



# JOURNAL

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## THE DATE AND PLACE OF ZARATHUSHTRA A HISTORICAL REVIEW

*We revere here the righteous fravashi of righteous Zarathushtra Spitama,  
 Who first thought good, first spoke good, first performed good (deeds),  
 Was the first priest, first warrior, first to render agriculture prosperous,  
 First to know, first to instruct, first to have become worthy, first to be deserving —  
 Commended the righteous mother earth, commended the authority of Sroash (conscience)  
 And all good principles of righteousness created by Mazda.*

*[Fravardin Yasht, stanza 88, T. R. Sethna translation, 1976]*

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LEADERS AND SAVIORS

**T**he French naturalist Jean Fabre conducted behavioral experiments with small caterpillars that always traveled together in strings on the forest floor. He placed several of these little creatures on the rim of a large clay pot. Before long, the first one connected up with the last one so they formed a complete circle on the rim of the pot. Fabre found that even with plenty of food and water close by, the caterpillars continued on and on, around and around until they dropped and died from sheer exhaustion. They were locked into their habits, customs, traditions and experiences of the past and could not change. They were 'rim-walkers' with no leadership. No one can accuse the North American Zarathushtis of being rim-walkers. Again and again we get letters from Indian and Pakistani Zarthushti commending the constructive and forward-thinking Zarthushti community in North America. Most of us must be doing something right, at least sometimes.

In two areas we are obviously blessed: we do have plenty of people who can form Associations, organize conferences, gahambars and jashans, and do a number of useful things for the community; and we have leaders who can visualize our course of action, motivate us to achieve greater heights, and guide us in implementing our programs. Unfortunately, one never notices what has been done; one can only see what remains to be done. So naturally, we also have people who like to criticize those who are trying to do something for the community.

Perhaps we have too many leaders, too many managers, and not enough followers. Perhaps we are waiting for the Savior (saoshyant) who will come and lead us out of our dilemmas and predicaments?

Oh! How we wish that Asho Zarathushtra was here among us today! He left this world over 3,000

years ago — but his words and teachings are as fresh and relevant today as they were in the glory days of Cyrus the Hachamenid! His dialogues with the supreme Creator Ahura Mazda, his insights into the causes of human misery, and his enduring message of hope and salvation — are all embedded deeply in our collective psyche. Directly or indirectly, Asho Zarathushtra has influenced the development of modern human morality and monotheistic religious thought more than anyone else in history. Zarathushtra Spitaman was a leader of unparalleled stature. He passed on his message to a people who hardly knew how to read or write, who hardly understood the world around them; whose only hope was to keep all the different 'gods' happy so that they would protect them from the marauding hordes and provide the beneficial rains and sunshine to grow their crops and feed their herds in peace. How difficult must it have been for him to give the world-view that he envisioned — a universe created entirely by one God, Ahura Mazda, a world full of righteous people who worked together, caring for all of Ahura Mazda's creations, fighting evil, and ensuring the continued renewal of the world to a state of everlasting life and happiness.

How many of the 3 billion inhabitants of this world today have even heard of Asho Zarathushtra? Even in the days of the Hachamenids, his name was not connected to the religion that bears his name today. The tablets and inscriptions of Cyrus and Darius clearly indicate their allegiance to Ahura Mazda and their religious beliefs as those taught by Asho Zarathushtra. But Asho Zarathushtra's name or the name of the religion do not appear in any of the inscriptions. Was this by design? Or was he already forgotten by that time?

In fact, apart from the few extant Avestan and Pahlavi scriptures and texts, Asho Zarathushtra's name hardly appears in any historical documents. And when it does, there is little corroborating evidence to pinpoint exactly where and when he

lived. This lack of inscriptions, historical evidence and almost total silence about the date and place of birth of Asho Zarathushtra is a source of great consternation to the scholars, students and followers of our great religion.

Did he really exist or is he a figment of our imagination? There can be no doubt that Zarathushtra is a real person in history. The fact that there is so little preserved evidence should indicate to us that he existed in a time when there was no other organized, non-tribal, monotheistic religion on this earth — even the world 'religion' was not coined in the same sense as we know it today.

Zarathushtra, in his wisdom and humility, did not want the religion to be named after him. His followers began to live the religion, rather than to call it by any name, or invent a new tribal name for themselves. That is why Cyrus and Darius, although they followed all the teachings of the Gathas and were true Zarathushtis in every sense of the word, did not think that it was necessary to call themselves Zarathushtis or to include the name of the prophet in their inscriptions. The religion was for everyone — not just for Hachamenids, Maghas or Aryas.

Today we do need a name for our religion. We are proud to be called Zarathushtis. Most of us are fortunate to have been born in Zarathushti families. We are happy that many who were not born into Zarathushti families admire the teachings of Zarathushtra; and some even call themselves Zarathushtis, whether we like it or not. We owe it to ourselves and to Asho Zarathushtra to make his name and message better known to everyone. The better we understand his teachings, the better we will understand ourselves. And when we understand ourselves, we will be able to work together to renovate this world.

In essence, then, we will all be leaders and saviors of this world. That is what Asho Zarathushtra wanted. That is what we must do. ■

*Rustom Kevala*  
Chair, FEZANA Publications

As I enter the second year of my final 2-year term as President of FEZANA let me share with you some of the achievements of the past year and my thoughts for the future. The directory of North American Zarathushtis, a video *PARADISE*, on the vision of Asho Zarathushtra, a unified syllabus for religious education, a Web page for FEZANA, the development of a Strategic Plan for the community in North America, have all become reality, FEZANA has received NGO status from the UN, the Journal continues to delight and connect people providing archival documentation for future generations, and the conferences and seminars for adults and youth continue to bring Zarathushtis together. Much has been done but much still remains to be done.

In this second year of my term of office I will continue to do what I have been doing, i.e. create greater awareness for FEZANA both among ourselves and outside our community and create a climate of trust among Zarathushtis of all persuasions, but I will give special emphasis to two areas, viz. develop a solid financial base for FEZANA and develop internal structures for disbursement of these funds. To fulfill the mission and vision of FEZANA we need money, we need to develop a mechanism by which no member of the community is deprived of education or of medical treatment. For this I need and welcome assistance from Zarathushtis knowledgeable in the area of fund development.

In my opinion we have arrived at that moment in our history on this continent when we should give up our preoccupation with survival. The question of survival should be put to rest once and for all. **The constant**

**fight for survival makes it impossible for the psyche to participate fully in the human experience, for survival requires the individual to adopt defensive attitudes and to refuse openness to others.**



We should now be working towards the more positive experience of consolidation. We are here to stay, to consolidate our presence and take our rightful place, center stage, in every facet of North American life as Zarathushtis. The organization of the World Zarathushti Congress 2000 on this continent is a testimony of the confidence the Zarathushtis of the two mother countries, Iran and India, have in us. It is the recognition they have given us of the roots we have established as we continue to grow as a viable community in North America. It is the recognition of our abilities to deliver a conference in which we will promote the vision of the future, a vision which is anchored in the present but which pays due recognition to the past.

I therefore suggest that we now shift our focus from issues of survival and look at larger issues of raising the Zarathushti consciousness on how we, as North American Zarathushtis, can add value to the North American society. **If we have confidence in ourselves and in our next generation, the artificial boundaries among ourselves of 'we' and 'they' will disappear and we will create space to accommodate all of 'us' of all different persuasions.** We must truly believe in the fundamental premise that we all want the best for our community. We need to make a paradigm shift to focus on consolidation, on larger issues of raising Zarathushti consciousness, Zarathushti spirituality and Zarathushti religiosity, for each has its rightful place in our conscious schemata.

We need to grow, not only at the individual level but also at the structural and organizational level. We need to establish ourselves by way of more associations, more anjumans, more community centers, more foundations for education, for medical treatment, agencies for social, psychological and religious counseling, professional and business networks.

We need to put down deep roots from which strong oaks will grow for the next generation so that we will become a well knit, well organized, continent-wide community, a virtual Zarathushti Nation. It is my hope that some of the larger 'small groups' like Detroit, San Diego, Florida, Atlanta, Ottawa, will organize themselves into registered associations and become members of FEZANA.

The strength of each association lies in the collective strength of FEZANA. The more FEZANA grows in numbers the greater will be its relevance and visibility. Let your voice be heard in formulation of strategy and policy.

**The opportunities for growth and development on this continent for all aspects of Zarathushti life are endless if we each light a lamp to create 1000 points of light.** With renewed confidence in ourselves and in our future generations let us create these 1000 points of light to nurture and free the Zarathushti Spirit to soar and achieve greater heights.

As we move towards the next millennium, we look to our young co-religionists to carry the lamp of a 1000 lights forward. They are our hopes, our dreams and our future. Our duty is to provide them with a solid base to build a Zarathushti way of life, shaped and molded by the reality of the times they live in.

The future belongs to those who prepare for it today. Let us prepare for it together and leave behind a legacy of hope. ■

Dolly Dastoor  
President, FEZANA

# Houston Celebrates!

The traditional Texan invitation is extended by the Zoroastrian Association of Houston (ZAH) to all Zarathushtis. Join us with your *garas*, gowns, and black ties to mark the inauguration celebration of the **Zoroastrian Heritage and Cultural Center** that will occur this fall.

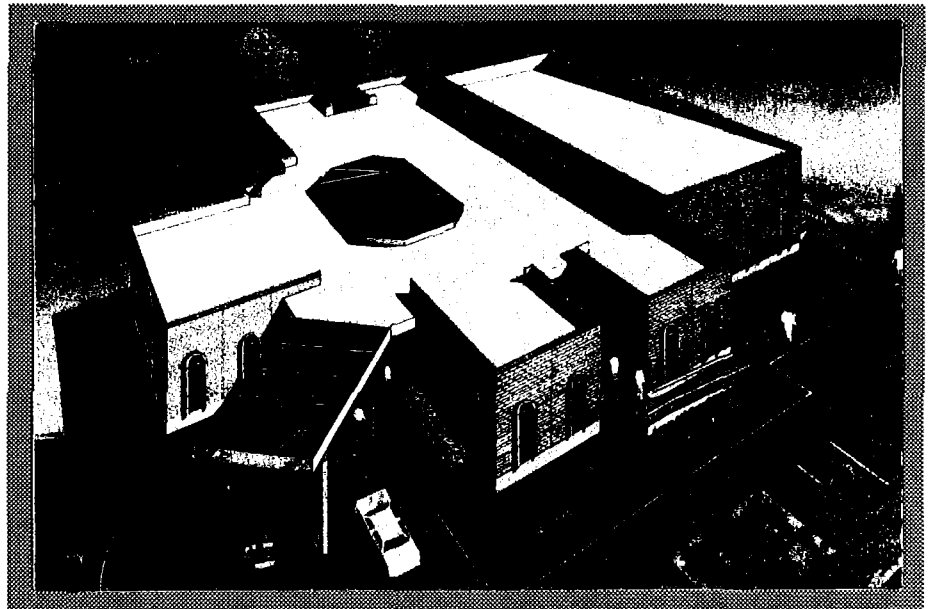
ZAH has plans for a truly memorable event. The three-day celebration will start on a Friday, when children of the Sunday School will carry a fire lighted from the home of Arnawaz and Hoshang Sethna to the new Center. This is the home where the Sunday School group has met for the past 15 years, and this is where the seed for a Center first started.

The Houston mobeds will meet the motorcade at the Center where they will perform a Jashan. The fire from the Jashan will then burn in a large *afarganyu* donated by the Quetta Parsee Anjuman, airlifted out of Pakistan with the help of several Zarathushti well-wishers there. Following the Jashan, the Houston Association will host the first Gahambar lunch at the Center. This Gahambar is to honor each Zarathushti, worldwide, who generously contributed and steadfastly supported Houston to make this dream a reality.

On Saturday morning, ZAH will host an informal Open House. In the evening, a banquet will be held, saluting Our Persian Heritage. The event will include a spectacular show, along with sumptuous Persian cuisine, reading of messages, greetings, and honors for key individuals. An all-day *mela* is the closing event on Sunday, where games, fun, activities, and serious conversation will ensue.

Located in the southwest part of town, the Center is at the intersection of two main highways in Houston. The driving distance for ninety percent of Zarathushtis is less than 15 minutes. The completed Phase I,

## ON THE NORTH AMERICAN SCENE



### Houston's Zoroastrian Heritage and Cultural Center taking shape.

*Top, artists concept of the Zoroastrian Heritage and Cultural Center in Houston, Phase I and Phase II.*

*Below, Members of the Zoroastrian Association of Houston planting trees at the Landscape Party on the grounds of the new Center, on May 31.*



comprises of a main hall, a prayer room and a kitchen totaling 7,000 sq. feet. ZAH intends to collect funds to complete Phase II by the time World Congress 2000 rolls into Houston; this will add three class-rooms and a covered atrium. Dadi Surti, a Karachi architect, designed the building and provided the drawings at no cost to Houston.

Houston dreamed of a Center since 1981, and its reality was only possible by the steadfast course of ZAH and its sub-committee, the Zoroastrian Building Fund. The Fund started with forty families donating \$20 a month. Local fundraisers, Gala May Balls, directory printing, collection by the youth, and investments in mutual funds increased the amount to \$250,000.

Then in 1992, 35 local Zarathushtis bought 20 acres of land, and donated 4.3 acres to the ZAH to build the Center. The strict city code requirements forced us to spend more than our budget; therefore, the building was re-designed to Phase I and II. In July 1996, Mazda Construction Company signed a contract to build the Center for \$449,000.

Albeit, the Center has taken sixteen years to complete, it has been an exhilarating experience. People from all walks of life have donated – small amounts, large amounts, some have boldly declared donations, while others have quietly requested anonymity. In 1992 three major donations were received, two local and one from the West coast, that gave added impetus. A national mail-out in 1994 brought in more funds. The overwhelming interest and support from Zarathushtis all over North America was very gratifying. It has been an amazement to realize the support and enthusiasm that has transcended into brick, mortar and stone.

Come to Houston, and you will always find a friend or a relative. Celebrate with us and marvel at what can be achieved with self-help, solid determination, and by the grace of Ahura Mazda. ■

-By Aban Rustomji

# ZSO Plans for Future

## Report of the Long Term Planning Committee

**T**he Long Term Planning Committee of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO) was established in 1996 with a mandate to act as a think tank of the ZSO, and to make recommendations to the ZSO Executive Committee regarding priorities for the future development of programs and activities for the organization.

The Committee developed and sent a "Master List of Issues and Project Activities" to all ZSO members. The Committee has issued the following conclusions and recommendations.

### CONCLUSIONS

- (1) The first priority issue was **Encourage Zarathushti Youth**. The favored project was "Involve the youth in all activities of ZSO, including membership on the Executive and other committees."
- (2) The second priority issue was **Support Zarathushti Elderly**. The favored project was "Assist the home-bound elderly with a network of voluntary care through friendly visiting, meals on wheels, etc."
- (3) The third priority issue was **Enhance the Zarathushti Faith and Spiritual Needs of the Community**. Favored projects here were "Religious education by age groups" and "Educate parents about maintaining Zarathushti practices in the home."
- (4) The fourth priority issue was **Develop Appropriate Physical Facilities for the Community**. The favored projects were "Develop

appropriate housing for Seniors" and "Develop a Zarathushti cemetery".

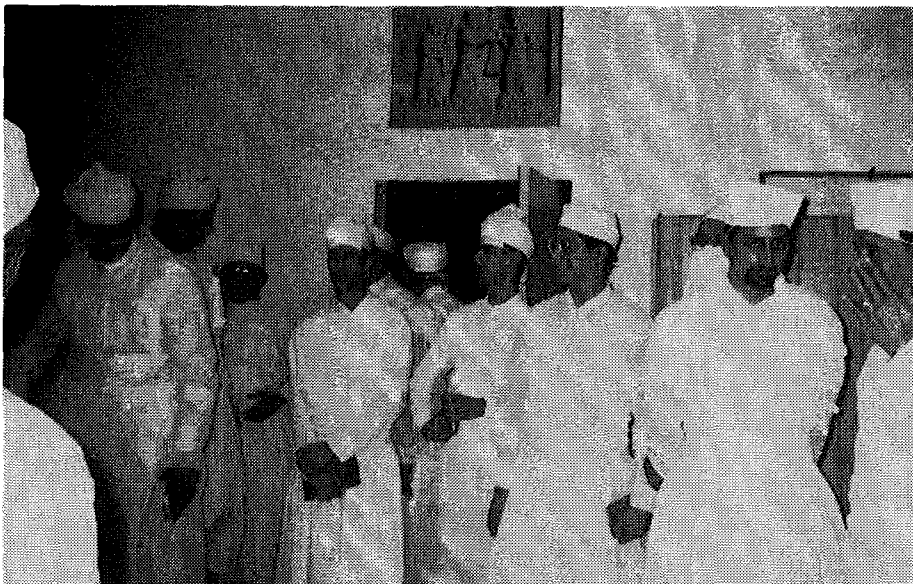
### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these findings and other comments from respondents, the Committee proposes establishing working groups to address each priority, and further makes the following recommendations:

- Change the ZSO constitution to create an additional Youth Member on the Executive Committee. Youth is defined as up to the age of 26 years. Additionally, every sub-committee of ZSO should be required to have a youth representative.
- Establish a 'Volunteer Committee' whose function will be to ascertain the needs of elderly and incapacitated members and develop ways to meet such needs. The Committee recognizes that this is currently being done by individuals in the community, but is of the opinion that it now needs to be formalized.
- Pursue through FEZANA, the present status of the Religion Education Curriculum of the FEZANA Education Committee and develop formal ways to implement it.
- Establish a 'Housing Committee' to explore the possibility of developing a housing colony ('*bagh*') by obtaining assistance from government sources and raising funds in the community.
- Include a 'Letters to the Editor' section in the ZSO newsletter. ■

### PIR-E-SABZ IN CANADA?

Over 180 Zarathushtis gathered on Asman Yazad of Khordad 3735, Sunday June 15, 1997, in Shannon Falls near Vancouver, reminiscent of the annual trip to Pir-e-Sabz in Iran. Photos of Zarathushtra and Pir-e-Sabz, a fire *afargan*, candles and flowers, along with the chanting of prayers from the Gatha and Khorddeh Avesta and singing of traditional religious songs, created an unforgettable, spiritual atmosphere. The Zarathushtis of Vancouver may well have started a new tradition in North America, at probably the greenest spot in the world.



North American Zarathushtis are most fortunate to have a good number of youth mobeds in most communities. Shown here at the "mega-Jashan" by the North American Mobeds Council and the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario, at the Mehraban Guiv Darbe Mehr in Toronto, on March 29, 1997, are [right to left] young mobeds Khushnoom Panthaky [with beard], Mehbod Dastur, Farzad Mirza and Cyrus Khory.

## World Zarathushti Congress Committee formed

Planning is underway in full swing for the World Zarathushti Congress in the Year 2000, to be sponsored by FEZANA and hosted by the Zoroastrian Association of Houston.

At the AGM of FEZANA in Crestone, Colorado this August, Members approved the formation of a Committee composed of members of the ZAH and FEZANA. The Congress will be headed by two co-chairs, Dolly Dastoor (FEZANA) and Homi Davier (ZAH); two vice co-chairs, Farrokh Mistree (FEZANA) and Sarosh Manekshaw

(ZAH). The Program Committee will be co-chaired by Khorshed Jungalwala (FEZANA), Kayomارش Dotiwala and Yezdi Rustomji (ZAH). The treasurer will be Sarosh Collector (FEZANA and ZAH). Joint Secretaries will be Behroze Daruwala and Arnavaz Sethna (ZAH). Chair for International Liaison will be Rohinton Rivetna and Chair for Fund raising will be Rustom Kevala.

