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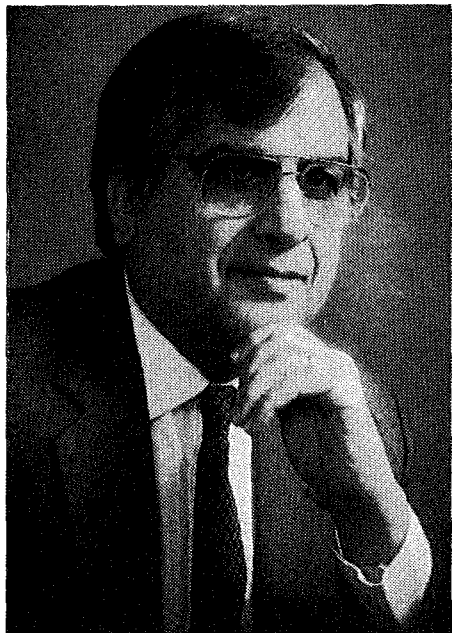
COMING TO NORTH AMERICA *Zarthushti Settling in a New Continent*

*Grant to those present, O Mazda Ahura,
strength through Truth and through Good Thought;
that power by which one may establish good dwellings and peace.
Indeed I realize, that you are the first provider of these things.*

[Ahunavaiti Gatha, Ys. 29.10, Humbach & Ichaporia, 1994]

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MESSAGES FROM THE SPONSORS



In memory of my father **Mehraban Khodamorad Harvesf** a merchant in Iran, an honest man, well-known, and best friend to all. He devoted his life for improvement and progress of the community and his children. He was loved by all.

- Keikhosrow Harvesf,
Jacksonville, Florida



A strong commitment to excellence is the hallmark of personal excellence anywhere in the world. Such pursuit, however, combined with the practice of the ethical precepts of our all-encompassing religion empowers us with the dignity of good thoughts, the wisdom of good words and the pride that underlies good actions, thereby making us an enviable force in the advancement of society, in particular the American society, of which we have chosen to become an integral part.

- Homi and Villy Gandhi, Hanoz and Navroz
Glen Rock, New Jersey

In honor of our children and our children's children, with the hope that they will participate in the process of Zarthusti community building.

- Phiroz and Dolly Dastoor and Farahad (Jean), Zubin (Jasmine) and Natasha (Adel)
Of Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver and Houston



Weekly prayer time at the Mistree's: Dinsha, Yashfara, Farrokh and Behram.

My dearest Dinsha and Behram:

You are products of a wonderful American mother and a Zoroastrian Indian father and you have inherited a rich heritage from both.

My wish for you is that you both understand what it means to be a Zoroastrian and feel comfortable with your American and Zoroastrian heritage and cultural identities.

My hope is that you will live a Zoroastrian life on this continent; rooted in a scholarship that leads to wisdom and facilitates spiritual growth. I would like you both to be happy and comfortable with the very notion of being Zoroastrian and be steadfast in your quest for Asha that I believe is the bedrock for scholarship and self improvement.

Most importantly, when it comes your turn to pass on our religion to the next generation you will have attained the knowledge to pass on more than what I have been able to pass on to you.

- Papa
Farrokh Mistree, Atlanta, Georgia

OF THIS ISSUE ...



This country offers freedom of expression and a variety of ideas. Reward is a measure of what you put in — it always has been. Of course there is a concept of playing the game and marching to the tune of a pecking order that exists in all professions, but there is no substitute for one's own confidence, persistence, zeal and tenacity.

- Jamshed Gandi
San Francisco, California

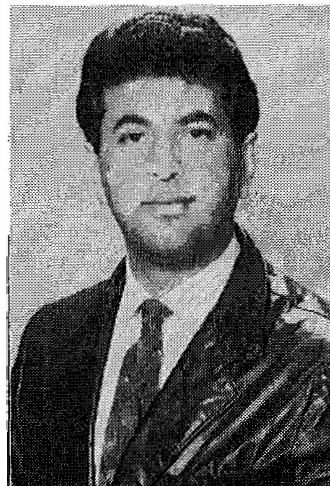
Congratulations to all those who take the plunge to resettle in a new country. You can be as successful as you choose to be — it is a matter of right timing, right thinking, positive attitude and great endeavor. But it can happen. Beginnings are hard but success is possible. Good Luck!

- Shirin Tata and Bella Tata
Vancouver, British Columbia



We live in a world of high technology, cyberspace, and virtual reality. Through the Internet we have the ability and means of reaching out to Zarthusis around the world at the speed of light. However, technology and freedom alone does not give us the wisdom of choosing the right path. More than ever, we need good thoughts, good words, and good deeds in this new world order.

- Mehran Sepehri
Mountain View, California



In Memory of Framroze and Dhunmai Bagli
and
Sorab and Homai Marshall
parents of Jehan and Freny Bagli
To disseminate the knowledge of the Religion of
Asho Zarthus.

-Jehan and Freny Bagli
Princeton, New Jersey

FEZANA JOURNAL WISHES ALL READERS A HAPPY NEW YEAR 1997

*May the Zarthusi community around the world have
a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year 1366 YZ.*

Hormuzd Roz, Fravardin Mah, 1366 YZ., March 21, 1997

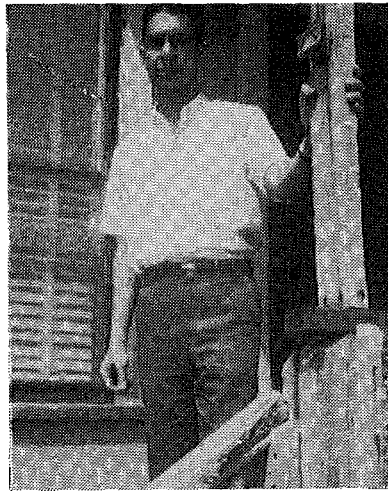
The American Journey

When I came to America at the age of 23, I was planning to get my Ph.D. and return to India. But when I graduated in 1966, no suitable job was available in India for an aspiring rocket scientist. So like many others, I stayed on for the lifestyle and opportunities that America offers. Due to my upbringing, I believed that wherever I lived, whatever I did, I would succeed. I worked hard. I wrote and delivered many papers. I stayed in the office late every day and seldom took any vacation. At 40, I had everything: a beautiful home on 10 acres, a wife and two kids, dogs, cats, cars, stereo, TV. And yet, I wasn't happy. I did not feel particularly successful.

Today, I know that success, like happiness, is a journey rather than a destination. A journey that cannot be made alone. The companions in this journey are the family, friends, and mentors, who make up an extended family which provides a sense of support and stability. Without this extended family to share in the successes and failures, all effort lacks meaning and purpose. It seems that while striving for 'success', I had neglected to cultivate friends and mentors from my own Zarthusti background.

So I became active in the local Anjuman. I gave my time to organizing meetings, speaking, attending Congresses, editing the FEZANA Journal. For the past ten years, I have come to know and be friends with a number of Zarthustis. Today, these are the people who give me a sense of belonging and make me feel worthy and loved. They remind me so much of myself. I don't know how I got along without them for so long!

Perhaps like me, most Zarthusti immigrants are striving to develop a sense of belonging — by developing this extended family to give meaning to their lives in the new country. But in every family, there are some who choose not to get along with the rest



Rustom Kevala in May 1964, and with daughter Ruby, in 1996

of the family, and our Zarthusti extended family is no exception. Some people are always putting people into compartments — orthodox, liberal, Ilm-e-Khshnum, Parsi, Irani, etc. I hear them say: "If only FEZANA would do what I say....", "I won't help unless you do things my way", and "I just don't associate with Parsis. All they do is gossip in Gujarati".

These are the people who are paranoid of the future, in constant battle with the present, and stuck in the quagmire of the past. They keep yelling at the tops of their voices the same message over and over again, hoping to drown out all opposing viewpoints just by the strength of their lungs. I respect them. There is always a kernel of truth in any gross generalization. But I believe that actions speak much louder than words. If they just talk and never lift a finger to help, I don't get excited. I have better things to do. But if they are able to do some good, who am I to stop them?

Lets face it, my contemporaries and friends who came from India are loyal to our community partly because the community provided mentorship and support and helped us to come here and get the education that we wanted. It stands to reason that if we expect our youth to be proud of us and carry the flame on to the next generations, it is the duty of every Zarthusti elder to help them get on their feet and prosper. I mean

REALLY help — financially, physically, and by example. We must dig into our pockets to send them to all the Zarthusti congresses and conferences that we can; offer scholarships, business loans, jobs, whatever they need. We must spend our time to take them to religious education classes and we must ourselves make the effort to learn and teach them what our religion **REALLY** means to us. We must support our institutions so that they will grow and provide the cohesive structure that will be needed for generations to come. And above all, we must set the example by working together for our future. No empty words allowed.

So here we are in North America, the land of freedom and opportunity. We have the best opportunity for fruitful dialogue and for making true progress. We are in a unique position to bring about the best in ourselves and thereby enrich our great religious and cultural heritage. Let us look back to see what was good in our past and what was wrong. Let us make use of the present to enrich our lives, and look to the future to empower ourselves to be worthy of being called Zarthustis. Let us make our journey of success together, in love and peace.

By the way, I never did achieve my goal of building a rocket to the moon. But you know what? I am very happy. ■

Rustom Kevala
Chair, FEZANA Publications

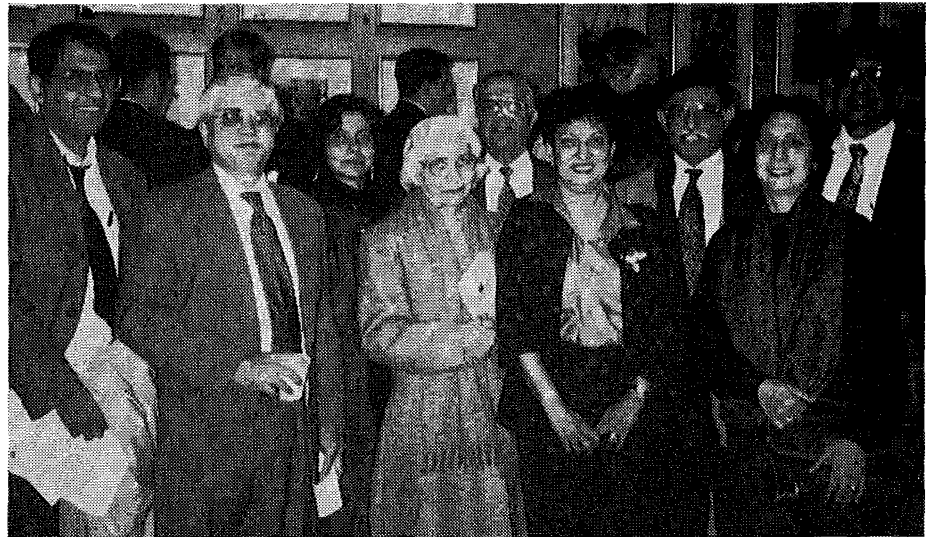
FEZANA Reaching Out in 1996

By Dolly Dastoor

The year 1996 was spent in promoting the image and credibility of FEZANA as a viable, relevant and effective vehicle for bonding the Zarthusti community of North America. For this exercise in public relations I made several trips to visit the different associations to interact with their boards as well as the grass root community, to inform them of the concept, the mission and the vision for the next millennium, the strategic plan which is being developed, and the forthcoming World Congress 2000 sponsored by FEZANA and hosted by ZAH (Houston).

In June, I visited Iran to attend the 6th World Zarthusti Congress, with seven presidents and past presidents of Member Associations, Chairs of Committees, present officers, as well as the past President of FEZANA. The North American community is very well perceived and respected internationally. It was an unique and memorable experience which will remain ingrained in our memories for ever.

In July, I was in San Francisco chairing the AGM and attending the Tenth North American Zoroastrian Congress, where I presented delegates with a flavor of the concept and mission of FEZANA. At the AGM, for the first time, we undertook an exercise (conducted by Dr. Rustom Kevala, Chair, Dr. Farrokh Mistree and Dr. Mehran Sepheri) to question our mission, our role and our future development. After the participants had a chance to share their vision, their views on internal and external operations of FEZANA, its strengths and its weaknesses, we came up with



FEZANA President Dolly Dastoor (sixth from left) at an Interfaith Meeting in Washington, DC, with members of ZAMWI: Yesvy Gustasp, Kersi Shroff (President of ZAMWI), Rashna Ghadialy, Nergish Masters, Rohinton Tengra, Dastoor, Ervad Behram Panthaky, Zenobia Panthaky and Rustom Kevala.

a broad outline of a plan for 'our shared space'. The draft plan which was mentioned in the Winter 1996 issue of FEZANA Journal has to be translated into action and if approved gradually merged with the existing Committee structure of FEZANA. Each association should also consider adopting the broad parameters of the plan and develop it within the relevance and reality of their own associations.

In August, taking advantage of my attendance at the Gatha Conference in Houston, where I presented a paper, I had the first preliminary meeting for Congress 2000 with the dynamic and vibrant community in Texas. There were several other members of FEZANA Committees present as well. In October I met with them again to further develop working relationships and structure for the Congress.

A professional conference in Washington in November allowed me to visit ZAMWI (Washington) and ZAPA (Pittsburgh), and have very interesting exchanges with the community on the need for the leadership of FEZANA to assume a directional role in issues facing the community. In Washington, before addressing the community, I participated in the slide

show at the Zoroastrian Center, organized by President Kersi Shroff and Rustom Kevala on the Iran visit. I had the opportunity to attend the annual Interfaith Concert at the Hebrew Congregation in Washington, DC. with members of ZAMWI. ZAPA members who came with delicious potluck dinner, emphasized the role of FEZANA in secular initiatives.

My visit to ZSBC (Vancouver) in December was memorable. I was able to address the community and have a frank and open dialogue, allaying fears about loss of culture and language in the younger generation, and the older generation who have difficulty with English, the official language of FEZANA. The severe cold spell did not prevent us from enjoying a fun evening of good food and Iranian music at the *Caspian*, with directors of ZSBC and Trustees of the Rustom Guiv Foundation.

These exchanges are useful in putting a face to FEZANA as mentioned by Shahriar Shahriari in Vancouver. I am willing to take that face to any other association or small group which would like their community to know more about FEZANA and its role and activities.

Message to FEZANA Journal Patrons

For several years now, FEZANA Journal has been bringing us articles, news, clips, and episodes covering our Zarthusti faith in North America and the world. Our history, our heritage, our culture, our very being is brought to our homes regularly each quarter. The Journal is truly a unique publication that we should all be proud of.

But as we are all aware, voluntary services and hard work, although fundamental to the success of an endeavor such as this, are not enough to bring this to your doorstep year after year. Although FEZANA Journal is mostly funded by subscriptions and donations from readers and sponsors, additional sources of revenue are needed.

One important source of revenue is advertising and promotion. To the few who are already advertising and to the generous sponsors, FEZANA thanks you in earnest for keeping the dream alive!

I joined the FEZANA team this year to market our Journal and raise revenue for its various needs. Please consider how you can help. You may wish to advertise your business, or your employer, or your product, or any other item. Or you can sponsor an issue either individually or as a group. We look forward to your help and support. Advertising rates are:

	Per Issue	4 Issues
Full page	\$200	\$700
1/2 page	\$100	\$350
1/4 page	\$50	\$150
Bus. Card	\$30	\$100

Sponsorship: \$1500 per issue, (donated singly or by a group).

Please feel free to call me or send me email, with your questions and comments [see back cover for address]. **THANK YOU!**

*Jamshed B. Gandhi CPA, MS
Business Manager, FEZANA Journal*

■ ■ ■ FROM THE PRESIDENT ■ ■ ■

With a little more than a 1000 days from the next millennium, the nagging question persists in the minds of the Zarthustis of North America as to what the future holds for them. The last two decades has produced so much dislocation, so much disequilibrium, so many changes in our fundamental concepts, the likes of which we have not seen in 50 years, that it has generated anxiety and nervousness not only in our economic and political psyche but also in our spiritual psyche. Zarthustis are understandably worried as to whether the conflicts of ideologies, conflicts of nationality, conflicts of territoriality which are making silent inroads, are going to push us apart and destroy the fabric of our community.

To me these are real issues, which we can handle with thoughtfulness and maturity, by asking the right questions. And the main question we need to ask ourselves is: "What is my vision of the ideal Zarthusti community I would like to create for myself and my children on this continent?" The future will depend on the answers we supply, for that will be part of our North American heritage, our tradition, our 'Kisseh America'.

I would like to share with you my vision and agenda for 1997. I have a holistic vision, for I believe a community cannot have a religious vision if there is no socio-political vision as well. Religiosity and spirituality cannot be enhanced and strengthened in the abstract. It has to be practiced and experienced in an environment where there is a harmony and commonality of purpose, of thought, word and deed.

My vision is for *GROWTH* and *CONTINUOUS PROGRESS* for the community, revival and growth of spirit and knowledge, in an atmosphere of trust and comfort. My

vision is to develop infrastructures for our human resources — our youth, our shut-ins, our frail and our elderly — to create an atmosphere of pride in our community; where we are the subject of research for graduate and doctoral theses, not because



we are relics of a 'half-forgotten, half-obscure' religious community of the past, but because we are a vibrant, living community of the present, whose members have the courage to define themselves by making right and informed choices. My vision is the

creation of a North American identity carved out of the solid bedrock of Persepolis, finely chiseled by the social and climactic changes of our environment, rooted in scholarship and spirituality, respectful of the past but hopeful of the future, a vision of a community which will take full advantage of the technological revolution to bring our diasporic community together by building cyber-bridges of meaningful dialogue.

In my vision we need to develop an amalgam which will bond us together, a strong potent amalgam and not a cheap concoction which will unravel as soon as there is stress. And the ingredients we need to develop this amalgam? A lot of Commitment, Trust, Respect, Compassion, Spirituality, Tolerance, Unity of Purpose, Courage of Conviction, Knowledge, Sensitivity, Flexibility, Understanding, all mixed together with generous quantities of Good Humor.

On this the first day of the year 1366, let us resolve to begin this revival process, one step at a time.

Let us resolve that every action we do in the New Year will lead to *Frashokereti* — the perfection of the human spirit. ■

*Dolly Dastoor
President, FEZANA*

پیام دالی دستور - سرنشین فرزانا

با آغاز سال ۱۳۶۶ یزدگردی

اکنون که کمی بیش از هزار روز به آغاز هزاره سوم مانده، یک پرسش در اندیشه و فکر زرتشتیان آمریکای شمالی میگذرد و رنگ آن پشت هم بگوش تیرسد ' آینده، برای ما زرتشتیان چه ارمغانی دارد؟ '

در دو دهه ی گذشته باندازه ای نا آرامی و نا بسلامتی در بر داشته و اندیشه های بنیادین جامعه پدید آمده که در ۵۰ سال گذشته نمونه آنرا نداریم .

پیچیدگیها نی که در این دو دهه دیده شده نه تنها جوش و خروش (هیجان) و بر آفتگی (عصبانیت) در کار های اقتصادی و سیاسی پدید آورده بلکه در معنویات ما نیز رد پای آن (اثر آن) بخوبی دیده میشود .

همه آگاه هستیم که زرتشتیان بگونه ای دلخسته و دلرد شده اند که باین فکر فرو رفته اند، آیا این بر خورد اندیشه ها، برخورد های ملی و درجا هائی، بر خوردهای کشوری و مرزی (Territoriality) که بگونه آرام تار و پود ما را میخورد، کی مارا بسوی تباہی و جدائی می کشاند؟

از دیدگاه من این اندیشه و گفته ها که در این زمان پیش آمده آمیغ هائی (حقایقی) هستند که ما باید با اندیشه ای روشن و فکری باز و پخته با آنها بر خورد نمایم و با پرسش راستین از خود بخواهیم که ' بدرستی دیدگاه ما از یک جامعه ی ایدال زرتشتی که میخواهیم برای خود و فرزندان خود در آمریکا شمالی بسازیم چیست؟ ' . چگونگی آینده ی ما بستگی به پاسخی دارد که باین پرسش میدهیم و در آتیه بخشی از میراث امریکای شمالی ما، بخشی از ترادادهای (سنتهای) ما و یا برآستی بگوئیم بخشی از قصه امریکای ما را میسازد (قصه سنجان در هند) .

اکنون دوست دارم دیدگاه و دستور کاری که برای سال ۱۹۷۷ برای خود برگزیده ام با شما زرتشتیان در میان بگذارم و خود را با شما در لینکار هتبار (شریک) سازم .

من این دیدگاه و دستور کار را، بی آرایش و پاک با شما در پیش میگذارم . من میگویم یک جامعه نمیتواند

یک دیدگاه دینی و معنوی برگزیند که در آن دید اجتماعی و سیاسی راه نداشته باشد . روحانیت و معنویت بگونه ی خیالی و بی پایه نمیتواند ما را به توان و رسانی برساند مگر اینکه در جامعه ای بکار گرفته و آزمایش شود که در آن هم آهنگی در آرمانها، در اندیشه، در گفتار و کردار توده مردم بگونه ای فراگیر وجود داشته باشد .

آرزو و دستور کار من در این سال نو، رویش و بالندگی، پیشرفت پیگیر و رو بافزایش جامعه، دو باره زنده شدن روحیه خفته، بدست آوردن دانش و بینش در محیطی سرشار از آرامش فکر و آسایش بدن (جسم) میباشد .

آرزو و دستور کار من بوجود آوردن جوی از غرور و گردنفریزی است . نه تنها بخود بالیدن از یادگار های باستانی و گذشته، که نیکی از آن فراموش شده و نیکی دیگر هم ناشناخته مانده و مورد پژوهش پژوهشگران است، بلکه ما باید بخود بیاییم که جامعه ای زنده، رویا و پویا هستیم . ما باید بخود بیاییم که هموندان جامعه ی ما پروا و شهادت دارند، با برگزیدن راه راست، خود را بجهانیان بشناسانند .

آرزو و دستور کار من این است که در آمریکا ی شمالی ما زرتشتیان شناسه ای (هویتی) بیاییم که نه تنها سرچشمه و آبشخور از سنگنوشته ها و کنده کارهای تخت جشید دارد، بلکه شناسه ای که دگرگوئیها ی بر آمده (ناشی) از محیطهای اجتماعی و اقلیمی آنرا زیباتر و بهتر سازد . شناسه ای که ریشه در فرهختگی، فرامایگی و فرزندمندی و معنویت داشته باشد . شناسه ای که گذشته را پاس دارد و بآینده امیدوار باشد .

آرزو و دستور کار من این است که آمیزه ای (ترکیبی) بسازیم که ما را بهتر و بهتر بهم پیوسته و هم بسته نگاه دارد، نه اینکه جامعه ای کم توان و کم بها داشته باشیم که با اندک تند بادی بلرزید و از هم بپاشد .

این آمیزه ای که بآن نیاز داریم و باید پاره های (اجزاء) آنرا در خود داشته باشیم از این قرار است :
کرومندی و پلی بندی (تعهد بانجام کاری که با واگذار شده) ، نیک باوری (اعتماد) ، ارج و ارزش

کداری بکار دیگران ، مهر و دلسوزی ، روحانیه معنویت ، بردباری، یگانگی در باورها، بی پروای دلیری در انجام کارها، دانش و بینش ، نرم (حساسیت) ، نرمش و ساز گاری (قابلیت انعطاف) مدلی و هماهنگی (تفاهم) و افزون بر اینها بگویند سخاوتمندانه ای از رفتار نیک و برخورد خوب دیگران برخوردار باشیم .

در پایان، در روز آغازین سال نو ۱۳۶۶ یزدگردی بیاوید باهم آرزو کنیم (نیت کنیم) هر کاری میکنیم و هر گامی که برمیداریم ما را بسوی فرشتگان (بهسازی) و رسانی روان آدمی راهبری نماید .

سرنشین فرزانا (پرزیدنت) دالی دستور
برگردان بفارسی- کانن فرهنگی زرتشتیان
(Z.C.C)
وانکور

TIME TO PRAY

*I got up early one morning
And rushed right into the day
I had so much to accomplish
That I didn't have time to pray.
Problems just tumbled about me
And heavier came each task,
Why doesn't God help me, I wonder
He answered, "You didn't ask."*

*I wanted to see joy and beauty
But the day toiled on, gray and bleak
I wondered why God didn't show me
He said, "But you didn't seek."*

*I tried to come to God's presence
I used all my keys at the lock
God gently and lovingly chided,
"My child, you didn't knock."*

*I woke up early this morning
And paused before entering the day
I had so much to accomplish
That I had to take time to pray.*

-From ZAC, California Newsletter

Houston Center Building Nearing Completion

The dream of a Zarthusti center in Houston, Texas is close to becoming a reality. The building, on 4.3 acres of land in Houston, is nearing completion, and the Zoroastrian Association of Houston plans to have a Humbandagi at the site shortly.

Iranian Traditions Observed

On October 5, the ZSBC (Vancouver) celebrated *Mehergan* and *Zoroastrian Unity Day*, with the planting of a red Dogwood tree (representing one of Ahura Mazda's creations) by Mehraban Zartoshty. It was a moving experience to see Mr. Zartoshty well again after his ill health of the past 18 months.

Several Associations, notably ZSBC (Vancouver), celebrated *Shab é Yalda*, to commemorate the Winter Solstice, or the longest night of the year, on December 21, with communal music and feasting.

Another Iranian tradition now observed regularly by Parsis and Iranians in the US and Canada, is *Jashan-e-Sadeh*, the ancient midwinter festival, in late January, when huge bonfires are built to celebrate the discovery of fire.

The Iranian commemoration of *Asho Zarthust's death anniversary*, on December 26th, was also observed, with a Jashan, by a number of Zarthusti communities, among them ZAMWI (Washington).

Porseh Hamegani

On Hormazd Roz and Aspandarmad Mah (February 13, 1997), the Kankash-e-Mobedan (Council of Iranian Mobeds of North America) offered prayers in memory of departed loved ones. Names of family members deceased within the last ten years were remembered [photo right].



Zarthusti Community in North Carolina

We are a very small community here of five (soon to be six) families, in the Raleigh, Cary, Chapel Hill area, which is called the 'Triangle Area'. We get together quite often and on special occasions even get families from 3 or 4 hours away, at which times we number between 25-30 individuals. These times are always filled with a lot of typical Parsi merriment. Our newest resident is an Architecture student from India at NC State University.

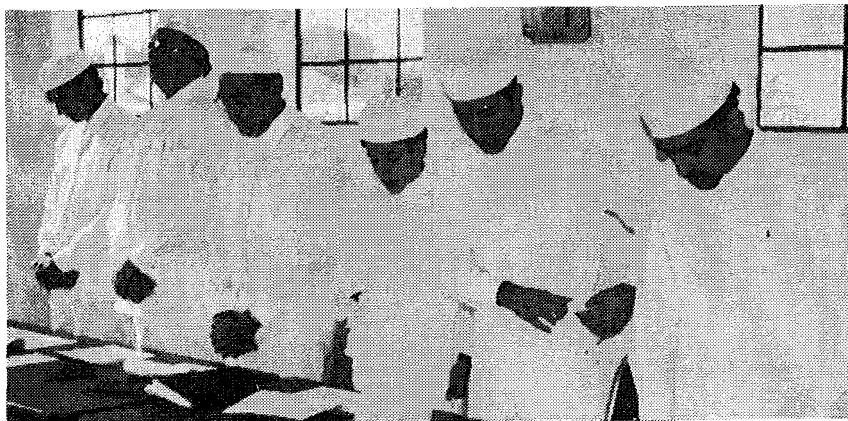
The Triangle Area was nominated in 1995 as the best place to live in the USA. We have the Research Triangle Park which houses companies like Glaxo-Wellcome, IBM SAS, Siemens and Northern Telecom. Our Universities—Duke, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, and NC

State University work closely with some of the research facilities here.

Above all, our weather is second to none. Four distinct seasons, very little snow (perhaps 2 to 4 minor snow falls) and great summers. We are 2 1/2 hours from the beaches of the Atlantic coast and three hours from the Blue Ridge Parkway with its breathtaking scenery. Even though real estate prices have risen in the past three years, they are very affordable, compared to other large cities.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend our traditional Southern hospitality to anyone wanting to explore this area — families as well as students. Call us at (919) 848-9738 or email: tdalal@nando.net.

*Behram and Tehmi Dalal
Raleigh,, North Carolina*



United Religions Initiative

The United Religions Initiative (URI) [see *FEZANA Journal*, Fall 1996] to bring religions together in a common forum, along the lines of the United Nations, to work towards peace and understanding, is proceeding well. Regional Conferences are planned in South Africa, India and Japan, and a Summit is planned for June 1997. The Conference in India will be organized by Dr. Homi Dhalala of Mumbai.

Working closely with the staff of URI, and its major proponent, Bishop Swing of San Francisco, Rohinton Rivetna publishes their quarterly magazine. With the support of Mr. Nani Palkhiwalla and Mr. Jehangir Patel of Parsiana, the URI magazine is expected to be printed and distributed in India as well.

It is hoped that the worldwide Zarthushti community will soon be able to support a permanent representative to the UR. The Zarthushti community must play a role in this effort, as the Initiative moves towards the year 2000, when the charter-signing is expected to take place.



Maneck Bhujwala (left), representing the Zarthushti faith, with Union City Mayor Mark Green, and Fremont Mayor Gus Morrison at Interfaith Thanksgiving ceremony at the Mission Chapel in Fremont, California, in November.

Zarthushtis at World Religion Day Ceremonies

World Religion Day has been observed on the third Sunday in January in over 80 countries around the world, for over 40 years.

At the San Francisco ceremony this year, Maneck Bhujwala, on behalf of the Zarthushti community, addressed a gathering of 900 persons, at the Palace of Fine Arts, giving an overview of the Zarthushti religion and ethical concepts introduced by

Prophet Zarthusstra, some of which were incorporated into later Western religions.

In Boise, Idaho, student Farah Tengra, a member of the only Zarthushti family in the area, spoke about the basic beliefs of the Zarthushti faith, and cleared up some misconceptions (e.g. fire-worship), at the observance organized by Baha'i youth at Boise State University.

Hoshang Karani [far right] and Ervad Jamshed Ravji [in white dagli] offered a message and recited the Ashem Vohu and Yatha Ahu Vairyo prayers, on behalf of the Zarthushti community, at a special interfaith service held on the passing of Chicago's Cardinal Bernardin, to an overflow gathering of mourners, gathered at the Holy Name Cathedral in Chicago, on November 20, 1996.

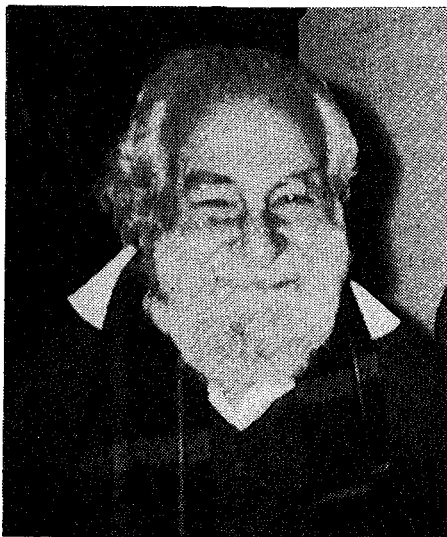
photo: Chicago Tribune, November 22, 1996



Michigan Conference on Religious Pluralism

Jamshed Udvadia of Lansing, Michigan, made a presentation on the Zarthusti Din, at a two-day conference on *Religious Pluralism — the Changing Face of North America*, at Aquinas College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He covered the life of Zarthustra, precepts, Amesha Spentas, Spenta Mainyu and Angre Mainyu, Fravashi, Freedom of Choice and Faith with Understanding.

He compared Religion to a large jigsaw puzzle with each religion holding some of the pieces. An enlarged understanding could bring the pieces together, helping seekers get a more complete view of the whole picture, thus obviating the need for so-called 'conversion'.



Homi Sethna Presents Voice of Zarthustra video

During November and December 1996, noted video and film producer Homi Sethna of Bombay toured the USA and Canada, presenting his recent videos, including *The Voice of Zarthustra* and *Happiness*.

Among the cities that hosted Mr. Sethna and arranged viewings of the videos are: Washington, New York, Montreal, Toronto, Atlanta, Miami, Michigan, Seattle, Vancouver and Los Angeles. Orders for the video may be placed at US\$25, with Rohinton Rivetna at (630) 325-5383. ■

GENESIS OF JAMSHEDI NAVROZE CELEBRATION IN INDIA

By Phiroz Dastoor
Etobicoke, Ontario

A little more than two hundred years ago, Nusserwanji Koyaji of Surat, introduced the celebration of the Jamshedi New Year — NoRuz (and also thus introducing the Fasli calendar) to the Parsis of India.

He was the great-great-grandfather of my mother's mother, Ratunmai Koyajee (Mrs. B. Pagdiwalla), as quoted by my aunt, Dr. Goolcher D. Coyajee of Jehangir Hospital in Pune [1]. Ratunmai was the sister of Goolcher's late father, Dinshaw Coyaji and other notable members of the Coyajee family, including Dr. Edulji of Pune and Dr. Dorabjee of Matheran, in Western India. Nusserwanji Koyaji was the son of Dastur Bejunjee Koyajee (1839-1860), who was the son of Edulji Kohyar, in turn son of Hormuzd Behram-Fram. Prior to the British Raj in India, Parsis had no fixed surnames, but took the name of their father [2]. Nusserwanji was the Surat Branch Manager of the Dutch

East India Company, and had visited Iran as a buyer and trader.

Sometime during the 1780s or 90s (he died in 1797), on March 21, he gave a Navroze party, with great pomp, to his company co-workers, the Parsi community of Surat, and his family and friends. This caused a great stir among the Parsis of Surat, and sowed the seeds for the introduction of the Farsi/Persian Fasli Calendar and the celebration of Jamshedi Navroze, in approximately 1177 Yz. (The Jalali Muslim year is somehow 10 years ahead of the Jamshidi Yazdegardi year).

Many years later Merwanji Panday (who died in 1875) started the celebration of Jamshedi Navroze in Bombay. He was followed by K. R. Cama, who being a Freemason, started this practice, without attaching any religious connotation to it, in his Lodge and other Clubs. There are no references to Jamshedi Navroze Jashan in any Pav Mahal manuscripts. ■

[1] Quote from a lecture on March 21st by Dasturji Kotwal. No definite date is given of the first Navroze celebration.

[2] Coyajee family tree: records from Anquetil du Perron, of Dastur Darab, re-recorded in a book by Jivanji Jamshedji Mody, 1916, p.277.

[The author, Dr. Dastoor will be happy to entertain new facts or corrections to the above record.]



Seattle Interfaith Program

Manijeh Deboo, in traditional Iranian Zarthusti dress recited the Hamazur Bin prayer at a Thanksgiving Service in Seattle in November 1996. Her husband, Behram Deboo recited selections from the Gathas. The program, organized by the Seattle Interfaith Council was attended by 320 persons of all faiths.

Jashan-e-NoRuz

A worldwide celebration of rejuvenation of life, hope and happiness

By Mehraban Shahrvin
Vancouver, Canada

We wish all Zarthustis and Persians throughout the world a happy, healthy and prosperous new year.

The happy and harmonious sounds of NoRuz are here again. These cheerful tunes signify the rebirth of hope in our lives, kindness and friendship in our relations, wisdom and determination at our work, and freedom and abundance for all.

This NoRuz marks the start of year 3735, on the Zarthusti calendar, or year 1376 on the Khorshidi calendar. NoRuz has indeed become a worldwide celebration because Zarthustis and Persians in all four corners of the world, in the remotest of lands on the face of this earth are celebrating it.

We must proudly and honorably announce this joyful celebration to the world, and remember that this precious tradition has been safeguarded and handed down to us by our forefathers with much sacrifice. All through the centuries, from the glory eras of the Achaemenians, Parthians and Sassanians, across their vast, vigorous empires, to the many foreign invasions, destructions, and annihilations inflicted upon our sacred Zarthusti festivals and pre-Islamic national traditions by different Barbarians, NoRuz has survived true and strong.

The turbulence of history may have put a dent in the elegance with which this festival is celebrated now, but the deep bond and popularity that NoRuz enjoyed in the heart of the masses, is what has safeguarded this precious heritage to the present day. The strategies of most tyrants, oppressors

and enemies after their invasion of the Persian plateau was to tear away our ancient Persian cultural and Zarthusti beliefs and traditions, in order to conquer our minds and souls, by rule or by force. In fact,

Even when the invaders succeeded in coercing people to abandon their ancestral religion, they never were able to replace NoRuz in the hearts and minds of true Persians, be they Moslems, Christians or followers of any other religion.

It is believed that 200 million people celebrate NoRuz, so this new year tradition is definitely not limited by any national, political, or geographic boundaries. Today, there are people in countries like Japan, Australia, most-ex-Soviet Central Asian republics, and even Central and South America, who celebrate NoRuz. Other more populous settlements of Persians and Zarthustis outside Iran and India are North America and Europe, where there are Persians and to a lesser degree

Zarthustis in just about every major city and territory. Even Heads of State are joining in recognizing and celebrating NoRuz, as did President Clinton of the US, in a celebration organized by the Iranian American Cultural Society.

Happy NoRuz to everyone! ■



whenever suppression became so intolerable that the rulers would rob or destroy people's customary things that they used in celebrating NoRuz, people turned to symbolic means and acts like greeting each other with small branches of evergreens, or entertaining family and friends with no more than dry bread and raisins, in their celebrations.

TURN THE PAGES OF LIFE

Most great actors and performers prefer a live audience. Why should this be so? The famous Russian violinist David Oistrakh provides an answer. After giving a concert in an auditorium with many musical experts present, he was asked how he enjoyed playing to such a critical assembly.

"It was wonderful," he said, "they created an atmosphere of attentive intimacy. It was as if all were helping to turn the pages of my music."

Is it not the same in everyday life? We experience such an uplift of spirit when those around us show appreciation and cooperation, and because of this we are therefore more inclined to praise rather than censure, to be helpful rather than obstructive.

We feel inspired — as if all about us are helping to turn the pages of life.

-From Informal Religious Meeting, Karachi, 1996

Days of Fravardegan, NoRuz and Vernal Equinox

By Jehan Bagli
Princeton, New Jersey

Introduction. Early Indo-Iranians observed a High Festival dedicated to *Fravashis*. This observance synchronized with the ritual of *Gahanbar* (later *Gahambar*) *Hamaspaspathmaedaya* on the evening of the last day of the year before the day of vernal equinox. With time, the ritual came to be known in Iran as *Fravardegan*.

After immigration to India, the Zarthusti community adopted the term *Muktad* for this festival. Two interpretations are forwarded by Modi [1] for this term: (a) Dastur Naryosang Dhaval has translated the Avestan '*Fravashinam*' into Sanskrit as '*Muktatmana*', from which the word *Muktad* is derived; and (b) Nariman Hoshung Rivayet on the other hand suggests *Muktad* is a corruption of the Farsi '*Mukhtar*' meaning the 'highest choice'. It is interesting to note that Johanna Narten in her work on Haptanhaiti interprets '*Fravashi*' as 'preference or choice' [2].

Dating and length of the ritual. This festival dates back to antiquity, in its history, into the pre-Zoroastrian era. Its association with *Gahanbar* *Hamaspaspathmaedaya* is best exemplified in *Fravardin Yasht* [3] with the words: "Yao Visadha. Aveyanti *Hamaspaspathmaedaya* paiti ratum", meaning "...who (Fravashis) come to the homes at the time of *Hamaspaspathmaedaya*." In ancient Iran, the festival lasted one evening, starting at the sunset of *Roz Aneran* of Mah *Aspandarmad*, and ending before the dawn of *Roz Hormazd* of Mah *Fravardin* (NoRuz day).

As the rituals became formalized in the post-Gathic era, fires were lit on the roof tops, Avesta was chanted and tables were laid out with food to welcome the Fravashis after sunset, and once again sounds of Avestan prayers resonated through the houses, bidding farewell to the withdrawing heavenly visitors, as the dawn shattered the darkness on the New Year day, the day of vernal equinox.

The tradition of the one-day celebration of Fravardegan was interrupted when the early lunar calendar was changed to a solar computation, with the introduction of the epagomenae (intercalation) of the five Gathas. The one-day Fravardegan was thus expanded to a five-day ritual. Concomitantly, the celebration of *Hamaspaspathmaedaya* *Gahanbar* moved from *Roz Aneran* (30th *Aspandarmad*) to *Vahishtoishti* Gatha and was celebrated during the five Gatha days. Thus *Rozan* Fravardegan, the 'Fravashi Days' were synchronized with the five days of the Gathas.

The introduction of epagomenae also shifted all the specific *gahanbar* days by five days. Four preceding days were added to each *Gahanbar* celebration, and each of the *Gahanbar* festivals was thus expanded to a five-day ritual, with the original specific day as the fifth day. Thus *Maidyozaremaya* which was originally celebrated on the 45th day of the year, *Roz Daepmeher* of Mah *Ardibehesht*, was now performed from *Roz Khorshed* (41st day of the year) to *Daepmeher* of that month. This explains the five-day celebration of each of the *Gahanbars* that we have today.

In *Fravardin Yasht* [3] however, we recite the words "aat athra vichaenti

dasa pairi khshafno", meaning "then they (Fravashis) wander here for ten nights." This indicates that the period of Fravardegan is in fact ten days. *Vendidad* [4] and all the Middle Persian literature such as *Dinkerd* [5], *Sad-Dar* [6], and *Persian Rivayat* [7] concurs with Fravardegan being a ten-day festival. The ten days referred to here, consist of the last five days of the month of *Aspandarmad*, plus the following five Gatha days.

