THE GOOD RELIGION
A LOOK AT ZARATHUSTI SCRIPTURES AND GLIMPSES OF OUR FUTURE:
The Sixth World Zoroastrian Congress,
The FEZANA Annual General Meeting, and
The Tenth North American Zoroastrian Congress

In whose birth and growth the waters and plants flourished,
In whose birth and growth the waters and plants increased,
And in whose birth and growth
The entire progressive creation shouted with joy:
Hail to us, for a spiritual leader is born,
Zarathust-Spitama!
Henceforth the Good Religion of worshipping the Wise One
Will spread all over the earth.

[Fravardin Yasht, stanzas 93-94]
Light Up That Fire

In this issue, four articles provide overviews of our holy scriptures: how and when they came about, what they contain, and their importance in our rituals, festivals and daily life. The articles are somewhat overlapping, but provide different perspectives to provide a better understanding of the most important texts of the Zarthusti Religion.

Preservation of religion requires much more than the recitation of its scriptures and prayers. It requires a true understanding and internalization of its teachings. Undoubtedly, our forefathers had internalized the religion, passing on their wisdom from generation to generation even when knowledge of the language of our scriptures was lost. Our priests and learned men of the past performed yeoman services by preserving our texts orally and in writing. Through ritual interpretations, they transformed our prophet’s message into daily, monthly, and seasonal routines for the common man. For our religion to have survived the destructions, holocausts and massacres of the past is indeed a miracle and an affirmation of the enduring message of our prophet, Asho Zarthust.

Almost 200 years ago, we started on a quest to truly understand once again the language and message of our scriptures. In India and Iran, we produced a number of scholars who not only understood and lived our religion, but also spent lifetimes translating and explaining our ancient texts to everyone who cared to listen, all over the world. The glory and the strength of the message of our prophet that was uncovered is awesome indeed!

Today, we are looking beyond preservation, beyond survival. We are looking at leadership and growth. The Sixth World Zoroastrian Congress in Tehran was a joyous celebration of our faith in our future. The theme of the Tenth North American Zoroastrian Congress was: Leadership, Past, Present, and Future. Speaker after speaker attested to the fervor with which we feel the message of hope and goodwill that pervades the Good Religion. Young and old, men and women, participated in the rituals of the Congresses, proclaimed their faiths and hopes and went home resolved to continue their quest to put our religion firmly on the map of the world once again.

Please read President Dolly Dastoor’s message. Read the stories of the Congresses and feel the excitement of planning for our future. Read about the journey through Iran and enjoy the photos. Experience the warmth and fervor of our youth. Then make a pledge to rake the embers and light up that fire of the Good Religion that is ever-burning in your hearts.

Rustom Kevada
Chair, FEZANA Publications

FROM THE PRESIDENT

This has been a summer of exciting and interesting activities for the Zarthusti community around the world and in North America. In June 1996, together with more than 25 Zarthustis from North America of all different ages, I was fortunate enough to visit Iran and attend the Sixth World Zoroastrian Congress in Tehran, June 19-23, 1996. It was a wonderful, eye-opening experience.

Meeting Zarthustis from different parts of the world made one realize that the realities of Zarthustis of India, Iran and North America are very different, shaped by differing socio-cultural environments. We think, talk, walk, eat and dress differently, but we are all nevertheless Zarthustis. The agiaries are open to all in Iran and open to none except Zarthustis in India, but we still practice the same religion. Religion and not race appears to be the common factor binding us together.

The natural adaptation process was used and is being used by the Zarthustis of India to suit their reality as a minority in a Hindu majority. The same process was used and is being used by the Zarthustis of Iran to suit their reality as a minority in an Islamic majority. We also are a minority in a Judeo-Christian majority and we also have...
to adapt to suit our reality. This is an evolutionary process which should not cause concern or alarm to anybody.

At the Tehran Congress the delegates from North America among whom were the President, Assistant Secretary, and Past President of FEZANA, as well as the Editor and Publisher of FEZANA Journal, together with five present and 5 past Presidents of Member Associations of the Federation and three young adults (who were our best ambassadors). We were all very well respected and the achievements of FEZANA, in a short span of 10 years, were much appreciated. We were looked upon as a young, vibrant community full of hopes for a bright future. We were looked upon as a group of people ready to sift the wheat from centuries of chaff and do what is right for the community, having the courage to do what is right for the community, having the courage to make decisions for the community however difficult they may be. They expect this from us not because we are superior but because we are the first generation of immigrants in a free world.

Immigrants have been known to be made of sterner material, and qualities of strength, adaptability, resilience, and analytic perception are generally their best attributes. They are always ready to accept challenges. People of my generation owe it to our compatriots in India and Iran to show leadership in forging a new community identity based on the tripod of Knowledge, Spirituality and Religiosity (defined as reverence for rituals and traditions). They look towards North America to show leadership in developing a World Council of Zarathusti Federations, and they look to North America for developing a true understanding of our religion.

And your elected representatives at the Annual General Meeting of FEZANA did just that in San Francisco. They showed collective leadership at a Strategic Planning session designed to enable the community to look at itself and plan for the next 25 years. The plan evolved through general consensus, which would be attainable through grass-roots efforts.

Once the vision was established, the first step towards an action plan was formulated where each person present took responsibility for a piece of the plan. The plan is not to be developed or implemented by one central flame of fire but by a thousand flames of individual effort, yours and mine. To the best of my knowledge this is the first time the Zarathusti community anywhere in the world has deliberated collectively for its future and taken responsibility for its implementation.

At last our leadership is moving away from our preoccupation with survival on this continent. The perceived notion of the constant fight for survival has made it impossible for the psyche to participate fully in the human experience, for survival requires the individual to adopt a defensive attitude and to refuse openness to others. In our zeal for survival, the leadership has become defensive, which in turn, had made us confrontational towards ourselves and each other. We were stifling and suffocating the voices of our young adults, we were frustrating our youth, and as adults we were inflicting wounds on each other we were not even aware of. We were bleeding and we did not know.

But my fellow Zarathustis, this will have to stop. With your help, effort and motivation we will begin the healing process. With your help we will bridge the gap between “we” and “they” and we will all be “us” once again. Together the thousand flames of light can lead the way. Will you join me to bear the torch, and light the flames, on this exciting new path of mutual respect and harmony as we work towards building our Zarathusti Nation? Ushita te.

Dolly Dastoor
President, FEZANA

FEZANA AGM, San Francisco

Representatives from 14 of the 21 Member Associations attended FEZANA's Ninth Annual General Meeting in San Francisco, California, July 3-4, 1996. Following the benediction, Dr. Jijibhoy Patel, President of the Zoroastrian Association of Northern California, welcomed FEZANA Officers, Committee Chairpersons and Member Associations to San Francisco.

In her President's Report, Dolly Dastoor stated that she was pleased that progress had been made in four areas that she had identified as goals for FEZANA two years ago when she was elected President: (a) increase in awareness for FEZANA; (b) increase involvement for FEZANA; (c) widening the knowledge base of the religion; and (d) setting internal structures. She added: “It cannot be emphasized enough that the achievement of FEZANA is the achievement of each Association.” Dastoor reported that at the Sixth World Zarathustrian Congress in Tehran, she and other delegates from North America were well respected and our achievements much appreciated.

Dolly urged her generation to show the leadership in forging a new community identity based on a tripod of Knowledge, Spirituality and Religiosity (defined as reverence for rituals and traditions) as taught by our Prophet Asho Zarath. She requested: “As we move to the next millennium, there is a renewed thirst for spirituality, especially among the youth; so let us help our youth to seek this out, let us
develop a happy marriage between spirituality and religiosity for each has its rightful place in our conscious schemata."

In the Treasurer’s Report, Sarosh Collector presented the statement for the year ended March 31, 1996:

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<th>Fund</th>
<th>Year Ended March 1995</th>
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Election Results: Dolly Dastoor was re-elected President, Sarosh Collector was re-elected Treasurer, and Maharukh Motafram was elected Assistant Secretary. Framroze Patel continues as Vice-President, and Katayun Kapadia continues as Secretary. Services of the outgoing Assistant Secretary, Mehran Sepehri were greatly appreciated.

Awards Committee. Dinshaw Joshi, Chair, reported that 31 nominations were received for the five categories of Achievement Awards. Mr. Jamshed Guzdar, Chairman of Bombay Parséé Panchayéet and a prominent businessman of Mumbai, donated $2,000 to be applied towards the purchase of a trophy in the name of Jamshed and Shirin Guzdar. It was decided that the trophy for FEZANA’s Excellence in Profession/Business Award be sponsored from this donation.

Congress Committee. Chair Bella Tata reported that Zoroastrian Society of Ontario, Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York and Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago had indicated interest in hosting the Eleventh North American Zoroastrian Congress, in 1998. Subsequently, ZSO and ZAC withdrew; hence ZAGNY will host the next Congress.

At the last AGM, it was decided that Houston would host, on behalf of FEZANA, the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress in the year 2000, and Dolly Dastoor would spearhead this Congress. The Trustees of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet as well as the delegates, namely the representatives of the various anjumans in India have all agreed in a letter dated January 19, 1996 received by Dolly Dastoor from J. N. Guzdar, Bombay, that the 7th World Zoroastrian Congress to be held in the year 2000, will be organized by FEZANA in North America. FEZANA will facilitate obtaining visas for delegates from Iran.

Census/Directory Project. Chair Noshir Langrana distributed the first edition of the FEZANA directory. He stated that it took two years of coordinated effort to compile this data on census and directory, and he thanked Viraf Commissariat, Sheroo Kanga, Anahita Sidhwa, Yasmin Ghadiali, Firoza Fitch, Teshtar Irani, and Kaika Clubwala for the many valuable hours contributed by them to this project a success. The directory is available at US $10 per copy [see page 66].

Education Committee. Kayonarsh Mehta, Chair, and Villy Gandhi, Co-Chair, distributed a comprehensive Zarthusí Religion Education Curriculum that outlines various aspects of our religion: Doctrine, Scriptures, Prayers, Rituals, Ethics and History. The curriculum is distributed in six levels modeled on the format of the Zoroastrian Association of Chicago. Each level can be covered in two years. The same curriculum can be used for Adult Education, at an accelerated pace. For associations that cannot have six levels of classes, several levels can be grouped together to suit their needs.

External Affairs. Chair Rohinton Rivetna participated in a multitude of Interfaith programs, including “Development of World Community” by the UN in New York on September 22. He has filed an application for FEZANA to have NGO status with the UN. Rivetna thanked Khorsheid Jungalwalla, Anahita Sidhwa, Kersi Shroff, and Maneck Bhujwala for promoting participation in interfaith pro-
grams in their respective cities. He continues to participate actively as a Trustee of the Council for a Parliament of the Worlds’ Religions and is also working with Bishop Swing of California, to move towards the formation of a permanent global organization of religions United Religions, on the same model as the United Nations. He presented a paper at the Tehran World Congress promoting the formation of a council of Zoroastrian federations and continues to spearhead that initiative.

Publications Committee. Dr. Rustom Kevala, Chair, reported that the FEZANA Journal is distributed to about 1550 households. The Winter 1995 issue on Zarathusi enterprise was reprinted by Parsiana at its own expense, and generated much favorable publicity. The Journal is looking for talented youth for the Youthfully Speaking section, that has thus far been admirably covered by Jim Engineer. Aaron Rustom (Houston), Burzine Unwalla (Houston) and Tanaz Billimoria (California) have joined the team. The addition of Mehrdad Khosraviani has strengthened the subscriptions and record-keeping functions. In order to bring in new ideas and make best use of our community’s varied talents, the Journal will invite guest and contributing editors to the editorial board from time to time.

Roshan Rivetna, Publisher of FEZANA Journal mentioned that the departments of the Journal were designed to: keep the community informed, to educate the reader in our history, religion and traditions; and to inspire and encourage communal growth. Cost for the last four issues was $14,220. Income from advertisers, subscribers and donations was $18,904. She urged Member Associations to encourage members to be paid-up subscribers.

Welfare Committee. Chair Kaemarz Doshiwala reported work on the following programs: Zarathusi Credit Card; develop and circulate to the membership for their approval, plans and charters for the Education Trust and Med-

Faces at the San Francisco AGM. Top, Mehran Sepehri, Assistant Secretary and Bella Tata, Congress Committee Chairperson. Above, Ketayun Kapadia, Secretary and Sarosh Collector, Treasurer. Below, from left, Farrokh Namdaran, Khorsheed Jungalwalla, Gev Nentin, Farshid Salamat, Jimmy Mistry, Rohinton Rivetna, Behram Kapadia, Shida Anoushiravani, Dolly Dastoor, President of FEZANA, Dinshaw Joshi, and Siloo and Dr. Jijibhoy Patel.
Planning for Our Future

Report on the Strategic Planning Sessions at the FEZANA Annual General Meeting.

By Rustom Kevala

THE NEXT MILLENNIUM APPROACHES

As the next millennium approaches, North American Zarthustis are thinking about their future: their children and grandchildren, retirement, and eventual death! Will their grandchildren be Zarthustis? Will their religion be recognized for its contributions to the free world? Will their legacies be meaningful and enduring? As a new initiative from FEZANA President Dolly Dastoor, a special Strategic Planning exercise was held during the FEZANA AGM in San Francisco. The exercise was chaired by Rustom Kevala. It was organized into three sessions, spread over the afternoon and evening of July 3, and morning of July 4.

THE SESSIONS

The first session, chaired by Mehran Sepehri, articulated and discussed the visions. Dolly Dastoor, Rohinton Rivetna, Mehran Sepehri, Farrokh Mistree, Jal Birdy (in absentia), Kayomarsh Mehta, Rustom Kevala, Pervin Mistry (in absentia), Ardeshir Anoushiravani, Farshid Salamati, Bella Tata, Adi Davar, Farrokh Namdaran, Anahita Sidhwa, Roshan Rivetna, Behram Kapadia, and many others presented and discussed their visions for the Zartusti community in the next 30 years. [Some visions were published in the Summer 1996 issue of the FEZANA Journal].

The second session, very effectively orchestrated by Farrokh Mistree, analyzed the visions, and identified 'shared spaces', or collective goals for the community and its organizations. During this session, each participant was asked to write down his/her personal goals within these shared spaces and what they would personally do to enhance those goals. During the third and final session, participants separated into smaller focus groups to discuss strategy, develop milestones, and make personal commitments to achieve the shared space goals.

STARTLING OUTCOME

What emerged from these sessions was startling and heartwarming. Our past history indicates that individuals are suspicious of leaders with their personal agendas that may conflict with the unspoken ‘goal’ for the community, namely ‘survival’. But ‘survival’ did not even appear in anyone’s vision. There was tremendous enthusiasm and interest to unify the community and move on to bigger and better things. Everyone present gave their commitment to continue to work together and contribute positively to achieve the visions.

The shared space can be classified into four major collective goals:

- Learning to Live a Zarthusti Life.
- Thousand Points of Light.
- Internal Infrastructures.
- External Infrastructures.

These goals are purposely left very general to allow individual expression and interpretation. Clearly ‘Learning to Live a Zarthusti Life’ can mean different things to different persons. But if a person has fire in his (or her) belly, then who is going to stop them from pursuing their goal? That is the meaning of the “Thousand Points of Light”. Each individual should be free to follow his dream; but without knocking someone else down, without acrimony, and without interference from...
someone who does not agree with his direction! But if everyone followed their divergent paths, it would cause chaos. The big picture, the collective goal of ‘Learning to Live a Zarthusti Life’, may become lost.

That is why we need the ‘Internal infrastructures’. The development of Internal Infrastructures turns out to be an extremely important goal if we are to achieve what we want to achieve. Internal Infrastructures include development along three types of activities: community organizations at the local and North American levels to channel our energies and talents; economic activities to empower our community, our aged and our youth; and most importantly, ecumenical activities to meet the spiritual and religious needs of the community, including setting up mechanisms for empowering our priesthood. This latter activity is in turn linked to the very first and overriding goal, that of Learning to Live a Zarthusti Life.

All of this leads to the final goal, that of developing enduring ‘External Infrastructures’. This is the externalization of our religion that will literally bring us out of the woodwork. We need to develop links with other religious organizations, interfaith groups, the outside world. How do we reach out to Zarthustis in different parts of the world? How do we manage our future research activities? How do we put our religion back on the map of the world?

It is clear that all the goals are inter-twined, and we need to move simultaneously along all these paths, but in unison and in one direction.

This is a tremendous leap in a direction we have not ventured before. We must move together and in an unwavering direction if we want to remain a strong and vibrant community in the 21st century. The existence of FEZANA is a tremendous asset to help us set this course. Let us use it wisely.

NEXT COURSE OF ACTION

The next course of action is for the various group leaders to submit their written reports to Rustom Kevala by early August. The reports will contain specific objectives and milestones; action items: what needs to be accomplished in the next 3 months, 1 year, and after that; and specific commitments from individuals. Dolly Dastoor will then coordinate the various goals, milestones and action plans, and put together a coordinated final plan for review by all Associations. Those who could not attend the Strategy Planning Sessions, but are interested in being a part of the action, are urged to contact the focus group leaders listed below:

Leading a Zarthusti Life
Khorshed Jungalwala, (508) 443-6858

Thousand Points of Light
Anahita Sidhwa (214) 462-1553

Internal Infrastructures
Organizations
Adi Davar (703) 354-3072
Economic Activities
Gev Nentin (516) 462-0763
Ecumenical Activities
Kayomarsh Mehta, (708) 974-1238

External Infrastructures
Rustom Kevala (301) 948-1777

Dastoor plans to put the Action Plan into action before the next FEZANA AGM. A report will also be published in the FEZANA Journal.

At the Strategic Planning Sessions: Left, Focus Group discussion. Below, Rustom Kevala and Mehran Sepehri; Farrokh Mistree.
FEZANA Tenth Anniversary Party

About 85 FEZANA officers, Member Association Representatives and guests celebrated FEZANA’s Tenth Anniversary with a dinner party on July 4, organized by outgoing FEZANA Assistant Secretary, Mehran Sepehri, at His Lordship’s Restaurant, in Berkeley. A good time was had by all, as guests wined and dined, and raised their glasses in toasts to the ten-year-old FEZANA. The evening ended with a 4th of July fireworks display over the spectacular panorama of San Francisco and the Pacific Ocean.

Directory and Yellow Pages Available

Due to the committed efforts of FEZANA Census Committee Chairperson Noshir Langrana, and his team “Zoroastrians in North America”, a directory and Yellow Pages of Zoroastrians in North America is now available, for $10 per copy. For ordering information, please see “Books and Such”, in this issue.

Quantum Physics and the Gathas

On April 14, Shahriar Shahriari of Vancouver presented a workshop comparing the Gathas to actual experiments in Quantum Physics. Beginning with a prayer from Napoleon Hill, he went on to talk of Einstein’s Theory of Relativity, and new theories on matter and time. Interspersed with mind exercises, he touched on verses from the Yasna, expanding on their meaning. A good way to learn about the Gathas, and a great way to spend an afternoon with friends and a well-prepared presenter. [In Search of the Truth, June 1996]

Community Jashan

Houston Zarthustis came together at an open-air community Jashan on April 29, at the home of Perozo and Shernaz Bhandara. Performed by Ervads Bomanshah Sanjana, Kurush Sanjana, Maneck Sidhwa, Farrok Desai, and Bujor Dastur, it was attended by over 150 Zarthustis ranging in age from 1 to 80.

Mysticism in the Gathas

Ervad Kaikhosru Dastoor, scholar and teacher of Avestan scriptures and mystical sciences for over 50 years, conducted the sixth annual retreat on “Mysticism in the Gathas” under the auspices of the Mazdeyasnie Connection, June 29-July 5. The Mazdaznan Center, in the picturesque coastal town of Encinatas near San Diego, with a magnificent view of the Pacific Ocean, offered an ideal setting for the retreat.

What is the divine message in the Gathas? Is this message only for Zarthustis or is it for the human race? What do the Gathas say about other religions? What is the practical lesson for us in our daily lives from the Gathas? Ervd Dastoor provided insight into these and other questions, revealing the esoteric side of the message in the Gathas. Contact The Mazdeyasnie Connection at (714) 995-8765.

Interfaith Activities in Stanford and Palo Alto

Maneck Bhujwala taught the Unit on Zoroastrianism at the spring Quarter class on Religions of the World, offered by the Palo Alto Institute of Religion. Other religions covered in this 9-week course, under the auspices of the Church Educational System, were Lutheranism, Buddhism, Catholicism, Baha’i, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam and Mormonism.

As a leader of the Stanford Associated Ministries, for Zoroastrianism, Bhujwala joined the formal procession of religious leaders and sat on the dais at the Stanford University Baccalaureate Ceremony for graduates of the Class of 1996 at Stanford.

BC Defines A Zoroastrian

At an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia on June 16, chaired by Bella Tata, a majority of over 75% of members approved a Constitutional revision to define “A Zoroastrian.” After over three years of meetings and discussion, four proposals were put to vote. The proposal that finally went through, on the second ballot is shown below.

"A Zoroastrian is a person who attests to be a true believer and follower of the religion as propounded by Asho Zarathushtra in the Gathas, and who subscribes to established Zoroastrian habitual or customary practices"

Further, eligibility for Ordinary Membership to the ZSBC is open to:

Any Zoroastrian, his spouse or his child residing in British Columbia, who is either:
born of both Zoroastrian parents and who has been initiated into the Zoroastrian religion;

or

born of both Zoroastrian parents, but who has not been initiated into the Zoroastrian religion due to circumstances;

or

born of one Zoroastrian parent; who has not been initiated into the Zoroastrian religion and who is not practicing another religion; but declares his willingness to be initiated;

or

not born of Zoroastrian parents, but who has been initiated into the Zoroastrian religion.

Visit to the Presidio

About 12 delegates to the Congress in San Francisco, visited the Interfaith Center on the grounds of The Presidio in San Francisco on July 5, for an evening of interfaith discussion and dialog.

Two years ago, stewardship of the Presidio passed from the US Army to the National Park Service to become part of the Golden Gate National Recreation area. The Main Chapel is now the home of the "Interfaith Center at the Presidio", a nonprofit organization for the purpose of interfaith collaboration and friendship.

Public Sudreh Pushi (Navjotes)

Over 300 people attended the Council of Iranian Mobeds Seventh Anniversary celebration and public Sudreh Pushi (Navjote) at the Rustam Guiv Darbe Mehr near Los Angeles, on May 4. Mobeds Mehraban Zartoshti, Fariborz Shahzadi, Bahram Shahzadi, and Keikhosro Khorsheidian officiated, along with nine young Pish-Mobedyars (assistant mobeds-in-training).

CIMNA took a bold step this year by announcing that the Mobedyar training program would not be limited to those born into a Mobed family. Last year, the Council took a revolution-
in our community, and then project it outside our faith for all humankind.
United Religions is still in its embryonic stage. Input from interested readers will be welcome.

Rohinton Rivetna

Austin, Texas, Anyone?
While there is no formal Zoroastrian Association in Austin, Texas, Aspi and Ketty Wadia, with traditional Texan hospitality, have offered to help Zoroastrian newcomers to the area at any time, and welcome them to the city of Austin. They can be reached at (512) 263-3131.

Chicago Plans Darbe Mehr Expansion
At a Special Meeting on June 9, the Building Expansion Committee of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago submitted preliminary plans for the expansion of the Arbab Rustom Guiv Darbe Mehr. "We have taken the first steps in our Master Plan as a visionary North American pioneering community", says Dilshad-Antia, newly appointed President of the ZAC, "The vision of the future propels us to consider the needs created by growth." The wish-list includes expansion of the Prayer Room (with provision for performance of inner ceremonies), Children's facilities, storage area, the hall, kitchen and parking lot, and further down the line, a new annex building.

ZSO Celebrates 25 Years
The Zoroastrian Society of Ontario will celebrate its 25th anniversary this year, with an Inaugural Jashan on September 8, and a Gala Silver Jubilee Banquet at the Thornhill Community Center, on September 20, with dinner, dancing, entertainment and valuable door prizes and raffles, including a car. Several other events are also planned by ZSO for this celebratory year.