This Committee will be called the World Zarathushti Congress 2000 Committee. It is structured as an independent entity comprised of individuals nominated both by FEZANA

and ZAH. The executive board will comprise of Congress co-chairs, vice-chairs, the treasurer, FEZANA president, ZAH president, and the FEZANA Congress Committee chair.

The Zarathushti community will be kept informed regularly with updates on the progress of the Congress through the Journal and through communications. The Committee needs the involvement of the community through moral and financial support.

*Dolly Dastoor and Homi Davier  
Congress Chairs*

## Council of Iranian Mobeds Celebrates Annual Day

The Council of Iranian Mobeds (CIMNA) celebrated its Eighth Annual Day on April 19, 1997, at the California Zoroastrian Center in Westminster, near Los Angeles. I was honored and privileged to be invited to this celebration, and to take part in the Jashan. These are some of my observations.

We arrived at the Dar-e-Meher in California at 3:30, and already a large number of youth and their families were milling around — even though the program was not to start until 5:30.

The program started with a Jashan by six Iranian mobeds and one Parsi mobed (myself) and nine mobedyars. This was followed by a navjote of 5 children.

An enjoyable music and entertainment program followed with lots of fruits, sweets, cakes and finger foods all donated by the families.

The highlight of the evening was recognition of the contributions of Mobed Fariborz Shahzadi (and wife Manijeh and two sons) towards establishing a religion education program for the children and adults of

the community. Heartfelt gratitude was expressed by the children for the help they had received from Mobed Shahzadi, and for all the classes and camps they had enjoyed.

The recognitions ended with a very emotional 'thank you' by a non-Zarathushti mother for helping her children learn and enjoy their father's religion.

*By Ervad Kobad Zarolia  
Mississauga, Ontario*



## Overstay Penalties Under New US Immigration Laws

Several Zarathushtis who have overstayed their non-immigrant visas now find themselves forced to leave the country under the new stricter US Immigration laws in effect since September 1996.

The question often asked is: Does an applicant for adjustment of status become ineligible for visa issuance for 3 or 10 years, if the adjustment of status application is not adjudicated in the first six months or one year after the non-immigrant visa expires, and the application is still pending?

It is unclear whether the overstay provisions of the new law will permit the grant of adjustment to an alien who overstays, *even when the overstay takes place while an adjustment of status application is pending.*

This could become a serious problem, especially since many of the classifications require non-immigrant intent when applying for an extension, and an alien becomes ineligible for an extension of stay at the time a visa petition or adjustment of status application is filed.

The INS has recently said that filing of an asylum application prior to the expiration of a period of authorized stay does not insulate an alien from the impact of overstay provisions, and the alien with a pending asylum application must successfully seek and obtain an extension of non-immigrant stay. Whether this interpretation of the INS will be extended to those with adjustment of status applications pending is yet to be seen.

[By Lal Varghese, Attorney at Law, Dallas, Tel: (972) 788-0777, email: attylal@flash.net]

## Farhangi Donation for ZAMWI Library

The late Mehraban Farhangi of Vancouver, BC, who passed away in October 1996, has donated funds for a library at the Center of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington.

## Fiftieth Anniversary of India's Independence

In commemoration of the 50th anniversary of India's independence from the British in 1947, the Asian Art Museum at Golden Gate Park in San Francisco presented *India: a Celebration!* — a series of exhibitions, performances, films, artist demonstrations and hands-on activities, reflecting the history and

beauty of the country. Among films shown for the occasion were *Pestonji*, Vijaya Mehta's 1987 melodrama set among the Parsis of Mumbai.

The film's speech, decor, acting and much of the storyline adhere to popular perceptions of the Parsis, and make interesting viewing.

### EDITORIAL POLICY

**FEZANA JOURNAL** encourages its readers to submit relevant information, news and views for publication. Articles in the Journal are intended for the general reader, and should not be very lengthy or highly technical in content. All unsolicited submissions should be limited to 600 words. Articles or letters that attempt to conduct ongoing public dialogue with other letter-writers, revile any religious doctrines or practices, or attack or slander individuals will be rejected. The Journal reserves the right to accept articles, hold them for future use, and edit them for clarity or to meet space constraints. The official language of FEZANA, and that of the Journal, is English.

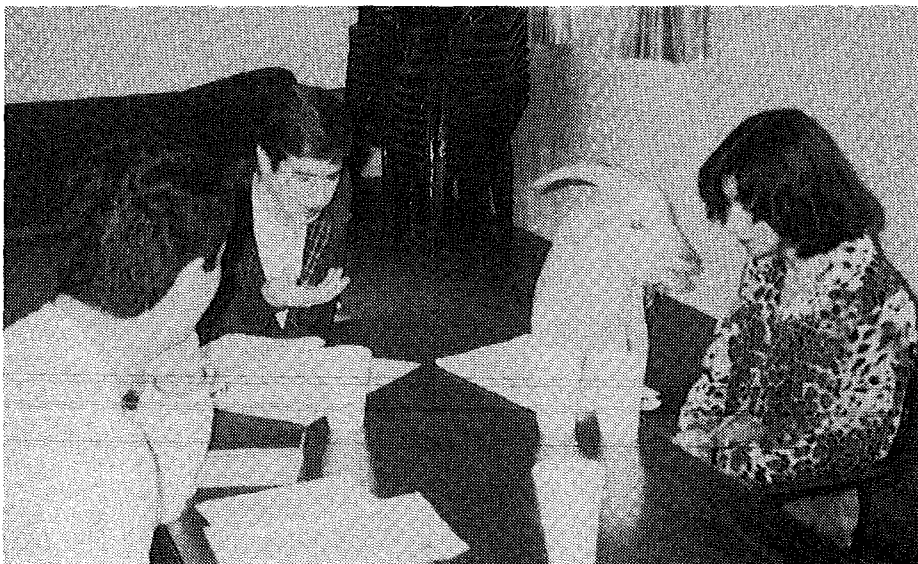
### STANDARDIZATION OF NAMES AND SPELLINGS

Following a presentation *Zarathushtra, His Religion and Its Followers — Standardization of Names and Spellings* by Jamshed R. Udvadia, and a proposal by Bella Tata to use 'Zarathushti' instead of 'Zoroastrian' in the name of the next World Congress 2000, the recommendation of delegates at the FEZANA Annual General Meeting in Crestone, Colorado, in August 1997 was to standardize on the following:

Name of the Prophet:	<b>Zarathushtra</b>
Name of the Religion:	<b>Zarathushti Din or Daena or Religion</b>
Name of the Follower:	<b>Zarathushti</b>

Starting with this issue, FEZANA Journal will adopt these spellings. It is hoped that all Zarathushtis, Anjumans, Associations and Federations will gradually move to adopt these standard spellings.

**Visitor at the ZAMWI Gatha Class.** From left, Orang Demehri, Karl Kevala, the visitor (a passing goat) and Rashna Ghadialy at a Gatha class of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington.



# FEZANA AGM 1997 Crestone, Colorado

## A Summary of FEZANA Officer and Committee Reports

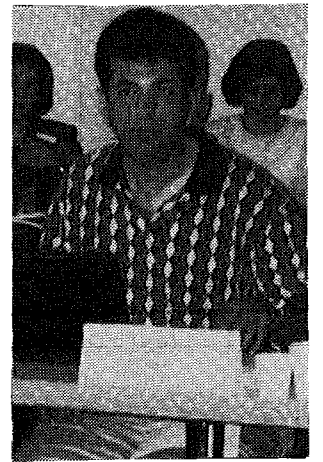
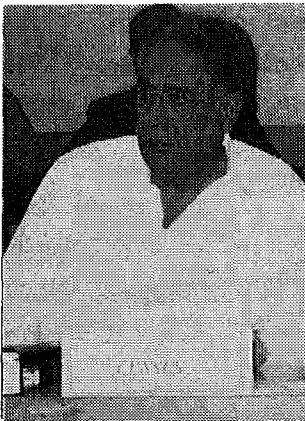
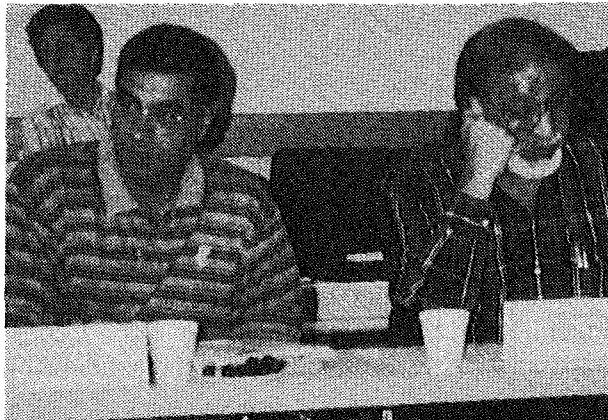
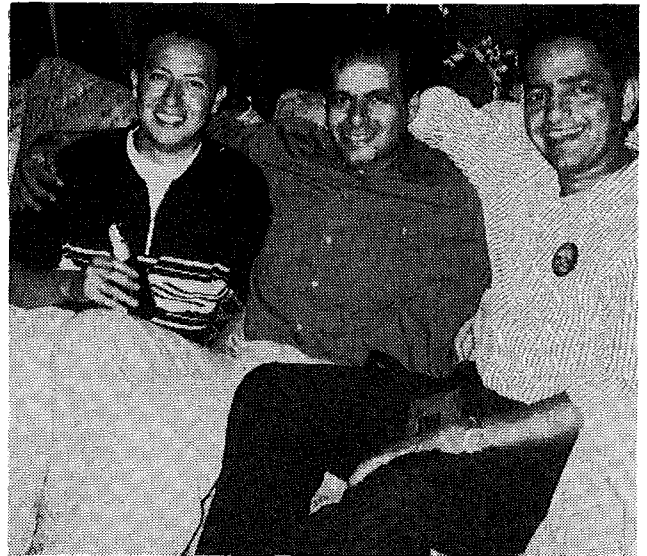
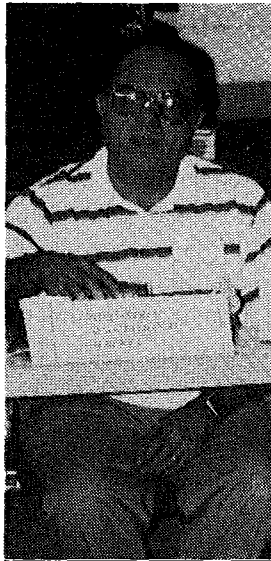
By Mehran Sepehri  
Secretary, FEZANA

Over the July 8-10, 1997 weekend, leaders of the Zarathushti community in North America gathered in the little town of Crestone, in the beautiful mountains of Colorado, to discuss and ponder common issues and action items, and to join resources in preparing for the challenges of the coming millennium.

The two-day Tenth Annual General Meeting (AGM), a face-to-face gathering of FEZANA officers, committee members, Member Association presidents and/or representatives and observers, preceded with a Friday evening workshop on Spirituality, was spent in reviewing the status of FEZANA and anjuman activities, airing of issues, and finding ways to strengthen collective Zarathushti presence in North America. Rather than an exhaustive account (which will be presented in the minutes), this report gives a mere flavor of the areas covered, that might be of interest to the general reader.

The meeting was hosted by the newest member of FEZANA, the Zoroastrian Association of the Rocky Mountains. Particular thanks go to President **Rumy Engineer, Navroze and Bucky Amaria, the Shroffs** and other Denver residents for their warm and generous hospitality in hosting the AGM. The small, but large-hearted Denver group had gone out of their way to bring breakfasts,

*From top, Firdosh Mehta; youth editor Aaron Rustom Mehernosh Mody (ZYNA) and Bijan Khosraviani (Sports); Gev Nentin and Kaemarz Dotiwalla, Rustom Kevala; Sam Vesuna; Adi Davar and Keki Bhote; Denver 'team' Navroze and Bucky Amaria, Rumi Engineer and Mrs. Engineer; Mehran Sepehri.*





lunches and a delicious 'pullav-dal' dinner all the way from Denver, for the attendees.

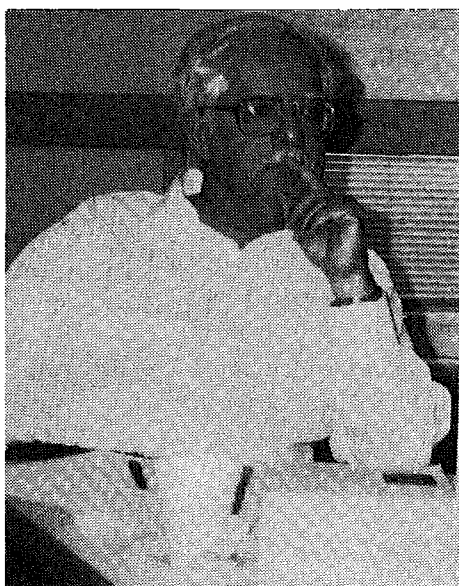
In the **President's Report**, **Dolly Dastoor** reported progress towards her goals for FEZANA: (a) increased awareness, (b) increased involvement, (c) widening the knowledge base of the religion, (d) creating a climate of trust among Zarathushtis of all persuasions, and (e) setting internal structures. She said, "Let us create 1000 points of light to nurture and free the Zarathushti spirit to soar and achieve greater heights ... If we have confidence in ourselves and in our next generation, the artificial boundaries among ourselves of 'we' and 'they' will disappear, and we will create space to accommodate all of 'us' of all different persuasions."

Vice President **Framroze Patel** gave an inspirational report giving thanks to the community for help in the recovery of his son, Pashang, from a brain tumor. Following her report, outgoing Secretary **Katayun Kapadia** was presented a plaque "in recognition and appreciation of years of service as Secretary of FEZANA". Assistant Secretary **Mahrukh Motafram** (in absentia) submitted a report that defined the role of the Assistant Secretary to include writing a FEZANA News section in the Journal and on the Web. Treasurer **Sarosh Collector** presented the Statement of Fund balances:

Fund	Year Ended	Year Ended
	Mar 1996	Dec 1996
	(US Dollars)	
General	34,125	38,511
Welfare	15,043	16,436
Rel. Ed.	2,720	3,720
Student Aid	1,006	1,006
Endowment	8,100	8,100
Total Funds	60,994	67,773

FEZANA JOURNAL — FALL 1997

**Election Results.** **Framroze Patel** was re-elected Vice President and



Top, Planning for Congress 2000: Homi Davier, Houston co-chair, Bella Tata, FEZANA Congress Committee chair and Dolly Dastoor, FEZANA Congress 2000 co-chair. Below, Framroze Patel and Katayun Kapadia.

**Mehran Sepehri** was elected Secretary, for the coming two-year term.

**Awards Committee:** **Farrokh Mistree**, on behalf of Chair **Dinshaw Joshi**, outlined the five award categories, nomination eligibility and procedures, evaluation criteria, judging procedure, and award design and presentation. The Committee is seeking nominations for award presentation at the 1998 Congress.

**Directory/Census.** **Noshir Langrana**, Chair, was commended for

the success of the North American Directory project. Cooperation from the Associations is requested in preparing an updated 1998 edition.

**The Census Report**, submitted by **Anahita Sidhwa** (in absentia) outlined plans to analyze existing data (a total of 5990 entries) and for gathering additional data.

**Congress Committee.** **Bella Tata**, chair, presented Operating Guidelines for the World Zarathushti Congress 2000 (WZC2000) in Houston, in the year 2000. FEZANA's nominees to Chair/co-Chair various WZC2000 committees were ratified [see page 6]. **Homi Davier** and **Sarosh Manekshaw**, elected by the Zoroastrian Association of Houston as WZC2000 co-Chair and Vice-co-Chair respectively, presented a six-point summary plan, covering the concept, the committee structure, the scope and plan of action.

**Noshir Langrana** and **Gev Nentin**, co-Chairs of the Eleventh North American Zoroastrian Congress in New York in 1998 [see *Coming Events*] hosted by ZAGNY, reported great strides in planning the event, and appealed to Associations to support their fund-raising efforts by purchasing raffle tickets and advertisements.

**Education Committee.** Chair **Kay-omarsh Mehta** reported (in absentia) that the initial draft of the universal Religious Education curriculum, prepared with input from associations and the Mobed Councils, has been finalized, and will be distributed in September. Regular youth camps were organized by local associations and the Kankash e Mobedan. An Interactive Avesta course has been started, and plans are underway to investigate the feasibility of establishing a Higher Learning Institute.

**External Affairs.** Chair *Rohinton Rivetna* reported that FEZANA had been granted Consultative NGO status with the United Nations, following a two-year application process. "As Zarathushtis, we are most suited to bring about the healing the world needs" said Rivetna, as he outlined the Committee's interfaith activities: participation in founding of United Religions; Parliament of the World's Religions; the National Conference Interfaith Calendar; anti-proselytizing pact, and numerous other interfaith activities. The dialog with Manitou Foundation in regards to the Global Village at Crestone continues as does spearheading the effort for federations and associations of the world 'to 'come together' as a World Council [see next article].

**Promotion of Zoroastrian Business and Professionals.** On behalf of chair *Farshid Salamati*, Rohinton Rivetna announced the Zarathushti Business Conference in Las Vegas, October 31-Nov 2, 1997 [see *Coming Events*] and urged all business persons and professionals to attend. To facilitate accounting and to satisfy other legal requirements for this conference, an interim Limited Liability Company has been set up.

**Funds and Finance.** Chair *Keikhosrow Harvesf* reported (in absentia) on the urgent need to find ways of generating more revenue to enable FEZANA to meet its responsibilities of serving the financial, spiritual and inspirational needs of Zarathushtis in North America. Suggestions included: designating an annual 'FEZANA Day'; organizing fund-raising events; and drives to encourage estate plans to benefit FEZANA.

**Publications.** Chair *Rustom Kevala* reported that the Publications Committee took on additional tasks, besides publication of the FEZANA Journal: a FEZANA Web Site was established, and a project has been undertaken to generate an index of publications on the Zarathushti religion in public libraries in North America. The Journal Editorial Team has been expanded to include Jamshed Gandhi as Business Manager, Jamshed Udvadia on the editorial team, and Mahrukh Motafram to coordinate FEZANA and Association news. Publisher Roshan Rivetna was named editor-in chief.

*Roshan Rivetna* stated there were two conflicting goals for the Journal: (1) to reach more households; and (2)

to increase the percentage of paid-up subscribers. She appealed for subscriptions, sponsorships, ads and donations, and urged readers to 'adopt-a-family' and subscribe for overseas readers, who cannot afford it.

**Research and Historical Preservation.** Chair *Pallan Ichaporia* reported that since its inception in 1992, the Committee has three publications to its credit: *The Gathas of Asho Zarathushtra*, the *Research Journal Vol I*, with three original articles, and *Vol II*, which has the Proceedings of the Second North American International Gatha Conference. That conference was co-sponsored by FEZANA through this committee. Volume III will publish a summary of the First International Avesta Conference in November 1997.

**Small Groups.** Chair *Mez Birdie* reported on the continued activities of the 'Small Groups' of FEZANA, and expressed the hope that each Group would consider becoming a formally registered Association and join FEZANA.