With time, the first five days became known as the *Panj-e-kasog*, the lesser Pentad, and the later five Gatha days as *Panj-e-mas*, the greater Pentad [8]. It is difficult to pinpoint when the five-day ritual was changed to that of ten days. However, the reason for this change can be found in the book *Old Iranian Calendars* by Taqizadeh [9]. The author raises this discrepancy, and answers it as follows: "Biruni tells us that a controversy having arisen among the Zoroastrians as to which of the two Pentads was the real Fravardegan, they decided to add both pentads together and make the Fravardegan ten days.

**The religious New Year day
of the early Zarthustis was
thus synchronous with
the symbolism of spring.**

Relationship to Vernal Equinox. The ritual of Fravardegan is historically positioned to terminate with the dawn of the day of NoRuz. Modi explains the meaning of the term *Hamaspaspathmaedaya* as follows: "It seems to signify the time when the path (*pathan*) of the year is the same (*hama*) or in the middle (*madha*). It is the time of the Vernal Equinox, when the days and nights are equal, when the heat and the cold are the same." This clarifies the reason why this *Gahanbar* was carefully inserted before the High Festival of NoRuz day which is traditionally synchronized with the day of Vernal Equinox. The Indo-Iranians of the

era before Asho Zarthus divided their year based on the seasons and are believed to have initiated their year from spring [10].

Avestan society of the Gathic era, considered middle of spring (*Gahanbar Maidyazaremaya*) as their first High Feast of Gahanbar, providing strong support to the fact that the day of NoRuz must synchronize with the day of Vernal Equinox. The later traditional literature of Dinkerd [11] and Zand-Akasihi [12] also make a strong case to initiate the year with the day of the spring equinox. The religious New Year day of the early Zarthus was thus synchronized with the symbolism of spring — the resurgence and resurrection of body and life in nature.

This computation also finds the second most important High Festival of Mehergan in its proper location, in proximity with the Autumn Equinox. For the pastoral society of the Avestan era, the Autumn Equinox was the time when sunlight of spring and summer has done its job, bestowed the bounty of a rich harvest, and the approach of *Gahanbar Ayathrem*, that signals the time to return the herd back to shelter.

This harmony was maintained by the religious (*Vahizakik*) calendar. Zand-Akasihi attests to that [12] with the words: "Note this: the Vahizakik months Fravardin, Ardibehst and Khordad compose the season of spring; the months Tir, Amardad, and Sheherevar are of summer; the months Meher, Avan and Adar are of Autumn." Zarthus around the world should take note of our traditional religious literature, and bring in sync many of the High Festivals that have little relevance when performed in disharmony with nature, following computations that are clearly proven erroneous. ■

[References on page 14]

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Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity.

Days of the Departed Souls

The Parsi Tradition

By Ervad Behram Panthaki
(Brig. Retd. Indian Army), Virginia

Muktad or Fravardegan. The last ten days of the Zarthusi year from Astad Roz, the 26th day of Aspandarmad Mah, through the Vahishtoishti Gatha day (the last day of the year), are known as the *Muktad* days. They are the principal days for the remembrance of the dead.

The word *Muktad* is derived from the Sanskrit *Muktama* meaning salvation. Although the scriptures give ten days as the period of the Fravardegan, some Parsis have extended the period to 18 days by adding a preparation day in the beginning and seven days of the New Year at the end.

The object of the *Muktad* days is to remember and honor the spirits of the departed ones in the family. During these days the guardian spirits or *Fravashis* of the holy come to this world, desiring worship and invocation with offerings from the living. The *Fravardin Yasht* tells us that the *Fravashis* of the dead expect to be invoked by their names in the ceremony. Hence it is a custom that in the recital of the ceremonies, especially the *Afringan*, names of the deceased are recited.

During *Muktad*, a family may set up a table with flowers in silver vases for each of the departed loved ones at an Agiary. *Afringan* and *Farokshi* prayers are recited with offerings of fruits and flowers. A *Baj* ceremony is also performed with ritual bread and sweets (*darun and malido*) by a qualified mobed.

Some families also request *Satum* prayers be performed with offerings of food. The fruits, flowers and food are meant to provide nourishment and pleasurable memories to the departed soul, and are eaten by the families after the rituals are completed. The word 'Fravardegan' means the ceremony to honor the *Fravashis*

The Iranian Tradition

By Mobed Fariborz Sohrab
Shahzadi, San Diego, California

It is important that the departed are remembered by the living, as there appears to be a well-knit link between the physical and spiritual worlds. Iranian Zarthusis remember their departed ones on two days of the year.

Fravardegan. The festival of *Fravardegan* falls on Fravardin Roz and Fravardin Mah of the Fasli (seasonal) calendar (on April 8, 1997). The day is dedicated to the souls of all departed ones. A series of rituals such as the *Afringan* are performed in honor of the departed souls. They are offered food and fragrant flowers which are ritually consecrated during these ceremonies.

Traditionally this ceremony is performed annually for one generation, for 10 to 30 years after the death of the person. If this is not possible, the prayers and ritual invocations for the departed soul continue as they are collectively remembered.

Porseh Hamegani. The second day on which the souls of the departed are honored is called *Porseh Hamegani*. Prayers are held on Hormazd Roz and Aspandarmad Mah of the Fasli calendar (on February 14, 1997). Just like the Fravardegan rituals, prayers are offered in a sacred place and names of the departed are recited. ■

and the Farohars or guardian spirits. Fravardegan is celebrated on Fravardin Roz and Fravardin Mah. In Bombay, a special communal ceremony is held at Doongar-wadi, where the towers of silence are located. The principal prayer on that day is *Farokshi* or Fravardin Yasht. This is a community prayer in honor of the *Fravashis* of the departed souls of holy and righteous Zarthusis of the past.

Just as the cross and the nativity scene remind Christians of the events in Christ's life, the vases of flowers and the remembrance of the righteous Fravashis at the time of Muk-tad and Fravardegan remind Zarthustis of the deeds of their forefathers — deeds which have spread moral and spiritual perfume as strong as that of the flowers and fruits. ■

Days of Fravardegan...

References: [Continued from page 13]

[1] J. J. Modi, *Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsis*, p. 438, 421.

[2] M. Boyce, *Zoroastrianism — Its Antiquity and Constant Vigor*, p. 99.

[3] Yasht 13.49.

[4] Vendidad VIII.22.

[5] Dinkerd Book VIII, Ch. VII.12.

[6] Sad-Dar, Ch. XXXVII.4.

[7] Ervad B. N. Dhabhar, *Persian Rivayet text*, p. 542.

[8] M. Boyce, *Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism*, p. 213.

[9] S. Taqizadeh, *Old Iranian Calendar*, Royal Asiatic Society, 1938.

[10] M. Boyce, *History of Zoroastrianism*, Vol. I, p. 172-175.

[11] Dastur P. Sanjana, *Dinkerd*, Vol. IX, p. 565.

[12] B. T. Anklesaria, *Zand Akasih*, Ch. XXV, 16, 26.

Letter from Russia

The Zoroastrian community has existed in St. Petersburg for years. It received legal status in 1994. Now this community is the only one in St. Petersburg hearing Zoroaster's confession. The inheriting mobad, Pavel P. Globa is its founder and dean.

The community carries out regular religious activities, study and extending Mazda's religion. We are ready to contact all Zoroastrians in the world. Our address is Borovaya Str. 42, Office 14, St. Petersburg, Russia 192007, a/ya 236, Tel: (812) 262-58-28, Fax: (812) 261-01-04, email: slava@avesta.spb.su

[From the Internet]

■ ■ ■ AROUND THE WORLD ■ ■ ■

Formation of Council of Zoroastrian Federations Underway

It is customary for Zoroastrians to form an Association wherever a few Zarthustis settle. So it is that now in India we have 78 Anjumans; in Pakistan 5; in Iran 21; in Europe 3 or more; in North America 21; in Australia 4; in New Zealand 2; and in Hong Kong, 1.

Demands of the modern world have made it imperative that regions with larger numbers of Anjumans dialog with each other. And hence, at least two Federations have been formed — one in North America (FEZANA) and one in India (FPZAI). In Iran, the Tehran Anjuman serves as the coordinating body, and likewise the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe, for the Anjumans in Europe.

In a world that is becoming increasingly smaller, and where the 20th century marginalization of religions is giving way to close collaboration and partnerships among the religious institutions, it is now urgently necessary for the Federations in the regions of the world to be connected, and dialog with each other. This then, is the genesis of the proposed Council of Zoroastrian Federations.

It does not matter under what umbrella organization they dialog, as long as a formal channel of communication is established. And again, it does not matter whether the Council has an immediate agenda or not, or whether the Council has a long list of achievements. What is important is that an infrastructure is set up for coming together, and working on issues of global import together.

Just as the Anjumans coming together gives the community a National stature and identity, so also, the Federations coming together gives the Zarthusti community worldwide, a global presence. The constitutional framework for such a Council of Zoroastrian Federations has been drafted over the past six years. The

process, started by individual drafters, was filtered through a Constitution Convention in Chicago in 1993, and subsequently through the global Regions.

Bolstered by calls for such a "world body" at the Sixth World Zoroastrian Congress in Tehran, two informal meetings were held during the Congress, on June 22 and 23, to pursue this further [see FEZANA Journal, Fall 1996]. Further meetings were held in Bombay, in December 1996, between Rohinton Rivetna, members of the Indian Federation, Parvez Ravani, Zarthusti Member of the Iranian Parliament who was visiting India with a Parliamentary delegation, and Members of the World Zoroastrian Organization (WZO).

Pursuant to these meetings and communications received by Keki Gandhi, Secretary of FPZAI from FEZANA President Dolly Dastoor, and ZTFE President Rusi Dalal, the proposed Council of Federations has been accepted, in principle, by the four major regions of the world — India, Iran, North America and Europe, who will become the founding members of the Council. The next (#6) draft of the Charter, being prepared with input from Keki Gandhi and his colleagues, will now be sent to these four regions for their review and recommendations.

While we proceed with the Council, every effort continues to be made to find a workable link with the London-based WZO which is doing very laudable work in the social, welfare and educational arena. Their continued sustenance and support must not only remain, but be redoubled.

I am personally committed and confident that the Council will be a complementary body, not in competition with the WZO. We cannot violate our fundamental purpose, which is to seek harmony among all Zarthustis. We must find a common ground and move forward together.

- Rohinton M. Rivetna

Melbourne Zarthustis Plan Fundraising for Building

At their last AGM, a show of hands indicated that most members of the Zoroastrian Association of Victoria were in favor of continuing efforts for their building project. Fundraising ideas included: (1) Each family to donate \$5,000. (2) Sell biscuits at various distribution points in the neighborhood; (3) Sell products on an internet Web page; (4) Buy an old church; and (5) Build a small hall on a small plot of land. Once the 4 walls and roof are done by outside contractors, the community could complete the inside of the building. This was felt to be the most cost effective and viable solution. [From *Rathaeshtar*, December 1996]

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*Your chin was made for keeping up
Your hand for holding on
Your upper lip for keeping firm
When all your luck seems gone.
Your head was made for holding high
Your heels for digging in,
With this kind of anatomy
Your're in the race to win.*

- Informal Religious Meetings, December 1996



Upcoming Festivals

<i>Porseh Hamegani (F)</i>	- Feb 13
Aspandarmad-Hormazd	
<i>Char-Shanbe-Soori (F) [see below]</i>	
Tuesday before NoRuz	- Mar 17
<i>NoRuz (F) & Jamshedi Navroze (S)</i>	
Fravardin-Hormazd	- Mar 21
<i>Ava Ardisoor Parab (S)</i>	
Avan-Avan	- Mar 29
<i>Fravardegan (F)</i>	
Fravardin-Fravardin	- Apr 8
<i>Atash Nu Parab (S)</i>	
Adar-Adar	- Apr 27
<i>Maidyozarem Gahambar (F)</i>	
Ardibehest-Khorshed	- Apr 30
<i>Zarhust-no-Diso (S)</i>	
Daye-Khorshed	- May 29
<i>Maidyarem Gahambar (S)</i>	
Daye-Meher	- Jun 3
<i>Maidyoshem Gahambar (F)</i>	
Tir-Khorshed	- Jun 29
<i>Jashan-e-Tirgan)</i>	
Tir-Tir	- Jul 1
(F) = Fasli, (S) = Shenshai	

Char-Shanbe-Soori is a pre-NoRuz festival dating back to Zoroastrian Iran, and is still celebrated by many Iranians. It is held on the last Tuesday evening of the year, before NoRuz. A bonfire is made, and everybody jumps over the fire. Music, feasting and dancing follow. The idea is to welcome the New Year a few days in advance.

World Youth Congress in London, July 1997

The Second World Zoroastrian Youth Congress will be held in London, England, from July 4-11, 1997. The packed program includes talks, seminars and workshops, as well as sight-seeing and a taste of UK hospitality. All youth between 14 and 40 are invited to attend and submit papers.

Early-bird registration at £150 (including 3 nights luxury hotel, meals, dances and programs) has been extended to March 21. To register, contact your local Association or Kerman Jasavala, 24 Griffiths Road, London SW19 1SP, UK, email: 101366.3704@compuserve.com; tel: 0181-542-7195; fax: 0182-241-7150.

1998 Congress in New York

The 1998 North American Zoroastrian Congress, will be hosted by ZAGNY, July 2-5, 1998, at the Hilton Hotel in Rye, New York, not far from the Darbe Mehr in New Rochelle. Contact Co-chairs: Gev Nentin at (516) 462-0763 or Noshir Langrana at (609) 275-9154.

Mobeds Council Meeting

The AGM of the North American Mobeds Council (NAMC) will be held at Mehraban Guiv Darbe Mehr Zoroastrian Temple, near Toronto, on March 28 and 29, 1997. The agenda will include status reports on:

- (a) Directory of Mobeds by Kobad Zarolia.
- (b) Training of Mobedyar by Jehan Bagli.

IN COMING ISSUES OF FEZANA JOURNAL ...

Summer (June) 1997: Zarthusti Professionals in North America

Dolly Dastoor of Montreal will be the Guest Editor of this Special Issue on Zarthusti Professionals in North America. Cyrus Toorkey of New Jersey will also support the production of this issue. Professionals in any field — doctors, engineers, architects, journalists, scientists, teachers, lawyers who would like to be featured in this compilation are invited to send in their writeups with a photo to Dolly Dastoor, 3765 Malo, Brossard, PQ J4Y 1B4, Canada, Tel: (514) 656-2036.

Submission deadline is April 1.

Fall (September) 1997: Exploring the Date and Place of Zarthustra

Sarosh Maneckshaw of Houston, Texas, will be the Guest Editor of this issue. Readers interested in submitting articles or letters for publication, please contact Mr. Maneckshaw at 11415 Overbrook Lane, Houston, Texas 77077, Tel: (713) 870-9317.

Submission deadline is July 15.

(c) Guidebook for young mobeds by Yezdi Antia.

(d) Religion Camp for young mobeds by Adi Unwalla.

(e) Postal tuition conducted by Kayomars Mehta.

The agenda also includes an item:

"To consider and if thought advisable, pass a resolution approving the definition of a 'Zoroastrian'."

For further information, contact Nozer S. Kotwal, NAMC Secretary, at (416) 643-1610.

First International Avesta Conference

The First International Avesta Conference will be held at the Sheraton Tara Hotel, in Framingham near Boston, November 15-17, 1997. Subjects to be covered include the Old Avesta (Gathas), Young Avesta, Pahlavi, Persian/Parsi Zoroastrian Literature, Rituals and History.

Among the world renowned scholars presenting are: Keki Bhote, Richard Frye, Gherardo Gnoli, John Hinnells, Helmut Humbach, Pallan Ichaporia, K. D. Irani, Khorshed Jungalwala, Dasturji Firoze Kotwal, William Malandra, Sarosh Maneckshaw, Farhang Mehr, Khojestee Mistree, Antonio Panaino, James Russell, Martin Schwartz, Shaul Shaked, Mario Vitaloni, Gernot Windfuhr, and possibly Mrs. Homai Mody.

A first of its kind, the conference will present a unique opportunity to explore every facet of Zoroastrianism. Contact: Pallan Ichaporia at (610) 589-5419, Khorshed Jungalwala at (508) 443-6858 or Sarosh Maneckshaw at (281) 558-7882.

Proceedings of the Second International Gatha Conference

are ready to go to press, and will be published in the Journal of the Research and Historical Preservation Committee of FEZANA. To reserve your copy, call Pallan Ichaporia, Chief Editor and Chair, at (610) 589-5419.

FEZANA AGM IN CRESTONE, COLORADO

The Tenth Annual General Meeting of FEZANA will be held in Crestone, Colorado, August 8-10, 1997. The meeting will be devoted to developing further, the Strategic Plan for the community, as well as a brainstorming session for Congress 2000. A detailed agenda will be sent later.

Crestone is 2 hours by road from Denver airport, so if you can arrange to arrive in Denver before early Friday morning, we can pool car/van rental and leave together for Crestone by 10 am on Friday, August 8. This would give us time to absorb the beauty of the place.

15 town houses, each accommodating 4-6 people have been booked in Crestone. Cost of each townhouse is US\$75 per night. In keeping with the pristine atmosphere, a round table discussion is being planned on "Zarthusi Spirituality, Rituals and You."

Meeting coordination is sponsored by Buckey Amaria of the Rocky Mountain Zoroastrian Association. For further information call Katayun Kapadia at (609) 795-0946 or Dolly Dastoor at (514) 656-2036.

Zarthusi Business Expo

To promote networking among Zarthusi businesses and to encourage Zarthusi entrepreneurship, a Zarthusi Business Expo is being planned, organized by the FEZANA Business Committee. Based on survey responses, the preferred location is Las Vegas, Nevada, and the preferred dates are 2 days in the Fall of 1997.

The Expo will feature exhibits by businesses and entrepreneurs, including table-top exhibits and booths. Talks and discussions will also be held on: Establishment of Zarthusi Venture Capital; Business Opportunities in India; and Guidance for New Zarthusi Entrepreneurs.

This promises to be a rewarding experience for the Zarthusi business person or budding entrepreneur, and a few, fun-filled days for the whole family. Contact Farshid Salamati at (510) 727-0480, email: sabehan@aol.com, or Rohinton Rivetna at (630) 325-5383, email: rivetna@lucent.com.

Parliament of the World's Religions, 1999

The venue for the next Parliament of the World's Religions, to be organized by the Chicago-based Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions (CPWR) will be South Africa, some time in 1999.

It is wonderful that the small Zarthusi community can make available to the global religious community, Zarthusi resources in almost any part of the world. In South Africa, we have some talented and capable resources in Dr. Dara Randeria and Frene Ginwalla. Dr. Randeria is already providing assistance to Jim Kenney, Director of CPWR, who has visited South Africa a couple of times to plan for the 1999 event.

For those who experienced the 1993 Parliament in Chicago, where Zarthusi presence was felt in large numbers, the 1999 Parliament promises to be an even greater thrill. We must plan on a significant presence there as well. Contact Rohinton Rivetna at (630) 325-5383. ■

WORLD CONGRESS IN HOUSTON IN YEAR 2000

The Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress will be held in the year 2000, in Houston, Texas. FEZANA and the host organization, the Zoroastrian Association of Houston are inviting interested persons to get involved in the planning for this momentous event, as a committee member, benefactor or a participant. Contact FEZANA President Dolly Dastoor at (514) 656-2036.

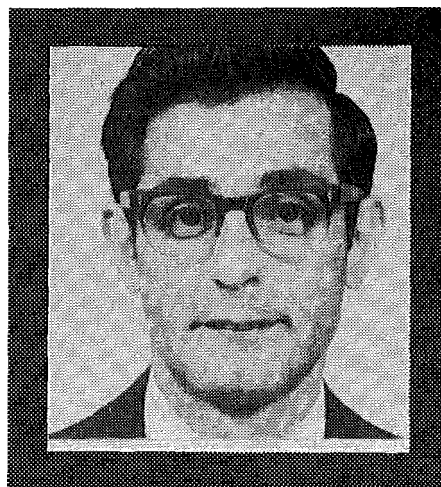
ZOROASTRIANISM

A Historian's Dilemma

Reinforcing the need for a proper history of the Zoroastrian communities in all the three areas of the world – Muslim Iran, Hindu India, and the Christian West.



By Soloman A. Nigosian



The significant role of the Zoroastrian faith in the history of the world's religion is well known to students of religion [1]. But anyone familiar with the Zoroastrian faith must realize the difficulties and uncertainties inherent in the study of its essential aspects. The ambiguous nature of the linguistic evidence, the lack of a proper philological and exegetical tradition to the Zoroastrian scriptures, the contradictions in the existing Zoroastrian and non-Zoroastrian records, and the gaps in the historical sources defy a precise historical reconstruction.

Perhaps no other domain in the study of the Zoroastrian faith has been hampered by inherent uncertainties as that of the historical development [2]. Practically nothing is known of the way in which the faith developed and spread through the Iranian lands during, or even before, the Achaemenid dynasty. In fact, the paucity and varied nature of the sources make it difficult to trace precisely the historical development of the faith from its origin to the day when the Sassanid dynasty fell to the Muslim Arabs in 651 CE.

From Iran to India. The lack of evidence makes the subsequent history of the Zoroastrian faith almost as difficult to trace as its early beginnings. Zoroastrian tradition speaks of "the ruin and devastation that comes from the Arabs," but how and why such disasters occurred is not exactly known [3]. Somehow a

minority group of Zoroastrians have survived up to the present day in Iran.

Another small group of Zoroastrians left Iran (maybe around the eighth or ninth century) to seek asylum in India, where their descendants have survived to this day. But there is very little, if any, accurate information about the early Zoroastrian settlers in India. Nothing is known for certain about the circumstances or the stages of the migration of Zoroastrians from Iran to India. There are no documents dating earlier than 1600 that describe the exodus [4].

The only chronicle describing the exodus is *Quissa-i Sanjan*, written in Persian in 1600 at Navsari by the Zoroastrian priest Behman Kaikobad Sanjana [5]. However, the date of this document — some eight hundred years after the events it records — makes the reliability of its contents suspect, especially in regard to chronology. Unsatisfactory as it may be, the *Quissa-i Sanjan* remains the scholar's chief resource in tracing the events that culminated in the arrival of the Zoroastrians to India. One may assume therefore that the Zoroastrian settlers eventually integrated into Indian society.

From Iran and India to the West. In search of more challenging opportunities and better conditions, numerous Zoroastrians have left Iran and India to settle in various parts of the western hemisphere. Their contact with western civilization has made

them victims as well as beneficiaries of westernization, industrialization, and technology. Consequently, their cultural customs and religious traditions have been dramatically changed.

The circumstances under which the Zoroastrians left India and Iran to settle in the western world bear little comparison with their earlier flight from Iran to India. True, the migration of Zoroastrians to the West was motivated by threats, real or perceived; the treatment of religious minorities after India's independence in 1947 and Iran's Islamic revolution in 1979 were factors in the migration. But the emigrants to the western world did not seek refuge or asylum in a foreign territory as their ancestors had done; they came of their own choice to a welcoming country.

The refugees from Iran to India were, by modern standards, uneducated, poor, and inept. It is not known how long it took before they adapted to their Indian environment, language, clothing, food, and customs. The emigrants to the West, however, are professionals, businessmen, well-to-do and versatile. Their contact with western civilization in India and Iran prior to their arrival in the West prepared them for an easy transition to the culture and customs of their adopted homeland.

Today, adherents of the Zoroastrian faith live, in addition to Iran and India, in Britain, Europe, Canada, USA, Australia, and New Zealand.

The implication of this territorial distribution is quite obvious. Each Zoroastrian community exists in a predominantly religious society: Muslim Iran, Hindu India, and the Christian West. Any future study of Zoroastrian history must certainly take into account the dynamic societal forces in all these three areas that threaten or challenge the survival of the Zoroastrian tradition.

Maintaining proper records. Needless to say, there is a need for a proper history of the Zoroastrian communities in all the three areas of the world. Recent Zoroastrian settlers in the West, particularly those in Canada, the US, Australia, and New Zealand, are in a fortunate position to record or document their history for posterity. In preparing the necessary records, the following important issues, among others, must be kept in mind: (1) the precise statistics on the numbers, dates, and destination of Zoroastrian arrivals; (2) the reasons or factors that contributed to the emigration from either India or Iran; (3) the role or attitude of the host country towards Zoroastrians; and (4) the adaptability of the Zoroastrians to their new environment.

Such records will be indispensable to future generations, Zoroastrian and non-Zoroastrian alike. The unfortunate precedents set in the past need not be repeated. Fortunately, it is not too late to rectify the situation. ■

*[Solomon Nigosian, a faculty member of the Department of the Study of Religion at the University of Toronto for over 20 years, and a Research Associate at Victoria College, is a historian of religion, specializing in Near Eastern religions. His areas of research include Zoroastrianism and Hebrew Scriptures. He has published extensively, his most recent books being: *The Zoroastrian Faith: Tradition and Modern Research*, 1993 [see review in FEZANA Journal, this issue], and *World Faiths*, 2nd ed (1994).]*

[Continued on page 54]

ZOROASTRIANS OF THE DIASPORA



Excerpts from the chapter on North American Zoroastrians in "Contemporary Zoroastrians, an Unstructured Nation", by Rashna Writer



The Zoroastrian community in North America is a dynamic section of the Zoroastrian community world-wide. It is a relatively recent settlement since the mid-1960s, comprising a highly professional cadre of men and women who have chosen to make their home on the continent because it offers financial, educational and career opportunities, and is deemed a safe haven.

The striking feature of the North American community is that it is not monolithic. It comprises of Parsis from India, Pakistan and other parts of the world, and Iranian Zoroastrians who began arriving in North America, in the main following the Iranian Revolution of 1979. Both Parsis and Iranian Zoroastrians are represented by a small number who have migrated to North America after having spent some years in the United Kingdom.

The Parsi migrations have been inspired chiefly by a search for economic advancement. The Iranian Zoroastrians have felt compelled to emigrate because of the growing pressures of living as a religious minority in a fundamentalist Islamic country.

The reasons for movement West may have differed, but once the re-settlement process has been established, a

return to the old countries does not seem feasible for the foreseeable future. Some Parsis are said to have expressed the hope of retiring in India, but the author, in the course of field work, did not encounter any such. The Iranian Zoroastrian, on the other hand, clings steadfastly to the 'dream' of returning to his country, yet acknowledges that such possibility becomes remote upon viewing the political realities of modern Iran. Zoroastrians in the USA and Canada are therefore permanent residents.

Historical conditioning. The historical conditioning of the Iranians and Parsis has been distinct. Americans and Canadians, being largely unaware of the Zoroastrians, perceive of this religious-ethnic group as 'Indians' or 'Iranians' without distinguishing them from the majority religious groups of those countries. The impact of environment on religious observance is often subtle, and over time, inevitable. Iran and India are fundamentally very distinct cultures. In consequence, the two groups of Zoroastrians have developed in disparate ways.

An Iranian Zoroastrian domiciled in North America saw a very bright future for the religion if the young were taught the philosophy underpinning the faith, without stressing the

traditions and customs. An equally emphatic Parsi youth reaffirmed his Zoroastrian identity, which had been shaped from childhood by the simple aspects of morning prayers, and the donning of *sudreh-kushti*. Clearly, the very concepts of what makes one a Zoroastrian differ widely for the Iranian and the Parsi.

These distinctive attitudes in religion, culture and historical experiences are manifested most forcefully in North America, where the two groups have again met up after a separation which spanned a millennium. The Iranian Zoroastrians are concentrated in Los Angeles, Vancouver and, to a lesser extent, in New York, and are not as dispersed throughout the continent as are the Parsis.

It is the realignment of the Parsi and Iranian conceptualizations of Zoroastrianism, interacting with an American and Canadian environment, which will determine the future outline of the North American Zoroastrian identity.

American and Canadian Society.

The nature and composition of American and Canadian society, the creation of modern nation states by earlier immigrants from the five continents, enhances the new immigrant's ability to consider it his 'homeland', the country to which he is going to belong henceforth. Yet, the official governmental policies on the enculturation of the migrant population are different in the USA and Canada.

The Canadian government has espoused a policy of developing a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic nation where the very diversity of its peoples is now celebrated, and they are encouraged to become Canadians through their distinctive cultural traditions. The USA, as a global power, espouses a policy of the homogenous American identity. The 'Americanization' of the new immigrant is a conscious program of an accelerated release of ties with the old countries, and acquisition of American nationality, with its corresponding ethos.

The creation of an 'American Zoroastrian' and a 'Canadian Zoroastrian', as distinct and specific types of Zoroastrians, is in the process of being created. This is quite different for example, to being a 'British Zoroastrian', who does not belong to the Anglo-Saxon or Celtic races and is seen as quite another type of British citizen.

Western Zoroastrians will in due course come to be recognizably different from their co-religionists in the homelands of Iran and India.

Generational Difference. The first generation of Parsi immigrants who came some twenty or thirty years ago, establishing careers and families in their new homes, had a substantial difference from the first American-born generation. The immigrant generation was conditioned to face the difficulties of life — the minor, routine discomforts of everyday living in India and Pakistan. This had, in fact, put 'some iron on their backs'. This, however, was not the case with the new American and Canadian generations. They had become accustomed to the comforts of North America, and were consequently unable to face up to hardships. This then, was a major generational difference: the former could, and did, endeavor to achieve goals, the latter expect success and an ease of life-style as a right.

Future in North America. It is not possible, at this early stage in their acculturation to determine with any accuracy whether or not the North American Zoroastrians will successfully emulate the Parsi model, or indeed even remain recognizably Zoroastrian in the future. The American and Canadian environments will be prime factors in the shape the group finally assumes. The variations in customs, practices and ideologies of the Iranian Zoroastrians and the Parsis, adds an interesting dimension to the question.

What cannot be stated with any precision is whether the next generation of American and Canadian Zoroastrians, with the assumption of their newly-acquired national labels, will not result in a corresponding diminution of their Zoroastrian identity. One might put forward the hypothesis that the British Zoroastrian, because he must contend with remaining marginal within his adoptive society, will vigorously strive to retain his Zoroastrianism, making it his sheet-anchor in his adoptive country.

The emphasis of the American system on the homogeneity of its citizenry would suggest that the Americanization of the Zoroastrians would remove their particularisms. The Canadian official government policy of evolving a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society, could result in Canadian Zoroastrians being placed amidships of the British and American Zoroastrians, encouraged to become fully-fledged Canadians without abandoning their intrinsic heritage. It is unquestioned that the Western Zoroastrians will in due course come to be recognizably different from their co-religionists in the homelands of Iran and India. ■

[Rashna Writer is a Research Fellow at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London University, where she is working on her forth-coming book on Zoroastrians in post-Sassanian Iran. She is also an Editor on Defense and Foreign Affairs, an American publication.]

Dr. Writer has published widely on Zoroastrianism. Among her recent books are Contemporary Zoroastrians: An Unstructured Nation, by Rashna Writer, University Press of America, Maryland, 1994 (reviewed in FEZANA Journal, Fall 1994); and Memoirs of Keikhosrow Shahrokh, edited and translated by S. Shahrokh and R. Writer, Edwin Mellen Press, Lampeter, 1994 (reviewed in FEZANA Journal, Spring 1996).



THE YANKEE CONNECTION

Traces of early
19th century
encounters
between Bombay
and New England
at the
Peabody Essex
Museum

By Susan S. Bean
Peabody Essex Museum

*Portrait of Nusserwanjee
Maneckjee Wadia, oil on canvas,
painted by a Chinese artist in
Bombay, ca. 1803. Collection of
the Peabody Essex Museum.*

At the end of the 18th century American ships, many from Boston and Salem, Massachusetts, began visiting Bombay to trade. There, Nusserwanjee Maneckjee Wadia (1753-1814), grandson of the great ship builder Lowjee Wadia, founded a family business specializing in the markets of these newcomers to Bombay. Records of these first encounters between Yankee traders and their Parsee business associates have been preserved in the collection of the Peabody Essex Museum, the most extensive repository of sources on Indo-US trade in this country.

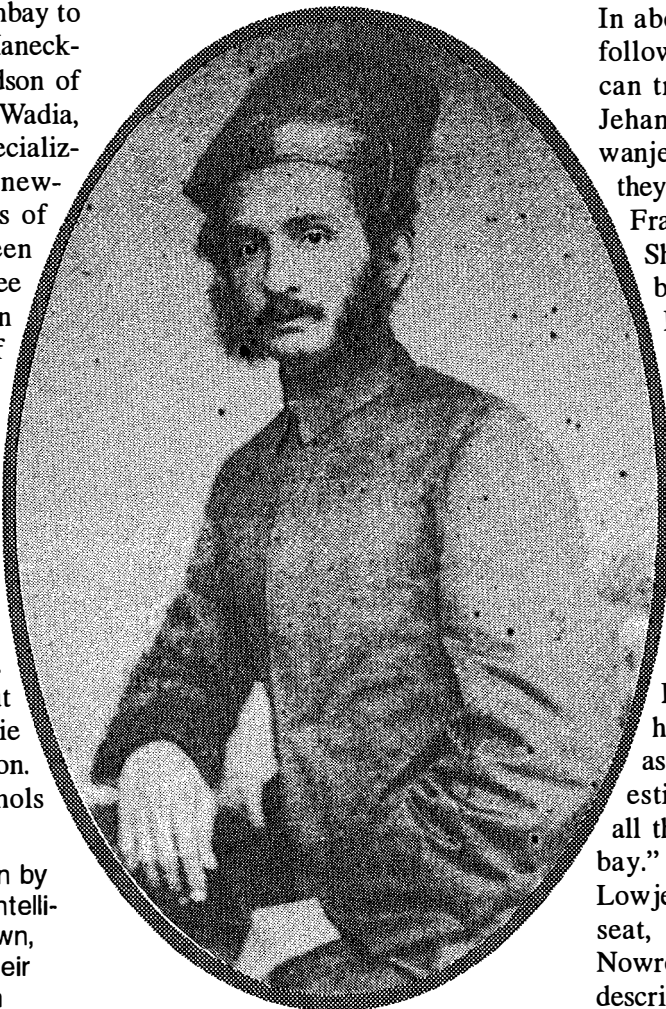
In 1799 George Nichols, a young merchant from Salem, sailed as joint supercargo (business manager) of the ship *Active* on a voyage to Bombay. They carried little cargo but brought \$16,000 in silver specie to purchase a shipload of cotton. In his autobiography Nichols wrote:

"The business was carried on by Parsees, some of the most intelligent people I have ever known, rich and very honorable in their dealings. The merchant with whom I did business, Nasser Vanji Monackjee was a very fine man."

At the time of his voyage, Nichols was engaged to be married. For his bride's wedding dress Nichols bought from Nusserwanjee "a beautiful striped muslin, very delicate, made in Bombay for some distinguished person" and brought it home to be made up in Salem into a fashionable empire-style dress lined with white silk. Nusserwanjee gifted the bride and groom with Kashmir shawls. Nichols 'returned the compliment by presenting him with a set of Mavor's Voyages.' Mrs. Nichols wedding dress and shawl were eventually donated to the Peabody Essex Museum where they are kept in the collection.

In 1803 Nusserwanjee became one of the first foreigners to make a dona-

tion to the collection of the East India Marine Society Museum in Salem (now the Peabody Essex Museum).



Photograph of Rustumjee Hirjeebhoy Wadia, Bombay, ca. 1859. Collection of the Peabody Essex Museum.

The museum had been established four years before to collect and exhibit "natural and artificial curiosities from beyond the Capes" (Cape Horn and the Cape of Good Hope). Nusserwanjee's gift was a "complete Parsee dress," and the owners of the museum had a mannequin carved to display it.

That same year Captain R. Dalling gave a portrait of Nusserwanjee painted in Bombay by a Chinese artist [page 16]. No doubt the Salem carver who made the mannequin used the portrait as his model. Today, the painting of Nusserwanjee can be seen at the Peabody Essex Museum where it has been on view almost continuously for nearly two

centuries. The mannequin is kept in storage; only scraps of the original clothing have survived.

In about 1815 Nusserwanjee's sons followed their father into the American trade, opening their own firm, Jehangirjee and Nowrojee Nusserwanjee Company. Like their father they specialized in trade with France and the United States. Shortly after they took up the business, William Augustus Rogers, supercargo of the Boston ship *Tartar*, arrived in Bombay: "Here I was, the moment I landed, thrust into a palanquin and carried off to our merchants' house whose names were Nowrajee and Jahangheer Nasserwanjee." Rogers recorded his impressions of Bombay in a journal, now in the archive of the Peabody Essex Museum. In it he refers to his merchants' father as "a man who sustained a most estimable character, having done all the American business at Bombay." Rogers wrote about visits to Lowjee Castle, the Wadia family seat, and to the country house of Nowrojee and Jehangirjee. He also described Parsee religious practices, and recorded an account of the community's history.

In 1839 Dossabhoy Merwanjee Wadia with his brothers Dhanjeebhoy and Cursetjee, also grandsons of Lowjee, took up the family specialty in American trade. A photograph of the brothers [page 18] was given to the Peabody Essex Museum by George F. White, Jr., who later took their father's name as his middle name (George Merwanjee White) for reasons that remain a mystery.

The firm, Dossabhoy Merwanjee & Co., which remained in business into the 20th century, imported sewing machines, kerosene lamps, and patent medicine from the United States [page 19]. Dossabhoy served as Vice Consul for the US in Bombay in 1852. In 1849 Cursetjee Merwanjee escorted Captain Faucon of the

American Brig *Frolic* on an excursion, traveling by ship from Bombay and then by road from Poona to visit the caves at Karli. Cursetjee kept a diary of the trip, now in the archive of the Peabody Essex Museum.

Eventually their youngest brother Hirjeebhoy and his son Rustomjee joined the firm. Rustomjee had studied in England and in 1861 visited America, stopping at New York, Boston, and Washington where he met President Buchanan. Rustomjee's photograph was also given to the Peabody Essex Museum by George Merwanjee White [page 17].

Rustomjee was not, it seems, the first Parsee to visit the US. This distinction probably belongs to Ardaseer Cursetjee Wadia, a grandson of Nusserwanjee's brother, who had come a decade earlier. Ardaseer

must have traveled to Salem, because around that time a Parsee came to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Howard. The event described years later by their daughter Caroline Howard King in her memoirs, charmingly conveys the wonder of these first encounters:

"Among the strange foreign visitors of those days, we were somewhat startled one evening by a friend's bringing a real live Parsee, with a tall calico headdress, to take tea with us.

"It was rather a revelation to me that a fire worshipper could take tea like ordinary mortals. But he was a harmless lion, and roared very gently, and drank his tea and ate his bread and butter quite like other folks, and told us many interesting things of his life in Bombay.

"I remember that we all screamed at him and spoke very distinctly, as

if we were talking to a child, and that he answered us in a very low cultivated refined voice, using much better English than we did."

These and other traces of the earliest Parsee contacts with America can be found at the Peabody Essex Museum, East India Square, Salem, Massachusetts 01970, Tel: (508) 745-1876. ■

[Susan S. Bean, a Ph.D. in anthropology, is currently Visiting Professor at Wellesley College, near Boston on the subject of South Asia. Her field of expertise is Indo-US Relations, and is soon to publish a book: *Yankee India: Commercial and Cultural Encounters in the Age of Sail*. Khorshed Jungalwala of Boston is working closely with Ms. Bean. They plan on publishing an account of their research findings shortly.]



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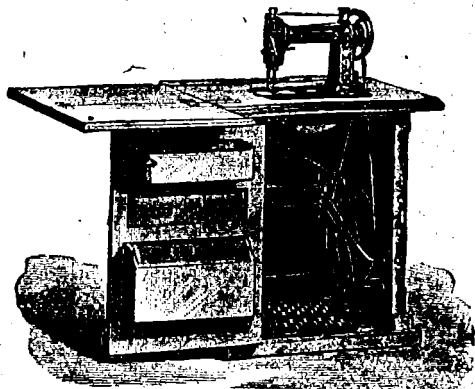
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Ancient People in Search of the New World

By Ervad Kersey H. Antia

It may not be a wild conjecture to think that Parsis had trade contacts with North America even before the US became independent in 1776, as they followed the British everywhere else. Moreover the British must have felt the need for various war supplies, man power, naval ships, etc., during the War of Independence in 1776, when they had not yet firmly established their rule over India, and could only rely on their trading partners, the Parsis and the Banias. It may be well worth researching if the first Indian who went to the US was, in fact, a Parsi, except for some Indian sailors who may have accompanied Indian goods on a Parsi or British trade vessel.

Civil War Connection. The fact, however, that the Parsi and Bania traders supplied cotton to the North during the American Civil War, which deprived the North of cotton from the South, is well documented. It led to the 'share-mania' in Bombay. When the Civil War ended, so many Parsis and Banias lost their fortunes, that Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, Second Baronet, who had promised a scholarship to the young Pheroze-shah Mehta to proceed to England to become a Barrister, could not honor his commitment.

Above, advertisement for Dossabhoy Merwanjee Wadia & Company, in Times of India, 1898. Collection of the Peabody Essex Museum.

Left, photograph of Dossabhoy Merwanjee Wadia & Company, Bombay 1853. Cursetjee Merwanjee is seated in the center; the others are not identified. Collection of the Peabody Essex Museum.

Even worse, J. N. Tata left India a rich man by boat, but when he reached England, he had to declare bankruptcy as he found out that the Civil War in America was over, and the high-priced stocks he was carrying with him to England were worthless.

