the question we need to ask ourselves is how prepared are we for the challenges ahead to group us as a nation of culturally and geographically diverse people, held together by the richness and depth of our religion.

One of the important challenges is to make our presence felt in North America. Our economic and professional contributions to the communities in Canada and U.S. are phenomenal. Not only should we be aware of it but so should the community at large. We need to develop the most basic demographic profile of ourselves which would have multiple purposes. Both for internal FEZANA planning and for public communication. It would help us network, do business with each other, plan services and use it as leverage for a Zarthusti Credit Card and locate old friends. It would help all of us.

We request you to cooperate with your Association and FEZANA when you are approached to provide basic information on your age, place of origin, size of family, profession or business. We realize this is very sensitive information for many of us, specially after what Zarthustis have gone through in the recent past. But we would like to assure you that complete confidentiality will be maintained if you so desire. There is a world-wide attempt to get a better understanding of the Zarthusti community. One of the resolutions of the last World Congress was to conduct a world census of Zarthustis and attempts are being made to do so.

FEZANA, under the coordination of Noshir Langrana (ZAGNY), Minu Patel (ZAMC), Anahita Sidhwa (ZANT) and Mehran Sepehri (PZO) can design and manage the project, but effective implementation will rest with individual associations and each and every one of us. *Let this be a truly federated project.*

Ours is a Federation of religious organizations which operates in a social context. And if the social structures are not in place, religion cannot flourish. We need to operate on both levels. For our community to flourish in North America we need to develop a blueprint, a master plan of action, where Zarthustis of all shades of views from all geographic regions of origin will feel comfortable to work together in a spirit of trust, openness and plurality.

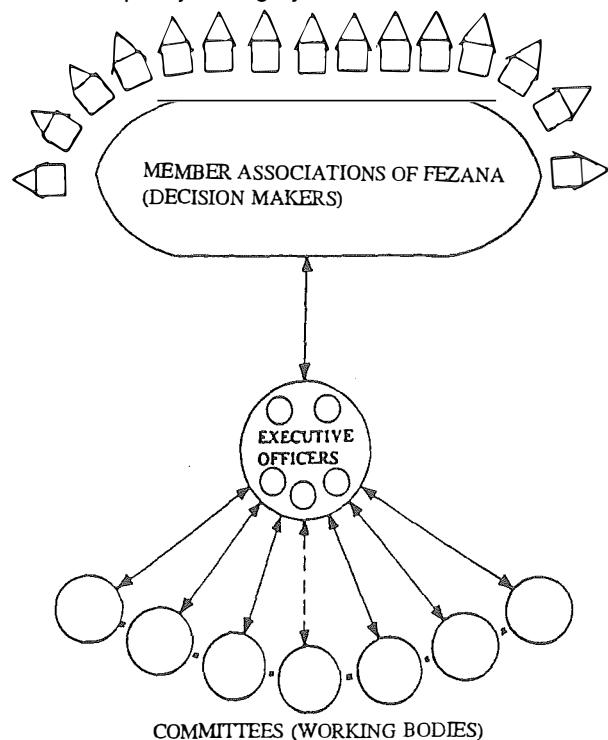
I wish all of you a very successful and peaceful 1995,

*Dolly Dastoor*  
President, FEZANA

### FEZANA AT WORK

***Ask Not What FEZANA Can Do For You, Ask What You Can Do For FEZANA!***

FEZANA is a coordinating body that provides an infrastructure to promote and facilitate the objectives of the Member Associations (Members) and Small Groups of North America [See diagram below]. Each Member is assigned one to five votes depending on the size of its membership. Thus, if you, as an individual, are a member of one of the 21 Members of FEZANA, you have a voice in setting the direction of FEZANA. You would elect the Officers of FEZANA through your Association, who would cast the votes on your behalf. And you would set FEZANA policy through your Association.



FEZANA Officers serve as administrators and executors of the wishes of the North American Zarthusti community. The newly-elected President, Dolly Dastoor, spelled out her vision in her message in the last issue of FEZANA Journal. She plans to meet with all Members during her term, to articulate her vision and get feedback. To help Dolly get the true pulse of the community, the community must respond. With a two-way dialogue, we can prioritize our needs and issues, and chart a course to reach our goals. One avenue for free and open dialogue, of course, is the FEZANA Journal.

The truism that the future of our community rests in the hands of our community is absolutely true! FEZANA's past president, Rohinton Rivetna has often remarked that the internal resources of our community are truly awesome. If we can mobilize only a fraction of our resources, there is no limit to what we can achieve — for us today, and for generations to come.

The work of FEZANA is realized through the Committees which are the real working bodies. Each Committee has a written charter, which may be revised periodically to be in line with the mandates of the Members. The Committee chairpersons are usually appointed by the President of FEZANA, with the approval of the Members, relying on the suggestions of Members and individuals; and the enthusiasm exhibited by those who are already serving the community in some way. Present Committees and Chairs/Co-Chairs are:

Awards/Scholarship:	Dinshaw Joshi, Washington, D.C.
Congress:	Bella Tata, Vancouver
Youth:	Jim Engineer, Chicago
	Mazda Antia, Chicago
Education:	Kayomars Mehta, Chicago
	Villi Gandhi, New York
External Affairs:	Rohinton Rivetna, Chicago
Funds and Finance:	Keikhosrow Harvesf, Florida
Publications:	Rustom Kevala, New Jersey
	Roshan Rivetna, Chicago
Research & Preservation:	Pallan Ichaporia, Pennsylvania
Small Groups:	Mezdie Birdy, Florida
	Maharukh Motafram, Wisconsin

New Committees are being formed for Planning, Public Relations/Marketing, and Social Policy. If you are interested in serving on any Committee, please contact Dolly Dastoor at (514) 656-2036.

FEZANA does not encroach upon the activities of local Associations or Small Groups. FEZANA's activities are continental in nature, and several liaison activities take on a global character. A Mission Statement, drafted by Ms. Bella Tata based on an earlier draft by Rohinton Rivetna [*FEZANA Journal*, December 1992], and on comments received from Members, should be emerging shortly.

Bona fide membership in a local Association is an essential step for you to start influencing FEZANA and the future of our community in North America. If you are not well known, or your talents have not been recognized, it is up to you to draw attention to yourself. Get involved with your Association. Be vocal. Organize meetings, discussions, workshops. Contact a FEZANA Officer. Write to the Journal.

## Guest Column

### The Parsis As An Endangered People

By NERGIS DALAL

In 1971, the official census showed the number of Parsis in India as 91,266 of which 64,000 were in Bombay. Today's figures show that the Parsis are down to 60,000 in the whole of India. The decline is due to many reasons, the main ones being the short-sighted, restrictive and rigid policies of the Parsi priesthood and the male-dominated Parsi Panchayat.

To claim that after nearly 1,400 years in India, Parsis are ethnically pure is absurd ... Only small groups escaped to India after the conquest of Persia by Islam and the forced Islamization of the people. Through the centuries Parsis have intermarried with the natives of India, with or without the approval of the priests. Therefore, the concept of ethnic purity is a myth...

Parsis do not recognize or permit conversion to the faith, nor do they permit adoption by law, since a child who is not born a Zoroastrian cannot be accepted into the community. But where is it stated that one must be born a Zoroastrian and when did the Parsis appoint themselves the Prophet's chosen people? In fact, Iranian Zoroastrians, untouched by alien influences, practice a purer form of the religion. Although they do not approve of intermarriages, if the son or daughter marries a Muslim, the new member is accepted into the community...

Parsis, once considered enlightened, forward-looking, enterprising and even brilliant, are today opting to die out than change their thinking. There are reasons for this. Among them are shortage of accommodation, women who are too independent and marry late and a commitment to small nuclear families, which the powers that be are trying to change through bribery. In fact, intermarriages would be excellent for the Parsis, bringing new blood into the community which has become increasingly unhealthy with a high incidence of mental disease ...

In a study by Professor John Hinnells of the University of Manchester on the contemporary Zoroastrian community and its adoption as a minority group in the new world, the conclusion arrived at was that if the Parsis wished to survive they must change, evolve, adapt and go forward, identifying themselves as members of a new age. No one in Zoroastrian time was born a Zoroastrian. Like all prophets he traveled around, preaching and converting. His beautiful religion was for everyone who was prepared to join the fight of good against evil and live by the three guiding principles — good thoughts, good words, good deeds. In Zoroastrianism rites are less important than ethical conduct. The fire, which stands at the center of the religion, was considered only as the symbol of Ahura Mazda, the light and the truth.

[From India Abroad, June 1994, submitted by K. Harvesf]

## ON THE NORTH AMERICAN SCENE

*Southern Californians Celebrate  
Khordad Sal with Gusto*

For the first time in Southern California, the birth of Asho Zarthustra was celebrated with great fervor by about 200 Zarthustis. Orchestrated by Siloo and Phiroze Mehta of *THE MAZDAYESNIE CONNECTION*, the function included: guided tours of a pictorial exhibition on the birth and mission of Zarthustra, conceptualized by Siloo Mehta and actualized by Phil Avari; a five-act play, written by Siloo Mehta and directed by Malcolm Bhesania, on the life events of Zarthustra; a lively question-answer session focusing on the circumstances of his birth, the age he lived in, the miracles he performed and his message; and a magic show by Zubin Mehta depicting the miracles of Zarthustra. After a delicious home-cooked Parsi style dinner, the program concluded with a Grand Parade of children and adults singing and dancing to the tune of *Chaye Hame Zarthusti*. Truly an enjoyable, educational and interesting program — kudos go to the Mehta family for a job well done.

*Meher Dadabhoy Amalsad  
Los Angeles, California*

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## PAUSE A LITTLE AND REFLECT

Stop.  
Pause ...  
Question the meaning of "existence."  
What is the essence of your being?  
Don't just accept things  
For what you believe them to be ...  
Experience them.  
Feel life, don't let it just slip by.  
There is no human being in control.  
Anything can happen  
Anytime ...  
What is "time" anyway?  
Stop for a minute  
Pause a little  
Look around you ...  
Reflect.

*Neville B. Rustomjee  
Denver, Colorado*

[Reprinted from *American Poetry Anthology*, 1994].

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*ZAGBA-Harvard Symposium*

The Zoroastrian Association of Greater Boston held a day-long symposium on Zoroastrianism, in cooperation with Harvard University's Committee on the Study of Religion headed by Professor Diane Eck.

DR. FARHANG MEHR, Professor of International Relations at Boston University, spoke on *Zoroastrians from Iran and India in North America*, emphasizing an important characteristic of these immigrants: the ability to pick up where they had left off, to carry on their professions and trades, and to achieve stability and fulfillment in their new lands. PROFESSOR KAIKHOSROV D. IRANI, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at City College of New York, spoke on *Zoroastrian Vision and Its Contemporary Relevance*. Focusing on Zoroastrianism as a 'reflective' rather than a 'prescriptive' religion, his comments concerning contemporary relevance emphasized practicality and common sense in addressing issues of importance to the community.

In her talk, *The Role of Zoroastrian Societies and Associations in North America* MS. KHORSHED JUNGALWALA, President of ZAGBA, emphasized the need to maintain the momentum of the great efforts of the more than 20 associations in North America, now under the umbrella of FEZANA. Considered action was essential on the challenging tasks FEZANA faces: religious education, spiritual leadership, resolution of ongoing controversy of conversion emanating from mixed marriages, and dissemination of information to non-Zarthustis. DR. JEHAN BAGLI, Associate Director of Cardiovascular and Exploratory Chemistry at Princeton, spoke on *The Development of the Zoroastrian Calendar*, explaining that cosmologically, the New Year should begin on the first day of Spring. Unfortunately, the lack of intercalation has put all the rituals which have always had seasonal significance into disharmony. He emphasized that Zarthustis are at a juncture in time when the three calendars currently being followed by Zarthustis, can be successfully synchronized. After 1996, the next such opportunity will not occur for another 120 years.

PROFESSOR JAMES RUSSELL, Mashtots Professor of Armenian Studies at Harvard, speaking on *The Armenian Response to Zoroastrianism in the Sassanian Period and Today*, traced the historical interaction between Armenia and Iran. According to him "the most significant historical association of the two peoples was that the Armenians were to coexist peaceably within the Sassanian empire with Zarthustis until the Arab invasions of the mid-seventh

century, which proved equally disastrous to both peoples." He made a startling revelation of the existence of an Armenian Zoroastrian group with its own small fire temple in the Soviet Union. He also presented evidence of Zoroastrian influence on the folk customs of Christian Armenians. PROFESSOR OKTOR SKJAREVO, Professor of Iranian Studies at Harvard, spoke on *Holy Scriptures Between Faith and Scholarship*, urging Zarthustis to decide for themselves whether to follow traditional rituals or turn to modern scholars for diverse interpretations.

[From a synopsis by ZAGBA Secretary Parastu Dubash, based on a report by Dilnavaz Shroff].

### Arizona Zarthustis Get Together



Arizona Zarthustis at Labor Day picnic in Rose Canyon, near Tucson.

Dinshaw Contractor is the new President of the Zoroastrian Association of Arizona, replacing Phiroze Rivetna who served as President since the founding of ZAAZ a few years ago. The other officers are Jamsheed Behrana (V.P.) and Cyrus Austin (Secretary). About 50 families live in Arizona, mostly in the Phoenix and Tucson areas.

### "Z4U" at Stanford

"Zoroastrians for Unity" (Z4U), an informal group of progressive youth of Northern California, held a "hat and tie" party at Stanford University in September. All youth and adults of Northern California are invited to join this group, that meets bi-weekly at the Dare-Mehr in San Jose.

### Californians Celebrate Mehergan

Over 200 Persian and Parsi Zarthustis celebrated the Mehergan function organized by the Persian Zoroastrian Organization in San Francisco, with a Jashan, a cultural program, dinner and dancing.

At the Mehergan celebration at the Dare-Mehr in Los Angeles, on October 2, which was attended by over 400 Zarthustis, the Kankash Mobedan (Council of Iranian Mobeds) honored six new Zarthusti "Torch Bearers", three Essay Competition winners, and three appointments to the pre-Mobedyar (assistant mobed) program. For the first time, a young female has started studies for pre-assistant mobedship.

[California news submitted by Mehran Sepehri]

### Humbach Speaks to New York Zarthustis at Udvada Luncheon

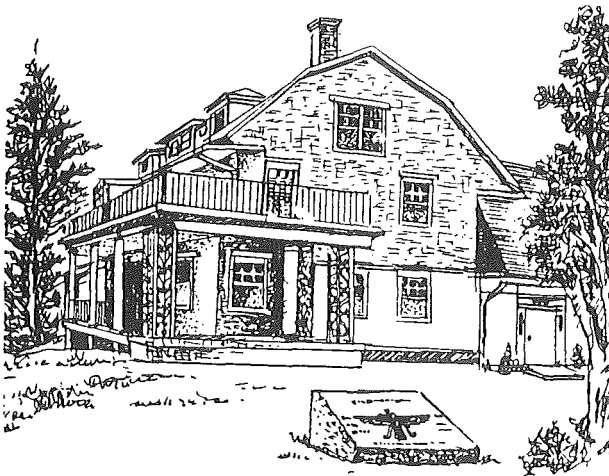
Professor Dr. Helmut Humbach of the University of Mainz, was the featured speaker at the New York Darbe Mehr on the occasion of the "Udvada Luncheon" on October 23. That occasion also marked the publication of his new book *The Heritage of Zarathushtra — A New Translation of the Gathas*, written in collaboration with Dr. Pallan Ichaporia [See advertisement this issue]. This translation has been obtained by applying rigorous methods of modern philology.

Dr. Humbach reiterated his opinion that Zarathustra may not have preceded Moses and hence may not be the first Prophet. However, Zarathustra was the first Prophet to give a picture of the other life. Zarathustra left a poetic message of mystical character, while Moses left clearly-defined commandments for life on this earth. In Zarathustra's religion, evil in the world is not attributed to God's inscrutable ways, as is necessary in monotheism; God's antagonists are blamed for it. However, the end of the material world is depicted as truly monotheistic. By the renovation and transfiguration of the world, Ahura Mazda and the truthful guided by the Prophet will finally succeed in eliminating evil, restoring paradise on earth, and securing Ahura Mazda's rule for ever.

Dr. Humbach regrets the use of the name Zoroaster by the Greeks. 'Astro', star, may have confused many into thinking that Zarathustra was an astrologer. The use of 'ushtra' (camel) and 'aspa' (horse), in names signified great honor and respect in the pastoral world in which Zarathustra, Vishtaspa and Jamaspa lived.

The Udvada Luncheon is an annual event at ZAGNY in honor of the Udvada Atash Behram. Almost 100 persons attended the lecture and lunch (of pullav-dal and sali-boti) and recitation of the Atash Niaish. Every dollar collected in voluntary contributions is remitted to Udvada, Navsari and Surat for the maintenance of Atash Behrams, and to help financially needy dastooris, mobeds, nasessals, farmers and other needy Zarthusti families. During the past year, Udvada, Navsari and Surat Anjumans each received \$3,289 (Rs. 1,01,977). Contributions may be sent to "Critical Assistance Fund", ZAGNY, Arbab Rustam Guiv Darbe Mehr, 249 Weyman Avenue, New Rochelle, NY 10805.

### *Sprucing up the NY Darbe Mehr*



Forty-five volunteers converged on the Darbe Mehr in New Rochelle, New York, on two weekends in September to scrape, repair and paint the outside railings, window trim and pillars before the onset of winter. Painting of the second floor exterior will be done professionally. Homi Byramji and Fali Shroff coordinated the effort. The cost is being shared by ZAGNY and the Iranian Zoroastrian Association. Contributions may be sent to ZAGNY Secretary Armaity Patel, 9 South Circle, Woodbridge, NJ 07095.

### *ZAGNY Youth Camps*

This year's summer week-end camps were held at Camp Hoover in Northwestern New Jersey. Both the Youth Camp in July and the Young Zoroastrian Camp in August, were attended by 25 youngsters. Ervad Ratansha Vakil gave a lecture on Navjote and Wedding ceremonies. Organizers and helpers were Lovji Cama, Amavaz Patel, Anahita Kotwal-Shroff and Homi Byramji.

### *ZAPANJ Gahambar*

The Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania and New Jersey held its annual Gahambar at the Voorhees Hall near Philadelphia on October 23. This annual event, which drew Zarthustis from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York and Washington, D.C., started with a Jashan ceremony, followed by lunch.

### *US Schools Accommodate Religious Beliefs and Practices*

A federal appeals court ruled recently that children of the Sikh religion will be allowed to wear a ceremonial knife (*kirpan*) under their clothing, on school campuses. This case by a Sikh family in California, sets an important legal precedent for freedom of religion in U.S. schools. Most schools in Canada do allow Sikhs to wear the knives.

### *1994 Achievement Award Nominees*

A large number of very deserving Zarthustis were nominated for the 1994 Achievement Awards that were presented at the Congress in Philadelphia [FEZANA Journal Fall 1994]. FEZANA Journal salutes each one of these outstanding nominees:

Outstanding Student Award Nominees: Keki Balsara, Cyrus Mistry, Hanoz Gandhi, Navroz Gandhi, Khurshid Mirza, Cyrus Hirjibehedin, Ruby Panthaky, Zia Poonjiaji, Farhad Dastoor, Meherbanou Zomorrodi, Armaity Homavazir, Natasha Dastoor, Yasmin Bhatena.

Young Zoroastrian Achievement Award Nominees: Darius Desai, Darius Bagli, Daryoosh Vakhshoori.

Humanitarian Service Award Nominees: Minoo Treasurywalla, Dolly Malva, Eruch Munshi, Coomi Bhatena, Yasmin Ghadiali, Adi Unwalla, Noshir Karanjia, Russy Sumariwala

Excellence in Profession/Business Award Nominees: Farobag Cooper, Alayar Dabestani, Bapsy Sidhwa, Sam Tata, Dolly Dastoor, Jehan Bagli, Rohinton Balsara, Adi Davar, Dinshaw Joshi.

Outstanding Zoroastrian Award Nominees: Farangis Shahrokh, Meherban Sharvini, Khosrov Namdaran, Rohinton Balsara, Khodarahm Shahryary, Dolly Dastoor, Jehan Bagli, Noshir Karanjia, Ali Jafarey.





### *Immigrants are Healthiest Americans*

Recent immigrants tend to be the healthiest Americans, finds a 1990 survey from the Department of Health, and it's not just because they are younger. Those who have been in the country less than five years are more likely to report good health than native-born residents or immigrants who have been in the U.S. for more than five years, even after adjusting for age differences. Recent immigrants are also least likely to be limited in their daily life by a chronic condition, and they spend the fewest days in bed because of ill health.

### *Ethnic Immigrants — Moving from Economic Power to Political Power*

The highest-earning immigrant ethnic group is Indian, with an annual income of \$40,625, according to a study by the Center for Immigration Studies. A close second and third are foreign-born Chinese and Japanese. Interestingly, in all four major ethnic groups — white, black, Hispanic and Asian — immigrants earn more than their U.S. born counterparts. The authors explain why Indian immigrants top the income scale: they are very highly educated, a large proportion (19%) are in the high-paying medical profession with incomes of over \$100,000. 26% are engineers. Many are college professors, scientists and entrepreneurs. An awesome 91% have a college degree.

Indians however, have negligible political power. As members of the highest earning ethnic group, Indians pay a disproportionately large amount of their income in taxes. Why do they tolerate massive taxation without representation?

Four decades ago, psychologist Abraham Maslow postulated a hierarchy of human needs. The lower (basic) needs can be satisfied by money, but the higher the need, the less useful is money. In the Maslow model, after economic power comes political power. However, the acquisition of political power is a whole new ballgame. It requires a different set of skills, resources and motivation and organization, than that of economic power. The process may take 5-10 generations. All the more reason to learn this ballgame and start playing it now. Get involved in the political process. This time it's going to take more than just a Boston Tea Party to bring about a change.

[From "The Next Step" by Sorab Vatcha, ZANC Newsletter, August 1994, based on an article in Times of India]

### *New U.S. Law Allows Adjustment of Immigration Status*

A new U.S. bill signed by President Clinton will allow previously ineligible persons to adjust their immigration status to 'Permanent Resident' by paying a penalty of \$650 (five times the I485 filing fee). The bill, effective October 1, 1994, allows applicants to change status without requiring them to return to their country of origin. For further information, contact the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

### *Green Card Renewal Deadline*

The deadline for renewing "old" Green Cards has been extended to March 20, 1995. All Permanent Residents with Green Cards issued prior to 1978 must renew them.

### *America's Best Colleges*

*US News and World Report's* September 1994 issue on "America's Best Colleges" is an excellent guide for students entering college in the U.S. or Canada. *US News* rankings combine the school's academic reputation with data on its students, faculty, financial resources and alumni satisfaction.

Harvard, Princeton, Yale, MIT and Caltech are ranked the top five among National Universities. These are America's best known schools and are research oriented and highly selective.

Among the Best Regional Universities, which are less selective, and offer degrees in various disciplines are: North - Worcester Polytechnic (MA); South - Wake Forest University (NC); Midwest - Illinois Wesleyan University (IL); and West - Trinity Univ.

Among the Best Specialty Schools are: for Engineering - Harvey Mudd College (CA), Cooper Union (NY) and Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology (IN); for Business - Babson (MA), Bentley (MA) and Bryant (RI) Colleges.

In these economically tight times, growing numbers of students are also turning to local 2-year Community Colleges, which provide good education at a low cost — tuition averages to \$1,500 per year. Average tuition at a public 4-year college is \$2,300.

### **CHECK YOUR ADDRESS LABEL ...**

Is your subscription due? Check your address label on the front of this issue.

### *A Prayer Room for Washington, D.C.*



On September 24th, Zarthustis in Washington, D.C. inaugurated a Prayer Room in memory of one of their beloved members, Esfandiar Jamzadeh. He was one of the Trustees of the Vandsar Committee, responsible for the upkeep and development of the land donated by the Arbab Rustam Guiv Trust to Washington, D.C. From the very beginning, Mr. Jamzadeh had wanted

a Prayer Room to be built in or near the small building that is currently being used as the Center. When he passed away on October 9, 1993, his family, wanting to fulfill his wishes, donated funds to convert the garage adjoining the Center, into the Prayer Room. Mr. Jamzadeh was born in Yazd, Iran, in February 1915. He had worked for Iranian railroads for 30 years, retiring as Chief of Railroad Stations serving the route from Tehran to Khoramshahr. He came to the U.S.A. with his family in 1980.



The opening ceremony and Jashan were performed by Mobed Bahram Shahzadi of the California Zoroastrian Center. Over 100 persons, including many youth, were gathered in the small meeting room of the Center. When the catered dinner was served, buffet style, most everyone poured out onto the lawn to enjoy the cool evening air, look at the Prayer Room, and savor the meaning of this important event.

### *Vancouver Zarthustis Sponsor Reception for New Canadians*

Presided over by Judge Parpia, members of the Vancouver community and the Eighth North American Zoroastrian Congress Committee hosted a reception for 97 new Canadian citizens from 24 countries. Following the oath-taking ceremonies, awarding of certificates, and speeches, Bella Tata was requested to lead the gathering in the singing of "O Canada", the Canadian national anthem, as the official singer had canceled out at the last minute.

### *Inviting All Readers*

FEZANA Journal invites feature articles and letters from you, the readers. We would like to receive suggestions of names of students, scholars and interpreters of our religious beliefs, whom we can approach for writing articles, providing historical information, and verifying material. *We must reach everyone who is willing to provide a rational viewpoint and thereby enrich our pool of knowledge.*

We continually run into trouble when we try to use our editorial prerogative to smooth the language, or reduce verbiage. Often, we are running against deadlines, space constraints, and time; and cannot call and clear every change and nuance. We beg forgiveness of the respected individuals, and request them to be more understanding of our difficulties. But by all means, we will be receptive to anyone pointing out our goofs, as long as it is done nicely!

As per our editorial policy, the Journal does not endorse or reject any interpretation of Zarthusti practices and beliefs. The purpose of the Journal is to disseminate information in a wholesome and interesting format. The Journal Committee hopes that this policy will be supported and continued by the Officers and Members of FEZANA.

### *Last Chance To Renew Subscriptions at Current Rates*

At the last FEZANA AGM, delegates approved an increase in FEZANA Journal subscription rates to recover all costs. After Spring 1995, the rates will be:

U.S.A.	\$10/year
Canada	\$15/year
Overseas Air Mail:	\$20/year
Overseas Sea Mail:	\$15/year

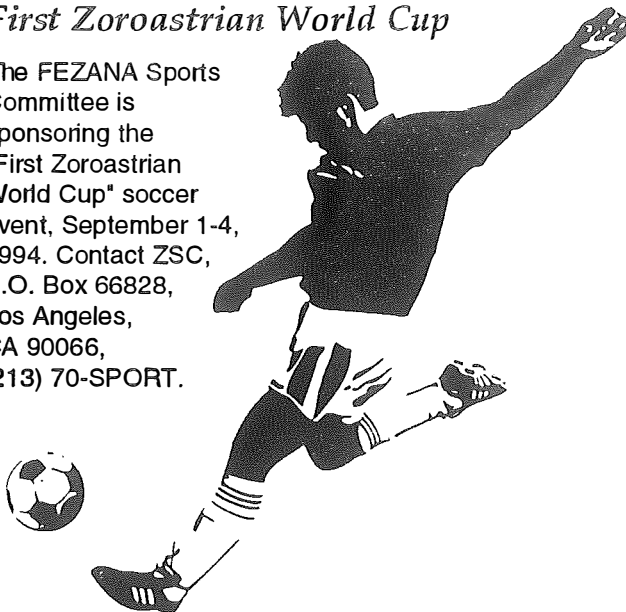
Please fill out the subscription form (on the back page) and mail it in promptly with your check.



## COMING EVENTS

*First Zoroastrian World Cup*

The FEZANA Sports Committee is sponsoring the "First Zoroastrian World Cup" soccer event, September 1-4, 1994. Contact ZSC, P.O. Box 66828, Los Angeles, CA 90066, (213) 70-SPORT.

*Texan Ski Trip*

The Zoroastrian Association of North Texas is planning a week-end ski trip in February to Colorado or New Mexico. Cost around \$300. All are invited to join in the fun, even if you have never skied before. Call Adil: (214) 414-9730.

*1995 Youth Congress In California*

The Seventh North American Zoroastrian Youth Congress will be held at Stanford University, June 30-July 4, 1995. Our program consists of four fun-filled days of innovative, educational sessions, small group activities and local excursion trips. The focus is for youth to exchange ideas and build friendships.

This Congress is organized by the youth, for the youth. The target age is 14-35 years. The Zoroastrian Youth Congress organizing committee (ZYC95) consists of energetic youth from the Persian Zoroastrian Organization and the Zoroastrian Anjuman of Northern California.

ZYC 95 is very interested in receiving your ideas, proposals and comments. We invite Zarthushti youth to participate by sharing their ideas and by organizing events. The Committee is also soliciting donations (tax-deductible) from supporters and sponsors, to provide a quality program, affordable for our youth. Call Darius Kasad at (415) 591-2813 or Shahryar Aryani at (408) 248-2491, or write to ZYC95, P.O. Box 8004, Stanford, CA 94309.

ZYC95 Organizing Committee  
Stanford, CA

*1996 North American Congress in San Francisco*

Mobedshahi

The Tenth North American Zoroastrian Congress will be hosted by the Persian Zoroastrian Organization and the Zoroastrian Association of Northern California, in San Francisco, in Summer 1996, under the leadership of PZO President Manoucher Mobedshahi. Contact Mr. Mobedshahi at (415) 673-1776 or Anahita Jasavala of ZANC at (209) 527-1227.

## AROUND THE WORLD

*University of London Offers Courses on Zoroastrianism*

Professor John R. Hinnells, longtime author, teacher and researcher of Zoroastrians, and especially the Parsis, has been appointed Head of the new Department of the Study of Religions at the University of London. The department offers introductory and advanced courses and degree programs in Zoroastrianism (along with other religions). Also on the faculty teaching Zoroastrianism is Dr. Philip Kreyenbroek.