Issues Facing Contemporary Zoroastrians in North America
An interactive seminar on Issues Facing Contemporary Zoroastrians in North America was held May 25 and 26, 1996, at George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia, co-sponsored by WZO, the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington (ZAMWI), FEZANA, and the George Mason University Persian Club.
The principal driving force behind the seminar, Adi Davar, noted that: "Little constructive dialog or interaction is presently taking place on key issues facing the young adults of our community. The seminar will make a beginning in the direction of creating a partnership between young adult and older Zoroastrians that would enable the establishment of enduring institutional approaches for resolving the issues."
The speakers (ranging in age between 23 and 33) included: Mazda Antia, an active mobed, and a graduate of the University of Illinois with a degree in Health Policy and Management; Armait Homavazir, currently finishing her BA at the University of Toronto, who last year worked and traveled to BC, Singapore, Malaysia and India; Khursheed Khurody, who received the State of California's Honors Award for social service in 1989 for pioneering work in the performing arts with gifted children of Vietnamese refugees, and is currently a graduate student in Indology at Harvard, and President of the South Asia Forum; Rabe'eh Mahooti, who has a Master of Science in electrical engineering from Portland State University, and works as a designer for Tektronix; Trity Pourbahrami, an honors student at the University of British Columbia, pursuing degrees in Physics and Biology, and who was a representative at the UN50 interfaith youth conference "Rediscovering Justice" in San Francisco; Aaron Rustom, who is working for a BA in Communications at the University of Texas in Austin, and is currently on the editorial team of FEZANA Journal; and Behram Varjvand, who believes that the fall of the Shah and the resulting Iranian diaspora have precipitated a Zoroastrian renaissance in North America, completed a Post-doctoral Fellowship in Neurobiology and is now starting his residency in Radiology at UCLA, with a goal of doing research in neurobiology using MRI to study brain function.
The Issues. Most speakers identified lack of unity as the biggest issue facing us. This includes religious disharmony and the debates over the divergent cultures of Indian and Iranian Zarthustis. People accuse each other of being orthodox or liberal. This bitterness has spilled over the Internet and even into the Bombay press and prevented the unification of the community in several large cities. The younger generation is disgusted by this mess and it was suggested that the undignified behavior of their elders sometimes contributes to the youngsters becoming disenchanted with religion and marrying outside the community.
The youth, whether born in North America or not, think of themselves as American Zarthustis. To them, being orthodox or liberal, or being of Parsi or Iranian origin seems immaterial. Highest priority should be given to the development of better religious education tools that all Zarthustis can use. They expressed the hope that if we can truly understand and live the religion in our

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everyday lives, cultural and religious harmony will prevail.

Almost all the speakers belong to what they call the 'lost generation'. Secondly, they want to externalize our religion. That is, they want to aggressively share their religious beliefs with others outside our community. This will help nurture their religious identity. Our youngsters are proud of our religion and want to pass it on to their children. And they want the latent talent of the 'lost generation' — those between 25 and 35, to be fully utilized. They want to be given more responsibility. They want to be given leadership roles in FEZANA committees and association affairs.

Solutions. The young adults feel that the key to our future is unity. We must be unified in culture as well as in religion. We need to celebrate our heritage and common ancestry instead of letting our cultural differences divide us. The key towards achieving this unity is religious education. Understanding, simplification and clarification of our holy texts and rituals will also help. We must re-establish the linkages between our religious scriptures and our values. Conclusions. After the speakers presented their views, three respected community leaders: Farhang Mehr, Kaikhosrov Irani and Farrokh Mistree were asked to summarize their understanding of the issues and suggest approaches for resolving them. The discussion that followed was very supportive of the views expressed by the speakers and the elders. However, some in the audience felt that there was too much emphasis on change. They felt that the so-called 'orthodox' side was not well-represented. The very fact that this question was raised indicates that we are still a little ways from achieving religious harmony in North America. Every one agreed that we do need the help and support of our co-religionists in Iran and India to bring about the harmony that we are seeking.

Nevertheless, it was felt that North America is slowly creating a framework for our unification and revitalization. With better religious education and greater cooperation and unity, we will achieve our common goals of being recognized as one of the noblest religions in the world. It is clear that our youth are willing to work hard and they are willing to listen to the elders — but a dialog needs to start in place of distrust and disharmony. Thus the dialog generated during the seminar was extremely useful. It was resolved to hold more seminars like this at various locations in the future.
Portland State University
Persian Program
Portland State University will offer courses in Persian language and culture, including Principles of Zoroastrianism, this summer. This intensive program will allow students to complete an entire year of Persian language study in 8 weeks, while becoming familiar with many aspects of the culture.

PSU also offers The Silk Road, a two-credit course examining the network of commerce and ideas operating for nearly 2000 years, stretching, at its zenith, for 8000 miles from Cadiz on the Atlantic coast to Shanghai on the Pacific. The course explores the Silk Road’s significance in the exchange of ideas, religions and technology.

It is hoped this program will provide those within the Persian community as well as others, an opportunity to learn about Persian customs, traditions and achievements, and to enhance their knowledge of this ancient culture, recognized by many as the foundation of civilization.

Much of the funding for this program will come from private support. A tax-deductible contribution will be most appreciated. Make checks payable to Persian Culture, Account #22780, PSU Foundation, and mail to Shervin Behroozian, Assistant Professor, Department of Foreign Languages, 393 Neuberger Hall, PO Box 751, Portland, Oregon 97207, Tel: (503) 752-3522.

Remember Jashne Mehrgan — Unity Day
October 2, Mehr Roz and Mehr Mah, is Jashne Mehrgan. Let us not forget our resolution, made at a FEZANA AGM a few years ago, to celebrate our community unity in North America on this day. Our community is blessed with rich diversity — both diversity of thought as well as ethnic diversity.

Let us all join hands and celebrate our harmony on this day. Let us encourage our priests, scholars, educators, teachers and the like to pray for harmony, and to speak to us on the subject of unity, and its value to our community. For we know that without harmony and unity, there will be no progress.

International Conference on Zoroastrian Literature, London, 1996
An International Conference on Zoroastrian Literature (Religious and Secular) sponsored by the World Zoroastrian Organization and the World Zarathushtrian Trust Fund, will be held in London, November 16-17, 1997.

The panel of speakers will include Carlo Cereti, Francois de Blois, Ilya Gershevitch, Gherardo Gnoli, Helmut Humbach, Stanley Insler, Kaikhosrov Irani, Farhang Mehr, Antonio Panaino, Nicholas Sims-Williams, Fereydun Vahman, and Farrokh Vajifdar.

The proceedings will be fully published shortly after the Conference.

The detailed program is yet to be finalized, but the current information may be obtained from WZO, 25 Willow Close, Bishop’s Stortford, Herts CM23 2RY, England.

2nd World Zoroastrian Youth Congress
July 4-7, 1997: Full Day Seminars
July 8-11, 1997: Evening sessions, sight-seeing, socializing

The Young Zoroastrian Congress Committee of UK, cordially invites young Zoroastrians from North America to the next Youth Congress, in London. Meet and exchange ideas with youth from around the world, to shape the future of Zoroastrians as a global community. Delegates will also have the opportunity of visiting the UK and enjoy the hospitality of UK-based Zoroastrians.

Call for papers on:
Religion, History and Culture — Future, present and past Role of Zarathushtrianism in our daily lives. What is a successful Zoroastrian? Global issues — a Zoroastrian perspective.

Mr. Kerman Jasavala, Chair, YZ Committee, Zoroastrian House 24 Griffiths Road, London SW19 1SP, UK Fax: 44 181 241-7150 • Tel: 44 181 542 7195 • Email: dhunjii@warfield.demon.co.uk

IN COMING ISSUES OF FEZANA JOURNAL
Winter (December) 1996: History and Achievements of Zarthustis in Bombay
Spring (March) 1997: Early History and Identity of Zarthustis in North America

Letters and articles on these themes are invited. Submission deadline is October 15, for the Winter Issue, and January 15 for the Spring Issue.
Census of All Living Zoroastrians of the World

The Bombay Parsee Punchayet has undertaken to create a computerized Data Bank cum census record of all living Zoroastrians of the world. Data will be made available to Zoroastrian institutions and demographers desirous of learning more about this most microscopic community that has made such significant impact in India, Iran and around the world.

The BPP has appealed to every Zoroastrian around the world to cooperate and furnish the required data on the form reproduced below.

World Voyage to Save Coral Reefs

The planetary Coral Reef Foundation has set up an incredible global expedition to protect coral reefs. The Foundation has chosen an international crew of 12 for a fact-finding voyage lasting over four years. One of the chosen crew is a young Zarthusi from South Wimbledon, near London, UK, Thirty Vakil.

The crew set sail on the research ship Heraclitus, from Belize in May and will travel through five continents, returning to Belize in the year 2000. The voyage aims to develop techniques to restore the fragile ecosystems of these coral reefs, that line 60,000 miles of shorelines of over 100 countries around the world. Coastal development is taking its toll of these underwater gardens created by nature over hundreds of years.

With no scientific or sailing background, it was by mere chance that Thirty was selected for the trip. “The criteria was that you had to be ready, willing and able — and I was,” she explained. It’s tough, but I’m going to do the full five years.

The voyage can cost over £45,000, and the Foundation relies heavily on sponsorships. To help the cause Thirty stands for, please contact the family in the UK Tel: 0181-542 1766.

From ZTFE Circular, 1996

Congratulations New Zealand Zarthusis

Of the total population of 54 families in New Zealand, eight are subscribers (all paid up) of FEZANA Journal. New Zealand thus becomes the only country, from the 22 countries to which the Journal is sent, with fully paid-up subscriptions! Many thanks to Yazdi Mistry for promoting the Journal down South.

New Association in Auckland, New Zealand

Ervad Jamsheed Sidhwa announces the formation of The Traditional
Mazdayasni Zarathushtrian Anjuman of New Zealand Inc. (TMZANZ) in Auckland, New Zealand. The Anjuman grew out of a need to cater for the religious needs of not only the children, but their parents and other religious-minded adults.

Realizing that if the Zarathushtrian religion is to be protected in its pristine form, and that too in a foreign, Western country, the Committee plans to run the Association on strictly traditional grounds — e.g. Committee Members "will not marry a non-Zarathushtrian spouse" and "will not be a confirmed smoker." Further, TMZANZ will not accommodate non-Zarathushtrian practices which it believes is tearing the fabric of the community, such as: inter-marriages, 'Juddin' navjotes, attempts to convert non-Zarathushtrians into the religion; and attempts to abolish rituals and tariquats. Contact: Ervad Jamsheed Sidhwa, 50 B, Millhouse Drive, Howick, Auckland 1705, NZ, email: adenwl_t@central.co.nz.

K. R. Cama Lectures
Under the auspices of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute in Bombay, Dr. Pallan Ichaporia delivered three Government Research Fellowship Lectures for 1996 on "Historical and Theological Aspects of Yashts", with special expositions on the Fravardin and Jamyad Yashts, in Bombay in July 1996.

Below, Dr. Pallan Ichaporia delivering the lectures in July. Dr. Rohinton Peer presided at the meeting.

Seawall at Udvada
The construction of a sea wall for protection of Udvada from erosion has commenced, according to Padra Shri Homi J. H. Taleyarkhan, Chairperson of the Save Udvada Committee. Stage 1 will include construction of a 90 meter sloping wall along the shore line.

The high-level committee set up for the protection of this sanctum sanctorum of the Parsis, through a scheme of engineering and afforestation, met in Udvada on July 3rd, high tide day, to review plans for protection against damage by tidal waves.

Russian Zoroastrians in Moscow, St. Petersburg and Azerbaidzhan and ... Letter from Mr. Alexey Valyaev of Moscow to FEZANA Journal, via the Internet:
"We shall be very grateful to you if you find it possible to publish some information about us in your Journal.

"The first Zoroastrian communities in Moscow and St. Petersburg date back to 1917, those in Azerbaidzhan to 1930.

"In 1981 Pavel Globa organized Zervano-Zoroastrian schools in Moscow and St. Petersburg. In 1989 these schools were awarded official status. Since 1990 such schools have also been formed in Kiev, Minsk, Odessa, Kalingrad, Kishinev, Murmansk, Vilnus, Riga, Tallinn, Perm and other cities of the former USSR. Every school has from 200 to 700 students.

"In 1994 a Zoroastrian community of St. Petersburg gained its official status, and now a Zervano-Zoroastrian community, White Mountain, is in the process of registration in Moscow. Students of the Zoroastrian tradition take the following courses:
- The Avesta astrology.
- Zervano-Zoroastrian ritual.
- Calendar systems, including the year calendar of sacred animals, the Zervanite solar and lunar calendars.

"At the head of these schools is Pavel Globa, a Zervanite who has received the knowledge from his grandfather, whose ancestors were from a Zoroastrian community in Iran. After contacting the Badashan Zervanites he was initiated and his genetic connections were confirmed.

"Pavel Globa's activities caused a revival of interest in Zoroastrianism, as the oldest world religion. Under his supervision, texts of the Vidaevdat, Bundahishn and Menog-i-Khrat were translated into Russian. Globa wrote a book on the fundamentals of Zoroastrianism, Fire Alive, as well as a great number of books on the Avesta astrology.

"In Russia, Globa is known as the man who had foreseen the fall of the USSR, the Chernobyl holocaust, the catastrophe of the ferry Estonia, and many other political events.

The Zarathushtrian Project
Every year 800 more Zarathushtrians die than are born. At this rate (given there are only 52,000 in India today), the community will become extinct in 70 years. The Zarathushtrian Project was founded in 1989 to remove the issues that are leading to its extinction, which are: (1) 2 of 5 women marry outside the faith; (2) there will be no priests left within 10 years; (3) lack of housing in cities like Bombay; (4) lack of knowledge about the religion; (5) there are less than 1200 Zarathusti entrepreneurs in India. These issues persist not because of lack of money or resources, but are really a reflection of the lack of individual will.

The goal of the Zarathushtrian Project is to create character that will drive us as a community to work with an undivided will to prevent our community from becoming extinct.

To this end the Project has created a 4 1/2 day residential program called Kunashni. Participants go through a process of simple, intensive meditation, interspersed with discourses and recitations that address the very fundamental questions.

Contact The Zarathushtrian Project, E-38 Jer Baug, Byculla, Bombay 400 027, Fax 011 91 22 373 8833.
In the Annals of Winemaking, 5000 B.C. Was Quite a Year

By JOHN NOBLE WILFORD

Oenophiles might toast it as the first step toward civilization.

Neolithic farmers in what is now Iran had just settled down to village life, cultivating fields of barley and tending herds of goats and cattle. At about this time, around 5400 to 5000 B.C., they also learned to make good use of wild grapes growing in their midst, and so became the earliest known vintners.

Archaeologists have found the evidence for this in a yellowish residue left in the bottom of a pottery jar from the mud-brick ruins of a Neolithic village at Hajji Firuz Tepe, in the northern Zagros Mountains near the modern town of Urmiya. The residue contains the earliest chemical evidence of wine, a team of archaeologists said in a report being published today in the journal Nature.

And since the jar was produced 7,000 to 7,400 years ago, the researchers noted, the discovery has given wine-drinking an extra 1,500 to 2,000 years of history. Until now, the earliest evidence for wine came from similar residues examined at Godin Tepe, which had been a Sumerian trading post around 5,500 years ago and is some 400 miles south of Hajji Firuz. Traders at Godin could also order beer.

The ceramic jar was excavated some two decades ago by Dr. Mary M. Voigt, who is now an anthropologist at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Va. She found the jar in what appeared to be the kitchen of a square mud-brick building at Hajji Firuz. Only recently was it retrieved from storage at the University of Pennsylvania and the residue analyzed by infrared spectrometry and related chemical tests. This analysis was conducted by Dr. Patrick E. McGovern, an archeological chemist, and colleagues at the University of Pennsylvania Museum.

The researchers detected two tell-tale chemical traces. The residue contained the calcium salt of tartaric acid, which occurs naturally in large quantities only in grapes. It also contained resin from a widely distributed evergreen tree in the Middle East, Pistacia atlantica. This resin was widely used in antiquity as an additive to inhibit the growth of bacteria and thus prevent the wine from quickly turning to vinegar.

So the Neolithic tipplers must have drunk a wine similar to the Greek retsina of today. But Dr. McGovern said the chemical tests could not determine whether the wine had been red or white, or from wild or domesticated grapes.

In their journal report, the researchers noted that pollen in sediments revealed that wild grapes were plentiful in the region, but said that "the wine in the jar might well have been produced from a precursor of the highly successful domesticated type still used to make modern wine." In any event, they said, the new evidence shows that wine was being made at the time people were establishing their first permanent settlements, based on domesticated plants and animals.

Dr. McGovern said in an interview that the fact that the farmers at Hajji Firuz had learned to preserve their wine with resin indicated they had already had many years of winemaking experience. But 7,000 or 7,400 years ago, he said, "is about as far back as we're going to be able to establish the origin of wine."

The above article was submitted by Aloo Jhabvala Driver of South Hadley, Massachusetts with a note: "Enclosed is an interesting piece of news from the New York Times, for my fellow readers. I am an avid reader of FEZANA Journal, and discuss many aspects from it with my friends in the academic world, since I am a Professor of Sociology and the only Zoroastrian at American International College in Springfield, Massachusetts. Keep up the good work for all of us to be proud that we are Zarathushtis."

AGASSI WAS BORN A ZOROASTRIAN IRANIAN

How many are aware that Andre Agassi, the very popular World Tennis Champion, is of Zoroastrian, Iranian origin? He may have taken American nationality now, but he was born a Zoroastrian and was brought up as an Iranian subject. His parents were Iranians. He developed a fancy for tennis from a very early age and rapidly rose up the ladder of the tennis world. Today he is ranked No. 1.

Another Parsi who played at Wimbledon and in the Davis Cup was Jimmy Mehta who remained an Indian throughout till his untimely death in a plane crash. Though no where near Agassi's class today, in his day, Mehta had made his own mark in International Tennis.

[Homi J. H. Taleyarkhan, in Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly, July 9, 1995]
Reflections on the Tenth North American Zoroastrian Congress
By Khorsheed Jungalwala
Sudbury, Massachusetts

About 300 delegates from all corners of North America, and some from Pakistan, Iran, England, Dubai, attended the Tenth North American Zoroastrian Congress in San Francisco, July 5-6, 1996, at the Cathedral Hill Hotel and Convention Center. The host organizations — Persian Zoroastrian Organization, and Zarthusti Anjuman of Northern California, the Congress Executive Committee, and Bella Tata, FEZANA Congress Committee Chair should be congratulated for the excellent arrangements that lead to the success of the Congress, despite initial differences and a late start in formulating the program.

The Congress, which is a biannual event, is attended by Zarthustis who have a remarkable urge to mingle, associate, lead, argue, discuss and simply observe, bringing out the best and the worst in all; but always culminating in a sense of belonging to one of the most enlightened religions in the world! One comes away with a profound feeling of urgency to nurture, protect and preserve Zoroastrianism for posterity. This conference, as others preceding it, gave a platform to young and old to present their views and generate lively discussions in the larger interests of the religion and community without the negative aspects of ‘personal agendas’.

Day One. The Conference opened with a Jashan Ceremony by Ervad Jamshed Makujina of San Francisco and Ervad Kersey Antia and his two sons, Mazda and Jimmy. The Master of Ceremonies, Nazanin Hodiwalla made way for the welcome addresses by Mr. Esfandiar Anoushiravani and Dr. Jijibhoy Patel, Chairperson and Co-Chairperson of the Congress respectively. They were followed by Dolly Dastoor, President of FEZANA and Dr. Farhang Mehr, who delivered the formal inauguration address.

After opening remarks by Program Committee Chairperson, Mr. Darius Captain, the first session, chaired by Mr. Rohinton Rivetna began with a
fantastic presentation of Paradise, by two of our outstanding young Zarthustis, Shahriar Shahriari and Shervin Shahriari from Vancouver, BC. They created a dramatic audio-visual treat of conversations between Asho-Zarthisa and Cyrus the Great and extrapolation of their vision into our future, i.e. the 21st century. The conviction and motivation of these two young men energized the spellbound audience!

Dr. Farhang Mehr, along with his wife Parichehr, after a very successful visit to Iran which generated a tremendous media exposure, were welcomed back to USA by all. He spoke on Leadership in the Zoroastrian Community — Past, Present and Future. Glories and achievements of past visionaries should provide fine examples to our present and future leaders to emulate. Mobed Fariborz Shahzadi explained the significance of the evolving role of the priest in contemporary times, in a refreshing talk: Let’s put Religion back into Zoroastrianism.

The 2nd session, chaired by Dr. Ardesthir Anoushiravani, opened with a touching presentation of slides of ancient Iran by Dr. Mehraban Shahrvin, followed by Mr. Manoucher Mobedshahi’s insightful and inspiring talk on Visions of the Future.

Mr. Adi Davar spoke of harmony and understanding in his talk on Leadership to Bridging the Differences in the Community. He gave an analogy of a quote from Sir Winston Churchill who referred to Americans, but which could surely apply to Zarthustis as well: “Irrespective of their differing ethnic origins, cultures and beliefs, they will invariably do the right thing, after they have examined every other alternative.” Mr. Davar challenged the leadership of each dissenting group to call a truce and make an effort to come up with solutions that could affect the destiny of future generations in a positive way.

Ms. Bella Tata chaired the 3rd session, introducing Ervad Dr. Kersey Antia who in a very informative speech explained the innovative role of Zarthisa and his message and the influence on other religious philosophies. The talk was entitled Zarathushtra as the Pioneering Genius of Eastern and Western Religious Thought.

Dr. Daryoush Jahanian unfolded a heart-wrenching history of Zarthusti suffering and bravery under various oppressive regimes in Iran, in his dissertation on the Significance of Leadership in Survival of Iranian Community in the Past.

He pointed out that the population of Zarthustis in Iran during the 15th century was approximately 3-5 million. Within three centuries it declined to a mere 6,000! At that critical moment the leadership of one man dispatched by the Parsis of India, Mr. Maneckji Limji Hataria, revived the community, and thereafter Iranian Zarthustis produced their own powerful leaders. There surely is a reason why Zoroastrianism has survived the harsh treatment of history! This speech was published in summary form in the FEZANA Journal of Spring 1996.

Day Two, Session 4, chaired by Dr. Jamshed Mavalwala, showcased Professor Mehraban Khodavandi, who traced the history of Zoroastrian education, analyzed its present status and offered solutions to practical problems of leadership that face Zoroastrian communities
in North America, in his talk on *Education and Behavioral Ideals of Zoroastrian leadership.*

Ms. Dina McIntyre in her talk on *Leadership, the Common Man and Zarathustra,* explored Zarathustra's concept of leadership which encompassed the interesting paradox of the material world being a resourceful medium through which spirituality is achieved.

Mr. Keki Bhote defined the attributes of positive leadership and challenged Zarthustis to carry the torch of leadership that Zarathustra lit and passed down to us through the generations of successful leaders among our ancestors, in his speech on *Zarathustra and the Ethics of Leadership.*

Session 5, chaired by Ms. Khorshed Jungalwala, started with an eloquent speech by Prof. Kaikhosrov Irani titled *The Future of Zoroastrianism and the Present Leadership.* He declared "Diversity does not imply opposition. Differences in practice do not mean revision. Whatever the differences may be, they can be discussed rationally with open minds. We can disagree in the last resort, without being disagreeable."

Ms. Parisa Khosravi, an outstanding young Emmy-award-winner with CNN, spoke of her life experiences in times of crises as a TV personality and the responsibility and dangers that go with her job as Director of International News at CNN headquarters in Atlanta. Her talk was entitled *Impact of the Communications Media.*

Mr. Farrokh Arjani, a successful entrepreneur and technocrat encouraged young Zoroastrians to start their own enterprises, and explained how that could be successfully achieved. He indicated that the Zarthusti community has been renowned for spawning many famous entrepreneurs in the past. His talk was titled "Reviving the Zoroastrian Business and Entrepreneurial Spirit."

Session 6, chaired by Dr. Rustom Kevala, presented outstanding speakers on the Young Adult forum; Ervad Mazda Antia, Ms. Nazanin Hodiwalla, Mr. Aaron Rustom and Mr. Arash Anoushiravani. The panel spoke candidly and eloquently about the support and understanding they expect from adults. The speakers were confident about their own abilities as each one spoke on "As a future leader of the community, what ideas would you formulate to enhance the lives of Zoroastrians in North America, and how would you practically implement them?" Suggestions such as: "Anyone who desires to become a priest (whether Athoman or Behdin, man or woman) should have the right to do so" may sound radical today, but tomorrow's leaders may surely bring this to fruition.

Session 7, an Open Question and Answer forum co-chaired by Ms. Dolly Dastoor and Mr. Darius Captain, brought out topics ranging from Gathic philosophy and rituals to current issues of conversion, inter-marriage, leadership, harmony and unity.

Closing Ceremonies and Banquet. The Congress concluded with a symbolic torch passed on to the delegates of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York (ZAGNY) who will host the next Congress, in 1998.

The Gala banquet offered plenty of entertainment including Iranian dances, a dance performance by Yasmen Mehta who leads a dance troupe "California Contemporary Dancers", a recital of *Sanjan March* with accomplished 15-year-old pianist Phiroze Tarapore and 89-year-old Keki Captain on the violin, and noted singer Behroze Chatterjee who led the delegates in a rousing rendition of *Chayye Hame Zarthusti.*

The Chief Guest was Dr. Dadi Balsara, international entrepreneur who rose from humble beginnings in Nagpur to establish a business empire spanning over 63 countries and worth over $5 billion. He is also a
renowned astrologer, palmist and karate expert. His forceful and stirring words moved the audience.

The evening ended with a presentation of the Zoroastrian Community Awards [see next article]. Mr. Dinshaw Joshi, Chairperson of the FEZANA Awards Committee, did a job par excellence in defining the Award criteria and selection process.

Other events. A marvelous slide show was presented on July 4 by the Zarthusists who recently attended the World Congress in Tehran. Socializing always brings about a calmer and.