**Sports.** Chair *Bijan Khosraviani* outlined activities of the Committee. He is looking for more participation from the East Coast, and dreams of





organizing the next Zarathushti Olympics there.

**Unity and Welfare.** Chair **Kaemarz Dotiwalla** recognized the able handling of welfare appeals (for medical emergencies, student aid and others) by 'Appeals Coordinator' **Dinshaw Joshi**. New initiatives include: a Zarathushti Bank Card; housing aid for economically disadvantaged Zarathushtis; and setting up of support structures to provide bereavement and funerary assistance to families. This would also involve working with funeral homes and governmental agencies to meet ritualistic requirements.

**Dinshaw Joshi** in absentia, reported that 102 donations were received by him in response to various appeals; and disbursements were made to about 20 needy organizations and individuals, mostly for emergency medical treatment and for agiaries and hospitals in India.

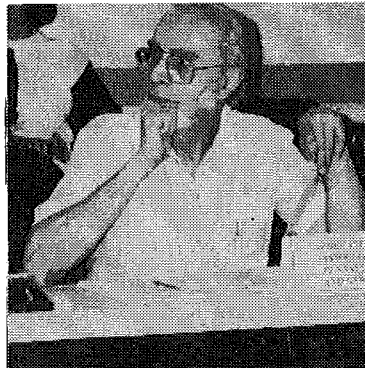
**Zoroastrian Youth of North America.** "We feel very confident that together we have a strong chance of paving a bright future together," noted co-Chair, **Mehernosh Mody**. ZYNA's activities included presentations at the World Youth Congress in London and a Cruise scheduled for December. "Together we shall renew the world" is ZYNA's motto.

## On Matters Spiritual and Strategic at the FEZANA AGM

By **Rustom Kevala**

### ZARATHUSHTI SPIRITUALITY

Friday, August 8, the evening preceding the FEZANA Annual General Meeting, was devoted to a discussion on Zarathushti Spirituality, organized by **Ervad Jehan Bagli** [right]. A panel of Zarathushtis presented their views on what constitutes a spiritual experience.



Panelist **Firdosh Mehta** related his personal experiences when he was hospitalized, and how, when he had lost all hope and was prepared for the inevitable, he suddenly started feeling better. **Aaron Rustom** explained spirituality as an attempt to explain the unexplainable. **Keki Bhote** examined the two forms of spirituality: cosmological (sense of mysticism) and ethical (namely Asha — which engenders virtues such as honesty, trust and helping others).

**Pervin Mistry** stated that 'spirit' in spirituality cannot be defined; one has to experience it. Prayers in front of the fire or hearth do help in this quest for spirituality. **Firoze Jungalwala** stated that the Gathas speak of Sroasha, the inner voice. In this sense, spirituality is a state of mind, and Zarathushti spirituality is no different from Christian, Hindu or Buddhist — the difference is in the method of attainment and its outward display.

**Ervad Jal Birdy**, submitted in absentia, that "spirituality is the yearning that man feels towards his Maker, with Whom he is part and parcel, with Whom he wants to communicate, to please, to revere, to be awed."

It was a satisfying evening, and Crestone did live up to its reputation as "Nature's spiritual hot-spot."

The second day of the FEZANA AGM, Sunday, was devoted to the discussion of several major issues facing FEZANA and North American Zarathushtis in general, including: FEZANA becoming a founding member of the proposed World Council of Zoroastrian Federations; proposal for a Zarathushti Spiritual Center at Crestone; adoption of the FEZANA Strategic Plan; and standardization of the spelling of our religion and our prophet's name.

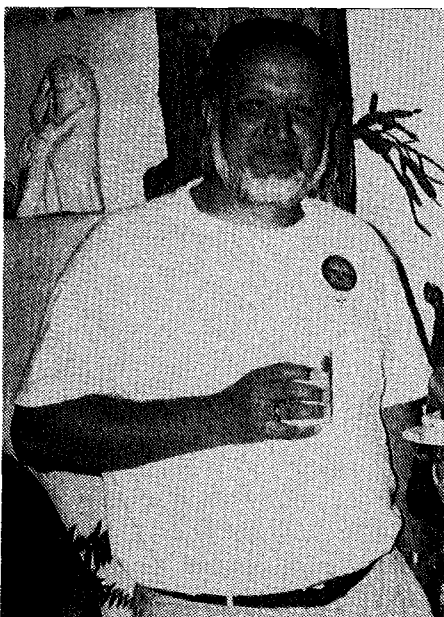
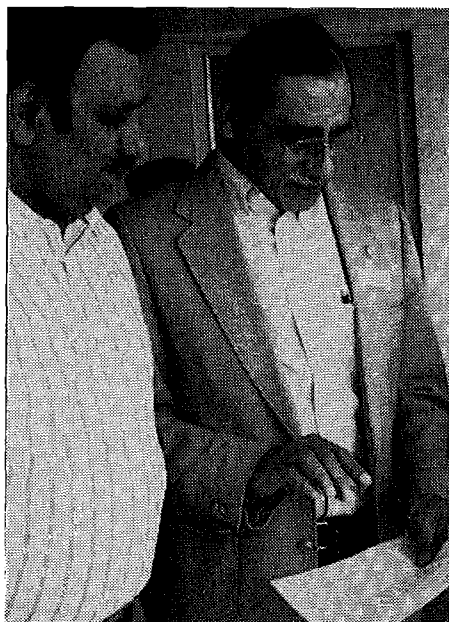
### WORLD COUNCIL OF ZOROASTRIAN FEDERATIONS (WCZF)

**Rohinton Rivetna** presented a paper on "Federations of the World Coming Together" as the World Council of Zoroastrian Federations. The vision of the World Council has evolved over the past decade. The world community at this time has no formal means of communicating with each other. Without formal linkage, there is no commitment and no responsibility. The primary role of the Council will be "networking", "coming together" and "being". The primary objective is for Federations and Associations of the world to "engage in dialog to shape our common destiny."

WCZF will have a hierarchical structure, modeled on the United Nations, with Federations and Associations representing and speaking on behalf of Zarathushtis of all regions of the world. This structure would facilitate the setting of common goals and resolution of issues affecting the community worldwide. While WCZF is designed as a body that can represent and speak on behalf of Zarathushtis, the WZO should con-



Left, at the AGM: **Yezdi Rustomji**, **Ness Lakdawalla**, **Sarosh Collector**, **Farhang Mehr**, **Roshan Sethna**, **Tehemton Aresh**, **Manijeh Deboo** and **Gordafried Aresh**.



tinue to serve the socio-economic, welfare and educational needs. The mandates of the two are separate, and clearly there is a need for both bodies.

In December 1996, FEZANA Member Associations approved the "Founding Principles of the Proposed World Council of Zoroastrian Federations". The Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India has also approved the principles. Rivetna proposed a three-step process: (1) FEZANA to become a Founding Member of the World Council of Zoroastrian Federations; (2) WZO to be supported and encouraged under its present structure; and (3) A "Memorandum of Understanding" be developed defining the collaborative roles of WCZF and WZO.

**Adi Davar** next presented the proposed amendments to the constitution of WZO to accommodate the concerns that individual members of WZO have votes with equal weight of any Association or Federation who is a member of WZO. A new 'bicameral' system is now proposed for WZO, with a 20-member Council of Individuals, representing individuals who are members of WZO, and a Council of Associations and Federations, representing associations and federations that are members of WZO, with two seats per major country. The two Councils would make up the 40-member 'WZO International Management Board'. The UK members of this Board will serve as the Executive Committee. An Advisory Committee of five respected Zarathushtis would advise the Board on controversial proposals. Next, Dr. Farhang Mehr and Firdosh Mehta were requested by FEZANA President Dolly Dastoor to present their analyses of the pros and cons of FEZANA becoming a founding member of the WCZF.

*From top, Pallan Ichaporia and Rohinton Rivetna; Farrokh Mistree (Parliamentarian of the AGM); and Jamshed Udvardia (promoting standardized names and spellings).*

**Dr. Farhang Mehr** stated that to date, WZO has not fulfilled its charter to represent all Zarathushtis as a world body. However, he felt that the creation of another body, even if a Memorandum of Understanding can be worked out, will create competition and dissipation of limited community funds and manpower. He suggested that the WZO constitution be changed to give adequate weight to associations and federations.

**Firdosh Mehta** pointed out that while WCZF lacks representation of individuals that do not belong to any association, the empowerment of individuals in the proposed WZO Council of Individuals is unclear, and there was still an imbalance in the weight given to individuals and associations. He favored fine-tuning the WCZF constitution and to changing its name to UFZA (United Federation of Zarathushti Anjumans). UFZA, the 21st name of Ahura Mazda, means 'Enricher'.

In the discussion that followed, delegates stated they were not prepared at the time to vote on the resolution for "FEZANA to become a Founding Member of WCZF". It was agreed they would go back to their respective associations and hold further discussions with their general bodies (not just the Boards). A new package of information will be sent to all the associations and a final vote will be taken before December 1, 1997.

#### NORTH AMERICAN COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

The Strategic Plan for the North American Zarathushti community has now evolved into a holistic vision of "shared spaces" for the community. It is interesting that the Mission Statement of FEZANA, which was developed following communications with the associations by Bella Tata in 1993, and the 'shared spaces' of the Strategic Plan (shown below in quotation marks) are almost identical.

● To preserve the religion of Zarathushtra – "Learning to Live a Zarathushti Life".



The Houston team: from left, Aaron Rustomji, Roshan Sethna, Behroze Daruwalla, Homi Davier, Sarosh Manekshaw, Arnawaz Sethna, Yezdi Rustomji, Sarosh Collector and Rustom Engineer, at the site of the 40-acre property offered to Zarthushtis by Hanne Strong [right] of the Manitou Foundation.

- To be a strong federation committed to putting the Zarathushti community firmly and clearly on the North American map, ensuring its survival, unity, progress and prosperity; thereby preserving its religious and cultural entity – *“A Thousand Points of Light”*.

- To work closely in cooperation with Zarathushti communities abroad in deliberations for a common goal of a united world Zarathushti community – *“External Structures”*.

- To provide effective leadership in addressing the critical issues of our times with wisdom and righteousness – *“Internal Structures”*.

The Plan is an important collective effort to define how we envision our future. It includes several action plans for the shared spaces, which are already being implemented with tremendous enthusiasm by individuals and associations.

The delegates present, upon request by President Dolly Dastoor, gave their full endorsement, and also directed Dastoor to proceed with fully implementing the Vision and the

Plan. Copies of the document *“First Strategic Plan for the North American Zarathushti Community, 1997-2007”* are available from FEZANA.

#### ZARATHUSHTI SPIRITUAL CENTER AT CRESTONE, COLORADO

On Saturday evening, following a tour of the 40-acre land site offered by the Manitou Foundation for use as a religious heritage site by FEZANA, the delegates were invited to dinner at the home of Mrs. Hanne Strong, president of Manitou Foundation. After dinner, everyone sat around a roaring campfire made fragrant with cedar chips under the Western Sky, while Mrs. Strong explained her reasons for establishing the Manitou Foundation and her vision for a community of religious groups living in harmony at Crestone.

Hanne Strong had approached Rohinton Rivetna during the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago in 1993, with the offer. Rivetna led a group of Zarathushtis on a visit to the site in 1994 [see *Daydreams or Destiny*, FEZANA Journal, Winter 1994] but the com-

munity has not been able to develop a cohesive plan.

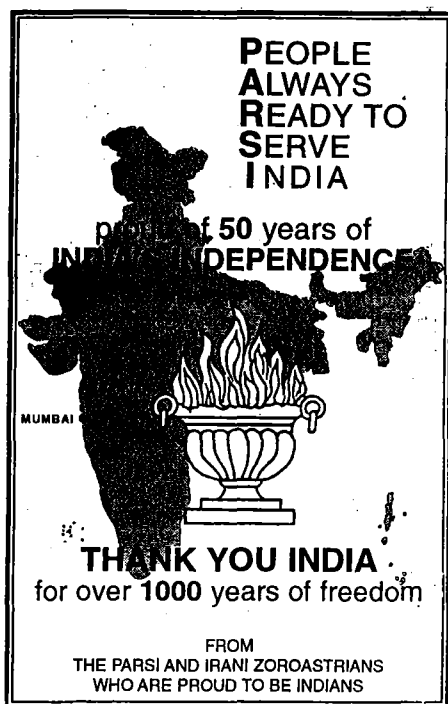
Crestone is located about 140 miles southwest of Colorado Springs and 200 miles south of Denver. The 40-acre tract of land that is being offered is at an elevation of over 7,000 feet, in the shadow of the 14,191 foot Crestone Needle peak in the Sangre de Cristo mountains. Such a site is in keeping with our religious tradition for important spiritual sites.

Recently Rustom Kevala had drafted a proposal, which includes the phased development of the land to coincide with the needs and financial resources of the community. This draft proposal had been sent to the Manitou Foundation, which endorsed it in principle. All the associations had also been sent a copy for review and comment prior to the AGM. The following development stages are envisaged:

- (1) *Spiritual Renewal Facilities*. Initially, the site, with minimal facilities, would be made available to Zarathushtis for communing with nature, meeting other Zarathushtis, rest and recuperation. Later, shelters and campsites may be built.

- (2) *Caretaker and Resident Cabins*, to be built by individuals at their expense, for their own use or for rent.

[Continued on page 33]



## Thank You India!

This catchy insertion [above] in the *Times of India* [March 21, 1997] on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of India's independence from the British prompted a couple of letters to that Indian daily:

"The Parsi community has fully integrated itself into the mainstream of this country which it adopted as its motherland over a thousand years ago," wrote M. G. Bhat, a non-Parsi; "they have never demanded any special privileges, unlike other groups, but have made substantial contribution towards the development of this country ..."

"It is said that Zarathushtis fled in all directions from Iran some nine or ten centuries ago," wrote Khorshed Gandhi, "Many Kurds, Uzbekistanis, and even some Eastern Europeans are supposed to be descendants of those migrants. Yet, it is only in India that they have been able to keep their distinct identity."

"Is it not because this land of Bharat [India] respected religion and allowed a minority to practice its own faith? Let us in this 50th year of our independence, re-dedicate ourselves to this great and noble tradition."

## Token of Gratitude to the People of England

Along the Boardwalk in Regent's Park, connecting the London Zoo down to Regent's Park Tube Station stands Ready-Money Fountain, a Victorian drinking fountain, with beautiful, mature trees surrounding it, dating back to 1869. The arched stone plaque reads:

THIS FOUNTAIN ERECTED BY THE  
METROPOLITAN DRINKING FOUNTAIN  
AND CATTLE TROUGH ASSOCIATION

WAS THE GIFT OF  
**SIR COWASJEE JEHANGIR**  
(COMPANION OF THE STAR OF INDIA)  
A WEALTHY PARSEE GENTLEMAN OF  
BOMBAY AS A TOKEN OF GRATITUDE

TO THE PEOPLE OF ENGLAND  
FOR THE PROTECTION ENJOYED BY HIM  
AND HIS PARSEE FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN  
UNDER THE BRITISH RULE IN INDIA.

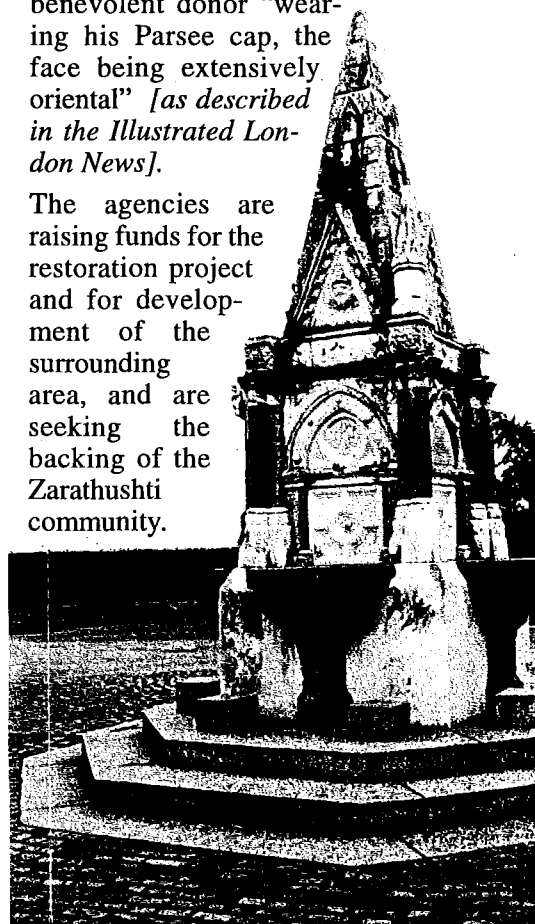
INAUGURATED BY H.R.H. PRINCESS  
MARY, DUCHESS OF TECK, 1869.

A ceremony was held to mark its inauguration in 1869 at which HRH Princess Mary declared the Fountain open after drinking from it with a silver goblet. The Fountain was described extensively with a review of its opening in the *Illustrated London News*. Over the years, the Fountain mechanism has failed and it remained inoperative for many years. It was repaired in the 1980s, but it is currently again out of use.

The "Friends of Regent's Park and Primrose Hill" in liaison with the Royal Parks Agency, have formulated recommendations for the restora-

tion of Ready-Money Fountain. It is proposed to retain much of the sculpture, busts, carved frieze and feature panels. One such panel is a sculpted head representing the benevolent donor "wearing his Parsee cap, the face being extensively oriental" [as described in the *Illustrated London News*].

The agencies are raising funds for the restoration project and for development of the surrounding area, and are seeking the backing of the Zarathushti community.



Contact the agency Secretary Mrs. Johnston in London at 0171-722 5932 or Shireen Bilimoria, a prominent local resident and Vice Chair of the Camden Lay Visitors' Panel, at 7 Colosseum Terrace, Albany Street, London NW1 4EB. [From *ZTFE Newsletter*, April 1997]

## Zarathushtis Organizing in Germany

50 Zarathushtis participated in the Jamshedi Navruz celebration in Bonn, Germany in March this year, and more are expected for the Pateti function planned in August. There are about 300-400 Zarathushtis in Germany, mostly in Hamburg and Bonn. There is no formal association yet, but efforts are being made by Sam Motashaw of Petersfehn (near Bonn), and formerly from Michigan, USA, to get Zarathushtis of the area together. Please contact Sam at Pirschweg-16, Petersfehn-1, D-26160, Germany, Tel: 494486 6768.

**Be Educated, Be Inspired, Be Informed — Read FEZANA Journal**

## UK National Census Includes Question on Religious Affiliation

The ZTFE (Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe) is urging all Zoroastrians to check the box marked "Other" and insert the word "Zoroastrian" in the space provided, in response to the question: "Do you have a religious faith?" for the National Population Census to be conducted in the UK in the year 2001.

A voluntary question on religion was included in the 1851 census, but this will be the first time that the Census

Division, realizing the multi-cultural nature of British society has made the question compulsory. Respondents will be able to check off one of: No, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Islam, Sikh, Buddhist and Other.

ZTFE was among the religious organizations invited by the Office of national Statistics to participate in meetings to formulate the questions on religion. While a specific reference to "Zoroastrian"

could not be negotiated, due to the small number of its adherents, the write-in space will provide an opportunity for British Zarathushtis to gauge their numbers. This will be the first time a census of Zarathushtis will be taken at a national level, outside of India and Iran. [ZTFE Newsletter, April 1997].