In the Fall of 1994, Dr. Rashna Writer will give a one-term course *Zoroastrian Faith, a General Introduction* sponsored by the University's Birbeck College. The course will be held at Zoroastrian House in London.

*K. R. Cama Oriental Institute Holds International Congress*

About 30 reputed scholars from India and abroad are expected to attend and contribute research papers in Indo-Iranian and Cultural Studies, at the Second International Congress organized by the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, January 5-8, 1995, in Bombay. Topics will include archeology, numismatics, art and architecture, language and comparative studies in mythology, religion, philosophy and history from the earliest times up to 1800 A.C.

The Institute was established by the citizens of Bombay in 1916 to perpetuate the memory of the renowned Oriental and Avestan scholar, social

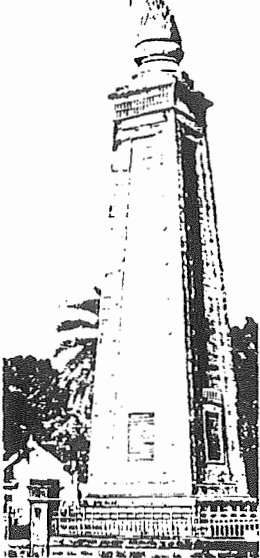
reformer and educationalist, Kharshedji Rustomji Cama. It houses a library which is a treasure house of ancient Avesta, Pahlavi, Sanskrit, Gujarati, Persian and Arabic manuscripts and literature, along with books on oriental studies.

The institute assists and assigns work to scholars and awards scholarships. Scholars are appointed by the Institute to take part in International and all-India Oriental Conferences and invited from the world over to deliver lectures, as well as Government Research Fellowship Lectures at the Institute. It also conducts essay competitions and organizes the Sir Rustom P. Masani Elocution competition.

For further information and application forms, contact: Mrs. Homai Modi, Trustee and Joint Honorary Secretary, K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, 136 Bombay Samachar Marg, Bombay 400 023.

### *Celebrating the Landing at Sanjan 1,300 Years Ago*

Dasturji Kaikobadji, Head Priest of Udvada, will start the Jashan on November 22, 1994, on the grounds of the "Sanjan Memorial Column", that commemorates the landing of Zarthushtis on the sacred soil of Sanjan, 1,300 years ago. The ceremony will be followed by a community lunch. To enable all Zarthushtis to participate with pride and dignity, the function is open to all, with no fee. The Sanjan Memorial Column Committee is appealing to noble-hearted Zarthushtis everywhere to support this project, which is of great historical, cultural and educational value. Checks payable to "FEZANA", may be sent to FEZANA Welfare Committee, Dinshaw Joshi, 4515 Willard Avenue, #1609-S Chevy Chase, MD 20815.



### *Australia's Population Aging*

Though the Zarthushti community is thriving there, Australia's population growth is expected to slow in the next five decades to as little as 0.3% a year from 1% now. Trends will depend on immigration, which has dropped sharply since the 1990-91 recession.

### *What's On In Karachi*

The Parsi community of Karachi raised Rs.200,885 for W.Z.O.'s Medical Benevolent Fund with a performance of a Parsi Natak, *Air Farohar — Great People to Cry With* to an audience of over 600 persons.

The Zoroastrian Association of Pakistan held a discussion on *Desirable Changes in our Marriage and Divorce Laws*. An overwhelming majority of the 550 persons present were in favor of changes to the laws of 1936 which are still being followed by the Parsis in Karachi.

[From Newsletter of the Karachi Zarthushti Banu Mandal, September 1994]

### *Zoroastrian House Hosts London Peace Pilgrimage*

In view of the recent high profile of Zarthushtis in the London press, Zoroastrian House was chosen as the designated venue for the ending of the "London Peace Pilgrimage", billed as London's interfaith event of the year, on June 11, 1994. The Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe, whose member Jehangir Sarosh is the Zarthushti representative on the Interfaith Network that sponsored the march, played host for the evening. 150 participants of all faiths, weary from the day's pilgrimage, joined in meditation to the chants of Avestan Doa-Tandarosti, followed by a superb reception. Commemorative Dadabhoy Naoroji Medallions were presented to the leaders of the Pilgrimage.

### *Zubin Mehta Takes Israeli Orchestra to India*



"This is one concert I have looked forward to for decades," says conductor Zubin Mehta, Music director of the Israeli Philharmonic, as he plans to return to the land of his birth for a three performance tour November 27 to December 3, in

Delhi and Bombay. India and Israel had no diplomatic relations until 1992. Having lobbied to end India's hostility toward the Jewish state (India had been an advocate for the Palestinian cause), Mehta was visibly moved when he spoke of hearing the Israeli and Indian national anthems together for the first time, at the ceremony in Jerusalem when India's ambassador presented his credentials to Israel's president.

In June, Mehta honored the victims of the war-torn former Yugoslavia with a performance of Mozart's Requiem with singer Jose Carrera, at the ruins of Sarajevo's former City Hall.

### *Zarthushtis Survive Plague Outbreak*

There have been no known cases of any Parsis impacted by the recent, much publicized plague outbreak in Surat. Family members of American Zarthushtis, residing in Surat city and the neighboring areas (Nanpoora) report that all is well. antibiotics are in good supply, and there has been no disruption at the Atash Behram and Agiaries. Most of the sizable Parsi population stayed in Surat throughout the outbreak.

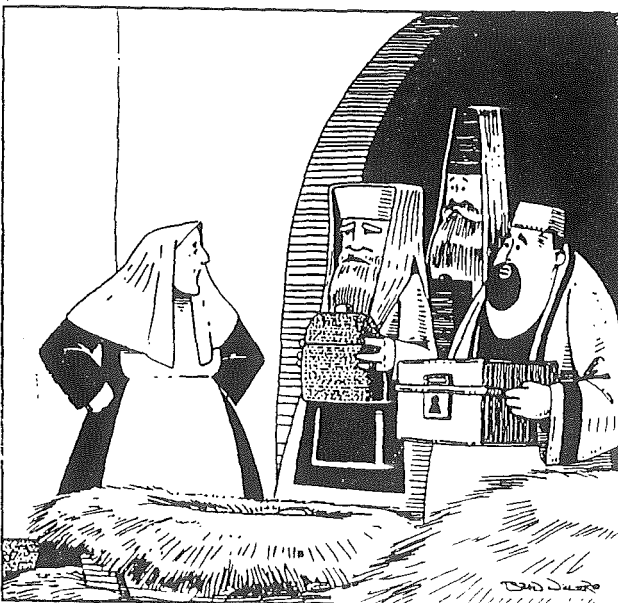
It is of interest to note that plague has long inhabited the American landscape, infecting animals from New Mexico prairie dogs to California squirrels. More than 300 people have contracted plague in the U.S. since 1947, reports Marilyn Chase in the *Health Journal*.

### *Bombay Workers Get the Most Vacation Days*

Abu Dhabi cooks are the best-paid chefs in the world, netting an average \$33,900 annually, says a Union Bank of Switzerland report; the worst-paid, netting \$500, are in Lagos, Nigeria.

Workers in general get the most vacation days in Bombay: an average of 39.3 days a year. In New York, it is 11 days.

[From *Wall Street Journal*, November 8, 1994]



"Fellas, I appreciate the gold, frankincense and myrrh, but were any of you men wise enough to bring some Huggies?"

Reprinted with permission from Brad Diller



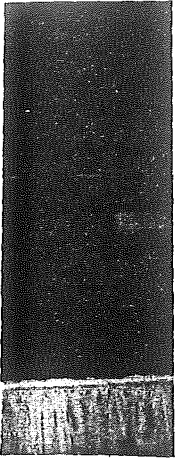
*Jafarey, Daver, Humbach, Ichaporia, Irani*

## *A Conference on the*

For three full days, from October 28th to 30th, the songs, verses and words of The Prophet echoed and reverberated in Costa Mesa, California. Over 100 scholars, lay persons, and students had gathered in this salubrious suburb of Los Angeles to continue the dialog on the Gathas started a year ago in Croydon, England. Indeed, it was more than a dialog. As the last speaker, Professor Natalie Vania, finished her examination of whether the German philosopher Immanuel Kant was an 'Enlightened Zoroastrian' and questions on morality from the floor took a distinct flavor of self-examination, it became clear that a truly historic event was unfolding.

The poetry of the Gathas, sung in clear tones by Kersey Antia and others, gave a new meaning to Zarthusstra's genius. Each lecture provided a newer understanding of the prophetic message, its sublime beauty, and its timelessness. Although one may say that we may never decipher exactly what Zarthusstra and his contemporaries meant by certain words, the general import of the message is quite clear. In fact, Professor Helmut Humbach alluded to the possibility that the ambiguities may have been intentionally included by the Prophet to provide a basis for his followers to meditate on the message. Humbach and Ichaporia expounded on the new insights they have gained through their recent collaboration in writing *The Heritage of Zarathushtra, A New Translation of the Gathas*. Although the new translation provides added insights into the true message of Zarathushtra, some in the audience mused about the simplicity and beauty of the earlier, and possibly 'imperfect' translations of Taraporewala, Insler, and others.

"Human knowledge is incomplete — we are not perfect. But there are no limits on us to become perfect", declared Professor Kaikhosrov Irani. "Understanding the Gathas gives us the path to distinguish right from wrong", said Khorshed Jungalwala. "We cannot bask in the glory of our ancestors or the Persian Empire, and in the name of religion be abusive toward those who follow the Prophetic tradition and culture expounded in the Gathas", said Houston Professor of Sociology, Yezdi Rustomji.



Ichaporia

The Committee for Gathic Studies and Conferences, chaired by Dr. Pallan Ichaporia and co-chaired by Professor Kaikhosrov Irani, is to be commended for organizing the Conference. Co-sponsors were the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York, the Zarathushtrian Assembly, World Zoroastrian Organization and World Zarathushtrian Trust Fund, Zoroastrian Association of Greater Boston, and Zoroastrian Association of Washington State. The Committee thanks Dr. Lovji D. Cama, Villy H. Gandhi, Dr. Noshir A. Langrana and Framroze K. Patel, all of ZAGNY, for their "behind-the-scenes" help in planning the Conference; and Darius Irani for coordinating the program during the conference.

## Gathic World — Three Days in Costa Mesa

The Gathas include 241 stanzas, a total of less than 6,000 words. They can all be read in less than an hour. It is a concise guide-book with a timeless message. It is the essence of our religion. "We need a standard translation of the Gathas that we can use for study and prayer", said Dr. Ali Jafarey. "All revealed religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, have standard versions of their holy books in a living language, even though scholars continue to debate on the meaning of words and the historical context of their scriptures in the original languages". The floor erupted into a flurry of questions: who would decide which translation should be considered as 'standard'; who among us would be considered qualified to say yea or nay to an interpretation or meaning of a Gathic verse; and how often would the 'standard' version need revision as our understanding improves? The proposal remained unresolved.

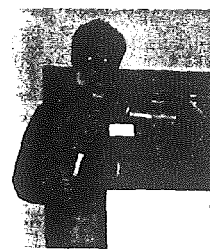
Space does not permit touching upon the vast content of the Conference. Dr. Farhang Mehr spoke on "Individualism and Societal Concept in the Gathas". Dina McIntyre examined the "Concept of Love in the Gathas". Dr. Hanns-Peter Schmidt, professor of Indo-Iranian studies at UCLA, spoke on "Zarathushtra and His Patrons". Dr. Martin Schwartz, professor of Near Eastern Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, examined "The Origin of Zarathushtra's Mystical Poetic Technique". Dr. Daryoush Jahanian, a Kansas City physician, explained the mystic underpinnings of "Ahura Mazda and Zarathushtra's Deity System". Farrokh Vajifdar spoke on "Daena as Means of Salvation". Dr. James Lovelace spoke on "Vohu Khshathra, Spirituality and Kingdom".

The Conference is now history. But it is clear that all those who were there are different today for being there. And it is clear that we will meet again and again to ponder on the meaning and significance of Zarathushtra's message: *we can change the world, if we have the will, and the wisdom, and the courage to do so!*

By Rustom Kevala



Antia



Rustomji



Vajifdar



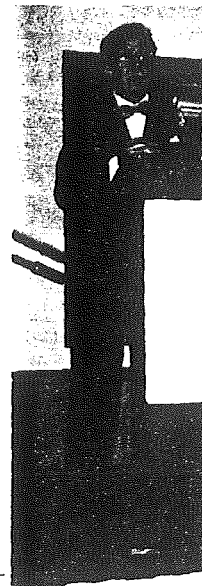
McIntyre



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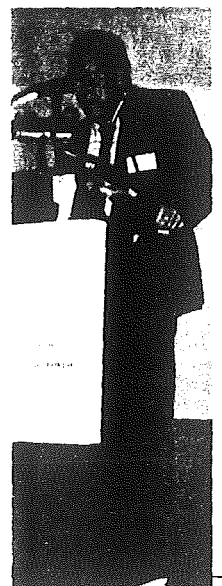
Vania



Farhang Mehr



Hintze



Schmidt



# All faiths agree: Peace on earth

by Dave Meade

It's that time of year again, with feelings of good will toward people, peace on Earth — and merry Christmas everybody! But what is it like for non-Christians?

It's almost a universal holiday in America, especially the cultural celebration of sending holiday cards, giving gifts, visiting family and friends, lighting up homes and stores, decorating Christmas trees. . .

Christians and most non-Christians, including many who are not religious at all, are joined socially and economically in the secular aspects of this holiday that once was an ancient pagan celebration of the rebirth of Earth's life-giving sun.

The religious observance of Christmas is another matter. Christians see the birth of Jesus as the most important event in human history — the incarnation of God's life-giving Son.

Among those who are not part of the Christian majority in metropolitan Chicago, Jews feel most left out by way the Christmas culture pervades their lives.

Rabbi Peter S. Knobel of Beth Emet Synagogue in Evanston, president of the Chicago Board of Rabbis says, "Christmas is a very beautiful time in America... if you're a Christian. If you're not, one feels very much outside of what's happening. This can be uncomfortable, especially in a country where officially there is no established religion."

"Christmas appears in public schools in ways which I think often make Jewish children feel uncomfortable."

"I think the essential message of Christmas — which I understand is peace on Earth and good will to humanity — is very important but often gets lost."

"I think religious leaders need to recognize that we are a multi-religious culture; that, yes, we are rooted in Christianity in terms of history but there has got to be a greater sensitivity in public institutions that we are a multi-religious culture."

Kathy Kase, who lives with her husband and two-year-old son, in Woodridge, adds "On the one hand, this is a beautiful time. The Christmas decorations are pretty. I enjoy them. And I think the general public becomes much more friendly."

"But then, on the flip side, every place you go has Christmas decorations and they don't recognize anything else. After a while it gets to you. I don't mind it in people's homes but when I go into children's places and see only Christmas decorations, then maybe the child in me starts feeling left out because Christmas is the only thing that's happening. My Hanukkah holiday isn't nearly as important or significant."

"When the clerk at the checkout says 'Merry Christmas,' you want to thank them for the good wishes. It's sincere, but sometimes it makes you feel bad that everyone just assumes you're Christian. It would be nice if they wished me 'Happy Holidays' — something more generic."

Kase explains that Hanukkah (this year Nov. 28 to Dec. 5) is a celebration of religious freedom, religious choice. "And yet you don't really have that choice when you go into public places," she says.

"What we do now to compete with Christmas and make our son feel good is to decorate the house for Hanukkah. We have a family Hanukkah party, but only the children get gifts."

Faisal Shah was born in Pakistan but grew up in the United States. He is a consultant for Discovery Card, a division of Dean Witter. Married to a Christian, he, his wife and baby live in Winnetka. As a Muslim, how does he react to Christmas?

"I have no negative thoughts on the fact that it's a Christian religious holiday. That doesn't bother me. But I am aware of people from other religions whose Christmas is being used for the profit motive. It has lost, for the most part, its original significance. Because of that they can't appreciate it."

"For me, Christmas represents an opportunity for people to make religion more of a primary thing."

"Christmas is one of the few exceptions to the rule of keeping church and state separate. I can understand there are people who are bothered by that, who are attempting to raise their kids in a conservative environment, to retain their original culture. For them it is a problem, particularly with young kids who see the obvious advantages of Christmas."

Shah points out that Muslims accept Jesus as a prophet, one of many including Adam, Abraham, Moses and their final prophet, Muhammad. "From a historical perspective, everything winds up the same in both religions (Islam and Christianity)," he adds. "It's almost just a technical issue, whether you consider Jesus the Son of God or whether you consider him a prophet."

"I personally have come to the conclusion that the world's religions are very much the same, and it gives that much more strength to your own religion because now, even though you're one of a minority, you're really one of a very large majority. The majority of mankind understand they are under one God."



Rabbi Peter S. Knobel at Beth Emet Synagogue in Evanston.

(Photos by Tim Sweeney)

The Rev. Sunnan K. Kubose is a minister of the Buddhist Temple of Chicago, 1151 W. Leland Ave. His father, the Rev. Gyomay M. Kubose, is founder of the temple; the Rev. Yukei Ashikaga is head minister.

The father and son are Nisei and Sansei, respectively second and third generation Japanese Americans. Here is the son's recollection of growing up in a Buddhist family:

"I think it would be very typical in America for Nisei parents to make Christmas available for their Sansei children — not to deprive them of Christmas, as children, because quite obviously Christmas transcends a strictly religious holiday."

"It's a cultural holiday in America. There's commercialism associated with it, but there is a more universal sense of peace on Earth, good will toward men. So it's a broad event."

"But particularly for young children — being in America, in a neighborhood, going to school, having friends — I would say that most families have a Christmas tree and Santa Claus. We would exchange presents and hang stockings. But we would pin them on our bed because we didn't have a fireplace."

"In strong Buddhist families, when their kids got older, they would not have the Christmas tree anymore. Or sometimes they would call it a Bodhi tree. Bodhi means wisdom, and Bodhi Day is a holiday of Guatama Buddha's enlightenment (December 8 in the Mahayana, or Northern, tradition). So they give Bodhi Day presents to children, and try to reinforce their identities as Buddhists."

Swami Varadananda is a minister of the Vivekananda Vedanta Society, 5423 S. Hyde Park Blvd. in Chicago. Swami Chidananda is the minister-in-charge.

American born Swami Varadananda says Hindu people often decry the West's materialism.

"The East is more spiritual. I think what happens is that the first generation holds onto the old ties. The second generation is kind of in between. By the third generation, they're American — and so there's tension. The parents are very concerned that their children will lose their Indian culture and religion."

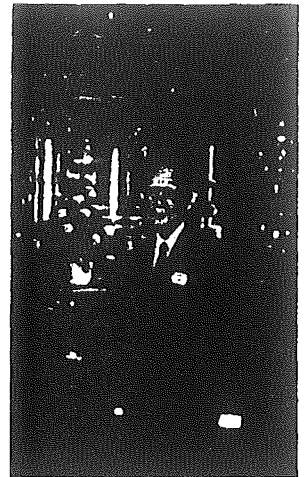
Regarding the cultural celebration of Christmas by Hindu families, Swami Varadananda says: "Because of their children, they may have Christmas trees and things like that. Some do, some don't."

"In India they celebrate Diwali, a festival of lights which comes in early November (this year Nov. 3), and it's a time for giving gifts. So Hindus tend to adapt that for their 'Christmas' as Jews do with Hanukkah."

From a religious standpoint, he added, Hinduism, accepts all religions as valid. "Most Hindus would be willing to accept Christ as a great spiritual teacher, or even an incarnation of God."

"However, they believe God comes more than once. Rama, Krishna, Buddha and others — all are considered incarnations of God."

"Particularly the Ramakrishna Mission has a very close connection



Rev. Gyomay M. Kubose, founder of the Buddhist Temple of Chicago.

that throughout our centers we always celebrate Christmas. We have what's called a Puja, a ritual worship, on all the holidays, and Christmas is one of them."

The Zoroastrian religion claims a unique place in the Christmas tradition, according to Rohinton Rivetna of Hinsdale, president of the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America.

For one thing, the three Wise Men, or Magi, were Zoroastrian priests. "They came to see Jesus, so there is that connection," he says.

The date of Christmas is also linked to Zoroastrianism.

Celebrating December 25th as the birthday of Christ has its origins in early Mithraic observances. This was a Roman festival to mark the birthday of the unconquered sun which, following the winter solstice, once again began to show an increase in light. At some time prior to 336 A.D. the church in Rome established the birthday of Christ on this same date. "Mithraism is believed to be an offshoot of Zoroastrianism."

"As Zoroastrians, we participate in everybody's joy, and sometimes sadness," he notes. "We see our image in all the different faiths. It's very natural for us to participate in their festivals."

"Christmas is no exception, and we join in the merrymaking and everything that goes with the spirit of Christmas. But we do not consider it a religious festival of our own."

"We have a holiday that falls on the second day of Christmas, Dec. 26, the death anniversary of our prophet, Zarathustra (or Zoroaster as he was called in the Greek literature). We observe it at our center in Hinsdale, located near Route 83 and the Stevenson Expressway."

Rivetna, director of environmental engineering for the American National Can Co., does not see his faith community as an endangered species.

"This is a free country," he says. "There's separation of church and state, and we have freedom to worship like nowhere else except in India. This is the future for Zoroastri-

Members of non-Christian faiths, including Zoroastrians, present their view of Christmas, in this article, printed in a Chicago publication, Life Times, December 1993

# *In Houston, a New Beginning*

## *Zoroastrian Heritage and Cultural Center*

*By Kaemarz Dotiwalla  
Houston, Texas*

### *Ground Breaking Ceremonies*

The day, October, 9, 1994. The time, 2:00 p.m. Nearly two hundred Zarthustis, young and old, met, not only to commemorate the realization of a dream, but to celebrate the blossoming of a new beginning. Maybe that is why the harsh, humid, rainy Houston weather of the day before, had given way to warm sunshine and showering of Ahura Mazda's blessings on the congregation in celebration of this auspicious occasion. The program started with Ervads Shahpur Pavri, Peshotan Unwalla, Maneck Sidhwa, and Burzin Unwalla invoking the blessings of Ahura Mazda on the work that the congregation was about to undertake. Several representatives of the Zarthustis who had made this occasion possible were called upon:

VISPI SAGAR, Chairperson of the Zoroastrian Association of Houston (ZAH) represented various executive committees since 1984 to the present, the Houston Zarthusti community, and the Zarthusti brethren of Hong Kong, who have sent a generous donation.

PURVEZ RUSTOMJI, Chairperson of the Zoroastrian Building Fund represented the various committees of the Fund and the architect of the Center, DADI SURTI.

KERSI ENGINEER represented the vision and generosity of 41 Zarthustis who formed the Zarthusti Group to purchase the property and donated it free of cost to the ZAH.

JENISTEEN DAVIER, President of the Zarthusti Youth Group of Houston, represented the youth.

FEROZ BHANDARA was asked to represent himself and his wife Shernaz, (who donated \$100,000 in goods and services towards the construction of the Center).

DR. ARDESHIR AIDUN was requested to represent "The Angel of Ahura" (who came to the help of Houston anonymously with a magnanimous donation), and the Iranian Zarthustis.

DR. KATY IRANI was called upon to represent herself (who donated \$30,000) for the Prayer Hall.

As the prayers continued, Purvez Rustomjee and Vispi Sagar broke the ground. Katy Irani picked up the time capsule containing signatures of all those present, along with other traditional items (religious items, newspaper and coins) and passed it to Jenisteen Davier, symbolizing the faith and trust the congregation has placed on their youth as guardians of the Zarthusti heritage and culture. Ardeshir Aidun, Feroz Bhandara and Kersi Engineer covered the capsule with earth. Next, all those present shoveled earth to cover the hole and add their prayers and good wishes.

Yasmin Medhora and other volunteers were thanked for making arrangements for the capsule and the scrumptious refreshments.

Kaemarz Dotiwala was the Master of Ceremonies.

### *All Zarthustis Invited to Participate in Wall of Honor*

On this foundation will stand, not a building made of brick and mortar, but a Center built on the walls of love, bonded by our common blood, beating in unison to Yatha Ahu Vairyo and Ashem Vohu, making this Center the heart-beat of the Zarthusti community around the world.

Zarthustis from all walks of life are invited to participate in whatever way they can, in this new beginning, and in the future that it portends. A "Wall of Honor" will be included, bearing the names of all donors who participate in ensuring that the message of Zarthusra and Zarthusti heritage and culture survive into perpetuity.

Donations will be most gratefully accepted. Send checks to the Zoroastrian Association of Houston, 5026 Hazelton, Houston, Texas 77035, Tel: (713) 462-0391.

*USHTA TE — May Happiness be Unto You!*

# Daydreams or Destiny?



*Thirty-five Zarthustis from across North America make a trip to Crestone, Colorado, to visit the site of the 40-acre parcel of land offered to Zarthustis in the proposed "Global Village".*

A striking figure, Danish-born Hanne Strong sat by the roaring bonfire in the crisp Colorado night, with the group of Zarthustis gathered around, explaining the story of her dream of a "Global Village" in Crestone, Colorado. With unusual hospitality, she had invited the whole group (of about 35) to dinner at her stunning Spanish style adobe home to talk about the proposal [See "One Woman's Sacred Ground", *Maclean's*, October 10, 1994, in this issue].

The Zarthustis had met in Denver on October 8, 1994, and driven the 3 1/2 hours down Highway 285 in 7 cars, to the little town of Crestone to see the site of the proposed land gift to Zarthustis. The weekend trip, organized by Rohinton Rivetna, who had visited the site in 1993 [see his report in "Zarthustis in Global Village", *FEZANA Journal*, Summer 1994] had drawn interested Zarthustis from across North America. To commemorate the visit, the group held a prayer ceremony at the site on Sunday morning invoking Ahura Mazda's blessings on this project, and left a 'diva' burning on a pile of rocks to mark the visit.

After the first rush of excitement on seeing the awesome setting of the land, in the midst of the Colorado Rockies, with white capped mountains, yellow Aspens, dark green Spruce, pristine streams and deer wandering around — the group discussed a number of sobering questions and concerns. What would the financial commitment be? Real estate taxes? Who would upkeep the dirt road? What about gas, electricity, sewer? What would they use the land for? A youth camp? Religious camp? A retreat? A learning center? A family vacation spot? And how would the Zarthustis "fit in" in this spiritual community of Carmelite Christians, Zen Buddhists and Hindu followers of Guru Babaji?

Future neighbors include an Institute for Sacred Architecture funded by Prince Charles; an extension of Colorado College; and possibly a center for a future "Assembly of World Religions", when such a body is created. Committed to inviting only those traditional religions with an "unbroken lineage", new age groups (such as Shirley McLaine's potentially lucrative New Age Center) have been turned away from the village.

*With Hanne Strong: Damkevala, Mobed, Dabestani, Amaria and Parsi*



The answers were not easy. There was a spectrum of opinions. Fil Bagwadia of Denver volunteered to solicit written responses from the attendees and generate a summary report.

As the night got cooler that October evening, and more logs were added to the bonfire, Zarthustis faced the question: was this just a daydream or were they destined to have a presence in this spiritual village? If the community willed it to be so, with Ahura Mazda's help, it would happen.

*By Roshan Rivetna*







*At the site of the Carmelite monastery.*



## RETREAT

We live in a society of compulsive, social whirl, conventional routine and obsession of work. Our young ones who we protect so cautiously and caringly, have no option but to emulate their parents as they grow up. The pattern of running through a hectic day's schedules and errands and 'got-to-dos' continue with frenzied tempo. Very soon, that way of life becomes the norm and with it, a loss of awareness of nature, of our real selves; we tend to be dehumanized and finally move away from the very basis of creation: God almighty.

Conscientiously and slowly but surely we must attempt to break that pattern of mindless existence for our own peace of mind, for our children and their children and most important of all, for our beautiful, precious and all too fragile *mother earth*. Occasionally we need time for contemplation, solitude and retreat. Time for self-awareness through moving closer to nature and to gain appreciation of God's creation.

Baca, Crestone, Colorado is one such place where God is bountiful. There is very little (yet) that mortals have done to that unspoiled habitat. No smog, no double yellow lines, no rush hour traffic, and nowhere to hurry to. Instead, there is tranquility, clean air, spectacular views, and time. God's pristine work is all around. A time and a place set aside to make us whole integrated human beings. It could give us an opportunity to be with our family and bond; a chance to repair our souls and heal our wounds; a moment to acknowledge spiritual richness that is ours to appreciate and pass on to our children.

This is within our reach.