The Civil War ended and by 1865, one Mr. Behramji was well-settled in New York. Since he had inherited from his family an international firm, long before settling in New York, he may perhaps have found it necessary to settle there for business reasons during and after the Civil War.

Baroda Parsis Appeal. If it is true that some Parsis from the Gaekwad State of Baroda wrote to the US government about establishing a Parsi colony in the States, it is very likely that the Parsis then knew a great deal about America, for they were not foolhardy enough to trade their unprecedented prosperity in India for some unknown prospects in America.

While I was conducting anthropological research in Baroda State in the 1960s, I was surprised to find Parsi names such as Kershaspji Dadachanji as the name of the Baroda Diwan in the late 1800s. Later, Dadabhai Naoroji too, became a Diwan of Baroda. Moreover, almost every major Indian State had a Parsi Diwan. The Parsis of Baroda had no reason to want to petition the US President, unless they knew for sure by various reliable contacts with other Parsis, that America did indeed offer them a better haven.

Dhalla's Early Accounts. Dasturji Dhalla's Autobiography [1] is an excellent historical source. He mentions some Zoroastrians already settled in the USA when he reached New York on June 18, 1905 to study for his Ph.D. in Avestan studies at Columbia University. "There were eight Zoroastrians living in New York," writes Dhalla, "The sons of an enterprising family of Sumari who had in the beginning of the nineteenth century, established a branch of their Bombay business in New York.

Rustomji Behramji, head of their firm in New York had left Bombay 40 years ago (in 1865) and had resided in New York since." Dhalla talks of having been served 'Dhan Dal', at Mr. Behramji's residence, cooked by his American housekeeper.

When a young Zoroastrian died in New York, a piece of land was purchased in New York City, at a very high price by the Tata Company, for the body "which was buried twelve feet below", so that if "some poor co-religionist should happen to die, his body could be placed above him in the pit. So scarce is the land, and so high the price on it."

"The Parsi population of the whole of the United States does not exceed 12 or 15 at any single period."

- Dr. Dhalla, 1905

"In 1905", says Dhalla, "there were eight Parsi business concerns and trading firms in New York and other parts of the US. With the passage of time, this Parsi enterprise is dwindling. Parsi youths come from time to time to study at various Universities, ... In spite of that, the Parsi population of the whole of the US does not exceed 12 or 15 at any single period."

During his second visit, in 1914, Dhalla met two Parsis from Bombay who were beaten up and robbed by gangsters on a train from California to New York. They had to cut short their visit and return to India.

In 1929, during his third visit, when Columbia University conferred an honorary degree of Litt.D. on him, "a sad event took place on New Year's eve midst the eleven Zoroastrians living in New York. A Parsi student committed suicide a day before he was to be married, to an American girl." Dhalla also states: "Indians are settled in many cities of California" around 1929.

The Juddin Question. After his fifth and last visit in 1938, just before the start of World War II, the learned Dasturji observed: "Marriages between Parsi men and western women have been taking place for a hundred years, from the time Parsis started going to Europe and America for business and education. Today about 100 such couples exist. They are living their lives midst conflicting faiths and conflicting cultures. Had they sought the companionship of girls of the community, there would have resulted a desirable decrease in the community's spinsters... Wealthy boys of the community who could have secured the best girls of the most aristocratic families were being wedded into very ordinary American families... we have seen Parsi wealth running into lakhs go into an alien land and an alien home at the demise of a rich Parsi husband.

"We saw eight Parsis marry American wives during our various trips to America ... young men were adopting their wife's Christian faith and were wedded according to Christian rites. Talking to some of them, we were informed that taking into consideration the resolutions being passed by the Bombay Anjuman against performing the Navjote of offspring of non-Parsi wives, they thought it advisable for themselves to be converted to Christianity ... The threat of not taking the offspring of non-Parsi wives into the faith does not in any way deter the men from marrying, but instead they forsake the faith and go out of our very small community."

Dhalla refrained from performing such Navjotes to avoid offending the sentiments of the orthodox, though in his writings and court testimonials he favored them, on historical and religious grounds.

My wife and I had the good fortune in 1966, to dine at an Indian restaurant in New York, owned by Mr. Wadia, a contemporary of Dhalla. We talked with him at length about

what I had read in Dhalla's autobiography. Mr. Wadia confirmed Dhalla's observations about the Parsis taking the lead over other Indians in settling in New York long ago.

As a priest, to me it is idle to talk about our material accomplishments if it leads only to dissipation and disappearance of our small and beloved community, as lamented by Dhalla. The Juddin Question is still unresolved, even as we number in thousands on this continent, and march towards the twenty-first century.

The stark reality stares us in the face and the number of young Zoroastrians marrying out is endangering our very survival here, unless we amicably and wisely resolve the Juddin Question at least on this continent, before it is too late, and find resources to employ a full-time, learned Dasturji like Dhalla, to secure the allegiance of our progeny to our ancient faith.

If this issue of FEZANA Journal on immigration does not inspire us to do so, then regrettably we will soon be history on this continent. Only those who adapt to the challenging historical circumstances that ambush them, are not written off by history. May Mazda bless us with wisdom to survive without losing our identity on this continent, which is noted for being a melting pot of different races.

Without such an effort, our associations and Darbe Mehrs will not be able to fulfill their mission. ■

[1] *English translation of Dr. Dhalla's autobiography, published by Dastur Dr. Dhalla Memorial Institute, Karachi, 1975.*

Errata.

FEZANA Journal [Winter 1996] incorrectly stated that Parsiana editor Jehangir Patel studied at Columbia School of Journalism. In fact, after graduation Patel took on-the-job training with newspapers.



Mazdaznan Movement in America

By Ervad Kersey H. Antia

I have often been asked about the Mazdaznan Movement, by people who have dim memories about hearing of some white ladies from America singing Ashem Vohu on the piano in Bombay. Though I do not remember witnessing such recitals, I was quite aware of this movement and had heard various but contradictory things about it.

"Those white Mazdaznans had sent for sudrehs and kustis, and were organizing Gahambars in America."

Two Parsi names stand out in my memory associated with this movement; Dasturji Bode, whose lectures I frequented in Bombay, and Ervad J. C. Katrak, my teacher at M. F. Cama Institute, and an Avestan scholar who had written an impressive book on a leading member of this Movement, Mother Gloria.

Dasturji Bode was invited by this Californian group in the 1950s and lectured there extensively through the early 1970s. After his death Mrs. Bode offered me his library collection, and I saw many books on this Movement, including some on musical notations for playing our basic prayers on the piano, which some Bombayites found very inspiring.

I had no direct exposure to the Movement; what I read as a teenager in Dasturji Dhalla's autobiography, satisfied my curiosity. The learned Dasturji writes:

"In the whole of the USA there was only one center where information regarding the Zoroastrian religion ... can be had, and that was Columbia University at New York. The person to give such information was Prof. A. V. Williams Jackson ...

"At the end of the last (nineteenth) century the students of oriental reli-

gions were taken aback. Suddenly, a religious scholar came into the public eye as a rival to Jackson. Verily, he seemed to have dropped from the sky, as he came with a claim to prophethood. He was God's messenger of this age — the Zarthustra of modern times ... he even invested himself with the title of Zardoost. That august person was Dr. Ottoman Zar-Adoost Hannish.

"In 1905, the sacred stream of this revered gentleman's captivating words (which started in Chicago) was flowing in full force through the length and breadth of Uncle Sam's land. A Christian by birth, his family had come from Germany and settled in Illinois. Gleaning stray concepts from the Zoroastrian, Christian, Hindu and other religions he was offering a medley or hotchpotch. He was founding a new religion.

"Later, many were impressed by the information received in Bombay that those white Mazdaznans had sent for sudrehs and kustis, and were organizing Gahambars in America.

"The lady disciples of Hannish delivered a series of lectures there (Bombay, in 1938). They returned (to America) in due course, and at the headquarters beautified by the mighty American dollar, a Mazdaznan Center had sprung up."

Fortunately, providence has given our generation one more chance to represent here the message of Asho Zarthust in its pristine purity. There may be very few Mazdaznan followers left in California, if at all, but our generation here has plenty of opportunity to practice the teachings of our great Prophet. Let us not squander it away. Let us raise and support at least one learned young Dastur in our midst, preferably from among our own young generation, who will carry on the torch Dhalla started at the beginning of the century. ■

*An account of some early Zarthushti arrivals in
Canada and the United States.*

The Pioneer Settlers

*Excerpted from papers by the Late Jamshed Pavri, including
his banquet keynote address at the Fourth North American
Zoroastrian Congress, in Montreal in 1982.*

■ COVER STORY ■



Pavri in 1959

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

The first Zoroastrian who came for permanent settlement to North America was **Pestonji Framji Davar** in 1892. He came and settled in San Francisco. His son Jamshed was the first Zoroastrian born in North America. Both the father and the son were millionaires. Jamshed died in 1982 as James Edward Davar, a Roman Catholic. According to the Will of Pestonji Davar, after the demise of his son, his estate, amounting to Rs. 5.6 million went to the Bombay Parsi Panchayet, and this is the only bequest received by them to be used for cosmopolitan charities. The son's million dollar estate went to his church.

It is perhaps a coincidence that, in 1866, when the most notable Parsi who frequented Canada in the past, the Honorable **Sir Phirozshah Cursetji Sethna** was born, Barkerville (450 miles north of Vancouver, BC), was the third largest city (pop. 60,000) in North America, and the Gold Rush was on. Barkerville attracted people from all over the world, and adventurous as our worthy ancestors were, there came to Barkerville, a Zoroastrian also. *Parsi Prakash* records **Maneckji Faramji Javeri** was prospecting gold in California at that time, and it is possible that he could be the one

who came to Barkerville. He would indeed be the first Zoroastrian in Canada.

With a long-standing association (from 1901-1933) with Sun Life Assurance Sir Phirozshah made several trips to Canada to attend Sun Life meetings, and even had discussions with the Government regarding settlement of Parsis in Canada. Those were the days when there was no immigration quota for Asians.

During the 1900s, there came to New York Nasli Heeramaneck, Phiroze and Behram Saklatwala and S. R. Bomanji.

Nasli Heeramaneck came during 1920 with 75 cents in his pocket and slept in the subways. Nasli and his wife Alice gradually built up one of the most important private collections of Indian, Nepali and Tibetan art in the world. Part of their collection consisting of 345 objects was purchased by the County Museum of Art in Los Angeles at \$3.5 million in 1969. Nasli Heeramaneck was one of the leading art dealers and connoisseurs in New York for more than forty years.

Phiroze Dorabji Saklatwala came to New York in 1904 as the representative of Tata Sons of Bombay. Thereafter, he embarked upon his

own business and became the majority owner of an oil company's share on the Big Board in New York, and was known as the "Parsi Oil King". He visited Iran during 1930-1931 and after an in-depth study, brought out his book, *The Rich Fields in Persia*. He visited Bombay to arouse an awakening of Persia in his community. He was appointed Honorary Consul General for U.S.A. He had organized poet Firdowsi's 1000th birth anniversary celebrations in New York. He died in New York on November 23, 1934.

His brother, **Dr. Behram Dorabji Saklatwala** was one of the promoters and founder of Vanadium Steel Corporation of Pittsburgh. His contribution in the field of metallurgy was his discovery in manufacturing iron without spots or moles. He was the recipient of the Grassley medal.

The first **Zoroastrian Association** in New York was born in the spacious living room of Phiroze Saklatwala on West 11th Street in New York. The day was November 10, 1929. There were seven persons present one of whom was **Rustomji Wadia** who is still alive [Mr. Wadia passed away in 1994] and the oldest Zoroastrian resident of New York. With the millionaire Phiroze Saklatwala as the promoter of the Association, the

organization would have indeed survived the depression years, but Phi-roze Saklatwala passed away at the young age of 54, and the community was too small to carry on the organization. As fate would have it, the affluent Zoroastrians were wiped out during the great depression and so also, the original Association.

The first student to attend University in Canada, was **Shiavax Nowroji Katrak**, who graduated as a dentist from Toronto University in 1922.

Another colorful person was **Dinshaw Framji Ghadiali** [also see page 29]. He came to the United States in 1901. He had an inventive brain and obtained two patents in 1911 in the electrical field. When World War I started, he joined the American Army and was attached to the New York Police Reserve Air Force Pioneer's Wing. He rose to the position of a major, then a colonel and finally became the commander. He was awarded the Liberty Medal for services during the war.

Ghadiali was an ultra orthodox Zoroastrian, too proud of his ancient Indo-Iranian race. He always wore the traditional Parsi long coat and covered his head with a cap, indoors and outdoors. He refused to meet any Zoroastrian whose head was not covered. He himself jokingly used to say that he was taken in the American army to make him give up his Parsi dress.

On February 5, 1917, the United States Congress passed an act which excluded all natives of Asia including the whole of India from admission as immigrants to the United States, which also meant granting of naturalization status. Dinshaw Ghadiali was a naturalized American citizen and resided in Malaga, New Jersey. The naturalization authorities moved to cancel his citizenship on the contention that he was a Hindu and not of the white race. Quoting various anthropological works, Dinshaw Ghadiali successfully defended his status which was upheld by the court. There was another appeal of

one Mr. Balsara where the Circuit Court of Appeals had ruled that Parsis are white [see *Bhicaji Balsara*, *FEZANA Journal*, next page] and the same cases were cited by the attorneys of Rustamji Wadia in 1933 in his memorandum to the United States District Court for naturalization papers. In 1948, Indian immigration was placed on a quota basis by the United States and Zoroastrians came to the US without the difficulty experienced by the pioneer settlers.

October 15, 1919 was independence day in the US. More than 75,000 persons including numerous persons belonging to some 42 ethnic communities participated in the parade. The honor to lead the parade fell on Dinshaw Ghadiali. At the head of his New York Police Reserve Air Force Pioneer's Wing, dressed in the Jama and Pichori (the Zoroastrian priest's garments, as Ghadiali was an ordained priest) with his daughter Kashmira by his side, Dinshaw Ghadiali, holding in his hand a flag which was inscribed 'Parsi Zoroastrian American Forever', was the most honored and proud person.

██████████

**Dressed in Jama and Pichori
he stopped the entire
parade, bowed before the
Mayor, and held the flag,
which read "Parsi Zoroastrian
American Forever"
to his heart.**

To show his ultra-patriotic feelings for his adopted country, America, he stopped the entire parade near the reviewing stand, bowed before the Mayor, and held the flag to his heart, eyes and head. There were two other Zoroastrians, Kaikhushroo Hormuz and Kaikhushroo Bam, both American veterans of World War I, in the parade.

Another prominent and illustrious Parsi to have come to Canada (BC) was the late **Jalbhaj Mehta**, son of Sir Homi Mehta, during 1930. He

bought over 200 acres of land, possibly with a view to engage in some business pursuit. The land was eventually disposed off when Jalbhaj returned to India.

The second World War brought (in 1940) **Lt. J. A. Moos**, who was in the Royal Canadian Navy, stationed at Esquimalt, near Victoria, BC.

In 1940, **Dara Antia**, **Minoo Netervala** and **Meherwan Cawas Irani** came to the US. Of the three, Irani is perhaps the second oldest resident in America. Graduating from the Indian School of Mining in Dhanbad, India, he came to the Colorado School of Mines. After 1955, he moved to Pittsburgh, to Salem Corporation, and the US Bureau of Mines until his retirement in 1981. Today he owns 20 patents in Mining and Metallurgical Engineering.

In 1941, **Rustamji Bana**, an architect came to Vancouver as a landed immigrant with his three sons from Japan. An exception was made in his case. He worked in Trail, BC in the construction of the arsenal factory and his eldest son Ardeshir was in the Canadian Air Force and saw active service in Europe.

Jehangir Nanabhaj Badhni who was a well-known engineer having studied in India, England and Germany, came to Toronto from Iran in 1946 for permanent residence. He was the Chief Engineer of the Iranian Government. It was Mr. Badhni's wish to establish a Zoroastrian Fire Temple in Canada — a consecrated Fire Temple with two full time ordained priests, conducting all religious ceremonies as performed in India and Iran. He was perhaps 30 to 40 years ahead of his time.

We in British Columbia have been fortunate to have Mr. **Mehraban Zartoshty** come to BC for permanent settlement. Mehraban and his brother **Faredoon** have been known for their philanthropy everywhere. Mehraban came to the US in 1948 and set up business, but later went back to Iran.

After India became independent, in 1947, and when Pandit Nehru visited Canada for discussions with the Canadian Government, an initial token immigration quota was established whereby 150 Indians could come to Canada in one year, and another 150 could be sponsored. Among the first to apply for landed immigrant status in Canada, were **Dara Dastur, Keki Bharucha, Bomi Ghadiali, and Dorab Wadia.**

During the 1950s, **Sam Tata, Zubin Mehta, Jehan Bagli** and possibly some others came to Montreal. **Gustad Contractor, Homi Engineer** and myself (**Jamshed Pavri**) came to Vancouver, and there must be some who came to Toronto. In the 1960s, the numbers of Zoroastrians began to increase, contacts became more regular, a directory came out, and associations started to come into existence.

Recent events in Iran have caused anxiety among our minority community, and several Zoroastrians have left the motherland and come to Canada and the US. In this group, towering above them all, was **Arbab Rustam Guiv**, a remarkable, venerated man in his late eighties. His very presence in our midst was a godsend and in a very short time, before he passed away, he left the Zoroastrians an unredeemable debt of gratitude. His contribution in the form of Darbe Mehrs will, in time, provide a cementing bond amongst Zoroastrians. ■

THIS IS THE TIME

*Surely this is the time,
Pregnant with promises to come,
When Man from his cauldron
Of suffering and strife must rise
Chastened, tempered and wise,
And in his inner being find
The Universal Mind.
That shall be the Coming,
The Grace, the New Dawn,
When Man, his own Saviour,
Awakened and liberated,
Shall live as one.*

- Soonoo Engineer
Vancouver, British Columbia

Bhicaji Balsara

First Zarthusti US Citizen

By **Kersi B. Shroff**
Derwood, Maryland

In tracing the presence of Zoroastrians in the US, Bhicaji F. Balsara must rank as a pioneer of the immigration of Zoroastrians into this country. It was as early as November 1900 that Mr. Balsara arrived in the US and settled and later married in New York.

His greater claim, however, must be his success in becoming naturalized as a citizen of the US. He petitioned for citizenship in 1906 but was only granted the status after he fought his case before two courts, the Circuit Court in New York and the federal Court of Appeal. Objections to Mr. Balsara's petition were based on a requirement at that time that only "Free white persons" could be admitted to citizenship. In his petition, Mr. Balsara claimed that his "color is white and his complexion dark."

In its ruling in *In re Balsara*, 171 Fed. Rep. 294 (1909), the Circuit Court had a serious objection to accepting the words "white persons" to include all branches of the race known as the Aryan, Indo-European, or Caucasian. To do so, it stated, "will bring in not only the Parsees ... which is perhaps the purest Aryan type, but also Afghans, Hindoos, Arabs and Berbers." The Court, however, allowed Mr. Balsara's petition noting that "he was a gentleman of high character and exceptional intelligence," but stated that a higher court should examine the issue.

The United States Government appealed the decision and the Department of Justice filed a comprehensive 145-page brief arguing why a Parsee could not be considered a "white person." The brief quoted many passages from books written by Western travelers to Persia and

India referring to the inhabitants as being "swarthy of complexion." The Justice Department argued that the law was intended to include Europeans and persons of European descent, and no others.

In the decision in *United States v. Balsara*, 180 Fed. Rep. 694, 695 (2nd Cir. 1910), Circuit Judge Ward offered the following description:

"The Parsees emigrated some 1,200 years ago from Persia into India, and now live in the neighborhood of Bombay, to the number of about 100,000. They constitute a settlement by themselves of intelligent and well-to-do persons, principally engaged in commerce, and are as distinct from the Hindus as are the English who dwell in India."

The Court stated that the term 'white person' referred to the white race as distinguished from the black, red, yellow, or brown races. In the opinion of the Court, Parsees do belong to the white race and it was agreed that Mr. Balsara was properly admitted to citizenship by the Circuit Court.

Mr. Balsara's victory in the early 1900s seems that much greater in light of a later case decided by the same Court, holding another Parsee ineligible for citizenship. In the decision in *Rustom Dadabhoy Wadia v. United States*, 101 F. 2d 7 (2d Cir. 1939), the Court this time did not accept Mr. Wadia as being a 'white person.' It had to follow cases decided in the meantime by the US Supreme Court which declined to accept the niceties of racial origins and interpreted the relevant law as being based on the common man's understanding of the term. ■

[Kersi B. Shroff, Attorney at Law, researched this interesting episode in Parsi history, at the Library of Congress in Washington. The reports cited here may be found in any law library in the USA.]

In southern New Jersey, in the town of Malaga, there is a street named Dinshaw Drive. An inquiry as to the origin of the name would reveal the genuine but checkered story of a highly creative Zarthusti gentleman who arrived on these shores in 1911.

The street is named after Dinshaw P. Ghadiali, medical healer, scientist, inventor, author, aviator, and a man of many other avocations. His prowess was well developed even before he arrived in the US. Born in Bombay, in 1873, Dinshaw became an Assistant to the Science Professor at Wilson College, at the age of 11.

Greatly attracted to electricity and related subjects, he began installing electric lights, and after a spell as an electric engineer on the P&O Steamship Co, was appointed Electric Engineer of Patiala State.

He first visited the US in 1896 where he met Thomas Edison and other noted scientists.

He began to research the healing effect of color and light on the human body. Twenty three years were to pass before Dinshaw developed a healing system which he called the Spectro-Chrome. An example in present-day medical practice is the use of blue light in the treatment of premature babies born with jaundice.

After arrival in the US in 1911, Dinshaw became a Professor at the New York College of Engineering and Automobile Instruction. He invented the 'Dinshaw Automobile Engine Fault-Finder', for which he was offered \$100,000. He eventually donated the invention to the US government for use on aircraft engines. In 1917, Dinshaw became a naturalized American citizen in Camden, NJ, after he proved that he was of the white race.

At a New York city parade of foreign-born Americans, Dinshaw car-



Dinshaw Ghadiali Genius of Malaga

By Kersi B. Shroff, Derwood, Maryland

ried a banner, leading the parade of 75,000 for 11 hours. At the parade, his knowledge of aeronautics became known, and he was appointed Governor of the New York City Police Aviation School and commissioned as a Colonel and Commander of the New York Police Reserve Air Service which patrolled the harbor in case of attack during the First World War. Dinshaw also flew the first police airmail service, from New York to Philadelphia. Later, Mayor John Hylan awarded him the Liberty Medal for his service to New York City.

In April 1920, after completing his research on light, Dinshaw established a Spectro-Chrome Institute in New York City, and moved it to Malaga in 1924. The next 46 years of his life were spent in practicing and teaching the color healing system. He designed many instruments

and accessories for the use of light.

The Spectro-Chrome system, however was misjudged and misunderstood. He was sued many times. In 1931, Dinshaw was charged with grand larceny, because Spectro-Chrome could not have any effect on diseases. Dinshaw conducted his own defense and was acquitted.

In 1947, at the initiation of the Food and Drug Administration, Dinshaw was again tried before a Camden court. He was fined \$20,000 and was put on probation for five years. His writings on Spectro-Chrome were ordered to be burned! In 1958, the FDA obtained a permanent injunction against another Institute organized by Dinshaw. However, within the limits of the injunction, Dinshaw continued to promote his

concepts of healing by light, until he died, at the age of 92, in 1966.

Dinshaw married Maneck H. Mehta in 1902 and had two children who came with

him to the US. In 1913, Maneck returned to India and a divorce was granted in 1922. He married Irene Grace Hoyer in 1923 and fathered eight more children, the last born in 1947. Three of Dinshaw's sons, Darius, Roshan and Jal have continued to promote his work. Rev. Roshan Dinshaw ministers to prisoners in New Jersey, and his brother Darius used to be the head of the local Vegetarian Society. The Dinshaw Health Society was formed in 1975. ■

[Sources: Darius Dinshaw, *Let There Be Light*, 1985; M. L. Taylor, *Dinshaw Ghadiali: The Triumph of Spectro-Chrome*, the IN Side, Autumn 1986; *Hillsdale's Renaissance Man*, Pascack Valley Tales, 1993, and a chance meeting between the author and Roshan Dinshaw who owns an appliance repair shop in Malaga.]

■ COVER STORY ■

Much of the information for this article has been compiled from secondary sources, articles and the memory of those interviewed, and could therefore be incomplete or inaccurate. While the accounts in this article have been kept brief to meet space requirements, the full record of the interviews and stories have been kept on file with FEZANA Journal. The Journal also invites readers to send in additional stories and corrections to enable us to compile a more accurate and complete record of the arrival of Zarthustis in USA and Canada.

By Roshan Rivetna

EARLY US-PARSI EPISODES

The earliest records of the presence of Zarthustis in North America were uncovered at the Peabody Museum in Boston, just a few months ago, through the efforts of Khorshed Jungalwalla [see *The Yankee Connection* by Susan S. Bean, this issue]. They record the visit of **Rustomjee Hirjeebhoy Wadia** of the illustrious Bombay ship-building family, in 1861, to the Boston area to set up trade with the Americans, and possibly an earlier visit, in 1851, by **Ardaseer Cursetjee Wadia** [see *Glimpses of the Great* by Roshan Rivetna, *FEZANA Journal*, Winter 1996] to Salem, Massachusetts.

Trade between India and the US was just beginning, and Parsi merchants were among the first to establish relations. One American commodity demanded in India was natural ice, dug out of the Boston lakes, while exports from India to the US were piece goods, hides and skins [1]. In 1839 **Dossabhoy Merwanjee Wadia** (1807-1865) established his firm in Bombay, trading principally with the US, importing sewing machines, drills, kerosene oil, Reed & Barton silverware and other articles [2], and had visited the US more than once to set up trade relations [1]. So revered was his name that President Ulysses



PHOTO: PARSEE LUSTRE [2]

Seth Dossabhoy Merwanjee Wadia
US Vice Consul at Bombay, 1852



PHOTO: PARSEE LUSTRE [2]

Ardaseer Cursetjee Wadia
Possibly visited Boston in 1851

Coming to No

Tracing the stories of Zarthustis in the Un

Grant, on a tour of India, honored him with a personal visit on February 15, 1879 at his firm at 6 Parsi Bazaar Street in Bombay. And in 1852, Dossabhoy was appointed Vice Consul, with the proclamation [2]:

"...reposing special trust and confidence in the ability and integrity of Dossabhoy Merwanjee of Bombay, I have nominated, and with the advice and consent of the President of the United States, do appoint him "Vice Consul" of the United States of America at Bombay ..."

(Sd.) Edward Ely
Consul of the United States of America

During the first half of the nineteenth century, less than 200 persons of Indian origin had emigrated to the USA [1]. America was far away, and half-way round the world; but, incredible as it may sound, in 1876, the Parsis of Baroda were considering emigrating to the US, en masse. They wrote to the American Consul:

"Many enterprising and intelligent Parsis are desirous of emigrating to the New World and of establishing themselves as colonists on the same plan and system as European settlers have been doing.

"It is a thought uppermost in the minds of some of our Community to form themselves into a body and by so doing to invest a certain amount of their own Capital in purchasing Cultivable lands of Considerable Area.

"The principal object of such an investment is to found a separate Colony of Parsis only, in a land which has been from time immemorial the fostering nurse of many an enterprising and needy adventurer and well-to-do Capitalist where they can, without the slightest impediment, preserve and follow the religion of their forefathers ...

"You are perhaps already aware that the Parsees of Western India do not fall even a whit behind their immediate neighbors the Englishmen, where the Spirit of noble enterprise and great undertakings is concerned.

"A settlement in America at the earliest opportunity has become the subject of our grave considerations ..."



Miss Jeanne Sorabji
At Chicago Parliament, 1892



PHOTO: PARSEE LUSTRE [2]

Phiroze Dorabji Saklatwala
"Oil King of America"

Birth America

United States and Canada from earliest times

This was, perhaps, the only attempt ever made by Indians to emigrate in a group to the New World. It is not known what came of it. [1] ■

EARLY SETTLERS IN USA

Jamshed Pavri of Vancouver has recorded the stories [see *The Pioneer Settlers*, by Jamshed Pavri, this issue] of numerous early settlers in the US: millionaire **Pestonji Davar** in San Francisco in 1892, **Maneckji Javeri** prospecting gold in California during the Gold Rush; inventor **Dinshaw Ghadiali** in 1901 [see *Genius of Malaga* by Kersi B. Shroff, this issue]; and businessmen **Phiroze and Behram Saklatwala** in 1904, and art dealer **Nasli Heeramaneck** in 1920, in the New York area.

The Proceedings of the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893 carries a picture and a list of "personages assembled on the platform",

among them "Miss Jeanne Sorabji, a convert to Christianity from Parseeism, from Bombay, India." [see *Zoroastrian Presence* by Rohinton M. Rivetna, *FEZANA Journal*, February 1993].

In November 1900, **Bhicaji F. Balsara** came to settle in New York, and waged a long and eventually successful battle for immigrant status [see *Bhicaji Balsara, First Zarthusti US Citizen*, by Kersi B. Shroff, this issue]

Avestan Scholar **Dastur Dr. Maneckji Nusservanji Dhalla**, High Priest of the parsis in Karachi, came to New York in 1905, for Avestan Studies at Columbia and made four more visits staying 2-3 years each time, the last one in 1938. In 1905, he noted there were eight Parsi businesses in the US, and the population "does not exceed 12 or 15 at any

single period." One of them was a businessman, **Rustomji Behramji**, who had left Bombay in 1865, and resided in New York since. He also spoke of the **Mazdaznan Movement**, started in Chicago by **Dr. Ottoman Zardoost Hannish**, who styled himself as the "Zarthusra of modern times." [see *In Search of the New World and the Mazdaznan Movement in America* by Ervad Kersey Antia, this issue].

Rustom Kermani, a carpet merchant from Kerman, Iran, came to Albany, New York around 1910, and married an American lady. His department store in Albany flourished, and he donated generously in Iran.

Jehangir Ardeshir Sethna was among the earliest Parsi students to come to the US for engineering studies. In 1913, when World War I was imminent he left his studies in Paris and came to the USA. He gained technical experience with Westinghouse and Sperry-Gyroscope and worked his way through college. He graduated in Electrical Engineering from Pittsburgh University in 1923. He returned to Bombay to begin a long and productive career with Tata Electric, until his retirement in 1955 as Deputy Chief for their Power Generation System in Bombay. [From *Zarine Weil, Oak Park, Illinois*].

Brothers **Shahjehan Jahanian** and **Feridoon Jahanian** came to the US in 1916 to study Agricultural Engineering. They traveled from Yazd, first to Bombay to learn English, and then made the long journey by ship and train to Los Angeles. Six years later, when Shahjehan met and was about to marry, an American girl, his father threatened to disinherit him, and sent a friend to escort him back to Yazd, where he married his cousin. Their son, **Shahriar Jahanian** and his wife **Shirin**, both of Yazd now reside in Langhorne, Pennsylvania. [From *Shahriar Jahanian, Langhorne, Pennsylvania*]



Burjor Wadia, of the Lowjee Wadia family, came as an engineer to Ford Motor Company in Detroit around 1918, and stayed for about 5 years, before returning to England, and Bombay. [From Khorshed Jungallwalla, Sudbury, Massachusetts].

Dr. Maneck Anklesaria came to California in 1922. He toured the country with his American wife and daughter Pramila Ann, and, dressed in a Nehru jacket and turban, gave lectures on Eastern religions and philosophy. He died in the early 1960s, while on a lecture tour in Chicago. [From Keki Gandhi, Los Angeles, California].

Probably the earliest long-time resident of New York was **Rustom D. Wadia** who came as a young man of 24, to study engineering at Schenectady, in upstate New York, in 1923, and lived in New York for 70 years. During the depression of the late 1920s, Wadia lost his job with Con Edison, the electric company, and bought a floundering Indian restaurant, *Rajah*, in mid-town Manhattan near Times Square, from the Indian owner (who had been a circus performer, a contemporary of the actor Sabu, and run into financial difficulties). It was possibly the earliest Indian restaurant in the country. In 1955, Wadia moved to the Ceylon India restaurant, in the Rockefeller Plaza complex.

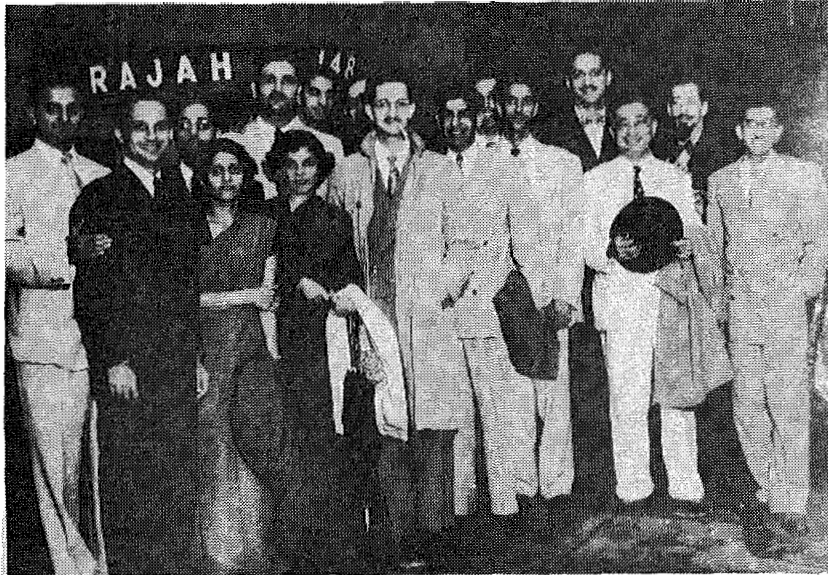


PHOTO: K. D. IRANI

quarters ^{including} a new Zagny headquarters estimated to cost in excess of 2 1/4 million dollars!! To me, it is more than a fool's dream. It is dangerous and beyond the reach of a small community of 250 souls. No doubt, a small percentage is well-off but you need at least one - Maledin Forbes or Donald Trump!

It was astounding when Prof. Munshi naively expected me to contribute \$25,000. As a veteran teacher of economics, he should know that a person invests a large sum of money for only two reasons: either to make more money or to ~~to~~ as a loophole for saving on taxes but not for saving his soul.

COURTESY PORUS COOPER

Top left, Rustom Wadia and wife Gladys in the 1980s. Top right, Navroze celebration at Wadia's Rajah restaurant in 1949. Prof. K. Irani is second from right; readers recognizing any of the others, please contact the author. Above, fragment of letter from Wadia to Porus Cooper, regarding ZAGNY's \$2 million fundraising efforts for a new building in 1988.

A colorful man, gregarious in nature, and a great conversationalist on any subject, his restaurant drew an interesting clientele, including theater personalities, embassy officials, students, artists, musicians and professors, as well as Indian tourists and students on very limited budgets who were sure to get a hearty dinner for 99¢ or even less.

Though married to Gladys, an American, Rustomji waged a long battle for his US citizenship, following the Asian Exclusion Act of the 1930s, whereby Asians were barred from that privilege. Rustomji passed away in New York in 1992, at age 94, and Gladys a year later.

[From Porus Cooper, Cherry Hill, New Jersey].

At the age of 19, with a Tata Scholarship, **Furrokh Sohrab Bamji**, father of Xerxes Bamji of Toronto, and brother of Ester Bamji of Washington, DC, sailed for the US in 1930, on a cargo ship and studied engineering at Purdue University until 1935.



PHOTO: X. BAMJI

Furrokh Bamji, Chicago, 1934.

To augment his finances, he came to Chicago during the 1934 World's Fair, donned a turban, darkened his face, and made a few bucks reading people's palms with an Indian accent. Another venture — mixing essences, and selling 'perfumes' in recycled bottles with exotic labels, thrived to the extent that he hired two women to help. With his earnings he bought a Model T Ford for \$50, traveled from coast to coast and then sold it for \$60!

At times when he was completely broke, he would attend churches, listen to the sermon, and then fill up on a couple of big breakfasts to last him through the day. Or he would order a bowl of soup in a diner, and fill up on the free crackers.

When gangster John Dillinger was shot by FBI agents in 1934, Furrokh Bamji was a bystander outside the Biograph theater, and witnessed the scene. [From *Xerxes Bamji, Mississauga, Ontario*].



PHOTO: PARSEE LUSTRE [2]

In 1934, **Hormusji Jivanji Billimoria** visited the US with the dual purpose of sightseeing and gaining knowledge about his business of dyeing and bleaching for the cotton mills

[2]: There was also a well known Billimoria family on Wall Street, in the 1930s.

In 1932, a pilgrim father called **Dastur Craosha A. Kaul** of Jewel Valley Ranch in Boulevard, California, wrote to the editor of the Karachi publication *Young Zoroastrian*:

"Enclosed is a US Money Order of \$2 for subscription to *Young Zoroastrian*.

"We have formed a Zarathushtrian Community here at Boulevard, now about thirty in number. Interest in Zarathushtrian precepts is growing here in America, as we have many inquiries as to prospective members and students. In due time we will build a temple and library, school and printshop, also a Dagmah, Tower of Silence. I have collected all Zarathushtrian writings available and know the Zend Avesta by heart ...

If you are able to assist us with books and information on this subject, we will do all that is required of us" ...

[From *Informal Religious Meetings, Karachi, December 1996*].

Below, Parsi students having Dhansakh dinner at Wadia's Rajah Restaurant in New York, 1947. Except for K. D. Irani (with beard) and Jehangir Medora (on his left), others are not identified.



PHOTO: JEHangir MEDORA

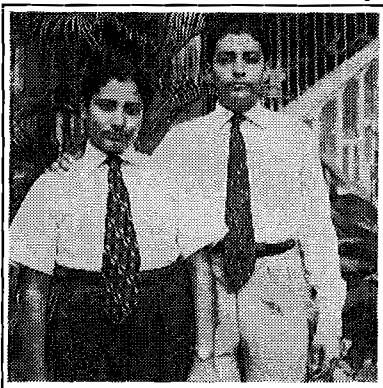
MEHLI MEHTA FAMILY

In 1945, leaving his wife Tehmina and two sons Zubin, 9, and Zarin, 7, behind in Bombay, violinist **Mehli Mehta**, who had already gained repute as the conductor and founder

of the Bombay Symphony Orchestra in 1935, came to New York on a Tata scholarship, to study the violin with noted violinist Ivan Galamian. After 4 years of immersed study he returned to Bombay. In 1955, shortly after son Zubin, just 17, left for the Vienna Academy of Music,

and Zarin went to England to become a chartered accountant, Mehli and Tehmina left India for Manchester to join the Hale Orchestra with Sir John Barbirolli.

Mehli emigrated to the US in 1959, as a violinist at the Curtiss String Quartet in Philadelphia. In 1964 they moved to Los Angeles, where Mehli has been the founder and beloved conductor of the American Youth Symphony for 32 years.



Brothers Zarin and Zubin Mehta, Bombay, 1952.

Zubin Mehta came to the US briefly in 1958 and won prizes at the Tanglewood Music Festival in Boston. He has since been conductor of the Montreal Symphony (1961), Los

Angeles Philharmonic (1962-1978), Israel Philharmonic (for life), the Metropolitan Opera, and the New York Philharmonic (1978-1991) where he had the distinction of being their longest tenured conductor. With his musical genius, Zubin Mehta is no doubt the most recognized and respected Zarthusti in the Western world.

Zarin Mehta emigrated to the US in 1960 to Philadelphia. In 1962 he moved to Montreal and quickly rose to become the youngest partner in a chartered accountants firm. He then became Manager of the Montreal Symphony until 1991, when he was invited to Chicago to become Executive Director of the Ravinia Music Festival.

EAST COAST AND MIDWEST



Jehangir Mobed, 1945

After World War II, in September 1945, 25 Iranian students came to America on board a freighter, traveling from Khoramshar on the Persian Gulf to New York. Among them, on that 40-day Atlantic crossing were 19-year-old **Jehangir Mobed**, Arbab Guiv's nephew, **Keikhosrow Guiv** and **Manoucher Sirouzi**. On arrival Jehangir first traveled to International College in Springfield, Massachusetts to learn English, and then went on to Tufts College for his B.S. Jehangir and his wife Olive now live in Chicago.

Below, Tehmina and Mehli Mehta, with sons Zarin (left) and Zubin in the 1950s.