Clockwise from top, Jashan by Ervads Dr. Kersey Antia, Jamshed Makujina, Jimmy and Mazda Antia; Congress delegates at banquet; passing the "torch" from Esfandiar Anoushiravan, Chair of the Tenth Congress, to Noshir Langrana and Geo Nentin, on behalf of ZAGNY who will hold the 11th Congress, in New York, in 1998; Bella Tata, Chair FEZANA Congress Committee, Ervad Jimmy Makujina, mobed of San Francisco; missile scientist Aban Daruwalla of California; "insightful and inspiring" Manouchehr Mobedshahi; Emmy award-winner Parisa Khosravi; entrepreneur Furrokh Arjani; and Mrs. Roda Pavri, and Program Chair Darius Captain..
harmonious interaction among us all. Ideas, critiques and compliments are exchanged with appropriate civility and receptivity. On July 3, FEZANA delegates were taken to the Darbe Mehr with its celestial surroundings on the mountain top and treated to a marvelous meal. July 4 was celebrated with a grand dinner at a bay-side restaurant, His Lordship's, with a spectacular view of fireworks. The Young Adult Night on July 5 was open to delegates from 16 to 40 years of age. A few visited the Interfaith Chapel at the Presidio for a dialog with members of other faiths. Others were treated to popular Indian music and songs by well-known singer Behroze Chatterjee and other musicians.

Friendships and camaraderie are renewed and developed at such Congresses; however divergent views should be treated with tolerance and not condemnation; respect and not scorn. After all, we are all still striving to learn the Ultimate Truth.

Congress delegates at the Rustam Guiv Darbe Mehr in San Jose.

Zoroastrian Achievement Awards

Five Achievement Awards are presented at each North American Congress to recognize and honor excellence within the community.

Under the able chairmanship of Dinshaw Joshi, the FEZANA Awards Committee (including Dhunmai Dalal, Villy Gandhi, Ness Lakdawalla, Farrokh Mistree, Dr. Iradj Pourkarimi, and ex-officio Mehraban Zartoshty) has done a marvelous job of orchestrating the definition, selection and presentation of the biannual Zarathusti Achievement Awards.

Thirty-one nominations were received for the five award categories. Each category was judged by a different panel of five judges, carefully selected by the Awards Committee. The list of judges was circulated to all Member Associations, and is available, along with the list of 31 nominees, upon request from the FEZANA Journal publisher.

Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Professor Kaikhosrov Dinshaw Irani, of New York, described in Dinshaw Joshi’s introductory remarks as:

“A rare treasure whom Ahura Mazda has bestowed upon us ... A Plato among living Zoroastrian philosophers and a Socrates to whom Zoroastrians in North America and indeed the world have turned, for scholarly knowledge and wisdom of our faith ... a tireless ambassador who has selflessly traversed the globe to advance the knowledge of our faith, religion and community ... a beloved teacher who has stimulated Zoroastrians, both young and old, to tackle issues facing the community and the faith with care, prudence and understanding, and yet he has been a pragmatic and visionary leader who with foresight and wisdom has steered the community away from pitfalls ... Indeed he is perhaps the only scholarly voice of reason and moderation among Zoroastrians.

Currently Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the City College of New York, having taught Philosophy of Science at the same College for forty-one years, Kaikhosrov is perhaps the only Zoroastrian in the world who was associated with Albert Einstein in Princeton. The latter wrote a personal letter of recommendation in support of Kaikhosrov’s application for a new job early in his professional career.

“For his dedicated service to the Zoroastrian faith, for manifesting the attributes of Vohu Mano, Asha and Armaity as he has traversed through life, for his sterling and unique...
achievements in the cause of Zoroastrianism unparalleled by any living Zoroastrian on this continent," said Joshi, "the Awards Committee proudly and gratefully recognizes Prof. Kaikhosrov Dinshaw Irani.

Rohinton Rivetna Outstanding Zoroastrian Award was presented to Mr. Homi Minocher Homji of Weston, Ontario.

After a significant and highly successful career in Pakistan, Homji joined the United Nations as an Advisor to Regional Community Development for the Asian Region. Since immigration to Canada in 1978, he has been involved in Zoroastrian community affairs in North America, first as President of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario in 1981, and subsequently as the founding Vice-President of FEZANA. He played a major role in formulating the FEZANA Constitution, and defining its structure and functions.

Minocher-Homji is a prolific writer of books and articles on aspects of Zarathusti community developments throughout the world, his most recent work being *The Pocket Avesta*.

Excellence in Business or Profession Award (trophy sponsored by Jamsheed and Shirin Guzdar), was shared by *Adi Dastur* of Islington, Ontario and *Dr. Mehroo Jussawalla* of Honolulu, Hawaii.

A nuclear reactor physicist, Adi Dastur has, for many years, provided leadership in developing Canadian deuterium uranium (CANDU) reactor physics design capability. In 1994, he was awarded the prestigious Outstanding Contribution Award by the Canadian Nuclear Association for his original contribution in the field of CANDU reactor physics.

Dr. Mehroo Jussawalla is one of the foremost authorities in the field of telecommunications economics in the world today. For the last 18 years she has been with the East-West center in Honolulu as a Senior Fellow, and had numerous assignments as visiting professor at various teaching institutions including Ruhr University in Germany, Osaka University and Vassar College. Author, editor or contributor to over forty books and over fifty articles in internationally reputed technical journals. Jussawalla has also been invited to serve as consultant with such telecommunications giants as AT&T and Motorola.

Outstanding Zoroastrian Student Award was presented to Arash Anoushiravani of California.

At 24, Arash graduated with honors from Stanford in the Program in Human Biology, and is currently studying at Harvard Medical School. While pursuing his academic career with distinction, Arash has also participated in other programs at Stanford such as Volunteers in Health and the Stanford Science Youth Program, and served as a Peer Academic Advisor. He has received numerous awards, among them the prestigious Lyons Award for Service, the Lederman Award for Academic Excellence in Human Biology, and the Phi Beta Kappa award.

in Toronto. Dr. Driver harkens back to the old school medical practitioner, a rare commodity these days, who sincerely believes in the Hippocratic Oath and in selfless dedication and humanitarian contributions which all embody the true spirit of Zoroastrianism. Her peers have asserted to the fact that she is a role model of a committed medical practitioner. Her clinical acumen combined with her sensitivity have made her a premier clinician in the field of child abuse.

*Outstanding Zoroastrian Student Award* was presented to Arash Anoushiravani of California.

From left, Arash Anoushiravani getting the “Outstanding Zoroastrian Student Award” from FEZANA President Dolly Dastoor.

Dr. Mehroo Jussawalla, receiving the “Excellence in Profession Award”, which she shared with Mr. Adi Dastur.

Professor Kaikhosrov D. Irani was presented with a shawl and the “Lifetime Achievement Award” by Chief Guest Mr. Dadi ballara. FEZANA Awards Committee Chair, Mr. Dinshaw Joshi is on the left.
The San Francisco Congress: An Onlooker’s Impression

By Toxy Cowasjee
Karachi, Pakistan

I

live in Karachi, Pakistan and for some years had the urge to take part in FEZANA’s Congress. A few weeks ago I suddenly decided that I will attend and see for myself how the ‘other half’ go about keeping Zoroastrianism alive and finally meet many of my friends whom I have been corresponding with.

The two days whilst FEZANA held its AGM and workshops, were a mixture of feelings. It was a pleasant surprise to find non-committee members allowed to be present giving an onlooker a good insight into the workings. How different from Pakistani Zarathosi organizations! It was quickly apparent that all present were totally committed to what they were doing and with this kind of commitment success has to come.

The second day’s proceedings (the Strategy Sessions) were out of the norm, being innovative, invigorating and having a total participation of all. For me this was an exhilarating experience. Farrokh Mistree, before the closing of the first day’s agenda, had asked each one of us to give our ‘own vision’ of what he/she wished to do. From this input, came the brain storming of all our ideas the next day, each of us in groups having similar objectives. As a follow up, a commitment was asked from all present for the immediate future and an ongoing one. If even half is achieved of what is promised, the Tenth Congress, which had a painful and agonizing birth, will be one to remember. Mistree, Kevala and Sepheri, the workshop leaders, need to be congratulated for carrying out the exercise in an enthusiastic and friendly manner.

After having two successful days prior to the actual Congress, one felt confident that the following days would go off well, and as it happened, we were not to be disappointed. Shahriar Shahriari and Shervin Shahriari, two dynamic young adults, showed all present, that the apprehensions so many seniors have about the future of Zoroastrians, are ill-founded and our good religion will never die. Their presentation of Paradise was clever, captivating everyone’s attention and giving one a feeling of complete satisfaction and pride in these two young men.

More young people should be invited to be speakers at these Congresses I feel, rather than having separate Youth Congresses, thereby bridging the generation gap. Besides these two young men, I particularly enjoyed hearing Mobed Fariborz Shahzadi and Farrokh Arjani. They were like a breath of fresh air. But that does not mean the others were not appreciated — far be the case.

Though the attendance was fewer in number compared to the usual figure, it was gratifying to see there were a fair amount of young adults. As suggested both at the AGM and during the Congress, the fee for the youth should be negligible enabling many more to attend. This observation should definitely be looked into by the next Congress hosts.

The Congress organizers need to be commended in their choice of speakers. Each one surpassed the other. Each was varied, blending every aspect from religiosity to dynamic entrepreneurship: from the not so young to the youth, each giving their interpretation of being a Zoroastrian.

The actual Congress arrangements were not so impressive, least of all the banquet and award ceremony, but this was of no great consequence as the ‘food for thought’ had been fulfilling.

Throughout the four days my feelings were of admiration of my peers and the earnest longing for having these speakers address our community in Karachi. I made a silent commitment to myself that somehow I will find the means of sending at least two young adults for every Congress held by FEZANA. If they have the opportunity of hearing scholars of this caliber, and mixing with thinking individuals, they will hopefully snap out of their apathy, which is there through no fault of theirs, and have pride in our religion.

I urge the Zoroastrian community of North America not to forget their fellow brethren in the home counties, especially where we are only a couple of thousand, and to try and keep in touch with new inputs from time to time. May Ahura Mazda guide and bless us all.

WHAT THE TEHRAN PAPERS SAID:

Facing page: Tehran newspapers carried news of the Sixth World Zoroastrian Congress, and the visit of delegates to President Rafsanjani and to the Ayatollah Khamenei. Shown overhead are some headlines from Tehran Times, Iran Today, Kayhan International, Iran, Akhbar and other Iranian daily papers.

FEZANA JOURNAL — FALL 1996

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Leader Receives Zoroastrian Leaders

Tehran Zoroastrian Congress Attracts World Delegate

Sixth World Zoroastrian Congress Opens

سپاسگزاری زرتشتیان از نظام اسلامی

Sixth World Zoroastrian Congress Opens

پیروان ادیان گوناگون در ایران را قادر بداند

روبروی اقلیت: مسلمان، زرتشتی زرتشتیان را در هر نقطه جهان، هم می‌خورند.
In some respects it was like any other Zoroastrian Congress—chock full of talks, discussion, airing of issues, resolutions, banquets and entertainment, and most important of all, an opportunity to meet and mingle. Only this one, being in the ancestral homeland, now the Islamic Republic of Iran, had a very special flavor. Here the women were all dressed in the Hejab (scarves and dark coats) of the Islamic Republic. Here the sessions were conducted in Farsi and English, with high-tech simultaneous translations provided. Here issues centered around the political and economic circumstance of the people. Here several thousand Zarthustis of Iran joined the delegates in feasting and dancing under the stars at the Kooshk-e-Varjavand gardens.

And here, in a master coup by the organizers, the Congress was interrupted with visits to the Religious Leader Ayatollah Khamenei and to the President of the Islamic Republic, His Excellency Hashemi Rafsanjani; and a visit by the President’s daughter, Fatima Rafsanjani, to the Congress. The events had extensive coverage on the front pages of all the Tehran papers. All in all, significant positive import for the Zarthusti religious minority in Iran.

Opening Ceremonies. The Sixth World Zoroastrian Congress was inaugurated on June 19, 1996, the 30th Day of Khordad, 1375. Although why June 19th is 30th Khordad and not Hormuzd Roz, Tir Mah as shown in the Fasli calendar, is still a mystery. It was explained to this author as having to do with the leap year having been missed this year in Iran. It is also interesting to note the difference of ten years between the official Iranian year, 1375, and the religious Zarthusti year (based on the coronation of the last Persian, Zarthusti emperor, Yazdegerd III), 1365.

Over 650 Iranian Zarthustis joined about 125 foreign delegates from fourteen countries (India, Pakistan, Dubai, Japan, UK, Germany, France, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, USA, Italy, Belgium and Tajikistan) at the International Conference Center of the Islamic Republic of Iran’s Radio and TV Broadcast complex—a contemporary building with a panoramic view of the city of Tehran, against a backdrop of the Elburz mountains. The well-appointed conference hall was equipped with state-of-the-art facilities for simultaneous Farsi-English translation via earphones at each seat and professional audio and video equipment. Arrangements of fresh roses, lilies and other flowers and greenery adorned the stage and podium.

After a beautiful rendition of the Ashem Vohu Song and the Iranian National Anthem by the Zoroastrian Students Chorus, and a benediction by Dastoors Rustom Shahzadi, Jehangir Oshidari and Mehraban Firuzgary (Dastoor Azargoshab
joined the eminent mobeds later) delegates were welcomed by Congress President, Dr. Mahyar Ardeshiri.

The Honorable Vice President of Iran, Ataollah Mohajerani delivered the inaugural address. He spoke of Zoroastrianism as a treasure of love (Mehr), joy and friendship, and received a rousing ovation when he said "This land is your own land."

Mr. Parvez Ravani, Zoroastrian representative in the Majlis (Parliament) of Iran expressed his gratitude to the Islamic Republic for their endeavors to encourage religious minorities, and especially for the privilege accorded by the Government, of

From top, clockwise, View of audience; Dastoor Rustam Shahzadi; Dastoor Jehangir Oshidari; Ataollah Mohajerani, Vice President of Iran; Shirin Namvar and Dolat Jamshidi welcoming delegates to the Congress; the Zoroastrian Students Choir at the Opening Ceremony.
holding this Congress. "Iran is the cradle of Zoroastrianism. In future, Iran should have a greater share in protecting and perpetuating the culture and religion of the Zoroastrians," he said, and promised to work side by side with the Islamic Republic for the reconstruction of Iran, and to improve conditions for all religious minorities.

A venerable mullah, Hojatti Kermani then addressed the gathering: "I myself belong to a Zoroastrian family of Iran. My father received a spiritual revelation, and converted to Islam. I am therefore, a unique link between the rights of Islam and the rights of Zoroastrians, and bring a message of love and commonality." He urged the delegates to spread the message of love, cordiality, humanitarianism, and to promote good relations between Iran and other countries around the world.

Dr. Farhang Mehr, erstwhile Chancellor of the University of Shiraz, and now a resident of Boston, Massachusetts, was accorded a warm welcome by the delegates when he stood up to read messages to the Congress.

On behalf of the World Zoroastrian Organization, Mr. Shahpur Captain sent a message of goodwill, and reiterated that the WZO has been functioning globally in every aspect of religious and communal life since it was officially formed in London in 1980, and invited all Associations and individuals to join.

Messages were also read from Sohrabji Godrej (of the Godrej companies), Padma Shri Homi J. H. Taleyarkhan, Mr. Jamshed Gazdar of Bombay Parsi Panchayat, and Mr. Nani Palkhiwalla, all of Bombay, who could not attend due to ill health and other reasons.

Visit to Khomeini's Tomb. About 200 delegates then took the one hour bus ride to the tomb of Imam Khomeini, founder of the Islamic Republic. Accompanied by an honor guard of Khomeini military police, the delegates placed a wreath at the Religious Leader's tomb. Of interest were the piles of Iranian currency notes (Tomans and Rials) offered by devotees, that filled the tomb enclosure knee-deep.

Religio-Cultural Heritage. After lunch, the Congress settled down to real business with a session on "Preservation of the Zoroastrian Religio-Cultural Heritage." Professor Kassra Vafadari of France promoted central headquarters (not a central democracy) to coordinate the affairs of the world-wide community. Homai Modi of India read a paper by Captain Hormozdizar Desai promoting a World Zoroastrian Union with two branches: (a) a socio-economic arm, and (b) an apex policy-making body. Professor Feraidoon Jonaidi (Iran) also talked of an "International Zoroastrian Association". Parviz Kaviani, Behmard Khorasavi and Bahman Nowroozian, all of Iran, gave their suggestions for a religio-cultural revival.

Collaboration Amongst Associations. The second day opened with a session on "Collaboration Amongst World Zoroastrian Associations". Lt. Gen. Adi Sethna of Delhi stressed the need to develop and disseminate books, magazines, videos and cd/roms. Dr. Gudarz Mehr (Iran) stressed the importance of holding World Congresses as a platform for discussing economic, political, social and cultural issues. The first one was held in Tehran in 1960 in the more modest Khosrov Hall of the Tehran Anjuman, and subsequent ones in Bombay. He promoted the activation of an International Secretariat based in Tehran, where heads of Associations could be invited for annual forums.

Mehran Sepehri (USA) spoke of his vision of a world-wide, world class Zoroastrian community, with committed leaders and torchbearers, who worked together in collaboration and coordination, and not competition for the preservation and prosperity of the community. Padma Shree Homi Taleyarkhan's paper was read in absentia. Rohinton Rivetna (USA)
presented a proposal for a “Council of Federations” structured along the lines of the United Nations, with proportionate representation from each of the major regions of the world where Zarthustis reside. This Council would be complementary to, and not in competition with the London-based World Zoroastrian Organization, which was applauded for its work in the welfare and educational sector. A call for a show of hands by session chairperson, Rusi Dalal (UK) yielded an overwhelming positive vote in favor of proceeding with the proposal.

Visits to Khamenei and Rafsanjan. Tight security measures were in effect as 5 busloads of delegates were driven to the seat of the Government of the Islamic Republic for an audience with Government leaders. All personal belongings, purses, keys, jewelry, watches, books, papers, were locked up in the buses, though this author did sneak in a wad of tissue, since there were never any guarantees of toilet paper even in the Presidential palace!

Each delegate was frisked from head to toe, men and women in separate security areas, and then ushered in, past rows of armed Khomeini guard to a stark, carpeted hall for the audience with the Religious Leader, Ayatollah Seyed Khamenei. The men delegates sat in front (on the floor), and women delegates were crammed into the back of the hall. As the Leader entered the hall, all rose and recited words in praise of Allah and the Leader. Khamenei then delivered a surprisingly positive address, in Farsi, acknowledging and welcoming followers of the ancient religion of Zoroaster, and inviting them to live and work together for the common cause of rebuilding Iran. “Iran is proud to be
the land of the first prophet, Asha Zarthust”, he said “He brought the concept of one God to this world.”

Delegates were then ushered to a neighboring building, to meet the President. Again, President Rafsan­jani welcomed the delegation warmly and spoke in glowing words about the Zarthustis, assuring them peaceful co-existence in their motherland Iran.

Delegates returned by bus to the Congress site, elated with the warm reception accorded to them, and with hope for a good future for Zarthustis in the Islamic Republic.

Mobeds. Congress proceedings continued after lunch with a session on “Strengthening of Religious Training of Mobeds.” Eminent Dastoors Firooz Azargoshasb, Rostam Shahza-
**Youth.** The third day, June 22, was devoted to sessions on "Promotion of Religious Convictions and Awareness Amongst Zoroastrian Youth." and "Spiritual and Material Welfare of Zoroastrian Youth." Dr. Homa Bahmanian and Rusi Bastani of Iran spoke of problems besetting Zarthusti youth in Iran. While Zoroastrian youth are well educated in the schools built for them by Irani and Indian philanthropists, and while the Islamic government has granted them certain privileges (such as exemption from attending school on Zarthusti religious days), job prospects were not very encouraging. Dr. Meher Master Moos, President of Zoroastrian College in Sanjan, India, invited youth and adults to explore opportunities available at that College, in the departments of Avesta and Scriptural Studies, Alternative Medicine, Interfaith Peace Dialog, Ecologic and Environmental Studies, and Astrology and Cosmic Wisdom. Ms. Rati Wadia (India) proposed a 10-step formula for an apex body to bring about a Zarthusti Renaissance. Parvin Kaviani (Iran) proposed the establishment of a global Zoroastrian bank to absorb the idle capital of the community, with an initial core capital of $1M to be collected by issuing stocks.

Other speakers — Behram Deboo (USA), Keyghobad Behdin (Iran), Shahin Kianfar (Iran), Darius Ghoshtasbi (of the Zoroastrian Students Organization of Iran), Alayar Danestani (USA), Mitra Kaviani (Iran), Mehmoosh Khezri (Iran) and Dariush Farzaneh (Iran), spoke of the erosion of family ties as youth migrated from the Zarthusti strongholds of Yazd and Kerman to urban areas and to foreign lands; of social problems faced by the youth as a religious minority in the Islamic Republic and the Judeo Christian world of the West; of economic problems and youth unemployment.

Calls were made for strong measures to preserve and perpetuate the cultural and religious legacy and promote economic and social prosperity — by setting up schools, technical institutes, colleges, sports complexes (Iran’s national sport is wrestling), global olympics, promoting the arts, music, handicrafts, literature, publishing and disseminating literature on Zarthusti history and religion, helping with marriages within the community, financial aid, loans and educational scholarships, establishing manufacturing companies and partnerships — all to bring about social and economic prosperity, and restoration of Zarthusti values amongst the youth. The global Zoroastrian community shoulders this responsibility.

**Demographic Trends.** The third day began with a session on "Dilemma of Zoroastrian Identity and Demographic Trends within the Community." Dolly Dastoor (Canada) spoke of creating a unique North American identity, just as Zarthustis developed their unique identities in India and Iran, because our realities are so different. The development of FEZANA was one step in that direction. Farshid Lakan (Iran) spoke of the need for statistics.

Dr. Rustom Kevala (USA) spoke on moving towards a unified world Zarthusti community, and what North American Zarthustis can offer in that direction. Firoozeh Ardeshiri talked about the important role of women in creating a Zarthusti environment for our children. Zarthusti women, according to our Prophet had
very equal rights, e.g. Iranian women do not change their name after marriage. In a powerful presentation, Prof. Farhang Mehr (USA) reiterated the Zoroastrian ethic of work and action, happiness and joy, and construction and building. The final speaker was Faramarz Zia-tabari.

Visit by Rafsanjani’s Daughter. The last day’s sessions were rearranged to accommodate an unexpected visit by President Rafsanjani’s daughter, Fatima. Dressed in a black ‘chaddar’, she spoke to a closed meeting of about 100 women delegates. A staunch supporter of women’s organizations in Iran, she spoke of progress in the position of women. Before the revolution, the literacy rate was 35%, it is now 70%. 45% of seats in the University are now occupied by women, and they hold government and private jobs. She spoke of cooperation between Muslim and Zoroastrian Women’s groups, and working together with “her sisters of the Zarthusti religion”

Resolutions. In a parallel meeting, Congress organizers and session chairmen and rapporteurs worked up a summary of the 4 days and prepared a set of resolutions, paraphrased below:

• The Congress believes that basic religious principles are not changeable and Zoroastrians all over the world must obey them. Traditions and cultural differences depend on the circumstances, time and place of the country. The Congress suggests that Anjumans who propose changes should discuss and obtain approval from all the Anjumans before incorporating those changes. The final decision rests with the proposing Anjuman.
• The Congress suggests that local Anjumans should help strengthen the financial condition of the priesthood. We must expand their training to cover the history of our religion, ancient history of Iran, and comparative religions. Women should be allowed to become understudies of mobeds and later go to areas that lack representation.
• To give religious education and values to our youth, special religious classes should be developed and expenses borne by the Anjumans. Anjumans should provide capital to deserving youth for higher education. We should provide sporting facilities and well-equipped libraries.
• The World Zoroastrian Congress should encourage the co-operation between Anjumans. The Congress demands the World Zoroastrian Organization in London to make necessary changes to its constitution in order to facilitate various opinions expressed by different Anjumans. The Congress requests the headquarters of this organization be in Iran, the birthplace of Asho Zarthust; and the permanent secretarial office be in Iran in order to follow the Congress decisions and report it at the next World Congress.
• It was confirmed that the Congress be held every four years in a country where Zoroastrians reside. Proceedings of the Congress will be published shortly.

Entertainment. With customary lavish Iranian hospitality, delegates were regaled for all four days, with lavish spreads of Iranian foods. Iranian cakes and cookies, and ‘chai’ were offered morning and afternoon. Lunches were served buffet style, on long banquet tables laden with varieties of rice, sabzi, kabobs, koresh, nans and more.

Each night delegates were entertained with music, dancing and feasting. The Zoroastrian Women’s Organization and Tehran Zoroastrian Anjuman hosted two dinners at the Anjuman’s Khosravi Hall. The Zoroastrian Organizations of Taft & Tavabe, Asha and Students, hosted a dinner at Markar Tehranpars, a hall endowed by philanthropist Pestonji Markar. Most enjoyable was the outdoor dinner at Kooshk Varjavand gardens, where about 3,000 Zarthus-tis gathered in their finery and danced to Iranian music till late in the night. Once inside the gates of these Zarthusti halls, scarves and ‘boorkhas’, coats and ‘chaddars’ were all checked in.

So ended yet another Zoroastrian Congress. For four days we were enlightened, energized, entertained, inspired and exhausted. And, unlike past Congresses, something lasting did come of it.