*By Fil Bagwadia  
Denver, Colorado*

*In Crestone, at the foot of the Sangre de Cristo mountain range: families of Navroze Amaria, Fil Bagwadia, Dolly Tarachand, Kayomارش Shroff and Neville Rustomjee, all from Denver; Rashid and Banou Parsi from Colorado Springs; Boni Damkevala, Keikhosrow and Parvin Mobed, and Rohinton Rivetna and family, all from Chicago; Rustom Kevala (New Jersey); Aleyar Dabestani (Seattle); Keikhosrow Harvesf and daughter Mojdeh (Florida); Farshid Salamati and Manoucher Mobedshahi (California); and Jamshed Mistry (Toronto).*

# C O V E R

Strong with representatives of the Baca's religious communities: while Maurice Strong has jetted around, warning of an environmental apocalypse, his wife has been working with equal fervor, fighting spiritual oblivion

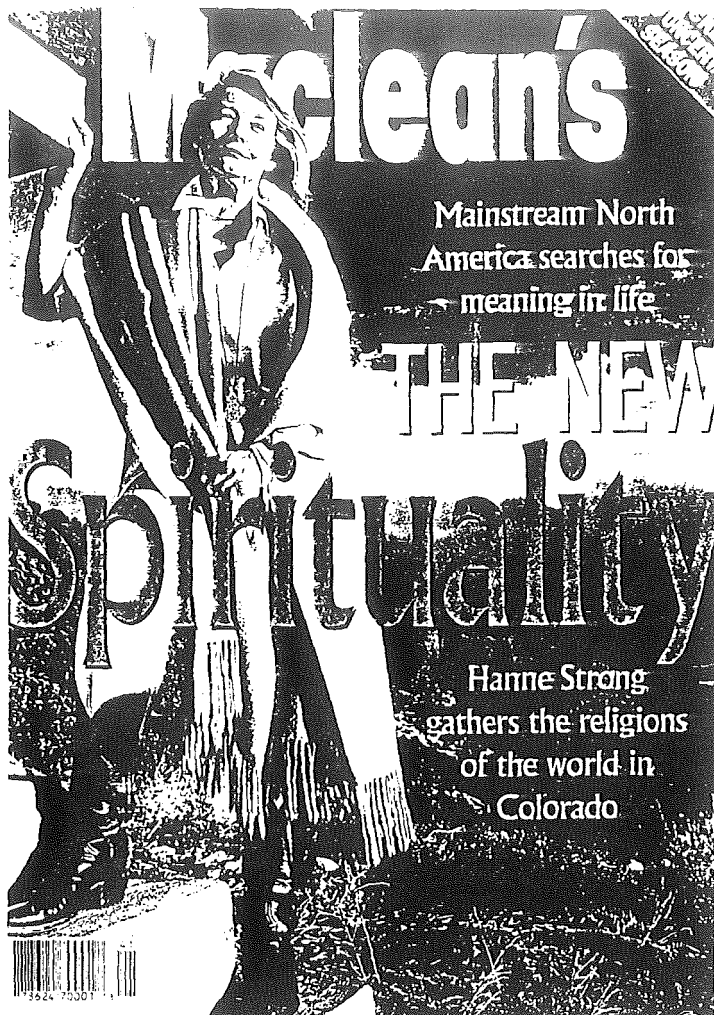
## ONE WOMAN'S SACRED GROUND

The sunrise was just beginning to explode over the Colorado range that the Spanish conquistadors named Sangre de Cristo, the Blood of Christ, riding the sky with rivulets of luminous crimson. But in tiny Crestone, a defunct gold-mining town nestled on its slopes 125 km southwest of Colorado Springs, life was already unfolding at its usual pace. Deer ambled across the main thoroughfare, Alder Street, which winds past the hamlet's four stores and smack into the Rio Grande National Forest. And at the Road Kill Cafe, where hikers were exchanging news of the latest bear and cougar sightings, Jack, the cook, was proudly announcing: "This place is the end of the road and the middle of nowhere."

Or at least it was. Now, two cheeky signs over the counter poke fun at the spiritual thrill-seekers who have taken to descending on Crestone: "Auras buffed" and "So many false gods, so little time." Across the street at Twenty-First Amendment Liquors, proprietor Katie Snider grumbled: "It's getting so we're overwhelmed with people. All they want to know is what street the monastery is on and where's Shirley MacLaine." MacLaine has not been seen in these parts since 1990, when the local populace of 60 made it clear that they would not exactly welcome the 3,000 New Agers she hoped to draw to a prospective centre on her 180-

### On a Colorado mountainside, Hanne Strong is creating a unique spiritual community

acre plot. As for the monastery, sometimes Snider gives directions, but more often she remains protective about the reason pilgrims are flocking to this remote village. Here, the gilded domes and spires of a unique spiritual community, aimed at gathering the world's major religions in one place, are rising above the awesome landscape. That quixotic—and some say quirky—experiment is the singular vision of Hanne Strong, the striking Danish-born wife of Ontario Hydro's controversial chairman, the man who played godfather to the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. For the past two decades, while Maurice Strong has jetted around the globe, warning of an environmental apocalypse and presiding over United Nations conferences, his wife has been working with equal fervor to hedge against spiritual oblivion. To that end, on a 200,000-acre tract of ranch land known as the Baca, she has assembled a disparate flock. At the end of one tortuously rutted mountain road, the spare precision of an airy pine *zendo*, or meditation hall, has tatami mat-space for as many as 49 Buddhists who come to train at the feet of U.S. Zen master Richard Baker-Roshi. Once abbot of the continent's largest Buddhist community in San Francisco, he became a 1970s media star for his influence over former California governor Jerry Brown. But six years ago, Baker-Roshi moved to the Baca to establish his Crestone Mountain Zen Center. "There's no place in the world



# Maclean's

Mainstream North  
America searches for  
meaning in life

## THE NEW

# Spirituality

Hanne Strong  
gathers the religions  
of the world in  
Colorado

where there are so many different religions represented," he says. "Really, it's Hanne's vision. None of us would be here without her."

Below, in a desert hollow, a mystical breakaway order of Carmelites called the Spiritual Life Institute has built an elegantly stark monastery, offering retreats for silent contemplation in hermitages scattered among the tumbleweed. Inside, where photos show the order's woodsy sister community near Kemptville, N.S., a sign over the library door cautions: "All who enter here—no fuss." These days, the retreat's waiting lists are full, as are its Sunday masses where the sermon is delivered by prioress Sister Sharon Doyle. A Cape Breton native, she ran a restaurant before donning the Carmelites' brown habit 16 years ago. "We say action without contemplation is blind," Doyle explains. "You have to explore the deeps."

Miles above, on a 50-acre plateau below Kit Carson peak, young American disciples of the late Indian guru known as Babaji throw open the doors of their gold-and-adobe-domed temple every dawn and dusk for *aarati*, the Hindu ritual of swooping candles and Sanskrit chants that salutes the passing of the light. In saris and shaved heads, they garland the white alabaster statue of Murti, the Divine Mother, with fresh flowers, under the watchful gaze of Paramananda, a 56-year-old blond with a mantra on her car's rear window. Born in Lethbridge, Alta., she spent much of her earlier life as Lucy Hill, the wife of a top IBM executive, doing the cocktail circuit in Ottawa and New York City. But after discovering yoga, she found her way through countless gurus to Babaji's ashram in Haidakhan on the Indian slopes of the Himalayas. When he died in 1984, fellow disciples invited her to Colorado for a commemorative service and she never left. Now, she tends Strong's seed banks, where she collects and catalogues rare plant strains. "This place is the great teacher," she says, recounting the harsh winters and relentless mosquitoes that have tested lesser resolves. "There's nothing here that isn't intense."

In the beginning, there was only the land—a vast stretch of San Luis Valley scrub that Maurice Strong had acquired in 1978, sight unseen, in a typically convoluted takeover deal. When Strong stepped into the hemorrhaging Arizona-Colorado Land and Cattle Co. (AZL), promptly buying out Saudi arms dealer Adnan Khashoggi, he planned to set up his headquarters in Phoenix, Ariz. But Hanne took one look at the city and said she could not live there. "No spirit," she says. The fact that Maurice

Having vetoed Phoenix, Hanne Strong found herself on a jet tour of AZL's other real estate. As soon as she glimpsed the stark beauty beyond the company's failed Crestone retirement village, she announced that she was home. "I just felt that I'd been here before," she says. On the next flight in, a Ute Indian spiritual leader told her that his ancestors had called the place the Bloodless Valley, because no wars had ever been fought there. The Hopi had used it only for sacred ceremonies. Three months after her arrival in 1978, as she tells it, a wild-haired 80-year-old named Glenn Anderson, dubbed "the Prophet" by the locals, knocked on her ranch house door with the words: "So you've finally come." He proceeded to spell out a vision he had received, she says, that a woman like her would preserve all the world's faiths in the valley against some imminent doomsday.



From her airy solar-powered adobe house, where assorted grandchildren, her own and others, whoop past the wooden statue of St. Francis of Assisi on the front porch and the stone Buddha out back, Hanne Strong still works at turning Glenn Anderson's vision into bricks and mortar. The Strong's Manitou Foundation, set up six years ago and financed chiefly by the \$1.2 million from the water company settlement and annual \$100,000 donations from philanthropist Laurance Rockefeller, gives the land away to any group that can articulate a serious spiritual mission. On 200 acres high among the junipers and ponderosa pine, her sister Marianne's Buddhist group, disciples of the XVIth Gyalwa Karmapa, one of the four lineages of Tibetan Buddhism, have spent the past five years building a 41-foot concrete Stupa, a ceremonial prayer tower. A Tibetan High Lama came to Crestone and walked the mountains in his flowing scarlet robes to select the precise location. "All the Lamas love it here," says Marstrand, who was once married to the Karmapa's translator, "because it reminds them of Tibet."

Boulder's Buddhist college, the Naropa Institute, plans to build a satellite campus on another Baca grant. And emissaries of the exiled Dalai Lama have inquired about acreage. In August, Prince Charles picked up the tab for a summer school on sacred design in the Baca run by Keith Critchlow, director of the Prince of Wales's Institute of Architecture in London. If his patron proves willing, Critchlow plans to found a permanent school for sacred architecture in the valley. Strong still hopes mystical Jews, Muslims and Sufis will materialize on the plots she has pencilled in for them on her master plan, came from award money Maurice Strong had won after the Rio conference from the likes of Greece's Aristotle Onassis Foundation.



Now, newcomers are flocking to Crestone on the wave of the new spiritual tide washing over mainstream America. But having helped persuade her pal Shirley MacLaine that her planned New Age centre would overtax both Crestone's serenity and its sewer system—prompting MacLaine to transfer her vision to 7,000 acres near Abiquiu, north of Santa Fe, N.M.—Strong still has nightmares of the Baca metamorphosing into another New Age mecca. "We're not New Age," she says. "We're old age: we're talking about preserving 2,000-year-old traditions. This isn't enlightenment in a weekend for \$495."

*[Excerpted from Canada's weekly newsmagazine, Maclean's, October 10, 1994. The Zarthushti connection is in the article "Daydreams or Destiny" in this issue of the Journal.]*



# Reflections of a Jewish Christian Among Zarthustis

By Hannah M. G. Shapero  
Falls Church, Virginia

*"Ecumenicon" is an interfaith conference with a difference: it welcomes faiths and traditions which are not part of the mainstream, such as western esotericism, gnosticism, and neo-paganism. Mainstream faiths like Judaism and Christianity share teaching time with Neo-pagans in an atmosphere of learning and tolerance. It was at the Ecumenicon Conference in July 1994, in Northern Virginia, that Hannah M. G. Shapero, a Christian of Jewish origin, who is a student of Zoroastrianism, presented this talk. He co-presenter, Piroja Mojgani, gave a Zarthusti blessing, and later showed the audience a splendid sari, in magenta and gold, that her mother had worn when she was engaged to be married. A part of the presentation was a typical Zoroastrian prayer table, with flowers, nuts and fruits, the Avesta, a portrait of Zarthustra and a lighted candle.*

## ***"I Don't Just Study Comparative Religion, I Live It"***

I don't just study comparative religion, I live it. I was born and brought up among secularized, non-observant Jews, though I learned a fair amount about Judaism in college. I became a Catholic Christian in 1979. I first encountered Zarthustis when I was a graduate student, but did not take a serious interest in the religion until many years later, when I read Mary Boyce's *Zoroastrians*. That was six years ago, just about the time I moved to the Washington, D.C. area. Having learned something about the faith from Boyce's book, my goal was then to find a community of practicing Zarthustis, where that ancient faith was still alive.

It took me five years to find that community, and my goal was realized in 1993 when I was able to attend the Jashan for the opening of the meeting house of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington. I have been a guest at community functions ever since, and I am always grateful to the Association for their hospitality and their willingness to talk about their faith.

## ***Jews first Encounter Zarthustis Through Persian King Cyrus***

Though the language and ceremony is different, I constantly recognize similarities between my own Judeo-Christian faith and Zarthustrianism. I also see many similarities between the Jewish culture in which I grew up, and the Zarthusti culture.

The more I study its history, the more I understand how Zarthustrianism has influenced Judaism and Christianity. This influence cannot be exactly documented through text or archaeology, but most scholars in religious studies recognize that it is there. Jews first encountered Zarthustis during the Jewish captivity in Babylon. The Persian King Cyrus, having conquered the area, decreed, with extraordinary tolerance for his time, that the Jews should be returned to their homeland, and that their Temple should be restored.

Even in ancient times, Jews and Persians recognized each other as fellow monotheists. After the Jews were freed, many chose to remain in Persian territory, and contact and exchange of ideas continued throughout the later centuries. In Jewish writings after captivity, new ideas appear which show that the Jews learned many doctrines from Zarthustrianism. Before the exile, Jewish writers imagined the afterlife as 'Sheol', and empty, Hades-like place. After the exile, ideas of a heaven of reward and a hell of punishment appear in Jewish thought; these are basic Zarthustrian doctrines that start with the Gathas.

## ***Influence of Zarthustrianism on Judaism and Christianity***

From the Zarthustis, Jews learned about the progress of sacred time toward an End Time when the world would be renewed; they also learned of the expected Messiah, who is known as 'Saoshyant', or Savior. The idea of individualized angels also

entered the Jewish world from Zarthustrianism; the 'fravashi' became the guardian angel of both Jewish and Christian teaching.

Judaism adopted the most important teaching of Zarthustrianism: the ethical dualism of right and wrong. Of course Jews had their own ethical teachings before their contact with Persia, but afterwards, the idea of the good mentality in conflict with the evil mentality became a Jewish theme. Likewise, the idea of an Adversary — known to Jews as Satan, was adopted from the Zarthusti Angra Mainyu, or Ahriman, the spirit of evil. Just like the Evil Spirit in the Gathas, Satan, a creation of God, chooses to do evil; he is not created evil.

In later Jewish writings, and in Christian writings, Zarthusti metaphors such as the conflict of light and darkness and the coming end of time become common. Christianity inherited many Zarthusti themes from Judaism, such as the 'battle of the sons of light against the sons of darkness.' The legend of the Magi visiting the Christ child illustrates the relationship between Zarthusti and Judeo/Christian sacred stories: the Zarthusti Magi may have been seeking the Saoshyant in the West when they followed their star to Bethlehem.

### *Similarities in Customs and Culture*

The relationship between Zarthustrianism and Judaism is ancient and honorable. And I found more similarities between the two faiths in customs and culture. Both Jews and Zarthustis cover thier head when they pray: the Zarthusti 'topi' is known in Judaism as a 'yarmulke'. Orthodox Jewish men wear something very much like a sudreh and kushti under thier clothes: it is called a 'tallith katan' and 'tzitisits', and it serves the same purpose: to remind one of his

faith and the call to pray. The Zarthusti 'Navjote' reminds me of the Jewish 'Bar Mitzvah', when a young man (now, also a young lady) is initiated into the community.

The Zarthusti love of learning and the divine injunction to use one's Good Mind ('Vohu Manah') is also essential for Jews: in Judaism, studying the Scriptures is a form of prayer. Zarthusti tend to go into the same highly intellectual careers that Jews do: medicine, science, law, teaching, finance. It is not for nothing that the Parsis have been called "The Jews of India." And, like Jews, they are greatly concerned about intermarriage and the loss of the faith to assimilation. Both groups have suffered great persecutions, and must live among those who do not share their faith. But they have, through their intellectual efforts and hard work, become far more influential in the larger society than their numbers would indicate.

### *A Friend of the Living Faith*

In both Zarthusti and Jewish/Christian teaching, God is all-good, and created the world as a good world: "God saw that it was good." Though the human world has been corrupted by the Adversary, Zarthustis, Jews and Christians all must strive to help in its renewal and redemption.

I am honored that I am welcome among Zarthustis, and I can now say that I participate in three great traditions: that of Moses, that of Jesus, and that of Zarthustra. I was born into that of Moses, was adopted into that of Jesus, and am a friend of the living faith of Zarthustra.

*[Ms. Shapero, a commercial artist by profession, is a student of the Zarthusti religion and practices, who attends most of the Zarthusti functions in Washington D.C.]*

*FEZANA Journal gratefully acknowledges*

*A ZARTHUSTI BUSINESS IN THE LOS ANGELES AREA*

*for sponsoring this issue.*

## COVER STORY

# Firdowsi's Shah-nama

## Epic of the Kings

*It is now 1,000 years since the completion of Firdowsi's immortal epic, the Shah-nama, yet its message rings fresh in the hearts and minds of all who read it. The millennium was celebrated in Tehran in 1990, and later in Tajikistan. In October 1994, Sidney, Australia, was the host of a global conference to celebrate 1,000 years of Iran's glorious history and culture. The magic of the Shah-nama, and the genius of its creator Firdowsi, are explored here, by scholars and students. The legends and stories contained in this monumental work, will be presented in a future issue of FEZANA Journal.*

### THE SHAH-NAMA'S MYSTERIOUS INSPIRATION — A TRANSCEN- DENT SONG OF FREEDOM

*By Parviz Varjavand  
San Carlos, California*

The Shah-nama is a monumental book of poetry acknowledged by scholars as one of the finest, and most important work in Persian literature. The work commenced approximately in 975 A.C. and ended in 1010 A.C. Two poets, one the Zarthusti, Daghighi, and the other a Moslem, Firdowsi, collaborated in composing some 45,000 rhyming lines of poetry. Historians have long ignored Daghighi's role in creating the Shah-nama even though it was he who started the effort. Firdowsi admits that Daghighi began the work and that he took 100's of Daghighi's lines and incorporated them, unchanged, into the Shah-nama.

Daghighi was assassinated while chronicling the events surrounding our Prophet Asho Zarthust. He was murdered by a slave boy, and accused of homosexual tendencies. Then all mention of him stops, and we have been left in the dark. It seems that the crime was a political conspiracy to defame a great man.

Playing detective is difficult since the murder of Daghighi occurred more than a thousand years ago. However, this research was done by my late father, Dr. Feridoon Varjavand. Most of his writing is in Farsi, and it is not appropriate to translate his work here. Yet I feel obligated to bring the core of his interest about Daghighi to the attention of western scholars, especially Zarthusti ones. Daghighi deserves notice for his role as the creative initiator of the Shah-nama. This area invites research.

Firdowsi makes cryptic references to the events surrounding the beginning of the Shah-nama. He alludes to Daghighi as "one who put me on the throne of Shah-nama" and as "one who never lived a happy day in his life." He writes of a secret patron, not by name, but as "the tall-standing great man" and "the generous man of learning in whose hands gold is as dirt". Firdowsi also credits this benefactor for bringing ancient texts to him and helping him read them. Then he laments that the great patron is lost: "I can find no trace of him" and "the man-eating sharks must have discovered my sunshine and taken him away."

*Statue of Firdowsi in Tus and Rome*



Thanks to Daghighi and the secret patron, Firdowsi accepted and forged his destiny as an epic poet whose power still lives whenever Iranian people gather together and read the Shah-nama. It's the power of magic and drama that professional Shah-nama readers can create when chanting his rhythmic stanzas to the accompanying beat of drums. On many an evening, their skills transform humble little tea houses into the great battlefields of heroes and knights of old. Listeners may experience great expanses of feeling, from the thunder of thousands of charging horses to the gentle whisper of lovers exchanging their deep-felt anguish. As the Shah-nama readers artfully intone the cadence and enchantment of the changing moods of these venerated poems, they move people to participate with laughter as well as with tears. This power also comes alive daily in the Zoor Khaneh or 'House of Strength' where Iranian men practice a tradition of classical exercise to a drumbeat and the chant of Shah-nama lines. These customs continue in part because although the verses are more than a thousand years old, they are still as familiar and understandable as the Farsi of today.

The Shah-nama is in pure Farsi, and thus it breaks with the rule enforced immediately after the Arab invasion of Iran, whereby all scholars and writers had to use only the Arabic language. During the previous Sassanian Dynasty many chronicles existed, called Khodai-Namak or 'Books of the Sovereign'. These collections of poetry described the great events of each ruler's reign and probably all the minor intrigues as well. In addition to history and mythology, philosophy and folklore were mixed into these poems in order to keep the audience interested. However, after the Arabs invaded Iran and ousted the Sassanians, they burned most non-Arabic books in an attempt to systematically destroy the Farsi language, including pre-Islamic history of Iran. Unfortunately, most Sassanian Khodai-Namaks were lost or forgotten during this period of history.

In 945 A.C. Prince Ahmad of the Buyid Dynasty entered Baghdad and deposed the Caliph, marking the end of Arabic-speaking rulers and the beginning of a revival of Persian culture. It was during the short rules of local Persian dynasties such as the Samanids, Ziyarids, and Buyids that writers could compose books like the Shah-nama.

A gross historic error and forgery credited the Ghaznavid Sultan Mahmud as having commissioned the book. The Ghaznavids used power based on slave holding. Indentured to the king, their elite slaves in turn ruled the people like chattel. This dynasty of bound fanatics destroyed much culture in Persia and India and paved the way for the disastrous invasions

of the Mongol hordes and other Turkish-speaking dynasties. It seems most likely, therefore, that the Shah-nama was begun before this tyranny permeated the land.

The Shah-nama must have gained fame fast and early for it was a new hope for a nation at a very dark time in its history. It revived the tradition of reading different Khodai-Namaks and caused a renaissance of the Farsi language. Firdowsi's genius was his ability to make these ancient tales palatable to the new Moslem sensibilities, whereas Daghighi, because of his anger and harsher tone, lost his name and his life in the effort. However, we cannot be certain if Firdowsi lived to see any sign of his success because in a very sad poem he describes how he is left old and poor and without the "sunshine" of his disappeared patron.



[Sketch from Shahnameh by Bahman Sohrab Surti]

The poems recapture the history of the ancient "Aryana Vajjah," the homeland of the Aryan people. In this great epic, myths and heroic adventures live side by side with detailed historic events and tender love stories. It is the only ancient script that retells the beginning of civilization from the use of stone tools to the discovery of fire and the making of different implements with almost Darwinian accuracy.

From Iran's earliest times, poetry has had great importance because the populace could memorize and recite poems much more easily than works of



prose. When a population is generally illiterate, people must rely predominantly on memory in order to keep track of their history, mythology, or any other lengthy text. Verses which are rhythmic and interesting in imagery can be memorized far more easily than non-rhythmic prose. Musical instruments and especially drums then come into play to help a raconteur keep the beat of the poems he is reciting. Inevitably, priests, shamans, or bards usually monopolize the industry of memorizing and retelling poetry.

The Shah-nama has the allure of a treasure trove for students of folklore. Hardly a month passes without the Iranian press publishing a new analysis behind one of its stories. The tales of Rostam and Sohrab, of Siavaksh passing through fire, of Esfandiar and Zarthustra — these and many others all have that element of myth which makes them rich material for fresh exploration and interpretation.

Naturally, Iranians love to visually embellish these stories. As the Shah-nama's fame grew, great artists began illuminating its pages with the most exquisite of Persian miniatures. Today prestigious museums of the world display these painted Shah-nama pages with the status of their most cherished collections. Now these stories bring renewed meaning when modern Iranians give them life in fresh imagery. We might incorporate them into plays, films, animated sequences, and paintings. Because these tales delve into the real consequences of difficult choices, they provide special comfort and support to our children who face daily challenges. As we read Shah-nama stories to them, they may find much inspiration and guidance, as well as take pride in their ancestors.

The enigmatic Daghighi, Firdowsi, and the mysterious patron risked their lives to give the great-hearted Iranian heroes to the world. Whatever our age or situation, their quest enriches us. We recognize our fundamental and universal destiny in the Shah-nama's transcendent song of freedom.

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It must be considered that there is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things.

- Machiavelli

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## BEST OF 28 STORIES FROM SHAH-NAMA: TABLEAUS OF FIRDOWSI'S MASTERPIECE

By Mehraban Shahrivini

Publisher, Pake-E-Mehr



In the fall of 1990 (1369 Yz.), the University of Tehran was the site of the first millennium celebration of Hakim Abolghassem Firdowsi's Shah-nama. This was a gala event attended by 500 Shah-nama scholars from around the world. A result of that event was an invaluable commemorative book containing 41 glorious color paintings, of which a

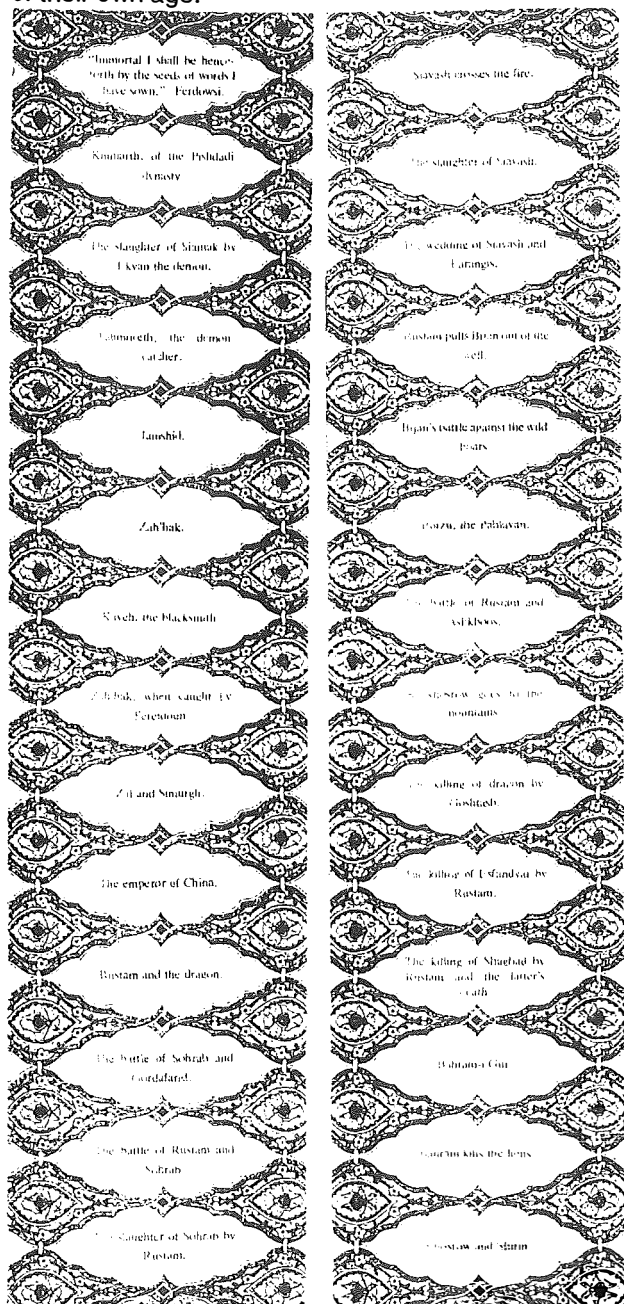
small sample is reproduced here. Only 10,000 copies of this collector's edition were available, and they were sold out within 48 hours. Fortunately for us here at Pake-E-Mehr, the following Spring, a scholar friend sent a copy of this magnificent work, as a unique gift to our library. It is only fitting that this short report be made, here in this special issue of FEZANA Journal, so the entire world can see how great the level of art and culture was in Iran 1,000 years ago!

### IN THE NAME OF GOD

The civilizations of the societies with a prolonged historical background are dynamic, reflective, traditional, perfectionist, scientifically oriented and idealist. The richness of every society's language and literature marks its civilization and integrity. Hakim Abolghassem Firdowsi's great and unique epic, The Shah-nama, should therefore be regarded as a sign of the richness, perfection and strength of the Persian language. A language backed by a great civilization and a unique culture.

In the course of time, this unique work of art has found its links with the other cultural and artistic values of the society, leaving its influence on different aspects of life, culture, history and literature and finding its way into the arts, music and even folklore. Such an influence has motivated other works of art in different eras, every single one of them being a treasury of different forms of art such as calligraphy, decorative painting (tadhib), miniature, goldwork, arabesque, paper making, book binding, etc. created by the faithful endeavors of the Iranian artists in different centuries.

Firdowsi began composing the Shah-nama in 384 Hijra and the final copy of the book was prepared in the year 400. Illustrating the Shah-nama began as early as the first years of the fifth century Hijra. More than 300 different editions of the book dating back 675 to 1000 Hijra have already been identified and are being curated in various museums in Iran and abroad. There are also 250 undated editions of the Shah-nama which belong to the era between the 7th and 13th centuries Hijra. In other words, there are more than 550 different manuscript editions of the book all of them with different styles of calligraphy and numerous tableaus depicting the style and taste of their own age.



The oldest copy of the book with Hassan bin Ali Hossein Al Bahmani's calligraphy and containing 89 tableaus is curated at the library of Topkapi Sarai in Istanbul. However, the copy in Nastaliq dating back to the year 841 Hijra and containing 93 tableaus, now at the British Museum, is believed to be still more significant. Another copy written in Nastaliq by Borhan with 159 tableaus is at the central library of Tehran University. There is also a copy dating back to 833 Hijra with 22 tableaus and very fine calligraphy by Jaffar Baisonghori at the library of Gulistan Palace Museum in Tehran. And another copy written in 847 by Mohammad Bin Mahmoud Hanafi Ash'shansaghi with 14 tableaus is curated at the same library. Undated illustrated copies of the Shah-nama are also at the libraries of the National Museum of Iran, the Islamic Consultative Assembly, Malek Library, Martyr Mtahhari College, Reza Abbasi Museum and the Museum of Decorative Arts.

The well-known Baisonghori Shah-nama curated at the museum of Gulistan Palace is the most well known and voluminous copy of the book after the edition known as Damoot and the three British Chester Bitle volumes of the centuries 8 to 11 Hijra and the Shah-nama at the Topkapi Sarai, Turkey. One of the latest editions is a work of art by Davari, a son of Vessal Shirazi the poet. Nine of its tableaus are illustrated by Davari himself and the rest are provided by Dr. Lottali Souratgar. The book is now at Reza Abbasi Museum.

This is how the Shah-nama found its way to the circles of the elite in the 5th century Hijra, to the country's literary circles in the 6th and 7th centuries and to the hearts of the ordinary man in the following centuries owing to its inherent national, religious and artistic qualities. In the meantime, arabesque designs, decorative paintings and miniatures were added to the text by the artists who spent their lifetime with their art. The trend which had begun in the 6th and 7th centuries still continues as new artists' names appear on the cover of Firdowsi's epic and become linked with the names of the heroes of Shah-nama. Now, in mid 14th century Hijra the trend is continuing enthusiastically and this volume is the latest effort to this end on the eve of Firdowsi's millennium.