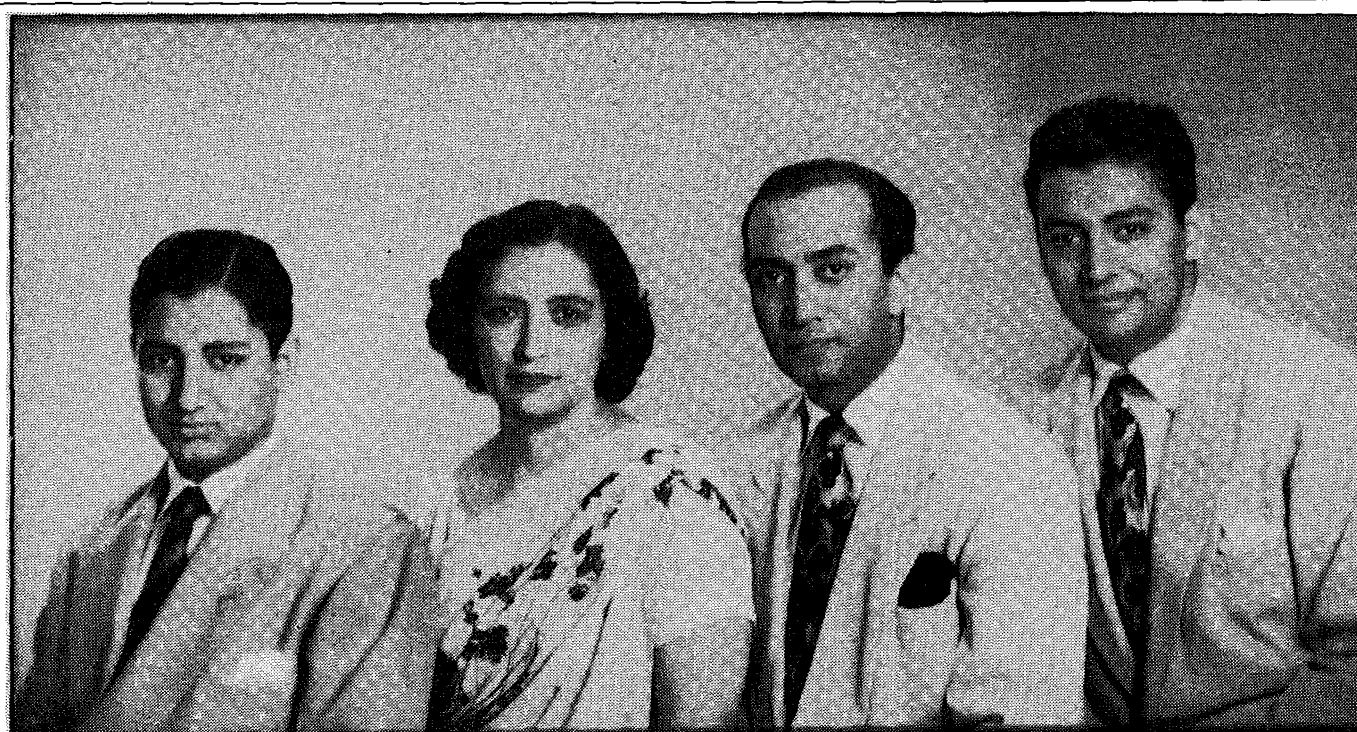


PHOTO: MEHTA FAMILY

In 1946, the American liberty ship *Marine Lynx* was transporting returning soldiers from the Burma front back to the US. Among the 40 or so Indian students on board who also made that rough 25-day crossing from Calcutta to San Francisco, sleeping in bunks 4-high, were **Noshir Adenwalla**, who went on to Harvard, **Dinshaw Mehta**, now a Chemical Engineer in New York, and a world authority on ammonia and methanol, **Homa Shahrokh**, daughter of Arbab Keikhosrow Shahrokh, (who was seasick right through the trip, went on to study at Berkeley, and has since married an American and settled in California), Mehraban Zartoshty's nephew **Jamshid Zartoshty** and brother-in-law, **Manoucher Mavandad**, and **Kaikhosrov Irani**.

Disillusioned with the lack of prospects for fundamental research in Physics in India, **Kaikhosrov Irani** wrote of his ideas in the emerging field of particle theory and relativistic quantum electro-dynamics to the Board of Fundamental Research in Washington, DC, and was offered a position as Research Associate.

On landing at the docks in San Francisco, he remembers filling out a number of lengthy and incomprehensible forms ("... not engaged in any activity leading to the violent overthrow of the US", "...not engaged in prostitution" and such). At the entry for "Race", neither Kaikhosrov nor the Immigration officer could quite agree, since he wasn't clearly Caucasian (though his ancestors did come from near the Caucasus Mountains in Persia), nor Indian, nor Brown nor ... In the end, the officer wrote "Other" and permitted him to enter the country.

After a few weeks at Caltech, where he discussed Physics and religion with Paul Epstein and Milliken, Kaikhosrov went on to the University of Chicago (1947-48), Columbia

University, and the American Institute of Physics at Princeton, where he made the acquaintance of Albert Einstein. When a job opened up teaching the philosophy of science at the City College of New York, he applied, and was offered a position at \$4.25 per hour. When Kaikhosrov produced a letter of recommendation

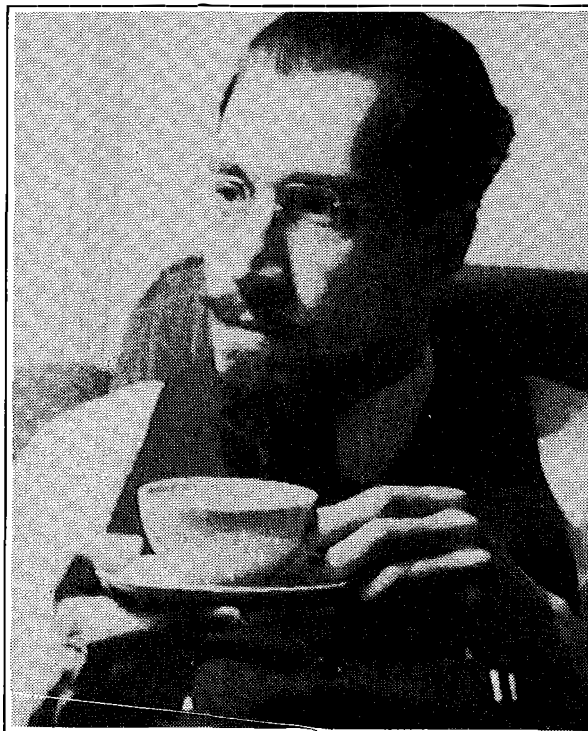


PHOTO: J. MEDORA

Kaikhosrov D. Irani, New York 1948

from Albert Einstein, stating: "I know Irani ... he's interested in this area, and will be able to expound well on this subject ..." his starting salary was raised to \$4.75 per hour. Kaikhosrov is now Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at that College, and of course a noted scholar and speaker on the Zarthusti religion. Kaikhosrov's wife, **Peroja**, joined him in 1953, and adjusted rapidly to their new life in the US.

Kaikhosrov recalls meeting other Parsi students in the 1950s: **Fali Mehta**, who studied dentistry at Columbia and Tufts, and returned to Bombay; **Nariman Dhalla**, who studied banking and was a VP with J. Walter Thompson; **Jehangir Vazifdar**, who did post-doctoral research in Boston and New York, and is now a noted cardiologist in Bombay;

Noshir Kergamwalla, who worked on Wall Street and had suffered losses during his last years. He passed away in 1994, alone and friendless, and was in the county morgue for 6 weeks before the Parsis of New York were contacted, and arranged for a proper cremation. **Dhun Modi**, nephew of Sir Homi Modi, and

Peshotan Nargolwala, were both students at Brooklyn Polytechnic, and returned to India. Another student there was **Minoo Patel**, who taught at City College until he passed away a few years ago. **Minoo Dastur** (brother of Furrokh Dastur of Los Angeles), studied metallurgy at MIT in the 1940s and worked for a few years, before returning to India. **Dara Antia** (brother of Yezdi Antia of Toronto), was at Harvard in the mid-1940s. He returned to India and rose to a high position with Union Carbide. ■

From the sheltered town of Yazd, to the high-rises of New York, took some adjustment for **Dr. Khosrow Jamshidi**, who came to Queen's College in Flushing, after finishing his high school in Tehran, in 1947. "It was a pretty lonely life at first", he recalls, "There were problems with the food, and problems with the language. At times I did not talk to anyone for days." Since it was so difficult to get into medical school in the US, Jamshidi secured his medical degree in Germany.

As a technician at Mt. Sinai hospital in the early 1950s, he saved the life of a 9-year old girl with acute kidney shutdown, using for the first time, a primitive kidney dialysis machine, being developed there. He has been with the University of Minnesota for many years, with numerous patents and publications on leukemia, lymphomas and toxicity. His techniques, notably the 'Jamshidi Bone Marrow Needle' to take tissue samples, are used throughout the world. ■

Mehraban Zartoshty and his wife **Paridokht Mavandad**, originally from Iran, came to New York in 1947 to set up his import-export business, and lived there for 3 1/2 years. Their daughters **Homa** and **Vida** were both born in New York, and could possibly be the first Zarthusti girls to be born in the US. Also in New York at the time, was a **Dr. Dinyar Farin** who returned to Iran to become a prominent cardiologist. Mehraban and his brother **Fareydoon Zartoshty**, also lived for many years in Bombay, and established Asiatic Travels there. Homa and Vida returned to the States for studies in 1978, and Mehraban and Paridokht emigrated to Vancouver, Canada in 1980. The Zartoshty brothers are noted for their generous philanthropies to Zarthusti causes around the world. *[From Homa Mehin, San Diego, California].* ■

There was also another Iranian, **Shahrokh Kyanian**, who had an import/export business in New York in the late 1940s.

When **Rohinton Bhada** came to the University of Michigan in 1953, the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of Bombay carried an article about the family "gone out of their minds" letting an 18-year-old, scarce out of Inter-Science, trav-

el alone to America. And sure enough, on his first night at the YMCA in Ann Arbor, his watch was stolen, in a flash, while he set it aside to wash his hands. Rohinton and his wife Patricia now reside in Las Cruces, New Mexico, where he teaches Chemistry at New Mexico State University. They have 7 children (2 of them adopted) and have been foster parents to 38 children over the years. ■



When 18-year old **Minocher Reporter** arrived at New York airport at 2 am, in September 1949, after a long voyage by ship and air, his first impression, sitting in the coffee shop, was the amount of sugar and paper that was wasted. At the time, sugar was rationed in India, and

paper goods were pretty much unknown. He went on to study biochemistry at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore, and then was at Harvard. The first Zarthusti he met was architecture student **Jehangir Mugaseth**, in the 1950s, at Harvard. Minocher married a Greek girl, and is now an ecologist and professor at Oregon State University in Corvallis, Oregon, researching Tundra restoration techniques at Prudhoe Bay, in the Arctic Circle, one of the Northernmost ports in the world. ■

In 1955, **Dr. Shahriar Mehrabi** came to Columbia University after a Ph.D. in Pharmacy from Tehran. He stayed at a Quaker boarding house, and worked as an Assistant Professor while he studied for his Masters and Ph.D. in Industrial Pharmacy, and then moved on to Pearl River, New York on a job with Lederle Labs, who sponsored him for a Green Card.

Mehri (Mary), just 18, came in 1959, finished a year at Pearl River High School and was married to Shahriar right after her graduation. They moved to California briefly in 1969, and then came back to New Jersey for 18 years with Bristol Myers. They retired to San Francisco in 1988. Dr. Mehrabi passed away in 1991. ■



PHOTO: J. MEDORA

Left, Parsi students at International House in New York, 1947.

Jehangir Medora is at far left. If readers recognize others in the picture, please contact the author.

International House was a hostel of 1,000 rooms for graduate students, a congregation of the brightest and best students from all over the world. About 10-15 Parsi students lived there in the early 1950s.

General Khodarahm Shahryary was sent for training at the US Infantry Center at Ft. Benning, Georgia, in 1955 as a Second lieutenant in the infantry division of the Iranian Army, and to the Military Academy at West Point in 1956, 1958 and again in 1960. He also served twice in the Pentagon. After retiring from the army in 1980, General Shahryary and his wife Irandokht emigrated to the Washington, DC area. ■

Eruch Munshi arrived at the port of New York on the French Line Liberté, in 1957, and lived at International House for a couple of weeks,

before moving to his apartment on Riverside Drive. With a Tata Scholarship, he had come for his MBA with noted professor Peter Drucker, known as the 'Pope of Corporate Management' at New York University. In those days to even see an Indian, let alone a Zarthusti, on the streets of New York, was a delight.

At a Pateti party in his Riverside Drive apartment in 1957 there were seven Zarthustis, among them **Minoo Virji**, who worked at the Indian Consulate, **Dr. Minoo Patel**, from Karachi who taught Chemical Engineering at City College, a student **Rusi Patel**, and a student

'**Pinky**' **Dubash**, who lived in Manhattan. Others in the area at the time were **Dr. Perin Vakharia**, who was then working at the UN, **Jimmy Das-toor**, a tennis pro from Karachi, **Dolly Gazdar**, at the newly-opened Air India office in New York, and medical student **Rusi Modi**. ■

Lovji Cama came in 1960 on a P&O liner to Southampton, and then on the French Line Liberté to New York. to study pharmacy and later Chemistry at Columbia University. After one semester on a Tata scholarship, he financed his studies with assis-

Below, 18th birthday party for Mehri Mehrabi (seated) at Hotel Taft in New York, 1959. Front, left to right, late Dr. Cyrus Behrooz and ex-wife, Dr. Darius Behrooz, a pediatrician in New York City and his Dutch wife Nahid Josephine, Dr. Shahriar Mehrabi, Dr. Nejad, a medical doctor in Connecticut and his wife. Behind, left, Dr. Jamshid Behramipour, Iraj Iranpour, and Dr. Esteghamat. Far right, Dr. Hooshang Behrooz and Dr. Hormuzdi, a successful gynecologist in New York City.

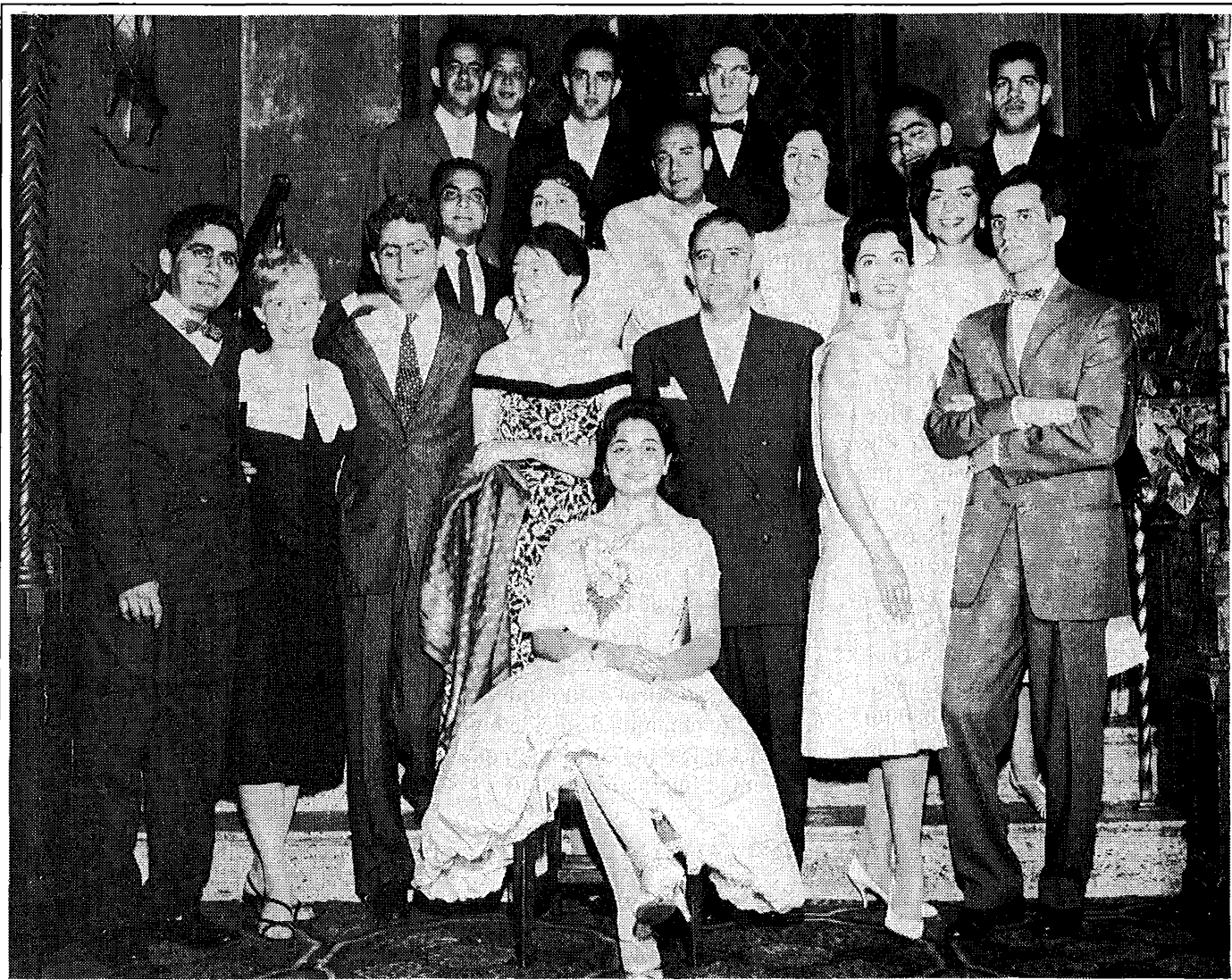
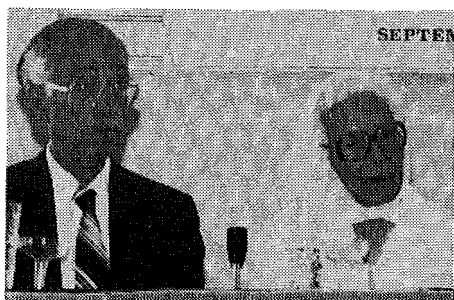


PHOTO: MEHRI MEHRABI

tantships, all the way to his Ph.D. Others he knew in New York at the time were another student **Dady Dhabar**, **Nariman Mehta**, working at Burroughs Wellcome, **Homi Dalal** and his sister **Vera**, **Farrokh** and **Gool Patel** (who were not married then). Many of them stayed at the International House in New York.

Three **Jahina** sisters came to the University of Pennsylvania — Soona in 1959, Dhun in 1962 and Gool in 1964. The fourth sister Mehroo, married Lovji.



Top, Dr. Sarfeh and Madam Guiv, 1985.



Arbab Rustam Guiv, 1978

In 1958, surgeon **Dr. Rostam Sarfeh** resigned his position as Head of the public health department with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, and emigrated to the USA as a surgeon in a hospital in Long Island, New York. He was in large measure, instrumental in helping realize the vision of the great **Arbab Rustom Guiv** and **Morvarid Guiv** — to establish Dar-e-Mehrs across the USA and Canada. Arbab Guiv and Morvarid Khanum came to the USA shortly after the first Darbe Mehr in North America was inaugurated, in New York, in 1977, with their initial donation of \$100,000. Over the next two decades, their generosity saw fruit with the establishment of Dar-e-Mehrs in Toronto (1978), Chicago (1983), Vancouver (1985), San Jose

(1986), Los Angeles (1987) and Washington, DC (1990), as well as cemeteries on the East and West coast.

— CHICAGO AREA —

Keki Bhote, originally of Coimbatore, India, came to Harvard as a Tata Scholar in 1948. Keki recalls riding through the streets of Boston with another Parsi from Harvard, **Fali Chothia**, on a bicycle built for two, quite a sight in their long overcoats, looking for the site of the famous 'Boston Tea Party'; and their disappointment on finding the inconspicuous marker a few blocks from the harbor. They hitch-hiked all over the eastern seaboard, with a sign that read "India or Bust—first stop New York".

Looking for a job after his Master's degree, a professor suggested that in addition to all the big corporations on his list, Keki also apply to this "up-and-coming, small, new company, Motorola." Almost as an afterthought, Keki did. Motorola was the first to reply, Keki hopped on a bus, arrived in Chicago, stayed at the YMCA downtown, and started his career. Keki's wife, **Mehroo** joined him in 1955. Over 40 years later, Keki retired from the company a few years ago, as a Senior Consultant for Quality and Productivity, for the corporation worldwide.

The only other Zarthustis in Chicago then (in 1948) were **Phiroze Chini-mini** of Karachi, who later, in 1957 settled in Canada with his wife Farida; and a long-time resident, **Mr. Sorabji**, who passed away in 1949 leaving a sizeable estate to the Bombay Parsi Panchayet, which was, however, never realized. The same year, a Parsi student at the University of Chicago committed suicide on the "L" tracks, leaving a suicide note in his room at International House.

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

*If you can Dream it
You can Do it.*

-Walt Disney

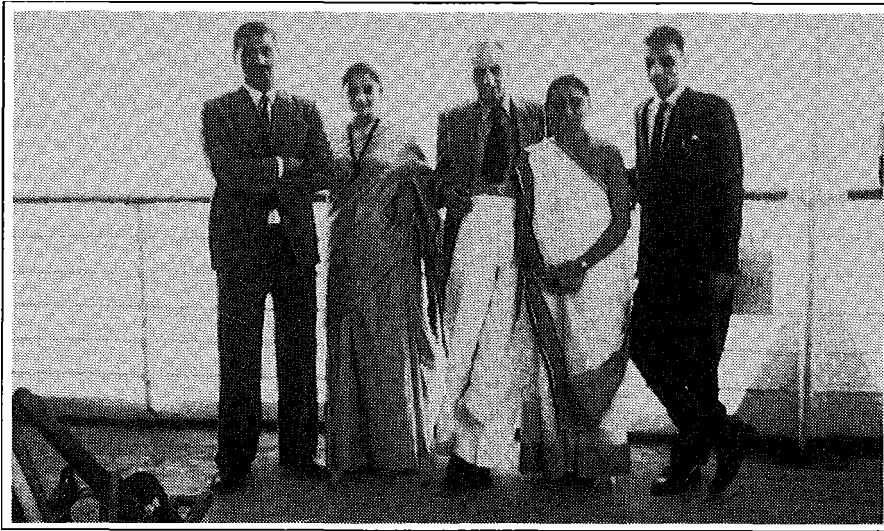
Jim Modi came aboard the World War II victory ship from Calcutta to Wilmington, North Carolina, in January 1948, after a 6-week voyage through the Suez. Lugging a huge steamer trunk, he changed 2 or 3 Greyhound buses and arrived at Purdue University in Lafayette, Indiana a couple of days later. That was when he saw this "white, fluffy, stuff" coming down and disappearing on the ground — his first snowfall.

While he made his way to a nearby hotel, and then to a dorm, the trunk, too heavy to carry, was left on the railway platform unattended for two weeks, until Jim found a friend with a car who could help him carry it to his room. In the meantime, he made occasional trips to the railway station to get his things! Upon graduation, Jim joined Motorola and retired after 35 years of service, as manager of planning and forecasting for the company.

In the early 1950s **Boman Kanga**, **Farrokh Dastur** (now in Los Angeles), and **Jim Jagus** (now in Pittsburgh) came to the Chicago area as students. Jim's wife **Navaz**, joined him in 1958. A few years later, **Behram Irani** (now in California) operated the Taj Mahal hotel, possibly the first Indian restaurant in the area.

Others in the Chicago area in the late fifties and early sixties, included **Sam Patell**, **Hormuz Vania** (now owner of Vania Engineering in Springfield), **Mehli Motiwalla**, **Khushroo Dastoor**, **Aspy Tantra**, **Darius Contractor**, **Sheroo Daruwalla** and **Dara** and **Phiroze Rivetna**. The mid-sixties brought **Minoo** and **Mehroo Patel**, **Rohinton** and **Roshan Rivetna**, **Godrej** and **Avan Billimoria**, **Maherji** and **Bachi Bilimoria**, and **Khushroo** and **Rhoda Patel**.

A few years ago, contact was accidentally made with a **Mr. Rustom Dalal**, in his 80s, who came in the 1930s to study engineering, and has lived in Chicago since, without contact with any Zarthustis.



Send-off for Dara Rivetna (right) on board the Strathnaver at Ballard Pier, Bombay, 1960: brother Rohinton Rivetna, sister Pervize, parents Minocher and Tehmina.

Film star Gloria Swanson's daughter met **Dara Rivetna**, **Phiroze Rivetna** (now in Phoenix) and **Keki Mistry** (now in Toronto) at the Port in New York, as the three students arrived on the Queen Elizabeth in 1961. They were carrying a parcel for her, sent by Norman Kaikhosrow, the representative of Chicago's Greer Tech Institute, in Bombay, who had helped arrange for their admission.

The Greyhound bus trip to Chicago, for \$29, and a \$10 deposit at the downtown Chicago YMCA depleted Dara's finances (a total of \$50), but he was able to get a night job as a stock boy, at \$1.50 per hour to help him through the early days.

Responding to a 'Handyman Wanted' ad, in the summer of 1963, he was tuning a boat engine on Chicago's lakefront, when he struck up an acquaintance with the owner of the neighboring sailboat, and helped fix his boat lights. The gentleman was happy with the work, and gave Dara a contact for a summer job. It was only a few days later, on his new job at National Can Corporation, that he found out that the nice person was Mr. Robert Stuart, whose father founded and owned the company. Dara has been with NCC to this day, and is currently setting up operations for the company (now American National Can) in India. ■

Rohinton Rivetna, and his bride of 12 days, **Roshan**, arrived at Chicago's O'hare airport on January 28, 1966. While Rohinton's heavy, brown, floor-length coat with eight-inch wide lapels, from his London days, was quite adequate, Roshan's silk saree, chappals, and white, satin-lined Kashmiri coat, though beautifully hand-embroidered, did little to help in the icy, -20°F blast of the 'Windy City'.

They each had one suitcase and \$8, the maximum amount allowed out of India in those days.

Fears about how far their combined \$16 would take them were quickly dispelled when Rohinton's brother Dara [see above] studying at Murray State College in Kentucky at the time came to pick them up in a shiny, long black Cadillac car. It was only later that they learned that it was a borrowed car, as Dara's old Chevy Belair would not start.

The Cadillac belonged to Mr. Robert Stuart, founder and President of National Can Corporation, a truly noble gentleman who had offered Rohinton a job at NCC.

The next day, Rohinton took two of his eight dollars, and made the long trek, via two buses and a train, to the National Can office. Today, after a long and productive career, he is

Director of Environmental Engineering for the company worldwide.

And Roshan, equipped now with a warm, red parka, cap, gloves and boots from Mrs. Stuart, walked to the corner grocery, and very judiciously spent another dollar or so on a pound of ground-beef (49¢ a pound), salt, sugar and tea, and a 25¢ Dell cookbook.

She was busy cleaning and making a meatloaf, in the two-room apartment (which they had rented on a weekly basis on the way home from the airport), when the doorbell rang. A friendly neighbor had dropped in to say hello. How very nice! Roshan welcomed her in, and offered her a cup of tea. Before she left, a half-hour later, the 'nice lady' had sold her a three-year subscription to *Good Housekeeping* magazine for eight dollars. Their last eight dollars!

Eighteen months later, their H1 training visa extensions ran out, and they received a Deportation Notice, but, at the time their first child, Zenobia, was on the way, and the immigration officer granted them an extension on a 'hardship clause'. ■

— TEXAS AREA —

Adi Desai was among the earliest to settle in Texas. All his life his dream was to come to America, and after graduation with a BE from Bombay University, he was doing three jobs to build up the necessary finances. He chose Rice University, in Houston since tuition there at the time, was free. Arriving in New York in 1959, with scholarships and loans from Parsi trusts to last him for 6 months, he made the 3-day trip by Greyhound bus to Houston. Adi just completed 36 years with Brown and Root in Houston.

In 1959, he met only one Zarthusti, **Mr. Spencer**, who had been there for a couple of years on a high management position. A few years later, **Yezdi Rustomji** came to Houston as a student, followed by **Dr. Sabavala**, an anesthesiologist, **Homai and Porus Khajautia**, **Mehli Behrana**,

Katy and Dinshaw Irani in 1968, and **Kaemarz Dotiwala**. A large influx of Zarthustis came with the oil boom in the mid-1970s. ■

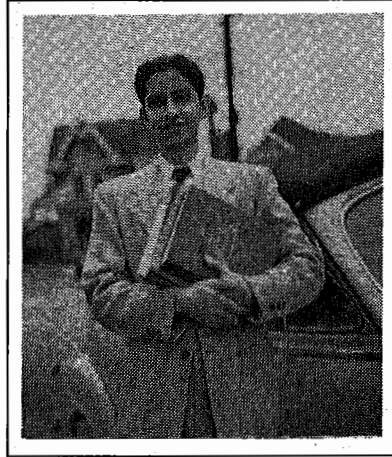
As a young man of 18, **Meherwan Boyce**, came in 1960 to the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, which he had selected based on its low tuition of \$300 for the year. Upon finding no one around at the Rapid City airport when he arrived, late in the night on a DC3 from New York, Meherwan asked directions of a janitor, who ended up driving him to a downtown hotel.

Next morning he went to register for classes. Unfamiliar with the 'semester-hours' terminology, when asked how many hours he wished to take at school, he quickly figured that 'full-time, everyday' must translate to 40 hours. The Officer let him sign up for the maximum allowed, which was 24. It was only later, when classes started that he found out that he had bitten off a little more than he could chew.

In his English exams, the school marked all his spellings wrong. So, he brought out a Chambers dictionary and learned for the first time that spellings in America were different.

Meherwan moved to Texas A&M University as a professor in 1969, and soon gained recognition as the world's leading authority on gas turbines. In 1977, he started his company *Boyce Engineering* in Houston. Today, with the help of his wife, **Zarine**, they have become internationally recognized in the field of turbo machinery and power plants. ■

WEST COAST - CALIFORNIA

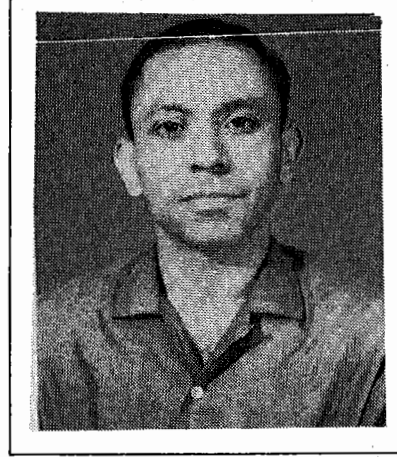


Minoo Naterwala, Los Angeles, 1948

One of the earliest to come to California in recent times was **Minoo Neterwala**, who came as a student to the University of Southern California in May 1948. Educated in a Zoroastrian boarding high-school in Deolali, Minoo was working on military construction projects in Bombay during World War II when he decided to come to America.

When the train from Deolali to Bombay was late, Minoo missed the boat, so to say, and had to fly to Colombo, Ceylon to catch up with the Norwegian freighter that brought him 45 days later, across the Pacific to San Diego and Los Angeles. Maneck Anklesaria [see page 28], the only other Zarthusti in the area, met him at the docks and helped him settle at the USC campus.

Minoo received a BA in Cinematography and Motion Pictures, but jobs in that field were very competitive, so he went on to do an MS in Marketing Research. He married an American girl, Amy, and has two



Keki Gandhi in 1965

daughters. In 1971, he left his job with the FHA, and the family moved to Bombay with a view to settling in India. But shortly thereafter, disillusioned, they returned to Los Angeles and started all over again. ■

Born in Navsari, and brought up at the Bombay Parsi Orphanage at Lalbaug, in Bombay, **Keki B. Gandhi** decided to come to the US upon the urging of an uncle who told him to "go to the New World, go to America" because after the War, "England still had a lot of rebuilding to do." With another Parsi boy, **Mr. Shroff** who was headed for a Midwestern University, Keki made the month-long journey on a Norwegian freighter, from Colombo, Ceylon, to Boston and New York in 1949.

In a cafeteria at the port in Boston, he and other Indian students from the ship thought they were being discriminated against, when no waiter showed up to serve them, until they discovered that this was a self-service cafeteria. Confused by all the variety of foods, they each settled for a piece of pie and a glass of milk.

After a few days at the YMCA in New York, taking in the famous sights he had heard about — the Statue of Liberty, Times Square, Rockefeller Center and the Empire State Building, he made the 3-day train journey, across the country, to Los

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Angeles, and on to the University of Southern California.

At the dorm, American friends forced Keki into learning how to play poker, and to their chagrin he won many times. "Beginners Luck" they called it. Among the 'poker group' was a young Muslim student named Zulfikar Ali Bhutto ('Zulfi'). When Jawaharlal Nehru came to a UN meeting in San Francisco, it was Zulfi who organized a student group to go and hear him speak at Berkeley, and engaged in spirited discussion with him afterwards. Zulfi rose to become Prime Minister of Pakistan, and was overthrown, tried, imprisoned and hanged during General Zia's reign.

Other Zarthustis at USC were **Minoo Netervala** and **Dara Munshi**. A **Dr. Daruwalla** was in medical school. ■

Furrokh Dastur came to Los Angeles in 1955. With a B.Com degree from Bombay, Furrokh finished his actuarial studies in London and worked there for 5 years before coming to Chicago's Northwestern University for an MBA. Furrokh now has a very successful Computer Services Company in Los Angeles, in partnership with **Phiroze Dalal**.

He arrived in New York in 1954, and took the train to Union Station in Chicago. Unaware of the long distance involved, Furrokh hailed a taxi to take him to the Northwestern cam-

pus (in Evanston). After paying the taxi-driver an exorbitant amount, he found out that his dorm was at Northwestern's other campus, just a few blocks from Union Station. This time, of course, he found his way back on the "L" train.

When Furrokh married, and **Naju Dastoor** arrived in 1957 as a young bride, there were hardly any Zarthustis in the Los Angeles area. Her American neighbors were warm and hospitable, and helped her get Americanized.

Soon, the Dastoor house became the gathering place for students and others who began to move into the area. In the early 1960s, about 30-40 Zarthustis from Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Diego and San Francisco, would meet there for Pateti and Navroze. "It was like a big family gathering," recalls Naju, "We cooked together, and everyone helped clean up." Part of this early group were **Dasturji Bode** and his wife **Homai**, **Farrokh Arjani** (now in San Francisco), **Adil Gandhi** (now in Orange County), **Darius Irani**, **Pervez Commisarriat** (who came in 1959 to the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation in Wisconsin, and is now a Senior Architect with the City of Los Angeles. Pervez and his wife Aban also started a business, marketing their private *Bombay Brand* pickles and spices), **Noshir Daruwalla**, and **Jehangir Sachinwalla**. ■

In the mid-1950s, **Dr. Framroze Ardeshir Bode**, Head Priest of the Fasli Agiary (and who had become a controversial figure following his performance of Navjotes of offspring of Parsi mothers and non-Parsi fathers, in the village of Bansda), and his gracious wife **Homai**, were invited to the USA under the auspices of the Mazdaznan Society in California [see *Mazdaznan Movement in America*, by **Dr. Kersey Antia**, this issue]. With **Mother Gloria**, a charismatic lady who sang Zarthusti prayers with a piano accompaniment, Dasturji Bode lectured at the Philosophical Research Institute and elsewhere, on religion and philosophy. The Bodes returned to Bombay in the 1970s; Dasturji passed away a few years later. ■

In 1956, **Farangis Shahrokh**, whose husband Ardeshir Yeganegi had passed away a few years earlier, came to the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, on 'Truman Point 4' and Ford Foundation scholarships, for a Masters program in Social Sciences. An uncle, **Bahman Shahrokh** had come to the US in 1949, and was a Professor of Pathology at Berkeley. Her two nephews **Iraj Shahrokh** (a solicitor, still in California) and his brother **Parviz Shahrokh** (at Berkeley) were also in California then. And **Hor-muz Soroushian** (uncle of Mehrborzin Soroushian of San Diego) was in San Jose.



Far left, Dastur Bode (center) with Dr. Behest Najad (right) and Asha, of the Mazdayasnan Order in Oregon, at the North American Congress in Chicago, 1977.

Left, Farangis Shahrokh, in 1956

Farangis recalls the depression she felt when, as part of her field studies, she saw the stark poverty in homes she visited — no food, no milk, broken furniture, crying, unclothed children — but beer cans everywhere, and a pink cadillac parked outside.

Though she returned to Iran in 1957 to take a leading role in Iranian Women's organization and in reviving the handicraft industry, she came to the US frequently on government assignments. In 1978, frustrated with the conspiracies and special interest groups that had moved in, she emigrated to the US. ■

— IRANIAN EXPERIENCE —

The 1970s and 80s brought a wave of Iranian Zarthustis to the US, especially to California. A large number came with the Iranian Revolution of January 1979, or during the 8-year Iran-Iraq war that followed, for political and economic reasons. Many fled, at great personal risk and sacrifice, to Pakistan in the East, or to Turkey in the West, and thence to the US.

On arrival in the US, many went through a period of depression, and wanted to return to their motherland Iran. "Was it really worth leaving home, job, family, country, and their whole life, to start in a new country, all over again?" said a 31-year-old businessman. But most have found a niche here, pursuing their professions and setting up businesses.

PARSI STUDENT EXPERIENCE

In contrast, the story of many Parsi-Indian students is somewhat different. **Hormuzd Commissariat**, after graduation from Bombay University, received admission from a number of US Universities, got a visa, and received scholarships in India to cover nearly half of his cost (his parents financed the other half). He came to Virginia Tech in 1993. Before he graduated with his Masters, he received 4 job offers through on-campus interviews. He is now working for Intel Corporation in California. "My company plans to sponsor my permanent residency," says Hormuzd, "And since I kinda like it here, I wouldn't mind." ■

The earliest records of Zarthustis in Canada have been documented by Jamshed Pavri [see *The Pioneer Settlers*, in this issue]. They include gold-pro prospector **Maneckji Faramji Javeri** to British Columbia during the Gold Rush, who could possibly be the first Zarthusti in Canada; **Sir Phirozshah Cursetji Sethna**, associated with Sun Life Assurance, in the early 1900s; dental student **Shiavax Nowroji Katrak** at Toronto University in 1922; land owner **Jalbahai Mehta** to British Columbia in the 1930s; **Lt. J. A. Moos** of the Royal Canadian Navy in Victoria; and engineer **Jehangir Nanabhai Badhni** in Toronto, in 1946.

Possibly the first Zarthusti immigrant to Canada in recent history, was **Rustom Bana**, to Vancouver, British Columbia, in 1941. World War II drove architect Bana, who was married to an English girl Hylda, and their three sons Adi, Nowsher and Narie from their home in Kobe-Osaka, Japan. After a year working on war building projects at Trail, BC, he traveled to San Francisco and obtained a special work permit from President Roosevelt's Secretary of Labor.

He worked as a ship engineer with Kaiser Shipbuilding yards, and later as an architect at the US Air Force base in Alameda, and various architectural offices in San Francisco until his retirement in 1970. Mr. Bana lived in downtown San Francisco for 57 years until his demise in 1989. His sister **Khorshed Dubash** also emigrated to the US and lived in San Francisco until she passed away.

As Rustomji's daughter-in-law, Shirley Bana recalls, two of Rustomji's three sons had their Navjotes done in India in 1935, and practiced the religion. All married Christian wives, and their children, who now live in Oregon and Los Angeles, do not practice the Zarthusti religion. ■

[By Maneck Bhujwala from Mr. Bana's daughter-in-law, Shirley Nowsher Bana].



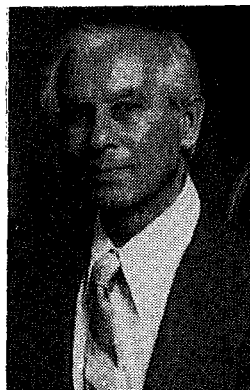
Dorab Wadia on his 70th birthday, Calgary, 1995

On a visit to the US in 1946, **Dorab Wadia's** uncle, **Pestonji Wadia**, shared a cabin with an American from Salt Lake City, who subsequently secured admission for Dorab at the University in Salt Lake City. After graduation with an M.S., he worked for a while. But in 1953, still on a student visa, and out of a job, it was difficult to immigrate to the US, so he opted for a student visa to Canada, and did post-graduate work in metallurgy at the University of Toronto for a year. A position with Sheritt-Gordon Mines brought him to Edmonton in 1953, where he married a Dutch girl, Agnes. In 1962, he moved to Calgary, where he taught at the Alberta Institute of Technology until his retirement in 1987. Dorab, who is a descendent of the Wadia shipbuilders, does not recall meeting any other Zarthustis in Alberta, until a few started coming in the mid-1960s. **Noshir** and **Freny Kapadia** settled in Medicine Hat, where Noshir was voted 'Best Chemistry Teacher in Canada'. ■

— TORONTO AREA —

With a B.E. from Poona Engineering College, **Baji Ghadiali** came to the University of Toronto in 1948. Upon graduation, he was employed as an engineer for Ontario's Hydroelectric construction projects for dams and generating stations.

He knew of no other Zarthustis in the area until the early 1950. His cousin **Bomi Ghadiali** (now in Los Angeles) graduated from the University of Toronto and worked for the Ontario Department of Highways. Baji and his wife **Marion**, have four grown children, and now live in Victoria, British Columbia. ■



Far left, Parsis in Toronto in the mid 1950s: Right to left, Bomi Ghadiali, the late Dorab Dastur, Keki, Dara Dastur and his wife Riina, and an unidentified couple.

Left, Baji Ghadiali in 1990

Adi Dastur, came to study Chemical Engineering and later Nuclear Engineering at the University of Toronto in 1956, following inter-science at Elphinstone College in Bombay. He made the long journey on a Lloyd Triestino liner from Bombay to Genoa, Italy, then on an Italian liner to Halifax, and by train to Toronto. He recalls a few other Parsi students at the University: in 1950, Miss **Tehmi Bharucha** obtained a MS in Social Sciences; in 1952, **Keki Bharucha** was a post-doctoral fellow in Chemistry; and in 1954, **Dara Dastur** obtained a graduate degree in Civil Engineering.

In the early 1950s, several families had arrived in Ontario, and applied for immigration status after finding employment. They underwent considerable hardships during their first years. **Eruch and Sabar Patel**, a banker from Jamshedpur, and **Khushrow Sanjana**, a lawyer from Bombay, were employed by the Provincial Government. **Gustad Contractor** was a Director in the Ministry of Mines in Ottawa. **Yezdi Kabraji** from Karachi, was employed as an accountant. **Homi Damkevala**, from Jamshedpur, was a high school teacher, and **Nariman Dhalla** later emigrated to the US.