## Patrawala appointed to Minorities Commission

Marazban J. Patrawala has been appointed to India's National Commission for Minorities, representing the Parsi Zarathushti community. Notable prior Members were Padma Shree Homi J. H. Taleyarkhan and Vice Admiral (Retd.) Rusi Gandhi.

In a letter to FEZANA, Patrawala writes: "...during my 3-year term, I

## AROUND THE WORLD



PHOTO: TIMES OF INDIA

## Zubin Charms Mumbai

Music lovers in Mumbai battled for tickets to the Munich Philharmonic and Chamber Orchestras with their beloved Bombay-born Maestro Zubin Mehta conducting. The Time and Talents Club and the Mehli Mehta (Zubin's father) Foundation had organized two performances, on April 13 and 14, at the Tata Theatre.

Especially spectacular was the performance of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, of which music critic Sheryar Ookerjee writes [Times of India, April 20, 1997]: "Notwithstanding the titanic thunderbolts, the roaring crescendos and the deliberate speed, Mehta revealed all its lyrical beauty — the moulding of melody, the wood-

wind tolling like distant bells before the returning fury of the Fates. The sweep of the violas and cellos, as they opened the *andante*, set the mood. It flowed like a river, now through banks of fern and flower, now battling its way through huge boulders, now roaring over precipices ..."

Breathtaking excitement was also in the air for the magnificent sounds of Tchaikovsky's Symphony No 5: "It opened with the clarinets brooding over the motto theme," says Ookerjee, "Mehta maintained a low profile so that the build-up, when it came, was overwhelming ... Mehta did not miss the beguiling curve of a single phrase or the sweetness of a tune". ■

would like to take up some of the vexing problems facing Parsi-Zarathushtis all over India and help in finding solutions ... I cannot do this alone ... I need the support and guidance of all members of the community in India and abroad." ■

*Man's ultimate destiny is to become one with the Divine Power which governs and sustains the creation and its creatures.*



# An Outsider's View of the Zarathushtis of Pakistan

By Shahriar Shahriari  
Vancouver, British Columbia

**I**n April 1997 we spent two weeks in Pakistan visiting Karachi and the Northern cities of that country and met and mingled with a large number of Pakistani Zarathushtis.

Generally, the Zarathushtis of Pakistan seem to be affluent and comfortable, though their numbers are rapidly declining. Just over a decade ago, there were 5,000 Zarathushtis in Pakistan. Today there are about 2,000. The census of 1996 predicts that with the same rate of decline, by the year 2016, there will be no Zarathushtis left in Pakistan.

**Close knit community.** The Pakistani Zarathushtis are a tightly knit community, mainly in the middle class and above, who look after each other. There are many well-funded charities to take care of the community's health, education and general welfare. It is safe to say that there are no poor Zarathushtis in Pakistan.

They are very active in their personal and professional lives. The community gets together regularly, and even when everybody complains about the general apathy, there seems to be a

unanimous and coherent voice suggesting a deeper level of care and participation, in spite of the appearances.

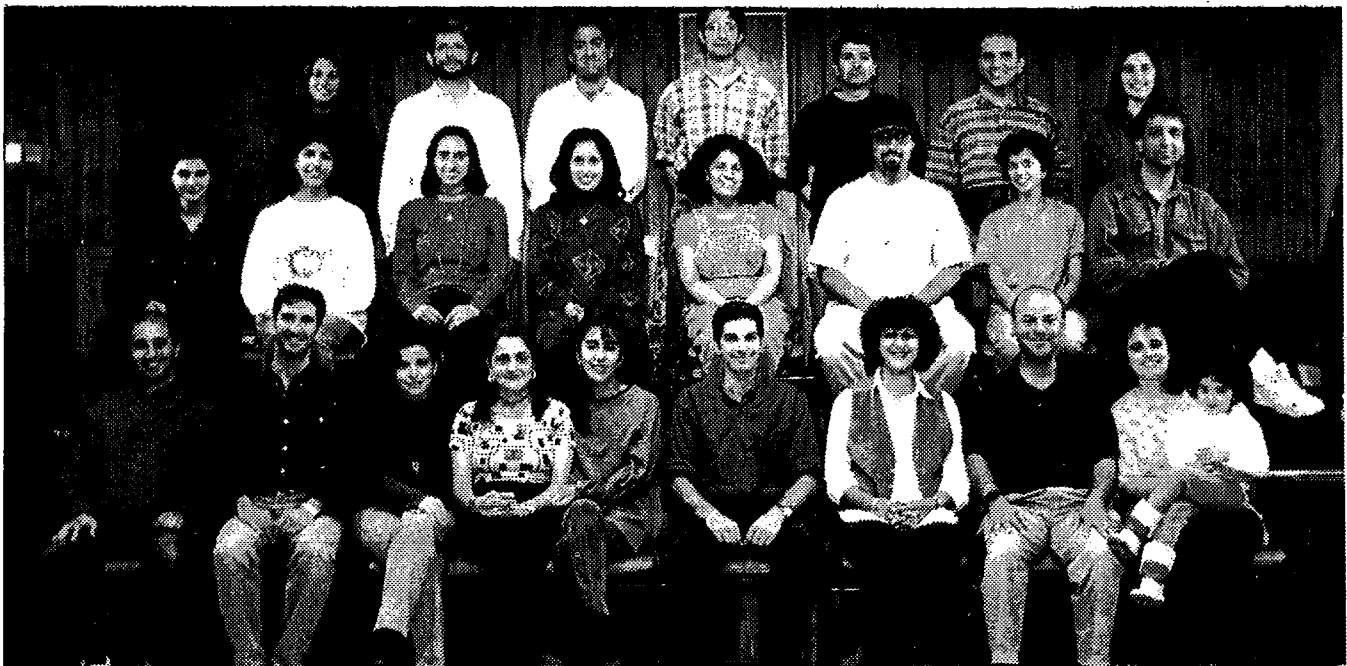
Like every other community in the world, Zarathushti or not, they seem to suffer from their internal politics and posturing. Yet in a crude way, this posturing seems to be proactive, in the sense that there seems to be a semi-competitive attitude among the various players, each trying to outdo the other in serving the community, rather than stabbing each other in the back. I am not condoning this posturing, for any wrong is wrong, even if it occasionally results in something useful and creative.

There is also a deeply ingrained commitment to traditions and the ways of the past. Even the 'moderates' and 'radicals' among them seem to somehow be drawn to the safe rocks of the known past. This is at times a healthy and moderating feature, particularly in view of their socio-political environment. Yet, at other times, it becomes a dogmatic attachment to defunct and obsolete organizations, as though their preservation at any expense is justified, even at the cost of present stagnation and inevitable future self-sabotage.

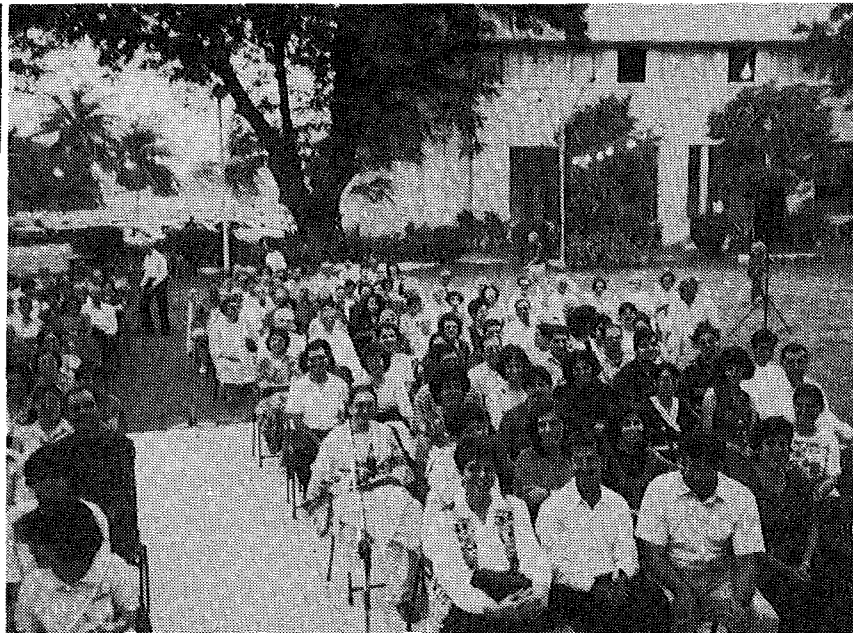
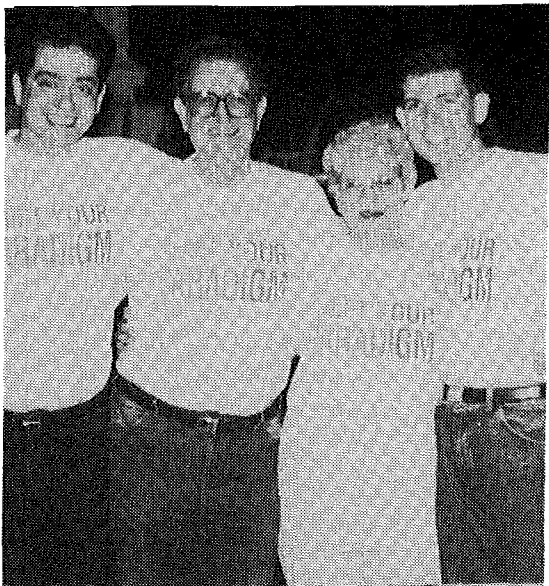
**Decline in numbers.** So what has made a community that is wealthy, well looked after, self-sufficient, deeply caring and comfortable, to so rapidly decline in numbers in less than a decade? Many are of the belief that it is the lure of greener pastures of the West that has drawn many of the young professionals away from such glowing prospects. Perhaps this is a factor, but I think there are some deeper causes. For one thing, travel and migration has become much easier. For another, the better communication links, easy long distance telephone access, not to mention readily available technologies have been a source of comfort, rendering migration not a total departure and definitely not a total break-off.

But in my opinion the most important factor driving this migration has been the exploding magnitude of corruption in that country. The Zarathushtis became a prosperous people mainly because of their constant indoctrination and religious adherence to the principles of honesty and fairness. We all know the credo of Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds. As such, bribery, corruption and all other sys-

**HATS OFF** to the Youth Congress Committee, chaired by Kerman Jasavala (front row, sixth from left) for a super job of organizing the 2nd World Zoroastrian Youth Congress in London last July [see full account in *Youthfully Speaking*].







Above, Shervin (left) and Shahriar Shahriari (right) with prominent Karachi Zarathushtis, Cyrus and Toxy Cowasjee who organized the Shahriari's visit, at a presentation of "Shift Your Paradigm" on the grounds of the Karachi Parsi Institute. Right, Shervin as Cyrus the Great in PARADISE, performing to an audience of over 500 Zarathushtis in Karachi in April 1997. Shervin and Shahriar live in Vancouver, BC. In 1995, Shahriar gave up an engineering career to start his own company, Transformations Unlimited, whose mission is to help individuals and companies realize their full potentials and live lives of higher quality and meaning. Many of his techniques are "straight out of the Gathas," he says, "a modern packaging of our own old teachings."

To order a copy of the video PARADISE, please see page 69.

temic maladies that exist in Pakistan are in a fundamental clash with everything that Zarathushtis believe in.

**Clash of values.** In a country where on a daily basis you need to know the 'right people' and 'take care of the right people', how do you reconcile your values with your environment? These people are faced with a deep, and perhaps even subconscious dilemma. Should they live and adapt themselves to the survival needs of their environment, or should they adhere to their moral and spiritual values, even if it means opting out of that system? The results speak loud and clear. More and more Zarathushtis are opting to migrate.

What about those who have not left? Have they given up their moral values and adopted the way of their environment? For the majority the answer is an unequivocal "No". They are the few sources of light and islands of stability working within the system, changing and exposing

its wrong ways. The Supreme Court Justices, minority members of Parliament (who do not have the right to vote), prominent and outspoken journalists, fair-minded and concerned business people, high level employees of multinationals and NGOs, as well as all the small people without prominent positions, each in their own way, large or small, public or private, goes through the battle of Good against Evil.

**Man against machine.** But my intention is not to make the Pakistani people look evil. The ordinary people that I encountered on this trip were some of the most generous, honest people I have come across, with very big hearts. The main source of the problem has been the organizational systems that have developed there, trying to create themselves based on the materialistic models of the West, without adopting the ethical values that come with them, and simultaneously discarding



their own morality. A perfect example of how the machine is becoming bigger than the man. And the ordinary people, Zarathushti or not, are each small heros in their daily battles against this monstrous machine, some becoming devoured by it, others escaping its tyranny one more day.

What I learned from the Zarathushtis of Pakistan was how to make my Zarathushti values second nature to myself. Then whether I choose to migrate or stay, whether I complain about the apathy or actually do something about it, whether I mingle with my community in formally organized functions or in our own informal get togethers, I live my values ■

## COMING EVENTS

### Upcoming Festivals

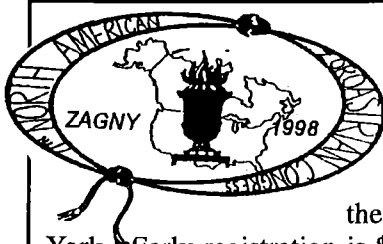
- Fravardegan (S)**  
Mah Fravardin - Fravardin (Tue, Sep 9)
- Paitishahem Gahambar (F)**  
Mah Shehrevan - Ashtad (Sep 12-16)
- Maidyozarem Gahambar (S)**  
Mah Ardibehest - Khorshed (Oct 1-5)
- Jashan e Mehrgan (F)**  
Mah Meher - Meher (Thu, Oct 2)
- Ayathrem Gahambar (F)**  
Mah Meher - Ashtad (Oct 12-16)
- Avan Ardavisoor (F)**  
Mah Avan - Avan (Sun, Oct 26)
- Adar Mah Jashan (F)**  
Mah Adar - Adar (Mon, Nov 24)
- Maidyoshem Gahambar (S)**  
Mah Tir-Khorshed (Nov 30-Dec 4)
- Tir nu Parab (S)**  
Mah Tir - Tir (Tue, Dec 2)
- Zarathushtra's Death Anniversary (F)**  
Mah Daye-Khorshed (Fri Dec 26)
- Maidhyarem Gahambar (F)**  
Mah Daye - Meher (Dec 31-Jan 4)
- Jashan e Sadeh (F)**  
Mah Bahman - Meher (Fri, Jan 30)
- Paitishahem Gahambar (S)**  
Mah Sheherevar - Ashtad (Feb 13-17)
- Meher nu Parab (S)**  
Mah Meher - Meher (Thu, Mar 5)
- Fravardegan (F)**  
(Mar 16-20)
- NoRuz (F)**  
Mah Fravardin - Hormazd (Sat, Mar 21)
- Jamshedi Navroze (S)**  
(Sat, Mar 21)
- (F)=Fasli, (S)=Shenshai, (K)=Kadmi

### World Zarathushti Congress in Year 2000 in Houston

The next World Zarathushti Congress will be held in the Year 2000 in Houston. It will be sponsored by FEZANA and hosted by the Zoroastrian Association of Houston. The Congress 2000 Committee was recently ratified at the FEZANA Annual General Meeting in August. [also see page 6].

### Tour of Iran

A two to three-week, conducted tour of Iran is being planned for September-October 1997. Contact Shahpoor Mehrabani of British Columbia, at (604) 988-7016.



### NORTH AMERICAN CONGRESS NEW YORK, 1998

ZAGNY extends a special invitation to the Eleventh North American Zoroastrian Congress, on the weekend of July 4, 1998, at the Rye Town Hilton in Rye, a suburb of New York. Early registration is \$140, students \$100. Contact Co-chairs: Gev Nentin at (516) 462-0763 or Noshir Langrana at (609) 275-9154.

\$10 raffle tickets are available for first and second prizes of business class tickets to India from New York or Chicago on Air India.

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### IN COMING ISSUES OF FEZANA JOURNAL ...

Winter (December) 1997: Zarathushti Initiation Rituals

On prayers and rituals as well as the traditions, customs and practices surrounding Zarathushti initiation rituals — the Navjote (Parsi) and the Sudreh-Pushi (Iranian) ceremonies. Submission deadline is October 1.

Spring (March) 1998: The Gathas of Zarathushtra in History & Religion

Yezdi Rustomji of Houston, Texas, will be the Guest Editor of this issue. Readers interested in submitting articles or letters for publication, please contact Rustomji at 944 Highland, Houston, TX 77009, tel: (713) 864-5145. Submission deadline is January 1.

## Parliament of the World's Religions, 1999

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 in South Africa, some time in 1999.

For those who experienced the 1993 Parliament in Chicago, where Zarathushti 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.

### Z-Cruise 97

ZYNA (Zoroastrian Youth of North America) announces *Z-Cruise 97*, "The Caribbean Caper", a 4-day cruise between Miami and Caribbean ports, December 26 - 30, 1997. This unique 'youth congress' will feature talks and workshops during the day and fun social activities at night. Cost is \$700. Contact Mehrnosh Mody, ZYNA, 46 Spiers Road, Newton, MA 02159, or email: mmody@opal.tufts.edu, Tel: (617) 928-0953.

## 1997 ZARATHUSHTI BUSINESS CONFERENCE

MGM Grand Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada

Friday October 31, 1997 - Sunday November 2, 1997

Sponsored by the FEZANA Business Committee

The 1997 Zarathushti Business Conference, a first in North America, is organized to develop relationships between Zarathushti businesses and entrepreneurs within the Zarathushti community world wide. The agenda will include:

- Display booths and tabletop exhibits; networking
- Identify needs of the business community & establish goals
- Insights into doing business in North America
- Business helping business and the community
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## FIRST NORTH AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL AVESTA CONFERENCE



The First North American International Avesta Conference will be held at the Sheraton Tara Hotel, in Framingham near Boston, November 15-17, 1997. It is sponsored by the Zoroastrian Education and Research Society, co-sponsored by FEZANA and ZAGBA (Boston).

A unique conference arranged to promote knowledge and understanding of Avestan literature and theology of the Zarathushti religion as it has evolved in the last 3,000 years, topics include the Old Avesta (Gathas and Old Avesta texts), Young Avesta, Pahlavi, Parsi/Persian Literature, Rituals and History. Designed for religious scholars, academicians, students, members of the Zarathushti community, and those interested in understanding the Zarathushti religion, the conference will provide a forum for perceptive and reflective exchanges. Among world renowned scholars presenting are: **Jehan Bagli, Keki Bhote, Carlo Cereti, Richard Frye, John Hinnells, Helmut Humbach, Pallan Ichaporia, K. D. Irani, Dasturji Firoze Kotwal, William Malandra, Sarosh Manekshaw, Farhang Mehr, Khojestee Mistree, Antonio Panaino, James Russell, Shaul Shaked, Martin Schwartz, Mario Vitalone, Gernot Windfuhr, and representatives from the Mobeds' Councils.**

Conference registration including lunches and banquet is \$100 and \$70 for students. Contact:

Pallan Ichaporia at 253 South 4th Street, Womelsdorf, PA 19567, Tel: (610) 589-5419,

Khorshed Jungalwala at (508) 443-6858 or Sarosh Manekshaw at (281) 870-9317.

To place an advertisement or message in the souvenir, please call Zenobia Rivetna at (617) 497-1451.