This collection marks several months of planning, individual endeavors and collaboration of highly efficient scholars and artists. The poems of the tableaus have been selected by Dr. Ravaghi who is an expert on the language of Firdowsi and his Shah-nama. The innovative designs and miniatures of the tableaus have been masterly created by Mr. Aghamiri, and the beautiful art of calligraphy appearing in the book marks the artistic strength of Mr.

Falsafi. The tadhīb works, the lithography and the printing of the collection which marks high standards of artistic capabilities and creative diligence have been supervised by Mr. Karim Farshbaf Safaei, and all this will undoubtedly add another golden page to the history of the contemporary art of Iran. On the other hand, the high quality of the printing of this book should be attributed to the experience, capabilities and hardworking of our colleagues at the lithography, lay out, printing and book binding departments of Offset Co.

*Tableaus from Firdowsi's Shah-nama*, is the outcome of the valuable collaboration of these scholars, artists and technicians who have undertaken a great job, namely the revival of the Persian language in a book presented jointly by the Unit for the Revival of Islamic Arts at Soroush Press; and Offset Co. on the occasion of Firdowsi's millennium. A volume which we hope would retain the book's eternal values.

## THE CREATION AND CONCLUSION OF SHAH-NAMA

By Susan Kaboly-Zadeh  
Vancouver, British Columbia

Firdowsi. A famous poet. A poet who is regarded as one of the outstanding seven; one of the earliest and most endowed with national sentiment for Iran. The author of Shah-nama, 'The Book of Kings'. Basically a connected story, the Shah-nama in metrical and rhymed verse, portrays the history of the Persian Empire from before the creation of the world to the Muslim Arab (Tazian) conquest. Firdowsi deals to a

certain extent with the succession of fifty kings and queens in his stories.

In his earliest years, Firdowsi possessed a prose book on the history of Persian kings which made him begin his own poem which took thirty-five years to complete. During middle age, Firdowsi composed episodes and later put them in chronological order by reign. This became the Shah-nama.

Some of the material used by Firdowsi is of ancient origin. Peasants luckily were able to refresh their memories from records written in Pahlavi (Middle Persian) or in Arabic prose translations. Firdowsi was not a fiction-writer using his imagination for the main characters or plots of his stories. Mostly being part of national tradition, Firdowsi's stories were elaborated upon and numerous speeches were put into the mouths of his heroic characters, including the long letters of the kings and other main characters. Firdowsi mainly wanted to preserve the history and language of Iran, yet not surprisingly, he composed something of artistic worth to be rehearsed and read a thousand years later. In the conclusion of his Shah-nama, Firdowsi states:

"Now that this fame-worthy work has reached its end, the whole world will echo with reports of me. Henceforth I cannot die; for I live, having broadcast the seeds of my verses. Anyone possessed of sense, good counsel and religion will after my death offer up praise to me."

Not only does Firdowsi cherish and respect his own being, but also that of his fellow citizens, his culture, tradition and heritage of his beloved Persia, or what is now called Iran. The famous and beloved Firdowsi truly speaks from his heart and in turn reaches out to generations of Iranians thereafter.

## FEZANA JOURNAL CONGRATULATES

*Parsiāna*

## ON THE OCCASION OF ITS 30TH ANNIVERSARY

During the 30 years of its existence, PARSIANA has become a true community institution, reflecting the ups and downs of Zarthustis all over the world, and particularly the special circumstances, achievements and problems of the Parsis of India. FEZANA Journal appreciates the professionalism of the editors who have impartially held a mirror to our community without sermonizing, editorializing or criticizing. Its magazine format is eminently readable and of the highest quality. PARSIANA provides a true historical record of the community. To subscribe, write to: Parsiana, c/o H. L. Rochat, Navsari Chambers, 39 A. Kranti Marg, Bombay 400 001.

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## A LOOK AT GEOGRAPHICAL KNOWLEDGE IN THE SHAH-NAMA

By Mehraban Shahroini  
Publisher, Pake-E-Mehr

The great Firdowsi's Shah-nama is, especially to Iranian Zarthustis, the eternal symbol of Iranian civilization and culture. It is not only a testament to its history and strong sense of national identity, but also an excellent source of geographical information in the ancient world.

It is such a vast ocean of information that to date, some of the ancient cities and locations named in it have not been found on the map.

The map taken out of Shah-nama [see below] illustrates the vast Persian Empire of ancient times. Some 325 geographical locations have been referred to by The Shah-nama. Names of locations such as Touran, Chin, Room, and Turk have been repeated many times in The Shah-nama. Those lands we know. But what about locations named only once or so, like Kang Daj, Bisheh Shahr, Maghan, or Almas Rood (Diamond River)? Where are these places?

Research on the geography of The Shah-nama has been done by an Iranian scholar, Hosein Shahidi in the last few years. In 1992, Sahab mapping company of Iran published this researcher's findings. For more information on this topic please contact: Neishabur Cultural Foundation, c/o Dr. Janidi, University Boulevard North, Jalalieh Street, Tehran, Iran, Tel: (604) 986-7550.

”پژوهشی برداشته جغرافیای شاهنامه”

شاهنامه که نامی جاودانه‌ی فرهنگ ایران است، علاوه بر سندی تاریخی و ملی، ... به تنهایی یکی از مهم‌ترین منابع جغرافیای جهان کهن است.

شاهنامه در بابیات به‌کار گرفته تاکنون نام برخی از سرزمینهای نهفته‌ی جهان به‌ویژه نام‌های باستانی ایران را در خود نگه داشته است.

نقشه‌ی شاهنامه همراه این نوشته، جغرافیای با زمانه از نام‌های کشورهای ایران در زمانهای دور است. در صراحت شاهنامه حدود ۳۲۵ نام جغرافیای وجود دارد که برخی از آنها بسیار - تکرار شده اند مانند توران، چین، روم، ترک و ... و برخی دیگر مانند گنگدز، بیشه‌شهر، منان، الماس رود و ... به‌کار آمده است.

پژوهش جغرافیای شاهنامه در سالهای اخیر وسیله‌ی دانشمندان ایرانی مانند حسین شهیدی (تخلص، بیژن) آغاز گردید. در سال ۱۳۷۰ (۱۹۹۱) پایان یافت و آنگاه از سوی موسسه جغرافیای و کارتوگرافی صاحب (تأسیس ۱۳۶۱ برابر ۱۳۱۵) در سال ۱۳۷۱ (۱۹۹۲) چاپ و منتشر گردید. این نقشه شاهنامه را دربرگیرنده این شماره ملاحظه می‌فرمایید و هرگاه علاقمندان نیاز به آگاهی‌های بیشتر دارند یا دفتر پست، مهره تلفن و فکس ۷۵۵۰ - ۹۸۸ (۶۰۴) یا بایانیه فرهنگی نیشابور (تهران - خیابان شمال دانشگاه - کوچه لاله - دفتر شهیدی) تماس بگیرند.

### A Look at Geographical Knowledge in the Shah-nama

نقشه جغرافیایی  
شاهنامه فردوسی

پژوهش حسین شهیدی (بیژن)

با همکاری موسسه جغرافیایی و کارتوگرافی صاحب

Shahab Geographic & Drafting Institute



## CUSTOMS, RULES AND CORRECT MANNERS IN SHAH-NAMA

By Dr. Pallan Ichaporia  
Womelsdorf, Pennsylvania

With the advance of Avestan and Pahlavi studies, Firdowsi's Shah-nama has assumed a new significance as the most developed source of Iranian sagas, the origin of which is in the Avestan traditions. Noldeke investigated the Avestan and Pahlavi source of the national history of Iran [*Das Iranische Nationalepos, Leipzig-Berlin, 1920*]. Furthermore, he correctly pointed out that Shah-nama has great influence on the Iranian psychology, and literary creations [*ibid.*]. Thus it should not come as a surprise that in Shah-nama, one can find scattered among its several volumes, instances of good social customs, good rules, correct manners and wise maxims. All these together are denoted by the Modern Persian word 'adab', the origin of which is traced to Sassanian Iran. Adab is equivalent to the Middle Persian word 'frahang' and is close to another Pahlavi word 'ewen.'

Shah-nama defines the word adab as ideal refinements of thoughts, words and deeds. This has its origin in the Zarthusti triad of good thoughts, good words and good deeds. The ideal refinements in the form of ethical behavior are manifested throughout the Shah-nama. Some examples are shown below:

(1) The gentle behavior of the man who brings the head of Tur to the latter's father, Faredun, and the response of Faredun at the sight of his son's head, without visible anger or grief, reflects correct manners and customs [*Shah-nama Vol.1, pp.192-193, Noldeke*].

(2) Another example is the reception which the Iranian commander, Godrej gives to Royin, who has been sent by his father, Piran, to Godrej with an offer of peace. Although Godrej has lost seventy sons and grandsons in the war with Turan, he walks with a cheerful face to meet Royin and asks how he (Royin), Afrasiab, and other Turanian generals are faring, and then entertains him for a week, before finally telling him that there can be no solution except war [*Vol.3, p.512*] — a fine example of excellent manners and behavior even towards one's enemy.

(3) Esfandiar, having reached Sistan, neither accepts Rustom's invitation to have meals with him, nor does he reciprocate the invitation for fear that if they eat each other's food and if Rustom does not obey his orders to be chained and brought before Kavi Vistaspa, he (Esfandiar) will not be able to do anything, on account of the bond of friendship created by sharing the meal ('mehr-e-nan o namak'). Shah-nama

talks about the custom of 'keram' which requires a host, after inviting someone to a banquet, to send a messenger at the appointed hour to remind the invitee [*Vol.4, p.609*].

According to Shah-nama, the course of a person's life is determined by his efforts ('kuses') and his fortune ('bakht'). Anoshiravan asks Bozorgmeher whether greatness results from efforts or fortune. Bozorgmeher answered that the two are coupled like body and soul. Efforts cannot achieve greatness without the assistance of fortune [*Vol.6, p.374*].

Proper proportion in diet according to Shah-nama is to eat little, [*Vol.4, p.283-286*] not to eat when the stomach is full, and to stop eating when some appetite still remains [*Vol.6, p.286*]. Also mentioned are the harmful effects of anything in excess [*Vol.5, p.630*]. It advises that wine should be taken to induce happiness and not drunkenness, which results from over indulgence [*Vol.6, p.286*]. The advantage of moderation and the evil of intemperance is found in the story of Kabroy and the Young Shoemaker [*Vol.5, p.516*], placed in the reign of Kayqobad.

The roots of such ethical refinements can be traced to Zarthusti Pahlavi texts: *Ayadg-i-Wazurgmihr*, *Xusrow ud Redak* (King Khusrw and a Boy), in several books of the *Denkard*, and *Handarz-i-Aturpat-i Maraspandan*.



Rustam in battle



Good manners come with good education and knowledge. Sah-nama shows that when young Zal seeks the approval of King Manocher for his marriage to Rodabe, he had to convince the King and nobles of the adequacy of his education and is being tested in the presence of the King and mobads (priests) on his way of life, his attitude towards death, and for his prowess in spear-throwing, club-wielding, archery and horse-back riding [Vol.1, p.328].

When Rustom is charged with the upbringing of Siavak, he takes him to Zabol, and teaches him how to ride, shoot arrows, hunt wild beasts, train falcons, behave decently, speak properly, exert authority and handle troops [Vol.2, p.200]. Similar education and knowledge were imparted to Bahman [Vol.4, p.690], Darab [Vol.5], Ardeshir [Vol.5, p.276], and Behram Gur [Vol.5, p.500]. These great Zarthustis were also trained by men of culture in the knowledge of Avesta [Vols.4-5].

Sah-nama asserts the superiority of poetry versus prose "where few words and much meaning is found" [Vol.8, p.102]. One must note Zarthustra's poetic Gathas where words are few and meanings are profound. Maxims are abundant in the accounts of the

reign of King Anoshiravan. They are: honesty in buying and selling; concurrence of the heart and the tongue (sincerity); generosity and magnanimity; affability and forbearance; calmness and chivalry; trustworthiness in oneself with trust in God; abstention from gossip, fault-finding and slander; modesty; and avoidance of conceit.

Shah-nama further gives advice on the choice of friends who will help in the hour of need. Regarding enemies, there must be preferable avoidance and they must be treated honorably [Vol.3, p.494].

Bozorgmeher, in an address to King Kosrow II, gives 10 demons ('devs') who are the enemies of good life: greed, excessive needs, envy, disgrace, revenge, anger, slander, insincerity, lack of knowledge of religion and ingratitude.

From this short article, one can easily see that Sah-nama is not only the history of the Iranian kings, but also a guide to a good, happy, honest life. It is the second best-seller book of all time in Iran, next only to the Quran. Sah-nama is our heritage and regular study of it is bound to benefit our lives.

## SHAH-NAMA: THE STRONGHOLD OF PERSIAN IDENTITY

By Ali Makki

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

The Shah-nama was written in the latter half of the tenth century A.C. by Hakeem Abol-Qassem Firdowsi of Toos. The poem became popular within a short time and earned a pre-eminent status as a vehicle for reclaiming the Iranian identity in the post-traumatic era following the downfall of the last Sassanian ruler. Three centuries after the defeat of Yazdegard III, Firdowsi's composition saved the Persian language from the threat of extinction, thereby preserving the essential medium for protecting Persian culture.

The Arab conquest, in the mid-seventh century, had two grave consequences, one was that Zarthustrianism, the religion of the majority of Iranians, was actively repressed by Moslem missionaries through coercion and force. This fact led to a gradual dwindling in the number of Zarthustis, first in the greater Iranian Empire, then in Iran proper. The second disaster was that Iran was no longer ruled by indigenous Iranians. This, of course, meant that Iranian national culture and identity were discouraged by the new rulers. Immediately after the conquest, the country was ruled by the Umayyad caliphs of Damascus and became part of the Islamic Caliphate.

Almost a century later, through a series of revolts, the Umayyad dynasty was replaced by the Abbasids, another Arab ruling family whose seat of power was in Baghdad. Since the Abbasid court owed its ascension to power in part to support from such civil servant families as the famous Barmakis, the pay-off was the reemergence of Persian influence at the ruling level. During the latter part of the Abbasid era, within which Firdowsi lived, his home province of Khorassan enjoyed nominal autonomy from Baghdad. Under the rule of the Samani family, client kings of the Abbasid, a Persian renaissance began and the Persian language, replacing Arabic, once again became the language of court poetry. The Samani rulers took great pride in their ancient Iranian past and the continuity and uniqueness of their Persian heritage.

As a result of this blossoming of the Persian language, such beautiful literary works as the Shah-nama began to emerge. Firdowsi belonged to the 'deghan' class, or the landed gentry, who, at the time, were viewed as the living repository of pure Iranian tradition. Several times throughout the Shah-nama, Firdowsi writes how he conscientiously recorded the stories of Iran's past. The poem deals

with the history of Iran from the time of creation upto the moment of the Islamic conquest. Hence, the Iranian national epic has been viewed by some scholars [Dick Davis, *Epic and Sedition*, Fayetteville, 1992, p. xxii] as being a piece of 'literary archeology' and a 'mytho-poeticization' of the Iranian past, rooted in 'antiquarianism', which may partly explain the continuity of Iranian cultural identity through several calamities which Iran has endured up to the present

For over one thousand years, the Shah-nama has been regarded by Iranians as a primary link with their ancient past and has served as a document of national pride. For many Iranians today, it conjures up a sense of nostalgia and a longing for their glorious past. In many homes, the esteemed status of the Shah-nama is demonstrated each year during the celebration of Navruz when a copy of this masterpiece is placed alongside a holy book on the 'Haft Seen' table — be it the Avesta in a Zarhusti home or the Quran in a Moslem household. Among some Moslem families, the Shah-nama may even be the only book on the Haft Seen.

Throughout the ages, the beautiful verses of the Shah-nama have been memorized and passed down from one generation to the next. After the advent of the art of press, almost every culturally conscious Iranian has a copy of the epic at home. There is hardly a living soul in Iran who is not familiar with a story or two from the Shah-nama. Even those who cannot read or write may be able to recite a few couplets with faithful accuracy — owing thanks to the strength of the Iranian oral tradition which is also responsible for preserving portions of the Avesta to this day.

[Mr. Makki is working towards a Ph.D. in dental medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. Co-founder of the Penn Zoroastrian Club, a student of the Gathas and other religious texts, and lecturer on religion at conferences, he hopes to eventually also get a degree in Indo-Iranian linguistics.]

#### IN COMING ISSUES ...

Themes for future issues of the Journal are:

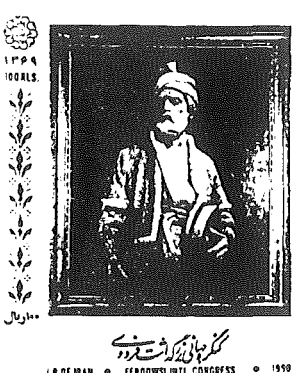
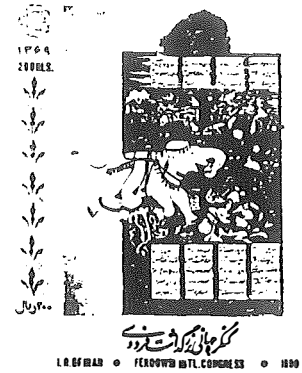
Spring: March 1995:

"Zarhusti Wedding Traditions"

Summer: June 1995: "The Creation Story"

Letters and articles are invited. Submission deadline is Jan 1 (for Spring issue) and April 1 (for Summer issue).

*Firdowsi commemorative postage stamps issued by the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1990. Acknowledgements: Ali Makki and Anoo Sukhia.*



### FIRDOWSI ON THE HUMAN CONDITION: TRAGIC YET BY MORALITY RECLAIMED

By Professor Natalie Vania  
Stanford, California

The world is not how it ought to be. In our daily frustrations and horror over violent world events, we sigh this thought and then scold ourselves for triteness. But each small sigh contains an essential of our condition humane. Today's leading ethicists [Bernard Williams, note the review of *Shame and Necessity* by A. Nehamas in *The New Republic*, October 24, 1994, p.40-45] credit Plato and fail to credit the great Persian Zarhusti culture for providing humanity clear distinction between life as it is lived and life made fresh as it may be. So the scholar who begins Shah-nama will be struck by the poet's relentless insight into the tragedy of "is not yet ought."

Firdaws's impacted mythic vision demonstrates the deep Persian awareness of death's tragedy tracking each. How cruel and final an Arbiter we face — for no man, none, good or bad, escapes! Ought not each of us live eternally on and on with the joyful vigor and bright fortune of priceless youth? As the



very human tragedy of Age wrinkles our skin and warps our solid bones, who has not rued quick youth and fleeing life? But the Water of Time, life, slips from each's reaching grasp and Noble or Ignoble alike face a final, unyielding end! Little is as it ought, indeed not even our own prized life.

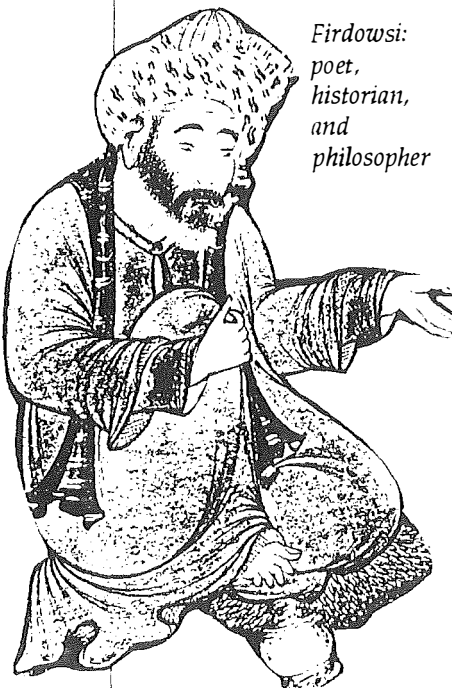
The world is tragic (have we needed Rwanda, Kampuchia, Bosnia, and El Monte after Auschwitz?) and each of our lives has the story of the tragedy awaiting it. What then is left, if whether we be good or bad, we are all met with the same fierce end? Death, so bitter. Firdawsī's answer contains the key of the Zarthusti ethos (preceding the Platonic): *When you are gone tomorrow with yesteryear's five billion, all that remains of you, your lingering shadow here is your repute as it was in this world.* If you have chosen the high road of the Noble rather than delighted in the Ignoble, good over bad, you live eternally fresh in the repute earned herein. That is all. That it is enough is all.

## SHAH-NAMA: THE ENDING IS WHAT COUNTS — A LESSON FOR US

Upon completion of his work, Firdawsī accomplished a feat no one before or after him has been able to achieve. Composing the history of a very ancient nation in poetic form was not only significant for preserving all the historical information that was at his disposal, but also constituted a great literary work that helped save and define the heritage of the Persian language. No other literary person in

history has been able to accomplish what Firdawsī did in terms of the extent and scope of his literary work. The majority of his work was dedicated to the history of Zarthusti Iran, starting from the legendary King Gayomars up to the period of the fall of Sassanian Iran to the Arab forces in the 7th century A.D. In recounting the episodes and events that surrounded the fall of Iran to the Arabs and the demise of Yazdegard III, Firdawsī's longing for ancient Iran is fully manifested.

Firdawsī:  
poet,  
historian,  
and  
philosopher



The contrasts that he draws in his composition of the "Last Letter of Rostam Farokhzad," the commander of the Iranian forces at the fateful battle of Qadassi, is a good example of the strength of his nationalistic feelings and emotions.

The last chapters of the Shah-nama recount the ending of Zarthusti Iran, and as such, a popular phrase coined in Iran capitalizes on that fact. "*Shah-nama: The Ending is What Delights*" is the literal translation of that popular saying, freely translated to: "*Shah-nama: The Ending Is What Counts.*" Taken in that context all the adoration accorded to the cause of ancient Iran in the Shah-nama cannot make up for the disastrous defeat that was brought upon it.

For, compared to other nations that were to be conquered by the Arab forces, nowhere was the eventual defeat as total as was in the case of Zarthusti Iran. Spain for seven centuries came to be ruled by victorious Arabs who tried to impose their religion, culture, and language. But at the end of the day when the Arabs were driven out, Spain emerged a unified nation, with little conversion, religiously or culturally to speak of. The majesty that was once Egypt took the brunt of Arab invasion, and down to this day millions of Copts are to be found inside and outside Egypt. In the near Eastern nations of Mesopotamia, Syria, and Palestine, where the weight of Arab invasion was felt, to this day hundreds of thousands of Nestorians can be found. India that received the second wave of Arab invasion never lost its Hindu cultural underpinning. But in Iran, the Zarthustis found themselves in the precarious position of a beaten and dwindling minority.

Although various factors contributed to the demise of the Zarthustis in Iran, one underlying cause that cannot be ignored was the inability of the Zarthustis to come together as a group to form the mental camaraderie and bond that other groups struggling for survival, have been able to form.

This problem plagues our scattered communities everywhere, to this date. We still find it difficult to make compromises in the interest of the togetherness of our community. Unfortunately, it is the same story everywhere, and one can only hope that we would learn our lesson before the "Ending That Counts" really dawns on us.

[From the Newsletter of the AT&T Bell Labs Zarthusti Club]

### Sudrehs Made to Order

Coomi Pesi Cooper will sew sudrehs to order for males, females and children. Contact Coomi at (609) 427-4481.

## AT THE YOUTH CONGRESS: ONCE UPON A TIME ...

By Zenobia Mehta  
Palos Hills, Illinois

What is there to do after all the day's events have ended and you still want more? Well, at this year's Youth Congress in Chicago, the youth were treated to yet one more session at the end of the day, open to anyone who was still awake. It was a bedtime story hour.

Readings from the Shah-nama provided a time to rest and to recollect stories that had been told to them as children. Some remembered their grandparents reading them the stories, and were even able to tell them once again.

As the organizer of this particular session, I never thought it would be as popular as it was. We wanted the Congress to be memorable and fun, and include sessions that went well into the night. For, though we all know that our youth are an intelligent bunch, many will not hesitate to stay up all night 'partying' at these Congresses. Planning these 'bedtime stories' was more for fun and enjoyment, but it also served our goal of education. More people went away with a notion to actually read the stories and learn them, as their grandparents had, *once upon a time*.

## INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION OF SHAH-NAMA

According to the *Newsletter of the AT&T Bell Labs Zarthusti Club*, June 1993, the Shah-nama has been translated into 23 languages including Chinese, Hebrew and Russian. In 1800, Orientalist Julius Mohl was commissioned by the French Government to translate the Shah-nama in its entirety into French. Mohl set out to do the monumental job, and planned it in seven volumes. To translate the first volume took him 12 years. Translation of all seven took a total of 52 years, and he died before completing the last one. The Shah-nama has inspired countless persons who have read it in Farsi as well as translations in other languages. In fact Shah-nama reading is an elaborate event in Japan. Some assorted books and materials on Shah-nama are profiled in these pages.

*EPIC OF KINGS* by Ferdowsi, paperback, Viking Penguin, New York, NY, ISBN 0-14-019231-X, 1990, \$14.95.

*DASTAN-I RUSTAM VA SUHRAB* by Mujtaba Minuvi, in Persian, Cultural Studies and Research Institute, Tehran, PK 6455.R87, 415p, 1990, \$25.



## شاهنامه The Shahnameh

Edited By  
Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh

The most accurate Persian edition yet published of Ferdowsi's great epic of Iranian history. Based on a collection of all the earliest manuscripts known of the work and including a comprehensive critical apparatus, this edition brings us closer than ever before to the Shahnameh as Ferdowsi wrote it in Tus and Ghazneh a thousand years ago.

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*EPIC AND SEDITION: THE CASE OF FERDOWSI'S SHAHNAMEH*, by Dick Davis, hardcover, University of Arkansas Press, Fayetteville, AR, ISBN 1-55728-251-X, 1992, \$30.

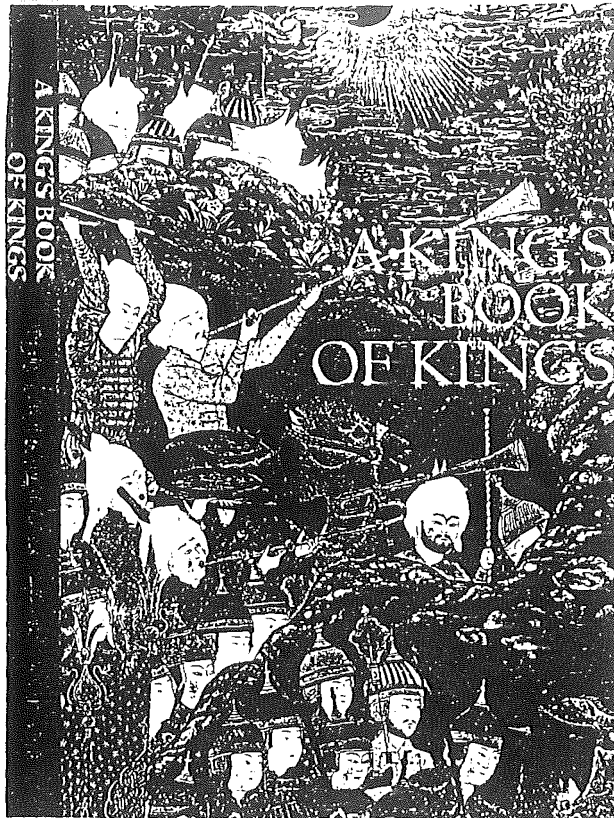
*MUSARIF-I-NUSKHAHAVI SHAHNAMEH*, by Zhila Nasiri, in Persian, PK 6455.A2, 1990

*ZINDAGI SHAYKH FAR-ID AL DIN ATTAR*, by Mustafa Badkubahi Hazavahi, in Persian, PK 6451.F4 Z63, 1991.

*THE GLORY OF SHAHNAMEH, SHUKUH-I SHAHNAMEH DAR AYINAHYI TARBİYAT VA*, by Parviz Alburz, in Persian, PK 6455.A43, 1991.

A description of the morality of the heroes, and their training. Includes an index of exemplary characteristics of the era of the heroes.

*FERDOWSI, A CRITICAL BIOGRAPHY*, by A. Shapur Shahbazi, Harvard University School for Middle Eastern Studies, distributed by Mazda Publishers, Costa Mesa, California, 1991.



*A KING'S BOOK OF KINGS, THE SHAH-NAMEH OF SHAH TAHMASP*, by Stuart Cary Welch, hardcover, 200p., 250 full-color plates, ISBN 0-87099-028-4, 1972.

This magnificent volume on the celebrated "Houghton Shah-nameh", by Stuart Welch, Curator at Harvard University's Fogg Art Museum, was published by the Museum of Metropolitan Art in New York, to commemorate the 2,500th anniversary of Cyrus the Great. This particular manuscript of the Shah-name (so-called after its owner, Arthur A. Houghton) was commissioned in 1522 by Shah Ismail, founder of the Safavid Dynasty, as a present for his son, Prince Tahmasp. A limited facsimile edition of this manuscript is available: *[THE HOUGHTON SHAH-NAMEH: A LIMITED FACSIMILE EDITION Edited by Martin B. Dickson, Hardcover, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, ISBN 0-674-40853-3, 1981, \$2,500]*.

Several manuscripts of the Shah-name, commissioned by kings, have survived, but none is grander in scale or contents. It is recognized as, perhaps, the most impressive extant monument of sixteenth century Iranian culture. Court artisans worked on the 759 folios (most other manuscripts boast hardly a dozen) for almost two decades. Pigments were chosen for brilliance, purity and permanence. Since many of these were composed of costly materials, such as ground lapis lazuli, malachite, vermillion, and gold, they were applied with great precision with paintbrushes made by the artist himself from hairs of kittens or tails of grey squirrels, mounted in quills.

The extraordinary quality of the paintings was recognized even then, for a commentator wrote: "The boldest painters hung their heads in shame before them".