The Congress gave North American delegates first-rate experience, and the Iranians, much hope for the future of the religion in Iran. And best of all, it planted the seeds of unity and collaboration, which are bound to germinate and grow with succeeding Congresses. We, in North America look forward to hosting the next Congress in the year 2000, in Houston.
Proposed Council of Zoroastrian Federations
Bolstered by calls by speaker after speaker for some sort of central secretariat or apex body or international organization or central anjuman or world association, and by the overwhelming positive show of hands following Rohinton Rivetna’s paper on the proposal for a Council of Federations, two subsequent ad hoc meetings were held with interested delegates from various regions of the world, to discuss this further.

Initial contact persons were established from amongst those present, to form an "Informal Committee for the Council of Federations Initiative", to be coordinated by Rohinton Rivetna. They are Parvez Ravani (Zoroastrian Member of the Parliament of Iran, for the 25 Anjumans of Iran), Minoo Shroff and B. K. Laskari (executive officers of Bombay Parsi Panchayet, for India), Dolly Dastoor (President of FEZANA, for North America), Rusi Dalal (President of ZTFE, for Europe), Godrej Sidhwa (Secretary of Karachi Parsi Anjuman, for Pakistan), Jamshed Sidhwa (for New Zealand), and Mani Clubwala and Aspi Irani (for WZO).

Arnavaz Mama of Parsiana was requested to carry a 1-2 page Newsletter of the proposed Council in Parsiana on a regular basis. Rustom Kevala and Mehran Sepehri volunteered to set up an Internet Home Page or email alias as a communication forum on this matter.

A copy of the draft constitution for the Council will be distributed to each Committee Member and other interested persons shortly, for comment and response by December 1996. It was proposed that the next meeting of prospective regional delegates be held in July 1997 in conjunction with the World Youth Congress in London.

At the meeting to discuss the Council of Zoroastrian Federations proposal:
Left, Arnavaz Mama, Mani Clubwala, Dr. Mehran Gudarz Mehr and Parvez Ravani.
Far left, Rohinton Rivetna, Dr. Mahyar Ardestiri, Prof. Kasra Vafadari, Dr. Mehran Sepehri, Parvez Dabestani, Dolly Dastoor, Kersi Shroff, Rusi Dalal, Jamshed Sidhwa Homai Mody, Pervin Mistry, Godrej Sidhwa, Aspi Irani, Minoo Shroff, Mr. Laskari.

TEHRAN — The Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Khamenei, in an address to the participants in the 6th International Zoroastrian Congress here Thursday said that Iran was a land of religious tolerance and amity. Iranian Muslims consider the Zoroastrians Worldwide as their own fellow countrymen, the Leader underlined.

He added that Iranians lived and worked together in a society for a common cause free from religious discrimination which should help the Zoroastrians to appreciate and work for a common goal in order to obtain divine blessings.

The Leader said Islam bestowed on Iran independence, honor and dignity, and the country’s reputation should be considered as the greatest achievement for the followers of different religions....

Meanwhile, Zoroastrian priests here Thursday appreciated the sympathetic feelings shown to them by the Leader of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Khamenei.

Priest Dastour Rostam Shahzadi said that Zoroastrians prayed for the longevity of upright and just rulers so that they would prevail over the wicked souls.

Dr. Jahanguir Ashidari, another Zoroastrian priest said that the Leader of the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei had given words of encouragement to a group of visiting Zoroastrians here Thursday.

In an interview on the sidelines of the Congress Thursday, Zoroastrian scholar Fereydoun Janidi told IRNA that after the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the Zoroastrian minority has set up special religious classes for all Zoroastrian school children in Iran. He said the Zoroastrians owed their religious awakening to the Islamic Revolution.

The scholar said that for centuries Iranian men and women had their own special attire that was consistent with their culture and beliefs, but that as a result of inroads into Iran of Western culture, that mode of dressing had gradually been replaced by non-Iranian fashions that were against the religious beliefs of the people of the country.

[Tehran Times, June 22, 1996]
Her eyes welled up with tears and her voice choked up, as Mandana, our guide, showed us around the Shah’s Niavaran Palace in Tehran—a spacious, white mansion with a mosaic facade, set amidst gardens and pools, exquisitely appointed, from the magnificent carpet in the foyer depicting the history of Iran, to the grand dining table set with royal blue and gold china, and the Shahbanou’s private dressing room lined with her gowns and shoes. It was from this palace that the Shah, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi fled by plane, with the Shahbanou Farah, and their four children, Reza, Ali Reza, Shahnaz and Laila, after the revolution in 1979. They took with them none of the jewels, or gowns or works of art, for that they said belonged to Iran. “All they took with them”, said Mandana, “was a box of Iranian soil.”

This was just one of the remains we saw of past glory and fallen empires, as we made our journey across Iran, on fragments of the “Royal Road” of the Achaemenians and the “Silk Road to China”, from Tehran, to Shiraz (city of poets), Pasargadæ (tomb and palaces of Cyrus the Great who founded the Achaemenian Empire in 558 BC), Naqsh-e-Rustom (Achaemenian tombs and Sassanian bas reliefs), Persepolis (palace city built by Darius the Great in 512 BC), Firooza Bad (Palace of Ardestir, founder of the Sassanian Empire in 226 AD), the villages of Yazd, Cham, Zainabad and Sharifabad (bastion of Zoroastrian orthodoxy), Isfahan (Sassanian fire temple), Kermanshah (Sassanian rock carvings at Taq-e-Bostan), Bisotun (cliffside rock inscriptions of Darius the Great), Kangavar (ruins of Parthian Temple of Anahita, 200 BC), Hamadan (the ancient Ectabana), via the Caspian Sea route, back to Tehran.

Our group of about 15 persons from USA and Canada gathered at Tehran airport on June 10, 1996; with tour manager Sohrab Pourmandigarian, to embark on the first leg of our journey, a flight from Tehran to Shiraz. The rest of the 10-day trip was by bus, at which time about 10 persons from India and Pakistan joined us.

Dress. All the ladies were very properly attired in the hejab, an assortment of chaddars, boorkhas, long coats or capes, and large scarves, as required by the laws of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Mine was a home-made outfit, a floor-length, black cape, tied at the neck, and a large, beige scarf.

The hejab stayed on at all times, except in private homes and hotels, or within Zoroastrian Anjuman grounds. If the scarf slipped a bit, or an arm or ankle showed, sure enough, someone, a passerby, or a police official would gesture to remind you, for, as a Mullah at the Congress said, “Woman is a source...
of spiritual beauty, we should not exploit their beauty; as is done in the Western countries."

The bus trip. Except for short night-stops at hotels, the bus was our home for the next ten days. Planning the tour was a logistics nightmare for our tour manager Sohrab who tried to please each member of our motley group, which was as diverse as it could possibly be. For some this was a pilgrimage to the holy Fire Temples and shrines, while for others it was a historical journey through our ancestral heritage. Ranging in age from 14 to 75, in ideology from the ultra orthodox to the liberal, in nationality from Canadians and Americans to Indians and Pakistanis, in temperament from the easy-going to the always crabby, and in health from the robust to the ail­ling, it was most surprising that this diverse group had as good a time together as we did.

Time in the bus passed fast. Starting every morning with Ashem Vohu and Yatha Ahu Vairyos led by Erva d Godrej Sidhwa, to lectures by Meher Master Moos, to lengthy discussions on Zarthu sti his tory, religion and people, down to heated arguments on where to go, what to see and where to eat. There was a lot of singing too. By the end of the trip, we had exhausted our repertoire of 1930s to 1990s favorites from “You are my Sunshine” to “Yellow Submarine” and from “Soonamai Lamba” to “She’ll be Eating Chelow Kabob When She Comes ...”.

As the tour progressed, a number of ailments developed — swollen feet, asthma attacks, and numerous stomach upsets. And the latter can be a nightmare on a bus trip where each bathroom was an adventure in the unknown, if one could be found at all. But all was taken in stride, and with good humor.

All were Zoroastrians, except Frank, a Professor of Religion, who had unwittingly joined the group. We found out later that this was a potential problem, since the special permission and visas granted by the Government of Iran, was for Zoroastrians only. But that small crisis also passed, like many others.

If, during the long, hot, journey, sometimes for hours through unre­lieved desert, the ladies lapsed and let their hejab slip, it was comical to see the scramble to get the boorkhas and scarves back on, when Sohrab, or Farshid our bus driver, or Shiamak, the bus attendant, gave warning of an approaching ‘checkpoint’.

Every 3-4 hours or so, the bus would come to a ‘checkpoint’. Farshid would show them a piece of paper which presumably stated our destination and purpose of travel. This was also placed on a 3-foot long placard in Farsi on the windshield of the bus: “Tour e sauya zyarati Parsian e Hindustan — Tour and Pilgrimage by Parsis of Hindustan”.

Some very strategic checkpoints were guarded by the ‘Kommites’, the Khomeini guard, while the lesser ones were manned by local police.

Below, at the Atash Kadeh in Shiraz, the mobed who tends the fire full-time, reciting prayers from an Avestan prayer book.
The guard, always very stern, sneering men, with huge machine guns hanging from their shoulders, would walk down the aisle of the bus, looking side to side at each passenger, poking and prodding the upholstery and baggage with a long poker. While we sat very quietly, boorkhas well in place, feeling very small and vulnerable, though our only crime might have been that some of us happened to be Americans.

Ill feelings towards Americans were fairly evident, not at all at the Congress or among the Zarthustis whom we met, but rather in newspaper articles that decried the wicked Western ways, and in graffiti on the streets of Tehran. We did see a few signs which read: “Down with the USA.”

Shiraz. Our first stop was in Shiraz provincial capital of Fars, from which the Parsis, and Persia obtained their names. Known for its artists, scholars, learning, nightingales, poetry, roses, and at one time wine, Shiraz has been immortalized in the poems of thirteenth century poets Sa’adi and Hafez, whose tombs we visited. We saw the Eram gardens, that inspired Sa’adi to write “The visitor forgets his homeland when early in May he comes to Shiraz”, for then the gardens are in bloom with 350 varieties of roses.

Behind an innocuous door between a row of shops on a busy Shiraz street, was the Zoroastrian compound, with shade trees, an Atash Kadeh, and a Dharamshala, all very reminiscent of any Parsi dharamshala, in Udvada, or Narsari or Dahanu.

Accommodations, modest but clean, were $1 per night. Parvin and Sarvar served us with bumper breakfasts (fried eggs dripping in butter, huge nans, butter, jam, and white goat cheese), and dinners (platters of white, dill or yellow rice with a “’khoresh’, a meat and vegetable stew, or ‘khemo’, or ‘chana-ni-dal’, and large plates of fresh herbs — basil, parsley, dill and others) at the long table set outdoors on the patio.

Darius’ Palace at Persepolis

Other than in Shiraz, our meals on the trip were usually in restaurants. Most times it was some form of kabob (chicken, lamb, ground lamb, or fish) served on a large flat skewer over a bed of white rice. Tea is served very light, with no milk, in a small glass. The local Iranians place a lump of sugar in their mouth as they sip their tea. Bottled local soft-drinks (including one called ‘Parsi-Cola’) were a-plenty, and very cheap — less than a dime a bottle. Water in Iran is safe to drink. Though there were a few stomach upsets in our group, I think it was more from over-indulgence.

The two-room yellow-brick Atash Kadeh building in Shiraz was built only about 25 years ago. The afargan was in the main room, in an enclosure with glass windows. Portraits of the deceased lined the walls of a side room. The fire was tended full-time by a mobed who lived nearby [see photo previous page]. Aflatoon Sohrabi, President of the Shiraz Zoroastrian Anjuman would not divulge the number of Zoroastrians in Shiraz; “less than 10,000” is all he would say, but the number is more like 200. He did say that they were approached frequently by persons who wanted to ‘become’ Zarthustis.

Pasargadäe. The day trip to Pasargadäe, 130 Km from Shiraz, was our first look at the glory that was once Iran. Here in the midst of the dry, rugged landscape, with no one but a lonely custodian to watch over it, were the ruins of the city, the palaces and pavilions, the fire altar, the stone columned halls and inscriptions built by Cyrus the Great over 2,500 years ago. Here, at the entrance doorway to his palace was the famous bas-relief of Cyrus with an Egyptian crown, Elamite costume, and Assyrian wings, with cuneiform inscriptions proclaiming his conquests. This is where he had fought the final battle against the Medes, and founded the Great Persian Empire which eventually stretched from the Danube to the Indus. Only the toppled columns now remain.

We were the only tourists that morning. Keeping its lonely vigil across the parched plain, was the gabled, stone monument [see photo] where Cyrus the Great and his wife were buried, in a gold coffin on a gold
table, covered by a richly embroidered gold cloth encrusted with jewels. Only the bare rock building now remains.

Plutarch records that after his victory over Darius in 331 BC, Alexander the Macedonian conqueror, came to Pasargadae. But instead of further plundering, he ordered his men to restore the tomb and its treasures, cemented the entrance, and put his personal seal on it. He then had the following inscription engraved on the door:

"O man, whosoever thou art, and whencesoever thou comest, for I know thou will come; I am Cyrus, who founded the empire of the Persians. Grudge me not, therefore this little earth that covers my body."

In 1971, for the monumental 2500th anniversary celebrations attended by a glittering array of Ambassadors and international royalty that outstripped even the procession of subject nations depicted at Persepolis, the Shah of Iran had an inscription made:

"Cyrus, sleep, for we are awake."

That was, sadly, just a few short years before the Revolution, in 1979, when the Shah and the Pahlavi dynasty were toppled.

Persepolis. Though I had seen photographs and read volumes on Persepolis, I was unprepared for the emotional impact of the monumental proportions of this imperial city in its majestic mountain setting, with its columned halls and palaces, grand staircases and colossal doorways — all silent witnesses to three millennia of world history.

The construction of Persepolis was started in 518 BC by Darius the Great. Over the next 180 years, each succeeding Persian king added a building or monument. There were still carvings left unfinished when Alexander the Macedonian, in a drunken fit, and goaded by the courtesan Thais, burnt Persepolis to the ground, it is said, to avenge the burning of the Acropolis by Xerxes.

Books and manuscripts, including a collection of 12,000 ox-hides on which the entire corpus of Zoroastrian scriptures was transcribed in gold ink, were wiped out in one sweep. The destruction of Persepolis marked the end of the Great Persian Empire.

We climbed the monumental double, stone staircase and entered the city through Xerxes' "Gate of All Nations" flanked by 18-feet high winged bulls, similar to those we see on doorways of Atash Bahrams today.

We saw a sole double-griffin capitol laying on the ground. What happened to the others? On the backs
of these capitals had rested the wooden beams that supported the massive roofs. This symbol [see photo below] has now been adopted as the logo of Iran Air.

And we saw the “Unfinished Gate”. Why was it unfinished? What happened? Who were those master craftsmen and who were the architects who fashioned and built these wonders? No mortar was used at Persepolis. Stones were cut to fit, and at times iron clamps joined two pieces together. How did they bring the massive stones here? From where? 2500 years ago, what tools did they use?

Through stone portals with effigies of the king fighting wild beasts (representing Good against Evil) and doorways where once were wooden doors plated with gold from Sardis, we came to the “Hall of a 100 Columns”. But only the bases of the columns now remain. What happened? Where are they now?

We walked up the very steps of Darius the Great’s Apadana Palace, and saw the “Parade of Nations” on the walls, showing representatives from his 23 ‘satraps’ — Sogdians, Parthians, Elamites, Medes, Armenians, Bactrians, Egyptians, Cilicians, Scythians, Lydians, Ionians, Phoenicians, Macedonians, Indians, Assyrians, Arabs — bearing gifts to the Persian court. It is interesting to note that every member of the procession is male; no females are depicted in this frieze, except for one female lioness.

We saw the treasury where 400 tons of silver and 300 tons of gold brought as tribute by the subjects, was stored. It took 30,000 horses, camels and asses for Alexander to carry the treasures back to Greece after his plunder of Persepolis.

The Queen’s Palace, which is, incidentally on one of the lowest terraces, was unearthed and restored as late as 1931 by the Orientalist, Herzfeld. It is now a Museum, and connects by two staircases to the private Palace of Xerxes, located on the highest terrace in Persepolis.

At the end of this most memorable day, we watched the sun set over the columns of the Apadana, through the massive dark stone portals of Darius’ Palace. A truly awesome sight that will linger in my memory forever.

While the Iranian government takes great pride in its Persian heritage, and supports restoration and excavations, the priceless monuments certainly did not evoke the awe and reverence in the common man on the street, as it did in us. Persepolis, like the other magnificent heritage sites, was very much a part of their daily lives — they picnicked there, played there, and walked by them to work every day. At Persepolis, as at all the other wondrous sites, there were no gift shops and no entrance fee — just one small boy selling a few post cards and one or two rolls of film on the street outside.

At times, on our bus trip, we would suddenly come upon a magnificent 2500-year-old rock carving, or a mountainside cuneiform inscription. Their significance seemed to completely elude the local people, including our guide. “Oh Yes! There’s another inscription”, he would say, as if he was pointing out a post office or a restaurant.

Naqsh-e-Rustam. Hewn out of solid rock cliffs, about 10 miles north of Persepolis, are the cross-shaped tombs [see photo left] of Achaemenid kings, Darius I, Xerxes, Artaxerxes I and Darius II, a sort-of Valley of the
Kings. The bones of the kings were buried here, in stone ‘astodans’. The tombs are now empty. Friezes above the tomb depict the king praying in front of a fire altar, with a winged Farohar above. The inscription, in Old Persian, Elamite and Cuneiform, over Darius' tomb reads:

"A great God is Ahura Mazda, who created this earth, who created the sky and the seas, who created Man, who created happiness for Man ... I am an enemy of those who tell the lie, and a friend of those who tell the truth. I am King of Kings, an Achaemenian, son of Parsa ...

Below the tombs are eight reliefs, [see photo above] sculpted over a half millennium later, by the Sassanian kings, anxious to assert their descendence from the mighty Achaemenian empire, depicting scenes of Persian conquests and investiture of Sassanian royalty.

Ardeshir's Palace/Fire Temple. A few miles from Shiraz, in Firoozabad, is the Palace of Ardeshir Papakan [see photo this page] who defeated the Parthians, and founded the Sassanian Dynasty in 226 A.D. Here was an example of Sassanian architecture, typically a large square hall, gradually turning into a dome on top. Mortar (of gypsum, lime, sand and camel hair) was used to bond the large stone blocks. The three large chimneys suggest the building may have been a Fire Temple. Our group built a sandalwood fire and prayed the Atash Nyaishetogether.

After a quick dinner of rice and kheemo cooked by Parvin and Sarvar at the Shiraz Dharamshala, the group left by bus for the overnight trip to Yazd. At sunrise the bus stopped at the 5000-year-old Cypress tree, with its gnarled trunks in the midst of dusty sand and rocky terrain, which our guide firmly believed was planted by Zarthustra.

Yazd and nearby villages of Cham, Zainabad and Sharifabad. In the midst of unrelieved desert dotted with thorny bushes, Yazd is a surprisingly large city with clean roads and large buildings. We visited the Atash Behram, [see photo next page] built by Dinshah Manockji Petit in the early 1900's, which looked very much like any Atash Behram in Bombay, with a Farohar relief over the columned entry — only the tops and scarves at the door were of white cotton, and the prayer books in the cabinet were in Farsi script.

Most Zoroastrians live around the "Zarthosti Molloh", an area of narrow, sand-colored streets lined with high, adobe, windowless walls, which protect the homes behind them from the unrelenting sun. Through a small, wooden doorway, we entered the Dinyar Zarthusti boy's school — one small classroom with old wood
Left, Atash Bahram in Yazd, built by Dinshah Petit in the early 1900's.

Below, from left: Manager Jamshid Khusrow with wife Shirin Rahidi, at the entrance to Pir-e-Banou. The mosaic reads: Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds (above the Farohar), and "One alone is the path, and it is the Path of Righteousness", below.

Morvarid, a 'Juddith' woman in Cham, who, though converted to Islam, still follows Zarthusti practices (note the afghan on the wall).

Jehangir Mehrabad, keeper of the flame at the entrance to the inner sanctum of the Atash Kadeh in Zainabad.

Shahrriar, the aged cemetery keeper and corpse-bearer at the cemetery at Cham. One of the two dokhmas can be seen in the back. As we took his photograph, he opened his shirt buttons to proudly display his sudreh and kushti.
benches. After 5th grade, the boys go to the larger public school built by the Marker family.

“There is not much work available for Zoroastrians here”, said Rustom Fardoneh, the aged mobed who tended the Atash Kadeh there. “Most Zarathustis work as bus drivers, or teachers, or in factories.” Mahinoor, who married and came to Yazd 22 years ago from Dadar Parsi Colony, was in tears, missing her two sons, Farzin and Ramin studying to be priests at the Madressa in Dadar. Her husband Dariush, a mobed with a powerful singing voice, regaled us with Zarthusti and Persian songs, as he showed us around Yazd and nearby villages.

Two dokhmas (Towers of Silence) can be seen on the mountains as we approached the village of Cham. At the base are the adobe ‘bunglis’ for the 4-day ceremonies for the departed. They were last used about 30 years ago. Now there is a cemetery nearby. Shahriar, the aged cemetery keeper and corpse-bearer, came by riding on a donkey, and eagerly showed us his sudreh and kashfi [see photo below].

Everything in the village of Cham — the narrow streets, the high walls, and the roofs — is the color of clay. The streets are deserted, for no one but the aged, live here any more. A young family drove up in a car to visit the Atash Kadeh. Following them through a doorway in the adobe wall, we entered a courtyard with a white tile shrine set inside a Cypress. In a small dark room on the left, a small afargan, numerous oil lamps and offerings of fruits and vegetables (mostly cucumbers and lemons) with ‘agarbattis’ stuck in them were placed on a metal tripod stand. Someone had pasted Mr. Medora’s Zoroastrian Flag over the doorway.

Nearby we talked with a ‘Jaddith’ woman, Morvarid, on the street in Cham [see photo below]. Jaddiths are Zoroastrians who, due to pressures, have converted to Islam, but still follow Zoroastrian practices, or vice versa. They have a separate cemetery, and can be recognized by their dark clothing.

We met a Tehran dentist, who had come to Cham for the Pir Sab summer festival. “Life is very difficult for Zoroastrians,” he said, “Not too many live here any more. And jobs are scarce.” He took us to his family home, where his mother, dressed in traditional layers of clothing in the Zoroastrian style — ‘makhma’ and ‘lachak’ (head shawls), ‘doman’ (long shirt), and ‘sharval’ (pantaloons) was delighted to show us around her home, and quickly cut up two large, sweet, red watermelons.

Belying its stark adobe exterior, inside were several nice rooms
Above, Abnayee Kyani, in the courtyard of her home in Sharifabad, weaving a kushti.

Left, Zarthusatis at Pir Sab listening to presentation by FEZANA officials and youth, on life of Zarthusatis in America.

around a courtyard, with Persian carpets on the floor, a few pieces of furniture, a TV, telephone, electric lights, and indoor plumbing. A portrait of Zarthustra was on the wall.

In the neighboring village of Zainabad, we visited the Atash Kadeh. While the exterior halls are being renovated in white tile (due to the philanthropy of Khodayar Movsanat) the original fire is still maintained in a large adefgan in a small, dark room at one end of the halls. Mobed Jehangir Mehrabad [see photo] unlocked the wooden door when we arrived, and prodded the dormant ashes into glowing embers.

In the next village, Sharifabad, only about 30 families now remain. We visited the aged Abnayee Kyani, sitting in the courtyard of her home weaving a kusti [see photo]. Her husband Ardeshir, and grandsons Bijan and Shiavak, tend the Atash Kadeh there. Again, in the hall, on a central table were numerous oil lamps and agarbattis. Photographs of the departed lined the walls. We peeped through a small, old, broken wood door, off to one side, and saw a huge, dark adefgan, with smoldering ashes. No one was around to tend the fire, just Abnayee Kyani and her two young grandsons Bijan and Shiavak. In the outside hall on the stage wall were two photographs — of Zarthustra and the Religious Leader Khamenei, side by side.

Ghanats — unique water systems. The dry desert areas depend on a unique system for their water supply. Over 50,000 ‘ghanats’, (also called ‘ab ambar’ or water storage tanks) traceable back to Achaemenian times, dot the landscape. The ghanat is a ditch, sometimes over 50 miles in length, and up to 150 feet deep, that starts at the foot of the mountains or some other source of water, and guides the water to a storage tank in the village or oasis or private home. On the surface it has a pointed dome.
Water is cooled by twin wind-towers or 'badgirs', where vents are arranged to catch the slightest breeze and carry it down to the water chambers beneath. A highly-skilled profession, ghanat-builders traditionally come from the Yazd area.

**Pirs around Yazd.** There are several *Pirs* (or shrines) set in the mountains around Yazd, where Zarthustis go to offer prayers and ask for blessings: Pir-e-Herisht, Pir-e-Banou, Sette Pir, and most popular of all, Pir Sab [see photos right]. At Pir-e-Banou built in the time of Reza Shah, legend has it that Yazdegird III's daughter was miraculously saved when the mountains closed behind her, thwarting the pursuing Arab hordes.