# The Date of Zarathushtra: A Brief Review

By Sarosh J. H. Manekshaw  
Houston, Texas

*Why is so little known about the early history of the Zarathushti religion? Perhaps it is because of its antiquity, its lack of a written tradition, the repeated destruction of its texts, or because of a combination of all these factors that there is such a dearth of information on the origins of the Zarathushti religion. This lack of definitive data has led to a great deal of speculation, none more so than that regarding the time and place of its prophet, Zarathushtra.*

At the outset it may be stated that there is no information contained in the Gathas, the hymns composed by Zarathushtra himself, which specifically mentions either the time or the place of its composition. In fact, even the extant Younger Avestan texts, which include the Yasna, the Yashts, the Vendidad and miscellaneous fragments, provide little help in placing or dating Zarathushtra. Needless to say, these texts have been analyzed in detail by numerous scholars, who have tried to deduce from their contents a time and place for the Prophet. Of course, these deductions have led to dates for Zarathushtra varying not only over decades or even centuries, but over millennia, and given a place for Zarathushtra ranging from western Iran and

Azerbaijan all the way eastwards to Afghanistan.

Knowledge of the early chronology of the Zarathushti religion is critical to developing an accurate understanding of the Gathas. Without it, one is left with conflicting opinions and confusion. Gershevitch [1995, p.1] in fact, states that this chaos is "due mainly to neglect of the compass fixing the four cardinal points of the Gathic horizon...The four cardinal points, all of course equally cardinal are: one, the authorship of the Gathas, two, the time of their composition, three, the space, geographical, where they were composed, and four, the gist of what they are saying."

This article will not attempt to review all the four cardinal points outlined by Gershevitch, but

rather it will be limited to reviewing only the materials related to the date and place of the Prophet. Since various dates and locations have been proposed for Zarathushtra, only a few of the more important are mentioned here. It is by no means a complete review; it is merely meant to give readers an idea of the vast divergence of opinions regarding Zarathushtra's time and place, and hopefully to inspire the more conscientious to research the details for themselves, starting with the reference materials given at the end of this article.

*Sarosh Manekshaw was the Guest Editor for this issue of FEZANA Journal on the Date and Place of Zarathushtra. Design and layout is by Roshan Rivetna.*

In general, the very early Greek dates are no longer recognized as having any historical validity. For a more complete compilation of the Greek and Roman texts which include references to the date of Zarathushtra, see Jackson [1899, Appendix II and VI] and the English translation of these texts given in Fox and Pemberton [1928].

## A R O U N D 6 0 0 0 B C

(Commonly referenced Greek sources)

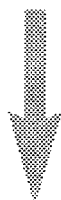


**6480 BC**

**Diogenes Laertius** quoted **Xanthus** of Lydia (5th century BC) as stating that Zarathushtra lived 6000 years before Xerxes' crossing of the Hellespont (an event which took place in 480 BC). In another copy of the manuscript the date between Zarathushtra and Xerxes is given as 600 years. This would put Zarathushtra at either 6480 BC or at 1080 BC. **Shahbazi** [1977, pp.34-35] interprets the latter date as the more credible, since it agrees with his own hypothesis [see p. 23].

However, **Gershevitch** [1995, pp. 10-12] believes that the correct number in the manuscript should neither be 6000 years nor 600 years, but rather 60 years before the crossing of the Hellespont, which would put Zarathushtra at about 540 BC, a time more in agreement with the "traditional date" of Zarathushtra.

Note that this is but one example where different scholars have found solace in different numbers which they have used to help prove their own hypotheses.



**6350 BC**

**Pliny the Elder** quoted **Eudoxus**, a pupil of **Plato** (4th century BC), as saying that Zarathushtra lived 6000 years before the death of Plato (348 BC), which in turn would put Zarathushtra at about 6350 BC.



**6200 BC**

**Diogenes Laertius**, in the 3rd century AD, quoting **Hermodorus** (who lived in the 3rd century BC) dated Zarathushtra as living 5000 years before the fall of Troy (which took place about 1200 BC). This would place Zarathushtra at about 6200 BC. This same date was also given by **Pliny the Elder** (1st century AC) when he quoted **Hermippus** (who lived about 250 BC).

**Zarathushtra's Date.** *The dates for Zarathushtra, commonly found in the literature, range from approximately 6500 BC to about 600 BC. For the sake of convenience, we can categorize them into three groups:*

- *The earliest dates, mainly from Greek sources, placing Zarathushtra around 6000 BC.*
- *Dates that place Zarathushtra typically at a time between 1600 BC and 700 BC.*
- *The 'traditional date' of Zarathushtra, which places him 258 years before Alexander, or some time in the 6th century BC.*

There are numerous scholars who have proposed dates for Zarathushtra, basing their Avestan literature. In general these dates

## D A T E S   B E T W E E N

< 6000 BC

**Hormazdyar Dastur Kayoji Mirza** in his book *Outlines of Parsi History* [1987, pp. 361-366] reviews the 'traditional date' and various Greek dating assigned to the time of Zarathushtra. Then, based on the Greek evidence, he "assigns very high antiquity to Zarathushtra and shows that Zarathushtra must have appeared not later than 6000

1400 to 1000 BC

**Mary Boyce** in *A History of Zoroastrianism* [1989, p. 190] states that both the 'traditional date' of 258 years before Alexander, and the early Greek dates placing Zarathushtra at about 6000 BC, are based on erroneous calculations and that "no reliable tradition exists about this." She then goes on to state that: "In the absence of any sound external evidence, therefore, it seems natural to conclude that the prophet lived some time between 1400 and 1000 BC.

1200 to 1100 BC

**Thomas Burrow** in his article [1973, pp. 136-139] uses a different approach to dating Zarathushtra. He develops a line of logic based on two factors:

(a) The time of the migration of the East Iranians (who first adopted the Mazdayasnan religion of Zarathushtra) into Central and Western Iran; which he sets at 900 BC.

(b) The fact that the *Farvardin Yasht* was written before this migration took place. In the *Farvardin Yasht*, the names of some of the early converts to the faith are stated, and include the family of a Saena, the first teacher of the Zarathushti religion, to have 100 pupils. Three subsequent generations of Saena's descendants are also named. Now, placing Saena at 100 years after Zarathushtra, and assigning 30 years per generation to the three generations following Saena, Burrow arrives at an interval of 200 years from the time of Zarathushtra to the writing of the *Farvardin Yasht*.

Adding these 200 years to the date of the migration (900 BC) he arrives at the date of 1100 BC as the very latest, for the founding of the Zarathushti religion. He, in fact, states that it is very likely that this date could be even earlier, by as much as another century.

Thus, Burrow would place Zarathushtra in the period between 1200 and 1100 BC.

### TRAPPED BY TRIVIA

*Trapped by trivia,  
Imprisoned by the demands of each passing hour,  
We float through life as in a dream;  
Forgetting the vaster reality for each pressing desire,  
We seek not our true inner being.  
In its silent depth, mystery dwells,  
Here peace and joy prevail.  
Not all the din of outer strife  
Can its sublime calm assail.*

- By Soonoo Engineer



deductions or inferences on various factors contained in the Gathas and the later range between 1400 BC and 700 BC.

# 1 4 0 0 B C A N D 7 0 0 B C



1080 BC

**Shapur Shahbazi** first explains the genesis of the 'traditional date of Zarathushtra' of 258 years before Alexander, and then goes on to show that it "must therefore be regarded as wholly unhistorical, the product of scholastic combinations which cannot be older than the Parthian period. It must be emphasized that neither its attestations in certain old works based on Sassanian sources, nor its acceptance for a time by some Zarathushti scholars, proves the authenticity of this tradition." [1977, p. 34].

Shahbazi then goes on to present his own dating for Zarathushtra. Citing al Biruni, Shahbazi states that the Khwarezmians in establishing their 'national' era, adopted the coming of Siyavush as the event to mark that date. This event the Khwarezmians held to be 888 years before Alexander, or about 1200 BC ( $\approx 888+331$ ). Now, in the *Shah Nameh*, Siyavush is four generations removed from Zarathushtra. Again, assigning 30 years per generation, this gives a period of 120 ( $=4 \times 30$ ) years between Siyavush and Zarathushtra. Shahbazi hence places Zarathushtra in 1080 BC ( $=1200-120$ ).



~1000 to 600 BC

**Gherardo Gnoli** in his very exhaustive work: *Zarathushtra's Time and Homeland* [1980] devotes a chapter to Zarathushtra's time [pp. 159-179]. He spends the greater part of the Chapter to disproving the 'traditional date' as being too late. This chapter, like Shahbazi's work [cited earlier] gives an excellent review of the bases for the 'traditional date', and he then goes on to state why he feels that it is invalid.

Gnoli does propose that the time and homeland for Zarathushtra "be placed between the end of the 2nd and the beginning of the 1st millennium BC in eastern territories of the Iranian Plateau" [p. 177]. He bases his arguments for this dating in large part to the radical social and cultural differences between the Gathic and Achaemenian societies. The Gathic society is based on a tribal and patriarchal society, dependent on stock-raising and elementary agriculture; while the Achaemenian society is a world-wide monarchy, with a developed economy based on trade and an advanced monetary system.

*Note:* Gnoli has recently retracted this date, and is now supporting the 'traditional date' [see *Report on Professor Gherardo Gnoli's Lectures at UCLA*, by Jenny Rose, in this issue of *FEZANA Journal*].

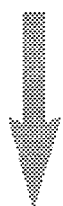


1000 BC

**Dastur M. N. Dhalla** in the *History of Zoroastrianism* [1938, p. xxxi] states in two very curt sentences: "The time when Zarathushtra flourished is a moot question. The approximate date at which he lived is 1000 BC."

The 'traditional date' of Zarathushtra is taken to be 258 years before Alexander (330 BC) or 558 BC (=330+258). It is referred to as the 'traditional date' because it is mentioned in some of the Pahlavi texts, and also referred to by 10th and 11th century Islamic scholars, as the date ascribed to Zarathushtra by the Zarathushtrian clergy [*al Biruni, Sachau translation, 1897, p. 17*].

## 'TRADITIONAL DATE' OF ZARATHUSHTRA (258 YEARS BEFORE ALEXANDER)



754 BC to 558 BC

While at first glance this appears to be a very precise date, there is considerable uncertainty in it. For example, does this date refer to Zarathushtra's birth; the date of his receiving his revelation from Ahura Mazda (at the age of 30); the date of his converting Kavi Vishtasp to the 'Good Religion' (at the age of 42); or to his death (at the age of 77)? Also "before Alexander" begs the question, before Alexander's conquest of the Persians, or his death?

The number 258 years itself, appears to have been derived from the **Bundahishn** chronology [*Anklesaria, 1956, p. 307*] which gives a 90 year rule for King Vishtasp (who was converted to the 'Good Religion' by Zarathushtra), 112 for Vohuman, his successor, who was followed by Humay for a 30-year rule, by Daray-i Chihrazatan for 12 years, and by Daray-i Darayan for 14 years, or (90+112+30+12+14=258). Daray-i Darayan being Darius III, the last Achaemenian king, who was defeated by Alexander.

Another reference to the 'traditional date' is in the **Arda Viraf Namak** [*AVN*] where there is a variation on the date of "258 years before Alexander". The AVN, in Chapter 1, gives a date for Zarathushtra as 300 years before Alexander [*Jamaspji Asa & Haug translation, p. 141*]. There are two apparent explanations for the date of 300 years before Alexander:

- (a) That it is a rounding up of the number 258, and
- (b) That if one subtracts from 300 the age of Zarathushtra when he converted Kavi Vishtasp (42), one gets 258 (=300-42), which is the 'traditional date'.

The 'traditional date' has also been referred to by two Islamic chronologists: **al-Masudi** (10th century AD) and **al-Biruni** (late 10th - early 11th century AD).

Numerous scholars have argued in favor of this traditional dating, specifically: **Hildegard Lewy** [1944], **Sayyid Taqizadeh** [1947], **Walter Henning** [1951] and most recently **Ilya Gershevitch** [1995].

Arguing equally fervently against this 'traditional date' as being too late in time, are: **Shahpur Shahbazi** [1977], **Gherardo Gnoli** [1980], **Helmut Humbach** [1991] and **Mary Boyce** [1989].

**Otakar Klima** [1959, pp. 557-558] uses a variation of the 'traditional date' to develop his dating. Taking the same Bundahishn chronology given above, and associating Daray-i Chihrazatan with Darius the Great, whose rule started in 522 BC, Klima adds 232 years (=90+112+30) to the starting date of Darius' rule to obtain the date of Zarathushtra as 754 BC (=522+232).



**Sarosh J. H. Manekshaw** is Director of Environmental, Safety and Health at Pennzoil Company. He was a co-Chairman of the Second North American Gatha Conference, in Houston, Texas, in August 1996, and served as editor of the Proceedings of that Conference. Sarosh is also the Houston Vice-Chairman of the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress in the Year 2000.

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## Report on Professor Gherardo Gnoli's Lectures at UCLA in April, 1997

By Jenny Rose  
Mission Viejo, California



The second biennial *Ehsan Yarshater Lecture Series* was recently delivered at UCLA by Professor Gherardo Gnoli of the University of Rome. A distinguished Iranist, Prof. Gnoli has published extensively, and is perhaps best known to Zarathushtis for his works *Zoroaster's Time and Homeland*, *From Zoroastre to Mani* and *The Idea of Iran*.

Under the general title *Zoroaster in History*, the theme chosen by Gnoli for his five lectures, was the controversial problem of dating the prophet. His opening lecture set the scene by delineating the decades-long debate that has surrounded European attempts to place Zarathushtra in time, and thus to locate his intellectual and spiritual environment. In *Zoroaster's Time and Homeland*, published in 1980, Gnoli had advocated an early date for the prophet, between the end of the 2nd and the beginning of the 1st millennium BC, and had been critical of the later 7th or 6th century BC date supported by such scholars as Herzfeld, Taqizadeh

Professor William W. Malandra is presently Professor of Indo-Iranian philology and Chair of the Department of Classical and Near Eastern Studies at the University of Minnesota. At Minnesota, he teaches undergraduate courses on the Zarathushti religion and on Ancient Iran as well as graduate courses on Old Persian, Avestan and Middle Persian. He is author of *An Introduction to Ancient Iranian Religion*.

# Zarathushtra's Place and Time A Scholar's Perspective

By William W. Malandra  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

## Report on Gnoli ...

[Continued from page 25]

and Henning, who accepted the tradition that counted "258 years from Zarathushtra till Alexander."

Following his recent reconsideration of the problem, Gnoli declared that he has now changed his thesis, and that he can no longer maintain the earlier date argued for by Boyce, Humbach, Shahbazi and others, but feels that the historical credibility of the traditional date has been verified by scholars such as Lewy and Henning. In the ensuing lectures, he propounded some new hypotheses on the date of Zarathushtra and its significance in both the classical Greek sources and Zarathushti works. Gnoli now maintains that Zarathushtra's dualistic teaching and philosophical message are consistent with the nascent Iranian sense of history and national identity around the time of Cyrus. The entire series of lectures will be published within the next two years. For further details, write to: The Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at UCLA, Tel: (310) 825-4165. ■

Jenny Rose has a Ph.D. and M. Phil in Iranian Studies from Columbia University, and an MA from the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London. Besides her research work, Rose is a freelance writer, has a large number of publications on the Zarathushti religion and the Role of Women in Zoroastrianism including chapters in *Encyclopaedia Iranica* and workbooks on Zoroastrianism for high school students.

There are two very simple questions for which Zarathushtis seek answers from scholars. "Where did Zarathushtra live?" and "When did Zarathushtra live?" As simple and straightforward as the questions are, the answers are long and involved; and in the end, the very answers scholars give are often at such variance with each other that lay people may well wonder whether they can place any trust in what we say. In the space graciously granted me by the editors of FEZANA, I would like to discuss these questions, not with the goal of giving a definitive answer to each, but rather, in the hope that I can show why they are so difficult to answer.

**Zarathushtis not alone.** The first thing I should point out is that Zarathushtis are not alone in the quest for knowledge about the time and place of their founder. In Buddhist studies a long standing problem has been the date of the historical Buddha. Apart from a 19th century scholar who thought the Buddha to have been a totally fictitious creation of myth and legend, most scholars have agreed that the Buddha died approximately 484 BCE. Yet now there are scholars who want to move the date up more than a century.

The historical figure of Jesus has been the subject of intense, and still ongoing, study and controversy. Again, apart from a few on the fringe who doubt his historicity, scholars agree on broad parameters that he lived at the beginning of the 1st century in Palestine. However, the sources are inconclusive about the date of his birth. Was he born 4 BCE, before the death of Herod, or, 6 CE, during the census of Quirinius? Was he really born in Bethlehem, or was the nativity narrative a fanciful con-

struction to accommodate the Davidic myth of the messiah?

The basic problem common to all traditions has to do with the nature of the sources. By sources we mean the historical data we have at our disposal. Normally these data are contained in primary textual documents, such as the Avesta, or other relevant texts such as the Achaemenid inscriptions or notices about Persians by Greek authors. But data may also be found in archaeological materials and other remains of material culture. In today's world we take for granted journalists, television and movie crews, anthropologists with sophisticated research techniques, and historians of contemporary culture who can digest on a daily basis the flood of information available to us.

Unfortunately, the world which witnessed the beginnings of the great religions was a very different place. No one from the Associated Press was covering the Iranian plateau in those far off times. What we have, then, is only what little that history has bequeathed us.

**Gathic and Avestan sources.** The inheritance is not insignificant by any means. For one thing, we have the very words of Zarathushtra himself. Whereas the words of Jesus and of the Buddha have been mediated through periods of oral transmission to the compilers who gave them final form, those of Zarathushtra come directly in the form of the *manthran's* compositions, the *Gathas*. For another, we have, in the rest of the Avesta, preserved a wealth of background information on the religion of ancient Iranian society, that serves to contextualize Zarathushtra's thought. That's the good news. The bad news

is that Zarathushtra and his followers were interested in ideas. It could hardly have occurred to them, that after several thousand years their spiritual descendants would be asking in earnest, "Exactly where did you live, and when did you live there?"

So, when one looks at the *Gathas*, one is struck both by their elevated style and intricate conceptual framework and by their only passing or oblique reference to the historical realities of time and place. For example, in the famous passage [*Ys. 46.1*] he asks, "To what land...should I go?" Under analogous conditions Muhammad fled Mecca for Medina; but here we know neither where Zarathushtra was nor whence he fled. Because his hymn is a communication with Ahura Mazda, he hardly needs to tell God his location.

The Zarathushtra of the *Gathas* is a personality who engages us with the immediacy of his presence. In marked contrast, the Zarathushtra of the Younger Avesta and of the Pahlavi books is a person of legend, whose very being has undergone a process of mythologization. Can we use any of the data from the post-Gathic sources to construct a valid historical argument for a time and place?

Consider the traditional Zarathushti date of "258 years before Alexander." Although this appears on the surface to be about as clear and reasonable as one could wish, on closer scrutiny one finds that is beset with problems.

Serious is the relationship of this date to the ancient reckoning of time by the Seleucid era. Most serious, however, is its relationship to the Zarathushti world calendar, an ideological construct according to the model of world ages. While some scholars maintain the validity of the traditional date others have advanced powerful arguments to prove that the date represents an attempt to reconcile the Seleucid era with the world calendar.