The manuscript's peregrinations from the time of the only date in the manuscript (934 A.H. or about 1540) until 1800 are unknown. In 1800 it was in the Royal Ottoman Library in Istanbul. In 1903, the manuscript appeared in Paris, when it was one of the major items in an exhibition of Islamic art. The lender was Baron Edmond de Rothschild. For a half century, although the manuscript was in Europe or America, it was not shown in any major exhibits. Since its acquisition by Arthur Houghton in 1959, this jewel of Iranian art has been made known to a wider public. Several of the original miniatures have been presented to the Metropolitan Museum in 1970.

This book, copiously illustrated with glossy, full-color plates, captures much of the splendor of the original manuscript. Says author Welch: "When I began this study, it was to learn about art; in the end I learned about life."

*Shah Tahmasp, the patron of this copy of the Shah-name*





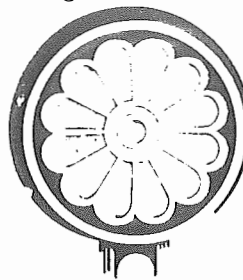
**THE SHAHNAMEH OF FIRDAOSI IN ENGLISH PROSE**, Volumes I - VII, by Dr. Bahman Sohrab Surti, softcover, with illustrations, 1987, Rs.500 for the set. Available from Marzban Giara, Dhunmai Building, 667 Lady Jehangir Road, Dadar, Bombay 400014.

In this monumental seven volume set, Dr. Surti takes the reader on a voyage of discovery, unraveling the glory of the great Iranian civilization. A complete, detailed and faithful translation, Surti's work is more absorbing and interesting than any novel, more instructive and inspiring than any scripture. It took Dr. Surti over 20 years to bring this work to fruition. After translating each sentence in rough in his own hand-writing, taking the utmost care to preserve the idiom and meaning, he typed the final copy himself. He is perhaps the only person who has both hand-written and then typed the translation of the entire epic from cover to cover.

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**THE EPIC OF THE KINGS, PERSIAN HERITAGE SERIES**, translated by Reuben Levy, hardcover, 423p, ISBN 0 7100 1367 1, 1967. Published by Routledge and Kegan Paul, 9 Park Street, Boston, MA 02108.



#### The Epic of the Kings

Professor Levy, a distinguished scholar in Persian studies, has made a valuable prose translation of Firdowsi's epic, selecting the most representative parts of the original, including the stories of Rostum, the giant hero, and his son Sohrab. In this translation, meant for the general reader, the translator has stressed the narrative and literary value of the epic. The Western reader will discern clear equivalents of chapters in Genesis, the *Odyssey*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and even Shakespeare.

Page from a translation of the *Shah-nama* into Japanese, published in *Ayandeh Journal*, Tehran, Winter 1990.



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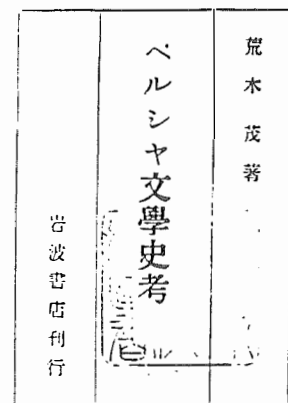
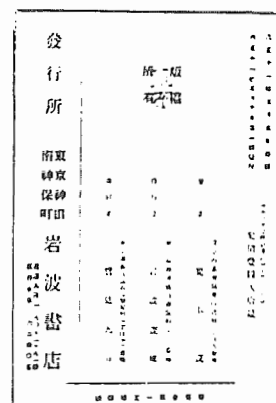
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FARIDUN VA SIH PISARASH, by Abdullah Vaziri, in Persian, PK 6435.A2 Y29, 1990.

FERDOWSI AND IRAN'S SURVIVAL, by M. J. Jafari-Langroudi, 221p, in Persian, 1990, \$9.75.

BAZKHAVANI-I SHAHNAMEH, by Mahdi Qarib, in Persian, PK 6458.Q27, 1991.

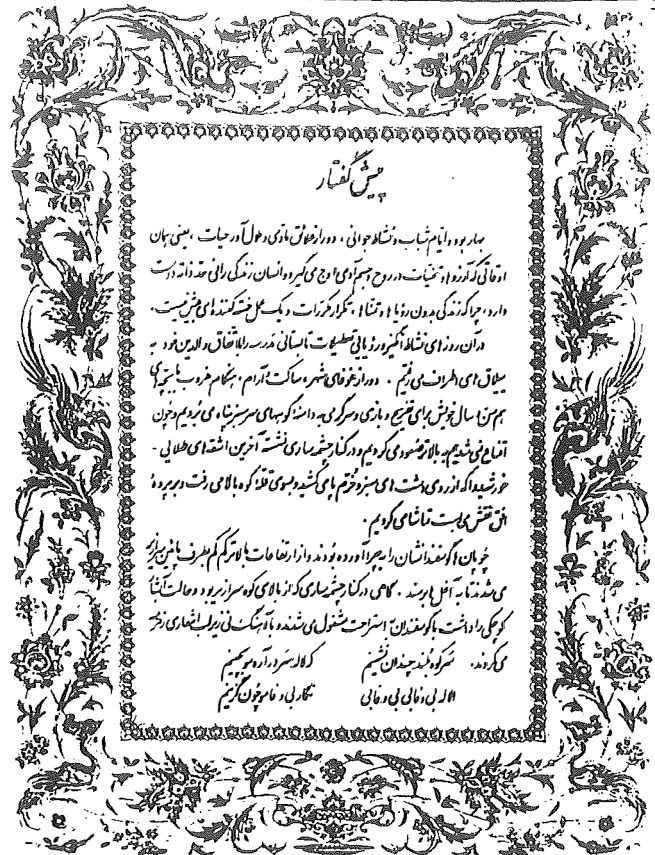
ESSAYS ON FERDOWSI AND SHAHNAMEH, by Mohite Tabatabaee, in Persian, 392 p., 1990. Collection of articles, previously published in different Iranian serials.

TALES OF ANCIENT PERSIA — RETOLD FROM THE SHAH-NAMA OF FIRDAUSI, by Barbara Leonie Picard and Victor G. Ambrus, Oxford University Press, 173p, 1993.

Paperback, in simple English suitable for children, youth and adults, with illustrations.



OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS



DIVANI SHIFRI BABA TAHIR URVAN HAMADANI, by Tahir Baba, 11th century, In Persian, 1984, available from Ketab Corporation, Encino, California, Tel: (818) 99-KETAB.

FIRDAUSI FOR CLARINET, HARP AND PERCUSSION, OP.252, by Alan Hovhaness, Sound Recording, No.75-750885, Grenadilla Records, Box 279, New York, NY, 1976.

## HOVHANESS

### Firdausi for Clarinet, Harp & Percussion, Op.252

Alan Hovhaness, of Armenian ancestry, one of America's most prolific composers, studied the art of ancient Armenian music and traveled the world over for research in Oriental music. In *FIRDAUSI*, composed in 1972, the composer presents the poet as a magical singer of mythical historical creation. The short movements suggest verses and parables, festivals, processions of heroes and animals, mysterious and strange combats and demons. Flying dragons follow each other in this musical pageant. The composer tries to present the poet of love, in music, not the poet of battles.

## THE ORIGIN OF CHESS, AS GIVEN BY FIRDOWSI

As narrated by Firdowsi in the Shah-nama, the game of chess, called by him 'shatranj', originated in India, and was introduced to Iran during the reign of King Naushirwan-e-Adil of the Sassanian Dynasty (531 - 579 AD). Firdowsi says that one day a messenger from the King of Hindustan arrived at the Iranian court of King Naushirwan with a rich tribute of precious jewels and valuables from India, among them a shatranj board with the 'mohras' (game pieces). Firdowsi describes two sets of pieces, one of ivory and the other of teak; the pieces included a king, vazir, pawn, camel, horse and elephant. The Indian king had stipulated that the wise Iranian courtiers should try to determine the correct moves and principles of the new game, adding that if no one in Iran could master the game, the Indian monarch would cease paying the tribute.

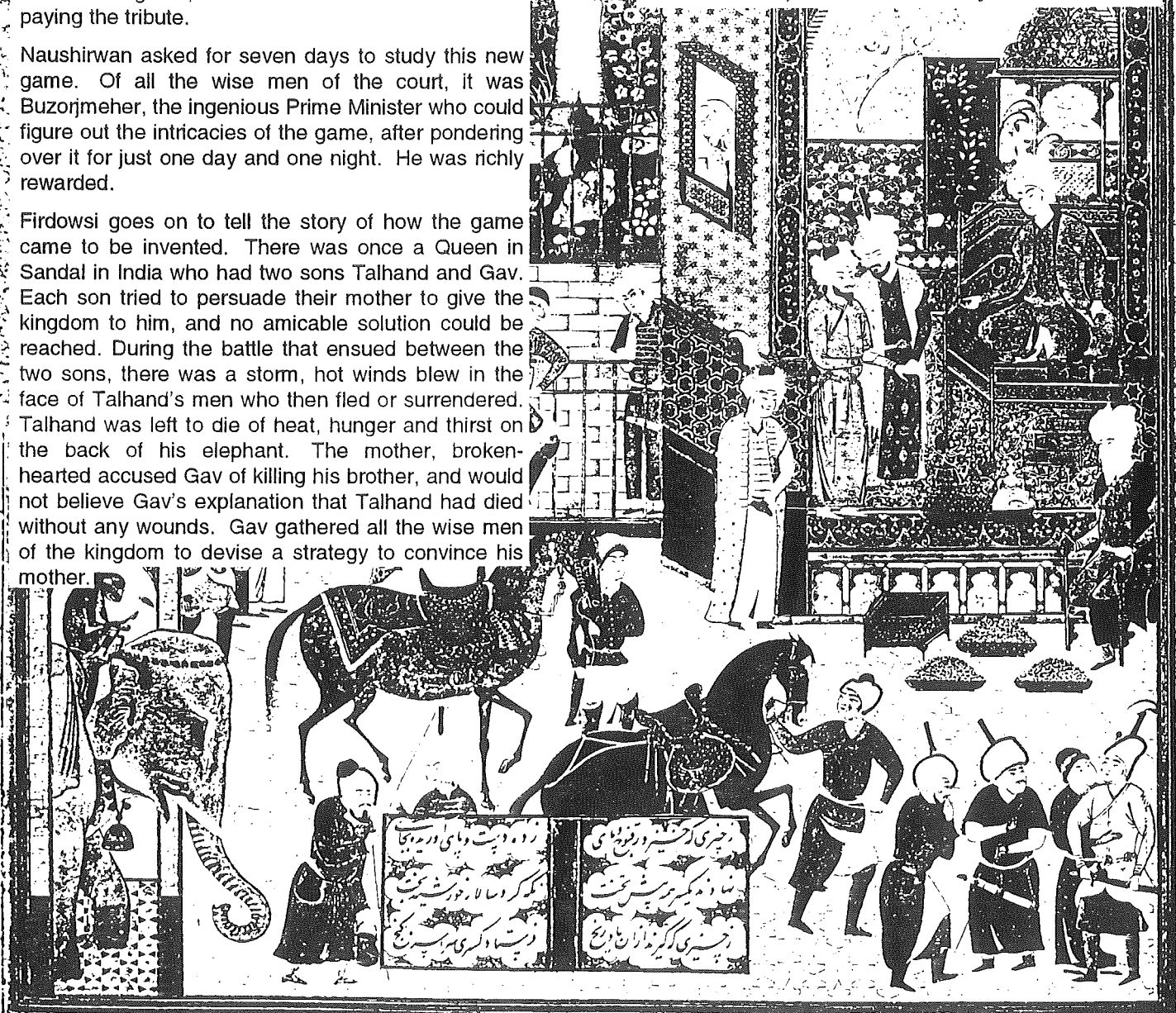
Naushirwan asked for seven days to study this new game. Of all the wise men of the court, it was Buzorjmeher, the ingenious Prime Minister who could figure out the intricacies of the game, after pondering over it for just one day and one night. He was richly rewarded.

Firdowsi goes on to tell the story of how the game came to be invented. There was once a Queen in Sandal in India who had two sons Talhand and Gav. Each son tried to persuade their mother to give the kingdom to him, and no amicable solution could be reached. During the battle that ensued between the two sons, there was a storm, hot winds blew in the face of Talhand's men who then fled or surrendered. Talhand was left to die of heat, hunger and thirst on the back of his elephant. The mother, broken-hearted accused Gav of killing his brother, and would not believe Gav's explanation that Talhand had died without any wounds. Gav gathered all the wise men of the kingdom to devise a strategy to convince his mother.

The wise men devised a board with a hundred squares and two sets of armies with kings, vazirs, elephants, horses, camels and infantry. With appropriate moves they enacted a mock battle on the board. They showed how the king of one army could be 'checked', and how he could be 'check-mated', or defeated without actually being wounded, when his army was not in a position to come to his aid. That was the game of shatranj — chess.

From Iran the game went to Arabia and Asia Minor, and thence it was introduced to Europe and later America. The English word 'chess' is another form of 'Shah' or 'Sheh', the principal piece in the game. The word 'check' is also derived from 'sheh'. The word 'check-mate' is derived from 'shah-mahat' meaning 'defeat of the king'.

[From "The Origin of Chess, as Given by Firdausi" by Khurshed Navroji Pavri, Parsiana, May 1966.]



## COVER STORY

# Shah-nama

## The Masterpiece of Firdowsi

by

Professor F. Reza  
Ottawa, Ontario

### A Literary Classic

The Shah-nama (Epic of the Kings), written by Firdowsi during the latter part of the tenth century A.D. is considered to be the greatest epic in Persian literature, and one of the greatest classics of world literature. The Shah-nama relates, in rhymed verse, the mythological and historical account of the ancient kings and heroes of Persia from legendary times until the beginning of the Islamic era. In the words of the late Reuben Levy, Professor of Persian at Cambridge University [*An Introduction to Persian Literature, Columbia University Press, New York and London, 1969*]:

"Shah-nama is indeed an epic of the people such as no other nation has ever produced, with its materials going back to the beginning of time... Firdowsi therefore did not invent the legends he set down, but transmitted in verse form a general picture of the past glories of Iran, which from its appearance upon the stage of history played an important part in civilizing the world. The whole story is presented in gigantic outlines surpassing Wagner's Valhalla and the events and characters described suffer no terrestrial limits as they range widely over earth and sky. In general the heroes live and wage war for hundreds of years, kings from the height of their thrones dictate their commands to the whole world and proclaim themselves the direct instruments of God's will. There is a theatrical and fairy-tale atmosphere about it all; every scene and every character is bathed in the sharp brilliance of a Persian summer sunrise."

The original version of pre-Islamic Pahlavi stories is the nucleus of the epic tale of Shah-nama. But Firdowsi has enriched it with countless poetic, political and moral messages. The authentic simplicity of Shah-nama makes it intelligible to any ordinary Iranian. Thus I dare to say that the vast and firm

foundation of Shah-nama's epic has greatly contributed to the preservation of the Persian language throughout these last ten centuries.

The superhuman legendary, as well as the material aspects of Shah-nama, have been widely treated, for centuries, in thousands of books and articles. Thus, Shah-nama ranks among the great epics of all nations. Aside from this national aspect, however, Shah-nama has been one of the great literary sources for writers of all nations having dealt with the fundamental questions of hope and despair, love and hate, doubt and faith, life and death. The fables and historical accounts of Shah-nama are studded with gems of wisdom, sageness, great aspirations for men, and with a reflection on the continuous struggle involved in reaching humanity's highest summits. It has been said [*Joseph Santa-Croce, "The Epic of the Kings", Unesco Courier, October 1971*]:

"Shah-nama is not only an Iranian Iliad and Odyssey and the setting for the knightly romances of the first empire to be built on a truly world-wide scale; it also contains a treasury of wisdom and moral guidance as well as a store of political precepts."

### Searching for the Ultimate Essence of Life and Beyond

Shah-nama contains some of the main themes of the pre-Islamic and pre-Sufi modes of searching for the ultimate essence of life and the beyond. Our great poet also depicts natural beauties such as sunrise and sunset as vividly as the most modern camera lens can.

In a book published in 1970, in Tehran, this writer has emphasized the human side of the masterpiece of Firdowsi. Dialogues between father and son, mother and daughter, husband and wife, warriors, kings and their subjects, well illustrate that kind of genuine universal communication which is capable of defying time and national boundaries.

In the aforementioned book, I have put emphasis on the timeless thoughts of Firdowsi, setting aside the



Firdowsi, photo from M. Sharvini

historical and national aspects of the epic of the kings which were inherited from Pahlavi sources. However, the splendor and grandeur of Shah-nama stem from Firdowsi's genius rather than from the historical sources from which the stories were compiled. I wrote on Shah-nama after a lifetime of scientific endeavor in the universities of the U.S.A. and Europe. And, while writing, I felt a sense of great admiration and utmost humility. I stood in the shadow of a man who lived one thousand years ago in a village of Khorassan. Though he lacked all modern facilities, institutions and libraries of our time, he was still able to create a masterpiece whose magnitude has not been diminished by the passing of time. Today, despite the cultural abundance and academic excellence of our time, it still seems practically improbable that anyone could create a human work of such magnitude. My compatriot, who produced this timeless work of art in a corner of a village of Khorassan ten centuries ago, complains in one of his poems that the winter has been harsh and that he lacked bread, and even food for his fire.

In the story of the great warrior hero Sam, whose wife gives birth to an albino son, we learn that Sam, finding his worldly ambitions frustrated and in fear of becoming an object of ridicule, resolves to abandon the child in the Alborz mountains. Symorgh, the fabulous mythological bird, adopts the boy and raises him to become a wise and powerful hero. The poet's feelings, with regard to this parent-child relationship, can be detected in the following observation on animals, which he so passionately injected into the whole fabric of the legend:

"When the cub had taken its fill of her milk, the lioness said: 'Even if I have given you the blood of my heart, I would not have expected gratitude from you. For you are my very life and soul, and if you are severed from me, so will be my life.'"

### *The Episode of Rustam and Sohrab*

In many circumstances, Firdowsi makes similar humane remarks concerning man's inhuman behavior. An episode of Shah-nama which attracted the attention of Mathew Arnold, the nineteenth-century English poet, tells the story of the fight between Rustam, the great hero of Shah-nama, and his son, whose identity is unknown to him. Mathew Arnold's poem on the subject is rather well-known in English literature.

Sohrab, the giant son of Rustam, has been groomed by the enemies of Iran to combat the supremacy of Iran and of Rustam. Sohrab, while fighting for his mother-land, never ceases, in his heart, to desire an encounter with his world-renowned father. He assumes that if he first vanquishes all the enemy warriors, there will then be no one else left to confront him; thus, he may be able to discover his father. But fate is a complicated labyrinth. The warriors of both camps keep Sohrab in the dark about the identity of his father. The Iranians do not wish to reveal the presence of Rustam for fear that his death, if it should occur, would make the enemy certain of an ultimate victory. And the leaders of Sohrab's army fear that if the father is recognized by the son, the latter would defect and join the Iranian forces.

When the old hero faces the young hero, Sohrab becomes aware, in his heart, of a filial sentiment. But the old warrior, blinded by his worldly fame, fails to recognize that the young man, whom he is about to kill, is his own son. Part of the moving dialogue between Rustam and Sohrab in the combat scene is conveyed in Mathew Arnold's admirable translation:

So Rustam knew not his own loss. But stood  
Over his dying son, and knew him not.  
And with a cold, incredulous voice, he said:  
"What prate is this of fathers and revenge?  
The mighty Rustam never had a son."  
And, with a failing voice, Sohrab replied:  
"Ah Yes, he had! And that lost son am I.  
Surely the news will one day reach his ear.  
Reach Rustam where he sits and tarries long,  
Somewhere, I know not where, but far from here;  
And pierce him like a stab, and make him leap  
To arms, and cry for vengeance upon thee.  
Fierce man, bethink thee, for an only son!  
What will that grief, what will that vengeance be?  
Oh, could I live, till I that grief had seen!  
Yet him I pity not so much, but her,  
My mother, who in Ader-baijan dwells  
With that old king, her father, who grows grey  
With age, and rules over the valiant Koords.  
Her most I pity, who no more will see  
Sohrab returning from the Tartar camp."  
And Rustam gazed on him with grief, and said:  
"Oh Sohrab, thou indeed art such a son."

[Professor Reza is an International Consultant with Scientific Research in System and Communication Technology, Ontario, Canada.]

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# Youthfully Speakin'G

*Generating Dialogue, Communication and Networking among Zarthusti Youth in North America*

*Youth Congress Report . . .*

## SNAZY Congress Lives Up to its Name Small Groups and Focus on Education Set Strong Precedent

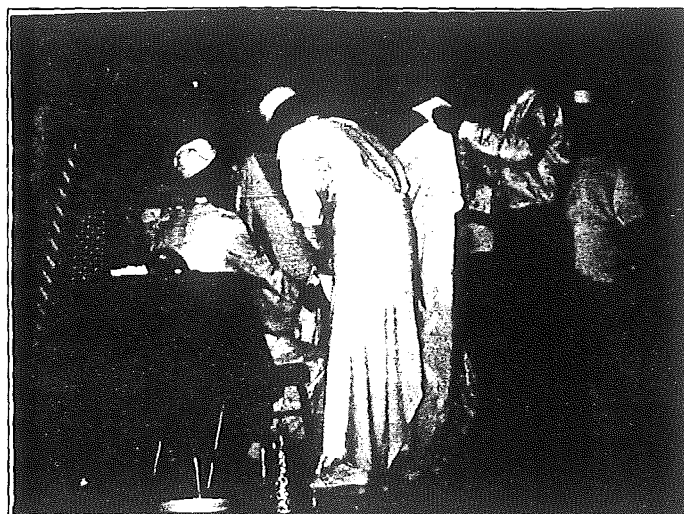
by Jim A. Engineer  
Youth Editor

Congresses have come a long way since the first in Los Angeles seven years ago. As a youth community in North America we seem to have come to a crossroads. Congresses have matured in their programming, leadership and structure, compared to the first few gatherings in which much of the mystique consisted of talking about how each youth felt about conversion. The Sixth North American Zoroastrian Youth (SNAZY) Congress was fresh, educational, visual, and above all, structured.

If anything made this congress stand apart from the others, it was the focus on education, coupled with interactive small group discussions of about 12 to 15 youth. Each small group discussion was led by a group leader, who in weeks prior to the congress, had learned and discussed the basics of the Zarthusti religion. Small group discussions enabled more youth to get involved, creating an environment in which the intimidation factor of speaking in front of a large crowd was reduced, providing the opportunity for more youth to freely question and debate on a personal level.

In many ways, we can equate Chicago's attempt at bringing Zarthusti education to a higher level, with the Clinton administration's stance on health care: education in Zoroastrianism and health care in the United States have both been mulled over in forums for years but never really brought to light until now.

When it comes to education and its role in formulating our own opinions we become nervous! We worry about the messages we hear, what to believe, whom to believe, and how the educator's influence may affect



Zarthusti youth from Detroit simulate a mock Zarthusti wedding at the Sixth North American Zoroastrian Youth Congress.

our own opinions or beliefs. Chicago approached the matter maturely, presenting the basics of Zarthusti rituals and teachings in an objective and balanced manner. The very fact that a congress dared to teach is worthy of credit, and establishes a strong precedent for congresses of the future.

SNAZY was also visual, capturing the essence of authentic Zarthusti rituals in presentations by youth communities from across the country. Jashans, weddings, the symbolism of fire, and many more presentations lit up the stage at the Schaumburg Marriott, located about 30 miles northwest of Chicago.

Although discussions at the congress were quite spirited and lively, they could have been administered by the moderators on a more consistent level. Some discussions focused on just one question and lasted 45 minutes, consuming valuable time and preventing other issues from being explored. Future congresses should

see 'SNAZY' . . .



# Youthfully Speakin' G

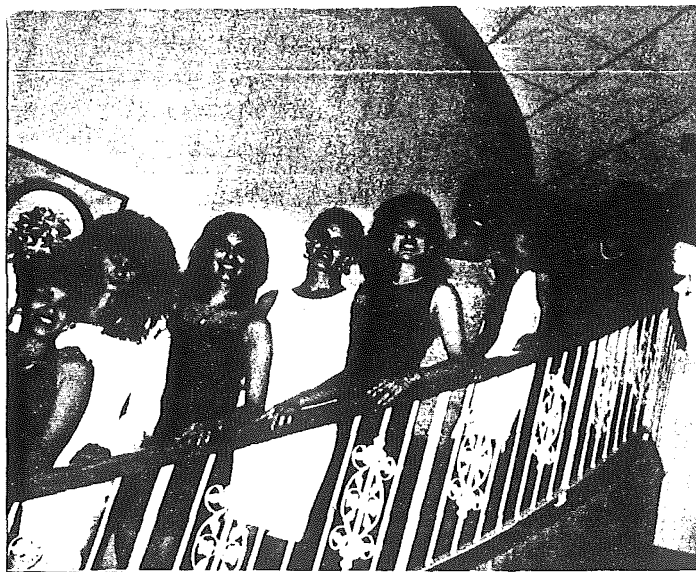
*Generating Dialogue, Communication and Networking among Zarthusti Youth in North America*

## 'SNAZY' continued . . .

learn from this and apply the rules of question/answer from the very beginning, and then adhere to the administration of those rules consistently.

An additional downside note lay in the congress's overall lack of enthusiasm in building an awareness for a national youth network that was started in Philadelphia a month earlier. The need for national communication, relationship building, and networking among Zarthusti youth in North America is imperative and should be encouraged.

Socially, the congress featured two nights of entertainment. The first being an eloquent banquet with dinner and dance, providing adults with a chance to mingle, and the youth with a chance to let loose at a creatively elegant banquet hall in a suburb of Chicago. The following night, youth visited the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago's Arbab Rustom Guiv Darbe Mehr to watch a Jashan ceremony take place. After dinner, a dance with a live DJ gave the participants a chance to mosh, jam, boogie, twist and shout the night away. But the education continued for those who were still hungry for it, featuring regular late night readings of the Shah-nama.



Several Zarthusti women pose for a picture at the Sixth North American Zoroastrian Youth Congress in Chicago.

*Editor's note: The following was a speech presented at the Sixth North American Zoroastrian Youth Congress in Chicago.*

## The Flame of Identity

by Shahnaz M. Bhujwalla

As a child, I can remember sitting before the holy divo (oil lamp), its golden flame rising and lowering rhythmically, with the soft voices of my mother and father, who whisper and chant their prayers to Ahura Mazda. The incense of sandalwood lingered over us, caressing us with warmth and hospitality. With all of my being, I would begin to pray my Ashem Vohu and Yatha Ahu Vairyō over and over, in the hope that God was listening to me. I can still feel the security of my family and this incredible sense of belonging, as vividly as I feel the plushness of the Persian carpet I would kneel upon. It was in these cherished moments, that my Zoroastrian identity would begin to form.

But what happened to this newly-formed and fragile identity when I was outside the sanctity of my home? At times it seemed to vanish completely, leaving me helplessly insecure in my differences. As a first generation American who practices a nearly unknown religion and culture in the western world, identity has become very important for me. When people ask me about my heritage, I want them to come away with a true, if basic understanding of myself and my religion. It took a few more years of understanding to realize, that being a true Zoroastrian had nothing to do with my childish explanations of eating Dhansaak for Sunday dinner, and it wasn't enough to merely explain about having to wear a sudreh and kusti close to your body, although these were certainly important aspects of it.

After much evaluation, I found the answers to my many questions, that basically, Zoroastrianism is a way of life that advocates free choice and promotes making wise and good decisions in accordance with the ethics of our religion.

*see 'Flame' . . .*

# Youthfully Speakin' G

*Generating Dialogue, Communication and Networking among Zarthusti Youth in North America*

—Special Feature—

## A Ritual Performer or a Priest?

by Mazda K. Antia

As I reach the end of my undergraduate years, I spend more time thinking about my future. Recently, my time has been spent thinking about the future of the Zarthusti priest. I am a priest and have been one for the last eight years. I have performed various ceremonies across the continent and truly love being a priest, especially for the joy I see in people's faces after a ceremony has been performed. Lately, however, I have come to question the structure of the priesthood. I say the Zarthusti priest process and not the Irani or Parsee process because I consider myself a North American Zarthusti, and this is a problem that we face in North America. We must realize it is not just an Irani or Parsee problem!

A comment made by my senior year biology teacher comes to mind when I think about the Zarthusti priesthood. She sniped at me one day in class and stated, "What kind of religion makes little boys priests?" At the time I shrugged off the comment as just another ignorant person not taking the time to learn about something before she speaks. Lately though, my thoughts have been returning to her comments. I have two problems with the priesthood: one pertaining to age restrictions and the other to restrictions on who can become a priest.

Boys 11-15 years of age, go from North America to India and go through the Navar ceremony, a 27-day process in which the boy lives in the fire temple. By making boys between the ages of 11-15 priests, we are more interested in them becoming performers of rituals than priests. The main justification for this point is that there is not enough thinking about spirituality in a person between the ages of 11-15.

The western concept of a priest includes, not only the performing of sacred religious rites, but also being able to spiritually and attitudinally lead others. Subjecting boys to the process of traveling back to India, memorizing prayers that they most probably do not understand, and then coming back here and performing rituals all seem to be a paradox to me. When a priest is performing a ceremony such as Navjote or Jashan, we should expect him to know the meaning of the ceremony and why he is performing it.

This past summer I was fortunate enough to attend the congresses in Chicago and Philadelphia and met many different North American priests. Most agreed that they were at a loss for the meaning of the ceremonies they performed and to becoming a priest in general. I can personally say that I did want to become a priest, rather I think my parents did not want me to become one due to the tribulations my father was going through for performing the Peterson navjote at that time. I can also say I am fortunate enough to have my father as a great resource for information on ceremonial meaning

see 'Priesthood' . . .