For 5 days in the summer, Zarthustis flock to picnic and pray at Pir Sab. We joined the thousands of devotees, sleeping on the mountainside terraces, under the stars. The sounds of singing, music and dancing filled the air, late into the night.

Next morning Alayar Dabestani of Vancouver (who is originally from Sharifabad) announced on the PA system echoing across the mountains, that FEZANA officials would talk about Zarthustis in America. Several hundreds listened as Dolly Dastoor and Rohinton Rivetna spoke and answered questions about life in America. Our three youth, Mazda Antia, Laila Contractor, and Cyrus Cama were besieged by Irani youth anxious to know about America, and how we could help them get there. Many addresses were exchanged.

**Isfahan.** The next day we took a city tour of Isfahan ('Half of the World'), famous for its carpets, inlaid work, and miniatures. We visited the ruins
of the Fire Temple of Ardeshir, high atop a mountain overlooking the city [see photo]. And we saw the beautiful Jama Mosque, where some parts were believed to have originally been a fire temple.

Hamadan, Ganj Nameh After a quick pizza dinner in the hotel, we boarded the bus for the overnight journey to Hamadan in Western Iran. Hamadan, the ancient Ectabana, was the Median capital before their union with the Persians, and most ancient of the cities in Iran, dating back to 800 BC. Both the Silk Route to China and the Royal Road of the Achaemenians passed through here.

At Ganj Nameh, near Hamadan, the victories of two Achaemenid kings, Darius I and Xerxes I are recorded in cliff-side inscriptions in three languages: Persian, Babylonian and Elamite. A replica in English was built some years ago.

Kermanshah, Taq-e-Bustan, Bisotun. At Taq-e-Bustan ("Garden Arch") near Kermanshah, are two deep arches (grottos), where triumphant moments of Sassanian history from the 3rd to 7th centuries AC — such as the coronations of Khosrow Parvez, Ardeshir and Shapur II and III, are immortalized in rock carvings [see photo above].

A few miles further down the road, 200 feet high on the vertical face of a rock cliff at Bisotun, near Kermanshah are the rock carvings portraying the victories of Darius in 520 BC over his rebel princes [see photo above]. The decisive battle was fought on this site. The face of the cliff is copiously annotated in three cuneiform scripts — Old Persian, Elamite and Akkadian.

The aged guide-cum-keeper-cum-guard, who sat all day in a small tent at the base of the mountain, allowed just a few of us to go up the treacherous scaffolding towards the bas-reliefs. The rest had to be content with a framed poster of the famous frieze. The inscriptions were first studied by Sir Henry Rawlinson in 1833, suspended by a rope from the 300-foot summit to copy and later decode the script, using it as a key to decipher the lost Akkadian language.

Kangavar, Temple of Anahita. As the sun was setting we drove to Kangavar to see the ruins of the Parthian Temple of Anahita (or Artemis), from around 200 BC. What must have once been a colossal monument to this Goddess of the Waters was now in complete ruins, possibly damaged by earthquake. Only the bases of some columns, over 6 feet in diameter, now remained standing. Vestiges of a grand staircase were visible, half-buried in the parched earth. All around us were rocks and fragments of structures, some lay where they had fallen, and others were neatly sorted into piles, by size, each piece painstakingly numbered.

The temple is being carefully re-assembled, in a major restoration effort by the Government [see photo].

As the sun set over the massive fallen columns, we walked, subdued, back to the bus. Most of my questions were left unanswered. What happened? When? How? Was there an earthquake? How many perished? Why? I will never know.

But we had to move on to Tehran, to the Congress, to tackle the more pressing questions of today.

Right, At the sight of the fallen Temple of Anahita, at Kangavar near Hamadan.

Far right, architectural sketch of the restoration effort by the Government.
Left, bas-relief at Taq-e-Bustan near Kermanshah, depicting the investiture of Ardeshir II (379 AD), showing the King receiving the “ring of power” from Ahura Mazda or the head priest. Mithra stands to his right, holding a bunch of Barsom twigs. This is the frieze from which the popular portrayal of Zarathustra so familiar to us today, is taken, with the halo of rays, long tunic and sash.

Top and right, cliffside rock carvings and cuneiform inscriptions of Darius I, at Behistun, near Hamadan
Cyrus Cama and Syrus Pourmandgarian in Iran

By Cyrus F. J. Cama and Syrus Pourmandgarian

We are Cyrus Cama and Syrus Pourmandgarian,
Both exploring our ancient homeland of Iran,
Having the maximum amount of fun,
That any mortal can have under the sun.

We have come for the Sixth World Zoroastrian Congress in Tehran,
And to visit Shiraz, Yazd, Hamadan, and Isfahan.
Let us not be wordy or make haste,
There is little time for us to waste.
Iran is such an awesome place,
Where you’ll always have a smile on your face.
In this land of awe and wonder,
There are so many points one could ponder.
Shiraz, we both must agree,
Is and extremely beautiful city,
Filled with flowers and poetry,
Like those of Hafez and Sa’adi.

We are off to Pasargadae the next day,
To see the tomb where Cyrus the Great used to lay.
It is before this great structure that our group eats lunch,
Composed of chicken, salad, and of course, fruit punch.

We travel some more, sitting on this bus,
Too busy and excited to complain or fuss,
Till we come to Naqsh-e-Rustom, a place of greatness,
With the tombs of Darius, Xerxes, Darius II, and Artaxerxes.
The day comes to a climax, when we reach Persepolis,
With enormous stone columns, that one just can’t miss.
We are at Darius’ palace, and our guide tells a story,
But we just sit back, and think of Ancient Iran, and days of glory.

At night, we’re off to Yazd,
And nearby Pir Sab.
This is a very important Zarthusti shrine,
Where Zarthustis can pray, meet others, and have a good time.

Yazd is most definitely the city,
To learn about your Zarthusti ancestry.
We visited the Dakhma and Atash-Kadeh,
Where we collected our thoughts and began to pray.

We travel to magnificent and beautiful Isfahan,
Then on to glorious and historical Hamadan.
Nearby are inscriptions of two great kings
(Darius and Xerxes)
That tell of Ahura Mazda, happiness, and other things.

At Kermanshah, we see another carved inscription,
That gives the reader a detailed description,
Of how King Darius achieved total victory,
Over several rebels, who challenged his supremacy.
The Caspian Sea is bluer than the Nile,
And we wish we could have stayed for a longer while.
We did however take a motorboat ride,
Through the breeze, and the calm tide.
The Congress in Tehran is the next day,
So we must move, and be on our way.
The bus ride there is a thrashing party and a blast,
As our whole group sings songs by the Beatles,
and others of the past.

The Sixth World Zoroastrian Congress comes to a start,
With everyone in their position and playing their part,
There are many interesting speakers, many of whom say,
That to have a strong community tomorrow,
we must have unity today.

But this is not all that we do in Tehran,
For we have made many new friends here in Iran.
We walk with them in the nice weather,
For we are all happy to be in this land together.

But the Congress soon comes to an end,
And we say to each other, “Good-bye, dear friend.”
That is sad, but do not fret.
This poem is not over yet!

We are Cyrus Cama and Syrus Pourmandgarian,
Who together explored our homeland of Iran.
Forgetting our adventure in this land never.
We are great friends and brothers forever.

Cyrus F. J. Cama, 15, is a high school student in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
Syrus Pourmandgarian, brother of our tour manager, Sohrab, was our friend and guide on the trip through Iran.
Our Holy Scriptures
An Overview
By Rustom Kevala

Avesta, Zand and Pazand

Avesta, the term applied to our scriptures, is also used for the language in which the oldest of our texts is composed. The term ‘Avesta’ does not actually occur in the scriptures themselves. Pahlavi language literature of the Sassanian and post-Sassanian times refers to these scriptures as apastak, meaning ‘scripture, sacred text, or original text’, as distinguished from zand, meaning ‘commentary, exposition’ [1], [2]. Choksy [3] suggests that the word Avesta comes from Pahlavi abestag, meaning ‘pure instruction’.

The original Pahlavi script of Parthian times was of Aramaic origin, and had only 12 primary letters. A new and improved script was invented in the 6th century CE (Common Era). Pahlavi texts written in this new script were generally known as Pazand, a term that denotes ‘additional explanation on the zand’ [1].

The Avesta texts that were in existence in Sassanian times and which are recited today as daily prayers and also in ceremonies, have been handed down by oral traditions from generation to generation since very ancient times. There is no word for ‘to write’ or ‘to read’ in the entire Avesta literature! The Avesta verbs used in connection with the sacred texts indicate that the texts were memorized, recited, chanted, studied, commented upon, catechized, versified, but never written or read. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the Avesta was composed in prehistory, when writing was unknown. The Avesta must have been committed to writing at a later stage.

A Brief History of the Written Avesta

There are references to written copies of the Avesta and commentaries on the Avesta prayers existing in Achaemenian times. The ceremonial implements (havana and tashita, ‘mortar, pestle and saucer’) found in the ruins of Persepolis bear inscriptions in Aramaic script, which indicates that written records of the scriptures must have been kept nearby. After Alexander’s invasion and conquest of Iran in 330 BCE, the Avesta scripture of Achaemenian times was partly destroyed and partly scattered in various places. Pausanias, a Greek traveler and geographer of the 2nd century CE wrote: “The Magi chant in a language unintelligible to the Greeks, as they read from a book.” Later, the Parthian Emperor Vologeses I (51-77 CE) ordered the collection of the scattered fragments.

The present corpus of our texts is attributed to Dastur Tonsar, who prepared and canonized a standard edition of the Avesta scripture under the sponsorship of Sassanian Emperor Ardashir Papakan (226-241 CE). In Sassanian times, there were 21 Avesta texts called Nasks, ‘collections’. These 21 Avesta Nasks were translated into Pahlavi, probably during the reign of Shahpur II (309-379 CE); and commentaries added during the reign of Khusro I (Khusro Anoushirewan, 531-579 CE)

The Avesta-Pahlavi scriptures suffered disruption once again when the Arabs invaded Iran in 641 CE. But 20 Avesta and 19 Pahlavi Nasks were still in existence in the 9th century. A summary of the contents of these 19 Nasks was included in the Pahlavi Denkard, compiled by Atarfarzand Farrokhzad, and completed by Atarpat Hemen in the latter part of the 9th century.

Unfortunately today, most of the Avesta Nasks, their Pahlavi translations, and other Pahlavi works mentioned in the Denkard have been irretrievably lost. Jafarey [4] estimates that the present Avesta texts, which contain about 98,000 words, are only about one-third the length of the original texts in the Nasks. Some of the portions of the lost Nasks do, however, appear to have been preserved in other manuscripts.

The oldest manuscript of the Avesta in existence today, dates to 1323 CE. It was copied by Ervad Mehrabani Kay-Khosro and is currently housed in the Bodleien Library at Oxford University as Manuscript J2 [3].

The Extant Avesta Scriptures

The extant Avesta scriptures can be divided into 5 texts:

1. The Yasna (including the Gathas)
2. The Visperad
3. The Vidāevdat (Vendidad)
4. The Yashts, and
5. The Khordeh Avesta.
THE EXTANT AVESTA
from Ali Jafarey [4]

Visperad

Non-Gathic Yasna

Gathas

Miscellaneous

Aerapatston
& Nirangist

Khordeh Avesta

Vendidad

shortly before and during the Achaemenian period — i.e., 6th to 4th centuries BCE [3]. The epic character and poetic form are the distinguishing features of the Yashts [1]. Important historical materials of the Pershadian and Keyanian dynasties have been preserved in the Yashts.

(5) The Khordeh Avesta, or ‘Smaller Avesta’ is the book of daily prayers of Zarthusists. It contains selections from the rest of the Avesta. It includes:

- The Kushti prayers
- The five Gahs
- The five Nyaishes (‘praises, litany’) composed in honor of, and dedicated to the Yazatas Hvar (Khorsched), Meher, Mah, Aredvisur, and Atar; presiding over sun, light, moon, water, and fire, respectively.
- Siroze, of thirty-days kshnu-man, dedicatory and invocatory formulae of the Yazatas presiding over the thirty days of the Zarthushti month.
- The Afrinjan (benediction, blessing) containing invocatory prayers and blessings, dedicated to Arda Fravash (holy Fravashi), Dahman (Piyet), Gahmar (seasonal festivals), and Rapithwin (coming of spring and summer).

There are only 183 words from the Gathas; consisting of the often repeated Ahuna Vairya and Ashem Vohu, and some other stanzas, in the Khordeh Avesta. Some editions are augmented with 101 names of Ahura Mazda, Tendarosti (prayer for blessings), and Patets (prayer for repentance).

[References on page 51]

Jafarey [4] also includes the Herbaistan and Nirangistan, books of Priests and Rites, in the Avesta scriptures. Besides these, there are some fragmentary Avesta texts preserved in Pahlavi commentaries given in Pahlavi translations of the Avesta. The proportion of each of these books in the extant Avesta is shown in the chart on this page.

Yashts

(1) The Yasna generally signifies worship with ceremony and offerings. The preservation of the Yasna in intact form is attributed to its continuous use by priests as the oral text for the Ijeshne ceremony. The text consists of 72 chapters (Avesta-Haiti; Pahlavi-Har; Gujarati-Ha). These 72 chapters include 17 chapters or cantos of Gathas (Divine Songs), the metrical chants of Asho Zarthus himself, divided into five parts:

- Ahunavaiti Ys.28-34
- Ushvataviti Ys.43-46
- Spenta-Mainyu Ys.47-50
- Vohu-Khshathra Ys.51
- Vahishtoishi Ys.53

The rest of Yasna reflects an assimilation into the religion of the hymns and rites of worship that were being practiced by the tribesfolk to whom Zarthustra preached [3]. The non-Gathic Yasna speaks about a purely solar calendar [4]. More on the Yasna is given in the articles by Ichaporia and Irani in this issue of the Journal.

(2) The Visperad (All-festivals) is composed in honor of the celestial Lords, presiding over the spiritual and material creations. It celebrates seasonal occasions and the intercalary days at the end of the then lunar-solar year of the earliest Zarthushti calendar. This indicates that it may be older than the corresponding non-Gathic Yasna sections. In ceremonial recitations, the Visperad is not an independent text, but it is a supplement to the Yasna. The Visperad consists of 23 chapters called kardas.

(3) The Vidaevdat or Vendidad. The Pahlavi word vidaevdat corresponds to the Avesta vidaevdata, the ‘law against the demons (evil forces)’. The Vidaevdat (popularly ‘Vendidad’) is one of the 21 Nasks of the Sassanian times; and in the present condition it has 22 chapters, called frakrats. It is a religious law book, and contains laws of sanitation, hygiene and ritual purity. It is the code of ceremonial ablutions, penance and purification. In ceremonial recital, the frakrats of the Vidaevdat are intermingled with the chapters and cantos of the Yasna and Visperad.

(4) The Yashts are composed in honor and worship of Ahura Mazda, Amesha Spentas, and Yazatas. Each of the Yashts is individually dedicated to one of the divinities. Pre-Zoroastrian divinities have been given the status of angels or Yazatas, with Ahura-like qualities fit for invocation [5]. The rendering of the Yashts into forms acceptable to Zarthusists appears to have occurred

[References on page 51]
A listing of items of the sacred literature of a tradition by itself provides no comprehension. It is their role and function within the tradition which must be grasped to give significance to their existence. The discipline of hermeneutics of religious literature has generated analytical categories of great value towards interpretation and understanding, which we shall utilize.

A piece of religious literature may function in several ways. It may be liturgical (i.e. to be recited in a ritual), or it may be wisdom literature (i.e. conveying some religious message), or it may be instructional, usually to the clergy. We may probe further into function to inquire, in case of liturgy, whether it is a prayer of expression (devotion or thanksgiving), or a prayer of request (general blessing or specific want), or an address or declaration to the Divinity or Humanity.

These functions become known as soon as we understand the content of the scripture. But here it is important to notice whether it is to be taken as the voice of God or the voice of Man. When we place the particular scripture in the historical context, which indeed we must if our study is to be analytical and critical, we inquire into the authorship, the period of its composition, and the intent of the composition.

I shall not make such judgements at all times, but I shall provide the information to enable the reader to apply this set of concepts to the scriptures we examine.

**The First Scripture — The Gathas**

The first and fundamental text of the Zoroastrian tradition is the set of Hymns known as the Gathas. These are the compositions of Zarathushtra, entirely in oral form, composed between 1400 and 1000 BCE, in a language we call Avestan. These highly poetic Hymns are in part an exchange between Ahura Mazda and Zarathushtra, and in part a declaration to humanity of the teachings of Ahura Mazda. These teachings are obviously the primary basis and foundation of the religion.

Every fundamental religious teaching must be examined for two primary aspects of religious faith: (i) the content of the belief — structure; and (ii) the attitude embedded in the mode of acceptance.

The content of the Gathas is a highly poetic expression of a religious vision, a view of the world with a related way of life. The view of the world may be formulated in the following propositions:

1. Ahura Mazda is the Creator of the World.

2. Creation was first conceived in a purely ideal form, as a principle of perfect evolution which is Asha, Ideal Truth. Whatever is in accordance with it is Good.

3. The material world was meant to reflect this progressive perfection. However, there are two operative principles, Mainyu — two conceptual vectors, one directed towards promoting Asha, called Spenta Mainyu, the other directed towards opposing Asha, not named in the Gathas, but later called Angre Mainyu. Thus the material world is a manifestation of the good creation of Ahura Mazda conflicted and contaminated.

Related to this view of the world is a way of life. It may be formulated in the following propositions:

1. Human beings, blessed with the divine gift of the Good Mind (Vohu Manah) are able to use reality in its true moral colors. In other words, one with a clear, uncontaminated mind can see any aspect of the world for what it is, and how it ideally should be.

2. When we recognize this disparity between what is and what it ought to be, the divine attribute of Right Mindedness (Spenta Armaiti) inclines us to act so as to bring the situation towards its ideal.

3. Such action emerging from the understanding of Asha (i.e. Good Thoughts) and directed toward its implementation is righteous action (Good Deeds). Such action leads to happiness of righteous contentment and the realization of some significance in our place in the cosmic moral order as cooperating in realizing the Divine Purpose.

Gathic religiosity requires the acceptance of this world-view and a commitment by the individual to this way of life as a fundamental requirement of the religious life. This and the veneration of Ahura Mazda, is the theology of the Gathas. There are of course extensive ramifications of this theology expressed in inspiring poetic form in the Gathas; but there is no additional doctrine or prescription, either moral or ritualistic.

We may now inquire into the mode of acceptance implied in this foundation work of our religious tradition. It is what we call reflective acceptance. The prophet in the celebrated
Yasna 30, the Gatha of Choice, asks each one of us to reflect on these teachings with a clear mind and make the choice (of acceptance or otherwise), and be responsible for that choice.

This utterly original and unprecedented religious conception must have been startling to the Iranian tribes of cattle and sheep herders to whom he proclaimed this Faith — for Zarathushtra replaced the very early archaic, magical religion as well as the somewhat later religion of sacrifice and virtual offering and asking for boons, by a religion of moral regeneration, of living the Good Life, promoting the Ideal Truth.

**The Early Post-Gathic Period**

The Gathas, the earliest of our religious literature, do not constitute a single scriptural text, as those texts that have been received by us in the Zoroastrian compilation prepared in the Sassanian period. The Gathas are incorporated in the Yasna. This is a liturgy of 72 chapters recited in the performance of what has now come to be known as the Yazeshne or Ijeshne ceremony. The Gathas are 17 chapters of the 72. There are two additional chapters which present four brief manthric prayers, i.e., prayers for reflective recitation. They are in Welsh Avestan, and their style bears the compositional stamp of Zarathushtra. They are the Yatha Ahu Vairyo, Ashem Vohu, Yenghe Hatam, and A Airyemo Ishyo. This is the extent of the Prophet’s compositions.

Moving on to the next compositions, we find them in the Yasna between Chapters 34, the last of the Ahunavaiti Gatha and Chapter 43, the first of the Ushtavaiti Gatha. This is a set of seven chapters, 35-41 (not Chapter 42). They are called Yasna Haptenhaiti, the prayer of the seven chapters. They are in a language which is almost indistinguishable from the Gothic. We can be reasonably sure that they were composed soon after the period of Zarathushtra. They crystallize some of the Gothic ideas, e.g., the life of Good Thought, Good Word, Good Deed is venerated. The abstract Gothic concepts and principles are collectively named Amesha Spenta, meaning Holy Immortals, and they are venerated. However, these chapters introduce ideas not present in the Gathas, ideas which acquired significance in the later history of religion, i.e., reverence for the elements, especially fire and water. Though alien, this is not inconsistent with Gothic teaching, but where does it come from? We recognize these ideas as recapitulation of pre-Gathic nature worship of the Indo-Iranian peoples. Similarly, in the Yasna Haptenhaiti, there is veneration of the Fravashis, the active, spiritual counterparts of individual selves. Such a concept does not appear in the Gathas, and plays no role in Gothic theology. It reflects a very old notion in the beliefs of the ancient Indo-European tribes of the spirits of ancestors and tribal heroes coming to the assistance of the living, when appropriately invoked.

We may rightly consider these elements in this Yasna Haptenhaiti as the earliest attempt on the part of the Zoroastrian clergy, close to the period of Zarathushtra, to adjust and reconcile Zarathushtra’s utterly innovative religious teaching to the population steeped in concepts belonging to a different code of religiosity.

Chapter 54, following the last Gatha, Chapter 53, contains the last manthric prayer in Gothic Language — Airyemo Ishyo. The next chapter, 55, is an eulogy on the Gathas and the Stot Yasna. This is probably the earliest reference to a Yasna (prayer of offering). But we are not told what this Yasna is. To determine what this Yasna must have been, and regarded as worthy of eulogy, we must rely on conjecture. The most likely answer would be that the original was the Gathas, and the four manthric prayers, and the Haptenhaiti. In this I am following the historical research of Dr. A. Jafarey.

This Yasna must have been regarded as bearing the heart of the religion. It was however expanded from time to time by additional prayers, of varying antiquity as judged by the language. The earliest addition was probably a prayer called the Fraoreti, a declaration of a believer that he or she has accepted the religion and made the commitment. It is now Chapters 12 and 13 of the present Yasna. The Stot Yasna probably stabilized with the addition of a chapter incorporating what is called Fshusho-Manthra. It is Chapter 58 of the present Yasna. It presents a very archaic form of worship to the Divinity and prayer for protection of cattle herders. The language of this prayer is close to Welsh Avestan.

Reviewing the early literature what we notice is that subsequent to the Gathas we have material following Gothic inspiration, and other material recapitulating pre-Gathic thought and practice. And this tendency continued for the next seven or eight hundred years.

Exactly when the Yasna became attached to the ritual for extracting the Haoma juice is unknown. Chapters 9-11 of the Yasna is the Haoma Yasht, a hymn to Haoma. This ritual is an expression of some very ancient myths and ritual practices of the Indo-Iranians. Soma, the Sanskrit equivalent of the Avestan Haoma, is part of some Rig-Vedic ritual. It was the drink of immortality, providing progeny in any case. The Iranians preserved the Haoma ritual, and also the sacred recitations of the Zoroastrian tradition. The myth and ritual here has obviously no connection with Gothic theology. Gradually chapter after chapter were added by various ritual priests who thought the amendment appropriate until the Yasna acquired 72 chapters, a number of no particular significance.

The next Avestan liturgical work is the Vispered, the Yasna to all the ratus (lords), or offering of reverence
to all the Lords. It is essentially the Yasna with sundry additions. It was recited at the Gahambars to honor the spiritual aspects of various creations and aspects of the year.

**The Yashts**

There is a whole set of Avestan religious literature called the Yashts, in essence hymns of praise and veneration. They are addressed to the Yazatas, i.e. worshipful beings. These beings are not part of the theology of Zarathushtra. Most of them were divinities of the pre-Zarathushtra Indo-Iranian pantheon, and some belonged to an even more ancient Indo-European pantheon—religious traditions which were polytheistic.

The reconciliation between these widely held ancient beliefs and Zarathushtra's monotheistic religion of ethical commitment was sought by having them join the conflict on the side of good against evil. There was also an additional artificial device in the Yashts to incorporate these minor divinities; near the opening of the Yashts, Ahura Mazda is made to tell Zarathushtra that the divinity (the one to whom the Yasht is recited) is worthy of worship.

The Yashts often contain significant elements of the ancient mythology of the relevant divinity, similar to what we find in the Homeric hymns of the Greek tradition. It is through these stories that we can recognize the character of these divinities.

Some of the Yashts contain references to the kings and heroes of ancient Iran. These accounts are often related to aspects of cosmic history and the origins and evolution of human society. Such accounts in the Yashts are rather allusions to what must have been a common lore of legendary history than a systematic presentation.

A book on cosmogony was composed centuries later, originally in what language is not known. But it has come down to us in Pahlavi—the Bundahishn. It is a highly mythologized account of creation and the history of humanity from a religio-mythical perspective. It is not a liturgical work, it may be called wisdom literature; perhaps the wisdom is faintly detectable.

There is the Avestan Videavadata. But for very good reasons we believe that it was a compilation from diverse sources, and originally written in Parthian Middle Persian or Pahlavi and then translated with numerous grammatical errors into Avestan. It exists in a suitable Pahlavi version, the Vendidad, and must be considered a Pahlavi text.