**Achaemenid and Greek sources.** I mentioned above the secondary sources of the Achaemenid inscrip-

“ “ The world which witnessed the beginnings of the great religions was a very different place. No one from Associated Press was covering the Iranian plateau in those far off times. What we have, then, is only what little history has bequeathed upon us. ” ”

tions and the Greek historians. These sources can be useful and misleading. Perhaps the best example is the name Vishtaspa. He was the ruler, *kavi*, whom Zarathushtra converted and who became the first royal patron of the religion. So much is beyond controversy. However, the father of the great king Darius is known from the inscriptions to be also Vishtaspa and from Greek sources Hytaspes. By assuming that the two Vishtaspas were the same person, one scholar proposed that Darius' father was indeed Zarathushtra's patron.

Although the argument has been thoroughly rejected, it remains a good example of the sorts of tenuous evidence scholars must resort to in search of the historical Zarathushtra.

**Examination of *realia*.** Another approach to the problem of Zarathushtra's time and place is an examination of the '*realia*', that is, things like metal or chariots, mentioned in the literary sources. If these *realia* can be linked to what is securely known from historical or archaeological sources, then one might be able to fix the date and/or

time at least within broad parameters. Since Zarathushtra explicitly refers to molten metal (*kvaena ayangha*) he must have lived after Iranians began smelting copper. Similarly, when Zarathushtra refers to himself as the 'charioteer of (his) diction' we must assume that he lived after chariots were common among Iranians. Such *realia* are useful in establishing a date before which the prophet could not have lived, but that is all.

The pastoral idiom of the *Gathas* has suggested to many scholars that Zarathushtra must have lived at a time and place far removed from the great empires of the Medes and Persians. According to this line of reasoning, the rise of the empire over Iran would mark a date after which the prophet could not have lived. Of course, this assumes that someone living in a pastoral setting outside, say, Hamadan or Susa at the time of Darius would necessarily have adopted an urban idiom in keeping with the

times!

**Conclusion.** So, these are some of the issues. What do I think? Well, he could have been a contemporary of the poets who composed the hymns of the Rig Veda, whose pastoral imagery, vocabulary and *realia* are similar. That is, he might have lived ca. 1500 BCE. It is also possible that he was a contemporary of Darius. I follow the general consensus that he lived somewhere in eastern Iran, but where? 'Seistan, Chorasmia, Bactria?

In the last analysis, I suppose we all, whether scholars or lay people, form our image of Zarathushtra on grounds that are not purely scientific. While I might want to regard him as a contemporary of Cyrus the Great living in Chorasmia, and as a man who used traditional imagery to address current issues of society and theology, another scholar may want to see in him an archaic and ancient shaman practicing in a central Asian context.

This modern portrait of the prophet — as if we know what Zarathushtra looked like — reminds us that we need to reflect on the extent to which we ourselves mold his image in a likeness that appeals to us. ■

# One of the most perplexing aspects of the study of the Zarathushti religion is the dating of its prophet Zarathushtra

# The Time of Zarathushtra

By Dr. Pallan R. Ichaporia  
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**Uncertainties in dating.** H. S. Nyberg is convinced that no evidence about the date of Zarathushtra can ever be found [AMI, 1968, pp. 45-47, and Religionen, p. 27]. Lommel, too, has expressed this same uncertainty based on all the recent works [Kirfel Festschrift, 187]. W. B. Henning had put the birth of Zarathushtra in 569 BC [Zoroaster, 1951, p. 37 ff]. Following in his footsteps, his student Gershevitch, recently opined [Approaches to Zoroaster's Gathas, Iran, 33, 1995, p. 6]: "One can not but marvel at the failure of denigrators of Zarathushtra's traditional date '258 years before Alexander' (i.e. 588 BC) to read Henning attentively...". Gershevitch believing this wrong chronology writes: "Henning drew from the date's immutability, the date 258 was immutable to Ardeshir and his Zarathushti contemporaries because they had received it from their fathers and grandfathers, who in turn received it immutable from their fathers...across more than half a millennium until the *fons et origo* is reached, the 258th year of the era which truly had Zoroaster for epoch" [op. cit., p. 8].

This is mere conjecture on Gershevitch's part; for it is not possible to justify the accuracy of this statement. That this statement may be of doubtful authenticity, can be seen if one takes into account the fact that the Magian Priests claimed Zarathushtra as their very own, by equating Zarathushtra's Vishtaspa with Hystaspis, the father of Darius. Their

whole effort to claim Zarathushtra to be a Magi would be erroneous if Zarathushtra's patron (Vishtaspa) was someone other than Darius' father. It does seem that the Magi influenced the traditional date by placing Zarathushtra in Achaemenian times.

Zarathushtra was born somewhere in eastern Iran, long before Cyrus established his empire. The Magian Priests had their origins in Media, in the west, and they became Zarathushtis centuries after the passing away of the Prophet, at the time when the Zarathushti religion was spreading to western Iran. Burrow, states: "The earlier history of the Zarathushti religion was confined to eastern Iran." [The Proto-Indoaryans, JRAS, 1973, p. 135].

## THE 'TRADITIONAL DATE' (AROUND 600 BC)

The 'traditional date' of Zarathushtra, 258 years before the defeat of Darius III, by Alexander (i.e., 600 BC in round figures) comes from the traditions of Pahlavi literature. The Bundahishn [33:14] gives a date 300 years before Alexander's invasion, along with the Karnamag-i-Ardashir [8:10], Dinkerd [Book III, 3-5], and The Book of Arda Viraz [Arday Viraz Namag]. Of special interest in the Arday Viraz Namag is chapter 1:1-5, where the conversion of Vishtaspa is mentioned to have taken place 300 years before Alexander (=630 BC) This text needs to be re-examined in view of the new translation given below:

Edon gowend ku ewbar ahlaw  
Zarduxst den-i-padirift andar gehan  
rawag be kard

*It is said that once, the pious Zarathust gave the religion which he had got (from Ormazd), and (then) prevailing in the world ...*

ud ta bowandagih i se sad sal den  
andar avezagih ud mardom andar  
abegmanih bud hend

*...till 300 years (his) religion was pure and men had no doubt (about this religion) ...*

ud gajastag ganak-minminovand ud  
darvand, guman kardan-i anshutano  
pavan denman din o raai

*Then the accursed evil spirit, the liar, to make men doubt the religion ...*

an gajastag alaksandar i hromayig  
arummyak-mujrayik ... an eranshar  
mad

*...instigated Alexander, the Roman who was living in Egypt and thus he came to the land of Iran to inflict cruelty, war and destruction.*

afrash valmn airan dahyupat zekte-  
land

*He assassinated the Iranian Leader of the Land.*

To determine from this text that Zarathushtra lived 300 years before the conquest of Alexander is risky, because the very next passage alludes to the existence of Avesta and Zand texts written on cow-hides with gold ink, which were deposited in the libraries at Persepolis. This claim is not endorsed by those scholars who readily embrace the traditional date of Zarathushtra, because it implies that the pure state of the religion lasted for 300 years. The author of Arday Viraz Namag was merely recording an ancient myth of the Magi which claimed Zarathushtra as one of their own. Besides, the information on Alexander is faulty. He was neither a Roman nor did he come from Egypt.



Shahbazi argues in *The Traditional Date of Zoroaster Explained*, [BSOAS, 40, 1977, pp. 25-35], "Since the epic history separated Siyavush from Zarathushtra by four generations ( $4 \times 30 = 120$  years), the Khwarezmian tradition implies that the prophet flourished ( $1200 - 120 =$ ) 1080 BC"

Gnoli is reported to have recently revised the time of the Prophet (in his forthcoming publication) to “the traditional date of Zarathushtra, i.e., 600 BC.” In a previous writing, he stated, “...the date of 258 years before Alexander does not have any historical value”, and, “The figure of 258 years between Zarathushtra and Alexander should ... be interpreted as a datum without historical value.” [*Zoroaster’s Time and Homeland*, 1980, p. 167 & p. 169].

Otakar Klima gives the date of the prophet as 784-707 BC [*Archiv Orientalni*, 27, 1959, pp. 556-564]. W. Hinze gives the date as 630-553 BC [*Zarathushtra*, 1961, p. 24] and for linguistic reason A. Kammenhuber gave 1000 BC [*Die Arier im vorderen Orient*, 1968, p. 90]. All these dates are more or less near to the 'traditional date' of Zarathushtra.

## EARLY DATES (AROUND 6000 BC)

Some dates coming from lay Zarathushti writers have put the Prophet in the stone age. One can understand the religious zeal of assigning a date in antiquity to the Prophet. Such writings, however, carry scanty scholarly references. Others have tried to use astrology coupled with astronomy, of dubious

For the fantastic Greek dates for Zarathushtra around 7000 BC, and even earlier, see Jackson's *Zoroaster the Prophet* [pp. 150-178, Appendix II, 1899] as well as JAOS, [17, 1896, pp.1-22], and Fox & Pemberton, [Journal of KRCOI, 1928]. These works may be consulted for the exhaustive reviews of dates, such as: 6000 years before Xerxes, 6000 years before the death of Plato, and 5000 years before the Trojan war. All these dates reveal the artificial nature of Greek chronology.

### FARVARDIN YASHT DATES (AROUND 1100 BC)

Of special interest is the proof from *Yasht 13 (Farvardin Yasht)* where a large number of names of the supporters of the faith is mentioned. Among them is named Saena, considered to be one of the most important of Zarathushtra's successors; and three successive generations -- Zigrey, Vitkavay and Utayutay. Thus we have three generations ( $3 \times 30 = 90$  years) after Saena, and adding to this another 100 years between Zarathushtra and Saena, we obtain 200 years (which is the minimum time period between Zarathushtra and the composition of this *Yasht*).

Burrow [*The Proto-Indoaryans*, JRAS, 1973, pp. 138-139] adds these 200 years to 900 BC (the time of the westward movement of the Iranians) to arrive at (900+200=) 1100 BC, as the date for Zarathushtra. This date looks convincing.

The above date has support from the Greek historian, Xanthos, of Lydian descent, who wrote in the mid-5th century BC, that Spitama Zarathushtra, the prophet of Ancient Iran, lived 600 years before Xerxes' crossing of the Hellespont ( $480+600 = 1080$  BC). This date is also in approximate agreement with the linguistic evidence [Humbach & Ichaporia, *The Heritage of Zarathushtra*, 1994, p. 11]. Gershevitch has changed the

**Conclusion.** The ‘traditional date’ of Zarathushtra comes from Sassanian times, and “in spite of the arguments that have been advanced against the creditworthiness of this it has continued to be accepted by the majority opinion ... because certain ... scholars have accepted it.” [*op. cit.*, Burrow, 1973, p. 136]. Mary Boyce writes, “In the absence of any external evidence, therefore it seems natural to conclude that the Prophet lived sometime between, say, 1400 and 1000 BC.” [*History of Zoroastrianism*, p. 190]. This may be the best explanation for the date of Zarathushtra. ■



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*Life is what happens while  
you're off making other plans*

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Many views have been presented regarding the date of Zarathushtra. They begin from 6600 BC and end with 100 AD. The Greek historians generally have placed him at a much older time. Herein, the names of scholars and their views are presented.

<b>DATES (BC)</b>	→ <b>J. K. Katrak</b> estimates Zarathushtra's time to be 8600 years ago. In his treatise he quotes Ferdowsi's poem about Vishtaspa's reign "... six thousand years have passed since that period."	<b>1500-1200</b>	→ <b>Mary Boyce</b> [ <i>Zoroastrianism</i> , 1992].
<b>6600</b>	<b>H. S. Spencer</b> (1965), <i>The Aryan Eclipse Cycle</i> , Bombay, p. 223, determines the date of Zarathushtra as 7129 BC.	<b>1500</b>	→ <b>Mills</b> , first 900 BC, and later 1500 BC.
	<b>R. H. Aston</b> of Rhodesia [ <i>Jame Jamshed</i> , Mumbai, January 18, 1964] concludes that the prophet lived around 6000 BC.	<b>1080</b>	→ <b>Shahbazi</b>
		<b>1080</b>	→ <b>Pour Davoud</b> [ <i>The Age of Zarathushtra</i> , Journal of the K.R.Cama Oriental Institute, No. 28, Bombay, 1935].
<b>6312</b>	→ <b>Pithawala</b>	<b>&gt;1000</b>	→ <b>B.C.Hummel</b> based on his version of 'Assora-Mazza' in an Assyrian inscription as Ahura Mazda [ <i>Ashtiyani, op. cit</i> ]
	<b>The Greeks:</b>	<b>&gt; 1000</b>	→ <b>Kuiper</b>
<b>6500</b>	→ <b>Xanthos</b>	<b>1000</b>	→ <b>Lommel</b> , based on Egyptian papyri [ <i>Ashtiyani, op. cit.</i> ]
<b>6350</b>	→ <b>Oudoxes and Plinus</b> , quoting Aristotle place Zarathushtra 6000 years before <b>Plato</b> who lived in the 4th century BC.	<b>1000</b>	→ <b>Dhalla</b> [ <i>M. N. Dhalla, Zoroastrian Civilization</i> ]
		<b>1000</b>	→ <b>Rudolph and Duncker</b>
<b>6200</b>	→ <b>Hermodorus</b> places Zarathushtra 5000 years before the conquest of Troy (in 1200 BC). [ <i>Razi, Avesta, in Persian</i> ]	<b>1000</b>	→ <b>Geldner and Jackson</b>
		<b>1000-900</b>	→ <b>Wesendonk</b>
<b>&gt; 6000</b>	→ <b>Plutarch</b>	<b>900</b>	→ <b>Bartholomae and Widengren</b>
<b>6000-4000</b>	→ <b>Kavosji and Bharucha</b>	<b>660-583</b>	→ <b>West</b> [ <i>E. W. West, Pahlavi Texts, Part 5, S.B.E., Oxford, 1897, p.27.</i> ]
<b>3500</b>	→ <b>F. Azargoshasb</b> (1981) lecture in Chicago	<b>650-541</b>	→ <b>Henning</b> [ <i>W. B. Henning, Zoroaster, Oxford, 1951, p.41</i> ]
		<b>570-550</b>	→ <b>Herzfeld</b> [ <i>Zoroaster and His World, Princeton, 1947, Vol 1, pp. 1-30</i> ].
<b>2000</b>	→ <b>Asgarov</b> , based on excavations in Uzbekistan in 1984. [ <i>F. Mehr, The Philosophy of Zarathushtra, in Persian</i> ]	<b>589-512</b>	→ <b>Anquetil du Perron</b> [ <i>Anquetil du Perron, Zend Avesta, Paris, 1971, Vol. 1, Part 2, p. 6</i> ]
<b>2000-1500</b>	→ Based on chronology of the Rig Veda and the Aryan migration in 1700-1500 BC	<b>588</b>	→ <b>The 'traditional date'. Bundahishn</b> , apparently a non-religious Pahlavi book of the early Islamic centuries, in Chapter 34, determines the date of Zarathushtra as 258 years before Alexander's conquest of Persia, or 588 BC, which has been quoted by Persian historians <b>Birouni</b> and <b>Massoudi</b> [ <i>F. Mehr, op.cit.</i> ] and [ <i>Razi, op.cit.</i> ].
<b>2nd mill.</b>	→ <b>Hippel and Lassen</b>	<b>&lt; 485</b>	→ <b>Nyberg</b> [ <i>F. A. Bode, Songs of Zarathushtra</i> ] and [ <i>H. S. Nyberg, Die Religionen des Alten Iran, German translation H. H. Schaeder, Leipzig, 1938, pp. 34-45</i> ]
<b>1800-900</b>	→ <b>Moulton</b>	<b>100 AD</b>	→ <b>Darmesteter</b>
<b>1767</b>	→ <b>Zabih Behrooz</b> , of the Military Academy of Tehran, through various astrological methodology, arrives at the same number, and concludes that the birth of Zarathushtra was in 1767 BC.		
<b>1700-1400</b>	→ <b>Ashtiyani</b> , based on the age of the Gathas and the Rig Veda [ <i>J. Ashtiyani, Zartosht, Mazdayasna and Government, in Persian</i> ]		

# Zarathushtra's Time and Homeland

By Daryoush Jahanian, M.D. \*  
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*The life of Zarathushtra has been shrouded under the cloud of history. To this day, controversies encircle the meaning of Zarathushtra's name, his date of birth, birthplace and personal life. For example, in the entire Avestan texts only the name of Hvovi is mentioned as his wife; however, later during the Sassanian era and thereafter, the account of his life was mystified and travestied by fictitious writings that endure to this day; so much so, that one school believes that the prophet was never married, and that in the Gathas, it is one of the students who is addressed as the daughter of Zarathushtra. By tradition, however, it is taught that he had three sons and three daughters.*

\* Excerpted from "The Zoroastrian Doctrine and Biblical Connections" by Daryoush Jahanian, Kansas City, 1997.

## TRADITIONAL DATE REFUTED

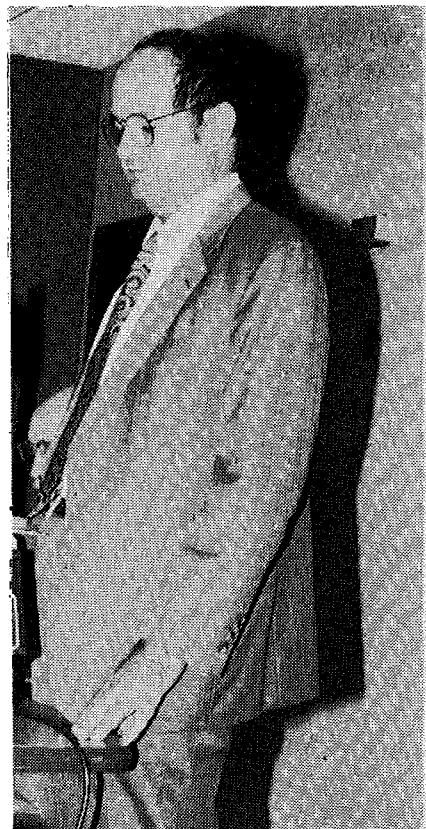
The 'traditional date' (588 BC) has been rejected by many authors. *Arda Viraf Name* [Ch. 1-5] a writing of the Sassanian era, dates Zarathushtra 300 years before Alexander, and according to *Zadsparam* [Ch. 12, Stanza 23], 300 years after the prophet his religion remained unharmed. In general, by Sassanian tradition, the interval between Zarathushtra and Alexander is 258 to 300 years.

To understand how the figures of 258, 272 and 300 are computed, the following explanation from the *Bundahishn* is presented: Vistaspa's ruling period before the advent of Zarathushtra, 30 years + 60 years after that + his successor Bahman's 112 years rule + Homai's 30 years + Tchehrazad's 12 years + at last, Darai Darayan's 14 years would equal 258 years. If the 14-year period of Alexander's rule is added, this figure comes to 272 years. Since Zarathushtra at the age of 42 converted Vishtaspa, then  $258 + 42 = 300$ .

One must realize that according to these premises, the end of the Kayanian dynasty is joined to the end of the Achaemenian dynasty and the two have been made into one. In other words, Darai Darayan has been recognized as Darius III and Vishtaspa as the father of Darius the Great. [Extracted from the research paper by Ali Hassouri: *The Date of Zoroaster*].

The inaccuracy of the traditional date can readily be realized by the fact that Vistaspa's rule is estimated at 90 years and that of his successor, Bahman, 112 years. Also, it is hard to understand why the first 30 years of Vistaspa's ruling period has been included in the above calculation when the age of 42 is added to it.