*Youthfully Speaking* is the official youth section of the FEZANA Journal. Letters to the editor should be limited to one typed page, and articles to two typed pages, due to high volume and limited space. Any questions, comments or feedback? Call or write to:

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# Youthfully Speakin' G

*Generating Dialogue, Communication and Networking among Zarthusti Youth in North America*

## *'Priesthood' continued . . .*

The Iranian Council of Mobeds is on the right track. They have developed a program in which those who want to become Mobedyars can do so. This is a significant step in the process of developing a new system of priesthood. My one gripe with both Mobed associations is that they do not have one basic council (leaving out the words Parsee or Irani), for all North America - a council that is united in its goals and beliefs. Yes, we may have our differences, but we are in North America together, and should work and develop our future together. We need collaboration, in which we not only listen to one another, but learn from one another. Communication and collaboration hold the key to the future. We must push it and achieve it.

Our religion is one based on using our free will and then making the right choice. I believe at this stage in North America, now is the right time to start exercising those choices. Choices that will help us unite and survive as true North American Zarthustis in the next century!

*Ervad Mazda K. Antia is a twenty-year-old senior majoring in health care administration at the University of Illinois.*

## *'Flame' continued . . .*

First generation North Americans are pioneers in creating a Zoroastrian identity in this New World. Our actions and deeds may very well pave the road that future Zoroastrians will tread upon. It's all very nice and historic to talk about the great past accomplishments of the Parsees and Persians, but what are we North Americans doing to continue the legacy of charity and goodwill toward mankind and animals alike. If we individually and communally are true Zoroastrians and make choices to act in accordance with the values of our religion, then we will begin to create a Zoroastrian identity in North America, almost effortlessly.

Also, educating ourselves, so that we in turn can educate others correctly about our heritage, will work to create an identity among our peers and more importantly, ourselves. Attending these congresses are an ideal way to pick up more knowledge about your religion and find other who may have shared a similar past as yourself. There is an identity to be found here, a security in knowing that each of us is not alone in our worldly experiences.

Another way of educating ourselves is by reading our religious texts, and gaining an understanding of what our religion means in our lives. Unfortunately, there are too many clashing opinions and biases in the many books written, so the best and most Zoroastrian way to learn about your religion is to study it and come to your own individual conclusions.

Within my soul, my Zoroastrian identity burns as brightly as that ever-present divo of my childhood memory. With this knowledge of who I am and what I stand for in our world, I at last feel secure and confident, anywhere I go. As for our North American Zoroastrian identity, it remains unwritten in the history of the world - and, it is up to us to make a contribution for our posterity. Each of us must individually strive to understand the legacy left to us by our predecessors and constantly apply it to our interactions with the world. Through these interactions, an identity will surely form, so that one day, Zoroastrians will have no need to explain themselves to the world.

peace

It shouldn't feel so far away.

# Youthfully Speakin' G

*Generating Dialogue, Communication and Networking among Zarthusti Youth in North America*

## *'Priesthood' continued . . .*

and the beautiful philosophy of Zoroastrianism. I have also had various resources available to me in Chicago, and I make no claim to knowing everything.

The point is, however that we are more concerned in making young boys priests (ritualists) so they can perform our ceremonies rather than making them priests in the Western sense of the word. I have no problem with the fact that this is how it has been done in India or Iran for generations. They have developed their own system and had it entrenched for many years. Perhaps it works well within their cultural environment, though Iranians seem to have made significant changes lately in the way they prepare youngsters for the Navar ceremony.

The North American Zarthusti community, however, needs to develop its own system that will suit its particular cultural and religious needs. If we realize that our ancient method of turning out priests will not meet the needs of the future North American generation, then we must have the foresight to change it before it is too late. I do believe that time will demand an immediate change, because we are a new generation lacking proper religious education, and are running out of people knowledgeable about our religion.

Our current system also allows only boys (in their teenage years) of a priestly family to become priests. I think it would be a travesty to uphold this system here in North America if we want to have a steady supply of knowledgeable priests. We should allow adolescents the chance to become priests at a later age, if at that time they are more willing and committed to becoming priests on their own, and are knowledgeable about the religion. Although the process of becoming a priest through familial ties has been the norm in India and Iran for generations, we are in a new environment, and in a short time frame in which we must adapt to our new environment.

We must adapt as the Zarthustis who migrated to India, and like the Iranians who adapted after the rise of Islam. Those within the claim of priestly heritage should not be denied their right to become a priest, ritualist or otherwise; but those with the calling to become educated priests should not be denied that right either. Rather, we should encourage such priests, because without them there will be fewer capable and learned priests to serve our future generations.

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*"If we realize that our ancient method of turning out priests will not meet the needs of the future North American generation, then we must have the foresight to change it before it is too late."*

**-- Mazda K. Antia**

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There is no authentic reference in our Avestan scriptures to uphold the claim of hereditary inheritance of the priesthood. Nor is there mention in the Gathas or Avestan scriptures which outright bars women from performing priestly duties (Bagli: FEZANA Journal Fall '93). Rather, the only word mentioned directly toward the priesthood is Ratu: a righteous leader who guides to peace, prosperity, happiness, bliss and ultimately to immortality (Harvesf: FEZANA Journal Winter '93). Why then, must we bar those that are the most deserving of becoming a priest? They would be our best teachers and would help nurture our religion into the 21st Century.

see 'Priesthood' . . .



# Youthfully Speakin'G

*Generating Dialogue, Communication and Networking among Zarthusti Youth in North America*

## The Flipside Of Conversion

by Jim A. Engineer  
Youth Editor

"I knew nothing about my religion and rarely associated with my community. I was about 19-years-old at the time and just couldn't understand the prayers," says Joe Zarthusti, who agreed to talk to *FEZANA Journal* anonymously. His story is personal, but the subject matter affects us as a North American youth community. Joe Zarthusti went on to read the Bible, the Koran, visit Christian churches, talk to clergy of many faiths and even read the Bundeshish and Vendidad. He was looking for answers, and admitted that he couldn't find them all through Zarathushtra. He went to high school and college in the United States, and like many of us, was exposed to other religions. He began questioning, seeking to know more about God, creation and his own spiritual identity.

Joe Zarthusti is relevant to this article because we have all been Joe Zarthustis at one point in our lives. All of us have questioned our spiritual identity. Some of us choose to talk to our Mobeds and Dasturs. Joe Zarthusti took his conviction a step further and explored many religions, including Zoroastrianism, for answers. Whether or not Joe Zarthusti found the answers to all his questions is beyond the scope of this article.

The fact that Joe Zarthusti didn't associate with his community, understand the prayers, and eventually turned to other religions to find the answers should tell us something: How good of a job are we doing in keeping youth interested, informed and educated on Zarthusti principles? Religion is often referred to as a way of life. Unfortunately, our way of life has become divided by cultural (Irani/Parsee) differences, and differences in the conservative and progressive schools of thought. How many times do we attend events in which a small faction of adults battle, fight, quarrel, and play politics? What kind of an example are the adult leaders in our Zarthusti communities setting? Is this a way of life the next generation wants to embrace?

While we discuss the pros and cons of conversion, intermarriage and the acceptance of non-Zarthustis into our religious communities, we seem to be forgetting about the opposite extreme — the conversion of Zarthustis to other religions. Joe Zarthusti says he is still a Zarthusti, but what about those youth who want nothing to do with Zoroastrianism, youth who are fed up with the fighting, fed up with not knowing the meaning behind the prayers they recite and the rituals they practice?

If religious education on the North American continent is to take place, it should start in the communities. Today's youth, more so than adults, are influenced by what they see, hear and listen to, both in and out of the Darbe Mehrs. When youth move on to college or leave home for the first time, they are exposed to a sea of diversity. Is their religious identity strong enough to keep them sure of their belief in the Zarthusti faith? Or are they more vulnerable to search for spiritual harmony and understanding through other religions?

It is time we re-prioritized the issues affecting our community in North America. Our population is miniscule and shrinking. Our attention should be focused on maintaining the interest level and harmony within our communities, providing our youth with strong role models, guidance, and a sense of religious belonging.

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# Youthfully Speaking . . . *EXTRA!*

## ZYNA YOUTH PERCEPTION SURVEY

### *"The Perceptions of Zarthushti Youth in North America"*

Dear Youth: The following survey has been created for you to express your perception of congresses in North America and overseas. To make the most of congresses we must try to better understand the wants and needs of those attending them. Please take a quick timeout to fill in the survey, and return it to the address listed at the end of it. **Please circle only ONE statement that best represents the way you feel.**

1. I feel youth congresses should be held . . .
  - a.) once a year
  - b.) twice a year
  - c.) every other year
  - d.) other
2. I feel the following age should be the minimum age of congress attendees . . .
  - a.) 12 - 13
  - b.) 14 - 15
  - c.) no minimum
  - d.) other
3. I feel the following age should be the maximum age of congress attendees . . .
  - a.) 30
  - b.) 31-33
  - c.) 34-35
  - d.) other
  - e.) no maximum
4. Would you be curious to attend a congress in which the majority of adult and youth activities are separate (along with accommodation), and held in the same city at the same time?
  - a.) Yes
  - b.) No
  - c.) other
5. What types of activities would you like to see more emphasis being placed on at youth congresses?
  - a.) more focus on religious education and ritual
  - b.) more focus on social issues facing the community
  - c.) more social time
  - d.) other \_\_\_\_\_
6. How much is the maximum you (or your parents) are willing to spend on registration costs for the congresses, which include housing, food, entertainment, etc.?
  - a.) Less than \$100
  - b.) \$100 to \$200
  - c.) \$200 to \$300
  - d.) No limit
  - e.) Other

# Youthfully Speaking . . . EXTRA!

7. In addition to attending congresses, would you be interested in attending ski trips, beach outings, camps, cruises, etc.? (please circle the way you feel)
- a.) If there was some type of religious teaching on each activity.
  - b.) If there were no religious instruction or teaching.
  - c.) If there was a combination of religious teaching and social.
  - d.) If I had the money.
  - e.) No. If no, why? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Would you be interested in attending a true WORLD Zarthusti youth congress outside of N. America?
- a.) Yes.
  - b.) Yes, if there were fundraising activities in each community to assist me.
  - c.) No. If no, why? \_\_\_\_\_
9. How do you define youth? Does being a youth depend solely on age / a combination of age and attitude (mindset) / or strictly attitude (mindset). Please explain below or on another sheet.
- \_\_\_\_\_

For ZYNA to establish an initial database of Zarthusti youth we ask that you please print the following information about yourself:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone/fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthday (month/day/year): \_\_\_\_\_

Sex  
(circle)      male      female      other

Confidentiality is ensured by ZYNA. This survey will be tabulated by ZYNA representatives only. No personal information will be published.

Sincerely

Mazda K. Antia  
Co-Chair  
ZYNA  
708/460-6585

Jim A. Engineer  
Co-Chair  
ZYNA  
708/983-7792

PLEASE MAIL THIS SURVEY BY DECEMBER 31, 1994 to:

ZYNA  
c/o FEZANA  
5750 S. Jackson  
Hinsdale, IL 60521

For more information on this survey or ZYNA, please contact Mazda at 217/328-2636 or Jim at 708/983-7792. Thanks for your time.



## The Christmas Star

By

Daryoush Jahanian, M.D.  
Kansas City, Kansas

On Christmas, three Magi from the East, by following a shining star, found the birthplace of Jesus and visited the child with his mother, Mary, and presented gifts. <sup>[1]</sup> It is generally accepted that the country the three Magi came from was Persia. 'Magus' (or 'Mogh', in plural: 'Magi') was originally the priest of the old religion in the west of Persia, whose tenets and customs are reflected in the Vendidad. Thus, the Greek historians quote two forms of religion in ancient Persia. One is ascribed to the Zarthusti tenets and the other to the traditions and customs of the Magi. As the teachings of Zarthustra were intermingled with the old religion, the Magi's position was transformed into the priests of the new religion and later they became associated with astrology.

The plot of Gautama the Magus (Mogh) is well recorded in history. <sup>[2]</sup> Apparently in the atmosphere of religious tolerance and the secular government of Cyrus, the Magi did not maintain the prominent position they desired and that resulted in the conspiracy. After the overthrow of Gautama by Darius, many Magi were slain by the angry people, <sup>[3]</sup> which illustrates that in that part of Persia, they had not established a strong religious base.

The birth of Jesus Christ took place during the Parthian dynasty (250 B.C. - 224 A.D.) of Persia, at which time the Magi were teaching and practicing the new Zarthustranism in its mixed form. The word 'Mobed' or Zarthusti priest, is the shortened 'Magopat' or 'Moghpat'; many Iranian poets quote the old Magi in their poetry. There has been an assumption that the three Magi who visited Christ at birth were responding to the Zarthusti prophecy of the Saoshyant. This theory does not stand, however, because the word 'Saoshyant' in the Gathas means 'benefactor', whereby those who bring benefit to others and promote society, are intended. There are Saoshyants of the past, present and future, but no reference is made to any promised person who shall advent.

The traditional names of the Magi are Melchior, Balthasar and Gaspar. The sixth century Syriac Cave of Treasures declare the names of the Magi as Hormizdah King of Persia, Yazdegerd King of Saba, and Perozadh King of Sheba, <sup>[4]</sup> but all the given names are pure Persian.

Marco Polo, who traveled to Persia in the late thirteenth century, apparently witnessed the tombs of the Magi in the City of Saveh where the inhabitants spoke of the buried three kings who went to worship a newborn prophet. <sup>[5]</sup> So it appears, the Zarthustis were the first to recognize the birth of Jesus Christ, and such a statement is not an exaggeration.

[From "The Zoroastrian Doctrine and Biblical Connections", by Daryoush Jahanian, M.D., to be published]

1. Bible, Mathew 2:1-12
2. Before the military expedition to Egypt, Cambyses ordered his brother Bardiya (Smerdis) to secretly be killed. In his absence, Gautama claimed that he was Bardiya.
3. Herodotus 3-79: The anniversary of this day is known as the Magophonia, during which every member of the tribe (Magi) stays indoors.
4. B. M. Metzger, *Names for the Nameless in the New Testament*, 1970, 1:82.
5. The travels of Marco Polo.

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## PERSONAL PROFILE

## Searching for the "Reel" Thing

*Immigrant Entrepreneur Alayar Dabestani Finds His Pot of Gold in the Theater Business*



### Rags to Riches



"Canada and the U.S. are lands of opportunity", says Alayar (Al) Dabestani, 51, of Maryville, Washington, "If we put our minds to it, with hard work, we can accomplish whatever our goals may be." Owner of 21 theater screens in 10 theaters in the Washington State, Vancouver and Toronto areas, Dabestani has now found his pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. He gives much of the credit for inspiring him, to his father, Ardeshir Dabestani of Yazd.

But, to get where he is now, Dabestani has tread many a rough mile. Born in Sharifabad, Iran, Dabestani arrived in Vancouver on July 3, 1972 (which happens to be Canada Day as well as his birthday), to pursue graduate studies at University of British Columbia. He graduated with an MBA in 1974, and later finished coursework at Simon Fraser University for a Ph.D. in Economics. His wife, Gitty, joined him a couple of years after he arrived. The family now lives near Seattle, with their two children Nausheen, 22, and Ardeshir, 17.



His is the proverbial "rags to riches" story. On arrival in Vancouver from Iran — alone, no friends, no family, and knowing very little English — his immigration documents listed his total assets at \$200. To pay his way through college, he took up assorted jobs, including working in the library, bookstore, and as a paper boy. After graduation, he jumped into the exploding West coast real-estate boom, and quickly

rose to become a top salesman. He later formed his own land investment company in Vancouver and another investment company in Washington state that continued, through ups and downs, at times close to bankruptcy, until 1985.

### Recognizing an Opportunity

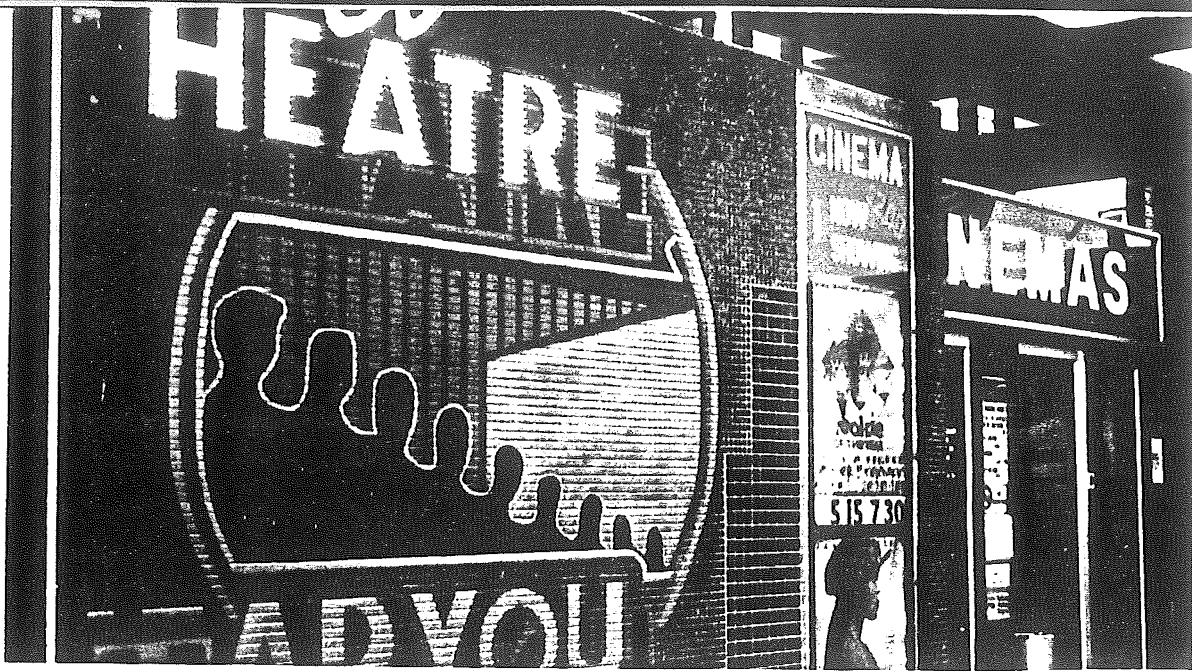
When real estate began to drop in the mid-eighties, he turned to the theater. A complete novice in the business, he ventured in when an opportunity came his way. With a \$5,000 initial investment on his credit card, he paid the deposit and first month's lease for a two-screen movie theater in Marysville, WA. The three previous owners had gone bankrupt. Experimenting with first run, second run, art and foreign films, he quickly turned the business around.



Dabestani is now a partner with Jack Clark in *A Theatre Near You* which boasts theaters in the Seattle and Vancouver areas, and with Canadian businessman Eddy Dehmoubed in *Golden Theatres Limited*, in the Toronto area. With innovative ideas (they show second run movies at rock-bottom prices of \$1 or \$2 at some theaters) they hope to slay Canada's cinema giants, and lure customers away from their T.V. sets and video stores. In 1993, Dabestani entered the movie production business when he financed a 34-minute feminist feature film *Salt Please*, produced by UBC film graduate Mojdeh Shahriari. He now has his sights on expanding to several more markets in the USA and Canada.

His theaters have created jobs for over 200 employees, of which 50 are Zarthustis. "I am proud to say", he says, "that they (Zarthustis) are my best employees."

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*Dabestani is chairperson of "A Theatre Near You" chain of movie theaters.*

### ***In the True Zarthusti Spirit***

Deeply committed to serving the Zarthusti community, he has been a member of the Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia for 22 years and a director for five terms. In 1991 he was co-founder, and is currently the President of the Zoroastrian Society of Washington State.

He is eternally grateful to the late Jamshed Pavri of Vancouver for being his "mentor and inspiration" in the early days. "A symbol of nobility, charity and service", Mr. Pavri welcomed Dabestani to the Zoroas-

trian Society of British Columbia (and discreetly forgot to ask him to pay his annual Association dues when he could ill afford it).

Today, his total assests are unknown, but Dabestani did venture to say that he made his first million dollars within three years of starting his first theater. "The degree of wealth is measured", he says in the true Zarthusti spirit, "not by how much, but by how it is used to help others."

*By Roshan Rivetna*

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## BOOKS AND SUCH

*THE PARSIS — Volumes I and II*

An Enlarged and Updated Edition of "Les Parsis" by M. M. Murzban. First published in 1917. 1994 publication by: Jeroo Mango and Danai, Mangal Smruthi, Khar Danda, 14th Road, Khar, Bombay 400 052, 502 pp, \$43 including shipping by airmail.



*Les Parsis* was originally published in French by Mlle. Delphine Menant in 1898. This review concerns the 1994 reprint of two English language volumes by M. M. Murzban. *The Parsis* goes beyond mere translation of the original work. Erudite and carefully researched, this seminal work (Volume I) covers the exodus from Iran and survival of Zarthustis in Iran and India followed by a chapter on Parsi population in early 19th century India.

The second volume which deals with the history, customs and traditions of the Parsis is richly embellished with numerous halftones and illustrations. Both volumes are copiously annotated by Mr. Murzban to enrich and support the original text. In the process, the annotations, appendixes and notes provide numerous cross references and serve to identify scholars and several early reference works which are now out of print. They also provide valuable insights into the rationale for various practices and beliefs of the Parsis.

For example, Appendix I (in Volume I) gives opinions of various early writers and scholars as to our "alleged" worship of the sun and fire. This ten-page

account with several cross references is worth reading and publicizing to set the record straight (re. fire worship) in Western religious publications.

The two volumes document in vivid detail our history, religious practices, lifestyles and culture spanning most of the 19th and early 20th centuries. The pictures and stories are a memorable time capsule, a nostalgic portrait of a bygone era.

The main criticism is the lack of continuity and flow, due to the large number of annotations and notes on every page. However, for a reference work of this magnitude, it is difficult to see how else so much material could have been presented.

The two volumes together contain the first six of a total of 19 chapters that were created for the English translation. Other volumes presumably contain the remaining 13 chapters; but there is no mention by Danai as to the total number of volumes published, nor of their current availability in print.

This monumental reference work will appeal to students, scholars, researchers and all Zarthustis who are keen to know their roots or simply wish to learn more about their great heritage. In presenting a unique study of their inseparable social and religious life, Mr. Murzban pays the ultimate tribute to the Parsis and Iranis in the following paragraph excerpted from Volume I:

"Both the Parsis and their Iranian brothers are not only the survivors of one of the greatest nations of the East, but the trustees of one of the loftiest creeds of antiquity. This role explains their long survival, for they have never filled any other. ... the process of evolution withdrew them from Eastern civilization and urged them towards the West, without any consequent renunciation of creed or tradition. Possessed of wonderful assimilative power, they made light of Hindu customs, as, long before, they had sacrificed their Iranian habits at the pleasure of the Rana of Sanjan. But Mazdayesnans and Zoroastrians they remained; their profession of faith has not changed. Lawyers, engineers, Sheriff, member of the Viceroy's Council, or member of the House of Commons — every man preserves intact his Zoroastrian belief and reverence for his Holy Scriptures."

[Book review by Adel Engineer]

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**FERDOWSI: A CRITICAL BIOGRAPHY***A. Shapur Shahbazi*

150pp, hardcover, \$17.55

Harvard University Center for Middle Eastern Studies.

Distributed by: Mazda Publishers, P.O. Box 2603, Costa Mesa, CA 92626.

The aim of Professor Shahbazi's investigation is to offer a detailed, balanced, and documented account of Ferdowsi's life, thoughts and achievements. This he succeeds in doing very admirably. A careful survey of the sources of information about Ferdowsi's life reveals some contradictions — mainly because the scholars who wrote about Ferdowsi have had different backgrounds and ideologies. The best authority on the life of Ferdowsi, Shahbazi contends, is the Shah-nama itself as the poet frequently breaks his narrative to insert a few lines about his age, work and thoughts.

Next, Shahbazi takes up the difficult task of examining Ferdowsi's attitudes towards Zarthustrianism. His conclusions are inescapable. Regardless of his religion, Ferdowsi was an Iranian patriot who considered terms such as "the Nobles", "Prosperous Land", "Empire of the Valiants", as a synonym for Iran. Ferdowsi idealized Iranian heroes, glorified their way of life, and defended their traditions with the zeal and conviction of a resurrector of the perished empire. Ferdowsi blames Kosrow Parvez for the fall of the Iranian empire, and sets himself the task of preserving the memory of its golden days and transmitting it to the new generation so that they could learn and try to build a better world.

Shahbazi then proceeds to assess the primary sources of ancient Iranian history that were available to Ferdowsi. The final chapter gives an excellent summary of the contents of the Shah-nama. Shahbazi opines that Ferdowsi's aims in writing the Shah-nama were the vindication of ancient Iranians and revitalization of Iranian nationalism during one of the darkest periods in Iranian history.

Shahbazi concludes: "Ferdowsi's style is that of a superb poet. His epic language is so rich, moving and lavish that it truly enchants the reader. The echo of every distich, which in the Persian has the rhythm of the English line: 'The pharaohs of Egypt, the Caesars of Rome', is most pleasing to the senses of the reader or listener. This is one reason, not always appreciated by non-Iranians, for the survival of the Shah-nama, and hence, of the national history as presented and accepted by the Iranians themselves ... If a history were ever to influence its readers, the Shah-nama has done and still does so in the finest way."

*[Book review by Rustom Kevala]***1995 Multi-faith Calendar**

A multifaith Calendar, published by the Alberta Interfaith Council on Human Rights, incorporates various events and festivals observed by many faiths in Alberta, Canada, with beautiful illustrations and high quality printing. Your organization is invited to participate in this worthwhile fund raising activity for the Interfaith Council. The calendars retail for \$11.00 each. Quantity discounts are: 10 or more at \$9; 25 or more at \$8.50; 50 or more at \$8; 100 or more at \$7; and 200 or more at \$6 (plus postage, handling and taxes). Profits may be utilized as a fund-raiser for your organization. Contact: Firdosh Mehta, 10444 - 18 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, T6J 4Z8, Tel: (403) 438-4371.

**1995 Interfaith Calendar***[See next page]*

The Interfaith Calendar published by the National Council of Christians and Jews, showcases one month for each of twelve major world religions in glossy full color layout. The month of December is, as always, reserved for Zoroastrianism. The text and photographs were provided by Rohinton Rivetna. NCCJ distributes over 50,000 calendars of which a number are given to FEZANA free of charge. Calendars are available for a suggested donation of \$10 per calendar from FEZANA, 5750 South Jackson Street, Hinsdale, Illinois 60521, Tel: (708) 325-5383. The entire donation will be applied to FEZANA Welfare funds.



## READERS' FORUM

This column is a forum to present information, views and opinions. Letters (under 600 words) may be submitted to the Editor, Articles and Letters. The Journal reserves the right to edit letters for clarity and space.

*Mobeds a Male Institution?*

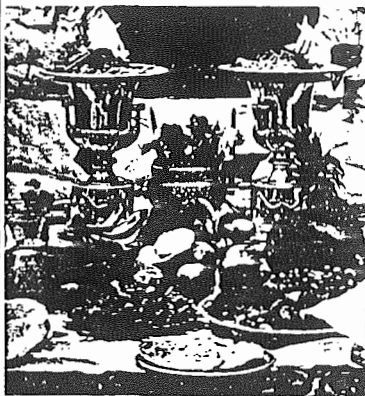
The current position regarding Mobeds is supported by a traditional male-created Zarthustrian theology that has legitimized an all-male priesthood. It maintains that Ahura Mazda is male, as is Zoroaster, who redeemed humankind by his own trials and tribulations. Traditionalists contend that men are heads of women and women are created as helpers of men, unendowed with authority or the ability to perform priestly duties. They argue that the priesthood is a naturally and divinely ordained male institution.

Such theological elaboration is anchored in the biologicistic Aristotelian world view of gender relations that deemed women biologically, physically, morally and intellectually inferior to men. Thus rendering women unable to represent humanity. As males alone represented 'the fully human', Zoroaster had to be male to be the collective representation or head of humanity. Moreover, since women could not represent Zoroaster, and as induction into priesthood

conferred teaching and authority over others, authority of which women were considered incapable, they were not admitted into the priesthood.

Progressive theologians, however, oppose this traditional view, and explode the theological basis for the exclusion of women from the priesthood. They assert that women's subordination is not biologically, but socially determined. Theology is culture bound, and mainstream theology provides religious justification for unequal gender relations in society. Zoroaster's theology is thus impregnated with the patriarchal biases of Avestan writers, interpreters and theologians of the era. This 'alternative' group of thinkers is engaged in theological interpretation to revive the message of Zoroaster according to the times.

On the question of Ahura Mazda's maleness, which is used to bolster the all-male priesthood, theologians assert Ahura Mazda is neither male nor female, but an integration of both, transcending the gender dichotomy. Also Zoroaster's maleness does not preclude any individual, male or female, from the image of Ahura Mazda, or from equal participation in Zoroastrian life. Doing so is a veritable transgression of Zoroastrianism.



Light in all its manifestations symbolizes righteousness sustained by an enlightened mind — the highest of all attributes of the one God, Ahura Mazda, "Wise Lord," that man can possess. An eternal flame is scrupulously tended in all Zoroastrian temples and forms the focus for Zoroastrian prayers and ceremonies. The intense reverence for the natural elements (the earth, air, fire, and water) are symbolized by the items displayed in Zoroastrian ceremonies.

Ashem Vohu  
Vahishtem Asti  
Ushta Asti  
Ushta Ahmai Hyat Ashai  
Vahishtai Ashem.

To think a good thought, to speak a good word,  
to do a good deed  
is the best.

Eternal happiness to him who  
is righteous

Yasna 28.11

AVESTA, the sacred book of the Zoroastrians, comprise in part the 72 chapters of the YASNA "worship" or "praise". Sequences of these hymns are called the Gathas, attributed to Zarathushtra himself.