**The Shorter and Later Avestan Texts**

The rest of the Avestan literature gives a prominent place to prayers of blessings called Afrins. The ritual recitations are always made in front of a fire with offerings of bread, fruit, milk, water, and wine. Flowers are also presented in the ritual. The recitations are of several kinds: Afrinagan Daham, memorial blessing for the departed; Afrinagan Gatha, recited on the last five (Gatha) days of the year; Afrinagan Gahambar, recited on seasonal feast days; Afrinagan Rapithwan, recitation in honor of summer. It was recited at the start of summer, or on mid-summer day. It was an important event in the lives of the Northern cattle breeders. The May-day and Mid-summer celebrations of present-day descendants of Northern Indo-Europeans from Ireland and Scotland through Scandinavia and North Europe into Baltic lands echo these ancient rituals.

An Avestan text of practical importance is the Khordeh Avesta. Compiled from earlier Avestan material with additions around the fourth or fifth century CE, it is the book of common prayers for Zoroastrians for the last 1500 years. These prayers of tying the kushki and baj, are regularly recited by the devout laity. It also contains Nyaishes, recitations to minor divinities. The Arash Nyaaishe (Nyaaishe to Fire) contains Gathic passages and material from Yasna Chapter 62. It also contains a list of and veneration to the 30 days of the month, the Siroze.

There is a text called the Nirangistan and Herpetestation. The two are considered part of one text. They are instructional. The Nirangistan are instructions for appropriate performance and behavior of priests. The Herpetestation discusses obligations of priests when officiating on visits to those who call for services.

In the Avestan material that has come down to us surviving the various devastations we have a few fragments, one piece of which is known as the Aogemadaecha. It is a short (less than 10 pages) dissertation on death, a beautiful piece of wisdom literature. Its author, a learned priest of the late Avestan period writes with complete familiarity of the tradition, but with a calm and clear reflection on the attitude of moral consequence in the hereafter, free of mythology or propitiatory machinery.

This is a survey of the Avestan literature of our tradition. It is important to notice how much of the religious vision of the Prophet was faithfully continued, and how much was alien in content and spirit; what was added or compromised in the process of adapting to the pre-Zoroastrian cultic and sacrificial practices of the population, not up to grasping the new religious vision. We must also understand the reasons why the priesthood, whether Zoroastrian or pre-Zoroastrian, who in the compromise and expansion, clouded the sharp clarity of Zarathushtra's notion of religiosity and imported elements of propitiation and offering of praise in place of illumined choice and the offering of righteous action.
The Yasna

By Pallan R. Ichaporia

Yasna (Sanskrit: Yajna) is the prayer of praise, adoration and act of worship [Bartholomai Wb. p.127]. During Sassanian times in the reign of Ardeshir Babak during the Avesta was gathered and compiled, the high ceremony of Yasna/Ijeshe was re-established and Yasna became the name of all the texts which were recited at the ceremony.

The Yasna or Ijeshe Ceremony

The Yasna or Ijeshe ceremony has a number of subordinate performances in the preparation of offering of Para-haoma, juice extracted from the haoma plant and mixed with consecrated water, milk and other ingredients (Ativianghan and Urvaram). This is before the ceremony of Paragn (Sanskrit: Prakriya). This whole ceremony is a very ancient one in the Mazdayasna religion. [For a complete explanation of the ceremony, see Kotwal & Boyd, “The Yasna, A Zoroastrian High Liturgy”, Paris, 1991].

The Text of Yasna

The Yasna, though composed for the purpose of the high liturgy, has original connection with the ceremonial act which it accompanies. It is a mixture of various manthras (potent prayers, holy words) and, in parts, extremely ancient texts. These elements are very skillfully knitted together into one whole. The larger sections have appropriate introductions prefixed to them and closed with longer or shorter prayers.

The Yasna comprises 72 chapters called Haiti. The formation seems to have been done with utmost care, although several chapters are simply of at least three different parts which are distinguishable by considerable differences in language and contents:

1. Yasna chapters 1-27 and 54-72, seem to have been composed much later. We may call it the Later Yasna.
2. Yasna chapters 35-41, is also known as the Yasna of Seven Chapters, or the Haptenhaiti.
3. Yasna chapters 28-34 and 42-53 are the very old Yasna, called the Gathas.

First Part of the Later Yasna, chapters 1-27 begins with formal invocations to the offerings addressed to all the divinities and yazatas in accurate order according to their rank [Ys 1-2]. It refers to the consecration of certain libations (Zaotthra) and other offerings (Mayzada) such as milk (gaush huda, gaush jivya), juice of the Haoma and Hadhanaepatha plant (which when mixed with milk is called Para-haoma), and the sacred bread which is partaken of by the priests [Ys. 3-8.4]. Then follows the prayer Yasna 8.5-8 and 8.9, which is the introduction to the Hom-Yasht where Haoma is praised as a plant and a Yazata in the style of the Yashts [Ys.9-11].

Yasna 11.16 introduces a new section, the Confession of Faith of the Mazdayasans which is from Chapter 11.17 to the end of Chapter 13. The Mazdayasna Confession is in the Gathic dialect and seems to have higher antiquity, next to the Yasna Haptenhaiti. The most important of these chapters is the Creed of Zarathushtra [Ys. 12, 14, 15]. Chapters 16 and 17 contain the invocation of Beneficient Immortals, times of the day (Gahs), seasons of the year, and

Chapter 18 is the same as 47. Chapters 19-21 are the homilies on the three most sacred Zoroastrian prayers, the Ahuna Vairyo, Ashem Vohu and Yenghe Hatam. Chapter 19 is the theological commentary on the Ahuna Vairya prayer. Chapters 22-27 are the Homer Yasht which accompanies the second preparation of the Haoma juice.

Second Part of the Later Avesta, Chapters 54-72 begins with the potent prayer of A Airyema Ishyo [Y. 54]. which belongs to Vacha Chthrus hamrutra [Vispered 10.11]. This prayer ranks with the Ahuna Vairya and Ashem Vohu in importance. Chapter 55 begins with a short poetical praise of the Gathas of Zarathustra, and Stot Yasna. Stot Yasna are the songs of praise and prayers which designate a collection of texts incorporated between Chapters 14 and 59, and comprises 33 portions including five Gathas and Yasna Haptenhaiti [Bartholomae Wb. p.1589].

Chapters 56 and 57 are the small and large Sraosh Yashis, devoted to the praise of Sroasha. Chapter 58 contains Fshusho Manthra, the ‘forward moving potent prayers’. Chapter 59 contains renewed invocations. Chapter 60 is the prayer for the protection of shelters of devout adherents. Chapter 61 is for keeping ‘the lie’ away with Ahuna Vairya prayer followed by homage to fire (Atar) in Chapter 62, also called the Atash Nyaisha. Chapters 62-68 are in praise and offering to life-giving waters also called Ardevisur Nyaisha. Renewed invocations and conclusion of the ceremony form the end of the Yasna.

Yasna Haptenhaiti, Chapters 35-41, ‘Yasna of the Seven Chapters’ is inserted in the midst of the Gathas. Although it is more recent than the Gathas, it is more ancient and original than other sections of the later Yasna. It is composed in the archaic language close to the Gathic language, with many fewer objects of worship. It is liturgical in character.
The Gathas, Yasna Chapters 28-34 and 42-53, form the very old Yasna. The Gathas, the sacred of the sacred, and by far the oldest of the Zoroastrian literature, in their essential elements are to be traced back as the very words of Prophet Zarathushtra himself.

The word ‘Gatha’ means song. But as far as their content is concerned, they may be called sermons in verse form, giving guidance and prescription to live a truthful life. The manner of their delivery and their general tenor seems to take for granted that the hearers were thoroughly acquainted not only with all the circumstances and events to which occasional reference is made, but also with the doctrine of the religion of Zarathushtra. Seventeen sermons in verse have come down to us, Yasna 28-29, 45-51 and 53. They were divided at quite an early date into five parts, each different in size.

The five Gathas can be classified by the structure of the verses and lines. The meter of the Gathas is much the same as that of the Veda. We find lines with the same number of syllables and verses with the same number of lines, as in the Veda, and that includes caesura found at the same place.

But the theology of the Gathas is entirely monotheistic and is far different than that of the Veda. And one must note another fundamental difference — the Vedic meter is one of quantity, while the Gathic meter is one of accent. The Gathas are the work of one great Prophet Zarathushtra, of one time period, while the Vedas are the works of many authors — the rishis, encompassing various periods.

The Gathas are no doubt the oldest surviving product of Zoroastrian literature and, we owe a debt of gratitude to our priests of yonder years for preserving them intact by including them in the Yasna liturgy. By themselves, the Gathas, which in bulk amount to about one sixth of the extant Avesta, would not have survived if they had not been placed in the center of the Yasna. The Gathic poems are among the most difficult ever written. Although only recently are they now better understood among scholars, we still have difficulties of correct identification of inflectional endings in order to unequivocally construe the Gathic sentences.

Zarathushtra’s Gathas are a new kind of religious lyric expressed by means of the age-old, conventional versification, a revolution in thought, a reformation of unmatched depth, which, to this day, stands out as a landmark in the history of religion.

Zarathushtra in all fairness, is thus called not only a great Prophet, but also a poet of uncommon power.

Our Holy Scriptures (Contd.)

References

First, Second and Third Orders of Scriptures

In the Zarathushtrian religion the Gathas must constitute primal in the order of importance. Despite changes in the style and introduction of the pantheon of divinity non-existent in the Gathas, the entire Yasna, the Yashts, Vasideh and the fragments of Avestan literature, such as the Nirangistan, Hadokht Nask, and others would constitute a second ranking order of scripture.

Yasna here represents an important collection of 72 Has or Haitis, meaning sections. This includes 17 Haitis of the Gathas and 8 sections of Yasna Haptenhaiti, also known as Hapten Yasht. The other Yashts included in the Yasna are Homa Yasht (Haitis 9-11), and Sroasha Yasht (Haitis 56-57).

Vasideh by definition represents ‘All Seasons’ or ‘All Festivals’. However, some western scholars have interpreted the suffix ‘red’ as ‘Chief of Lords’. The Vasideh ritual is therefore appropriately performed to celebrate the high festivals of Gahambars in the annual cycle at the proper time of the year.

Vidaevdat or Vendidad (The Laws against Demons), a book composed in the 3rd century CE, constitutes a Third Order of Scripture, and because of the late date of its composition, demands careful scrutiny in several areas of its content.

Sacred Literature

The prayer compositions of the Khordeh Avesta are the selections from scriptural texts of different rank orders mentioned above, and were spear-headed by Adurbad-i-Mahras-pand in the reign of Shaapur II (309-379 CE). These are a part of our sacred literature, but do not necessarily constitute the scriptures.

In addition to the above, Zarathushtrian tradition has a rich legacy of sacred literature of the Middle Persian era from the 7th-10th century CE, written under Islamic domination. This literature was written in an era that sustained long periods of heretic thinking of Zurvanite, Manichaean and Mazdakite movements, and can hardly deserve to be classed as scripture or eternal words of Ahura Mazda.

Despite that they do constitute a rich repository of the history and related information on the syncretic Zarathushtrian religion. Two such treatises — the Bundahish (Creation Story) or its more complete version Zand Akash (Information on Tradition) and the Dina-i-Mainog-i-Khirad (Opinions of the Spirit of Wisdom), were composed around the 7th century CE.

In addition, a significant amount of sacred literature has appeared in the 9th century CE under the reign of the later Caliphs, authored by Hudinan Peshobays (Leaders of the Good Religion). These included the Dinkard (Expositions of the Religion), Dadestan-i-Dinik (Religious Opinions), Epistles of Manushchihir (Letters of High Priest Manushchihir), Zadspram (named after Mobed Zadspram), Shayashtne-Shayesht (Proper and Improper), and Shikand-Gumanig-Vigar (Doubt-dispelling explanations).

Some of these are, as the very names describe, opinions of the authors, and others are clearly the accounts of what they have learned from their past history. Furthermore, besides names such as Manushchihir, Zadspram, Adur-Franbag Farrokhzadan, Adurbad-e-Emad (authors associated with the Dinkard), Mardanfarokhi-Ihrmazdad (author of Shikand-Gumanig-Vigar) we know very little about these individuals. These works, although they are a great asset to the study of the history and evolution of the syncretic religion we have inherited, are far from being classified as scripture in their time, style, and contents.
Christian theologians define a miracle as the suspension of the action of law of nature by God himself [4]. The story of Krishna's birth, life, childhood and miracles resembles that of Jesus' in the New Testament; yet for some unknown reason, Christianity has chosen to ignore its connections with the eastern religions [3]. Extensive investigative research has revealed the possibility that Jesus had lived in India [3], [4], [5].

According to Kersten, during his youth, at the age of 13, Jesus followed the Silk Road to India and Nepal. While there, he studied Buddhism, adopting its tenets and became a spiritual leader. Jesus returned to Canaan (Palestine) at the age of 29 where he survived crucifixion. After his resuscitation, Jesus went to India where he died in Srinagar. His tomb is revered as that of Saint Issa [3], [4], [5].

Today, as thousands of years ago, 'miracles' are a means of bringing the divine message closer to doubters. However, as Mascaren has put it in Mr. Rogers' article, "People who pray the Novena only to get something for themselves, could become bitter" [Parsiana, July 1994, p.91]. Petty happenings in Mr. Rogers' article are not miracles, they are happenings, and happenings are not miracles [6]. This is supported in a Time magazine article entitled "Can We Still Believe in Miracles" in which it is stated: "What was incapable of happening never happened, and what was capable of happening is not a miracle ... consequently, there are no miracles." [7].

The good religion of Mazda-worship is devoid of magic, occultism, superstition and cultic rituals. Prophet Zarathushtra pronounced the religion of morality and devotion of the mind, body and soul. But this pure, noble and unadulterated form of religion could not endure long after him. He had set aside the Indo-Iranian religion based on ceremonies and rituals, but in the days of his followers, the older religion recaptured his teachings and made it a part and parcel of itself. From that point on, Zoroastrianism became a ritualistic and conventional religion and continues to be this way to this day.

The purpose of prayer is to guide and inspire the devotee. For one who has absolute faith and understanding belief, it is immaterial whether the prayer is understood or not. However, for the eager individual and person who wishes to understand the meanings of the prayer, the Gathas have been translated by at least 42 individuals into Persian, English, Gujarati, etc. In the Gathas, the prophet says that every man and woman is an equal individual in his or her own right and that life's eternal and infallible lesson is that one's progress depends entirely upon one's actions. One man's good deeds cannot be loaned to another, and no man's burden of sin can be lightened by another's. Confession and prayer would not change either of these.

The wise lord hears prayers even in the form of thought in any language and any place. The truth and foundation of Zarathushtra's religion is found only in the Gathas. Ritual is not religion, but it is a powerful aid to religious life. Righteous thinking is prayer and that elevates man to Ahura Mazda. The prophet himself wishes to win Ahura Mazda's love [Gathas, Ys. 44.17], yearns to reach him [Ys. 50.8], approaches him with songs of praise and invocation [Ys. 34.2], asks for long life [Ys. 43.13], so that he may perform good deeds through his righteousness [Ys. 28.1]. As our own prophet said, religion must be followed with understanding, and not mechanically, or with superstition.

REFERENCES


[Continued on next page]
I got up early one morning
And rushed right into the day
I had so much to accomplish
And paused before entering the day
I got up early one morning
God gently and lovingly chided,
"My child, you didn't knock."
I wanted to see joy and beauty
But the day toiled on, gray and bleak
I wondered why God didn't show me
He answered, "You didn't ask."
I tried to come to God's presence
But you didn't seek.
Many ordinary Zoroastrians who
look with dismay at the rate at which
their children abandon their faith and
lapsé from Zoroastrianism, particularly in the West, put the blame at the
door of Zoroastrian education.
Religious education is not exempt from educational fashion, and it too
has been influenced by the emphasis on non-judgmental child-centered
teaching. If it is not fashionable for the alphabet to be taught by rote and
recitation, then neither is it fashionable for the Avesta and Zoroastrian
prayers.
There is a natural spirituality about children before adolescence. They
may not be able to discover the existence of Ahura Mazda for themselves, but, the information does not
surprise them when they hear it from parent, priest or teacher. They like
the idea. It makes sense. The task of religious education at that age is to
lay foundations that will endure, as

- Ralph Waldo Emerson
professional standing. In religious education schools Zoroastrianism can and should be taught confidently ‘as true’, and not as an option.

The only option should be to opt out, not to opt in.

Furhok K. Tangree
La Roche-sur-Furon, France

Enjoying Our Practical Religion

The whole family enjoys reading FEZANA Journal ... I dare say, you have contributed a great deal towards building interest among the Zoroastrians of North America to feel a great sense of pride in our (very practical) religion. It does not dictate — “You shall not …”, but leaves it to our own thinking how to practice Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds.

You have helped us to enjoy practicing what we are born in.

Sheroo Rusby
Port au Prince, Haiti

Zarthusti Entrepreneurs

I am glad to read that FEZANA, in its Special Issue [Winter 1995], has highlighted the strides made by the first generation of Zarthustis in various businesses in North America. I thank Parsiana for bringing this to the notice of its readers, and devoting its entire January 1996 issue to the achievements of these entrepreneurs.

When we were very young, we often used to hear our elders state, “Apra bap dadao dario dohwa hatha”. Implicit in the statement was the fact that while doing business and trade in far-off countries, Parsis stuck to their motto — honesty, integrity, charity and hard work — so ingrained in them. I am heartened to know that this statement by our elders is being put to practice by North American Zarthusti entrepreneurs.

Let these ladies and gentlemen flourish and prosper. They must, however, not forget to come to the succor of less fortunate and needy members of their community wherever they may be living.

Bhikhaji M. Adenwalla
Bombay, India

No Mention of Zoroastrianism

I was glad to read Mr. Bhujwala’s letter in the Summer 1996 issue of FEZANA Journal regarding the omission of Zoroastrianism from the recent TV production on religions, by Bill Moyers and Huston Smith.

In this connection, I am enclosing a copy of a review of a book In Search of the Birth of Jesus, throwing new light on the Magi, which speaks for itself. It is very well researched and written, by a non-Zoroastrian author. As many Zoroastrians as possible should read it in order to know how our Prophet Zoroaster influenced other religions that followed.

Mrs. G. D. Pocha
Livermore, California

[“In Search of the Birth of Jesus” by Paul William Roberts was reviewed in the Spring 1996 issue of FEZANA Journal. In regards to the omission by Huston Smith, see the letter below.]

Response from Huston Smith

At an “Interfaith Conversation” program with Huston Smith, in Chicago on May 11, Rohinton Rivetna met the author, and discussed the omission of Zoroastrianism from his book on religions of the world, as well as from his 5-part TV series with Bill Moyers on PBS. The following response has been received:

“...The most difficult part of both the PBS series and my book concerns their omissions.

“I hold Zoroastrianism in the highest esteem, having not only read of it to some considerable extent, but having spent some time at the temple com-

At Interfaith Conversation in Chicago: Huston Smith with Rivetna.

 pound that houses the Tower of Silence in Bombay.

“Moyers and I were both afraid that if we touched on too many religions we would end up with snippets and a kind of catalog of religions which would not reflect their spirit.

“But it was a hard decision, and we do owe your faith an apology which I hope to rectify at some point down the line.

Thank you for writing.

Huston Smith

On the San Francisco Congress

First and foremost let me congratulate ZANC and PZO for a successful Congress on July 6-7, in San Francisco. The obnoxious messages on the Internet were certainly nerve-wrecking! Yet, with Ahura Mazda’s help, all concluded nicely.

My first reason for writing to FEZANA is to air an issue of women’s equality. Zoroastrian women of the Bay Area, like all other women in USA want equality. Sadly, a couple of women have mentioned that they wanted to work for the Congress but their desires were crushed by men who dominated the Congress Committee. History has
shown mankind again and again that no matter how civilized we get, we do produce dictators. It is also showing us that even in this day and time, women are being discriminated against.

Another issue is the cut-throat messages on the Internet daily. That is why only 50 local persons attended the Congress — most did not want to be a part of it.

A lot of pride was exhibited at the Congress that Persian and Parsi Zoroastrians put up a show jointly for the first time. But recently ZANC had a General Body meeting and members decided against celebrating any festivals jointly with PZO. Reasons cited were: we have nothing in common, the two cultures are different, we do not share the same language, even the food is quite a change from what we are used to, and the festivals are also celebrated in a totally different manner.

But we all pray to Ahura Mazda. We are all following Humata, Hukhta and Huvereshta. So we have to ask ourselves — have we tried enough to live and let live? Have we left no stones unturned to get along with our Persian brothers and sisters?

Winning and losing is not the beginning and end of the game. The game has to be played fairly. That is most important. Also, it is very important to spread equality, justice, goodwill, peace and put aside grudges and grievances, personal pride, egos, and achieving rank. These were not the teachings of our prophet Zarathustra.

Gulmoher Gandy
Walnut Creek, California

More on the San Francisco Congress and AGM

I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to attend the FEZANA meeting and the Congress in San Francisco, and participate too. I was happy to see various members who are all doing good work and leading the cream of our crop to follow the path of Asha. I have learned from this Congress about the growth of our community — mental, physical, moral, intellectual and economical.

I am sure this has motivated our youngsters to walk on the path of Asha shown by our Pious Prophet Zarathustra, the Golden Star of Iran.

May Ahura Mazda bless our community today, tomorrow and always.

Sheroo Daruvwalla
Chicago, Illinois

Parsi-Irani Relations — The Chicago Model

Is Chicago a model for Irani-Parsi relationships?

The relationship was born in 1972 with the arrival of the Mobed brothers Bahman, Keikhosrow and Jehangir in Chicago. They were the first to recognize the need for developing and nurturing a cordial working relationship between the Parsi and Irani Zarathushti. They recognized the different strengths such a relationship could bring and the value such a partnership could add to the community. The strengths indeed are unique, with Parsi penchant for organization, and the Irani zeal for action. They indeed complement each other remarkably well — perhaps it was destined that way.

Over the years I have learned a great deal about the subject, but one of the earliest lessons was at the home of Bahman and Nahid Mobed. My wife, Roshan and I were invited to their home shortly after their arrival in the US from Germany. Bahman had very carefully planned the evening making sure that we got a flavor of the Irani Zarathusti life style. He had made sure that his brothers Keikhosrow and Jehangir were present. For some reason Bahman had singled us out to deliver his message.

At the time, we were between Associations — the embers of the first Association were still hot, and the memories raw and fresh. The Mobed brothers, having just arrived, were happily spared the unpleasant memories. Roshan and I were just becoming involved with local Zarathusti affairs. The community was holding get-togethers at our home, being one of the few who had ventured to purchase a home in the Chicago area.

At any rate, after a few pleasant encounters, the Mobed brothers went into a discourse of what it meant to them to be Zarathushtis, and their zeal to make certain that Zarathustis flowered in North America. “Roo-in-tan, we must do something”, says Boman, “we must get people together, and, Roo-in-tan, we must do it together.”

I immediately got the essence of what he meant about “doing something” — namely starting an organization — but the import of “doing it together” did not register immediately. It was not until later that I began to notice the differences between the two schisms of Zarathushtis — the ‘Parsi’ and the ‘Irani’. I frankly unashamedly developed an admiration for the Irani Zarathusti. I discovered their childlike simplicity, their deep sense of commitment and their disconcert of the outward trimmings.

In terms of ritual practice and customs I found them adaptable, never objecting to the Parsi hegemony, always accommodating. “It does not matter,” they will say, “Do it this way or that way, it is all the same.”

As I think of those first encounter at Bahman’s house, I see that as the genesis of our relationship between the Iranis and the Parsis in Chicago. We have done everything “together”. We formed our association together, Jehangir and Keikhosrow providing a great deal of input. Our first President was an Iranian, Dr. Bahram Farhadieh, and among our first large local contributions to jump-start the Association was Iranian — $5,000 from Bahman. They were always the first to donate themselves, and facilitate donations and support for the Association, from others. The rest is history. To this day, the lesson learned from the Mobed brothers rings true. Chicago
is indeed a fine example to other associations in North America.

There is value in doing things together. There is richness, there is harmony and above all there is peace of mind. Although I must remind myself all the time, that the balance is delicate, and it needs to be nurtured constantly. It has not been easy. It has taken every member of the community to wrought it out, but the rewards have been too numerous to count.

May Ahura Mazda bless our Iranian Parsi union, and may other communities in North America follow the example.

Rohinton Rivetna
Hinsdale, Illinois

**Question of Right or Left**

On page 37 of the Spring 1996 issue of FEZANA Journal, the photograph of Prophet Zarathushtra shown on the 'Zoroastrian Page' from the NCCJ Interfaith Calendar, is, to my belief, a mirror image of the original version, i.e. the right hand should be raised and not the left.

I am surprised that FEZANA, being a responsible body, is using the proceeds from this incorrect picture for the ‘FEZANA Welfare Fund’. If things are misinterpreted, do they sell faster and more?

I think that Mr. Rohinton Rivetna, instead of collecting orders, should have first put in a protest letter, which should have been published for the attention of readers.