The birthday of Zarathushtra is March 26 and his death anniversary is observed on December 26. According to the tradition, the prophet lived five days short of 77 years and that puts his ascension day on March 21; hence, even the traditional lifespan of the prophet appears to be inaccurate.



## ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL EVIDENCES

The views of several scholars are presented here because they help the readers to come close to Zarathushtra's era:

(1) Markwart, based on excavations in Khwarezmia that proved the existence of local kings at 800 BC, maintains that Zarathushtra lived many centuries before that [J. Ashtiyani, *Zartosht, Mazdayasna and Government, in Persian*]. In 1984, Asgarov in Ozbakistan's (USSR) excavations, unearthed ruins of a Zarathushti temple he estimated belonged to 2000 BC [F. Mehr, *The Philosophy of Zarathushtra, in Persian*].

(2) Lommel and Meyer note that in one of the inscriptions of Sargon the Assyrian King, dated 714 BC, allusion has been made to Mazdaku, a Median ruler, indicating that Medes were familiar with the Zarathushti religion [Ashtiyani, *op. cit.*]. Lommel also notes that in the Elephantine's papyri, followers of Mazdasan have been mentioned who lived in the south of Egypt. Considering the distance between there and Zarathushtra's homeland in northern

Afghanistan, he estimated that the prophet's time was about 1000 BC

(3) Mills notes that by comparative philological studies, the Gathic language is much older than the Achaemenian. Remiss [*Ashtiyani, op. cit.*] maintains that the name of God in the Gathas is Ahura Mazda, and in the Achaemenian inscriptions, Auramazda, which indicates an interval of perhaps several millennia for such a transformation to evolve [*M. H. Rempis, lecture in Tehran, Iran*].

(4) Hertel's theory that Vishtaspa, the father of Darius, and Kavi Vishtaspa, who supported Zarathushtra, are one, readily can be rejected because the pedigrees of the two are entirely different [*Ashtiyani, op. cit.*]. Vishtaspa (the father of Darius), based on the inscriptions of his son, is the son of Arsames, son of Ariaramnes, son of Chishpish (Teispes), son of Hakhamanesh (Achaemen). Kavi Vishtaspa is the son of Lohrasp (Urvataspa in Avesta) from the Naotarid clan, a Turer tribe named Fryana. If Zarathushtra was a contemporary of Darius' father, such a significant event should have been reflected in his inscriptions. He makes no mention of it.

(5) Two gold trays from Ariaramnes (640-590 BC) and Arsames were discovered in the province of Hamadan, west of Iran, on which the name of Supreme God Auramazda is inscribed [*M. H. Amini Sam, Pictorial History of Iran*.] reflecting the fact that the Persians were familiar with the name of Mazda in the seventh century BC and the advent of Zarathushtra should be placed a long time before the Achaemenian era. [See Note 1 below].

(6) Lommel notes that there is no mention of Magus (and Magi) as a

practicing priest in the Gathas. Only in Yasna 65.7, which is the younger Avesta, Magus is cited as a priest, and since the Magi were the Median religious monks, the Gathas should precede the Medes.

In general, there is no sign of Medes and Achaemenians in the Gathas, and none of their kings are named. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that Zarathushtra preceded the Median era, beginning at 708 BC.

#### ANALYTICAL STUDIES OF THE GATHAS AND THE VEDAS

As various scholars incorporate the Gathic and the Vedic studies to determine the time of Zarathushtra, the differences narrow and the prophet's date falls near or within the second

“Ashtiyani, based on the ages of the two books [Gathas and Vedas] places Zarathushtra at 1700 - 1400 BC, which is reconcilable with all the chronological data currently available about the two cultures.”

millennium BC as follows: Dhalla [*M. N. Dhalla, Zoroastrian Civilization*] 1000 BC; Moulton 1800-900 BC; Kuiper at least 1000 BC; Hippel and Lassen second millennium BC; Boyce [*Boyce, Zoroastrianism, 1992*] 1500-1200 BC A persuasive discussion by J. Ashtiyani based on comparative studies of the Gathas of Zarathushtra and the Vedas (Hindu books) is condensed and presented here [*Ashtiyani, op. cit.*].

The Avestan books, particularly the Gathas and the Vedas, are of Sanskrit root. In fact, they are so close that the Avestan books were first translated through the knowledge of Sanskrit. In the eighteenth century, a French scholar named Anquetil du Perron voyaged to India to obtain the scriptures. He was able to shed light on these books after many centuries of oblivion and brought them to Europe where a foundation was laid for the Avestan studies that have continued to this day.

The Gathas of Zarathushtra consist of 17 chapters scattered among the

72 chapters of the Yasna. They were isolated through philological studies by a German scholar named Dr. Martin Haug, and all authors concur that most or all of them are composed by Zarathushtra himself. The Gathas contain five Gathas: Ahunavaiti: Yasna 28-34, Ushtavaiti: Yasna 43-46, Spenta Mainyu: Yasna 47-50, Vohu Khshathra: Yasna 51, and Vahishta-Ishti: Yasna 53. Some authors have included Airyema Ishya: Yasna 54 in the Gathas because linguistically it is the same as Yasna 53.

The Vedas comprise of Rigveda, Samaveda, Yajurveda and Atharvaveda. The Rigvedas consist of 10 mandalas and 1028 sukta; several sukta form one mandala. Each mandala has been composed by several Rishis in different eras. All together 400 Rishis participated in the composition of the Vedas. The study of the Vedas reveals that most of the Rigveda had been composed before the Aryan

migration to India because they mention *Soma*, a plant indigenous only to the Iranian plateau used in the rituals. In the younger Avesta it is cited as *Haoma*. At the same time, references to sorghum, rice, fig, sugar cane and Shami (used in the rituals) which are indigenous to the Indian climate, are absent.

Careful analysis of the Gathas and the Vedas reveals that in a certain era, an ideological division occurred between the two groups of Aryans which has been attributed to the initiation of the migration to the Sind Valley. First, Zarathushtra rejects the worship of various deities known as Daevas by different Aryan tribes. As a result, Daeva, in the contemporary Persian language, has evolved as Div, which means demon and vicious person, while Daeva in the Vedas denotes God.

On the other hand, Zarathushtra presents his God as Ahura Mazda. Mazda, which is exclusively the name of God, means the wise Lord and for the first time has been introduced by Zarathushtra. But Ahura

**Note 1.** The inscription on the gold tray is "Urmazad the great God, has granted me Parsa the land of Persians with great men and fabulous horses." The authenticity of the trays has been questioned by some authors.

has an Indo-Iranian root, Asura. It means Supreme Being and is the attribute of God that also applies to perfect individuals. In the Vedas, Asura is also an attribute shared by Gods and men. But after the introduction of Ahura Mazda, the status of Asura in the Rigveda changes and Asura which indicated God (*Daeva*) [Rigveda 1, Sukta 55; R.V. 3, S4, Stanza 38], becomes antigod (or *Adaeva*) [Mandela 8, Sukta 85] and eventually is slain by Indra [Rigveda 6, Sukta 4, Stanza 22].

Because of Zarathushtra's new doctrine, he faced resistance and resentment by various Rishis. He names two Rishis who impede his progress; one is *Usig* (in the Vedas *Ushij*) and the other *Bendva* (in the Vedas *Bandhu*). Note, this is an epoch that the two groups have not separated.

In the Gathas, the priest of the old religion is called *Karapan* (in the Vedas *Calpa*), but there is no men-

tion of Brahma, a religious community that evolved within the Aryan society at 1000 BC and became prominent at 800 BC. The absence of Brahma in the Gathas suggests that this book was composed prior to the first millennium BC.

There are various opinions about the chronology of the Rigveda, but generally it is accepted that composition of the Rigvedas has been initiated prior to 2000 BC to 1700 BC and the great Aryan migration took place between 1700-1500 BC.

Hence, Zarathushtra should have been living between 1500 and 2000 BC, which falls close to the date determined by the late Zabih Behrooz of the Military Academy of Tehran, who by astrological studies concluded that Zarathushtra was born in 1767 BC. Ashtiyani, based on the ages of the two books, places Zarathushtra at 1700-1400 BC, which is reconcilable with all the

chronological data currently available about the two cultures. [P. Balgangadhar Tilak, through astrological findings in the Vedas, dates the oldest of the Vedas to 5000 BC; H. G. Jacobi, a German scholar, concurs. However, the most accepted view is 2000 BC]. He maintains that if one day it is determined that the Rigvedas are older, then Zarathushtra's time too should be changed accordingly. ■

[Zarathushtra's homeland is continued on page 37.]

**Dr. Daryoush Jahanian** is a practicing obstetrician-gynecologist in the Kansas City area. A founder and president of the Fravahar Zoroastrian Youth Organization in Tehran, he has also served on the boards of Arts and Religion. He has served as a trustee of the Rustam Guiv Foundation of New York, and is a founder and President of the Zoroastrian Association of Kansas.

## Matters Spiritual and Strategic ...

[Continued from page 13]

(3) An embryonic *Study Center* may be developed with a library and meeting rooms for retreats and scholarly pursuits in the pristine, mountainous setting.

(4) *Prayer Hall and Priest's Quarters*. Many Zarathushtis in North America are setting aside legacies in their wills and estate plans. If the infrastructures are in place, there is a strong possibility that a donor may come forward to build such a facility in memory of a loved one.

(5) *Consecrated Temple and Seminary*. This site could conceivably become the first consecrated Zarathushti temple in North America. It also has the potential for becoming the site for training and ordaining our future priests.

The proximity of Crestone to ski slopes (Aspen, Vail, Telluride and Breckenridge), whitewater rafting (at Salida and Canyon City) and other

recreational facilities (Rocky Mountain National Park, Great Sand Dunes National Monument, and National Forests) make it a popular stopping place for our youth. Everyone would have a stake in its development and upkeep. The center can be managed by FEZANA or an independent charitable foundation.

Kevala, Rivetna and several Rocky Mountain Association members were given the responsibility to conduct further feasibility evaluations, for a final decision on whether to accept the offer of the Manitou Foundation.

### Standardization of Spellings

Bella Tata, a director of ZSBC, had requested clarification on the desirability of one standard nomenclature and set of spellings for the name of our prophet, our religion and the followers of the religion. **Jamshed Udvadia** of Lansing, Michigan, and an editor of *FEZANA Journal*, presented a paper reviewing the existing variations and proposed a standardization based on the most common terminology. He summarized the existing variations as *Zarathushtra*,

*Asho Zarthust*, *Zarthusstra*, *Zartosht* or *Jarthost*, *Zardusht* and *Zoroaster*.

"Dastur Dabu explains that the three Avestan syllables *Zara-thush-stra* meant Golden Shining Star," stated Udvadia, "and the Greeks simplified the name by dropping the middle syllable and translating the rest, which eventually became *Zoro-aster*."

Udvadia concluded that '*Zarathushtra*' is the correct spelling. In line with this it would be appropriate to call the followers of his religion '*Zarathushtis*'.

The name of the religion presents some problems, but the best nomenclature would be '*Zarathushti*' also, with the word '*religion*' or '*daena*' or '*din*' added as needed.

There was general support for Udvadia's proposals and the sense of the meeting was that FEZANA and all the North American Associations gradually adopt this standard nomenclature. Formal change of the spellings in the name of our associations and FEZANA itself, would take several years, but the effort would be well worth while. ■



Just as there are numerous hypotheses for the date of Zarathushtra's birth, with these dates varying in time over a range of millennia, so too, there are numerous hypotheses for the place of Zarathushtra's birth, with locations varying spatially over thousands of miles. These numerous and widespread claims have made it difficult to pin-point Zarathushtra's birth place with any degree of certainty. This uncertainty has been further compounded in the past 150 years by various scholars, each strongly championing a different location,

usually by concentrating on discrete pieces of information from either the Avestan, Pahlavi or Greek literature. In addition to the birth place of Zarathushtra, there is also the question regarding the land of Vishtaspa, the first king to accept Zarathushtra's new message. Zarathushtra was driven out of his original homeland, persecuted by his own people and

frustrated by his failure to win over converts to his cause [*Yasna* 46:1: "To what land shall I go, whither to flee? From nobles and my peers they sever me, nor are the people pleased with me ..., nor the liar rulers of the land."] He then wandered through different lands until he found refuge with and a willing ear in Vishtaspa. Here the birth of the religion took

## The Homeland of Zar

MAP BY ROSHAN RIVETNA

**Airyana Vaejah.** The *Vendidad* mentions 16 lands created by Ahura Mazda, the first being Airyana Vaejah. It has come to be accepted by most as the original homeland of Zarathushtra but its location is unclear.

**Avestan Ragha/Median Raga.** One of the 16 lands created by Ahura Mazda was Ragha. It is unclear whether this Avestan Ragha, believed to be in Eastern Iran, or the Median Raga (Ray) south of Tehran, is the homeland of Zarathushtra.

**Azerbaijan (Atropatene).** *Bundahishn* states that "Eranwez (Airyana Vaejah) is in Azerbaijan." A. V. Jackson argues that Zarathushtra, and his father Pourushaspa were from Azerbaijan (Atropatene) in Western Iran, and his mother Dugdhova was from Ray (Median Raga).

**Parthia.** The Parthians, in Eastern Iran, made a strong claim that theirs was the land of Vishtaspa and hence of Zarathushtra's ministry. *Bundahishn* mentions a fire temple on Mount Revant on a hill near Nishapur.



place, and thus, to an extent, Vishtaspa's homeland, too, has had special significance to Zarathushtis, since it was from this area that Zarathushtra's mission started spreading throughout Iran. It is most probable that both the location of the birth place of Zarathushtra and the land of Vishtaspa had been long forgotten by the time of Alexander's conquest of

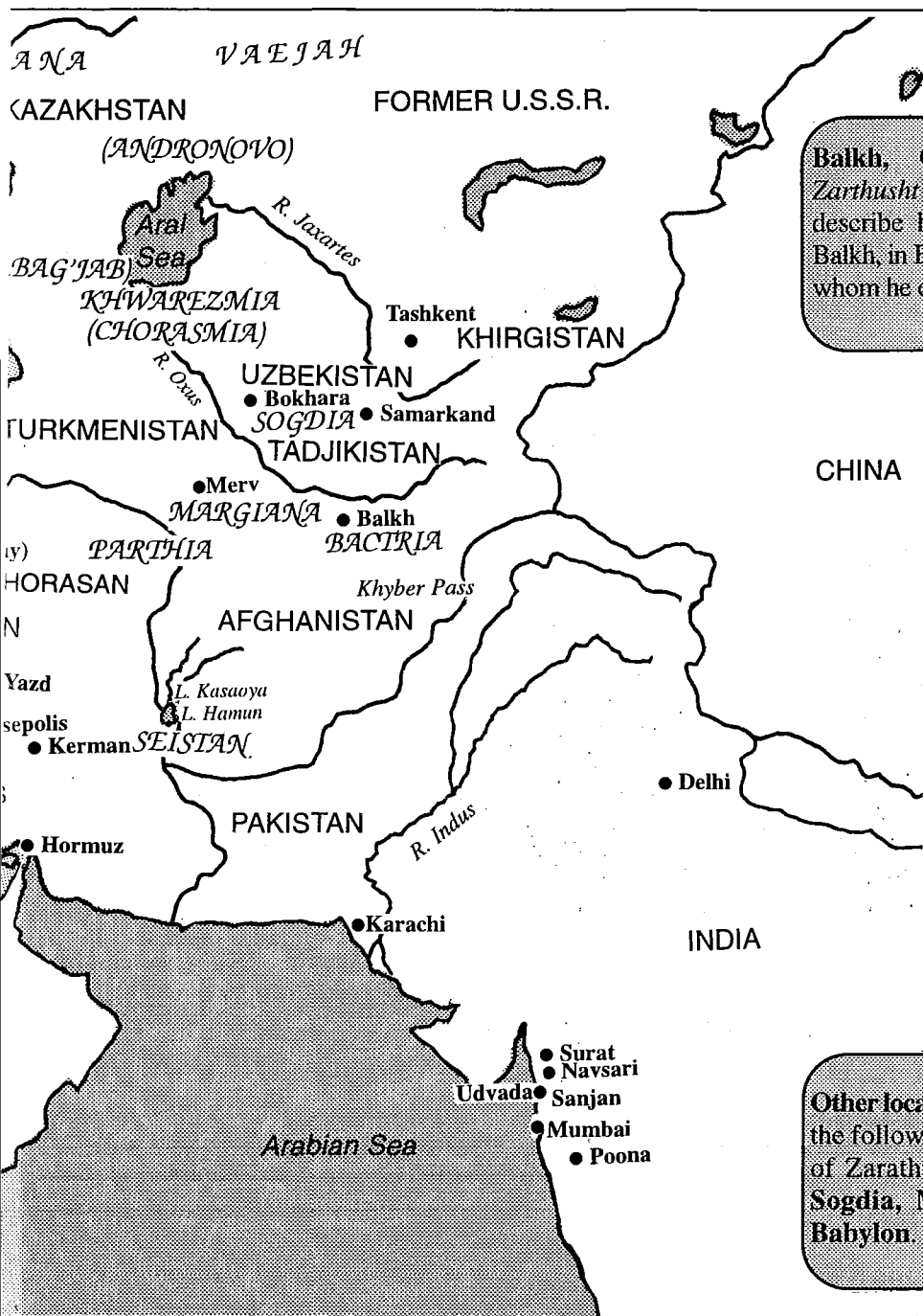
Persia, in 331 BC. As a result, starting soon after that period (in the Parthian era), the priests and kings of various different localities started making claims that it was their homeland that was either the original place of Zarathushtra or the land of Vishtaspa. Around these dubious claims, gradually legends were built and documented, and eventually

these legends appeared to give an air of authenticity to their claims. Many of these legends were then recorded in the Pahlavi works, by the Greeks and even by later Islamic authors.

Most of the modern theories, then, are based on these earlier, possibly legendary records, with twentieth century scholars also vying with each other to try to authenticate the validity of one land versus another. All this uncertainty leaves the practitioner of the religion confused and adrift in a sea of conflicting claims and counter-claims.

# thushttra: a Brief Review

By Sarosh J. H. Manekshaw



**Balkh, Capital of Bactria.** The *Zarthusht Nama* and *Shah Nameh* describe how Zarathushtra traveled to Balkh, in Bactria to the court of Vishtaspa, whom he converted to the new faith.

**Khwarezmia (Chorasmia).** Some scholars put forth the hypothesis that Airyana Vaejah was in Khwarezmia, south of the Aral Sea. It has also been identified with the land of Vishtaspa.

**Seistan (Sakastan).** The *Zamyad Yasht* and the *Vendidad* mention the Saoshyant rising out of the waters of Lake Kansaoya in Seistan, into which flows the River Haerumant (Helmand). Some scholars conclude this was the original homeland of Zarathushtra.

**Other locations.** Legends also associate the following places with the homeland of Zarathushtra: **Margiana (Merv), Sogdia, Mabug** in North Syria and **Babylon**.

**B**elow are described some of the places that have claimed to be either Zarathushtra's place of birth or the land of Vishtaspa.

The Avestan literature is of little help to us in locating Zarathushtra's homeland, and the Pahlavi literature is so full of the contradictory claims mentioned above, that it too needs to be examined with a fair deal of skepticism.