Social contact among the Parsis was limited. The bachelors met for breakfast at Frans restaurant on Sunday mornings. Pateti and Navroze

were usually celebrated with dinner at a restaurant. No more than a dozen attended.

— MONTREAL AREA —

One of the earliest Zarthushtis to arrive in Montreal, Quebec was well-known photographer **Sam Tata**, who emigrated to Canada in 1956 with his wife **Rita** (since divorced) and daughter **Toni** (who now lives in Sooke, BC), to practice photo-journalism. Born in 1911, in Shanghai, to a Parsi family managing a textile mill, Tata had a cosmopolitan upbringing. While he had already become a photo journalist of repute, on arrival in Montreal, Sam began as a struggling, immigrant photographer. He started with studio work, making portraits of Montreal society. Then came assignments from the national Film Board, McLeans, Star Weekly, Time magazine and others. Major exhibitions followed, several books of his works have been published, and finally recognition came to Sam. Many consider Sam as Canada's top-most photographer. At 86, Sam continues to be active and



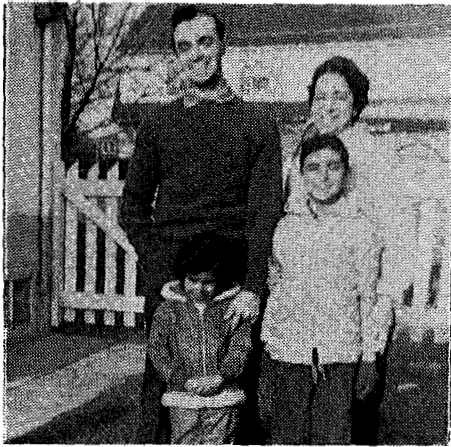
Sam Tata, Montreal, 1996

productive, and a familiar figure at Zarthushti gatherings in Montreal.

Among others who settled in Montreal in the 1960s, were **Jehan Bagli**, **Homi Daruwalla**, **Dhunjishah Surti**, **Ness Lakdawalla**, **Freddy Lakdawalla**, **Lowji Bharucha** and **Nowzer Kotwal**. ■

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Montreal, 1966: Jehan and Freny Bagli with Darius and Shiraz.

Leaving England (where he received his doctorate in medicinal chemistry) on an American cargo ship, **Jehan Bagli** came to Johns Hopkins in Baltimore, in 1955, on a post-doctoral fellowship. When the US Immigration authorities would not extend his Training Visa, he accepted a fellowship from the National Research Council of Canada.

With nothing but a verbal, telephone commitment from the Council, Jehan and his wife Freny picked up and moved to Laval University in Quebec City in 1959, and the following year, to a job with the new Ayerst Pharmaceuticals research labs in Montreal.

In 1983, Jehan was transferred to their new research center in Princeton, New Jersey, from where he retired as a Distinguished Research Fellow in February 1997.

During the early 1960s, Jehan saw the Montreal community evolve. For many years he published *Gavashni* magazine, and was the first editor of *FEZANA Journal*. In 1967, while on a visit to India, the community elected him in absentia, to be President of the newly-formed Zoroastrian Association of Quebec — the first North American Zoroastrian association, that is still in existence ■

Jamshed Pavri, his wife **Rhoda** and 18-month-old son arrived in Vancouver in 1958. They took the long route, first on the P&O liner *Strathnaver*, via Singapore to Sydney, Australia. Having been allowed only Rs. 800 with them, they stayed in Sydney for some days in the Salvation Army hotel and then took the *Orcades*, via Fiji and Hawaii to Vancouver.

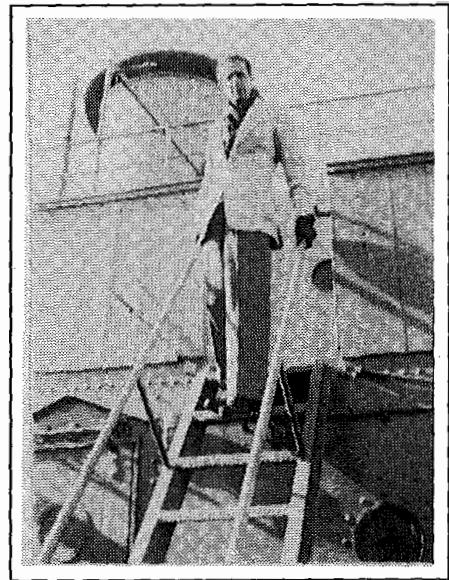
They brought 24 big crates of their belongings with them, accumulated from the years when Jamshed had business offices in Hong Kong, Japan, Karachi, East Africa and Bombay. They knew no other Zarthustis in the area at the time, and coming from a large joint family with four servants, adjustment was extremely difficult, especially for Rhoda.



GROUSE MOUNTAIN CHAIRLIFT
VANCOUVER, CANADA - 1959

Rhoda and Jamshed Pavri and Yezdi

Jamshed started his import/export business in Vancouver in a small way, with T-shirts, shoes from Japan, christmas wreaths, plastic flowers and other gift items. "He worked like a coolie," recalls Rhoda, "packing, and delivering it himself from store to store." But the way of doing business was quite different as every



Jehangir Medora, on the William Tilgman, 1946: "Just 12 passengers, and nothing to do except go up and down the stairs of the ship..."

customer wanted goods on credit and they did not have enough capital to keep the business rolling. After trying for two and a half years and losing \$60,000, they folded the business, and Jamshed went to work for Sealy Mattress Co. Jamshed passed away in 1989 in Vancouver.

With an LLB, and loans/scholarships from Parsi trusts, **Jehangir (Paymaster) Medora** came to New York in 1946 on the *William Tilgman* hauling manganese ore, after a 35-day voyage from Bombay, via the Suez, to Baltimore. He studied at Columbia University and worked with the UN, the India Supply Mission in Washington, and later, Larson and Toubro in India.

He immigrated to Canada in 1960, and secured his first job within a week, that sent him to Thompson, a nickle-mining town in Manitoba. It was an easy job — money flowed like water, because "nickle was like gold", but Jehangir could not stand the temperatures of 75°F below zero. He married a Canadian girl, and took a job in the copper-mining town of Tide Lake,



Jehangir Medora, in front of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's house.

where he first saw a grizzly bear, which standing on its hind legs, appeared to be about 14 feet tall.

Medora was responsible for facilitating the immigration of several hundred families to Canada. While in Ottawa, in the mid-1960s, Jehangir placed a small advertisement in the Bombay paper, *Jam-e-Jamshed*, encouraging Zarthustis to emigrate to Canada, which brought him a flood of over 1200 letters. He induced the Canadian Immigration authorities to send a friend, Col. A. E. Wood, to India, to conduct interviews with the prospective immigrants. Adi Katgara of Jeena Co. who was visiting Canada at the time, donated free airline tickets for Col. Wood. As a result, in the late 1960s, many hundreds of Zarthustis came to Canada as landed immigrants, mostly to Toronto.

Following the wave of Zarthustis that immigrated to Canada in the mid and late 1960s, the need was felt for a Zoroastrian body. In 1966, a group

of 17 Zarthustis met at a Church hall and formed a service group called the *Zoroastrian Fraternity* to provide information to prospective immigrants and provide help on their arrival.

Minoo Treasurywalla was one of the early officers of the Fraternity. Disillusioned with government controls and socialization pattern in India, he and his wife Coomi and two children, emigrated to Canada in 1965. His daughter secured a job as a secretary the very next day. However, Minoo, who had left a high position with Hindustan Lever, did not find a suitable job until 6 months later. "There was a community spir-

it," recalls Minoo, "everyone worked as one family, to help fellow community-members in those early days." ■

[1] S. Chandrasekhar, *From India to America*, Population Review Books, 8976 Cliffridge Avenue, La Jolla, CA 92037, \$25.

[2] H. D. Darukhanawala, *Parsi Lustre on Indian Soil*, Vol 1, 1939.

The author would like to thank all the persons who shared their early memories as well as their very precious photographs for this compilation. A special thanks to Jehangir Medora for sending numerous photographs from the 1940s and 50s.

"What most of these believers do not know, according to Bloom, is that the very notion of a millennium, the idea of the resurrection of the dead and fascination with dreams and angels are not Christian in origin. All are the invention of the Persian prophet Zoroaster, who lived probably 2,500 years before Christ."

From book review of "Omens of Millennium" by Harold Bloom, reviewed by Abbas Milani, in *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 13, 1996

Thoughts on Immigration

By Dolly Dastoor
Montreal, Quebec



The Dastoor family, in 1973

The decision to leave one's country of birth is generally arrived at after deep deliberations, for to leave the comfort zone of family and friends and start all over again as an adult is a leap in the dark. Most people do it once in their lifetime but to do it twice is little short of madness. But I am very glad our family indulged in this madness, for it has given us a depth of perception in human relationships on three different continents — India, Africa, and North America.

After living for 24 years in India, and then for 10 years in Nigeria, why did we choose Canada in 1973? I guess for the same reasons like everybody else — for stability and security. But we had forgotten to factor in the severe winters with mounds of snow which we dreaded the first few years, before we actually began to enjoy the beauty of frozen trees and the picture perfect snow-covered landscapes.

My most poignant moment came when I was given my Canadian citizenship. I was happy but felt guilty for giving up my Indian nationality. Though it was not true, I felt I was abandoning the country of my birth.

Am I glad I immigrated to Canada? Have my aspirations been met? Yes, I am very glad, not because of the fulfillment of my economic and pro-

THE IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE

Zarthustis in the diaspora speak of their thoughts and feelings on emigrating to North America.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

fessional aspirations, but for the unique opportunity it has afforded me to gain knowledge of my religion (which like many of my generation, I lacked in India) and experience first hand the excitement of the gradual unfolding of one "Zarthusti" community of my co-religionists from the diaspora. For I truly believe that the development of world political events which brought us together on this continent was for a purpose, and is an opportunity not to be lost.

Will my children, and my children's children feel the same way and participate in the process? I do not know, but if we are on the right track, then I sincerely hope so, otherwise all our efforts would have been in vain. ■

A Taxi-Driver's Welcome

By Jamshed Mavalwalla
Toronto, Ontario



In August 1960, a group of Fulbright scholars were sent by ship to Marseilles, France, by train to Paris, and then flown to New York. Euphoria was replaced by reality upon boarding the ship at Bombay. It was an old troop ship owned by P&O and it had no air-con-

ditioning. All the passengers were issued little folding cots, and every night, it was a scramble to find deck space. But we were all young and thrilled to be going to the US and full of confidence in the future.

On arrival in New York, I found myself making my way by train to Concord, New Hampshire to be with my host family. I had to change trains in Boston, and the Concord train left from another station. Some kind people on the train knew that the last train left in only a few minutes, so they ran me to a taxi, told him I was a new arrival, and asked him to race me over. Which he did. Not only did he get me there, but insisted on seeing me onto the train, and refused to take any money. Instead he gave me a handshake, and said "Welcome to America."

My early memories at Harvard are filled with how well I was treated by the Professors. These were eminent, world famous women and men. I got help from them all. After the paucity of computer equipment in India I was delirious with my access to the computer center, and totally overawed with the Widener Library and all the other libraries that surrounded me on the campus. Harvard opened avenues for me that I did not even know existed.

For many who came, the first years were hard. With the grace of God, and many many good people, my only problem was finding enough hours in each day to do all the things I wanted to get done. If I have



Homi and Villy Gandhi with their sons, boy scouts Hanoz and Navroz.

learned anything from those first years, it is that no matter how bright you think you are, or how hard you work, in the final analysis it is the others around you who truly enrich your life. I am so grateful that I did not have to stand alone. ■

Incredible Challenges

*By Villy Gandhi
Glen Rock, New Jersey*

Our family came to the United States in September 1981 as a result of a job transfer. Our sons, Hanoz and Navroz, at 9 and 7 years of age, had a very difficult time adjusting to their peers in school. Friendly, outgoing, courteous and intelligent, their uniqueness became an immediate threat to their young peers who felt that they were somehow 'different'. Those were cruel and difficult years, but in the long run, were to a large measure responsible in molding their tenacity of purpose, their sensitivity and compassion toward others, and their active pursuit of personal and academic excellence.

Prior to Homi's transfer to New York, from Nigeria, I had taught at Bombay University. With 5 years experience under my belt I had toyed with the idea of teaching at college level. However, in order to become better acquainted with the American system of public education, I decided to go back to school. I took education courses and became a certified teacher of English, K-12. Simultaneously, I tried to get some practical

experience in the classroom as a substitute teacher.

My first day on the job is etched in my memory as the ultimate definition of the term 'culture shock'. Never then, in my wildest dreams, could I have suspected, even remotely, that I would see students exercise such informality, as applying make-up, eating, chewing gum, talking out of turn, walking out of the class at will, and on the whole refusing to follow instructions.

Looking back, the incredible challenges of those years redefined our expectations of the culture and set more immediate goals in terms of adjustment for ourselves. Six years later we became citizens, actively involved in competitive careers, while our sons only recently graduated from MIT and Brown University.

It would be fair to say that a journey that we undertook over 16 years ago has been in equal measure a journey in tremendous personal, academic, and professional growth. The strength and bonds of friendships within the Zoroastrian community and the support without, has been an invaluable player in our achievements.

Yet, I am not quite so sure this is a country to grow old in. The concept of nursing homes scares me immensely. There have to be far better alternatives. The fact of the matter is, do we as a community, have the courage, the foresight, the wisdom, and above all the willingness, to create them. ■

One for All and All for One

*By Homi Daruwalla
Montreal, Quebec*

[Founding member of the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec and its first Secretary.]

My wife, who was carrying our second child, our eldest daughter, then two and a half years old, and I set sail from Bombay in March 1963 and arrived in Montreal on Sunday April 17, 1963, and, by a nice coincidence, Behram Roj.

It took me one and a half months to penetrate the so-called 'Canadian Experience' barrier, after which it was a little easier. By June 1963 we were the proud parents of our second daughter for whom I forked out \$500 CD, as I had not completed the three-month residency requirement.

In 1968 we had our last child, which I blame squarely on the Government of Canada TV ads which implored viewers "Why wait for Spring, do it now.", which I literally took to heart.

I have never regretted leaving the shores of India and whilst the Canadian winters can get you down, especially when you are 63, and there is no Shangrila in this world.

All in all, we have had a good life. We did what was the best for our family and community, and it is now up to the second generation to pick up. Our community in Montreal is about 300 strong, and we interact as 'One for all and all for one'.

I wish to make one observation that in spite of our presence in this new world, of over 25 years, we have failed to come to terms on two thorny issues: (1) the unification of calendars, and (2) the official and unequivocal acceptance of offspring of mixed marriages. It is my hope that our generation will successfully settle this issue, leaving to our second generation, the more complicated ones that will rise as they go through life. ■

Taste of America

By Maneck Bhujwala
San Jose, California

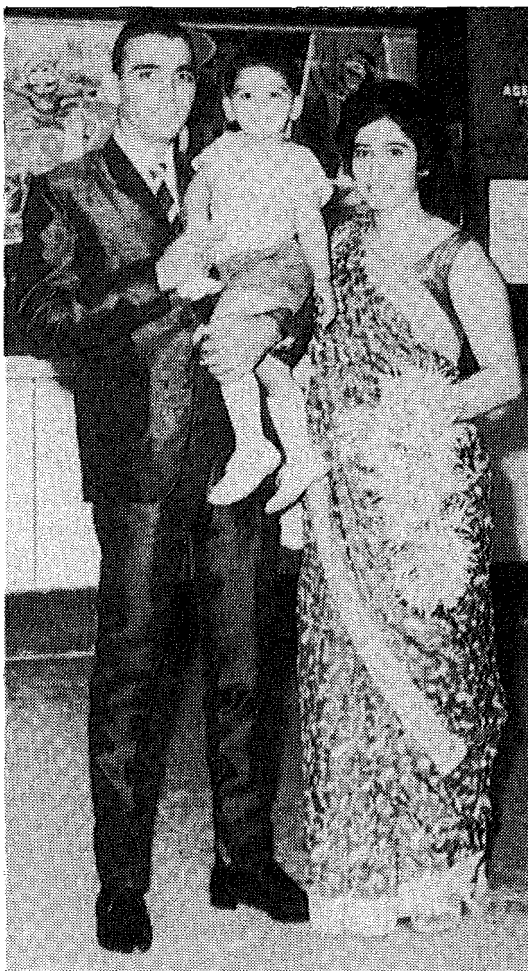
I came to the USA in August 1965, stopping over in Beirut, Lebanon, (it was a beautiful city before the civil war there), Rome and London, on the way. I had completed my B.E. from the University of Baroda, and was headed for Graduate School in the US., with a Rs.12,000 loan from the R. D. Sethna Trust.

The sight of New York and its Statue of Liberty was impressive as expected, but when I arrived at Albuquerque, New Mexico, I was at first disappointed by the appearance of the buildings. They had the 'Adobe' style of architecture, with the native American Pueblo look. It reminded me of building structures in villages of India. But I was soon assured that I was in an advanced and prosperous country, after I saw all the modern facilities inside the buildings.

Getting out of the airport, I got a pleasant taste of American hospitality. Walking with my big suitcase, looking for public transportation (I was trying to save my few dollars with which I came), some businessmen saw me and gave me a ride to the University dormitory. I was indeed lucky, as I had no idea of the long distances involved. One of the inside jokes was that if you saw someone walking in the US, it would either be an American Indian (Native American) or a foreign student. The sidewalks were mostly empty, as everyone drove cars.

One of the things I learned was not to say "No, thank you" when someone offered you food or drink, like we do for etiquette sake, in India. One time I was at a friend's house, and when he offered me refreshments, even though I was quite hungry, I said, "No, thank you", expecting that he would insist. But he took my "No" as final, and I was left having to eat my own words instead.

A Parsi friend, Firoze Irani and I once went to a restaurant/bar on our very first Christmas eve in the US, and got our first taste of American style violence. As we were having a drink, one drunk restaurant patron called another a liar, and that started a hand-to-hand fight that involved a whole bunch of people. It was just like a wild west movie scene. ■



Departure from Bombay airport, 1967: Pervin and Jimmy Mistry and son Nauzer.

From the Cacophony of Crows in Dadar to the Deafening Quiet of Canada

By Pervin Mistry,
Mississauga, Ontario

We arrived as immigrants to Canada in July 1967, even though Jimmy was here several times before (on board ship). Our son Nauzer was an infant when we set foot in Toronto. Our personal belongings were minimal, but our expectations were maximum. What impressed us the most at first

glance was the sheer size of everything! The airport, cars, high-rises, multi-lane highways, the 'deafening' quiet, and the cleanliness!

But Oh! How I longed for the constant ringing of the doorbell, the din of the hawkers and the cacophony of the crows! Having lived most of my life at Dadar Parsi Colony, Bombay, I felt entombed by the vast silence.

It was too late to regret, hence we began to appreciate all that was replaceable and easy to leave behind. I felt very homesick in the beginning, although Jimmy, Nauzer and I were a close family. The size and solitude of our new environment, enhanced the absence of our extended families.

Soon we began to form a nucleus of other Zarthustis who were also new immigrants. We shopped and ate together on weekends and organized outings. At that time there was only one semi-Indian/Caribbean grocery that sold some of our spices and vegetables. As all families did not own a car, we took turns to shop for those without transportation.

The Thorncliffe Park area soon became a miniature 'Parsi Colony'. It was from here that the need for an official organization was felt; the 'Zarthusti Fraternity' then conceived to form the ZSO.

Meanwhile, Jimmy's jobs with a shipping company, and later with Bechtel took him all over Canada, and abroad: Tokyo, Algeria, Australia, Papua New Guinea, Italy, Saudi Arabia, Saint John, and back to Toronto. Everywhere, he met a lot of Zarthustis, even in Papua!

Looking back, the nostalgia lingers. Our family has grown, expectations have been fulfilled. The silence is less deafening, our community is well, our beautiful city of Toronto has grown exponentially.

What has not changed, is the need to bond with the extended family in Bombay, and our need to identify cultural and religious roots. ■

Coping with 35° Below Zero

Firdaus Mehta came as a student at the Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts, in August 1971; and went back briefly to Bombay a year later to marry Rashne.

His immigration application to Canada came through faster than the US, and so, Firdaus loaded "everything we owned" including baby Sherezade (who was not yet born) into the old Dodge Polara (bought for \$100) and moved from Worcester to Toronto.

The biggest problem there was finding the first job. "Do you have any Canadian experience?" they would ask, and all that Firdaus could say was: "Yes, I just passed through Canadian customs."

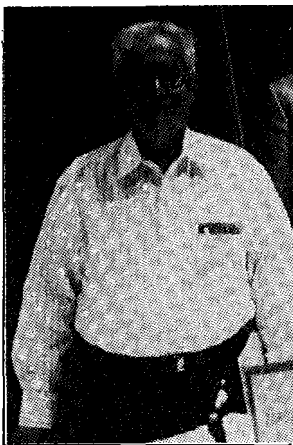
When they moved to Edmonton in 1975, Alberta was on the verge of the oil and gas growth, preliminary to the oil boom. Edmonton was just coming out of being a rural, farming and ranching community, to a modern, industrial town. There were about 20 Zarthusis there at the time.

What he was not prepared for was the intense cold — down to 45°F below zero in mid-winter; and the effects of wind chill on uncovered skin. Cars had to be 'plugged in' overnight — they even had 'plug points' at the kerb in parking lots, to keep the cars running through the bitter cold. There is snow on the ground from November through March.

And of course, he had to learn that one does not hang laundry out to dry in that weather. In a few minutes it freezes, and becomes stiff as a board!

First Day in New York City

When Framroze Patel first arrived in New York, in 1970, he sported a big mustache that he used to curl and wax. But out job-hunting the first day, the Jewish agent at the Accounting Agency told him: "Sonny boy, if you want a job in New York City, shave it off, and come back tomorrow!"



The next day, mustache well-trimmed, and with a letter of introduction from a friend in Bombay, he made his way to meet a gentleman at the Union Carbide building at 270 Park Avenue.

After the interview, too embarrassed to ask where the men's washrooms were, Framroze thought he would try to find them on his own. So, he walked out towards the elevators, and tried a door that looked like the washroom. But it was a Fire Escape door, and promptly shut behind him, leaving him stranded in the stairwell on the 40th floor.

He had no choice but to walk down those 40 flights of stairs (and he still had not found the washrooms, either)! He then made his way to Grand Central Station — for surely, there would be washrooms at the railway station. And he did find them. Rows upon rows of them. But each needed a coin to get in! Not having any coins handy, of course, he waited patiently outside, until a kindly gentleman held the door open after himself, for Framroze to sneak in. ■

An Accountant's Odyssey

*Jamshed B. Gandhi
San Francisco, California*

I was twenty-six years of age when I arrived in the US in September 1978. Realistically, I was prepared to start anew; I had no visions of California pavements being paved with gold. But what was to follow was more challenging than I had expected.

Reality struck soon. I was disappointed to find that all my education in the past was really ... in the past. Having to start at the bottom rung of the ladder in a new land was discour-

aging. As I was a part qualified accountant from the UK and holder of a Bachelor's degree from Pakistan (who had not earned a graduate degree from the USA), I had a tough time even qualifying to take the CPA exam. I thought of returning back to England many times; what kept me here was the great support I received from my parents and a little persistence of my own.

The freedom of expression and the variety of ideas this country had to offer, was a radical change for me. I also learned that the rigidity we have in our education systems the world over is self-defeating. The flip side is that we live in a highly specialized world; each country has its own disciplines and dictates to adhere to. Getting a job quickly helped and that led me to the belief that education aside, there is no substitute for experience.

Our profession of accountancy is not attractive to students, as ours is an ancient profession, based on tenure and a lot of long hours. The rewards in the early years are minimal. In today's world of "a concept today — a million dollars in the bank tomorrow", accountancy takes a back seat. However, I think it still remains and will always remain a very solid profession.

Ours is a profession on which the very heart, mind, pulse, and soul of a free market system depends.

I urge all our students of today and the professionals of tomorrow to consider this not as a quick road from rags to riches, but as a stable and time-proven resource. If you stand by it, it will stand by you. Of this I have no doubt, and as a matter of fact, I am sure! ■

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

"When you can think of yesterday without regret and tomorrow without fear, you are near contentment."

-AZA Newsletter, November 1996



IN THE MELTING POT

By Mehran Sepehri
Mountain View, California

adequate planning for the long adventure.

Many Zarthusti families who recently immigrated here, are confused and worried. In a fast-changing, foreign world, Zarthusti parents are not at ease and Zarthusti youth seem restless. Would it be safer to remain unchanged, or to mix into the melting pot? Where will our small community end up, with ever-increasing intermarriages and changing values?

Safe at home. I was born and raised in Kerman, Iran, in an area known as *Mahaleh Gabroon* (Zarthusti neighborhood). Almost all my early friends were Zarthustis, as was everyone living within the block. Being Zarthusti was not only a religion, it was a way of life.

In high school, I became a member of a bigger community, where only some were Zarthusti. I learned to feel comfortable with people of the majority religion. But my social contacts were still with my Zarthusti friends. I felt safe going back to my comfort zone within my Zarthusti neighborhood.

Changing world. When I moved to Tehran to start college, I came to the realization that Zarthustis were few and far between. I had to drive some distance to see friends or relatives. I became active in Zarthusti youth groups, Zarthusti newsletters and such — new dimensions to keep up with the community and my heritage.

As I was getting used to my new, enlarged, comfort zone, and new ways of staying connected with Zarthustis, at the age of 21, I undertook a major adventure — I came to the US for graduate school. My little world expanded suddenly, as did my standards and lifestyle. I felt fortunate that at least I had some relatives and friends nearby.

On a positive note, I felt free of old-time biases and prejudice. It did not matter that my friends were Chinese, or Indian or Iranian. I did not care how they looked or what they ate. I only cared about their attitudes and values. My Zarthusti friends of course fit well there.

Virtual Anjumans. We now live in a world of high technology, cyber space and virtual reality. Internet technology now brings together people from all over without regard to identity, time or distance. I work in a virtual factory, stretching over three continents. A virtual assembly line crosses borders, time zones and oceans, and delivers products on time. On the social side I am virtually connected and in constant touch with friends over five continents.

Zarthustis in growing numbers, are joining the Internet and connecting online with each other. It seems we are in a "Virtual Anjuman" where we can gather, exchange ideas, and learn Zarthusti ways. Our presence and bonds are now stronger than ever.

Our conventional barriers of time, distance, skills and languages are of the past. But is our world more meaningful and fulfilling than that of our ancestors in Iran or India?

Freedom and technology is a two-edged sword. We have the ability to reach out to people across the world with the speed of light. But freedom and technology do not give us the wisdom of choosing the right path. In this new world order, more than ever, we need good thoughts, good words, and good deeds.

We now have a new home in North America. We have put Zarthusti Associations all over the map. We now need a new way to revive and excel. We need to re-examine our beliefs and priorities and reinforce our foundation. We need to pave the way for the next generation. The torch is ours to claim, and pass on. ■

Freedom for all. North America, in particular the West coast of the USA, is known as the 'melting pot'. It is home to many minorities who have chosen to mix in the multi-dimensional culture of this land. It is where minorities are, in fact, the majority.

They moved here for a piece of the American Dream. While a few, who failed to find those 'streets paved with gold', most of the immigrants stayed, prospered, and became part of the new America.

Affirmative Action laws have been recently relaxed with outcries of 'reverse discrimination'. There is a separation of State and Church, so religious beliefs have little influence in schools and the workplace. Anyone can climb up the ranks freely, regardless of family, race or religion.

Forced immigration. Many early immigrants, who followed their dreams or relatives to the new land, were filled with enthusiasm and energy to take on new challenges. They dedicated themselves to their schooling and businesses. They excelled, and became role models for other immigrants.

On the other hand, many others, such as the Iranians who left their homeland in the late 1970s and early 1980s, did so in a hurry. They left because of the actual or perceived political and financial pressures and persecutions. Some families were divided with a few dear members staying behind. Most left without

MADAM BUTTERFLY

By Shahriar Shahriari
Vancouver, Canada

It was dark, and cramped, and humid. The walls were closing in and exerting pressure on the body. It felt as if the whole body was going to implode. And then an opening, a light at the end of the tunnel appeared. The body started pushing against the walls, and miraculously they gave way. The opening enlarged and the light got brighter. And then, suddenly, as if through sorcery, the walls fell back and the body was released.

A few hours later, the beautiful Madam Butterfly was fluttering about and enjoying herself. This was the ecstasy of freedom, and the magic of beauty.

Suddenly Madam Butterfly noticed a caterpillar clinging to a branch, slowly inching its way to the next leaf. And this brought back a flood of memories. Madam Butterfly remembered the time that she was a caterpillar, and was glad for her decision to weave her cocoon, to go through the solitary period of transformation, and emerge as this agile and wonderful creature.

And then with a second glance at the caterpillar, a rush of compassion and love flooded her body. She thought: "If only this poor caterpillar knew that it could decide to transform, and become a butterfly ..."

As if through divine revelation, a whole myriad of possibilities opened up to her. She then discovered her mission. To let every caterpillar know that all they need to do is to decide, and patiently go through the trials and tribulations of transformation, and they will automatically emerge as butterflies. Yes, she decided that she could spend the rest of her life doing this.

So without hesitation she approached the caterpillar and started telling him

her own story. The caterpillar listened intently as if listening to a mythical tale of magic and enchantment. The story reverberated at the deepest levels of its being, yet it was too fantastic to be true. So the caterpillar challenged Madam Butterfly to come and tell the same story to the entire caterpillar colony. "Wonderful!" thought Madam Butterfly, "Nothing could have been more synchronistic!" And off they went.

At a gathering where a number of younger and elder caterpillars had formed a circle, Madam Butterfly was introduced. She went to the center of the circle and started telling them about her own story of transformation.

Everybody was delighted, yet a few of the elders became slightly apprehensive. Then they thought this was only a story and no harm was done. They thanked Madam Butterfly, and politely hinted that they were waiting for her departure. Madam Butterfly did not know how to react. "I suppose they don't understand that I am telling them that I am one of them."

So she went directly into an arousing speech: "I am not here to tell you stories of myth and legend. I just told you my own story. I was one of you, and one day I made my decision. I found a secure spot and started weaving. I went head-on into the unknown, having faith that this transformation was for the better. I weathered many challenges, and at times I was lucky too. And finally I emerged as this free and beautiful creature that you see. Each and every one of you also has the same potential. But you must make the decision. It is your choice. Stay with the known with all of its limitations, or challenge yourselves, go into the unknown and let your inner beauty emerge."

The elders by now were visibly agitated. At first they tried to discredit and denounce Madam Butterfly. But

her persistence and dedication finally won through. Then seeing Madam Butterfly as a threat to their way of being, they openly opposed her and made every effort to shield the young caterpillars from her, and to isolate her and even banish her.

But she was determined, and she knew she was on the side of the inevitable, of growth and evolution. Eventually, a few of the younger caterpillars decided to try this adventure for themselves. They left the colony to find a safe and sacred space, and start weaving a cocoon around themselves.

Madam Butterfly located the few individuals who were going to undertake this transformation and warned them about the difficulties of this endeavor. That some of the cocoons will be dislodged by wind, some will be soaked by rain, others would be pecked by birds, yet others would be eaten with the branches by various animals of the forest. That the process was far from being smooth or certain. But the by-now inspired caterpillars responded that life as a caterpillar was not certain. In fact the only certainty they had was the hardship and eventual demise. And they embarked on their journey.

Every day, more and more caterpillars would find the courage to undertake the heroic journey, and every day, the elders were getting more and more concerned. Some tried to increase their indoctrination of the old ways. Others tried to find half-hearted solutions at modifying their old ways, coming up with some compromise attempts at prolonging the status quo. And all of them started attacking each other's ways.

But as Madam Butterfly had known deep in her heart, she was on the side of the inevitable. By this time, some of the first caterpillars who had embarked on this journey returned as butterflies and started talking about their ordeals. The similarity of their stories with Madam Butterfly's was

[Continued on page 75]

I was born in 1970 in a small town in England to my parents who had moved to England from Bombay, India. For eleven years I was raised and schooled in England, where I found out the hard way that my classmates would always remind me of who I was — an outsider in their country. As was common in my childhood, I would take insult to prejudice and had no apprehension about fighting back when my honor, culture and identity were being ridiculed.

In England, Indians are a secondary class and viewed in much the same way as minorities are treated in the United States — an unknown, different, colored sub-culture. However, some English were more open about their disdain for Indians; from schools to the English corporate culture, there lay a clear glass ceiling of acceptance that ate away at me on a daily basis.

My father, sensing the lack of opportunity in England took advantage of a job offer to come to the US in the late seventies. His dream had long been to live and prosper in America, a country whose abundance of opportunity and ability to prosper he learned about by frequently watching movies in Bombay's cinema houses as a boy.

A Year in Bombay. During the transition, my mother, brother and I moved to India for about a year to spend time with relatives and friends as plans for America were edging closer.

Once again I felt like an outsider, only this time it was in the Indian school system. I had a British accent, Western look and I was bigger than they were, which soon became an asset as I took to their way of life and enjoyed my uniqueness. I starred in the school play, as an ancient king, learned to read, write and speak both Hindi and Gujarati, and excelled in their sports.

IMMIGRANT NATION

I am writing this article anonymously. There is no specific reason for maintaining anonymity, except for my selfish desire to portray my life with shared commonalities and experiences that mirror those of my fellow North American Zarthustis.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Shortly after my brother and I completed our Navjote ceremony in 1981, we learned that our green cards were ready and we began packing for our new life in the US. Once again we were a family of four, and life in a sense had started over. We were amazed by America's geographic vastness, the size and abundance of food and drink at the grocery stores and restaurants, and the strange perception that no one really walked much in America — they only drove big cars.

In the past it was strange for me to wake up in a foreign place, be it in India or England, and I would often have difficulty sleeping. I remember my first night in the US, as I climbed into my sleeping bag in the two-bedroom apartment we rented in a northern Chicago suburb. For the first time in my life I felt comfortable, at ease and ready to begin the third chapter of my life. I slept soundly, dreaming for the first time in a long time, and when I awoke, my eyes were greeted by warm sunlight — something I rarely enjoyed in rainy England.

Joining the Melting Pot. My voice began almost immediately to take on a more American twang. New found words in my vocabulary included "neat", "awesome", and of course,

"have a nice day." Other changes began when I intermingled with kids in school. Girls took a liking to my British accent, while guys seemed particularly jealous and ready to ridicule me for it. The latter forces ultimately prevailed since mentally I was tired of being different from everyone else.

One consistent character flaw I had, was getting into fights with those who continued to tease and ridicule me just because I was different. I unhappily admit that I would reach a boiling point and then go ballistic. One such incident resulted in an in-school suspension during seventh-grade when an eighth-grader continued to launch daily attacks on my heritage and skin color. When I lost my cool I unleashed a hard blow to his face not realizing that my pencil, clenched tightly in my hand, would forge a thick lead gash along his cheek.

No one really walked much in America — they only drove big cars.

Incidents like that followed me into boy scouts, and even my freshman year of high school. At one point I was munching on some fries with a few close friends in a crowded cafeteria when an older, tougher, and ominous student pushed my chair into my stomach so he could get through the tables. He then began his very verbal and public assault calling me a "f#\$%^&* sand nigger," at which point I picked up my ketchup-laden fries and hurled them at him ruining his precious letterman's jacket in front of everyone. Luckily, a cheerleader stepped in to calm her raging jock friend and the hush of the cafeteria soon crept to a widespread murmur among the students.

In high school I developed two skills I frequently flirted with — writing and sports — and developed a partic-

ular admiration for the art of reporting, as I discovered my potential at the school newspaper. It was then that I realized an important distinction between America and England — that students in American schools have an unbelievable opportunity to excel in practically whatever they want.

I graduated in 1988 and experienced something completely new to me that summer — a Zoroastrian youth congress — the second of its kind, in Chicago. Never had I felt more at home and comfortable than to be with other Zarthustis in such a large philosophical and social forum.

Community Growing Pains. At the congress my heart raced with questions about some of the issues that confronted the community, such as interracial marriage and conversion. Why they were, and continue to be, such hot-button issues puzzles me to this day. At one point I approached the microphone and asked out of curiosity how many young Zarthustis approved of conversion and acceptance of interracial marriage, so I could get a clear visual image of how a sample of our youth population felt about these issues.

However, the very second I uttered my request and hands began to rise, I was pulled away and muzzled by a representative from the host city. He hastily announced that the session was going into a short five-minute recess and then pulled me aside, yelling at me in his ultra-orthodox, paranoid, half-English that I was not to ask such questions. From that day forward I took a keen interest in my community. I observed attitudes, issues and tempers at their worst. As I and my Zarthusti friends grew older, attended colleges in the Midwest and began seriously dating members of the opposite sex, I began to see and hear the unthinkable.

I learned of a number of parents, within my own Parsi community, who began ostracizing their children because they chose to marry non-Zarthustis. While I became familiar

with a few of these incidents I began asking myself some serious questions about who we are as Parsis. Another similarly disturbing example of our own ignorance came when I read months later of a Parsi woman who was not given the traditional Parsi funeral rights because she had married outside the religion.

[REDACTED]

The most difficult aspect of growing up as an immigrant in America has been in dealing with the state of our Zarthusti communities.

Present State of Affairs. As time progressed through my college days and now into my career, I, like many young Zarthustis, wonder about the state of affairs in our community. Growing up in a strong and close community like Chicago was wonderful socially, but as in each association across North America, there remains a gap in communication and identification between two generations: the adult generation that came to this country with high hopes for their children, and the younger generation who seem to have melted quicker into the American pot.

Now in the age of information technology and the Internet, one would think that generations of Zarthustis might be able to increase the dialogue on so many of the issues that confront us as North Americans. But it seems to have only inflamed the problem, with the views of the radical right consuming the valuable Zarthusti alias. Although protected by freedom of speech on the Internet, the right-wing, ultra-conservative establishment has tainted the reputation and image of our community, leaving the majority of level-headed

North American Zarthustis in an empty silence.

Being shaped by many experiences in my life, it is interesting to note that the most difficult aspect of growing up as an immigrant in North America has been dealing with the state of our Zarthusti communities. After all, what foundation for growth does a religious community have, if its followers are submerged in petty bickering and squabble?

But the majority of open-minded, accepting Zarthustis, ultimately will have to take responsibility for the community as we head into the next millennium. With a renewed confidence to improve our current state of community affairs, we must phase out the old world extremist views that savagely pollute our ability to move forward. We as a young North American Zarthusti generation must create our own empowerment, be more proactive in seeking a change of leadership and responsibly implement a framework of ideas that moves us from stagnancy to a united and growing population.

Today I am 26 years old, and working in the corporate communications office of a major Fortune 500 financial services company. Immigrating with my family worked for us and for hundreds of Zarthusti families throughout North America, but whether that experience has positively impacted our Zarthusti communities, remains in question.

Perhaps we should take our immigrant experience and use it to improve the current state of our North American Zarthusti landscape, because within the heart of each of us is a fundamental desire as an immigrant nation to pursue our dreams to the fullest. ■

*“Thoughts lead on to purposes,
Purposes go forth in action,
Actions form habits, habits decide character,
And character fixes our destiny.”*

- Tyron Edwards

The First North American Zoroastrian Congress is Born

By Armaity Homavazir
Toronto, Ontario

Over twenty years ago, the idea of the first Zoroastrian Congress in North America was introduced by Dr. Jamshed Mavalwala of Toronto, Canada. Understanding that the situation in the North American diaspora differed greatly from the problems and solutions offered back home, his motivation was to look for new leadership on the North American continent. Realizing that the issues we faced in North America were not properly understood back home, he saw the need to recognize new leadership here rather than turn to the 'home' community.

It is interesting to note that some of the pertinent issues twenty years ago still remain so today. Some common themes are: continuity, identity, preservation, and methods to bring together the dispersed community in an organized forum to discuss ideas freely and intelligently. And thus the first Congress was born!

The First North American Zoroastrian Congress was held on May 18, 1975. The symposium was a one-day event, held at the University of Toronto. Jamshed Mavalwala, who was then the President of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario, organized this congress as the final event of the year, of the Lecture Subcommittee of the ZSO. Ervad Yezdi Antia was the chairperson of the subcommittee. There was no formal Congress Committee, but people like Maneck and

Katy Khambata, Adi and Renata Dastur and Minoo Treasurywalla should be remembered for their invaluable help in its organization.

The theme was the *Future of the Zoroastrian Community*. About 150 delegates attended from Ontario, Quebec, Winnipeg, Vancouver, Illinois, New Jersey, New York, and as far away as India and Pakistan. With the help of a federal grant from the Department of Multiculturalism, and the generosity of Minoo Treasurywalla, who personally covered the cost of the luncheon, the participant's fee was only \$5!

The first session was *Ceremonial and Ritual in the Future of the Zoroastrian Community* with speaker Dr. Jehan Bagli, chaired by Moti Balsara, with panelists: Minoo Treasurywalla, Dina Austin, Jamshed Pavri and Gool Minwalla. The second session discussed *Social Organization of the Zoroastrian Community and its Implications for the Future*, with speaker Dr. Jamshed Mavalwala, chaired by Jehangir Karanjia, with panelists: Eruch Munshi, Sam Vesuna, Jal Guzder, Keki Bhote, and Behram Parsi.