This photograph is similar to the one Dr. Meher Master Moos distributed during the Tehran Congress for her Zoroastrian College project.

It brings about doubt in my mind as to whether a reform of our ancient religion is taking place of which we in Iran are unaware.

Rusi Bastani
Tehran, Iran

Fezana Journal urges readers to take note, and ensure the correct version in future portraits and photographs of the Prophet.

[Thanks to Mr. Bastani for pointing out this error; we believe it is inadvertent and not intentional. The photo in question was taken from the oil-painting by noted artist Shiavux Chavda, at the Darbe Mehr in Chicago. The error will be corrected in future issues of the calendar. And FEZANA Journal urges readers to take note, and ensure the correct version in future portraits and photographs of the Prophet.]

Numerous other responsible publications have also shown the left hand raised — either a case of the artist being mis-informed, or the mirror image being used inadvertently during the printing process. Top, left to right, NCCJ Calendar photo taken at Chicago Darbe Mehr; postcard; Zoroastrian College publication. Below, two photos from “In Search of My God” by the Zoroastrian Foundation.

**AHUNA-VAIRYA (YATHA AHU VAIRYO)**

This sacred prayer clearly indicates the Three Paths to God — the Path of Knowledge, the Path of Love, and the Path of Service. God has granted mankind three inestimable gifts—the head, the heart and the hand. Through the fullest and the most perfect use of these three, can a man hope to attain his goal and to obtain his divine heritage.

[Dr. Jijibhoy Patel, quoting from The Divine Songs of Zarathushtra, by Dr. Irach J. S. Taraporewala, Hukhta Foundation, Bombay 1991]
**Hooked on the Journal**

Somehow, some good old soul sent me a copy of your last issue [Summer 1996] because my sister’s name (Nancy Yazdani of Dallas) was mentioned on page 57. I also recognized three other friends, one of them being Anahita Sidhwa, a school friend.

I started to flick over the pages, and my eyes caught the article on page 44, where again I was happy to see my cousins’ names, Mehli and Zeno-bia Behrana of Houston. Then, on page 45 was another cousin, my kaka’s son, Adil Bharucha! That was it, I just could not resist reading more and more, I was hooked!

FEZANA Journal has now managed to get my full attention. Congratulations on coming out with such a fantastic Journal. Your last issue on FEZANA’s Tenth Anniversary, was certainly an eye-opener for all of us. I mentioned it to my friends and they have asked to loan it? Should I? Will I ever get it back? I do want to keep it as a momento. But, I will let them borrow it just to show how our community in other parts of the world is involved with communal work.

I hope Zarathushtis living in your part of the world will continue to strive hard, keep on growing and reach even greater heights. Wherever we are, let us join hands and keep our religion’s flag flying high.

Arnawaz Kersi Billia
Karachi, Pakistan

**Setting the Record Straight**

Congratulations! It is nice to see the Journal flourish, especially since I was involved with its printing in its early years. The Association profiles [FEZANA Journal, Summer 1996] made for interesting reading. Since my family and I have been associated with the Zoroastrian Association of Greater Boston Area since the early years, I would like to set the record straight — an honest appraisal in the hope of getting the community closer together.

In 1978, the Jungalwala’s arranged a get-together of all Zoroastrians in the area, to be addressed by Khojeste Mistree. This meeting inspired us to form ZAGBA. Kudos to the Jungalwalas. Subsequently in the years to follow, we had the good fortune of having dedicated families like the Guzdars, the Dhoodys, the Patels and the Dordys, and many others who carried the torch with great success.

Some time in the early 1990s, there appeared to be a lack of interest in the Association, and some of us, being concerned, met as a group, not under any one member’s direction, and laid the framework for the community to think as one, and forge ahead with mutual cooperation. The Guzdars and the Jungalwalas gave some valuable help in achieving this. Also, during this period, my son Mehrnosh got the area youth together as the “Bawas” group, which is completely independent of any other group or activity. Mehrnosh’s hard work has been rewarded by overwhelming support from his friends, and he is very grateful.

Dilnawaz Shroff has done a commendable job with the children’s classes, and for this their family deserves a lot of credit. We are also luck to have Dr. Farhang Mehr in the area; our knowledge of the religion and our heritage have been enhanced by his presence.

Kavas Mody
Newton, Massachusetts

### In Praise of the Zarathushtrtema

In our daily prayers (Gahs) we praise the various worldly authorities: Nmanya (household), Visya (village), Zantuma (regional), Dax’yuma (country) and in Aiwishruthrem Gah we praise the Zarathushtrtema.

Zarathushtrtema is the Avesta name for the highest earthly authority, Zarathushtra’s representative on the Earth. The title is in the superlative case, literally the ‘Highest Zarathushtra’. It would appear to be synonymous with Mobed Mobedan and to the more recently attested Dastur Dasturan.

I am not aware of anyone currently claiming this title, and would be very interested in any information on when it was last held.

Besides the Gahs, there are a few Avestan references to the Zarathushtrtema — in Yashts 10.15 and 13.21, in Yasna 2.6, 3.8, 4.11, 19.18, and Vispered 1.9. The Pahlavi literature [Shayest-na-Shayest] is also illuminating, as always.

But it is the Dinkard, that vast encyclopedia of ancient Zoroastrian wisdom, that spells out most clearly the function of the Zarathushtrtema, namely in promoting the message of Zarathushtra to all mankind, thus forming a unified army for the work of Frashogard (the renovation of the universe):

"... The highest relation with the Mazdayasnan religion is (formed) by the faith of all mankind being confirmed in the good religion, and their thoughts being in unison with Ohrmazd through a Zarathushtrtem ..."

A lot of the heated polemic heard today has the character of local (Sanjan/Udwada vs Bharucha/Broach), or regional (India vs Iran vs US) disputes. It seems to me that the way to heal these conflicts would be through a higher authority, a Zarathushtrtema, one who (although fallible) has the highest relation with the Mazdayasnan religion, and the interest of all mankind at heart.

We daily sing the praises of the Zarathushtrtema; I for one hope we can rise to the occasion and find a way to fill the void.

Joseph Peterson
"Change' is Upon Us"

By Aaron Rustom
Houston, Texas

It is with great pleasure that I embark upon this new undertaking, along with my fellow co-editors. As the history of Youthfully Speaking has shown us, it is a monumental task not easily accomplished. Jim Engineer is to be commended for providing the youth a forum to be heard, and for his thought-provoking and inspiring articles. Jim took on a Herculean task and always worked in a consummate and professional manner. So thank you Jim, and may we do justice to your legacy and reach the pinnacle of your successes!

As things do, as this editorship did... they change. ‘Change’ may at times signify an ending; it can also mark a beginning, but change always, always, always means things will be different! Change does not scare people. The outcome of change however — what happens after change, well that does scare most everybody!

This simple understanding of change will help you realize why people are so apt to avoid it. But, if there is one thing nature has shown us, it is that evolution, change, is unavoidable, unstoppable, and quite natural.

Which leads us to the ever-so-perplexing question, "What rational-minded person cannot accept change?" Well, that individual tends to be one who has found comfort in his or her inadequacies, is in a place of power, and/or has only one aspect in their life that remains sacred to them.

Now, these people may fight off evolution as best they can, but eventually, they will succumb to their own stubbornness and die out; much like any species would if it resisted the strengthening of its gene pool, a renovation of the mind, or an epiphany of moral enlightenment!

As you will come to find, I value progressive thinking. But do not mistake my proclivity towards 'progression' as an inability to see and understand all sides, namely 'orthodox' or 'conservative' schools of thought.

The trick is being able to think past the labels and names associated with the differing ideologies and more, and continue living the true, Zoroastrian way of life.

Thinking therefore becomes an art. One of the first books my father gave me as I went off to college was The Art of Thinking. Every time I talked to him he would ask me, "Have you read it yet?" Of course I hadn't, and as his frustration mounted, I finally gave in and read it, albeit, two years later. After reading it, I understood what he had been trying to teach and instill in me all this time. I finally had some insight into my own thought processes and more importantly, I saw the lack of thought processes in others.

This cognizance of how to think, now gives me the opportunity to seek out the 'truth', the best way I can, by exposing 'untruths'. Which is why I will always be a Zoroastrian, why my father taught me how to be a Zoroastrian, and why my mother has always and forever lived the Zoroastrian way of life! I am a true Zarthusti warrior, fighting for truth and justice.

Zarathushtra was progressive, he was innovative and passionate, but more that that, Zarathushtra was a thinker! This forum was set up by FEZANA for Zarthusti youth. It gives you and me the opportunity to let our voices be heard. It is a blessing and a responsibility. Freedom of speech is one of the most precious right we have. Use it, and use it wisely, as I will always hope to do!

[Continued on page 62]
Don’t miss an offer of a lifetime, prepare for July 1997. Did you know that from Friday July 4, 1997 to Friday July 11, 1997, you have the unique opportunity to attend an eight-day World Zoroastrian Youth Congress and visit the United Kingdom at the same time!

For the first time in their history, UK Zoroastrians have the privilege to host a World Zoroastrian Youth Congress which promises to be an event not to be missed. In order to ensure that the Congress combines both a work and a play theme, it will take place over an eight-day period.

The first part, from July 4-7, will include seminars and workshops. The second part, from July 8-11, will consist of evening sessions where smaller discussion groups will take place. This unique Congress format will enable delegates to not only attend an educational and interesting Congress, but also to take in the sights and hospitality of the UK and its Zoroastrians.

Our theme “Faith in the Future—Zoroastrian Identity into the next Millennium”, was chosen to provide a vast coverage area of potential discussion topics. Papers are invited. We extend a cordial invitation to you to join us in what promises to be a unique experience.

Kerman Y. Jasavala
Young Zoroastrian Congress Committee UK
24 Griffiths Road, London SW19 1SP, UK
Tel: 44-181-542 7195, Fax: 44-181-241 7150
[For additional details, including suggested topics, please see Coming Events in this issue].

Issues Facing Contemporary Zoroastrians in North America

By Burzin Unwalla
Houston, Texas

On May 25 and 26, 1996, at the George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, a first-of-its-kind seminar was held trying to focus on many crucial issues facing Zoroastrian youth of the 21st century. The seminar, financially sponsored by the WZO and FEZANA, was seeking a constructive interaction between younger and older Zoroastrians, and based on this dialog, an agenda for the future was to be developed.

The program was centered on seven young adults who discussed an issue they saw as critical to the preservation of our community. The speakers were then asked to give solutions they thought would help resolve these critical issues. In turn, three respected, adult Zoroastrians were to comment on the presentations and to begin the process of constructive dialog.

The seven speakers gave outstanding presentations, from the simple laws of Asha to the radical views of conversion.

All-in-all, a terrific seminar, with one exception — all seven speakers were representatives of only one group of people — for all implied some kind of change or modification in our religion. It was evident that only one side was presented. It would have been enlightening to see the other side of the spectrum — the orthodox side.

The seminar was based on the perception that many young adults are not having their views heard. It was based on the concept of an ‘open mind’, yet the other, more conservative side of our community was being left out. Where was this ‘open mind’ and why wasn’t it being used?

One of the three adults clearly over-stepped the boundaries given to him by the seminar committee. Rather than comment on the presentations and induce dialog like instructed, this adult gave his own philosophy of the Zoroastrian religion. He implied in front of everyone that those Zoroastrian priests who believe in the efficacy of our prayers are basically nothing but idiots! Following this statement, he half-heartedly attempted to apologize if he had offended any one. If these are his views, he should have voiced them at an appropriate time when asked to do so. Belittling our priests, who FEZANA looks up to for education and guidance, our doctrines, and the power of our mantra, before our

[Continued on page 62]
This is Your Land,
These are Your Kings
Some discoveries made on my recent trip to Iran

By Laila F. M. Contractor
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

As I walked through Tehran's Mehrabad Airport, I quickly shoved all the loose strands of hair under my black cotton scarf while reminding myself not to tell anyone I was American, not to look American, and to definitely not talk to any one in public since I am a woman after all. I even wondered if it had been a bad judgement call on my part to have brought American shampoo with me that might reveal my identity. As I sat down, adjusted my black mat which only allowed my feet, hands, and head to be revealed, and began to write in my journal, two Iranian men began peering over my shoulder. "Oh God!" I told myself, "now I am really in trouble! They will know where I'm from for sure."

However, the men started to speak in broken English, asking me where I was from (at first I told them India), how old I was, what I studied, if I was married. By the end of the hour, my cousin Cyrus and I had a group of men huddled around us asking questions, exchanging addresses with us, inviting us to their homes, and even offering to show us around Tehran.

The hospitality and curiosity of a foreign culture did not stop here, however. At various sights in Iran, flocks of Iranians followed the tour group, giving us their addresses and taking pictures. One man who was with a group of University students at Naqsh-e-Rustom (where there are tombs of the Persian kings Xerxes, Darius and his son), told my mother, upon discovering that she was a Zoroastrian: "We are so happy you came here. This is your land and these are your kings!" Even the Religious Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ayatollah Khamenei, successor of the late Khomeini, said in his speech to the delegates of the Sixth World Zoroastrian Congress: "Iran is your home and your country."

The warmth and hospitality of the Iranian Zoroastrians proved to be equal, if not greater. In Shiraz, I befriended several girls ranging in age from 13 to 23. One night I even played a game of basketball with my cousin Cyrus Cama, Mazda Ania, and two teenage Zoroastrian boys. To my surprise the boys could make a perfect lay-up and knew of Michael Jordan. At Pir Sab Chak Chak, a shrine built on a mountainside where legend has it, the daughter of the last Zoroastrian king, Yazdegird III escaped miraculously from the Arabs, the annual five-day pilgrimage was taking place when our group spent a night there. There were at least 2,000 Zarthustis at this huge, mountainside, castle of a complex, picnicking and worshipping. They invited Mazda and me to dance with them (an activity forbidden in the Muslim areas) and to have a sip of their homemade wine.

Once again, people surrounded us, asking questions, wanting addresses, and even just to take a look at us. Some teenage girls even began to flirt with Mazda! One middle-aged woman invited me to sit with her on her carpet. Although she could not speak a word of English, she kept on feeding me fried potato dumplings she had just made.

Almost anyone and everyone spoke of having relatives in America or England. Others opened their hearts to tell us their stories of discontent over the lack of freedom and job discrimination. I heard this same disheartening tale from many of the Zarthustis I met. In Tehran, Roya, a twenty-six year old woman told me of how she just "never has any fun in Iran" because of the lack of freedom. She could not even date this young man she liked without being harrased by the police. After one month of going out, they eventually got engaged, just to stop the harrassment.

These stories of hospitality, warmth, generosity, and lack of freedom in Iran, however, are not amongst the most important discoveries I made on my trip to Iran. My most significant discovery is that people are truly the same everywhere, especially when it comes to Zarthustis and Zarthusti youth. From my stories one can see that the youth, like many of the youth over here, have a love and longing for dancing, drinking, and relationships. They even have anxieties about finding a Zarthusti mate.

They, along with their adults, want the freedom to do as they please, and want their hard work to pay off, without discrimination on their jobs. Both North American and Iranian Zarthustis play their favorite sports with the same enthusiasm. Zarthustis everywhere also share the frightening problem of decline in our population due to low birth rates.

Unfortunately, we also have misconceptions about each other. The Iranian youth never failed to be amazed when I showed them my sudreh, kushti and fravashi pendant. Many of the youth in Iran believed that North American Zarthusti youth are the least concerned with the religion, let alone be religious. Many also expressed their beliefs about North Americans converting many...
non-Zarthustis and how they thought that those who did convert were accepted by everyone in the community.

Although Zarthustis speak many different languages, and live in different countries, I believe and now know that our major differences stop there. People are people after all, and I encourage anyone, especially the youth, to visit Iran to discover these facts for themselves. As youth we are the future of the religion and must consolidate and communicate with, and not alienate ourselves from our Zarthusti brothers and sisters, to ensure the successful future of our ancient and beautiful religion.

[Laila Contractor, 18, of Pittsburgh, graduated with honors from High School in June. This Fall she will start a medical program at Gannon University/Medical College on a 4-year Honors Scholarship. She was awarded the Faculty Award for being an exceptional student academically, as well as for her contributions to the community and has been inducted into the Cum Laude Society.]

Change  [Continued from page 59]

We are all looking for the truth to questions we have in our lives and in our community. The truth is not always attainable without there being untruths. Read wisely, and discern for yourselves. You are your best counsel. Although you may not always agree with what is said in this section of the Journal, or the people who write it, just remember this simple motto I have come to learn and live by.

The truth will never reveal itself to those who choose not to look in the mirror and face it!

Usha Te, from Texas Y'all.

[Aaron Rustom, an active youth member of the Houston Zarthusti community, is studying for a BA in Communications, with a minor in Sociology, from the University of Texas, in Austin]

Issues  [Continued from page 60]

...
YOUTHFULLY SPEAKING
fostering ideas and stimulating innovative thought among Zoroastrian youth

ing on the region and how long the person has lived there, defines the extent to which he or she would identify with a country's culture. Parents are important influences in this area as well, for exposure to customs during the impressionable years can deeply impact a person's identity. Cultural identity nourishes the Zarathushtrian identity. When the three work in harmony, there is no conflict, although in modern times which change so rapidly, that is seldom the case.

Some young Zarathushtrians, in a hasty scramble for the wisdom of the West, forsake the light of the East. Why? Perhaps for the sake of convenience. After all, peer pressure at schools is quite intimidating. Also, there are some who do not understand the importance, significance and the power of rituals, garments and prayers. It is very easy to discontinue a practice which, through a gradual progression of doubts, holds no purpose. On the other hand, there are some youth that have a library of knowledge and make a conscious decision to exercise their 'freedom of choice' and modify practices to suit their needs. Still others choose to follow the religion as closely as possible. The remainder are 'fence sitters', for they are not sure where or even if they want to fit into the scheme of things.

If we turn a kaleidoscope around and around, the colors and angles change as well. The overall effect stays colorful and in some kind of synchrony. After one person is finished looking through a kaleidoscope, many others can enjoy it as well, and they do know what to expect from it.

As youth, we are always considered to be important torch-bearers. We decide what gets passed on to the next generation. It is very important that each one of us makes educated and informed decisions. It is crucial to establish common ground, where we can discuss issues in a rational and respectful manner, without labeling people as 'liberal' or 'conservative', for many times, the issues get side-stepped due to fueled attacks on the labels.

I believe we have the potential to compromise, especially for the sake of our religion. Zarathushtrians are few and far between in the world, and face the frightening prospect of extinction, if we continue with our old habits. If tomorrow's youth have an identity crisis because of conflicting views handed down to them, our religion will continue to fade away.

I commend the many that take it upon themselves to do something about our community, through their leadership and active participation. Each one of us can make a difference. The next time someone walks up to you and asks you about your faith, be sure to tell them all about it.

I look forward to the day when I meet someone who says, "Oh! A Zarathushtrian. I know all about your religion." Until then, I will take it upon myself to continue educating myself and others about it.


[Tanaz Billimoria came to the US with her parents from India in 1993. Staying in India made her aware of the problems of poverty and overpopulation, and inspired her to be the student coordinator of a biomed-ethics class on campus at the University of California, Irvine. Tanaz also volunteers at Children's Hospital, Meals on Wheels, and Aids service foundation. Her philosophy in life is summed up in the verse:

"I have a dream of how the world should be
And I will fight from today to make it better
For I know that I believe in you
And my dream is your dream too..."

A GOOD ZOROASTRIAN

By Vandad Pourbahrami
Vancouver, British Columbia

At my school there are two preschool boys that do not know how to play soccer very well. When I see them coming to play with me and my friends I try to help them play better. For example when I have taken the ball to the net, I tell them to go in front of the net so I can pass it to them. If they don't score I go and talk to them and make them feel better.

When I do this, it makes me happy, because I am being a good friend. I think this is what Good Deeds mean in Zoroastrianism. I am learning about things like Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds from my family and Zoroastrian classes. If I am a good Zoroastrian my life will be good and I can help others have better lives also.

When I will be a daddy I will teach my children about the teachings of Asho Zartusht so their children will know about them as well. If each parent teaches his children about our good religion then the life of a lot of people will be better and happier. Also there will be lots of books and other things like computer games about Zoroastrianism. Then my Canadian friends and I can go to the library and together learn about each other's religions.

[Tanaz Pourbahrami was winner, in the 6-9 year-old group, of the Essay Competition organized by the Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia.]
Unique and different. In an original and creative style, the author meets the ancient eastern Master and Prophet, Zarathushtra, who appears out of nowhere. During the ensuing few days, the two meet time and again, share various adventures and take part in a few extraordinary experiences, while discussing various teachings of Zarathushtra.

In their conversations, they discuss God, humankind, good and evil, our purpose in life, and the existence and relevance of spiritual dimensions. They even talk about such abstract notions as heaven and hell, and continuity of the soul after death.

The author has a gift for explaining very complex spiritual teachings in simple terms. The reader will actually understand the universal concepts in a rare and refreshing manner.

Shahriari, who is the founder-owner of a Management Consulting firm, Transformations Unlimited believes that "techniques now preached by motivational experts, whether it is Robbins preaching action, or Covey urging us to think about our values before we act, or Hill talking about the power of our thoughts, are straight out of the Gathas, a modern packaging of our own old teachings."

"It is time we look deeply into our own teachings and values, and put them into practice", he says, "It is time to realize that history has come a full circle back to what Zarathushtra preached so many millennia ago."

These sentiments were also echoed by Dr. Harmon, President of the Institute of Noetic Sciences, who said: "Thus Spake the Real Zarathushtra makes it evident that Zoroastrianism contains the seeds of the 'new paradigm' — more clearly than any of the Western religions. It is a gem!"

And with that conviction, was born this exposition of the message of Zarathushtra in an eminently gripping and readable format. It will be a valuable addition to any library.

Shapero's Web Page
On the Internet
After months of development, a World Wide Web page by Hannah M. G. Shapero, artist and student of Zoroastrianism, is finally ready and available for visiting. It contains a "gallery" of her best art works, many links to sites on subjects ranging from gourmet foods to birdwatching to unusual philosophies, and a Zoroastrian section which features a collection of articles on Zoroastrianism. The URL is:

http://www.walker.reston.va.us:8080/hmgs/index.html
nineties. Many who have left the homeland, and chosen to settle in the Western hemisphere will identify with, and enjoy reading the situations and experiences Mehta weaves into the novel.

This is Tina Mehta's first book about our religion. “Not a religious book”, she takes pains to clarify, “but a book about a religion — Zarathushtrianism”. She has deliberately made the sacred Zarathushtrian lore read like a novel, because it was her experience that many scholarly books on religion were bought with devotion but rarely read.

She states from the outset her motivation for writing this saga. She is concerned for the survival of our community as we enter a new era as a people of the world. Our chequered history and resilient grandparents have left us a rich legacy of ancient wisdom to be used, not neglected. Our religion teaches many lessons that can be used to counter the slings and arrows that life throws in our direction. Today’s Zarthusists need to cope with Juddins of other faiths who come into our lives, bringing with them love, and acceptance and greater knowledge of who we are, through their dedicated study of our history and religion. “If the Zarathushtrian Saga reinforces the counsel of the Prophet Zarathustra in his followers and invigorates those of other faiths to consciously and religiously abjure Evil and increase Good in their day-to-day lives”, she says, “then the purpose of this book is served.”

To help the younger generations of Zarthusists growing up on different continents to search for their roots, this book is a fountainhead of knowledge and needs to be studied.

With consummate skill, Tina Mehta describes the religious practices, rituals, life cycle events, and rich traditions of the Good Religion — the Zarathusti way of life, into the story line extending to 21 chapters and over 700 pages.

The book contains numerous 'two-liners' in Avestan from our daily prayers and provides their meanings in English. It also drives home the point that children, if allowed to explore the world, will ultimately choose what is right for them as adults, and not what was right for their parents. Above all, this is Pouruchista’s own story about love and laughter, some tears and a happy ending.

Hand-bound in attractive purple, gold-embossed, handloom cloth, the book is well written, and makes a graceful addition to any library.

Mary Boyce, Professor Emerita of Iranian Studies at the University of London, who wrote the foreword, calls it “a splendid blow against Ahriman! And a lasting contribution to the long history of your religion.” No Zarathusti home can afford to be without it.

Mehta, who is also a painter, a qualified yoga instructor, reflexologist, metamorphic practitioner and member of the national Federation of Spiritual Healers in Great Britain, uses these skills in her counseling work, and has lectured and written widely on Zarathushtrianism.

Book Review by Adel Engineer

The Journal is a research tool for the needs of scholars, students and the general public interested in Zoroastrian studies and other related Iranian fields. It can be used as a reference tool for topics dealing with history, culture, religion, archaeology, geography, literature, linguistics and history.

US$6 per copy.

Please make checks payable to FEZANA. Order from Dolly Dastoor, 3765 Malo, Brossard, Quebec, Canada J4Y 1B4, Tel: (514) 462-4638 or Rohinton Rivetna, 5750 South Jackson Street, Hinsdale, Illinois 60521, Tel: (708) 325-5383.
Avesta-Pahlavi Texts on the Web


Sahyest Na-Shayest (shayest.html). A compilation of religious topics and miscellaneous rules: the degrees of sin; size and materials of sudreh-kushti; reverence to the sun and fire; confession, renunciation and atoning for sin; eating in the dark; four kinds of worship; unlawful slaughter of animals; sin of not marrying; Avesta not to be mumbled; treatment of a hedgehog; praying when washing the face; the cause of sneezing, yawning and sighing; whether evil may be done for the sake of good; nature of wisdom; extinguishing fire; evil of drawing well water at night ... and an assortment of other such miscellaneous injunctions.