## ZOROASTRIANISM

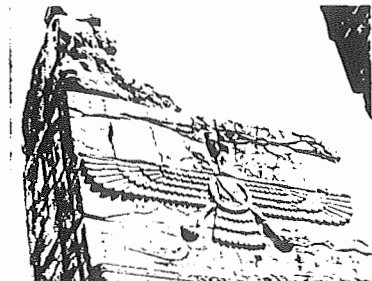
Prophet Zarathushtra, or Zoroaster, preached the religion on the steppes of Asia, the ancient Persia, around 1800 B.C. The faith flourished through the rise and fall of many civilizations. During the Achaemenian period, Zoroastrianism became the state religion of the Great Persian Empire, founded by Cyrus the Great in 558 B.C. It suffered a setback during the reign of Darius III when Persia was conquered by Alexander the Great in 331 B.C. Persepolis, the seat of Zoroastrianism, along with all the Zoroastrian scriptures written on cow hides, was destroyed during Alexander's conquest of Persia. The Greeks were overthrown by the Parthians in less than a century followed by the Sassanian rule while Greek influence gradually diminished.

Zoroastrianism flourished under the Sassanians (226 A.D. - 641 A.D.). Zoroastrian scriptures were retrieved and once again transcribed in the Pahlavi script during the Sassanian period. Zoroastrianism reeled once more in Persia with the advent of Islam and the conquest of Persia by the Arabs. At that time a large number were forced to accept Islam, but a few shiploads of devout followers left Persia and landed on the western shores of India where they were given refuge by the native Hindu rulers. Their descendants the Parsees, concentrated in and around Bombay, have kept the faith alive in India.

In an age of idol worship and polytheism, Zarathushtra preached the first monotheistic religion of the one supreme God, Ahura Mazda ("Wise Lord"). The message of Zarathushtra is contained in the ancient texts written in Avesta, of which the five Gathas are believed to be the word of Zarathushtra himself. The Zoroastrian teachings is embodied in the triad: HUMATA (good thoughts), HUKTA (good words), and HUVERASHTA (good deeds).

The loftiest ideal for man upon earth is to be god-like like Ahura Mazda. With the cultivation of the good mind (Vohu Maan), and by following the path of righteousness (Asha) and with devotion (Armaiti), man can eradicate all evil and can hope to attain the twin rewards of perfection (Hurvata) and immortality (Ameretat) thereby attaining the ultimate communion with Ahura Mazda.

The total population of Zoroastrians in the world today numbers only about 130,000 to 200,000, major concentrations being in India and Iran. There are about 12,000 Zoroastrians in North America. Approximately 500 live in Metropolitan Chicago.



Zoroastrians believe that in every single human being there dwells the divine essence of God. FRAVASHI, the divinity in humanity, is represented by this symbol.



A likeness of Zarathushtra the prophet adorned with a Sudreh. The faith was revealed to Zarathushtra when he was in solitude. The Sudreh worn by Zarathushtra in the picture is an inner garment made of white muslin which is worn by Zoroastrians symbolizing goodness and charity. The word sudreh means "beneficial path to righteousness." The Kushti, a sacred cord, is worn around the waist three times as a reminder for good thoughts, words, and deeds (Humata, Hukta, and Huverashita).

Zoroaster's personality was a rich combination of what are socially defined as masculine and feminine attributes. So one can argue that it really does not matter whether he is physically and observably male; the whole process of becoming human involves providing equal opportunities to both sexes to develop their innate human potential, uncircumscribed by socially stultifying roles. Developing an androgynous personality like Zoroaster is crucial for the development of a richer world Zoroastrian community.

Women have dominated the experiential realm of Zoroastrianism and they continue to be the backbone of all major institutionalized aspects of the religion, engaging in daily ritual observances. They are thus provided with space for spiritual expression and imbued with strength; they obtain emotional and social release through participation in Zoroastrian functions and gatherings. Hence, it is a paradox that they have been denigrated by institutionalized form of Zoroastrianism and largely marginalized from the center-stage of Zoroastrian ideological production, where leadership and decision-making continue to be defined by men.

*Furhok Tangree*  
*La Roche-sur-Furon, France*

### ***Correcting a Misconception***

In the February 1993 issue of FEZANA Journal, Khojeste Mistree's books are advertised as "Zoroastrian Studies, K. R. Cama Oriental Institute". Unfortunately, the public has consistently been misled into believing that Zoroastrian Studies is a part of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute or closely associated with it or supported by it ...

We, the Trustees would like to make it clear that neither Mr. Khojeste Mistree, Zoroastrian Studies, or the Athravan Educational Trust are in any way associated with our Institute ...

*Mrs. Homai Mody and Mr. H. J. M. Desai*  
*Trustees and Jt. Hon. Secretaries*  
*K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, Bombay*

*[Editor's note: A letter is being sent to the Trustees thanking them for bringing this matter to our attention through the "Bombay Samachar" newspaper. Appropriate corrections will be made in any future references.]*

### ***Stories About 'Garas' Anyone?***

Since some time, I have been thinking of printing a 'coffee-table' book on Garas, giving information on the embroidery and history in the introduction. I wonder if your readers who know anything about Garas, however insignificant, which I presume will be mainly oral history, kindly pass it on to me. Readers

in the US may send it to Roshni Rustomji-Kerns, 467 Poplar Street, Half Moon Bay, CA 94019, Email: Rustomji@AOL.COM, who is assisting me with the introduction. If anyone has an exceptional Gara, please send a slide to me, giving some background to who or where it came from; this will be published with the name of the owner.

*Toxy Cowasjee*  
*2A, Mary Road, Karachi 75530,*  
*Pakistan, Fax: 285-0908*

### ***Zoroastrian Thought in the Dead Sea Scrolls of Qumran***

Thank you for your inquiry about the Qumran (Dead Sea Scrolls) Section of the American Academy of Religion meeting. Unfortunately the program for the annual November meeting of the AAR is set in March, and it is not possible to add another presentation at this late date. The deadline for submission of papers is March each year. Perhaps it will, however, be possible for you to attend some of the Qumran sessions at the Chicago meeting (on November 19-22 at the Chicago Hilton).

There has been a long history of scholarly discussion about the relationship of Zoroastrian thought and the Dead Sea Scrolls, and this is certainly a topic which deserves further study.

*Eileen Schuller*  
*Qumran Section Co-Chair*  
*American Academy of Religion*

*[Editor's note: In this letter, in response to an enquiry by Rohinton Rivetna, it is heartening to note that the American Academy of Religion is acknowledging the contribution of Zoroastrian thought to the Dead Sea Scrolls, a fact that has heretofore been completely ignored by scholars.]*

### ***Suggestions for Future Congresses***

My wife and I enjoyed the Congress in Philadelphia ... here are some constructive suggestions for future Congresses.

Limit the number of formal speeches, as well as the time allowed per speaker. Instead, allow more time for individuals from the audience to have a dialogue with the panel. In this last Congress, individuals were generally not allowed to answer back to a panelist's comment on their question, which was unfairly used by some panelists to avoid a straight answer.

For example, when asked why we should not follow the advice of Mahatma Gandhi who condemned religious conversion as the deadliest poison, the panelist, instead of putting Gandhi's advice in perspective



or explaining what Zarthustra's advice would be, merely shut off the questioner by saying that he did not know Ghandiji and "why not listen to Zarthustra." Due to the rules, the questioner was not allowed to rebut and request a proper answer.

Require formal speakers to submit the full text of their speech in advance, and distribute this to the Congress participants. In this last Congress, one of the speakers denied making a statement as referenced by one of the questions from the floor, and in the absence of a written copy of the speech, it was hard to verify the fact.

Have a cultural entertainment program. A skit from the stories of the Shah-nama, authentic Persian music and dance, Parsi Gujarati wedding songs, a comedy skit, etc. should be considered, with the objective of educating with entertainment. Of course this all requires a lot of effort, but if our youth are motivated, we can make it happen.

*Maneck Bhujwala*  
*San Jose, California*

### ***Eye Towards Next Congress***

In the span of 19 years between the first North American Congress in Toronto in 1975, and the most recent one in Pennsylvania in 1994, we have had nine Congresses, each attended by approximately 480 to 520 people. There has been no increase in attendance in keeping with the increase in the North American Zarthusti population. The number of people attending the Congress has stayed the same. It would help to have a committee assigned to find out: how many were first-time attendees; how many had attended more than one Congress; and how many were planning to attend the next Congress. It helps to know why some people come only once and what motivates others to attend regularly. The committee should prepare a questionnaire asking these questions and also determine what people thought of the guest speaker and the topics discussed.

It is a proven fact that the Zarthusti community is able to arrange a well-organized Congress every two years, bringing Zarthustis together to get to know each other and share their thoughts. To my knowledge, no study has been done to show that Congresses have a positive and productive result for the community, or if the decisions made in the past nine Congresses have been carried out — for example, the agreement on having a unified calendar.

It appears that after the Congress is over everything is forgotten; and nothing worthwhile is achieved. If this is the case, then why all the hoopla before the Congress and total silence and inaction afterwards?

Is it because the Congress is used by a selected few as a stage for certain regular players who keep appearing with the same script to showcase themselves? Could this be the reason why the audience gets tired of witnessing the same self-serving acts by professional actors who only praise themselves and each other, without doing anything positive and productive for the society? Is it politics as usual? Could this be the reason why most Zarthustis choose to stay away? I hesitate to think that the Congress is being used as a stage for these self-promoting and special interest groups. I hope this is not the case.

The function of the Congress should be to bring our community together to share our thoughts and to make and carry out productive decisions in order to make a better world for ourselves, our children and mankind, and not to showcase a few self-serving individuals.

In an article I wrote two years ago, which was distributed at the Eighth Congress and published in *Pake-E-Mehr*, I noted that getting together is useful if we follow up and carry out the decisions made to a successful conclusion. I recommended asking the participants and Zarthustis of North America for their input on topics, guest speakers, qualifications of the guest of honor, and guidelines for the Achievement Awards. This would keep us from having to face a situation where the chairman of the Awards Committee receives the award himself. Even if well-deserved, there should not be the slightest appearance of conflict of interest.

We are few in numbers so we cannot afford division. If conducted correctly, Congresses can help bring the community together and we can take advantage of the diversity among us by creating unity. We have to put small differences aside and unite in order to survive. We owe this to our forefathers and our children. I am glad that Dolly Dastoor, President of FEZANA, has appointed Bella Tata to chair the Congress Committee. This is a step in the right direction. With Ahura Mazda's guidance and blessing and our efforts, we will not fail the future generation.

*K. Harvesf, M.D.*  
*Jacksonville, Florida*

### ***Achievement Awards Process***

At the last Congress I was amazed to find the awards selection committee member was a nominee for an award and a recipient of the award too. This is a conflict of interest, defied all ethics and ignored objectivity and accountability. I am surprised that the Congress personnel did not pay any attention to it.

In public and private sectors, awards selection committees have prestige for their impartiality. I am referring to the Malcolm Baldrige Award, or the Deming Award for excellence in Quality. There are CEOs and high ranking officials who form the selection committee. I am sure each of these individuals wants to see the award go to their outfit. Only stringent regulations prevent any form of partiality, avoid conflict of interest, and render the selection committee members accountable for their votes. I do hope we can have something on those lines which can ensure ethical professionalism. If not, it will amount to a whole heap of beans!

*Dr. A. N. Daruwalla  
Riverside, California*

### ***Achievement Awards — Response from Committee***

From Dr. Daruwalla's letter it appears that she has a total misconception and complete lack of knowledge about the mechanics of the award selection system.

To start with there is no such body as the "Award Selection Committee" — it is the "Awards Committee". This body has no function whatsoever in the nomination or selection of the final award recipient. The functions of this Committee are as follows:

- To disseminate guidelines for nominations to the North American Zarthusti community.
- To select a panel of five judges keeping certain factors in mind: geographic distribution, profession, youth participation, gender, Parsi/Irani, and commitment to community activity.
- Distribute nominations to the Judges.
- Provide guidelines regarding mode of assessment, rating and confidentiality to the Judges.
- Receive ratings from Judges, and collate them to identify the final recipient.
- Announce results.

It should be reemphasized that the Awards Committee plays no role in the nomination or evaluation of nominees.

*Dr. Jehan Bagli                      Freny Ranji  
Awards Committee                  Congress Chairperson*

*[Editor's note: To avoid any perception of impropriety, FEZANA is re-evaluating the process, and will make improvements for future Congresses.]*



### ***Zarthustis in Global Village ...***

I certainly commend the setting up of such a Global Village project as undertaken by Hanne Strong [FEZANA Journal, Summer 1994]. I see our religion too, represented in this Village. It will be an excellent opportunity to enhance our beautiful and historic culture — we have a gem, a treasure, to give to mankind. It may fulfill the need expressed by the community to establish a "Global University" on the lines of Ismalia, Brahmakumaris and Bahais, who contribute immense amounts of literature and are always very busy in their propaganda. When I attend their seminars I feel very sad and dejected and almost a pauper amidst them, as I have nothing to offer. We have a lot of work to do. We have scholars in our midst who could contribute to establish this Global University, which would be a pride and a beacon to the world. Let us do it.

*Ervad Homi Edalji Dordi  
London, U.K.*

### ***Global Village ...***

I look ahead to and love reading the FEZANA Journal. What a fantastic job you are doing. Zarthustis in Global Village [FEZANA Journal, Summer 1994] was most interesting. What an opportunity to have our center among all the other centers of different religions in such a beautiful, pristine environment.

Will we Zarthustis bury our differences to realize this vision? I hope so.

*Soonoo Engineer  
Vancouver, B.C.*

### ***Religion of Mazda Worship — a Religion of Choice***

The article, "Followers of 3,000-year-old Religion Meet" in the *Daily Pennsylvanian* reproduced in FEZANA Journal [Summer 1994], the author, Dennis Yun says: "However simple and appealing Zoroastrianism may appear to some, conversion is disallowed, which is the main reason for the small size of the Zoroastrian following," and then quotes Ervad Noshir Karanjia as stating "Zoroastrians consider your religion as the best for you. Conversion is not permitted because once you convert someone, you stamp your religion as the best." My question in response is: "Is this belief held by Zoroastrians in general, or was he just expressing his opinion and of those who share it with him?"

As far as the Zoroastrian religion is concerned, it is quite clear from the Gathas and other parts of the Avesta that it is a religion of choice. In their daily kushti prayers, all Zoroastrians recite: *Astuye*

daenam vanguhim Mazdayasnim ... ya hailinamcha, bushyeintinamcha, mazishtacha, vahishtacha, sraeshitacha, ya Ahuraish Zarthushtish, or "I profess the good religion of Mazda worship ... which is the greatest, the best, and the most profound of all religions which are, or shall be, which is Ahurian and Zoroastrian."

How then, can we, who declare our religion as the greatest, the best and most profound of all, tell others that their religion is 'best for them' and feel honest about our statement?

Mobed Bahram Shahzadi  
Huntington Beach, CA

### *On the Towers of Silence*

The John Casey report from the *Evening Standard* reproduced in FEZANA Journal [Fall 1994], mentions the Towers of Silence and adds: "They do not believe in burying or burning the dead, instead the corpses are left to be devoured by vultures." This could be true a hundred years ago. Iranians have given up disposal in the tower since 1934. Those in the West, now 20-30 thousand, also do not subscribe to the custom. Even in India, with the Towers in the Western part of the country, in and around Bombay, burial and cremation have become a normal procedure. I do not want to enter the controversy about whether exposition is a Zoroastrian obligation or just an older practice, but I do want to point out that this practice is decreasing with the progress of time, and only a minority of Zarthustis in India adhere to this tradition. The Journal should point out this fact to provide a balanced picture.

Farangis Shahrokh  
Anaheim, California

### *On Inter-Religious Dialogue*

I wanted to write and tell you how much I have enjoyed reading the summaries of the presentations at the Parliament of the Worlds Religions [FEZANA Journal, Winter 1993]. I especially liked the sentence about Mr. Kung's book: "The final goal is not a universal religion for all, but inter-religious dialogue at all levels." I have a strong belief that this is possible and imperative! I look forward to hearing more about this line of reasoning in future issues.

Cathy Bamji  
Condado, Puerto Rico

### *Zarthusti Internet Network*

The new Internet electronic email address of the Zarthusti network group is:

zoroastrians@least.sun.com

The new address of its administrator, Mehrdad Khosraviani is:

Mehrdad.Khosraviani@Eng.Sun.COM

The earlier addresses [See FEZANA Journal, Spring 1994, p.40], have changed.

Internet is a worldwide computer network. Most universities and large companies have a connection to this network. Home computer users with modems who use on-line services such as Compuserve, can also connect to Internet.

There are currently 172 members on the list, from the USA, Canada, Australia, Holland and Sweden. By sending mail related to Zarthusti activities, news, religious information, discussions, to one email address, it gets automatically distributed to all members of the group. Please send email to Mehrdad, if you would like to be added to the list.

Maneck Bhujwala  
San Jose, California

### *Righteous Woman — Obedient to Husband?*

Your issue on "Zarthusti Women: Past and Present" [FEZANA Journal, Fall 1994], provides a beautiful portrait of the high regard and complete equality accorded to women by any religion. However, the translation of the Avestan quotation on the very first page gives the reader second thoughts. Praising the "righteous woman", it shows her as "obedient to husband".

I have doubts about how a religion that recognizes complete equality of man and woman, can render her obedient to her husband, without requiring the husband to be obedient to her, if at all obedience is a better way of life than mutual respect and consultation. Otherwise, this is pure patriarchy. Can any of the scholars clarify this point to me and other women who may have the same doubts about this statement?

Farangis Shahrokh  
Anaheim, California

### **THANK YOU! THANK YOU!**

To all our subscribers and advertisers. We deeply appreciate your donations to help towards the high cost of printing and mailing.

## PRAYER CORNER

## *Yenghe Hatam and A Airyema Ishyo* *The Minor Manthric Recitations*

by

K. D. Irani  
New York, New York

The Yenghe Hatam and A Airyema Ishyo, which we consider here, together with the Yatha Ahu Vairyo and the Ashem Vohu discussed previously [*FEZANA Journal*, March and June 1994], constitute the four manthric recitations, i.e. brief thought-provoking formulations to reflect upon, and hopefully to be inspired by. The latter two, which appear in almost all our prayer recitations, are the major manthras, whereas the former are considered minor. In relatively free translation they read:

### YENGHE HATAM

*Mazda Ahura knows well those men and women whose every act of worship is living a life in accordance with highest righteousness (Asha). Such men and women we revere.*

### A AIRYEMA ISHYO

*Let the desired Fellowship come to the support of the men and women of Zarthustra, especially to the Good Mind to bring to enlightened religious consciousness its worthy reward — the reward of Truth. Such is the wish of Ahura Mazda.*

As is clear, these two manthric recitations are not as fundamental as the Yatha Ahu Vairyo, which deals with the essentials of the acceptance of the Faith; nor Ashem Vohu which formulates the basic tenet of ethical life. The Yenghe Hatam, which appears with the Yatha Ahu Vairyo and Ashem Vohu in Yasna 27, just before the start of the Gathas in Yasna 28, is an expression of reverence for those who are genuinely religious. It creates a bond of piety between the reciter and the community of the truly faithful. The A Airyema Ishyo appearing in Yasna 54 after the end of the Gathas in Yasna 53, calls upon the Fellowship of the true believers to support each other through the Good Mind. Thus both these manthric prayers are focussed on the community of believers. One expresses reverential regard for the community, the other calls for active support from the community.

These two recitations give us an insight into the earliest Zarthustrian reflections on the religious community or fellowship, that is, the social reality of the faith. Zarthustrian theology did not develop an explicit conception of a Religious Community in a systematic way, as did Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam. But the Prophet and his disciples saw its function clearly: the support of the community in the present, re-inforced by the bond of reverential recall.

It is however important to note that the principles of the moral theology of the Gathas are firmly emphasized. In the Yenghe Hatam, who constitute the community of reverence? Not just the social or ethnic group, but those whose act of worship is righteous living, not some standardized ritual! This remarkable religious innovation, that the true act of worship is a righteous life, and those living it constitute the true religious community, is the profound implication of this prayer.

Another important principle of moral theology is incorporated in A Airyema Ishyo. The only genuine support members of the religious fellowship can give to others is to their Good Mind, that is, help bring about enlightenment, a state worthy of a reward. What reward is this? It is the grasp of Truth (Asha)! This is exactly the message of the Gathas. The prayer ends with the statement: such is the wish of Ahura Mazda. That statement must mean something to the believer! The Divine Wish is for us to be blessed with the most worthy reward — Truth; to be achieved with the enlightenment received through the Good Mind. And it is precisely for that purpose that the Fellowship of the faithful should come to the support of one another.

Each manthric recitation reflects a profound aspect of the Gathic doctrine — the religion of the Good Life (Beh-Din). When they are recited as they so often are, ponder over their meanings, and let their insights crystallize in your innermost selves. Such was the wish of the Prophet.

## PLEASE GIVE FROM THE HEART ...

### *Appeals for Welfare and Student Aid*

Donations for student aid or welfare projects will be gratefully accepted, and distributed as appropriate by the Welfare Committee. Please send checks payable to "FEZANA" marked "Welfare", to: Dinshaw Joshi, 4515 Willard Ave, #1609-S, Chevy Chase, MD 20815, Tel: (301) 654-6250.

*The Parsi Ambulance Division.* will celebrate 90 years of dedicated volunteer service, free of charge to the Bombay public and up-country areas. Headquartered at Mahatma Gandhi Road in Bombay, the volunteers are ready to help, be it a riot or bomb-blast or any other disaster, without distinction of caste, creed or color. They also take up free medical aid projects to poor widows, adivasis and other needy persons.

Present inflation, high cost of fuel, upkeep and other necessary administrative expenses have made it difficult for the division to give increasing number of free services and modernize the division's services. Superintendent M. R. Antia appeals to Zarthustis for donations, so they may "with God's help, continue to serve the people."

*Humane Animal Control Program.* A Bombay-based voluntary organization, "Welfare of Stray Dogs", aims to reduce the incidence of rabies and control the stray dog population through a scientific and humane vaccination-cum-sterilization program, recommended by the World Health Organization. They vaccinate and sterilize the dogs captured by the Municipality, provide post operative care, feed and house them and immunize them against rabies. Monthly expenses for vet fees, medicines, vaccines, food, staff salaries are Rs. 50,000. The appeal for donations has been forwarded by Padma Shree Homi J. H. Taleyarkhan.

*KEM Hospital Research Foundation* is raising funds in honor of the founder, Dr. Banoo Coyaji, who dedicated her life for the poor and needy. Funds will be used for the expansion of the 550-bed hospital, to purchase surgical and research equipment, and to provide medical relief. Donations of equipment and hospital furniture are also welcome.

*Boy Needs Heart Surgery.* 8-year-old Burzin Bhabha of Bombay has "Fallot's Tetralogy", a congenital heart disease. Corrective surgery by Dr. Pereira of Bombay Hospital will cost Rs. 7 lakhs. Mrs. Doongaji, Principal of Burzin's school, Activity High School, has appealed to all generous-hearted Zarthustis: "Any help, however small, will be most gratefully accepted".

### *Parviz Kotwal Fund*

The "Parviz Kotwal Fund" has been established by the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec in memory of young Ervad Parviz, whose life was prematurely ended by an accident. The fund will provide help to Zarthusti organizations worldwide for existing or future projects to preserve and promote the teachings of Asho Zarthust. Strong emphasis will be given to the organization's ability to execute, enhance and nurture the project over its life span. Contact Homi Daruwala, 261 Stanley Avenue, St. Lambert, Quebec J4R 2R7, Canada, Tel: (514) 671-7691.

### *Medical Insurance for Needy Zarthustis*

To alleviate the burden on Zarthusti community trust funds, which are inundated with requests for medical and hospitalization funds for needy Zarthustis, a few foresighted individuals including Rustam Gae, Chairman of the WZO Trust for Women and Children, Jehan Daruwala, Editor of the Bombay Samachar, Dinshaw Tamboly of WZO and others are proposing the introduction of the 'Mediclaime' scheme of the General Insurance Companies.

An initial amount of Rs. 10 million would be capitalized and the interest used solely for the payment of the Mediclaime scheme premium for a segment of the community. The interest from this amount would cover about 200 needy Zarthustis annually. The project would be administered by a committee of knowledgeable volunteers, with one paid assistant to handle the paperwork.

The WZO is appealing for donations from philanthropists, other trust funds, businesses and organizations around the world for this very vital project. Checks made payable to FEZANA, marked "Welfare" may be sent to Dinshaw Joshi (see address above), for forwarding to WZO.

### *Little Hormazd Needs Surgery*

FEZANA readers will recall the heart-rending story of the little boy Hormazd Nowrojee who was born with seven heart defects. With funds raised primarily by the Lioness Club of Bombay, and other organizations, including FEZANA, Hormazd underwent open-heart surgery in Miami, Florida two years ago, and again in March 1994.

Due to complications — high fever, infection, lung collapse, paralysis of the diaphragm, Hormazd had to be in the Intensive Care Unit longer than expected. Through the generosity of friends and a local church, the family has been able to handle their boarding and lodging expenses in a nearby apartment. However,



the package deal of \$27,000 offered by the hospital has now run out, and the family is left with high costs of medicines, pathology and consultations. Checks payable to FEZANA, marked "welfare" may be sent to Dinshaw Joshi (see address above).

### Acknowledgements

FEZANA gratefully acknowledges the following donations since the last publication. Donations will be deeply appreciated for the FEZANA fund categories: Welfare, Religious Education, Student Aid, Properties, Helping Hands Youth, FEZANA Journal, General, or for a specific appeal. Checks may be sent as requested in the appeal, or to: FEZANA, 5750 South Jackson Street, Hinsdale, Illinois 60521.

#### For Welfare

Hosi & Pervin Amroli, CA (\$55); Banoo & Rusi Bharucha, AB (\$51); Poras and Pearl Balsara, TX (\$51); Dr. N. Camay, CA (\$25); Firdausi & Nilofer Desai, TX (\$20); Behram & Fareida Irani, TX (\$251); Mehraban & Faridoon Zartoshty, BC (\$50); Zoroastrian Association of North Texas (\$200).

#### For Million: Dollar Fund:

Russ J. Kevala, NJ (\$100).

#### For Helping Hands Youth:

Perviz Madon, BC (\$34); Various, for Youth Directory (\$25); Zoroastrian Association of Boston, for Navjote tapes (\$75).

#### For FEZANA Journal:

Anonymous Zarthushti Business, CA (\$1,500); Anonymous, Amsterdam, Netherlands (\$40); Anonymous, AB (\$40); Anonymous, Abu Dhabi (\$14); Anonymous (\$8); Babak Abadi, ONT (\$20); Navroze & Bucky Amaria, CO (\$21); R. F. Avari & Freny Cooper, FL (\$15); Rashne Baetz, ONT (\$12); Poras Balsara, TX (\$8); Dinshaw Balsara, IL (\$51); Sabar Balsara, ONT (\$15); Rusi & Moti Balsara, ONT (\$25); Ester & Roshan Bamji, Bahrain (\$250); Hoshang Baria, DE (\$25); Noshir & Goolu Baria, NY (\$30); Hushtasp Bhungara, MB (\$12); G. N. Billimoria, IL (\$8); James W. Boyd, CO (\$8); Jimmy & Roshan Bharucha, PA (\$8); Zarrin Bharucha, AB (\$25); Kersi & Katy Bhatena, IL (\$8); Coomi Bhatena, ONT (\$12); Rashne Bulsara, CT (\$10); J. S. Cama, TX (\$20); Dr. N. Camay, CA (\$40); Farokh Contractor, LA (\$60); Khershed Cooper, VA (\$8); Porus Dadabhoy, IL (\$16); Rohinton Dadina, IL (\$25); Susan Damania, ONT (\$15); Zarin M. Dastur, CA (\$8); Dr. Phiroz & Dolly Dastoor, QE (\$12); Edul & Niloufer Daver, NJ (\$8); Sheriar Demehri, MD (\$8); Nasswan Dossabhoy, MA (\$8); Burjor Dustoor, TX (\$10); Rumi Engineer, CO (\$10); Dhun & Katie Engineer, CA (\$8); Rustom Engineer, TX (\$21); Yezdi Engineer, IL (\$8); P. Framroze, HI (\$16); Farokh Forooghi & Goly Jamshidi, CA (\$100); Roda & Khushroo Gandhi, CA (\$8); Rusi Gandhi, IL (\$8); Jamshed & Arnavaz Gandhi, CA (\$25); Dr. Yezdi Godiwalla, WI (\$8); Parvez & Feroza Guzdar, MD (\$41); Mehernaz Hamsayeh, CA (\$8); Nosh & Marion Hormuzdiar, CT (\$35); Dr. Pallan Ichaporia, PA (\$120); Gayle & Firdausi Irani, IL (\$10); Irani & Co., IN (\$15); Adi & Yasmin Irani, FL (\$8); Rustam Irani, LA (\$11); Shahrukh Iranpour, FL (\$101); J. J. Jamadar, TX (\$16); Dr. Shahjahan Jamzadeh, BC (\$12); Aspandiyar Jijina, CA (\$8); Bahram Kaboly Zadeh, BC (\$12); Touraj Kaboly Zadeh, CA (\$8); H. Kadkhodaiian, IL (\$8); Zarir Kalianivala, TN (\$8); Jimmy Kapadia, TX (\$8); Firoz & Lily Kavina, IL (\$8); Susie Kunstek, ONT (\$8); Homsy K. Irani, NY (\$20); M. D. Karanjia, PA (\$8); Persis & Adi Kasad, PA (\$8); Karl Kevala, MD (\$8); Ruby Kevala, MD (\$8); Godrej Khursigara, ONT (\$50); Perviz Madon, BC (\$16); Pervez & Sheroo Madon, QE (\$15); Bejan & Perviz Malbari, CA (\$15); Jimmy & Amy Makujina, CA (\$8);

Adi Maneckshaw, MD (\$25); Arnaz Maneckshana, NJ (\$8); Jimmy Master, CT (\$8); Daisy & Hector Mehta, CA (\$15); Cyrus D. Mehta, NY (\$25); Cyrus R. Mehta, MA (\$8); Rohinton Merchant, WA (\$10); Sohrab Mistry, NY (\$8); Aspi Mody, TX (\$8); Kersi & Dolly Munshi, FL (\$8); K. Nanavati, ONT (\$8); Rohinton & Roxana Noble, TX (\$15); Farhad Panthaki, MA (\$10); J. M. Panthaky, BC (\$12); Tahmineh Parsons, VA (\$37.70); Baji & Perviz Patel, IL (\$18); Framroze K. Patel, NJ (\$15); Roda & Khushroo Patel, IL (\$8); Kaizad & Freny Rajkotwala, TX (\$10); Mahabanoo & Nariman Revitna, PQ (\$60); Jehangir & Khurshid Rudina, MN (\$13); Eruch Rustomji, IL (\$16); Neville Rustomji, CO (\$8); Yezdi & Maria Rustomji, TX (\$11); Navaz & Subhendu Sanyal, ONT (\$12); Meheran Sepehri, CA (\$8); Rusi Sethna, NY (\$8); Zal Sethna, UK (\$15); Persis Shroff, LA (\$8); Dilnavaz & Hoshang Shroff, MA (\$8); Rumi & Anita Sumariwalla, CA (\$8); Pervez & Mani Surkari, TX (\$8); Hoshedar Tamboli, FL (\$50); Farrokh Tangree, France (\$201); Spitman & Shiraz Tata, IL (\$16); Rusi Tavadia, MI (\$8); Siroos Teherani, TX (\$8); Homi Thunthy, LA (\$15); Z. Turnbull, BC (\$12); Adi Unwalla, NJ (\$20); Perry Unwalla, FL (\$8); Minoo & Shirin Vaghaiwalla, FL (\$8); Arnavaz & Adi Vakharia, LA (\$25); Arno & Nancy Weilenman, NY (\$10); Toeruna Widge (\$100); Gene & Gooloo Wunderlich, VA (\$8); Zoroastrian Association of Alberta, AB (\$22).