A youth workshop was simultaneously conducted by Toronto youth: Daraius Golwalla, Freny Elavia, and Yezdi Kabrajee. A report of their discussions was presented to the general audience, in the third session. All speeches and question/answer dialogues were published in a report following the congress. What was most interesting was the list of participants and recognition that some of these individuals are still active and devoted in their respective communities today.

Another positive outcome of holding our congresses was the introduction of the North American Zoroastrian Awards of Excellence. In 1988 during the Sixth North American Zoroastrian Congress, held in Toronto, Dr. Mavalwala suggested implementing these awards to highlight the achievements of individuals within our North American community. Worthy individuals got recognition,

and served as role models for ourselves and for future generations. Since then, the number and types of awards have expanded, and are now orchestrated by the FEZANA Awards Committee.

In retrospect, Dr. Mavalwala feels that part of the success of the congress was that so many people participated in this first-time event. They whole-heartedly agreed that such an event should indeed continue in the future. And today in 1996, we see after the recent hosting of the Tenth North American Zoroastrian Congress in San Francisco, that the tradition still lives on, and that the congress has become an integral part of our North American community's activities. ■

A Historian's Dilemma ...

Notes: [Continued from page 18]

[1] See among others, S. A. Nigosian, *The Zoroastrian Faith: Tradition and Modern Research*, McGill-Queens University Press, Montreal, 1993.

[2] See the careful sifting of the historical evidence undertaken by Mary Boyce, *Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1979.

[3] For problems of Muslim-Zoroastrian coexistence see Jamsheed K. Choksy, "Zoroastrians in Muslim Iran: Selected Problems of Coexistence and Interaction during the Early Medieval Period", *Iranian Studies* 20/1, 17-30, 1987.

[4] To be sure, there are reports written on the Zoroastrians by European travelers to India (and Persia) from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries, but they are limited to comments on the social and religious differences between Parsis and Hindus. For a survey of European travelers to India (and Persia), see D. Menant, *Les Parsis, histoire des communautés Zoroastriennes de l'Inde*, E. Leroux, Paris, 1898.

[5] Bahman Ibn Kai-Kubad, "Kisse Sanjan, or the Story of Sanjan." In *The Story of Sanjan: or The Supposed History of the Parsi Migration to India from Khorasan. A Critical Study*, edited and translated by Mehrban Sohrab Irani, Poona, 1943, pp.91-122.

YOUTH FULLY SPEAKING

THE MOUTHPIECE OF A GENERATION...

Colonization of the Mind...a Conversation With My Grandfather

by Aaron Rustom

As a child growing up, I was blessed to have a large extended family of grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins whom I could visit at any time. They were all part of my mother's family and all lived in Texas. However, I never knew my father's side and somehow would never feel complete until I had a chance to meet them. The problem was that his family was spread all over the world in Kenya, India, Australia, and England.

I used to amaze the kids in school with the list of continents that the "mighty Rustomji clan" inhabited. By bombarding them with so much information, they could never really grasp where my family came from or for that matter what my heritage consisted of. "Surely your father must be Black if he's from Africa," they would often say. After explaining to them that Africa was not a country I went into a detailed explanation of how the Indians migrated to East Africa.

It was around that time that my parents decided that it would indeed be a good idea for me to discover my Zarthusti roots. So in 1979, my parents sent me on a six week odyssey to India, Kenya, and England. Once in Bombay I was to meet my father's brother Kersi, who was flying in with his family from Australia.

On the morning of my flight, I was pretty nervous at the thought of leaving my home behind. I was appropriately outfitted in my "Levis" and a bright orange tee-shirt that read, "Texan: Handle With Care". Some of my fears were allayed when a beautiful flight attendant took my hand and promised to look after me and "handle me with care".

When I first stepped off the plane in Bombay, I was struck by a particular smell, not a bad one, but definitely unique to Bombay, as anyone who has been can probably tell you. I raced through the

line in customs, all due to my lovely chaperone. She was to release me to the custody of some long time family friends.

Within minutes, two gentlemen walked up to us and said they were here to take me to my grandfather. I first bombarded them with questions about my family, just to make sure they were on the level. Finally they pulled out a picture of my me and my parents. So I reluctantly left my beautiful escort with my memories and a kiss on the cheek.

I slept for most of the morning and awoke to the horns, clangs, and yelling that is so much a part of Bombay. After meeting the rest of the family, I asked where my grandfather was. They told me he liked to sit and have his tea near the window in the living room.

I entered the living room and found an old man, sitting in an old wooden chair, sipping tea, and looking out the window. I was puzzled by this sight because

I knew my grandfather had cataracts and could not see very well. I did not want to disturb him because he looked so peaceful. But, before I knew it he turned and faced me.

"Is that my grandson Aaron?" he asked. His voice sounded warm and inviting but at the same time frail.

I answered as best I could, "Yes it is." I felt as if I should have said something clever or endearing, but could not muster the words.

He beckoned me to approach and I obliged him. As I hugged him I felt a connection to my past as I had never experienced before.

We sat there for an hour talking to each other about the nine years of time we never had together.

I wanted to know so many things about our family history and how I came to be.

My grandfather told me that many Parsis moved to East Africa to work in the banks and on the railroads as my great uncles had done.

"Multicultural man is the person who is intellectually and emotionally committed to the fundamental unity of all human beings while at the same time he recognizes, legitimizes, accepts, and appreciates the fundamental differences that lie between people from different cultures. This new kind of man cannot be defined by the language he speaks, the countries he has visited, or the number of international contacts he has made. Nor is he defined by his profession, his place of residence, or his cognitive sophistication. Instead, multicultural man is recognized by the configuration of his outlooks and world views, by the way he remains open to the imminence of experience."

by Peter Adler
from *Toward Multiculturalism*
by Jaime Wurzel

For the next few hours I learned about the many places my family has called home. Slowly I began to understand the difference between my nationality and my ethnicity.

My grandfather helped me to understand, that indeed I was as much a part of my country, as I was a the sum of my parents heritage.

I was the blood of my ancestors that dated back to ancient Iran and from my mom's side, all the way back to the Maya Indians.

I was the equivalent of what North America was all about, a multicultural experience, where all were equal and able to live together in relative peace and harmony.

All too often though, some of us forget what our ancestors went through to get us here. We here in America and in Canada, are the products of our parent's hopes and dreams.

As Zarthustis we must remember that we have always migrated in order to make a better life for ourselves and our offspring.

It is time for us to establish ourselves as a culture that is mature enough to deal with the diversity in our community and life as minorities in countries where the majority rules.

UC Berkeley ethnic studies professor, Richard Takai calls for people to look beyond their roots to find commonalities to "bridge" their racial and ethnic identities. This does not mean to assimilate but rather as he says, *"I think people, especially in the post Rodney King era, are beginning to realize that we just can't study ourselves as separate groups; We have gone beyond the need to recover identity and roots, and now we're realizing that our paths as members of different groups are crisscrossing each other."*

It is inevitable that we will mix and mingle with the many other cultures found on our continent. That is a fact and a reality we are currently dealing with and must accept!

However it is not the only option for us as young single Zarthustis. What we as North American Zarthustis must do is to make ourselves known to the out-

side world and demand the attention that any of the other minorities garnish.

It is not enough that we obtain the status of "hyphenated" Americans or Canadians. Our identity lies in who we are, not the politically correct labels the media or the majority rulers give us.

We are a minority among minorities, yet sometimes we act as if we are in fact the majority.

We can not, nor should we adopt the mentality of the colonizer when in fact we are the colonized. In India and East Africa, many Zarthustis climbed into bed with the British and enjoyed the luxury of being the master's lackey. That will not work anymore! Unfortunately, many Zarthustis have begun to act like the British, in their dealings with the very real multicultural North America they live in.

Raymond Kennedy wrote in 1945, *"The British have been in contact for a longer time with more dark peoples than any other western nation, yet they hold aloof from their subjects to an unequaled degree. They refuse to associate freely or make friends with other races, and their exclusiveness has engendered a reciprocal feeling toward them on the part of their colonial peoples."*

If this is the message we want to send to the world then we are in for a long journey indeed.

I propose that the best way for us to maintain our cultural identity is not by hiding and keeping to ourselves. First of all, it's a



ridiculous idea and secondly, it is against Zarathustra's message.

We are giants among giants, yet we impede our progress with in-fighting and petty jealousies. Let us colonize the masses with our righteous actions and words.

We Zarthustis should begin lobbying and educating the public about who we are and what we are about. It is pure arrogance that makes us believe that if people know who we are, then they will necessarily want to be like us. And it is extreme ignorance to shun those who want to uphold and live the Zarthusti way of life.

The loss of the Zarthusti culture and identity comes not when we hit the shores of our adopted homelands, mix with the natives, or begin to act in North American ways; the loss of culture will become apparent if we continue to try and preserve ourselves by segregating ourselves. Separation does not equal preservation.

It is time to accept our role in this society and overcome the challenges we face. To do that we must truly unite under the one cause of promoting and saving our religion. The culture part will take care of itself, as it has for the past few thousand years!

**Ushta Te from Texas
Y'all!**

Voices of the New Generation

Read what a new generation of North American Young Adults voiced to Adult Leaders, for the first time on this continent, as its perception of "Issues Facing Contemporary Zoroastrians". These voices were heard at the Interactive Seminar in May '96, pioneered by ZAMWI, and supported by the World Zoroastrian Organization & FEZANA. Limited copies are available for free distribution in North America. **Those wishing a copy, should phone or e-mail Aaron Rustom.** Any donation to help defray cost will be welcome.

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Retrospective Introspective

by Pervez Mistry

My parents came to Canada in the late 1960's with my older brother in their arms, a few dollars and a couple of steel trunks containing all their belongings. Now, the family, as well as the "few dollars" have grown, and the trunks are now a beautiful house. That was, and usually still is, the situation with most immigrant Zoroastrians who have left their homelands in search of "greener pastures". But what about our ancient religion and its place in the New World? We all have a good education, clothes to wear, food to eat, a place to live, but is our younger generation capable of carrying forward our great religion?

Most of our ancestors left Iran because of religious persecution - their driving force was their identity, their need to survive as a religion. It was the dire threat of assimilation from other religions that united us as a people and has kept us tightly-knit for all these centuries.

Thanks to their foresight, not only does Zoroastrianism still exist (to the surprise of many non-Zoroastrians), but has survived intact for centuries amongst the massive backdrops of Hinduism and Islam. Some of their cultural aspects have been adopted, such as dress, food, language, etc., but religiously there has been no intermixing. In fact, because of the common Aryan heritage, some Hindu symbols and traditions are similar to ours; i.e. the Swastika, the "divo". These are mistakenly referred to as "adopted Hindu customs", when in fact they're only commonalities. It seems that under adverse conditions and persecution, our determination to endure as a distinct religious group became stronger. The past three centuries have seen the Parsi community rise like no other. Our achievements during the British Raj in India were highly disproportionate when compared to our numbers. Religion was still an important part of everyone's daily life. With financial prosperity - more institutions such as Atash Behrams, agiaries, madrasahs, and dakhmas were built.

So what has happened to all that? Our reputation, money and power are still there to an extent, but what about the religion? Nowadays, it seems like there has been a reversal of fortune for the Zoroastrians - we are no longer persecuted and are still financially prosperous, but our religious identity is fading. The problem seems to be that we have come to new countries where there are not too many Zoroastrians, resulting in more pressure to be absorbed into the larger society. As long as we stayed close together as groups in India and Iran and did



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not accept outsiders, we continued to exist. The momentum to "be accepted" that we gained in the past couple of centuries is the same force that is leading us to lose our religious identity.

Here in North America, the Zoroastrians have been focusing on material growth, but not spiritual. Of course, there congresses, seminars and lectures on the religion, but how many of us actually think about or practice the religion on a daily basis? What lacks in us today is the real pride, the desire to perpetuate the religion. We've all seen jashans being performed, but how many of us will have jashans done in our own homes and know what the priests are saying? If we ourselves don't know the meanings and purpose of prayers and rituals, then what will we tell our kids about sudreh-kusti and the religion when their navjotes are performed? Will we even have their navjotes done? For that matter, will we even have mobeds to perform religious ceremonies?

What is needed is a "leap of faith". Modern scholars dissect and interpret our scriptures, ceremonies and traditions and usually conclude that they're irrelevant or have been "added later" to the religion (I believe the term they use is "un-Zoroastrian"). Should we care about their opinion? Has any Zoroastrian scholar tried to teach the Hindus, Muslims, or Jews what their scriptures and traditions really are and what they should discard or change? They should stick to researching their own respective religions and traditions. We

should hold on to the beliefs and traditions of our forefathers for theirs, ours and our kids' sake. It has worked for so long, why tamper with things now? In an age where the purpose of religion is being questioned, we must be extra cautious in our policies regarding outsiders, education, etc. What kind of religion will we be passing on to future generations?

Personally, I predict that the way things are going, our religion will become a popular new-age cult within the next few decades. From what I'm seeing now, there are many non-Zoroastrians who like to "sample" other religions and are interested in ours because it is interesting and "exotic". I already see so many letters and articles written by non-Z's who sign with "ushta-te" and other Zoroastrian terms. Frankly, it seems quite absurd and we should discourage such behavior.

An interesting point to remember is that there were many groups of Zoroastrians who left Iran, before and during the Arab invasions. Most of them blended into their host communities so completely that there is no longer any trace of them except for archeological remains. We should be careful not to let the same thing happen to us.

So, we had better get our act together soon or it may be too late for us; at least here in North America. Change is not necessary for survival. When one generation forgets a ritual or tradition, the next will not know what has been lost. We must think ahead and also think back to how we survived for all these years.

THE SECOND WORLD ZOROASTRIAN YOUTH CONGRESS



Faith in the Future Zoroastrian Identity into the Next Millenium

For the first time, we, the UK Zoroastrians have the privilege to host a World Zoroastrian Youth Congress. In order to ensure that the Congress combines both a work and play theme, it will take place over an eight day period. The Congress will be split into two parts. The first part, from July 4-7, will include seminars and workshops. The second part, 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 educational and interesting Congress, but also to take in the sights and hospitality of the UK and its Zoroastrians.

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BOOK BEFORE MARCH 21ST, A SPECIAL RATE OF £150 PER PERSON, WILL INCLUDE: a packed program of lectures, discussion groups, workshops, panel session, all Congress facilities, Welcome Reception Party on Friday evening, 3 nights luxury overnight accommodation at 5-star hotel, 3 days breakfasts, lunches and dinners, Gala World Youth Ball on Saturday evening with live Band/Disco, Sunday evening Variety Entertainment Program, Parsi/Irani meals for the remaining weekday evening sessions at Zoroastrian House and overnight accommodation/hospitality with Host Families (for overseas delegates) for the remaining 4 days of the Congress until Friday 11th, and Closing Party on July 11. The Congress is heavily subsidized - at 50% of the true cost. An optional program of events from July 8-11 is being organized for your enjoyment and participation at a nominal cost.

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What is the Understanding of Justice Taught by the Zoroastrian Faith and What Contribution Does This Make to Campus Life?

by *Sherazade Mehta*



The concept of justice can involve many forms. We may talk about societal justice including some form of criminal justice, or consider justice where one group of the society may have preferred treatment compared to others. Another form of justice may be based on spiritual values involving a particular faith. Even though these may be present themselves separately we know that they are all intermingled and can be developed as a composite. In order to understand how we develop our concepts of justice in our daily lives which can include campus life, we can start with the inculcation of values and ethics as presented in our various spiritual traditions. These may reflect through the mental development and upbringing of various individuals of a society.

The summary of the core of Zoroastrian doctrine as explained in the divine hymns of our prophet Zarathustra, called the Gathas is as follows:

Ahura Mazda, the Lord of Wisdom, created a spiritual form of existence which contained ASHA, the ultimate principle of truth and righteousness, and the mental faculty to comprehend this principle of ASHA. Ahura Mazda then created the material world which was to evolve in time according to this law.

However, in the material world there is an intrinsic force of opposition to this divine plan through the destructive mentality. Thus, we have a conflict of two spirits of faculties. The good, Spenta Mainyu. This is defined as Frashokereti, the renovation to complete the goodness.

For this to be a functional religious doctrine it must lead to a way of life. The Gathas also provide the ethical prescription to achieve this. The good mind, Vohu Mana, the greatest gift of God is capable of grasping ASHA. Thereby realizing what ought to be the case. It is also able to evaluate the experiences of the world and recognize what is right and what is wrong. The spirit of benevolence,

Spenta Armaity, also inherent in us impels us towards the good. That is what, we as morally responsible beings should do. The moral act has three implications. First, the act justifies the doer as a worthy supporter of Ahura Mazda. Second, it brings the world towards the progressive implementation of the divine plan. Third, a moral life is the sole ground of satisfaction for the conditions of ultimate salvation. This is the central belief that has been accepted by Zarathustrians at all time and places. This kind of religious consciousness is clearly a Reflective Doctrine, which contains the fusion of a view of the world and a way of life. The mode of acceptance as Zarathustra presents in the Gathas, is for the individual to have conviction of its truth and to make commitment to its way of life, after due reflection. Fundamentally to be a Zarathustrian is to live by the philosophy of Zoroastrianism.

To constitute an adequate acceptance of faith we must realize what the core of the faith is, and commit to live in accordance with it, that is to apply that philosophy of to the world we live in, both physical and social.

The world provides satisfactions as well as disappointments to us humans. The Doctrine indicates that, this is an imperfect world which is capable of being perfected. The instrument of improvement is the human mind. By individual and social action one can bring about progressive improvement, when our motives are directed towards benevolence, that is, solving problems, which promote welfare. Hence each one of us should practice good thoughts, good words, and good deeds with purity of heart. This means that our actions should not be biased by personal motives such as greed, revenge, envy or malice. Perhaps the simplest way to apply this understanding to the contemporary world would be to identify the values one would wish to promote in social existence.

The first value would be

knowledge, for not only is it a value in itself, it is also an indispensable requirement for rational formulation of policy. Education that enhances one's knowledge and wisdom is to be wholeheartedly promoted.

Those of us who are fortunate in life are asked to build schools and places of higher learning for those of us who are less fortunate. Those of us who possess wisdom and knowledge should pass it on through education of the next generation. Towards this, our schools and universities play an important role. That is why I have chosen to pursue the field of education at this university to prepare me to participate in this process as a career in my life. Next is the satisfaction of the wildest of the wildest possible range of individuals. In a policy for bringing about satisfaction, one must have due regard for the individual choice and freedom. Imposing one's policy decisions upon others is a violation of an individual's self-determination. This is explicitly declared by Zarathustra in the Gathas, and becomes the sole basis for one's responsibility and consequent salvation. And lastly, justice. ASHA, in a social context is justice, that is the law of "As you sow, so shall you reap."

The Zarathustrian way of life is not an easy one. It leads the way with a belief that the good mind is able to see the truth, for when truth, either in fact or in morals, is clearly recognized then it cannot be denied either in thought or action. This belief about justice is applicable in any area of life including the University setting.

I wish to acknowledge with thanks for the above understanding I have gained through the translation of the Gathas and various other writings of Professor Kaikoshrov Irani, of the department of Philosophy, the City College of New York. Ushta-Tei...

Sherazade Mehta first presented this paper on January 31, 1996, at The University of Alberta Interfaith Dialogue...

YOUTHFULLY SPEAKING

THE MOUTHPIECE OF A GENERATION...

West to East...And Back

by Tanaz Bilimoria

My religion is who I am; the principles of good thoughts, words and deeds that lie at its heart have greatly shaped me as an individual. As a child, when I moved from country to country, state to state and city to city in the US, my religion was the primary source of stability in my life.

I spent my earliest years in the US. I did not fully realize the important responsibility of being a Zarthusti until I was presented with my sudreh and khusti. As my Navjote ceremony progressed, at one point, I gazed into the fire and became oblivious of my surroundings. I was drawn to the intense illumination and just let myself drown in the warmth of the fire. That was the instant that I connected with the religion as a whole. I was full of questions after that, and was very interested in learning more about this seemingly innate part of myself. My brothers and my mother moved to Bombay, India soon after my Navjote ceremony with my grandma, who was ill at the time.

My grandma was an extremely worldly lady, one of the most remarkable examples of a Zarthusti. She was a philanthropist, she was honest, extremely hard-working, and prayed dutifully three times a day. She helped me through my transition. I was overwhelmed with the academic situation. While in the US, I had the basic subjects, and in India, there were seven. My writing was atrocious; for the first three weeks, I always copied my homework and then showed it to my grandma, who was the only person that could decipher what I had written. I remember my first day at school so clearly because it seemed so unreal. Instead of working with jellybeans and addition in math, we worked on division problems. As the day went on, and teacher after teacher kept coming in and pounding us with subject matter, I wondered when the day would end and just how many subjects I would have to study...I mean, I couldn't possibly have time to study for seven subjects and have my usual five hours a day playtime.

I was learning Gujarati at home, which was a constant source of amusement for all my relatives and those at home, as I learned it with an accent. One day in particular stands out in my mind. I was playing downstairs and became real thirsty. I went up to the watchman and asked him for water, as I didn't want to go all the way to my home. He looked at me sternly and then carried me

upstairs, and muttered something in Hindi to grandma, after which she burst out laughing. She later informed me that the watchman thought I was asking him for a panty instead of panee...I just couldn't pronounce it correctly.

Everyday was a learning experience, it was always new and exciting. Some days were better than others, and on those not-so-good days, my grandma told me things about herself, and stories about kings from Iran. After that, she would to the agiary, and we would just sit there and gaze into the fire together. It was nice and peaceful...and it never failed to pacify me. She always told me that if I was ever confused about the direction in which my life was going, to sit and gaze at the fire and think about it. When she passed on for two months, I went everyday to the agiary that we used to go to together to think about her. I didn't ever cry, because I knew she was there, I could feel her through the warmth of the fire. Shortly after that, we moved back to the US.

I was a junior in High School, and became completely absorbed in schoolwork, and became involved with clubs on campus. It was different; not too many people knew about Zarthustis, and in the girls' locker room, I was always asked about my "white shirt" and "cream string". I responded to all the queries to the best of my ability. Unlike many young Zarthustis in the US, who have negative experiences in that regard, mine were fulfilling. Many of my peers found my religion fascinating, and wanted to become better acquainted with me as well. I felt very comfortable around them, and became involved in a lot of leadership activities at school. However, after about a year, I began to miss the Zarthusti environment of Bombay, and wondered if I was slowly beginning to lose that part of myself. I lit a diva and gazed into it. For that instant, I felt like the six-year old, gazing at the awesome power of the fire for the first time at her Navjote ceremony, and again, I felt that connection. So now I know that it will always be part of me...regardless of where my life may take me. Isn't that really what it's all about?

Humata. Hukhta. Huvershta...

"We of the United States are amazingly rich in the elements from which we weave a culture. We have the best of man's past on which to draw, brought to us by our native folk and folk from all parts of the world. In binding these elements into a national fabric of beauty and strength, let us keep the original fibers so intact that the fineness of each will show in the completed handiwork."

Franklin D. Roosevelt

PERSONAL PROFILE

It has been a quarter of a century since the passing of this true Zarthusti, the great humanitarian. Dr. Esfandiar Yeganegi was one of my dearest friends. The last time I saw him and his lovely wife was in Albany, New York. Even with the passage of time, I still find it difficult to write about his life story which affected and enriched so many other lives.

Esfandiar was born to a Zarthusti family in Yazd, Iran, where he spent his childhood and finished the sixth grade. The family moved to Tehran where he attended and graduated from American High School and the College of Tehran. He received his B.A. degree in science in Iran, but Esfandiar was not content with that. To pursue higher education, he traveled to the United States where he received his Ph.D. in economics from the University of Columbia in 1934. Upon his return to Iran, he served in the army for two years. After the service, he joined the family business, but Dr. Yeganegi wanted more out of life.

He was a visionary, a dreamer and a doer. He wanted to help people in a big way. The country was going through changes and Dr. Yeganegi not only wanted to be a part of it, he wanted to be in the forefront of it. He loved people and was searching for a way to make a lasting, positive contribution to people's lives.

On one of his trips to the US, he was invited to a friend's farm in Colorado where he saw the latest method of farming in the US, the use of deep wells. Suddenly he found his dream coming true. He could see implementation of this method changing the face of farming and the lives of farmers in Iran, where water is scarce. He returned to Iran to make his dream a reality. He started his own company, and the much needed water flowed out of the first deep well in 1323 Shamsy. For the next 27 years, Dr. Yeganegi's company installed 2,500 deep wells all over

DR. ESFANDIAR YEGANEHI

Man of Courage and Compassion

By Keikhosow Harvest
Jacksonville, Florida

Iran, changing waste lands into farmlands and directly affecting the economy and lives of Iranian people and realizing his own noble dream.



Before I left Iran for the United States to pursue my education in medicine in 1968, I visited my friend Dr. Yeganegi as I had often done in the past. He wished me good luck and success in the new world. He told me to always remember the saying: "If they close the door, go through the window." He told me to believe in myself and to reach for the stars and never give up and to always think of others. Helping others succeed always made him happy. He was a down-to-earth person. He helped anybody in need. His good intentions and deeds are his greatest legacy.

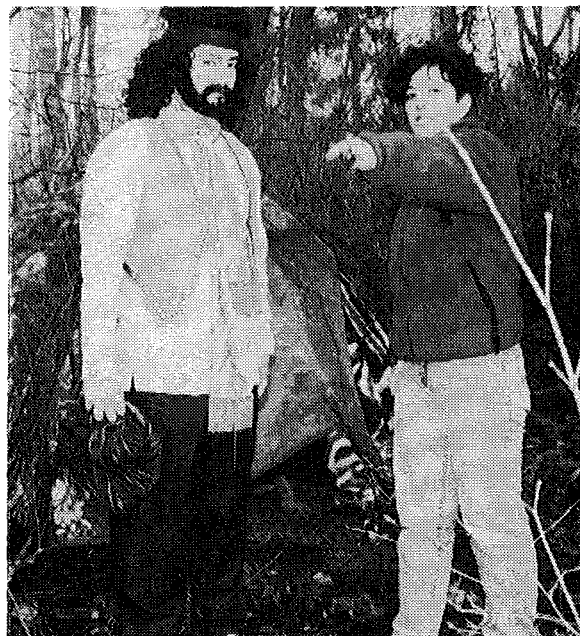
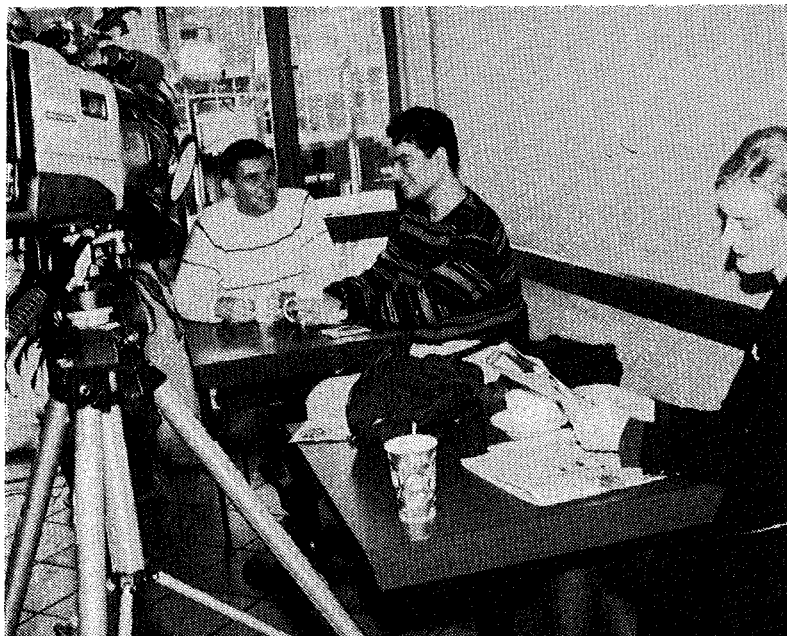
The results of his efforts were bearing fruit nationwide. The wells resulted in dry lands turning into agriculturable lands, increasing the number of farms and farmers, creating jobs, adding to the personal income of the farmers and the country's agricultural output and income as a whole. It is worth mentioning that Dr. Yeganegi was the first person

in the country outside of the government, in the private sector, to do this with his own finances, changing the country's economy and bringing pride and honor to the country and the Zarthusti community.

Making money was not his priority. For example, when Ayatollah Brojerdy was building the Azam Mosque in the Holy City of Qhum, to provide water, he asked the government for recommendations. Dr. Yeganegi's name was given to him for the job. He was contacted and received by the Ayatollah and asked to do the job. After satisfactory completion of the deep well Ayatollah waited for the bill. Since he did not get one, he summoned Dr. Yeganegi and asked for an explanation. Dr. Yeganegi responded: "Where is the money you are going to pay me coming from?" When Ayatollah replied "From people's contributions," Dr. Yeganegi responded: "I am one of the people and this is my contribution." Ayatollah was very impressed, and later issued a decree to the people of Qhum stating that they could vote for Dr. Yeganegi as if he was one of their own. This story was related to me by Dr. Yeganegi himself. This was considered a great honor and achievement for a Zarthusti individual and the Zarthusti community as a whole. Ayatollah's decree in reality was a vote of confidence and approval for Dr. Yeganegi and the Zarthusti community, which was hitherto unprecedented.

Dr. Yeganegi served as President of the Tehran Zarthusti Anjuman for many years and was elected to represent the Zarthusti community in the Iranian Parliament for four terms, a position he held until his passing. He was a courageous man. For a short while, the Communist party was a recognized party in Iran, but Moha-

[Continued on page 75]



Let's Get Paradise

By now, at least 500 Zarthustis have experienced *PARADISE* in Canada and the US. In April, *PARADISE* will go to Pakistan. Several more performances are already scheduled for 1997. All reports give a resounding endorsement of the enormously creative talents of its stars — **Shahriar Shahriari** and **Shervin Shahriari** (not brothers) of Vancouver, BC.

The message of Paradise is brought home dramatically as Shahriar and Shervin's concerns and deep thoughts bring them face to face with Asho Zarthust and they ask him for his advice.

"My philosophy is not about how to 'do' things, but on how to 'be' " Zarthustra tells them, lovingly, "You can be great again, but if you are merely concerned with the greatness of Zoroastrianism, you will only continue to react with fear and desperation, and the outcome is the continuation of decline. If you want to create Paradise, be worthy of Paradise. What the world needs today is people like Cyrus, or as the Persians

of today refer to him: Kuroshe Bozorg."

With this, Asho Zarthust invites Cyrus to join them and share his vision of Paradise. Cyrus's message is decisive, his vision — pure inspiration. His monologue is guaranteed to galvanize the most cynical Zarthusti into action. There is no limit to what we can do, if we can make Cyrus's vision our collective vision — and give the young Cyruses of our time the opportunity to build their Paradise. *PARADISE* is an aural and visual extravaganza and an unforgettable experience. You must see it to believe it.

Now FEZANA and the Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia (ZSBC) want to bring the powerful message of *PARADISE* into every Zarthusti home, Association, Youth club, and library. Yes, a professional quality videotape of Paradise is under production. In addition to the seed money from the sponsors, donations have been received from several FEZANA Member Associations and a few individuals.

Shahriar Shahriari and Shervin Shahriari on the set of PARADISE with Production Director, Mojdeh Shahriari (right) in Vancouver.

Shooting for the video production started in early January at the Arbab Guiv Dar-e-Mehr in Vancouver and at several outdoor sites. Clips of Zarthusti sacred places in India and Iran will be included from Homi Sethna's documentaries and other sources. The background stills of Iranian desert scenes are stunning. A blend of Western and Iranian classical music creates the right mood.

The director for the video production is none other than **Mojdeh Shahriari** [see *FEZANA Journal*, Fall 1995] who has won several awards for her work in Canada. **Peyman Parsa** is the Director of Photography, with several production assistants and a crew of paid make up artists, consultants and set designers.

PARADISE has begun. *PARADISE* will be released this summer. FEZANA hopes to produce or publish similar works by young Zarthustis in North America. If you have a project you would like to be considered by FEZANA, contact Dolly Dastoor or Rustom Kevala [see back cover]. ■

SPEECHES AND WRITINGS ON ZOROASTRIAN RELIGION, CULTURE & CIVILIZATION

By F. K. Dadachanji,

Ehtesham Process, Karachi.

Hardcover, 450 pp, 1995, \$16.

*Available from K. Dadachanji,
12690 Portada Place, San Diego,
CA 92130, Tel: (619) 350-1353.*

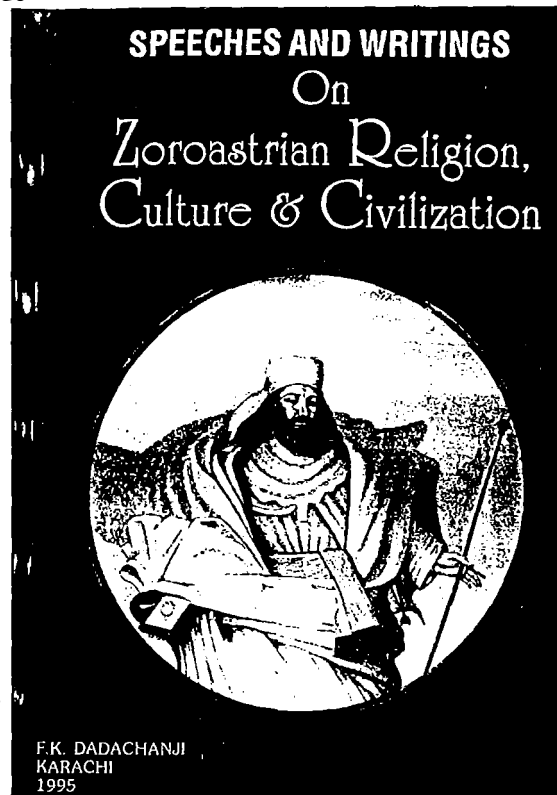
It is always a joy to find the fire of religious enthusiasm burning outside India and Iran, and it is even more joyous to find a book on our religion from the pen of a 75-year-old Zarthusti from Karachi, Mr. F. K. Dadachanji, who has devoted his entire life to the service of his community. In his own words, in his case: "The special plane carrying us away to our final destination has been delayed, but I cannot sit idle in the lounge, doing nothing. A Zoroastrian never rests until the very last." This indeed is the very ideal that our religion teaches us [e.g. *Visperad* 15.1]. The foreword has been written by Justice Iqbal, the son of poet Iqbal.

The first part explains, in simple terms, various principles and customs of our religion along with their influence on the formation of Parsi character in India and Pakistan. Section II deals with the achievements of 'Prominent Parsis' on the Indian subcontinent. While we know a lot about the achievements of Tatas, Wadias, Naoroji, Mehta, Wachha and others if we were raised in India, such information is obviously not readily available in Pakistan, and *Speeches* could be a gold mine for Pakistani Zoroastrians, for whom this book is primarily offered as a labor of love.

However, there is less and less exchange of information and contacts between these two countries, and this book supplies vital information about the prominent Parsis of Pakistan about whom their Indian co-religionists know so little. The book,

therefore fills an important gap in our knowledge about how Zoroastrians are faring in Karachi.

The section on Ancient History (Section III), deals extensively with Achaemenians and Persepolis among other topics. Section IV comprises of miscellaneous matters such as early Parsi cricketers in Pakistan, short history of the Karachi Parsi Institutions, Y.M.Z.A., and speeches by the author, which become rather ubiquitous in the book.



Section V is devoted to *Art, Music and Science* among our Pakistani brethren. The Epilogue in Section VI includes an address of honor given to the author. Section VII, entitled Afterword comprises of Monajats, the life of F. E. Dinshaw, a star figure in Indian economics and law, studies in ancient Persian history, a Business Week review of the Tatas, and again, a lecture by the author at a Karachi Anjuman condolence meeting for J.R.D. Tata. The book ends, almost, with an excerpt from FEZANA Journal.

It should be obvious to the reader by now that consistency, coherence and relatedness of topics are not the

virtues intended by the author. And, despite many typographical errors, due perhaps to restraint of time, we have to be thankful to the aged Mr. Dadachanji for taking the time to make this compilation of 450 pages. Until a more systematic and comprehensive book appears on the horizon, if at all, this volume will fill a vital lacunae in our knowledge about Pakistani Parsis.

This book will be particularly welcomed by those who cheer his views that "Blue blood still flows in the veins of Sohrab and Rustom" and we should be proud to belong to a "super-community — a race of supermen who has achieved so much. By marrying among ourselves we have produced the finest specimens of the human race, and therefore there is no need for any fresh blood. On the contrary, we must preserve our blood — a precious heritage — and let it not get mixed up with outsiders.

"Why is the Parsi community so great? Nobody knows. Nobody knows why the Arab horse is the best horse, or why the bulldog is the most tenacious dog. But, these are facts of life. God Almighty has in His infinite wisdom endowed the Parsi community with greatness, or it is possible we have built up this greatness through 5,000 years of civilization, culture and development," [page 51].

However, he makes a 180 degree turn when he describes J.R.D. Tata, a product of mixed marriages as "the greatest living Parsi of the day and one of the great citizens of India," [page 417]. He seems unaware of any contradictions here, or when he pays glowing tribute to Neville Wadia in a recent Karachi publication [*Informal Religious Meetings September 1996*].

This volume is a welcome addition to any library and a must for augmenting our information about the Zoroastrians in Pakistan. ■

- Review by *Ervad Kersey H. Antia*

Down and Really Out

Rohinton Mistry's A Fine Balance is an epic of tragic realism worthy of Hardy and Balzac. Is this the Great Indian Novel?

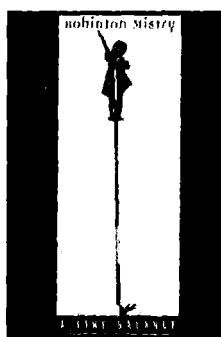
AT THE HEART OF ROHINTON Mistry's monumental new novel lie questions as essential as breathing. How can hope and dignity be maintained in the face of daily atrocity? And atrocity that comes not with the sudden violence of a Holocaust but in a steady, relentless drip-drip-drip of degradation and disappointment. What is the price of forbearance in the challenging of injustice, and when does stoicism turn into fatalism? Cities like Bombay are routinely given tags like "City of Hope" or "City of Dreadful Night"; Mistry digs beneath the comfort of such abstractions to a level of complexity where murderers command our sympathy and philanthropists live off beggars. The fine balance that gives the title to his book asks us, unforgettably, where we draw the line "between compassion and foolishness, kindness and weakness."

Mistry, a Bombay-born Zoroastrian, or Parsi, who moved to Toronto in 1975, has long distinguished himself as a rigorous humanitarian who can re-create from afar every last rending detail of his clamorous hometown. His books are living rooms that open up onto whole worlds. And with characteristic deliberation, he has steadily moved from a first collection of stories (*Swimming Lessons*) to a prizewinning mid-length novel (*Such a Long Journey*) to this new epic, which is worthy of the 19th century masters of tragic realism, from Hardy to Balzac. In response, perhaps, to a world that has "a phobia about anything in slow motion," it restores the old-fashioned virtues of attention and compassion.

As a testament to patience, *A Fine Balance* (Knopf; 603

pages; \$26) is also a test of it: its first 250 pages merely introduce the four main characters and the sorrows of their pasts. Dina is a Parsi widow in her early 40s who runs a small apartment in Bombay; Maneck is a student from the mountains who takes a room with her; and Ishvar and Om are two village tailors, uncle and nephew, who long to pull themselves up from their Untouchable status. All four, with their habits of impatience and loss, hopefulness and resignation, find their lives intertwined when Indira Gandhi announces her State of Emergency—her absolute rule—in 1975.

As in his earlier books, Mistry evokes every distinctive smell and sound of



Bombay's streets, from a train that "shivered down its long steel spine" to the savory cadences of the locals' language—"The thing is, they are always playing bad mischief." His characters respond to the savageries of government and fate alike with a jokey warmth: "For politicians, passing laws is like passing water. It all ends down the drain." And in a

level, pitying tone, far from the "bombast and rhetoric [that] infected the nation," he shows us how to load a dead buffalo onto a cart, how to collect "the fruit of the myrobalan tree to tan hide," how to beg. But what really distinguishes his book is that he gives faces and voices to the suffering and takes us into the lives and huts of dirt-poor souls we usually regard only with pity or suspicion. He explains how a cripple moves and how men live by collecting hair; why professional beggars look down on those who blind themselves, and how the legless help the hopeless. And through this scrupulous exactitude, he makes real horrors that are the stuff of nightmares: Untouchables being forced to eat excrement, being hanged from trees, and having molten lead poured into their ears; women having acid thrown in their faces; slum dwellers being bused into the countryside and forcibly emasculated.

As the book progresses, we begin to see that the central metaphors—of stitching together quilts, making clothes out of patches; of extended games of wits over



NO MISTRY: Restoring the old-fashioned virtues of attention and compassion—and testing patience too

the chessboard that end without a winner; and of cutting the very life force out of human beings—are as meticulous as everything else here. And the Emergency is only a dramatic metaphor for a world in which "living each day is to face one emergency or another." But Mistry has

too subtle a grasp of truth for resolutions of any kind: even the innocent here support their oppressors, and even the bullies have families and cares of their own. The only villains are governments, businesses and any "isms" that would sacrifice humanity to some lifeless end.

Inevitably, Mistry's tight focus—and heroic canvas—will be compared with Vikram Seth's 1,400-page Indian epic, *A Suitable Boy*. Though Mistry does not have Seth's sparkle and charm, he substitutes a depth and penetration that draw blood. And where Salman Rushdie's recent *Moor's Last Sigh* was an endlessly inventive attack on sectarianism, Mistry shows us how such divisions play out on the streets and in the heart. The field of candidates for the title of Great Indian Novelist is as crowded these days as for its American equivalent, but few have caught the real sorrow and inexplicable strength of India, the unaccountable crookedness and sweetness, as well as Mistry. And no reader who finishes his book will look at the poor—in any street—in quite the same way again.