Bundahishn (Creation Story) (bundahis.html). Dating to the late 9th century, Bundahishn has three main themes — creation, the nature of earthly creatures, and the Kyanians (their lineage, abodes, and vicissitudes befalling them). Here is preserved an ancient picture of the world, saucer-shaped, star-encircled, girdled by two great rivers, in which yearly the Gods fight against the demons to end drought and famine, and to bring protection to man.

Dadestan-i Denig (Religious Decisions) (dd.html). Written in the ninth century CE by Dastur Manushchihar-i Goshnajaman of Pars and Kerman, it covers a wide range of topics: why we were created; why the good suffer; the necessity for good works; the fate of the soul after death; a comparison between Christianity and Zoroastrianism. It even discusses grain futures (in Chapter 49!)

Yavisht-i Friyan (yf.html). The Pahlavi retelling of an ancient tale, as evidenced by allusions in Yasht 5 (verse 81). It tells of a riddle contest between Yavish of the Friyans and the sorcerer Akht.

Shkand-gumanig Vizar (doubt-disspelling exposition) (avesta.html). It discusses why Ohrmazd did not use his omnipotence to repel Ahriman; proof of the existence of the Creator, proof of the existence of an ‘injurer’ (evil); inconsistency of those who trace both good and evil to a sacred being; discussion of the Jewish and Christian accounts of Creation, Good and Evil.

Pazand Texts. These include Afrins, Doas, Nirangs, Setayashes and other miscellaneous texts.

Sad Dar (saddar.html). Written in Persian (with a few Arabic words), this work is more quoted than any other by Parsi compilers of the Persian Rivayets, or religious traditions, in the seventeenth century. It is a convenient summary of many of the religious customs handed down by Pahlavi writers, such as: necessity of unwavering faith; perseverance in industry; recitation of formulas after sneezing; sin of unnatural intercourse to be punished by death on the spot; ceremonies in honor of departed souls; treatment of nail parings; people should marry early, and childless man must adopt a son; why promises must not be broken; necessity of Bareshnum (sacred ablutions); adoption; evils of falsehood; advantages of truth in word and action and many more such assorted rules.
Please support our Zarthusti entrepreneurs and advertisers, and purchase their products and services. Enquiries and submissions about this column may be made to Dr. Rustom Kevala (see back cover).

Opportunities Available
As a Zarthusti computer industry recruiter, I will be glad to help Zarthustis and other computer professionals. I have immediate openings for persons with experience in Oracle, PeopleSoft, Unix, C++, OO, Informix, Sybase and System analysts with AuthorWare and IconWare experience. Contact Cyrus Desai, Desai Associates at (703) 714-6975.

Give Me Bodily Health
Health is happiness. Health is the richest possession of man upon earth. Give me, O giver of health, a healthy body to nurture a healthy mind, to enable me to lead an active and industrious Zoroastrian life. That healer is the best healer who cures by health giving mantras. He is the righteous man who leads the soul, such healer is the best conquering healer [Yast. 3.6].

Being a priest, I practice spiritual healing through our prayers. I believe one can be cured, or at least provide comfort to the person through our prayers. If your family member, friend or acquaintance is seriously ill, please contact me — Mobed Zarir Bhandara, 2526 Santa Catalina #106, Costa Mesa, CA 92626, Tel: (714) 434-1936.

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New Beauty Salon in Houston
MAHNAZ FIROOZGARI and her husband FARROKH have opened a new beauty salon, “Natural Success” in Houston. Mahnaz is a licensed beautician and hair stylist and will provide all beauty aid needs. It is located at 1801 S. Dairy Ashford, Suite 107, Houston, Texas 77077, Tel: (713) 497-8843.

Good Indian Tea
If you are interested in buying some good Indian Tea, at $3 per pound, please call BAKHTAWAR in Dallas, Texas, at (214) 462-1475. All proceeds will benefit the Building Fund of the Zoroastrian Association of North Texas.

Psychic Consultations
MOHUR SIDHWA, a newcomer to Houston, has opened her psychic consultation office. Mohur has been a professional Psychic Consultant for 15 years in Tucson, Arizona. Contact her at 6060 Richmond, Houston, Texas, Tel: (713) 953-0107.

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FEZANA JOURNAL — FALL 1996 67
A new Zoroastrian supplies shop will serve the needs of Zarathustis in North America

Khursheed Bapasola of New Jersey has recently started a new Zoroastrian Supplies shop. This is probably now the only such business in North America, since the "Zoroastrian Supplies" store in Texas closed down last year.

Wishing to give back to a community that, she feels, has helped her out in so many ways, Khursheed is committed to selling basic Zoroastrian supplies such as kushtis, topis, kakras, sali, tacho and lobban, at very affordable prices.

The cost of these basic items will be kept low by subsidizing it with the sale of other items at regular prices. These will include books, nicknacks, Pateti/Navroze cards, and other items. Any items relating to the religion and Navjote/Wedding ceremonies, such as ses, divas, daglis, sapats, food items, and more, can be custom ordered.

Other innovative ideas are also being explored, such as basement sale of Zoroastrian items, along with a once-a-month dance session (for the body), chess club (for the mind) and yoga class (for the spirit). Khursheed will welcome your thoughts and suggestions.

A mail-order catalog will be available shortly.

Contact Khursheed Bapasola at 7 Fox Hollow Road, Voorhees, New Jersey 08043, Tel: (609) 768 8351.

The Gift of Life

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Donations will be deeply appreciated for the FEZANA fund categories: Welfare, Religious Education, Student Aid, Properties, Youth, FEZANA Journal, General, or for a specific appeal. Checks, payable to "FEZANA", may be sent to the address in the appeal, or to Dinshaw Joshi, FEZANA Welfare Committee, 4515 Willard Avenue, #1609-S Chevy Chase, MD 20815, Tel: (301) 654-6250
What could be more precious than your gift of vision, a pulsating heart, a kidney or any vital organ of your body, that can enrich someone’s life? One can start while still alive by donating blood or bone marrow to save another life. For more information, please call Hira Bhandara at (714) 434-1936.

Parsi Students’ Hostel Association
The Parsi Student’s Hostel at Gama­dia Colony in Bombay is appealing for funds for general improvements to the buildings and programs.

The Hostel provides accommodation for 58 mofussil students pursuing studies at colleges in Bombay. Since its inception in 1937, hundreds of students have benefited from these facilities. Checks, made out to FEZANA, marked “Student Hostel” may be sent to the FEZANA Welfare Committee [see previous page for address].

Parsee General Hospital Appeal for Donations
Yasmin and Jamshed Ghadiali are, once again, spearheading the annual fund-raising drive for Parsee General Hospital in Bombay. $83,302 has been raised, and every cent of it sent to the hospital, over the last ten years.

According to Mr. Homa Petit, President of the Hospital, funds are needed for “ongoing upgrade of its aging physical infrastructure and medical technology, and support of the large volume of highly subsidized social welfare care.

Checks made out to ZAGNY-Critical Assistance Fund may be mailed to Jamshed Ghadiali, 2686 Belcher Street, Baldwin, New York 11510, Tel: (516) 378-4516.

Unique Offer from Panchgani Dar-e-Mehr
Trustees of the Seth N. B. Choksi Fire Temple in Panchgani, near Bombay, have developed an innovative scheme to raise funds to build up a Corpus Fund for the maintenance of the 64-year-old Dar-e-Meher. For a one-time donation of Rs. 5000 (less than $150), on a day to be selected by the donor, for the next five years, a Machhi will be offered and Afringan will be performed. Tandarosti will be recited daily with the names as desired by the donor. Checks, made out to FEZANA, marked “Panchgani Dar-e-Meher” may be sent to the FEZANA Welfare Committee [see previous page for address].

Acknowledgements
FEZANA gratefully acknowledges the following donations since the last publication.

For Welfare:
Anonymous, AB ($15); Anonymous, AB ($100); Anonymous, BC ($25); Anonymous, Germany ($20); Anonymous, ONT ($300); Anonymous, MD ($153); Babak Abadi, ONT ($50CD); Dr. Cowas Antia, MD ($150); Cyrus Austin, AZ ($300); Katy Alamshaw, CA ($15); Viraf Bharucha, TX ($25); Jal Birdy, CA ($31); Kali Buhariwalla, TX ($751); Maneck Bharucha, TX ($101); Aspi Bharucha, OH ($50); Farhad Cama, PA ($21); Tehnaz Chinyo, PQ ($12); Kavasji Dadachanji, AK ($200); Sheroo Daruwalla, IL ($11+10+10); Diana Dinhaw, CT ($150); Farieda Irani, TX ($251); Bejan & Maharoukh Irani, IL ($25); Dinoo Purvez Jilla, FL ($231); Hoshang & Bonnie Karani, IL ($15); Ardeshir Khosravi, IL ($100); Noshri & Rhoda Lakdwalla, CA ($20); Jehangir Mober, IL ($50); Nilofer Modi, NM ($25); Shernaz Mohanty, TX ($25); Rohinton Ogra, IL ($81); G. D. Pocha, CA ($100); Meheroz Rabadi, IN ($100); Behram Shroff, VA ($51+51); Rohin & Arnaz Talati, CA ($11); Yezi Unvala, CA ($100 + $15); Adi & Arnaz Vakharia, LA ($50); Pesi & Aban Vazifdar, IL ($101).

Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania and New Jersey ($551);
Zoroastrian Association of California, ($101).

Fine China Designs Inspired by Persepolis
Hassan Hatefi, of Pars Art, displayed his beautiful, handmade fine china with Zarathusti motifs at the Zoroastrian Congress in San Francisco in June. This year, in addition to his popular fravahar designs, he also introduced some new designs inspired by Takht-e-Jamshid (Persepolis) on fine china, as well as gold and silver jewelry, limited edition prints and other memorabilia.

Items may be ordered from Pars Art at P. O. Box 3251, Falls Church, VA 22043, Tel: (703) 471-3934.
**MARRIAGE CLASSIFIEDS**

FEZANA maintains a matrimonial file and will coordinate the initial contacts between interested parties. FEZANA does not assume any responsibility for verifying credentials. Contact Roshan Rivetna (see back cover for address).

**PARSI BOY, 25, Masters in Electrical Engineering, working in world-renowned firm, financially stable, attractive, athletic. Photographs available. Seeks slim, attractive and good-natured girl for marriage. Please reply by mail, preferably with photographs to P.O. Box 390035, Mountain View, CA 94039-0035, or call FEZANA Journal publisher for telephone number. [M96-34]

FEZANA maintains records of births, navjotes (sudreh-pushis), weddings, deaths and other major events such as graduations, navar and martab cere­monies. Please send full information with photographs to Dr. Rus tom Kevala (see back cover for address).

**BIRTHS**

Amitis, a girl, to Farnaz and Farhad Aidun of Metropolitan Washington, DC area, on May 18. Grandparents are...
FAIADUN and Manijeh Aidun and Ardesht and Parvin Khorrami.

Alishia Arezou, a girl, to Azita and Guy DuBois of Metropolitan Washington, DC area, on September 11, 1995.

Atoosa, a girl, to Shahin and Jamshidd Forouzan of Metropolitan Washington, DC area, on January 29. Grandparents are Khodamorad and Banoo Kamran.

Sam, a boy, to Nawaz and Hoshi Merchant of Somersett, New Jersey, on May 22.

Sanaya Meher, a girl, to Hosbedad and Anahita Tamboli of Florida area, on March 13; sister to Cyrus and Sarosh. Grandparents are Pheroze and Sheroo Tamboli of Pune, India; and Bahman and Dolly Irani of London, UK.

Navjote (Sudreh Pushi)

Delnaz Daruwalla, daughter of Parvez and Nilufer Daruwalla, at the Arbab Rustam Guiv Darbe Mehr in Chicago, on June 22.

Aryeneesh Dotiwala, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Kaemerk Dotiwala of Sugarland, Texas, at the Stouffer Renaissance Hotel in Houston, on April 6. The ceremony was performed by Dastur Firoz Kotwal of Bombay.

Bryce Golwalla, son of Darius and Yvonne Golwalla, in Mt. Airy, Maryland, on June 1. Mobed Behram Panthaki performed the Navjote.

Roshni Jamsetjee, daughter of Rumi and Kashmira Jamsetjee of Chicago area, at the Arbab Rustam Guiv Darbe Mehr in Chicago, on July 27. Four recently-initiated Chicago-area mobeds, all under 16 — Ervads Hoshi and Neville Vazifdar, Jimmy Antia, and Zarvan Karanjia, joined Ardaviraf Minocherhomjee in performing the ceremony.

Sarishta Katrak, daughter of Kerman and Soheila of Toronto area, at the Mehraban Guiv Darbe Mehr in Toronto, on June 22. After the ceremony, performed by her father, Sarishta spoke in English, Farsi and French, expressing her pride in being a Zoroastrian.

K analyst, son of Hormaz and Mithra Khoshroo, in Vienna, Virginia, on May 18. The officiating priest was Mobed Behram Panthaki.

Freddy Patell, son of Freny and Syavux Patell of Dresher, Pennsylvania, at the Palace of Asia, on September 11.

Zal and Zane Sethna, sons of Roshan and Zarir Sethna of Houston, Texas, on May 4, by Ervads Peshotan Unwalla and Maneck Sidhwa.

Darius and Delna Wali, son and daughter of Zarine and Richard Wel of Chicago area, at the Arbab Rustam Guiv Darbe Mehr, on August 10. After the ceremony, performed by Dastoor Kersey Antia and his sons Mazaid and Jimmy, and Ardaviraf Minocherhomjee, the new initiates affirmed their commitment to being Good Zoroastrians with a few words, in English.

Engagements

Zubin Dastoor of Montreal, son of Dr. Phiroze and Dolly Dastoor, is engaged to Jasmine Cooper, an occupational therapist, also from Montreal. Zubin is a mechanical engineer and a licensed commercial pilot. Jasmine is an occupational therapist. The wedding is planned for June 1997.

Bey Estimate, son of Rohinton and Roshan Rivetna of Hinsdale, Illinois, is engaged to Mary Davis, daughter of Ray Davis and Peggy Akin of Indiana. Jamshed is a quality engineer with Honeywell Corporation in Freeport, Illinois. Jamshid is a registered nurse at Freeport Memorial Hospital.

Weddings

Yasmin Crawford and Antish Alleck, at the Arbab Rustam Guiv Darbe Mehr in Chicago, on May 19.

Behram Dubash, son of Framroze and Siloo Dubash of Toronto, to Shaan Nari Nargolwalla, at the Trillum Hall in Mississauga, Ontario, on May 18.

Below, Natasha Dastoor was married to Adil Irani on May 25 in Montreal. Bottom, Burjor Ichaporia was married to Kashmira Dastur on June 28.
Zarin Dastur, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Maneck Nariman Dastur, to Vista Jumasing, son of Mrs. Minnie Keki Durnasia, at The Castaway Banquet Center in Burbank, California, on July 14.

Ramin Dehmoubed, son of Golcheher and Ardishir, to Farahanaz Felfeli, daughter of Katayoon and Faredon, on May 24, in Toronto.

Burjor P. Ichaporia, son of Dr. Pallan and Hutoxi Ichaporia of Womelsdorf, Pennsylvania, to Kashmira E. Dastur, at Cama Baug, Bombay, on June 28. Dasturji Kaikhushroo M. Jamasp Asa and Dasturji Firoze Kotwal officiated [see photo].

Natasha Dastoor, daughter of Dr. Phiroze and Dolly Dastoor of Montreal, Quebec, to Dr. Adel Irani, son of Drs. Katy and Dinshaw Irani of Houston, Texas, on May 25, at the Windsor Hotel in Montreal. Ervads Nozer Kotwal and Zubin Dastoor officiated. Adel is doing his fellowship in Thoracic cardiac surgery. Natasha will be doing her residency in Pediatrics. The couple will reside in Houston [see photo page 71].

Ferzin Jungalwala, daughter of Firoze and Khorsheed Jungalwala of Boston

Ferzin Jungalwala was married to Rajan Patel in New York on April 6. area, and Rajan Patel, son of Jayanti and Usha Patel of New York on April 6. Over 850 guests celebrated the dual Hindu and Zoroastrian ceremonies (performed by Ervad Jehan Bagli) at Huntington Town House in New York [see photo below].

Mehraban Modarai, son of Behdukhot and Jamshid Modaria, to Mandana Jam, daughter of Faraz and jamshid Jam, on May 17, in Toronto.

Dr. Sorab R. Vatcha, of Mountain View, California, son of Scylla and (the late) Rustum Vatcha of Bombay, to Persis J. Madan, of Bombay, daughter of Perviz and Dr. Jamshed Madan of Bombay, in San Jose, California, on June 14. The couple now resides in Mountain View, California.

Anniversary

Firoze and Dosi Sethna celebrated their Golden (50th) Wedding anniversary in Vancouver, BC, on May 6.

Deaths

Perin Antia, wife of Ervad Yezdi Antia, past President of the North American Mobeds Council, mother of Rayomand, Zahir (wife Arlynne), grandmother of Azar, Victoria, Darius and Cyrus, in Toronto, on June 16, after a long and courageous struggle with cancer.

A teacher and reading specialist, Perin was a caring, loving person, with a tremendous capacity to make and keep friends, as evidenced by one of them who delivered an eulogy: “When Perin entrusted me with her friendship, she bestowed upon me a pair of wings and a halo. Whenever that halo slipped, she always managed to be looking away. She became a one-woman cheering section for any rare, small achievement I might manage. She elevated my personal concept of friendship to new heights. Because Perin insisted on believing that we were better than we actually were, we tried harder to become the people she believed us to be.”

Mobed Firooz Azargoshab, 84, in Tehran on June 25 [see obituary below].

Jehangir P. Collector, father of Sarosh Collector of Houston, husband of Roshan Collector of Baroda, in Karachi, on July 1.

Burjor Hormusji Mehta, father of Armaitiy (Aspy) Mehta, grandfather of Persis, Yasmin and Nazreen, in Houston, on March 19.

Khodarahm Pourkarimi, 73, of complications after knee surgery; father of Janis Rais-Bahrami of Washington, DC area, brother of Iradj Pourkarimi and Gify Marzbani of N.Vancouver, in London, UK, on March 26. He is also survived by his wife, and three other children.

Pheroze D. Tamboli, husband of Sheroo, father of Dr. Hoshedar (Anahita) Tamboli of Tampa, Florida, and Dr. Kazad Tamboli of Mandville, Louisiana, in Pune, India, on April 23.
Zarhustis around the world mourn the loss of Mobed Firooz Azargoshash, Mobed-e-Mobedan (High Priest) of Iran and President of the Kankash-e-Mobedan (Council of Mobeds), on June 25, 1996, in Tehran.

Delegates at the Sixth World Zoroastrian Congress in Tehran who remember his smiling face, gracious presence, and inspiring words, were shocked to hear of his passing barely a couple of days after the close of the Congress.

Mobed Firooz Azargoshash is survived by his wife Simin Adarbad of Tehran, and daughters Shahnaz Parsi and Mitra Kianian of California, and Mahnaz Ormazdi and Parvin Mazdayesnie of Tehran.

Son of Dastoor Namdar, of a highly educated, well-read and cultured Mobed family, Dastoor Azargoshash was born in Yazd in 1912. After elementary schooling in Yazd, he went to Alburz College in Tehran.

Upon graduation, the Kankash-e-Mobed of Iran sent him, and another promising young Mobed, Rostam Shahzadi (who is a respected Mobed in Tehran today) to Bombay to study Avesta Pahlavi at the Cuma Athorman Institute.

After 7 years in Bombay, he returned to Iran, and spent a year as an English teacher at the Kaikhosrow-vi Yazd High School. He then studied law at Tehran University and graduated with the highest honors. He worked for many years as a translator at the Mineral and Science institute, until his retirement 15 years ago.

A man with a passion for learning and research, Dastoor Azargoshash spent a lifetime studying the Gathas and the Avesta language, under noted Avestan scholars Ustad Pour-Davoud, Dr. Irach Taraporevala, Dr. Bode, Behramgore Ankle­saria, Professor Mills and Dr. Haug.

After 15 years of research, he published a translation of the Gathas from the original manuscript to Farsi, along with commentaries from other scholars. Eight years later he published a second book on the Gathas, in Farsi. His works form one of the greatest compilations of the Gathas in Farsi.

To commemorate the 100th anniversary of Maneckji Limji Hateria, in 1990, the Council of Iranian Mobeds of North America (CIMNA) published a small book of Gatha translations by Dastoor Azargoshash in Farsi and English. In 1985, he wrote an Avesta book in English (Roman) script, which was published by CIMNA.

Though his soul has departed, Dasto­oor Firooz Azargoshasho’s thoughts, words and deeds will remain with us for posterity.

[From Fravahar Magazine, Tehran, 1990. Many thanks to Mitra Kianian for sending the article and to Kaikhosrow Mobed for translating it from Farsi to English].

Dr. Kersey Antia was selected to receive an invitation to the People to People Citizen Ambassador Program, for his activity in the fields of religion and philosophy, including numerous publications and professional recognition awards.

Papers by two Zarhustis were published in the May 1996 issue of Psychological Science, the prestigious journal of the American Psychological Society. MAHZARIN BANAJI’s paper was on “Automatic Stereotyping”, and JAMSHEEH BHARUCHA wrote about “Issues in Auditory Cognition … and Pattern Recognition.”

Cherag Daruwala, son of Aspi and Zarin Daruwala of Dresher, Pennsylvania, distinguished himself at the Delaware Valley Science Fair. He won three special awards, and placed second in the Medicine and Health category, with his project “Implications for Research of Anti-Coagulant Drugs”, an invito study on blood clots. Cherag will start a 9-year medical program at Westchester University this Fall.

In addition to her active leadership role as President of FEZANA, DOLLY DASTOOR is also noted in her professional life. She recently wrote a chapter on Neurological Assessment in the book Clinical Diagnosis and Management of Alzheimer’s Disease, published by Martin Dunitz, England, in 1996.

ARYENESH DOTIWALLA, daughter of Kaemarz and Havovi Dotiwalla, of Houston, won an award for her music piece It’s a Hard Knock Life, by Richard Strauss. 107 contestants competed at the Musical Recital under the auspices of the Houston Music Institute.

Natasha Dastoor Irani, daughter of Dr. Phiroze and Dolly Dastoor, received her Doctorate of Medicine and Master of Surgery.
with distinction from McGill University on May 30, (just a week after her wedding). Natasha, who was placed on the Dean’s Honors List, and received the Psychiatry Prize, will specialize in Pediatrics at Baylor Medical Center in Houston.

Noted author ROHINTON MISTRY was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by the University of Ottawa, at its Convocation ceremonies this spring.

JEHAN PANTHAKI, son of Ervad Behram and Zenobia Panthaki of Falls Church, Virginia, returned from a 5-week stay with a family in Russia. He graduated from High School with honors (3.9 average), was on the athletic honor roll, and won the award for best actor. He will pursue a degree in commerce at the University of Virginia.

After 20 years of service as Chief Medical Examiner for Virginia’s Tidewater District, DR. FARUK PRESSWALLA, 55, retired on June 30. “He’s been an important person in the system,” said the State’s Chief Medical Examiner, “He’s highly regarded by both prosecutors and defenders and law enforcement agencies, and enjoys a high degree of public confidence.”

Presswalla completed medical school in Bombay, then worked in London’s Scotland Yard, and in New York City, before taking this post. At times, he was the District’s lone medical examiner, ruling on the violent or unexpected deaths of an estimated 2,000 people a year, and has helped police solve thousands of cases. In 1993, Presswalla served as Virginia’s Chief Medical Examiner for 15 months when the then-chief fell ill.

Often outspoken in his criticism of the office, Presswalla’s application to become the State’s Chief Medical Examiner was turned down, in what some perceive as a snub of Presswalla, who had successfully challenged Governor-Elect George Allen, arguing that examiners should be left out of politics. Allen backed down.

[Daily Press, Virginia, May 1996].

Young Lady with Raw Talent

Sherry Panthaki has an impressive list of credentials in piano performance and singing.

Passionately fond of music, Sherry is an exceptionally talented young musician, and dreams of one day seeing her name up there with the stars. She was four when she first began “tinkling” around on the piano at home. Her earliest training was with her mother Khorshed Panthaki. While deeply involved with school activities at St. Mary’s School in Pune, Sherry also found time to quickly rise from Level 1 through Level 8 in Piano, Theory and Voice with the Trinity College of Music, London, passing each with distinction, in a very short time.

The Zarthusti community looks to Sherry with pride, as the young lady with “raw talent” now takes the next step in her musical career.

To help defray the high cost of her program at Knox, contributions will be most gratefully accepted. Please send checks to Sherry’s aunt, Mrs. Bhickoo Patel, 2328 Islington Avenue, Apt. 205, Etobicoke, Ontario, M9W 3X2, Canada, Tel: (416) 743-3606.

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