### Tax Implications of Donations Received by FEZANA from US Residents for Remittance Abroad

Some questions have been recently raised about the 'Tax Exemption' status of donations received by FEZANA for remittance abroad, under the code of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) of the USA. FEZANA, which is registered in the State of Illinois, as a charitable organization, sought legal opinions from two American legal firms on the circumstances under which donations received by FEZANA from residents of USA for remittance abroad to foreign individuals and organizations, are tax exempt. It is summarized below:

(1) Unrestricted donations by US residents to FEZANA or restricted donations by US residents to FEZANA for its own specific projects are tax exempt.

(2) Donations by US residents to FEZANA for onward remittance to *foreign organizations* are tax exempt only when:

(a) Donations are for a specific project of the foreign organization that FEZANA has selected as being consistent with FEZANA's charitable purpose; and

(b) FEZANA has control (as per guidelines of the IRS) over the use by the foreign organization of the funds remitted.

(3) Donations by US residents to FEZANA for onward remittance to *foreign individuals or to foreign organizations for projects not selected by FEZANA* are not tax exempt, as FEZANA has no control over the use of the funds remitted, as required by IRS.

(4) Donations *directly remitted by US residents to foreign individuals and organizations* (i.e. not through FEZANA), are not tax exempt.

FEZANA will continue its policy of publishing in the Journal appeals from foreign individuals and organizations that it considers worth supporting. Donors

from USA are advised to keep in mind the above guidelines and the following regarding the applicability of 'tax exempt' status of their donations in response to those appeals.

Appeals from Foreign Individuals: FEZANA will receive and remit donations in response to appeals from foreign individuals; however such donations will not be tax exempt in USA as FEZANA can have no control over the use by the foreign individual, of the funds remitted.

Appeals from Foreign Organizations: Before publishing the appeal, FEZANA will ensure: (a) the status of the foreign organization; (b) the veracity of the appeal and the need for funds; (c) that the organization cannot gather the required funds from domestic sources; and (d) that the organization will maintain

and submit proper accounts to FEZANA in respect of funds remitted. Hence donations received by FEZANA for remittance to foreign organizations for specific projects cleared by FEZANA will be tax exempt in USA.

### *Tax Implications of Donations to FEZANA by Canadian Taxpayers*

Even though FEZANA is not considered to be a "qualified donee" for Canadian income tax purposes, donations to FEZANA by Canadian taxpayers can be used to claim tax credits provided the Canadian taxpayer has some USA income and the donations to FEZANA and any other USA charity do not exceed 20% of the USA income. This is possible under the Canada-USA Tax Treaty, Art.XXI, para 6.

## *Zarthushti Business and Professional Network*

At the Business and Enterprise Workshop during the Ninth North American Zoroastrian Congress, Dr. Cyrus Toorkey was given the charter to develop a directory to help networking between Zarthushti businesses and professionals in North America. This work is a continuation of the networking started by Mr. Farshid Salamati of California following the Eighth Congress. We hope it will assist Zarthushtis to find employment, obtain services of Zarthushti professionals, buy/sell products, and establish their own business or profession. Several individuals present at the workshop agreed to act as Regional Coordinators to help Dr. Toorkey. The co-chairs of the Network are Tehemtani Arjani, Farshid Salamati, Meherwan Boyce and Aban Comisariat.

A one-page data sheet has been sent to the Regional Coordinators as well as to Associations, so that every Zarthushti professional, businessman, and businesswoman in North America will have an opportunity of being included in the directory. If you have not yet received the form, please fill out the copy on this page. Your suggestions will be welcome. Networking is an extremely powerful tool in today's society. However, its success depends solely on the willingness of individuals to provide the data. Please return the datasheet and your comments by January 31, 1995, to: Dr. Cyrus B. Toorkey, 1837 Meerbrook Court, Cherry Hill, NJ 08003, Tel: (609) 751-0633, Fax: (609) 751-6343.

### NORTH AMERICAN ZOROASTRIAN BUSINESS & PROFESSIONAL NETWORK DATA SHEET

(Please Type or Print in Black Ink Only)

Name:	Tel:
Address:	Fax:
Company Name:	
Company Address:	
Services offered by your company/organization:	
Please circle one: Owner/Partner/Employee	
Profession:	
No. of years with this organization:	
No. of years in this profession:	
Briefly describe the actual work you do in your organization:	
Other professional activities/side businesses you are involved with (Optional):	
Please tick which of the following you would like to be involved with:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing contacts with other Zoroastrians having similar businesses/profession.</li> <li>• Utilizing business/professional services offered by other Zoroastrians.</li> <li>• Offering other Zoroastrians placement in your organization.</li> <li>• Informing fellow Zoroastrians of placement opportunities in your business/organization.</li> <li>• Counseling other Zoroastrians regarding your business/profession.</li> <li>• Other. Please explain briefly:</li> </ul>	
Answers to the following part are optional.	
On a personal level which of the following would you be interested in (tick all that apply):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have Zoroastrian youth from other cities/countries stay in your home for a week or two during the summer and winter vacations.</li> <li>• Help Zoroastrians coming into your community to settle in.</li> <li>• Put up Zoroastrian students coming from abroad for a few days to help them transition into the USA.</li> <li>• Invite Zoroastrian families traveling through your region to spend a day or two so as to give them a break in their journey.</li> <li>• Network with other Zoroastrians by phone/fax/computers.</li> <li>• Other. (Please specify):</li> </ul>	

## ZARTHUSTI ENTERPRISE

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

### Physician and Musician — Available for Performances

**Maestro Adi Tamboli M.D.**  
Presents  
**Thought & Expression**  
Instrumental

1. Best Wishes (Mera Salam leja) - UDAN KHATOLA 3:05  
2. Memorable Good Old Days (Jane kaha gaye voh din) - MERA NAAM JOKER 5:20  
3. My Name Is Chin Chin Chu (Mera naam Chin Chin Chu) - HOWAH BRIDGE 3:28  
4. Caution Before Falling In Love (Babul para dhure) - JANGHEE 3:30  
5. Barbarian (Aahe koi muje janghe kaho) - JANGHEE 3:30  
6. Moonlit Night (Yeh raat yeh chandni phir kaha) - MAAL 3:30  
7. Humile (Dum Bhai Sam) - HARE TAMA HARE KRISHNA 3:00  
8. A Slow Walk (O dil-e-chir chah-e-love) - MARGA 3:30  
9. Love Satisfaction (Pyar mein karo CHORI CHORI) - MAAL 3:30  
10. Permissive Environment (Mere dil mein) - SPARVISH 3:30  
11. Life And Death Cycle On Earth (Usta Sa Naam Yaha) - MERA NAAM JOKER 3:30  
12. Krishna played by Dr. Adi Tamboli

Kawai SR-7 Organ, GUTWD Kong, Roland Super JD, Roland JV-680  
Kong OSRW, Process Pop Rock, Eroniq SQ-2, M-1 Kong, T-4 Kong, Roland E-20, Roland E-40  
Compact disc digital audio arrangement  
Multi-keyboard instrumental performing solo artist, Adi Tamboli M.D. The Orchestra Himesh  
Recording Engineers: Doug Herpin, Lou Costantino, and Mark Myrland  
Manufactured and printed by Disc Masters, Philadelphia, U.S.A.  
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MADE IN USA

"THOUGHT AND EXPRESSION" is Adi Tamboli's latest C.D. He had always 'thought' of doing charity work and this is how he puts his talents to work to 'express' the thought. A physician in private practice, Tamboli is also an accomplished musician. Using professional sound equipment including 13 synthesizers and keyboards, that give the effect of a full orchestra, Tamboli is available for private functions, such as Navjotes and Weddings and for professional meetings. He plays popular Indian and English melodies with a Western touch. Tamboli's recordings are available as a CD (for \$12) or as a cassette (for \$6), from TAM-CHAR, 119 Patterson Road, Weirton, WV 26062, Tel: (304) 723-5513. All profits will benefit needy Zarthustis in India.

### Translator - Interpreter in Six Languages

## I due poteri di Zoroastro

La religione zoroastriana è una religione fondata da un profeta, alla quale, appunto, è preferibile dare, per una esigenza di chiarezza, il nome del suo fondatore (zoroastrismo) piuttosto che quello del suo sommo dio (mazdeismo), dal momento che non sono mancate interpretazioni, anche recenti, che hanno proposto di relegare nel mito o nel rito la figura, in realtà storica, di Zoroastro.

Il dualismo etico, più o meno radicale, è senza dubbio il

poteri spirituali contrapposti è sempre rimasta sullo sfondo della teologia, della visione del mondo, del culto, della morale e delle pratiche rituali, specie purificatorie, dello zoroastrismo.

Altro carattere specifico dello zoroastrismo è quello di essere una religione fondata da un profeta vissuto in un ambiente religioso e culturale per molti versi simile a quello dell'India vedica, politeistico e fortemente ritualistico. In ciò lo Zoroastrismo si differenzia dalla più antica dell-

### THE TWO POWERS OF ZOROASTER

"The Zoroastrian religion is a religion founded by a prophet, Zoroaster and hence, it is preferable and rightly so, to attribute the name of the religion (Zoroastrianism) to its founder rather than to the supreme God (Mazdiyasni). There has been no dearth of interpretations even in present times, which tend to relegate Zoroaster to just a mythological figure rather than a historical reality ..."

Thus starts the 3-page article, published in an Italian newspaper in Verona, by Gherardo Gnoli, Professor of Religious History of Iran, at University of Las Sapienza di Roma. It is available upon request from the publisher of FEZANA Journal.

The article was translated from Italian, by BAKHTAVAR PRESS. Fluent in both written and spoken Italian, French, Gujarati, Hindi, Spanish and German, Bakhtavar will do translations of letters, articles, books or technical papers, from any of these languages into English and vice-versa. She is also available to serve as an interpreter. Contact Bakhtavar at 163 Pickwick Drive, Suite D, Schaumburg, Illinois 60193, Tel: (708) 582-0976.

### "Send-A-Gift" To India

[See advertisement this issue]

Have you ever wanted to send a gift to your loved ones on their birthdays, navjotes, wedding, New Year's or Navroze, or show you care with flowers for a funeral? A new business enterprise, Send-A-Gift, started by Rustom Engineer of Houston will deliver your gift, with a personal note, at very reasonable prices. Flowers start at \$19 for a bouquet of 1 dozen roses; Fancy cakes — Black Forest, Dutch Chocolate, Trifle and more, are \$33; Chocolates are \$25. He also sends Indian Mithai (\$29 per Kilo), dry fruits, nuts and more. Everything is of the highest quality, from the best available in town. Call Send-A-Gift at (800) 850-0702.

**Send-A-Gift**  
to  
**Bombay**

Send the finest quality  
**Flowers, Chocolates and**  
**Fancy Cakes** to your  
loved ones in Bombay  
with a personalized  
message from **\$19** and up.  
Call Rustom at  
**713-850-0702** (Houston)  
or **800-850-0702**

## JOBS

*Submissions and inquiries for this column may be made to: Dr. Rustom Kevala (see back cover for address).*

### Job Wanted

Seeking change — electrical engineer with 7 years' experience in digital and analog electronics, fixture designs, and systems. Currently employed with a major elevator manufacturer in Connecticut. BSEE 1986, Worcester Polytechnic Institute. MSEE 1991, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Contact Adil Das-tur at (203) 272-9278.at

### Heartening Word for College Grads

Education pays off for American workers, and college education *really* pays off, writes David Wessel in the Wall Street Journal. Despite the often-chronicled woes of newly degreed members of the current generation, young college graduates last year earned a whopping 75% more than comparable high-school graduates.

High schools are now turning out the "baby-bust" generation, graduating about 2.5 million each year. A decade ago, when baby boomers were coming through, high schools were graduating more than 3.1 million a year. Thus although nearly 63% of last year's high-school graduates were enrolled in college this fall, compared with 53% a decade ago, the total number of college graduates available in the labor market has shrunk; which might explain the widening gap in wages between college and high-school graduates.

## MATRIMONIALS

*FEZANA maintains a matrimonial file and will coordinate the initial contacts between interested parties. FEZANA does not assume any responsibility for verifying credentials; respondents are urged to make proper checks before entering into obligations. For further information, contact Roshan Rivetna (see back cover for address).*

**Male physician, 38**, interested in meeting Zarthusti woman. [M94-35].

**Parsi lady, 48**, well-established, well groomed with good sense of humor, seeks suitable marriage partner. Currently working for American company in Middle East. Traveled extensively in U.S. Call (713) 495-8441 or 541-3031. [F94-37]

**Parsi girl, 26**, working in Finance and Marketing area on East Coast. [F94-38].

**Gentleman, 35**, working for major hotel chain on East Coast. Divorced since 1987. Looking for mature, hardworking, educated, good home-maker. [M94-39].

**Air-India flight attendant, female, 32**, based in India, visits U.S. often. [F94-40].

**Beautiful female, 25**, educated and good-natured, presently living in India, seeks a compatible, educated, good-natured and fairly religious, non-smoker, Zarthusti male for matrimony. Visiting U.S. in 1994. Call (513) 829-7818. [F94-41].

**Petite girl, 27 years young**, recent MBA graduate. Enjoys music, theater, movies, sports. Would like to meet educated, fun-loving, single man with a good sense of humor. Call (301) 977-7817, ask for Behnaz. [F94-43].

**Mechanical Engineer, male, 29, 5' 8"**, working in U.S. seeks a compatible, educated, good-natured Zarthusti female for matrimony. Call Mrs. Mehroo Godiwalla (414) 797-9221. [M94-44].

**Computer programmer, male, 34**, employed with good Los Angeles company, well settled, non smoker, seeking Parsi female between 25 to 28, height 5'2" to 5'4", well educated, polite nature, good family background and wearing Sudreh-Kushti. Call (818) 598-8470. [M94-45].

**Very attractive, young 46, widow**, with two teenage children, professional, well-settled and financially very secure, in Canada for 20 years. Outgoing, loves theater, music, dancing, traveling. Call (604) 980-3402. [F94-46].

**Responsible male, 39, 5' 6"**, good income, living in Canada, likes sports, music, photography. Would like to meet girls with Western views. Call (403) 461-9522.

## PERSONALS

**Would love to renew friendship** with my best friend, Jamshid Pourvashi. Last met him when we graduated from Military Academy in Tehran in 1955. Anyone knowing his whereabouts, please contact Pasha Hatefi, 11631 Old Brookville Ct, Reston, VA 22094, Tel: (703) 471-3934.

**Mr. or Mrs. Dhun Ratanshaw Surti**, Montreal, Canada, please contact old colleague of Tata Power, Mr. or Mrs. Godrej Gandhi, U.S.A. at (408) 379-6181.

## MILESTONES

*FEZANA maintains records of births, navjotes (sudreh-pushi), weddings, deaths, and other major events such as graduations, navar and martab ceremonies, and other honors. Please send full information to Dr. Rustom Kevala (see back cover). Photos of navjotes, weddings and other celebrations are invited, and will be published as space permits.*

### Births

Natasha, a daughter, to Mehrwan and Pooran Aga, of Edmonton, Alberta, on August 6.

Aidan Gould Amrolia, a son, to Zubin Amrolia and Nancy Gould, of Vancouver area, on June 15.

Crystal Lee, a girl, to Lilly and Terry Creamer, granddaughter to Soonie and Bahadur Patell of Ontario, on June 11.

Hormuz, a boy, to Mehemoth and Monaz Kapadia of Columbus, Ohio, on August 9. Hormuz's older sister, Sanaya, is 3.

Shalina, daughter to Chris and Phiroza Sherback of Edmonton, Alberta, on March 17.

Sarosh, a boy, to Anahita and Hoshedar Tamboli of Tampa, Florida, on July 18. Sarosh's older brother is Cyrus.

### Navjote (Sudreh-Pushi) Ceremonies

Freyan Billimoria, Neville Clubwalla, Zarine Patel, and Freya Tarapore, all of New York, had their navjotes performed during Summer 1994.

Farishte, daughter of Narges and Fariborz Meherain, in Toronto at the Mehraban Guiv Darbe Mehr, on January 2, 1994.

Darius, son of Perviz and Kuroosh Mistry of Ontario area, on August 27.

Yashtar, son of Shaila and Percy Presswalla, of Ontario area, on August 13.

Havovie, daughter of Cyrus and Kashmira Suraliwalla, at Delta, B.C., on July 16.

Cambyasis and Burzin, children of Ruby and Cyrus Tampal, of Ontario, on June 11.

### Navar Initiations

Murad, son of Hira and Cyrus Antia of Toronto area, in Bombay on December 22, 1993.

### Weddings

The following list of four weddings performed by mobeds of the California Zoroastrian Center was kindly provided by Mobed Bahram Shahzadi:

Sohrab Aidun, son of Shahbahram and Kharman Aidun, to Mina Sar-e-Deh, daughter of Rustam and Parichehr Salamati Sar-e-Deh, on July 30.

Dariyush Irani, son of Mr. and Mrs. Merwan Irani, to Catalina Alcorer.

Khodayar Khodayari, son of Shahriyar and Sarvar Khodayari, to Ketayoon Mavandadi, daughter of Iraj and Taj Mavandadi, on July 29.

Jila Ordibeheshti, daughter of Rustam and Taj Ordibeheshti, to Jim Storer, on April 24.

Koroush, son of Simin and Asastoo Aflatooni, and

Mehernaz, daughter of Goolafroz and Pirooz Abteiaie, in Tehran on October 17, 1993.

Selena Elavia, daughter of Farokh and Roda Elavia of Prattville, Alabama, to Vistasp Jijina, son of Minoo and Aloo Jijina, in Chicago, on September 2.

Oshidari to Fariba Kaviani, at the Arbab Rustam Guiv Darbe Mehr in Vancouver, on June 25.

Moijan, daughter of Shireen and Mehraban Homaiee, and Babak, son of Shireen and Rostam Sohrabian, in Los Angeles, on December 17, 1993.

### Deaths

Dhun Byramjee, mother of Mehroo Aga of Bombay, and Marzi and Kermin Byramji, grandmother of Roshni, Deenah and Cyrus, in Oakville, Ontario, on January 10.

Aspi Cooper, 72, husband of Dina, father of Xerxes (Dilshad) Cooper of Vancouver, B.C. and Yasmin (Minoo) Narielwala of Ahmedabad, in Ahmedabad, on June 21.

Shiavux Daruwalla, brother of Sherroo Daruwalla of Chicago, in Bombay, on August 28.

Hira Dubash, 89, mother of Fali, of Agassiz, and Daulat (Russel) Hamer of U.K., grandmother of Soraya Dubash, at Chilliwack General Hospital in Vancouver, on August 4.

Noshir Kapadia, husband of Freny, father of Shernaz, Binaifer and Roxzan, son of Roshan and brother of Pervez, Kersi and Nani of St. Catherine's, Ontario, in Calgary on December 17, 1993.

Kaikhushroo Patrawala, father of Behroze (Minoo) Dutia of New York area, in Bombay, on October 5.

Hoshang Sorabji Wadia, husband of Gool, father of Arnavaaz Byram Mistry and Bapsy, and grandfather of Afreed and Delnavaz, of Ontario area, in Bombay, on January 15.

Tehmina Rivetna, 89, wife of Minocher, mother of Rohinton (Roshan) and Dara (Dinsoo) of Chicago, and Pervize (Krish) Krishnayya of New Jersey, grandmother of Zenobia, Jamshed, Cyrus, Raiomand, Zubin and Jehan, of heart failure, in Bombay, on October 13.

Dr. Keki Shroff, father of Persis (Faraydoon) Bahrassa, and grandfather of Farhad, Nazneen and Cyrus, of North Texas, in Bombay, on September 21.

Sheramai Wadia, mother of Jimmy (Khursheed) Wadia of New York area, on August 2.

Some of the dates for the following death notices are the dates on which memorial services were held at the California Zoroastrian Center.

Dr. Hooshmand Sahrif Abady, in Tehran, on May 15.

Mobed Ardeshir Azargoshasb, in Tehran, on February 13.

Sarvar Khosrow Bandary, in Tehran, on February 20.

Homayoon Rustam Bakhtari, in Tehran, on August 3.

Sohrab Rustam Bastani, in India, on February 29.

Firooz Rustam Kermany, in Orange County, California, on April 17.

Khodayar Shirmard Mazdayasni, in Tehran, on August 23.

Kaikhosrow Namvar Nami, in Tehran, on March 6.

Borzoo Ostavary, in Tehran, on January 9.

Bahram Rustam Pararesh, in India, on February 20.

Ardeshir Mehraban Sassani, in Yazd, Iran, on July 16.

Kaikhosrow Rustam Yalzadeh, in Southern California, on May 29.



## OBITUARY

### *Khodamorad Sioshansi, 1917-1994*

Khodamorad Sioshansi, who as Deputy Commander of the Imperial Iranian Army in 1978, held the highest military rank a Zarthusti has ever achieved in modern day Iran, passed away on July 7, 1994, in Walnut Creek, California.

Born in 1917 in Kerman, Iran, Khodamorad started his long military career, after graduation from the Military Academy with top honors in 1939. Following graduation from the US Army Staff and Command College in Leavenworth, Kansas in 1950, he returned to Iran to teach in the Military Academy. He translated many of the Army staff manuals from English to Farsi. By 1955 he was promoted to the rank of Colonel.

After a two-year service in the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) in Turkey, Khodamorad quickly rose from the rank of Brigadier General (in 1960), to Controller General of the Imperial Iranian Armed Forces, to Major General (in 1964). His promotion to Lt. General in 1968 made him the highest ranking Zarthustrian in the modern-day Iran. The highlight of his long military career was his promotion to Adjutant General to His Imperial Majesty in 1974. He retired from service in 1978.

Just prior to the Iranian Revolution in 1979, Khodamorad came to the U.S. and settled in California for what was a bitter-sweet life in exile. A man of high principles and integrity, who believed in the virtues of hard work and discipline, he loved his country and strove to serve it well.

## EVENTS AND HONORS

CYRUS CAMA, URMEZ DAVAR, USHEEN DAVAR, CYRUS DEBOO, NATASHA GANDHI, CYRUS HIRJIBEHDIN, AVAN PATEL and SAM SHROFF were awarded scholarships of \$100 each by ZAGNY to pursue undergraduate studies. In addition, loan scholarships totaling \$4,000 will be distributed to them on a need basis.

SAM BHADA, General Manager of St. James Court Hotel in London, raised over 17,000 pounds sterling, for the "New Premises Fund" of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe, running 26 miles in the London Marathon on April 17.

MANECK BHUJWALA has been appointed member of Stanford Associated Ministries (SAM) to represent Zarthustis to the Stanford community. Zarthustis were formally represented at the new student

orientations, and Maneck offered information to inquiring students.

ZANE DALAL of Los Angeles [see *FEZANA Journal*, Summer 1994] was a guest conductor at the Utah Symphony in September, with Ian Fountain on the piano, for a gala event launching the St. Paul's Cathedral Fund in the U.S. during the official visit of the Lord Mayor of London, Paul Newell. Dalal's repertoire at this concert included the Military March in D Major from Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance*, Beethoven's Symphony No.5 in C Minor, and Tchaikovsky's Concerto No.1. He was also invited to record a C.D. with the Utah Symphony under the auspices of award-winning producer John Mosley and Night Technologies (NTI) of Provo, Utah. Its new 20-bit surround sound technology, using NTI's EQ3 equalizer and patented circuitry, eliminates all distortion. It has been hailed as the greatest evolutionary breakthrough in sound by top experts in music recording, film, broadcast and live concert fields.

BOMI DAMKEVALA, past-President of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago was honored by ZAC during the Association's Navruz function, for his years of selfless and devoted service to the Chicago community, including his help during the construction of the Darbe Mehr. During his four-year Presidency, ZAC achieved some lofty goals: hosted the Parliament of World's Religions, the Mobeds Council meeting, planned for the Chicago Youth Congress, and restored the Darbe Mehr to like-new condition.



ZARIN DASTUR, 21, daughter of Amy and Maneck Dastur of Los Angeles, was second runner-up at the 10th annual Miss Asian American Beauty Pageant 1994, in Fresno, California. She was also awarded a \$1,000 cash prize and the title of "Miss Asian Princess", as well as the title of "Miss Asia California". For her incredible classical ballet performance as the Dying Swan (in the style of the legendary ballerina Anna Pavlova), Dastur won the "Best Talent"

award and cash prize of \$500. Among the judges was former Miss India PERSIS KHAMBATTA, famous for her role in the movie *Star Trek*.

DOLLY DASTOOR's article: "Re-focusing the Vision of Zarathushtra", appeared in the September 1994 issue of *Ecumenism*, which was devoted to Women of Faith in the World's Religions. *Ecumenism* is published by the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism in Quebec. Dastoor's article reflected on the equal status of men and women in early Zarthusti scriptures, the changes in roles and onset of male dominance during the Parthian and Sassanian periods, and the challenges faced by Zarthusti women today.

With his election as Mayor of Brighton in May, WORSHIPFUL MAYOR TEHMTON FRAMROZE becomes U.K.'s first Zarthusti mayor. Framroze, who hails from Zanzibar, stood for his formal portrait in Parsi attire with the traditional 'fento'.



Mojdeh Harvesf



Cyrus Harvesf

MOJDEH HARVESF, daughter of Dr. Keikhosrow and Mary Harvesf of Jacksonville, Florida, has received a four year scholarship totaling \$45,000, to Jacksonville University. Mojdeh, a Junior, studying pre-Med (biology) with a minor in chemistry and Math, is on the National Honor Society, the National Dean's List, is on the Who's Who Among American High School Students, and is Vice President of Student Government, the French Club and the Junior Class. Mojdeh has also received awards in Piano competitions and for her drawings, acrylic paintings and ceramics.

This year, her younger brother, CYRUS HARVESF, received the Presidential Academic Fitness Award in recognition of educational excellence by meeting outstanding academic standards (competency in core subjects and first in math and science) at the primary school level.

CYRUS HIRJIBEHDIN was elected as the President of the Zoroastrian Student Chapter at Stanford University, California.

DR. PALLAN R. ICHAPORIA has been selected to be in the *Marquis Who's Who in the East — 1995-1996*, and cited as "having demonstrated outstanding achievement in his field of interpreting and translating ancient archaic pre-Islamic Iranian literature for over 25 years, thus contributing to the betterment of contemporary society."

HIS EXCELLENCY JAMSHED MARKER, Ambassador Extra-ordinary and Plenipotentiary at the United Nations, and Permanent Representative to the United Nations for Pakistan, was appointed to be the President of the Security Council of the U.N. for the July 1994 sessions. Mr. Marker has served as a diplomat for Pakistan for the last 30 years, and has been Pakistan's Ambassador to several countries notably France, in recent years. Marker is also the President elect for the Economic and Social Council of the U.N.

MINU AND DR. (MRS) MEHROO PATEL were honored by the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago at their Navruz function, for their years of outstanding community service, including behind-the-scenes help to countless people, in the Chicago area. Their services in their own fields of statistics and medicine were also recognized.

In a historic decision on August 17, the Board of the University System of Georgia, appointed DR. BEHERUZ SETHNA President of West Georgia College. Dr. Sethna becomes the first ethnic minority person to become President of such an institution (aside from Presidents of historically black colleges), and the first person of Indian origin to be appointed to the Presidency of such an institution, in America. A Ph.D. from New York's Columbia University, and an electric engineer from I.I.T. Bombay, Dr. Sethna has also held high positions at Lamar University in Texas, Lever Brothers and Proctor and Gamble. Author of *Research Methods in Marketing and Management*, and over 35 scholarly papers, Dr. Sethna, has been a Fulbright scholar, and has been nationally honored in his areas of expertise — Marketing, Product Management, MIS, Computer-Integrated Manufacturing and Communications.

[From *Jame Jamshed*, September 25, 1994]

FARANGIS K. SHAHROKH (YEGANEGI) was honored as "Woman of the Year" by the Iranian Women's Studies Foundation, at its annual Seminar, at UCLA, in June. The Foundation honors one Iranian woman every year for her services to Iran and Iranians, particularly women. The Seminar was co-sponsored by UCLA, Harvard, and Columbia Universities. Mrs. Shahrokh's many achievements were shown on a videotape specially prepared for the occasion.

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*The FEZANA Journal is the official publication of Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA). The views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of FEZANA.*

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