—By Pico Iyer

Time Magazine Places Rohinton Mistry With the Ranks of Hardy and Balzac

Book Review in Time Magazine, July 1996 is reproduced above.

WHO'S WHO OF RELIGIONS

Edited by John R. Hinnells

Penguin Reference Book 1991

ISBN 0-14-051349-3

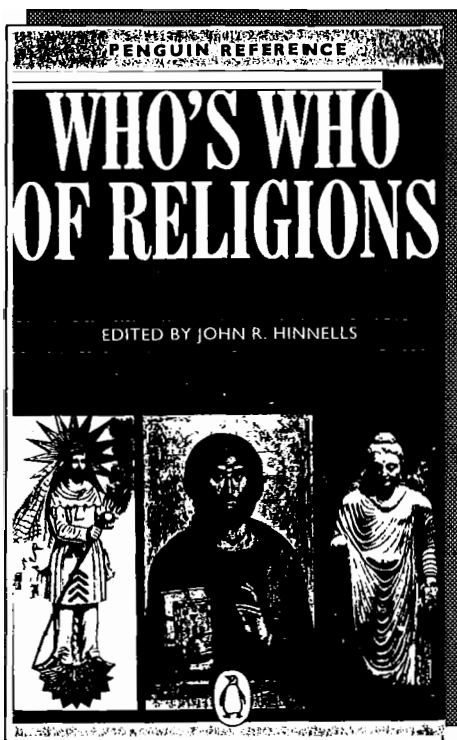
Paperback, 560 pp., US\$14.95.

This easy-to-read reference book was written to understand the lives of leading men and women of religion, both ancient and modern, who have had a significant impact on the religions of the world. The 1,500 entries cover a wide range of major figures including Zarthustra, Moses, Plato, Jesus, Muhammad, Lao Tzu, Gandhi, Mother Theresa, Desmond Tutu, reflecting among them founders, prophets, teachers, mystics, reformers, missionaries, saints, miracle workers, musicians, theologians and political leaders.

Who's Who of Religions is the outcome of scholarly collaboration of 68 international scholars, who live and write in different continents. The choice of the entries was based on a balanced picture of the range of religious personages in the various traditions. It does not deal simply with the 'founders' and major thinkers, but with many others who played an important role in the shaping of the religious tradition.

The entries are of people who actually lived and are not of mythological figures. For some groups the great teachers are crucial but in others the visionaries, the ascetic, the good ruler, the tyrant, musician, oppressor, all who shaped the religion are included. Even though the editors mention that it is difficult to draw a clear dividing line on who does or does not qualify for inclusion, the choice of Zarthusti names is questionable, as there were, and are, many more than the 38 entries who have influenced the direction of the religion both in Iran and India.

The 38 Zarthustis covered are persons of ancient and modern times: Cyrus and his successors Shapur I, Zad Sparam, Changa Asa, Ardasur I



(Ardeshir I), Khosrov II, Parvez, Meherji Rana, Tansar, Maneckji Hatara, Sir Jamshedji Jivanji Modi, Kay Khosrow Shahrokh, Behramshah Shroff, and others. These 38 entries are covered by a bibliography compiled by Mary Boyce and John Hinnells with 57 contributors. Note has been made of the role women played in their religious traditions, however not a single Zarthusti woman has been mentioned.

The reference book has three important 'tools': the index, the maps, and the bibliography. This easy-to-read reference book which focuses on the 'living religions' Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism and Islam, with 26 other subject areas from African Religion to Zoroastrianism, will be welcomed by students of religion. The language and style of text makes this reference book accessible to the general reader.

Who's Who of Religions is a vital and necessary addition to better the international understanding of the peoples of the world, and to appreciate what directs their mentality and their societies. As religions do not exist apart from the people who practice them, the historical knowledge of various religious traditions and the men and

women who have shaped them in the past and continue to shape them in the present, takes the focus away from movements and 'isms' and concentrates on the people.

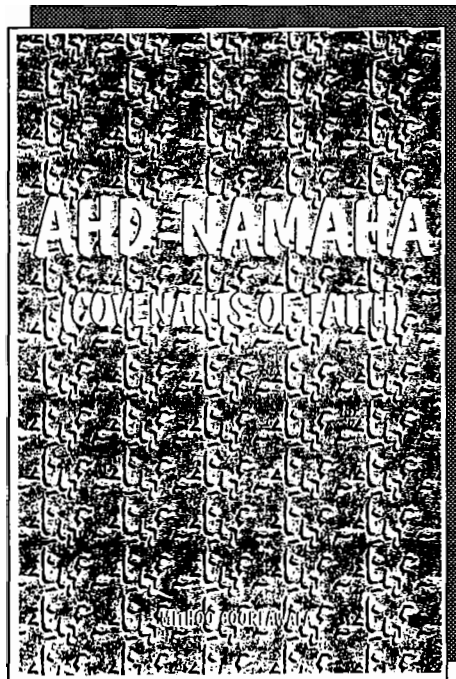
Even though Zoroastrianism is not included in the introduction of this reference as a 'living religion' the Zarthusti reader needs to be particularly indebted to the general editor John Hinnells and the Penguin Group of publishers for the choice of three great religious leaders Zarthustra, Jesus and Buddha on the cover of the book and for the mention of Zoroastrians and Parsis in the introduction.

This 560-page pocket reference is a welcome addition to the book collection of Zarthustis interested in the people behind the history of the religion.

- Review by Dolly Dastoor

AHD-NAMAHA (COVENANTS OF FAITH) By Mithoo Coorlawala

Published by the K.R.Cama Oriental Institute, Revised edition, 1995.



The monograph *Ahd-Namaha* (Covenants of Faith) together with the informative footnotes used to supplement the text, granted by Prophet Muhammad and his fol-

lowers to the Zarthustis of Arabia, gives us glimpses and fresh insights into Zarthusti history and the socio-political environment they lived in. The footnotes mention hundreds of fire-temples in Arabia. That there were Zarthustians in Yemen, Umma, Bahrayne (Bahrain) is also learned from these articles. Evidence is also given to confirm that the Zarthustis were considered 'People of the Book' (*Ahl-e-Kitab*) by the Muslims.

These Covenants of Faith offer the reader the view of tolerance, reconciliation and reaching out by Prophet Muhammad and his followers to the conquered people, the Zarthustis, the Jews and the Christians. Even though these covenants were not observed by later followers of Islam, they are a tribute to the sense of fairness, and conciliation of the early Islamic period, a feature rarely attributed to the religion of Muhammad.

This charter promises protection of life, property, place of worship and more significantly freedom of worship. Special privileges like exemption from military service on payment of the *jizya* tax, were given to followers of any of the known prophets of God.

Most significantly, in the true spirit of early Islam, religious freedom is enjoined in clear terms as the words of Prophet Muhammad: "There is no compulsion in the matters of religion, but only explanation of the right way and error. Let therefore all Muslims act according to my order and execute my will concerning them (Zarthustis) and their posterity, whether they become Muslims or hold fast to their faith."

Mithoo Coorlawala in a simple and easily readable style, has researched with scholastic detachment and objectivity, the authenticity of *Ahd-Namaha I* and *II* in Arabic and *Ahd-Namaha III* in Persian. Contrary to the conclusion of Jafarey, Russell and Nariman, Coorlawala concurs with Farhang Mehr as to the authenticity of the Zarthusti *Ahd-Namaha*. *Ahd-Namaha I* (631 CE) was dictat-

ed by Prophet Muhammad to his son-in-law, Imam and 4th Caliph Ali, and addressed to Farrokh bin Shakshan, a kinsman of Salman-e-Farsi. *Ahd-Namaha II* (661 CE) was granted by Imam and 4th Caliph Ali, one year before his death, made in favor of Bahram Shad bin Khiradars, designated as the descendent of Adarbad Mahraspand, the Persian.

**This charter promises
protection of life, property,
place of worship and, more
significantly, freedom
of worship.**

The authenticity of *Ahd-Namah III* in Persian is questionable as it bears the same date as the second charter and was transcribed in Persian, by his son Hussain. It is addressed in general terms for all times, to the descendants of Adarbad Mahraspand, the spiritual counselor and Prime Minister of the Sassanian Emperor Shahpur II (309-379 AC). The author argues that it would be unlikely that Hussain spoke Persian, and if this *Ahd-Namah* was an authorized translation then the name of the scribe would appear. But again if this was an authorized version, such a translation would invite grave consequences as it was forbidden to write in Persian for 200 years after the invasion of Persia. At best it seems to the author that a Persian translation of the Calif Ali's Arabic *Ahd-Namah II* was made centuries later to make its contents accessible to Iranian Zarthustis.

Quoting Quranic biographers and historians the author outlines the life of Dastur Dinyar, later known as Salman-e-Farsi, the first Iranian convert to embrace Islam, at a time when there was no compulsion to do so. Salman-e-Farsi, the spiritual counselor to the Sassanian Emperor Chores II wandered for 25 years in Syria, Palestine, Iraq, and Egypt till he met Muhammad in Yathrib, and became his trusted and loyal spiritual

companion. He died in 656 AC and his tomb on the eastern banks of the Tigris is a revered place of pilgrimage for devout Shiite Muslims. Even though one is not quite sure as to the reason for the inclusion of a chapter on Salman-e-Farsi one is indeed grateful to the author for it gives the reader insight into the unique role the first Iranian convert to Islam played in the genesis of Islamic thought.

The Arabic texts, together with the Gujarati and Persian translations were first published in 1851, twelve hundred years after they were first granted, by Seth Sorabjee Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy. The English translation by G. K. Nariman was published 75 years later in 1925 by the Iran League. A fragile copy of the three Zarthusti *Ahd-Namaha*, written in the nastiliq calligraphy in three sections, 3.81 meters long and 25.4 cms wide, with the first two sections in Arabic, and the third in Persian in a beautiful bold flowing script with touches of gold, was presented to the K. R. Cama Institute in 1949.

The charter granted to the Jews of Medina is preserved in the National Library in Tehran and that granted to the Christian monks (one year after that granted to the Zarthustis) is owned by the Chihal Satoon Museum in Isfahan.

The 76-page limited edition (500 copies) monograph *Ahd-Namaha* together with the *Ahd-Namaha* in Arabic and Persian, translated in Gujarati and English in the Appendix, was a result of a personal search and inquiry, of an interest aroused in the author by her father Nadirshah Chinoy. This book will make very interesting and informative reading for all Zarthustis interested in their history.

- Review by Dolly Dastoor

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

*It is possible to give without
loving, but it is impossible to
love without giving.*

-Fed Newsletter

THE ZOROASTRIAN FAITH: TRADITION AND MODERN RESEARCH

By S. A. Nigosian

McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993

ISBN 0-7735-1144-x, Paperback, 154 pp, \$18.

Thank goodness we have extra days once in a while to do extra things! On this Thanksgiving Day in Canada, to read *The Zoroastrian Faith* by Nigosian was indeed a pleasure, and a great excuse to put my feet up, and place all the mundane tasks on the back burner. It's too bad we can only do this under pressure for a book review!

The title could not have been more appropriate, as it is indeed a research text of tradition and modern viewpoints. Professor Nigosian, in his preface begins with careful admission that the Zoroastrian faith is indeed a complicated one due to lack of concrete evidence by which one can trace the faith's origin and development of Zarathushtra's teachings and practices.

Insightful information is given in the book's five chapters, on Zoroaster, and Zoroastrian history, scriptures, teachings, and observances. Each chapter presents two schools of thought, the traditional and modern.

The name Zoroaster or Zarthustra, the time of his era, his birthplace and his teachings according to Greek and Latin writers (Xanthus, Diogenes, Laertius, Hermadorus and Plutarch to name a few) and according to Avestan literature (the *Gathas*, the *Yashts* and the *Bundahishn*), are all explored in the first chapter.

A description of the historical development and spread of Zoroastrianism from its origin to the present day, in spite of the paucity and varied nature of the sources, is the bulk of Chapter 2. This section also includes the religious conflict between Zoroastrian and non-Zoroastrian faiths during the Sassanian dynasty.

Chapter 3 gives brief but comprehensible descriptions of the Zoroastrian

scriptures, the *Yasna* (which includes the *Gathas*), the *Visperad* and the *Videvdat* (*Vendidad*). Nigosian also gives a simple, understandable overview of other religious documents such as the *Bundahishn*, the *Rivayets* (Pahlavi version of *Shayest ne Shayest*) and the *Dinkerd*, even though these writings contain the opinions and decisions of Zoroastrian high priests. He acknowledges that the texts preserved in the Avesta are the fundamental tenets of the faith.

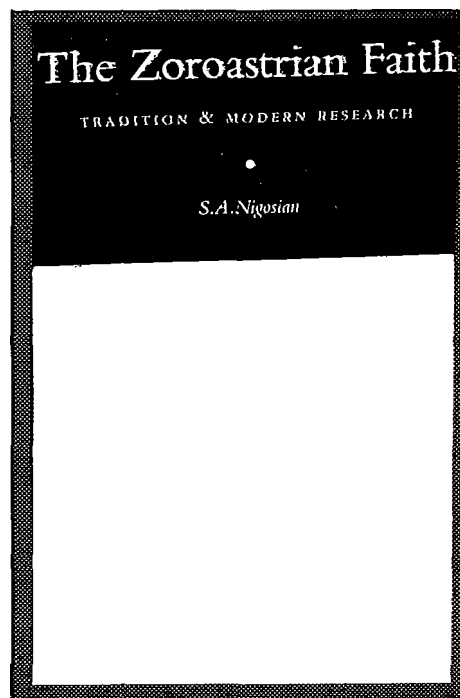
Zoroastrian teachings, including the basic Zoroastrian beliefs and concepts, from Ahura Mazda to cosmic dualism and the influence of Zoroastrianism on Judaism, Christianity and Islam, are analyzed in Chapter 4.

The last chapter, on Zoroastrian observances, is interesting as it explains how some rituals have evolved according to migration and adaptation of Zoroastrians to new places and environments.

In conclusion, this is a fine, very readable text and worthy of a space on your book shelves. Almost forgot! It has humour too. For instance when talking about death and the soul remaining in an intermediate place 'hamestagan', Nigosian states "the soul suffers no torment except the seasonal temperature of heat and cold!"

Professor Solomon A. Nigosian is a Research Associate with Victoria College of the University of Toronto, and a specialist in near Eastern languages and literature. It was heartwarming to see the names of Dr. Farhang Mehr, Yazdi Antia and Homi Minocher Homji acknowledged for "helpful comments and criticisms" of the text.

- By Guloo M. Austin
London, Ontario



A Critical Look at Nigosian's "The Zoroastrian Faith"

This is one of the latest treatises on Zoroastrianism, again from a Westerner, a Canadian professor with an Armenian background. Since Armenia was Zoroastrian before it turned Christian, the author's background helps him in delineating hitherto unknown Zoroastrian influences on some Armenian church practices that survive to this day.

After describing the Navjote ceremony, the author adds: "Incidentally, in the order of service for the ritual of christening, the Armenian church has retained a significant Zoroastrian symbol ... the fundamental Zoroastrian feature of human choice in the areas of thought, word, and deed, and the symbolic gestures of facing westward to the Adversary and then eastward to God, is a marked characteristic in the ritual of christening in Armenian Christianity." Zoroastrians have always regarded the North as the residence of evil, since the cold wind plagued mankind from the North in the regions above the equator. Nigosian cites Armenian sources to prove that "sanctuaries of

Ahura Mazda with perpetual fire-altars existed in various parts of Armenia Also the festival of Nao Roz (Armenian *Amanor* or *Navasard*, meaning New Year) was celebrated in honor of Ahura Mazda" [p. 32].

Armenia, he adds, "was under Persian suzerainty for almost eight centuries, from about the sixth century BCE to the end of the third century CE. Throughout this entire period, and particularly during the latter part of the Parthian dynasty, Armenia was a predominantly Zoroastrian land. In 301 CE, the vassal King of Armenia, Tiridates III adopted the Christian religion," which "aggravated the growing power struggle between Rome and Persia, over control of strategically important Armenia. The dispute was finally settled by partitioning Armenia in 387 CE ...

"Just as the Romans were promoting Christianity, the Sassanids were determined to establish Zoroastrianism in their empire ... The persistent refusal of Armenians to abandon their Christian inclinations necessitated stricter measures ...

"Christian Armenians not only ignored this decree, but attacked neighboring towns, killed numerous Zoroastrian priests, devastated fire-altars, and then seized the furniture and fixtures of the fire-altars and placed them in their churches." Hostilities assumed enormous proportions, leading to the Armenian uprising in 451 CE, and the treaty in 484, granting Armenians their religious freedom.

Any expectations, however, of the author's background enabling him to easily trace Zoroastrian influences on Judaism and Christianity, are met rather with disappointment due to "the absence of concrete, positive evidence, which creates considerable difficulties in tracing with precision or certainty the question of exchange of religious ideas and practices. And, to make matters worse, the difficulties inherent in the Iranian literature present problems of interpretations."

All he sees is "shared concepts and beliefs", though he concludes: "Nevertheless, it is hardly conceivable that some of the characteristic ideas and practices in Judaism, Christianity and Islam came into being without Zoroastrian influence" [pp. 95-97].

The author, however, has done a scholarly job in presenting Zoroastrianism to practitioners of the faith as well as outsiders. It is difficult to find such a succinct outline of our religious history, scriptures, principles and observances written in a scholarly but lucid way, and incorporating the latest research findings and views. Each chapter has an excellent bibliography. This is a good book to give someone or use for a discussion or adult religious classes, if one is interested in a brief but scholarly outline of Zoroastrianism that also provides adequate references to a lay person for most of what is written in English about the three millennia of our history and religion.

The author's Armenian background helps him in delineating hitherto unknown Zoroastrian influences on some Armenian church practices that survive to this day.

The book is unique in yet another aspect in so far as it is one of the few publications authored recently by someone not tutored or influenced by Professor Mary Boyce, the savant *facile princeps* in our times, to whom the Zoroastrians owe a deep gratitude for her lifelong labor and devotion to our ancient faith.

It is interesting that even though Nigosian seems to be familiar with Sassanian dualism which Boyce and her students perceive as a unique theological sophistication, and a salient feature of Asho Zarathushtra's teachings all through the ages until we got influenced by Christian protestant teachings of an omnipotent God, he asserts: "What is stressed instead is

the relation between the doctrine of cosmic dualism and the principle of the freedom of human choice, together with the law of consequences. The implication of this cosmic dualism is that human beings, according to Zoroastrian teachings are not merely passive spectators of the war between Ahura Mazda's and Ahri-man's host of allies... Every individual is, by his or her own choice, engaged in this cosmic warfare, contending for the defeat of Ahriman and the ultimate triumph of Ahura Mazda."

The whole conflict is therefore a war of moral choices: right or wrong, truth or falsehood, justice or injustice. Such a view, however, may not be acceptable to those in the Boyce school of thought as it does not explain the existence and predominance of evil in this world, which Sassanian dualism may be able to explain better.

While such views on dualism seem to have endeared Nigosian to contemporary Zoroastrians such as Aspi Moddie, himself an author of many articles and a book on Zoroastrianism. Nigosian's book has received harsh reviews in a recent issue of the distinguished *Journal of the American Oriental Society* by Prof. James Russell, a student of Boyce, and also of Armenian descent, who found it not worth the paper it is written on, and not worth felling a single Canadian tree for.

Nigosian readily admits that "Anyone familiar with the Zoroastrian faith must realize the difficulties and uncertainties inherent in the study of its essential aspects ... In spite of painstaking scholarly research in the field of Zoroastrian (and Iranian) ethnology, philology, archaeology and history, there is still hardly any concrete evidence by which one can trace precisely the faith's origin and development ... But these difficulties and uncertainties (duly noted and treated in the text) should in no way prevent us from presenting an

instructive analytical work on the Zoroastrian faith."

Indeed, this is how he begins the book. And when one finishes reading it, one will not doubt that it has served its purpose admirably, and is worth every effort (and tree from the Canadian forests) that it took to complete. Anyway, Russell may derive some comfort from the fact that the book is printed on 'acid-free paper'.

There is, however, no excuse for us to complain about the paucity of reliable, well-researched books on Zoroastrianism. Every Zoroastrian must grab this one before it gets out of print, as is often the case with all such books, though one may unfortunately never find a book in complete agreement with one's own views, for the very reasons honestly stated by the author at the very outset.

And there are many other reasons to disagree with the author, as when he translates the word 'Juddin' as convert, or when he observes: "To the consternation of the conservatives, certain reformists influenced by Western agnosticism and skepticism, blend their own beliefs with teachings from Hinduism, Christianity, Theosophy and other religions [p. 117]. Unfortunately, no reference is cited for this weighty remark which seems so contradictory in itself — how and why would a gnostic and skeptic Zoroastrian reformist find inspiration from other religions in the first place if he or she is skeptic and why they would attempt reforms if they are unsure and skeptic?

More importantly, all the reformists I know from K. R. Cama onwards were insisting on avoiding Hindu and theosophist influences, Dhalla being the best example. It was, however, the orthodox like J. J. Vimadalal, Dastur Dabu and many more who were staunch theosophists. Perhaps Bode was the only Dastur influenced by theosophy, but he was no skeptic or agnostic.

Rather, it is some ultra-conservatives and cultists per Hinnells [*Zoroastri-*

ans in Britain, 1996, p. 273] who are on the rise and who subscribe to vegetarianism, beliefs in reincarnation, ever-living human entities/saints (*Abeds*) in the Demavand mountains, etc., which is reminiscent of Hinduism and which, per Boyce, Martin Haug long ago described as a thorough reinterpretation of theosophy, after studying their beliefs first-hand in Bombay. Perhaps by 'reformists' Nigosian simply means 'liberals'. It is rather difficult for an outsider to correctly judge such a complex people as the Parsis, especially if he has not lived among them. ■

- Ervad Kersey H. Antia

Books Available at "The Zoroastrian Shop" in New Jersey

The Zoroastrian Shop in Voorhees, New Jersey stocks a supply of commonly requested books on Zoroastrianism, among them:

Shahnameh of Firdaosi, 7 volumes
By Dr. B. S. Surti (\$15/vol)

Zoroastrianism and the Parsis
By John Hinnells \$ 5

History of Zoroastrianism
By Maneckji Dhalla \$12

The Religion of Zarthusra
By I.J.S. Taraporewala \$12

Understanding the Gathas
By Dinshaw Irani \$ 5

My Simple Book of Zoroastrianism
By Lorraine Moos \$10

Greeting cards \$ 2

English and Gujarati Calendars \$2

The Zoroastrian Shop has established contacts with publisher Mr. Marzban Giara of Mumbai, and can help order other publications, such as:

Parsi Foods and Customs
By Bhicoo Maneckshaw

The Zarathushtrian Saga
By Tina Mehta

The Parsis by Menant, Vol. I & II
By M. M. Marzban

Contact Khursheed Bapasola, *The Zoroastrian Shop*, at (609) 768-8351. ■

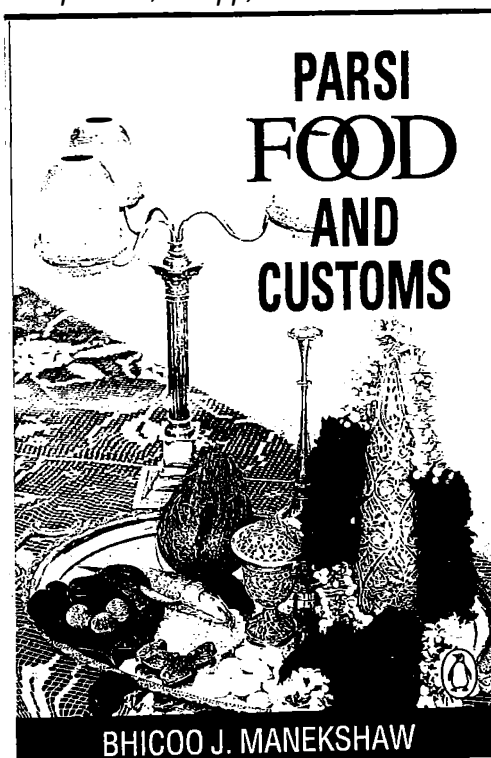
PARSI FOOD AND CUSTOMS

By Bhicoo J. Maneckshaw

Penguin Books, 1996

ISBN 0-14-025759-4

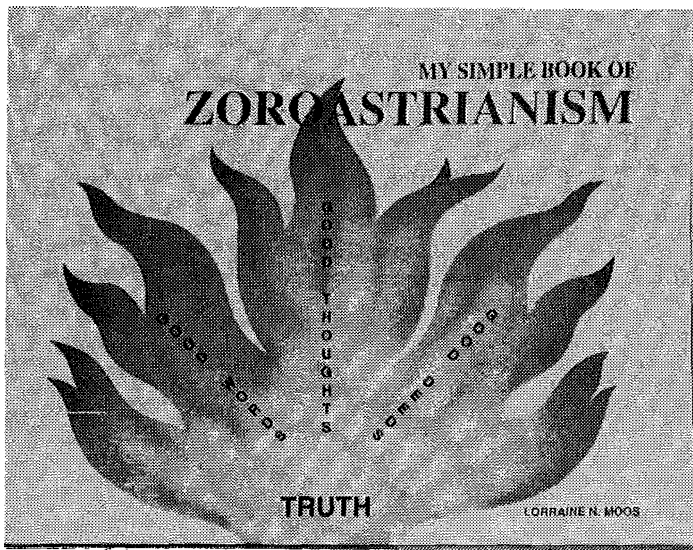
Paperback, 430 pp, Rs. 200



Parsi Food and Customs is a treasure-house of recipes and customs that define the Parsi way of life, packed into a concise, non-pretentious pocketbook.

The size of the book belies the wealth of information it presents. The first part describes traditional Parsi customs and ceremonies, giving both the practical 'how-to's as well as interesting glimpses into their historical origins and significance. The author covers: the Parsi custom of *chalk* and *toran*, *ses* and *achoo-michoo*; the calendar and customs associated with special days; customs surrounding life-cycle events, such as birth, Navjote, wedding and death; the Navroze table; the Jashan ceremony, Gahambars and more.

In the latter part of the book, the author takes the reader on a culinary journey with a selection of traditional Parsi recipes. There are a variety of egg (*Bharuchi akoori*), vegetable (Parsi 'estew'), fish (Goa curry, *patra-ni-machhi*, or the famed 'Tara-



A simple
book on
Zoroastrian-
ism for
children

MY SIMPLE BOOK OF ZOROASTRIANISM

By Lorraine N. Moos

1996, 65 pages, with color illustrations, \$10.

Available from The Zoroastrian Shop, New Jersey, Tel: (609) 768-8351, or from Lorraine Moos at (330) 665-1196.

"I am not a Zoroastrian, nor am I an authority on Zoroastrianism", says Lorraine N. Moos, in the Foreword to *My Simple Book on Zoroastrian-*

ism, an excellent, new book for children, on the religion of Zarthustra. Rather, what drove Moos into producing this simple and informative book was her (and her Zoroastrian husband Neville's) commitment to raise their two children Farrah, 6, and Carl, 3, as Zoroastrians. This book is the result of her energy, love and devotion to that cause.

On attractive, glossy paper, with large, full-color pictures, the book is compiled, as acknowledged by the author, from source materials

pori patio), meat (*kid-nu-gosht*) and rice (*Mamaiji's Dhansakh*) dishes, to please any palate. The recipe section ends with chapters on tea-time snacks (*batasa*, *nankhatai*) and Parsi chutneys and pickles (*lagan-nu-achar*, *murambo*). Though why the recipe for *Kharia ni Jelly* (jelly from goat trotters) is in the 'Eggs' chapter, I am still unable to figure out!

Bhicoo Maneckshaw is a seasoned Parsi gourmet, with a long career as an expert chef and catering consultant, with hotels including the Taj Mahal Hotel in Mumbai, and the airlines, including Air India. In 1963, she became the first Indian to gain admission to the Advanced Course at the famed Cordon Bleu School of Cookery in London. She has also taught and published her articles and recipes widely. and authored another cookbook *Traditional Recipes of India*.

- Review by Roshan Rivetna

PERSIAN FOR BEGINNERS

By M.R. Ghanoonparvar
and F. Givechian

1990. 108 pp., illus, 3 cassettes.
ISBN 0-939214-81-4 \$39.95.

Available from Mazda Publishers,
P.O. Box 2603,
Costa Mesa, CA 92626
Tel: (714) 751-5252.

This volume and the three accompanying cassettes are designed for learning the Persian language with the help of a native speaker or a teacher, without resorting to cumbersome grammatical rules. Early lessons are based upon repetition, substitution, and pattern practice drills.

The tapes are designed to teach Persian much the same way as one learns a native language — by hearing and imitating. They complement the text *Persian For Beginners* published in 1985.

(including text and illustrations) from noted Zarthusti authors: Piloo Nanavutty, Ava Mehta, Pareen Lalka, Dastur Khurshed Dabu, the editors of *In Search of My God*, and *Zoroastrian Studies* audio tapes.

Starting with the story of Creation, the author covers some spiritual concepts (*Fravashis*); the life of Zarthustra; his teachings; history of the Parsis in India; and customs and ceremonies (*Navjote*, *sudreh* and *Kushti*).

This book has one of the nicest compilations of daily prayers for children, including all the Navjote prayers, in Avesta, with English translations alongside, in large, easy-to-read print. The 101 names of Ahura Mazda follow, with meanings. The book ends with some traditional Monajats (religious songs) in Gujarati, including *Khudavind Khavind*, *Chaiyye Hame Zarthusti*, and more, in Gujarati, with English translations alongside.

For not being born a Zarthusti, Lorraine Moos has done an excellent job of capturing the basic concepts into one attractive book for children.

- Review by Roshan Rivetna

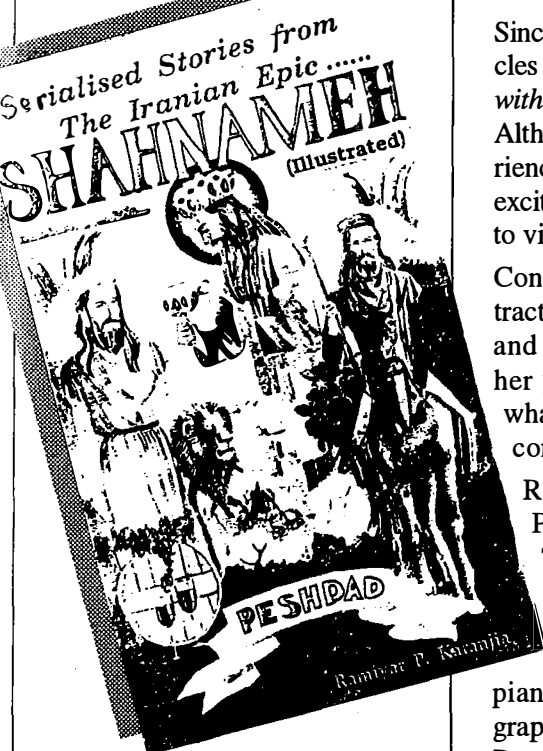


READERS' FORUM

Readers are invited to submit letters to this column. Please ensure that all submissions meet the Editorial Policy outlined on the back cover.

SERIALIZED STORIES FROM THE IRANIAN EPIC SHAHNAMEH — PESHAD

By Ramiyar P. Karanjia
Athornan Madressa, Mumbai
1996, paperback, 108 pp. US\$7
Available from Kayomars Mehta,
8122 Circle Drive, Palos Hills, IL
60465, USA, Tel: (708) 974-1238 or
Sarosh Maneckshaw, Tel: (713) 870-
9317.



In Serialized Stories from the Iranian Epic Shahnameh — Peshdad, Ramiyar Karanjia brings to life the exploits of great Iranian kings of the Peshdadian Dynasty, like Hoshang, Jamshed and Faridun. The life of each king is covered in a separate chapter.

The small but very informative and entertaining book will be enjoyed by children and adults alike, as it takes the reader through the history of the ancient Iranian kings, in a lucid and easy-to-read style, with illustrations.

Future books in this series will cover the rest of the five Mazdayasni dynasties, the next one being the Kayanian Dynasty.

On the Fall Issue

Congratulations to the Publications Committee on the calibre of the Journal. It is classy in its entirety: the contents, the layout, the choice of articles, the clarity, are all done in an outstanding fashion, and in my pile of mail, it is the first one I attend to!

Sincere congratulations on your articles *On the Royal Road* and *Congress with Iranian Flair* in the Fall issue. Although envious of those who experienced this trip, your account has excited me even more to motivate me to visit 'our land' one day.

Congratulations also to Laila Contractor on her perspective of the trip and her sensitivity to the problems her youth peers endure in Iran, and what we take for granted on this free continent.

Referring to the article on Sherri Panthaki "Young Lady with Raw Talent", I was disappointed that no mention was made of her teacher, Ms. Roxanne D. Anklesaria, an accomplished pianist herself. In fact the photograph published with the article is in Roxanne's home in Pune, India.

Guloo Austin
London, Ontario

Reader Scrutiny

FEZANA Journal is doing a wonderful job and you are to be complimented. I look forward to receiving it and usually read it from cover to cover. There are a couple of points I'd like to make about articles in your last [Winter 1996] issue:

On page 35 the caption under Lady Jeejeebhoy's picture translates Rs. 1.40 lakhs to \$4,000. This sum gives an incorrect picture, since in 1845 I am sure the equivalent amount was much more than that. We cannot translate 1845 rupees at the current rate of exchange (Rs. 35). Even just a few years ago, in 1968, the dollar was equivalent to just 4 rupees.

On page 64, the opening paragraph states the three Parsi cyclists who circled the globe returned from their trip "one year and five months later". The picture inset from Ripley's Believe It or Not says they did it in "four years and five months". The latter is more believable.

My criticism is only meant to improve an already fine product.

Jamshed R. Udvardi
Lansing, Michigan

[We goofed! Mr. Bapasaola, did take four years and five months - Ed]

Now Available ...

VOICES OF THE NEW GENERATION

Issues Facing Contemporary Zoroastrians in North America

This publication incorporates papers delivered at the Seminar held in May 1996 at the George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia, jointly by FEZANA, WZO, WZTF and ZAMWI. Included are papers presented by Armaity Homavazir (Toronto), Trity Pourbahrami (Vancouver), Khurshed Khurody (Boston), Bahram Varjavand (Houston), Rabe'eh Mahooti (Portland, OR), Aaron Rustom (Austin), and Mazda Antia (Chicago).

A limited number of copies are available for a donation to ZAMWI to cover mailing costs. Order from Dilnavaz Bhalla, Secretary ZAMWI, 2507 Red Clover Court, Reston, VA 22091.

To the Editor, Time Magazine:

...Zoroastrianism is neither an obscure nor a forgotten religion. It is the oldest revealed religion propounded by the prophet Zarathustra (Zoroaster in Greek), about 1800 BCE in Iran which made huge innovations in religious thought, extolling the worship of one God Ahura Mazda. His religion enters recorded history with its adoption by three mighty Persian Empires of the House of Achaemenians, Parthians and Sassanians. Zarathustra's name was familiar to Plato and Aristotle, and Pythagoras was said to have studied under him in Babylon.

Jews and Christians who appear to have absorbed much of Zoroastrian doctrine, identified him with various Old Testament figures: Nimrod, Balaam, Baruch, Ezekiel. The Achaemenian Cyrus the Great (Korush in the Old Testament), for releasing the Jews from Babylonian captivity, has been heralded as their Messiah, as prophesied two centuries earlier in Isaiah 45:1:3.

After the Arab conquest of Iran in the 7th century CE, Zoroastrianism ceased to be Iran's state religion and a systematic persecution of Zoroastrians was instituted. A small group sought religious freedom in western India in the 10th century, where their descendants still flourish as the Parsis.

At present there are over 200,000 Zoroastrians in all corners of the world, including Iran, with 15,000 in North America, all contributing to the professional, business and social life of the countries they live in.

A religion with a history of over 3,000 years, which has influenced world religious thought, can hardly be called an obscure or forgotten religion to be equated with Pantheism and Neutopia ...

*Dolly Dastoor
President, FEZANA*

[Similar letters were sent by numerous Zarthushtis, among them Jasmine Patel, Zal Karkaria, Rohinton Rivetna, Porus Havewala, and others].

Interchange with Time Magazine

Obscure religions—half forgotten or half invented—are flourishing on the Web



Depiction of the Traditional 'Zoroastrianism' Home page (maintained by Porus Havewala of Australia) on the World Wide Web, along with 'Pantheism' and 'Neutopia', under the sub-heading "Obscure Religions..." in Time Magazine of December 16, drew a flurry of letters to Time from Zarthushtis. FEZANA President Dolly Dastoor's letter and Time's response are excerpted in this column.

Response from Time

Thank you for your letter prompted by the December 16 cover story "Can Thor Make a Comeback?" We regret that you were disappointed in seeing Zoroastrianism implicated as a religion 'half forgotten or half invented.'

In including the graphic from a Zoroastrian website in our story, we were associating it with the former rather than the latter modifier.

We had in mind the fact that Zoroastrianism reached its zenith of influence long ago and is not counted among those contemporary mainstream religions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam and Christianity, faiths whose followers vastly outnumber adherents of Zoroastrianism.

Even so, in hindsight, we concede that we should have given more consideration to Zoroastrianism's seminal role in establishing monotheism; we could surely have found another group to more aptly represent the rel-

atively obscure religions active on the World Wide Web ...

*Robert Cushing
Time Magazine*

Fire, Source of All Creation

I recently saw a film on the giant IMAX screen at a local entertainment park (*Great America*) in Santa Clara, California, called the *Ring of Fire*, about volcanoes and earthquakes that occur around the land surrounding the Pacific ocean.

What is interesting is that the narrator stated that "fire was the source of all creation (on our earth)." Even water was a by-product of fire. What a great reason for venerating fire as Ahura Mazda's oldest and greatest creation, in our Zarthushti religion.

And we are not alone. In the Bible, God appeared to Prophet Moses in the form of a fire behind a bush (or a 'burning bush').

The great elements in nature are almost miraculous and awe inspiring, yet, in our busy life, we take these great elements for granted, and lose that feeling of awe and respect, except once in a while; and some of us even ridicule our ancient practice of venerating Ahura Mazda's fire.

Maneck Bhujwala
San Jose, California

Priests and Progress

Vera Pavri needs to be congratulated for her grasp of Parsi history [*FEZANA Journal*, Winter 1996] and our youth should follow her lead; but please let me clarify that even though the priests did lose their predominance to modernity, "Parsi conduct" was not necessarily "dominated by laymen."

As a matter of fact, mostly only the priests enjoyed the privilege of learning the three R's from antiquity until the advent of modern times; they were therefore, the first ones to opt for modern education. No wonder therefore, they came to dominate not only Parsi society, but also the country.

Men like Dadabhai Naoroji, Veer Khurshed Nariman, S. Saklatwala, D. Wachha, P. Mehta, Feroze Sethna, Rustom Masani, Minoo Masani, R. K. Karanjia, R. K. Sidhwa, Cooverji Bhabha and many more, were all *Ervads* who had gone through the *Navar* ceremony or were *Ostas* (sons of priests), and contributed greatly to the political development of India.

As regards the industrial and commercial development of India, J. N. Tata and his sons, and R. D. Tata (father of JRD) were also *Ervads*. The Godrej's also belong to a priestly family from Bharuch. E. Kulke even depicts Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy as being from a priestly family.

Ervad Rustom Maneck's help was eagerly sought by the Portuguese, Dutch and English traders, and his descendants continued to contribute to Parsi society with the establishment of firetemples and education trusts.

The first lawyers, doctors, divans, civil servants, educators, scientists, accountants and architects were from the priestly class. Their tradition of memorizing the whole Avesta stood them in good stead. Almost all the notable lawyers mentioned in *FEZANA Journal* [Winter 1996] were *Ervads* or *Ostas* — Sir Dinshaw Mulla, Sir Jamshedji Kanga, (who always wore the priestly turban, albeit with a 'cheerut' in his hand), Fali Nariman, the Kotwals, Veer Nariman and H. N. Seervai. The first vernacular press too, was started by Ervad Marzban in 1778, which was natural because it was mostly the priests who knew reading and writing. Almost all the Avesta-Pahlavi scholars trained by K. R. Cama were *Ervads*, who, not the laymen, dominated the religious scene, J. J. Modi even earning knighthood for it, perhaps the only colonial clergy to do so.

These *Ervads*, and not laymen as claimed by Pavri, not only "allowed for socio-economic changes to take place," but pursued them vigorously, for instance, Ervad Dadabhai Naoroji's reform movement for women's education.

The clergy however "debilitated" did everything to ensure that their own children were the first to benefit from modernity. In fact, it was very often the lay persons, especially the Orthodox, such as Mansukh, who raised hue and cry against reform movements — for women's education, or the Swaraj Movement, or Ervad Dr. Sir Tehmulji Nariman becoming a gynecologist and getting religiously 'polluted' delivering babies.

Thus, while the priests did indeed lose their sway, their knowledge of the religion made them see in modernity a vindication of Frashokereti, which their children heartily tried to bring about, more so than the lay persons.

While the priestly power did clearly decline in the age of secularism, not only among us, but amongst all nations, the mighty impact of these *Ervads* had far reaching influence on the community than it has ever been realized or even conceived.

Since I wrote this letter in a hurry, the same night I received the *Journal*, many more details are left unsaid, enough to fill a book.

Ervad Kersey H. Antia

Wake Up and Shake Up

The global Zoroastrian community continues its lack of unity and leadership. We are split between orthodoxy and liberalism. The Bombay Parsi Panchayet (BPP) is more interested in housing a diminishing population than in our ultimate survival ... Our priesthood is more interested in scriptural translation and doctoral theses or performing rituals, than directly educating the community. The knowledge, skill or use of techniques of community organizing and development is lacking or ignored, except by the academe. Exodus of population continues west or south.

A total demographic extinction is clearly written on the wall, but who cares? The universe is rapidly changing all around us at a vastly accelerated rate, but we, the Rip van Winkles, heirs to an ancient and noble tradition, continue to be oblivious to the needs of harmonizing our Faith to the changing milieu, and are consequently becoming obsolescent. Strong egos, power politics and vested interests are inhibiting the global diaspora from coming together to work out a proper solution.

Our traditional and respected, though limited leadership is vested in BPP. If the BPP has to assume this vastly enhanced responsibility, it will need to restructure itself as a fully democratic, elected body, change its constitution and geographic scope ...

Failing that, a new global democratically elected body will need to be constituted by a selected, capable leadership, as the Founding Directors, leaving the BPP to continue its Trust affairs. Elected or nominated representatives would be invited to its membership from all over the world, wherever a stable community exists and has formed into a local Association.

This Federation of Global Zoroastrian Associations would assume the

responsibility of leading the world Zoroastrian community into the next millennium, as a strong, well identified body, with a clear vision of the demands of a changing universe, so as to be in harmony with it. It would not be bogged down by blind traditionalism and their media pressures, but retain our Gathic core essence and spirit to a point, and flexible enough to re-orient itself to the changing universal demands. This will be a very informal body, open to all views, by presence or proxy. No restrictions on opting in or opting out at any time. No compulsion to accept majority decisions, but the ability to modify them or reject them.

The whole purpose is just to keep coming together under a global umbrella and sound out views on various burning topics (which currently, in the absence of such a leadership organization, is splitting us and creating acrimony), so as to find out ways and means of harmonizing such views.

It could be financed by all participating members and certainly in a big way by BPP. It could deal with ways and means of reversing our dwindling demography and harmonize the geographically shifting population pressures ...

This is not just another stage of hierarchy, but a global discussion forum, where our latent energy and genius could be used constructively and not wasted on futile conflicts in the media. We have about 30 years within which to shape up this idea, establish the forum and get in control of our destiny. Else we will be lost in the limbo of history.

Failing such action, individual Associations and Federations around the world may tend independently to work a way out of this mess, as best suited to their individual local environment, pressures and politics. Once this global body is formed and our continuity ensured, perhaps it will be time to assess the universal changes that are taking place and think about appropriate readjust-

ment, reform and renaissance of the Good Religion.

Homi B. Minocher Homji
Toronto, Ontario

Zarthusra Appears

I have written and recorded some songs of praise to Zoroaster and Ahura Mazda, after Zoroaster appeared to me in November 1994 and said, "Music is the bridge between humanity and Divinity, and all the people of the world understand the language of music."

Zoroaster first appeared to me in 1991 and has done so since, and as I look back on my life, I believe He has been with me always. He communicates to me without words, and has taken me many places and to many times.

When He first appeared, I was an atheist, and had never heard of Zoroaster. He was with my mother when she passed away, as witnessed by the lady sharing her hospital room, when a 'man of light' came and took my mother home. He has saved my life (literally) at least four times. And he has taken me to see my beloved mother many times since she went with Him.

I know for many this will be difficult, or even impossible, to accept, but I have nothing to gain by lying. In fact, it has been a most difficult experience for myself to accept, having never been religious nor interested in religions. But it has changed my life, my outlook and my goals.

If anyone is interested in my music or my story, please email me at swehrle@unm.edu.

Sharon Faith
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Kudos on the Directory

The *North American Zoroastrian Directory* is most impressive and reflects FEZANA's commitment to Zoroastrians in the new world.

With all your members being busy in their professions, businesses, offices

and homes, it is very creditable to have produced such a massive undertaking. I am not aware of any directory produced in our community on such a scale. FEZANA has demonstrated what can be achieved with limited resources and loads of commitment ... ■

Jehangir R. Patel
Editor, *Parsiana Magazine*
Mumbai, India

More Kudos...and Memories

I am really impressed with the work and efforts put forth by the President and the literary staff of FEZANA; as well as special congratulations to Noshir Langrana for the North American Directory—this was quite an undertaking.

Recent articles, especially in the Winter 1996 issue were superb — on the Gateway of India, *Glimpses of the Great, Eminent Parsi Lawyers, Down Memory Lane*, and *Back to Cusrow Baug*. Most touching was Cawas Mody's poem *Pride*. In 37 years in the USA, I have totally become Americanized, but like Cawas says: "I left my culture, but it never left me." I would like to add to that poem: "Go east or go west, but the Parsis are the best!"

Whenever I visit India, Tata Colony, Poona, Panchgani, all the good old memories come back to me. The best part of the trip is to share old times with friends, families and colleagues from school and college. My wife Carol always enjoyed Parsis, but this time my son Brian, who is a mathematician from MIT also had the pleasure of going down memory lane with his Dad's Parsi friends, and is writing to his other six siblings, about how much he enjoyed in India.

Without Parsis, India would be a dull place to live in. The contribution of Parsis to Indian industry, their hard work, their vision, and not to mention their good looks, good old jokes and jovial spirit,

Adi Maneckshaw
Waldorf, Maryland

Madam Butterfly ...

[Continued from page 51]

striking. But what was more, some of them remembered many details from their days as caterpillars, and started sharing them with the rest of the colony.

A few weeks later, when there were still many skeptics and a few hardened caterpillars, a pair of butterflies returned with their eggs which had just hatched into larvae. They had given birth to many larvae. And they told the rest of them that this was the only way they could increase their numbers. That the transformation from caterpillar to butterfly was a part of their process of regeneration and growth. That each transformation was an individual ordeal. That their offspring were born as larvae to become caterpillars, only because they had to face their own individual ordeals and go through their own transformations.

It was only then that the entire caterpillar colony realized that this transformation was not about my way or your way, but about the natural way. That the ordeal of transformation was a part of life, and it was only by going through this ordeal that their colony could regenerate itself and flourish. ■

Dr. Yeganegi ...

[Continued from page 61]

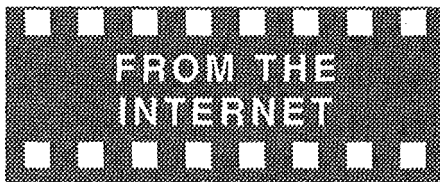
mad Reza Shah Pahlavi cracked down on the party, arresting members, prosecuting and executing some leaders and jailing others. Some Zarthustis were among them. After serving their time, by law they could not work for the government, and private companies were afraid to hire them. Dr. Yeganegi had the courage and compassion to hire almost all of them to work for him, being fully aware of the risks involved.

A true humanitarian, he was not afraid to take on a difficult task. He also helped people on an individual basis, regardless of their religion. If

someone needed help, Dr. Yeganegi extended his helping hands, not expecting anything in return. He did not look for recognition or reward. He liked people and believed that helping others was his religious duty. That is why he opened the *Yeganegi Clinic* in Tehran, to take care of the poor. He believed in the words of a Persian poem which roughly translated says:

"It is better to leave behind a good name than a palace made of gold."

Dr. Yeganegi passed away at 64 from complications due to diabetes. The nation mourned, felt and acknowledged his loss. He went to his place in heaven. ■



Sky Burials in Derbyshire

"Archeologists have found platforms for sky burial in Derbyshire where prehistoric man laid out his dead to be picked clean by the animals. Hundreds of human teeth and bones have been found near Long Stone Lake in the Peak district, thought to date from the middle neolithic period about five thousand years ago. Supporting evidence comes from hundreds of tiny bones from small animals which archeologists believe were deposited in the droppings of birds of prey attracted by the corpses. "The custom of laying out the dead for birds to clean is still practiced by Parsees in India."

[From *The Times* (of London), October 16, 1996, posted by Mark Summers.]

Yazd Historically Significant

UNESCO has declared that the city of Yazd, located in the center of Iran, is the second most historically significant city in the world. Venice of Italy has been announced by UNESCO as the first. ■

[From *Kayhan Havai*, December 25, 1996, submitted by Mehrdad Khosraviyani.]

■ ZARTHUSTI ■ ENTERPRISE PRODUCTS AND ■ SERVICES ■

Please support our Zarthusti entrepreneurs and advertisers, and purchase their products and services.

Opportunities Available

Telecommunications. Due to the recent merger between MCI and British Telecom, opportunities have emerged in telecommunications and Information Technology. Positions are in US and Europe. Contact Eddie Mehrfar at emehrfar@shl.com or fax: (310) 860-8506.

Housekeeper. Position available for a caregiver and housekeeper for an aging couple in North Carolina. Room and board with compensation. Call Pearl at (201) 228-9602.

Tennis Pro. Looking for an enthusiastic tennis professional (male or female) with a solid tennis background, to work in a premier country club in New Orleans. Clerical and computer skills are a plus for the Tennis Pro Shop. Contact Burziz Kanga at (504) 283-9866.

Office Assistant. with potential for advancement to management, at ROOFMASTER, a rapidly growing family-run roofing and siding business in Ottawa. Excellent communication skills, customer service oriented, ability to handle high pressure environment, reliability, integrity, small-business experience, computer skills, basic book-keeping, accounting, a plus. Contact Jehaangir Bulsara at (613) 723-9273, email: bulsaraj@comnet.ca.

A Win-Win for all

Rusi Gandhi Real Estate will donate 10% of his commissions from Zarthustis to FEZANA or the Zoroastrian Association of your choice. He can help buy, sell or rent commercial or residential property in the US, Canada, or 52 other countries in the world. Call (800) 575-6005.

Opportunity Wanted

Computer Animation. 17-year-old Zarthusti youth with an "undying passion" for computer animation and multi-media content creation, is seeking a summer job in his chosen field. He is willing to relocate anywhere in North America. A job with Loop Media in Toronto last summer gave him the opportunity to learn Houdini, Ice, Adobe and Painter. Please contact Rushad at (416) 492-8114, email: pjk@fs4.uc.on.ca

Looking for Rug Importers

Looking for buyers (importers or individuals) interested in doing hand-made rugs business with a Pakistani exporter — Saira Carpets of Lahore, owned by a reputable, family who have been in the business for generations. The exporter can customize rugs to the buyers requirements. Can be bought singly or wholesale. Contact N. Challa, 2767 Briargrove, Apt. 473, Houston, TX 77057, Tel: (713) 789-7693, email: nazmgr@aol.com.

The Zoroastrian Shop

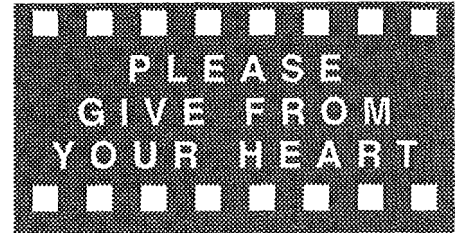
Traditional Zarthusti items can be ordered from *The Zoroastrian Shop*:

- Sukhad, lobban, kakras ...
- sudrehs, kushtis and topis
- Zarthustra photos
- Khordeh Avesta
- Silver — ses, batti, afargan
- Gold and silver jewelry with Farohar/Zarthustra
- Chalk-na-dabba and chalk
- Bead torans
- Books [see Books, this issue]
- Tee shirts, artifacts
- Ceramic tiles with Zarthusti motifs.
- And much more.

Contact Khursheed Bapasola in Voorhees, NJ, at (609) 768-8351.

Vasanu Anyone?

Nergis Unwalla of Pennsylvania, sells home made *vasanu*, at \$10 per pound plus shipping. To order, call Mrs. Unwalla at (609) 983-6239. ■



Donation 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. For tax exemption eligibility please refer to FEZANA Journal [Winter 1994, p.60-61].

Little Imroze Would Love to Receive 'Get Well' Cards

"Thank you for your wonderful response," writes Binaifer Bhandari, aunt of 13-year-old Imroze Ardeshtir of Mumbai. "Thanks to you and other donors ... Imroze had her sister Farah's bone marrow transplanted on October 24th, at Hammersmith Hospital in the UK ... "I have one more request. It would be a great show of support if Imroze received as many 'Get Well' cards as possible."



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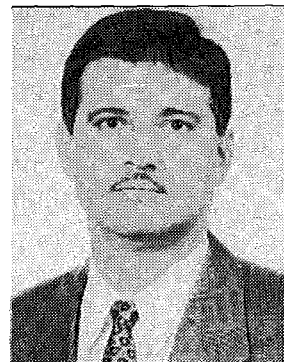
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So, please send Imroze a 'Get Well' card — c/o Binaifer Bhandari, 22 Dagmar Avenue, Wembley, Middlesex HA9 8DE. Donations, of course will be welcome for continuing treatment. Send checks to Ms. Bhandari or to FEZANA Welfare Committee [see address above].

Student Aid Appeals

FEZANA receives numerous appeals for Student Aid. One such appeal is from a student finishing high-school in California, with outstanding academic and extra-curricular credentials. He has a grade point of 4.0 and a PSAT score of 1440. He writes: "I would be most grateful for any financial assistance for college, to help alleviate the burden on my parents." Send checks payable to FEZANA, marked "Student Aid", to the Welfare Committee [see address above].

SUNY Project in Western Ghats

Farshid Ahrestani, a student at the Environmental and Forest Biology department at State University of New York, is doing his Master's the-

sis on "Human-wildlife conflicts in the Plani Hills, Western Ghats of India." Data for the study will be collected by a survey of 500 villagers over a 9-month period. Farshid is looking for financial support for the project, estimated to cost \$3650, including airfare and stay in India for 9 months. Please send checks payable to FEZANA, marked 'wildlife project', to the Welfare Committee [see address above].

Chicago Pediatrician Provides Health Care in India

With the expert voluntary services of Chicago area pediatrician Dr. Roda K. Patel, the voluntary *Gram Seva Trust* has added a new Child Health Care Service. The Trust serves the poor and needy in 41 villages in the Valsad District of India, with a population of 71,000.

The goal is to provide total child health and nutrition to this community, where over 50% of children suffer from malnutrition and high susceptibility to fatal diseases. The cost for

providing a nutritional diet is Rs. 300 (~\$10) per month per child. The total cost for the project is estimated to be Rs. 44,000 (~\$1400 per month. Any donation will be gratefully accepted. Please send your checks in the name of Dr. Roda Patel, to 2030 Post Road, Northbrook, IL 60062, Tel: (847) 297-3347.

Athletic and Cycling Meet

Sponsors and donors are sought for the annual Parsi Athletic and Cycling Meet, organized by the Nowroze Baug Play Center. Contributions will be used for cash prizes, certificates and medals for the athletes. Please send checks payable to FEZANA, marked 'Athletic Meet' to the Welfare Committee [see address above]

Religious Study Scholarships Available

Scholarships are available from a generous Zarthusti in India, who wishes to remain anonymous, for:

- Education of Zarthusti children, with Mobeds' children given a preference.

Send the finest quality
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URGENT APPEAL FOR MELANOMA SURGERY

Dear Friends:

I am writing on behalf of Nawaz Mehta and her family. Unfortunately, Nawaz, just 33 years old and a brilliant chartered accountant by profession has suffered from recurrent melanoma of the face which has become life threatening. As I write this she is undergoing extensive surgery involving half of her face at the Johns Hopkins Institute in Maryland.

As you can well imagine the cost of such a surgery for a foreigner is crippling. The family have, from within their resources, been able to provide approximately 10 lakhs of Rupees and they are still trying to raise more funds with other trusts in India and around the world. The cost of the total surgery and hospitalization is around US\$170,000.

I am appealing to all North American Zarthustis to show your support in a generous way. Thank you in advance for your compassion for a fellow Zarthusti in their hour of need.

- Mrs. Guloo M. Austin
London, Ontario

Please send checks payable to FEZANA, marked "Nawaz Mehta" to the Welfare Committee [see address above].

◆ Encouraging top-ranking students of the Zarthusti religion to continue higher religious studies.

◆ Encouraging scholars of the religion to serve the community by teaching and preaching Zarthustra's message and traditions.

For information and application forms, please contact Nadir Modi, Modi Lodge, 13 Vachha Gandhi Road, Gamdevi, Mumbai 300 007.

Acknowledgements

FEZANA most gratefully acknowledges donations received this quarter, through December 31, 1996. Donations will be deeply appreciated for the FEZANA fund categories: Welfare, Religious Education, Student Aid, Youth, FEZANA Journal, General, or for a specific appeal.

For FEZANA Welfare Fund

Kaikobad Bilimoria, ONT (\$100); Adi Davar, VA (\$51); Aloo Mistry, MI (\$75).

Received by Welfare Committee for Various appeals:

Anonymous, NJ (\$25); Anonymous, NJ (\$20); Zenobia Austin, CA (\$21); Sam Bhathena, MD (\$100); Homi Byramji, NJ (\$101); Diana Dinshaw, CT (\$100); Rusi Gandhi, NJ (\$25); Homi Gandhi, NJ (\$25); L. A. Hakim, NY (\$50); Homiyar Panday, NJ (\$200); G. D. Pocha, CA (\$50); Anahita Sidhwa, TX (\$51).

For General Fund

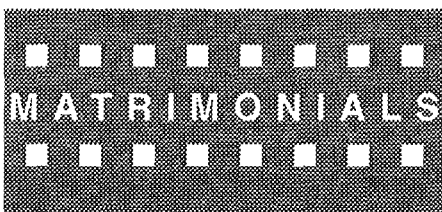
Jamshed Fozdar, Singapore (\$514); Jim Jagus, PA (\$500); Jal Panthaki, ONT (\$20).

For FEZANA Journal:

Firozi Daruwala Alercia, NC (\$10); Anonymous, MD (\$50); Anonymous, BC (\$500); Khursheed Bapasola, NJ (\$15); Sarosh Bharucha, ONT (\$10); Rointon Bhumgara, UK (\$20); Kaikobad Bilimoria, ONT (\$100); Jehangir Cama, TX (\$15); Kamal Campbell, GA (\$15); Capricorn Travel N' Tours, TX (\$150); Farokh Contractor, LA (\$50); Katy Cooper, CA (\$40); Parastu Dubash, MA (\$31); Dupage Cancer Treatment, IL (\$881.25); Noshir Dutia, NJ (\$21); Jim Engineer, PA (\$21); Freddy Engineer, CO (\$10); Soonoo Engineer, BC (\$10); Hoshang Farahmand, NY (\$20); Keki Gundevia, UK (\$11); Parvez Guzdar, MD (\$21); Rustom Homavazir, ONT

(\$15); Hinata Jambuserwala, CA (\$10); Maneck Kakalia, Pakistan (\$200); Noshir Langrana, NJ (\$20); Jehangir Medora, ONT (\$1500); Daisy Mehta, CA (\$10); Thrity Mistry, Alberta (\$30); , Neville Moos, OH (\$10); Burjor Patel, IL (\$25); Arzan Pithawalla, FL); Minoo Pithawalla, NJ (\$25); Zarir Sethna, TX (\$150); David Shahriari, CO (\$20); Kersi Shroff, MD (\$10); Diniar Sukhia, NJ (\$10); Dick Vazir, FL (\$20).

Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia (\$35); Group sponsorship of Spring 1997 issue (\$1200). ■



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.

Tall, slim, 29 years old, professional lady, interested in music, dancing, cricket, tennis and swimming; invites correspondence from well-educated, fun loving Zarthusti boys with good sense of humor. Contact uncle at (301) 977-7817. [F97-01]

Well-educated, attractive lady, 31, 5' 4", B.A.-equivalent from UK. Interested in well-educated, well-settled, professional. Willing to settle in USA, UK or India. [F97-02]

38-year-old, attractive, professional woman, currently working in UK, seeks suitable match from well-placed professional. Call 00 - 44 - 121 - 454 7621. [F97-03]

Girl from Canada, 23, degree in child psychology, working in pharmacy and as teacher's aide. Loves cooking, reading, exercise, music. Call (613) 829-0224. [F97-04]

Gentleman from Germany, 60, attractive and fit, consulting engineer, in Europe for 40 years. Looking for mature and settled lady, preferably professional. Call 0049-211-628518, fax: 624524. [M97-05]

Slim lady, 33, MBA in Information Systems and Finance. Looking for outgoing and sociable professional, fun-loving, with good sense of humor. (419) 531-8161. [F97-06]

Looking for suitable match for **brother in India, B.Sc. 28, 5'11"**, from home-loving, educated Parsi girl. Call (818) 358-4567. [F97-07]

Executive chef, male, 25, at country club. Hotel Management degree from Switzerland. Was banquet chef at Ritz-Carlton, quiet, enjoys home and family, music and entertaining, traveled widely, and will continue to do so. Call (215) 443-0736. [M97-08]

Lady in India, 30, M.Com, lecturer at M.S. University in Baroda. Enjoys reading, embroidery, movies, traveling. Write to Mrs. Bam, 302 Indrasan Flat, Fethagunj, Baroda 390002, India. [F97-09]

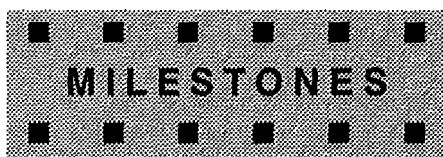
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Help in Finding Matrimonial Partners in India

Mrs. Serah Kotval, of Mumbai is interested in helping Zarthushti men from North America who are visiting India, to meet Parsi women and "get together for matrimonial purposes." Interested persons are requested to write well in advance of their arrival in India, giving their full name, address, telephone, date of birth, height, education, employment history, hobbies, and send a recent photo. A stamped return envelope will be appreciated since postage is very high. Write to Mrs. Kotval at Dady House, 802 C, Khareghat Road, Dadar, Mumbai 400 014.



Births

Robin, a boy, to Nyaz Asgari and Homa Ashtari, in Vancouver, BC, on July 20.

Cyrus, a boy, to Dara and Mehrbanoo Behrooz, in Campbell River, BC, on August 15.

Farsos, a boy, to Ruby and Yazdi Bulsara, of Dallas area, on December 12.

Zubin, a boy, to Neville and Rashna Doodha, in Burnaby, BC, on October 24.

Farentina and Zarina, twin girls to Keki and Patty Gatta, of Ontario, sisters to Cyrus, granddaughters to Mani and Minocher Gatta, on November 8.

Farah, a girl, to Sharokh and Rashna Kianipour, in Vancouver, BC, on August 20.

A boy, to Parinaz and Mehrdad Khosravi, Marketing Manager for FEZANA Journal, brother to Afsheen, in San Francisco area, on February 14.

Zarine, a girl, to Shernaz and Jamshid Minwalla, of London, Ontario, sister to Armaity, on January 1.

Danny, a boy, to Parveen and Marzban Ogra, of Chicago area, grandson to Goolu Ogra, in Vernon Hills, Illinois, on October 1.

Tascha, a boy, to Mojdeh Shahriari and Peyman Parsa, on July 15, in Vancouver, BC.



Another Success Story for FEZANA Journal

Behnaz Dholoo, originally from Bombay, and Sohrab Mistry of New Jersey, who met through FEZANA Journal's matrimonial column, were married on January 11, at the Bombay Palace in Manhattan. Also in the photo are uncle Jimmy Dholoo of Maryland and family. Officiating priests were Ervad Darius Antia and Pervez Patel.



Pervin and Jimmy Mistry (seated) of Toronto celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary, and son Nauzer (center) and his wife Armin (née Sachinwalla) celebrated their first, with a reception at Sangam Banquet Hall in Mississauga, Ontario, on December 25. Son Pervez (left) has announced his engagement to Zenobia Dara Panthakee (second from left). Son Percy, a student in Electrical Engineering, is at far right. The function was a great success, with over 350 guests enjoying the good food and music including traditional Parsi and Iranian songs and dances (garbas).

Zenia, a girl, to Anaheet and Farhad Sethna, and sister to Zubin, in Ontario, on December 28.

Ariana Cheri, a girl to Helga and Hooman Sotoodeh, of San Francisco area, on November 5. Proud grandparents are Rostam and Minoo Sotoodeh and Mary Mehrabi.

Karl, a boy, first child for Nitash (née Dadyburjor) and Ratansha Vakil, currently of Singapore, previously in USA.

Farah, a girl, to Nazneen and Shahvir Vimadalal, of New York area, on December 9.

Imran, a boy, to Bhaktawar and Sarosh Wadia of Alberta, on October 24.



Died, Fredoon Gazdar of Toronto, on January 13, in Toronto, after a long and productive life. Mr. Gazdar is shown above (center) celebrating his 100th birthday, on November 24, with (l. to r.) son Khurshed, grandson Cyrus, daughter-in-law Dhun, grandchildren Rohinton and Aban, future daughter-in-law, and son Sam. [also see FEZANA Journal, Winter 1996].

Shayan, a boy, to Ramin and Mojgan Zohrabi, in North Vancouver, BC, on September 20.

Navjotes

Bayan and Janene Farzandi, son and daughter of Jehanbux and Shariene Farzandi, in North Vancouver, BC, on September 22.

Adil and Farhad Minocherhomjee, sons of Ardaviraf and Hutoxi Minocherhomjee of Chicago area, in Mumbai, on December 18.

Farah Petigara, daughter of Zubin and Yasmin Petigara, of Vancouver, BC, in Karachi, on August 10.

Engagement

Pervez, son of Pervin and Jimmy Mistry of Toronto, was engaged to Zenobia Dara Panthakee of Toronto, in November [see photo].

Weddings

Jamsheed Amanat of Vancouver, BC, to Monic of Montreal, Quebec, in Vancouver, on December 29.

Benaifer Khambatta, daughter of Sarosh and Farida Khambatta, to Bruce Bedford, on August 29.

Behram Daboo, son of Aspy and Aban Daboo of Chicago area, to Roxanne Buhariwalla, daughter of Sam and Roshan Buhariwalla of Mumbai, on May 20, in Mumbai.

Mehernaz Jamshedian, daughter of Farokh and Zarine Jamshedian, to

Mehran Jamshidnian, son of Khodabandeh and Firoozeh Jamshidnian, in Vancouver, BC, on September 15. The ceremony was performed by Mobed Jehangir Panthaky.

Recovering

Last year, Dr. Keikhosrow Harvesf, Chief of Pediatrics at St. Vincent Medical Center in Jacksonville, Florida, was diagnosed with multiple myeloma. Today he is in remission after intensive chemotherapy, and still goes to work every day. He attributes his recovery to the love of his friends, and the prayers of his young patients and their parents. He is on the prayer list of most of the churches in Jacksonville and neighboring counties. Dr. Harvesf contributes frequently to Zarthusti periodicals, including Payk-e-Mehr and this Journal.

Friends and family of Pashang Patel, son of Framroze and Armaity Patel of New Jersey, celebrated Pashang's recovery with a Jashan at the Darbe Mehr in New Rochelle, on January 25. With two 12-hour surgeries, a brain tumor (benign) was removed, and Pashang has since, undergone extensive therapy and corrective surgery to restore his hearing loss, speech impairment and right hand movement. His latest, a nerve graft procedure was also successful and he should be able to return to work by June.

Framroze and Armaity wish to thank "each and every righteous human being who contributed to Pashang's recovery, particularly Dr. Nayak, Dr. Khurshed

Dastur, and the Zarthusti communities of Pittsburgh and tri-state New York area."

Anniversaries

Freny and Jehan Bagli of New Jersey, celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary on September 16, with a family get-together.

Pervin and Jimmy Mistry of Toronto celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary on December 25 [see photo].

Armin and Nauzer Mistry of Toronto celebrated their first wedding anniversary on December 25 [see photo].

Deaths



Jal P. Bapasola, 100, father of Noshir (Khursheed) Bapasola, grandfather of Sam and Sherazad, of New Jersey, in Bombay, on January 10. Mr. Bapasola traveled around the world on a bicycle in 1923, taking over 4 years and covering 44,000 miles [FEZANA Journal, Winter 1996]. Photo shows Mr. Bapasola on his 100th birthday last year, with his medals.

Mother of Khojasteh Bastani, grandmother of Nilufar Varjavand, of Pennsylvania, in Iran.

Framroze Bharucha, father of Yasmin Ghadiali of New York, in Mumbai, on January 3.

Dara Rustomji Contractor, father of Shirin and Sarosh Contractor of Ontario, in Mumbai, on December 7.

Esfandiar Farkhani, husband of Parichehr Sarvian, father of Fariba Roya, and Dr. Farzad Farkhani, of Cali-

fornia, in November. The *Porseh* ceremony was held at the Dar-e-Mehr in Westminster, California, on December 1.

Shirin Godrej Irani, 85, sister of Peroja (Kaikhosrov) Irani of New York City, of a stroke, in New York, on November 20.

Perin Jal Kapadia, mother of Freny Romer, Zenobia Irani and Rohinton Kapadia, in San Diego, CA, on December 2.

Homi Eruch Kotwal, husband of Tehmi (Née Boyce), father of Eruch and Arnaz, brother of Homai Bhaya, and brother-in-law of Bomy Boyce, in Toronto, on January 5.

Naju (Nellie) Leivers, sister of Jehangir, Soonie Bahadur Patell, and Homi Patell of Ontario, in Multan, Pakistan, on November 17.

Dinshaw Merchant, 80, father of Whabiz of Chicago, Hoshang of Hyderabad, Maharukh of Mumbai, Arnavaz of Australia, in Mumbai, on September 12. A philanthropist all his life, who gave freely for many educational and welfare causes, Mr. Merchant will be specially remembered for commissioning and donating the full-length painting of Zarthustra by Shiavux Chavda, that hangs in the Darbe Mehr in Chicago.

Mondegar Mandgaryan, husband of Khorshed, father of Tehmasp, Rustom, Pervez and Parvin, in Toronto, on December 19.

Jall Rustomji Khory, husband of Seru, father of Fredoon Khory and Ruby Bilimoria, of Ontario, in Mumbai on October 31.

Rajinder and Sita Dayal, brother and sister-in-law of Perrin Parshottam Mathur of Alberta, in India.

Katie Pastakia, 45, wife of Dr. Behram Pastakia, mother of Meher, of Bethesda, Maryland; daughter of Ratan and Sheroo Daruwalla of Mumbai; after an extended fight with cancer, on December 14. Katie, a Ph.D. was a researcher in hematology at the National Institutes of Health in Maryland. She has requested that donations in her memory be made to the Fali Chothia Educational Fund of ZAMWI, c/o Firoza Fitch, 10300 Farnham Drive, Bethesda, MD 20814.

Minoo Patel, husband of Khorshed (née Khursigara), father of Nergish and Darius, brother of Soonu and Bahadur Patel and Jehangir, in Toronto, on December 18.

Dinyar Rustomji, brother of Jimmy (Rosie) Rustomji, of New York area, in Mumbai on November 3.

To Mr. Farhangi With Love

A little man in aged stature,
But so large in wisdom, heart and soul;
How do I say goodbye to one so loved?
How do I smile without you anymore?

I see your combed-back
silvery strands of hair
Long whisks of eyebrows turning white,
A trimmed and handsome mustache
Caressing your lips;
I feel my cheeks tickle
When you kissed me good night.

I remember vividly the way you smiled,
That image entrenched forever in my mind,
A row of ivory teeth
Peeking through wide grinning lips,
Chestnut gray eyes blinking down;
your face so kind.

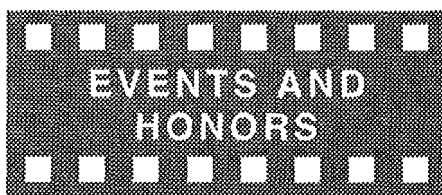
And I won't forget the way you spoke,
A hoarse but soothing voice,
Sharing much more than you ever took,
Teaching me that I always have a choice.

I'll embrace again your gentle hands
Holding mine and squeezing tight,
Giving of your own life energy,
To assure me things will be alright.

I guess I can smile without you anymore
Because I don't have to say Good bye,
With so many memories
Of the loving man you were,
I can live a lifetime with you still at my side.

-Mitra Lohrasb-Tafti

[Dr. Mehraban Farhangi passed away in Vancouver on October 26. See FEZANA Journal, Winter 1996].



The entry submitted by **PHIROZ DASTOOR** of Toronto, *Volunteer Vision*, was selected from over 200 entries for the masthead of the Operation Eyesight newsletter. He was also cited for "outstanding contributions" in support of the World Blind Union, by the Canadian National Institute for the Blind.

SHIRAZ KAPADIA, Ontario physiotherapist, entered the Canadian International Marathon sponsored by the City of Toronto with 3500 competitors. She completed the full marathon (26 miles) in 3 hours and 58 minutes.

STOP PRESS. Died, Richard McIntyre, of cancer, husband of Dina McIntyre, father of Richard and John, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on February 19.

ZARINA MULLAN PLATH of Bloomington, Illinois, daughter of Soli and Linda Mullan of Chicago area, won the \$15,000 Ruth Tully Poetry Fellowship award. One of her poems that helped in securing the prestigious award is shown here:

The Parsis Don't Bury Their Dead

They don't cremate them either; earth and fire are sacred. So white-robed priests place the bodies on towers, out there in the open, in bird-filled space.

Prayers are sung, in a slow loud hum, vibrating in the air like a band of tuning forks; the towers are silent. Their tops are clean and smooth, hot under the clouds.

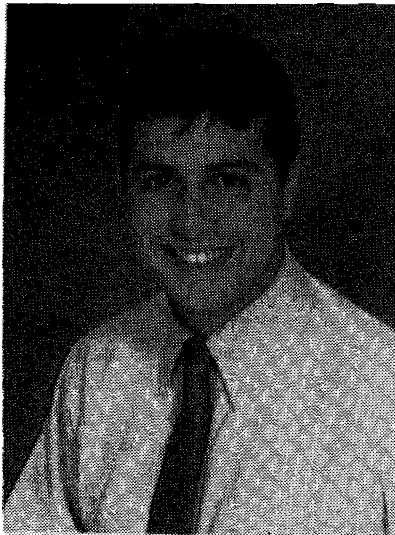
Somewhere there stands a cluster of these high tables offering souls on a plate — a field of these monuments like false forests.

The sky above continually moves, stirred by the circuitous routes of vultures in slow motion. Their wings point and beat with a conductor's precision, over my grandmother's bones, clean as piano keys.

RUSHNA PATEL, daughter of Perviz and Baji Patel of Chicago area, was inducted into the Hoffman Estates High School Chapter of the National Honor Society, on November 6.

The Fraternity Ahuramazdyan Ontario has honored Padma Vibhushan **KHUSHROW RUSTAMJI**, (a frequent visitor to Toronto and brother-in-law of Coomi and Minoo Treasurywala) with a citation and honorary membership for his service to India as Director General, Border Security Force, and Special Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs.

DR. BEHERUZ SETHNA is one of five recipients of the Washington Times Foundation National Service Award for 1996, from the State of Georgia for "impressive efforts to encourage understanding between people ..." In 1994, Sethna was nominated President of West Georgia College, the first member of an ethnic minority to hold the position. [From Parsiana, May 1996].



KHUSHRU D. TATA, manager of Information Technology at the South Carolina Office of the Governor, has been selected "1996 Outstanding Young Man of America" in recognition of outstanding professional achievement, superior leadership ability and exceptional service to the community.

Tata, son of Dolly and Dara Tata of Mumbai, came to the US in 1987 to study Management Science at the University of South Carolina. Currently at the Governor's Office, he is responsible for Information Technology for seventeen divisions, maintaining networking, communications, email and other Internet resources.

Thank You! Thank You! To 'Behind the Scenes' Volunteers

I would like to thank all the volunteers (besides the regular Journal Staff who are also all dedicated volunteers), who help behind the scenes in getting the FEZANA Journal produced and distributed every quarter.

Chicago area volunteers who gather to stick labels, stamp, staple, insert, paste, sort, rubber-band, and

bag the Journals (all 1650 of them), and deliver all the bags to the Bulk Rate Center at the Post Office: **Dilshad Antia and family, Bachi Damkevala, Firoza Engineer, Dinavaz Irani, Zarine Karanjia, Farida Shroff, Zarine Weil and family**, and the **Rivetna family**, especially **Dinsoo, Jehan and Cyrus**.

My daughter **Zenobia Rivetna**, for being my "Quark Express" consultant, and suggesting continual improvements in the design and layout of the Journal.

Jamshed Udvadia of Lansing, Michigan, for offering to proof-read the Journal, and doing a great job this time, at very short notice.

Rohinton Rivetna, my husband, an invaluable help, resource and inspiration at every step.

THANK YOU! - **Roshan Rivetna**
Publisher



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

ZOROASTRIANISM

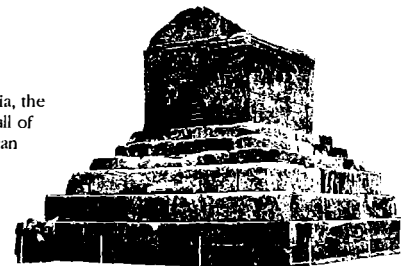
Prophet Zarathushtra, or Zoroaster, preached the religion on the steppes of Asia, the ancient Persia, around 1800 B.C.E. The faith flourished through the rise and fall of many civilizations. Zoroastrianism became the state religion of the Great Persian Empire, founded by Cyrus the Great in 558 B.C.E.

With the advent of Islam and the conquest of Persia by the Arabs large numbers of devout followers left Persia and landed on the western shores of India where they were given refuge by the native Hindu ruler. Their descendants the Parsees, concentrated in and around Bombay, have kept the faith alive in India.

In an age of idol worship and polytheism, Zarathushtra preached the first monotheistic religion of the one supreme God, Ahura Mazda ("Wise Lord"). The principles upon which Zoroastrianism stands are simple. It is a monotheistic religion with stress upon conscious choice to choose the righteous path (or Asha). Although the pursuit of Asha offers comforting prospects for the afterlife, the main tenets of the religion stress the here and now. Zoroastrianism is a pragmatic teaching concerned with an improvement in the quality of life on earth. Zoroastrians are taught that Asha is practiced by maintaining moral purity of thought, word and deed hence the term Humata "good thoughts, Hukta "good words and Huverashia "good deeds" which forms the cornerstone of the religion. The message of Zarathushtra is contained in the ancient texts written in Avestan of which the five Gathas are believed to be the words of Zarathushtra himself.

The loftiest ideal for man is to be god-like like Ahura Mazda. With the cultivation of the good mind (Vohu Man) and by following the path of righteousness (Asha) and with devotion (Armaiti) man can eradicate all evil and can hope to attain the twin rewards of perfection (Haurvatat) and immortality (Ameretat) thereby attaining ultimate communion with Ahura Mazda. It is humankind's mission to bring about on this earth Zarathushtra's vision of Frashokereti: the kingdom of truth and good thinking.

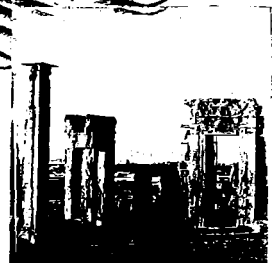
The total population of Zoroastrians in the world today numbers only about 200,000, major concentrations being in India and Iran. There are about 14,000 Zoroastrians in United States. Approximately 500 live in Metropolitan Chicago.



Tomb of Cyrus the Great at Pasargadae
Alexander is ascribed to have not allowed plunder of this tomb and instead ordered his men to restore the tomb and its treasures and put his personal seal on it with an inscription engraved on the door.



The "Edict of Cyrus"
Inscribed on a cylinder is an ancient declaration of human rights made by Cyrus the Great (circa 557-529 B.C.E.) after he conquered Babylon and released the Jews from Assyrian captivity. The Zoroastrian tolerance for others is reflected in this heritage. Courtesy of the United Nations.



The Ruins of Persepolis
The seat of the Persian Empire, Persepolis was destroyed during the conquest of Persia by Alexander in 331 B.C.E.

Zoroastrian page from the 1997 NCCJ Interfaith Calendar. Entire proceeds are applied to FEZANA funds. \$10 per copy. Contact Rohinton Rivetna, (630) 325-5383.

FEZANA

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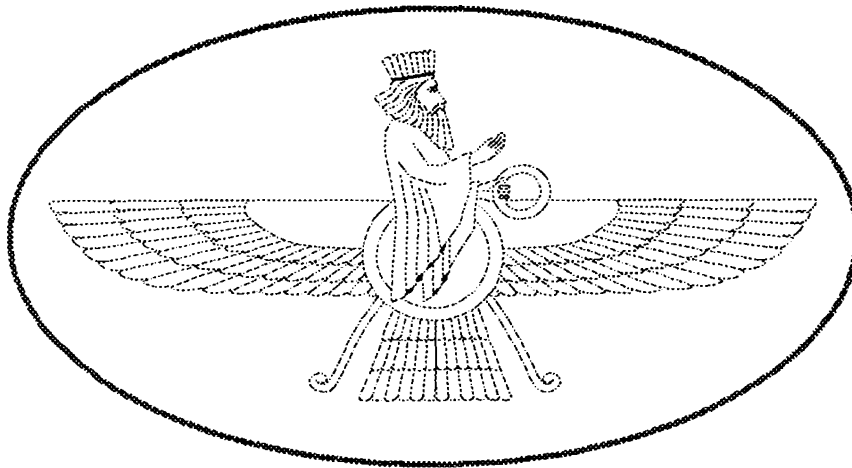
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