As stated before, the Gathas contain absolutely no information about the place or date of Zarathushtra's birth. These devotional hymns are not a historical record of Zarathushtra's life, and hence, are of little help in trying to solve our dilemma.

#### AIRYANA VAEJAH

In the opening chapter of the Vendidad [1:2], however, there is a list of 16 lands created by Ahura Mazda, and the first to be named is **Airyana Vaejah**, it being qualified as "the first and the best of the regions and districts." In a Younger Avestan text [Yasht 9:14] mention is made that Zarathushtra was "renowned in Airyana Vaejah", while in another [Yasht 5:104], Zarathushtra is said to have sacrificed in "Airyana Vaejah of the good Daitya". It has, thus, generally come to be accepted by most that Airyana Vaejah was the original homeland of the Iranians and of Zarathushtra. But where Airyana Vaejah is located is left unclear.

Iranians were also supposed to have settled in the remaining 15 lands described in the Vendidad, many of which have been associated with locations in present Eastern and North-eastern Iran (the Central Asian Republics of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan) and Afghanistan. Thus, the general inference is that Airyana Vaejah must also lie somewhere in the area of north-eastern Iran.

Mary Boyce [1992, p. 5] feels that in Avestan times, while the Younger Avestan texts were still being com-

posed, the people of Eastern Iran had a general idea that Airyana Vaejah lay somewhere to the far north. However, by post-Avestan times, this knowledge had gradually faded away and it gave rise to the opportunity for priests and kings from various areas (including western Iran) to start making their own fantastic claims to having that distinction.

#### ZARATHUSHTRIAN RAGHA MEDIAN RAGA

In the Vendidad, amongst the 16 lands mentioned, the 12th is a land named Ragha [Vendidad 1:16]. Here again, there are no explanations given to help us to more precisely locate this land. Further, in Yasna 19:18, reference is made to a 'Zarathushtrian Ragha'. Now, in Media, just south of present-day Tehran, there is a city called Raga (Ray). The ancient Medians (despite the difference in the spelling of the two names) decided to associate the Avestan Ragha with their city; thus, claiming for themselves the distinction that theirs was the land of Zarathushtra's birth.

Herzfeld [1974, pp. 60-66] strongly supported this theory that Zarathushtra was from **Median Raga**. However, Gershevitch, [1964, p. 37] on the basis of the language difference between the two names, concluded that they are two different cities, with the Avestan Ragha being the true land of Zarathushtra lying somewhere in Eastern Iran, as opposed to the Median Raga in Western Iran. However, while we know the location of the Median Raga, the location of the Avestan Ragha is still unknown.

#### AZERBAIJAN (ATROPATENE)

Jackson [1899, Appendix IV] has argued that Zarathushtra was from **Azerbaijan (Atropatene)**, specifically from the area around Lake Urumiah. Azerbaijan's claim is attested to in the Bundahishn [29:12-13], where it is stated that "Eranwez (Airyana

Vaejah) is in Azerbaijan". However, it must be remembered that the Bundahishn is a post-Sassanian work, and that it is probably documenting a legend that must have been often repeated by the people of that place.

According to Shahrastani, an eleventh century Islamic author [cited in Jackson: 1899, p. 199] Zarathushtra's father, Pourushaspa was from Azerbaijan, while his mother, Dugdhova was from Ray (Median Raga), and that Zarathushtra himself was born in Azerbaijan.

#### PARTHIA

**The Parthians** too, in Eastern Iran, made a strong claim that theirs was the land of Vishtaspa and hence of Zarathushtra's ministry. In the Bundahishn [9:37] it is stated that immediately after Vishtaspa accepted the religion of Zarathushtra, he was said to have built a fire temple 'Adur Burzin Mihr' on 'Mount Revant', which was on a hill near Nishapur in Parthia [see Boyce: 1992, p. 10].

#### BALKH, CAPITAL OF BACTRIA

**Balkh's** claim to being the land of Vishtaspa is attested to in two different post-Sassanian works. In the *Zarathusht Nama*, a thirteenth century work, Zarathushtra is said to have traveled from his homeland in Iran to the court of Vishtaspa, in Balkh.

The *Shah Nama* also describes in great detail how Zarathushtra traveled to Balkh and there converted Vishtaspa to the new faith. Here, too, the story is repeated that Vishtaspa established a temple, and founded the 'Adur Burzin Mihr' fire. The *Shah Nama* also goes on to describe how Zarathushtra planted a cypress tree that became famous as the 'Cypress of Kishmar' [see Boyce: 1992, p. 12].

#### KHWAREZMIA (CHORASMIA)

Among modern scholars, it was Markwart who first put together the hypothesis that Airyana Vaejah was in **Khwarezmia**, a land south of the Aral Sea, on the lower water course

of the Oxus river [see *Humbach: 1991, p. 37*]. Later Henning [1951, pp. 42-43] interpreting some of Herodotus' works identified Khwarezmia as the land of Vishtaspa. According to Henning, Khwarezmia coexisted with Media as an independent state, until Vishtaspa was defeated by Cyrus, and the land annexed into the Achaemenian empire. Again, like most opinions on the place of Zarathushtra, this too has its detractors; most notably Frye [1993, p. 41], Gnoli [1980, p. 99] and Humbach [1991, p. 37], who all strongly disagree with the 'Khwarezmian hypothesis', and present evidence to refute it.

### SEISTAN (SAKASTAN)

Another location with ties to Zarathushtra is **Seistan**. In both the *Zamyad Yasht* [19:92] and in the *Vendidad* [19:5], there is mention of the *Saoshyant* -- Astvat-ereta -- rising out of the waters of the Lake Kansaoya, into which flows the River Haerumant (Helmand). The *Saoshyant* is the World Savior who will bring about *frasho-kereti*, the final renovation, when evil will be forever destroyed.

There is also a legend that the seed of Zarathushtra is preserved in the waters of Lake Kansaoya. That at the right time a virgin swimming in this lake will give birth to the *Saoshyant*.

Gnoli [1980, pp. 146-149], examined the geographical names mentioned in the *Zamyad Yasht*, and located them in Seistan. He thus concluded that the original homeland of Zarathushtra was in this area.

### OTHER LOCATIONS

Without going into details, the following locations have also made some claim to be Zarathushtra's homeland, and have some form of legend associating them with the Prophet: **Margiana (Marv)**, **Sogdiana**, **Mabug** in north Syria [Boyce:

1992, p. 17], and **Babylon**. It is interesting to note that the last two locations mentioned do not even lie within Iran, and yet claims have been made that they are Zarathushtra's homeland!

### CONCLUSION

We have listed various dates for Zarathushtra and numerous locations which could have been his homeland. But the important question that we have not asked ourselves is why is it important for us to accurately know these?

Henning [1951, p. 35] most succinctly answers this question by stating that: "It is obviously impossible to understand anything of anyone without knowing, at least approximately, the time in which he lived; without apprehending, by such knowledge, his environment, the conditions of life, the cultural situation in which he found himself. To say that the date is irrelevant, shows an abysmal lack of feeling for all history."

The message of Zarathushtra is timeless, however, it is imperative that we continue to strive to accurately pinpoint a date and location for Zarathushtra. Research must continue and, by necessity, we practitioners of the religion must be willing to face the fact that we will continue to be bombarded with divergent opinions. Perhaps, however, it is not too futile for us to hope that, some day soon, this quest will result in a scholar being able to come up with an irrefutable conclusion which will definitively give us the date and place of Zarathushtra. ■

[For references please see page 25]

## Zarathushtra's Homeland

By Daryoush Jahanian  
Kansas City, Kansas

[Continued from page 33].

Tradition places Zarathushtra's birthplace at the northwest of Iran, today the province of Azerbaijan, but this theory does not stand because:

- The prophet presented his religion to Kavi Vishtaspa (Gushtasp) at the city of Balkh (Bactria), located to the north of Afghanistan, which is one of the oldest cities of the world.

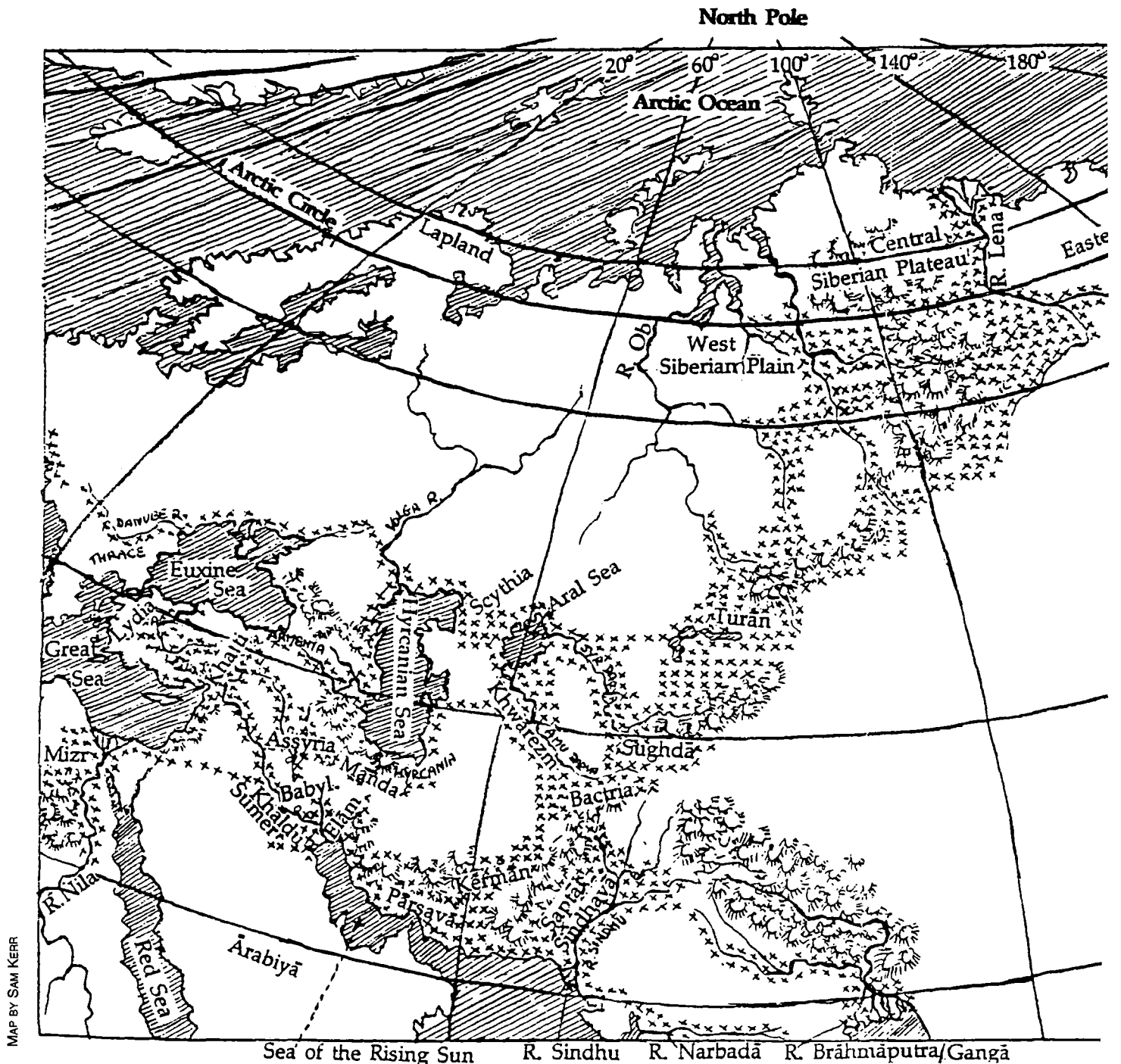
- The Aryan migration had taken place from the northeastern Iranian plateau, an area covering the north of Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and parts of Kazakhstan.

- Hassouri notes that the reign of the Kayanians (Vishtaspa's dynasty) took place in the East according to the Avesta, which makes no mention of western Persia [A. Hassouri, *The Date of Zoroaster*]. Only one of the western towns is named Rhages, and also Chaechast, which has been equated to Urumiyeh (Rezaieh). There is no sign of the Medes and Achaemenians in the Avesta, and only the concurrence of the name of Darius' father with that of Vishtaspa, Zarathushtra's patron, has caused the belief that Zarathushtra was a contemporary of the Achaemenians in the sixth century before Christ.

- The Gathic language is an archaic eastern language. Hence we should conclude that the homeland of Zarathushtra is the northeastern Iranian plateau and not the northwestern part. ■

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**Z**arathushtra was born among the Gathic Airyas, the descendants of the proto-Indo-Iranians who, it would appear, inhabited (during his lifetime) part of the land mass occupying the northern-most areas of the vast Inner Steppes of (modern) Eurasia, which was known to them as *Airyana Vaejah* (Vedic: *Arya Avarta*). As migration (in search of greener pastures and more amicable climes) proceeded and continued southwards and westwards (the Vedic Aryas mainly southwards and eastwards; some moving westwards too...Mittanni, etc), they

adjusted to the settled environment and mingled with the alien host populations.

The memory of the exact location of their ancient Homeland, gradually, over the subsequent centuries and millennia, became enveloped in obscure mystery but they retained a tradition, placing their homeland somewhere far away to the north of the river Jaxartes in a north-easterly direction.

Allusion to the passage "**Airyana Vaejah of the Daitya Vanghui**" [*Vendidad*, Fargard 2, verse 21; *Avan Yasht*, verse 17 and 104; *Ram*

**Note on River Daitya.** The map indicates that this region has several plains quite adequately watered by the two major rivers River Lena and River Ob. There are no scriptural pointers to help us decide which of these two main stems or their many tributaries could have been the 'Daitya'. The Jaxartes was "far away" from *Airyana Vaejah* even during the time of the prophet. The "long march" had not yet begun. Such are the mysteries of our most ancient scriptures.



# The Domain of Zarathushtra: Revisited

By Sam Kerr  
Sydney, Australia



*Sam Kerr's earlier essay on The Domain of Zarathushtra was published in the FEZANA Journal [Fall 1995]. In it he had speculated on the possibility of Zarathushtra's 'diocese' and the initial influence of his teachings having been prevalent mostly in an area of the vast expanse south of the (present) River Jaxartes. The essay, mainly based on assumptions made from material in the much later surviving Pahlavi writings (which are mainly citations, excerpts and commentaries) and on the mistaken thinking of the Graeco-Roman and Islamic periods. Kerr had clearly omitted discussions on other possibilities of the Prophet's domain being situated north of the River Jaxartes. Here, he re-explores and delves more closely into the prophet's domain, however shrouded in mystery it might appear to remain.*

1 and 7] Zarathushtra is said to have "received enlightenment on the banks of the Daitya". The *Greater Bundahishn* [Chapter 35, verse 54] testifies to the fact that he first commenced his teachings to his people who lived along the banks of that river. In the *Vendidad* [Chapter 19, verse 2] Zarathushtra prepares himself to "combat the assault of the Evil one by sacrificing on the banks of the good daitya". In the much later (Young) Avesta, *Avan Yasht* [verse 104], the purity of the waters are, however, attributed to the immaculate *Aredvi Sura Anahita*.

Although in the extant Hymns of the Gathas no names of these places occur, allusion to them does occur in the later (Young) Avesta, which con-

tains verses of history and geography of the era of Zarathushtra and of the more ancient, pre-Zarathushtra times. To these ancient verses were added verses by subsequent generations of (well-meaning) priests who, thus inadvertently, created distortions of the ancient history of events and of places in favor of their own interpolations, thus promoting a gradual loss of the previous portions of 'tangible' legends and ending in a 'misrepresented whole' with other extraneous piled up material.

One typical example of this process of accretion can be seen in *Fravardin Yasht*, which is largely of pre-Zarathushtra origins but is admixed with names of Zarathushtra's times and of the many post-Zarathushtra

*Yasht*, verse 2] is interpreted in the extant Avesta as "the expanse of land" (*vaejah*) irrigated by "the good waters of the River Daitya" channeled by the toiling of the tillers and also by the seasonal inundation of the river. In the present format of the *Avan Yasht* [verses 9 and 10] the Prophet is credited as having been well known in the land of Airyana Vaejah (later Eran-vez). In his dialogue with Ahura Mazda, he was urged to "offer prayers along the banks of the river, carry the libation of the waters and honor the waters with words of invocation and praise". In the *Zadsparam* [Chapter 22, verse

generations of the prophet's followers, added in layers as time passed by. Similarly the names of the various original Airyanic settlements and of places of the pre-Achaemenian era, occurring in the *Fravardin Yasht* and other pre-Zarathushtra *Yashts*, seem to have remained unfamiliar or even unknown during the later conquests further southwards and westwards. This suggests that the generation-by-generation addition of names and places continued to occur until the *Yashts*, as we know them in the present format, ceased to change at some period in the post-Achaemenian times.

Consequently, it may be safely surmised, the original names of places the Prophet would have frequented did exist, but in a time and place far away from those described in and mentioned in the later (Younger) Avesta, the Pahlavi texts and those of the much later Graeco-Roman and Islamic periods.

While attempting to refute the claims of Airyana Vaejah being placed south of the River Jaxartes, it should not be presumed either that the ancient places named in the Avestan texts were mythical. As mentioned in my previous essay the 'transfer' of namesakes of ancient Avestan places to the later settled lands, south of the Jaxartes, were obviously orchestrated; the emotional claims having been instigated by local priestly attendants of the shrines and temples, to maintain their close ties with the faithful and succeed in gaining wide commercial credence to inflate their coffers. Some examples are:

- **Mount Hara** had been remembered even in the Greek inscriptions of a post-Achaemenian Greek temple in Cappadocia praising Thea Anaitis as 'barzoxara' (Anahita of high Hara).

- **Mount Asnuvant** was clearly confused with Mount Sabalan, the highest peak in Azerbaijan, to which place the ancient Avestan 'Adar Gushnaspa' was also 'transferred'. The nearby town of **Urumiya** was also misidentified with the birthplace of Zarathushtra and the adjoining **Lake Urumiya** with the Avestan **Lake Chaechesta** to fit in with the

complete picture of the nearness of the Lake, the Mountain and the Fire, as in the ancient Avestan texts. Adjoining the nearby town of Gan-zak, the capital of Azerbaijan, a smaller lake was wrongly named **Lake Haosravah** from the ancient Avestan namesake, an offshoot of the **Sea Vourukasha**.

- **Lake Kansaoyo** was 'misplaced' as **Lake Hamun** in **Drangiana**.

- Kai Vishtaspa's father, Lohrasp (the Avestan Aurvāt-aspa) was incorrectly claimed by the Bactrians as having built the city of Balkh in Bactria and then founded the great fire, *Adar Burzin Meher*. This claim was, in turn, challenged by the (post-

Sura Anahita, was transferred to Siestan during Achaemenian times.

Similarly several other ancient Avestan places and events were 'misidentified' with the newly settled name-places, during later migrations and conquests, by claims and rival counter-claims made by the priesthood in Media (Manda), Azerbaijan (lesser Media), Margiana (Marv), Arachosia (Harakhvaiti), Drangiana (Siestan) and even Khwarezmia (Chorasmia), Sogdia (Sughda), Bactria (Baakhdhi) and Hapta Hindava. The *Shah Nama*, unfortunately, gave the ultimate credence to the various distortions of our Avestan history and the name-places.

“ The close relationship of the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age elements of the Andronova culture ... to that of the Gathic culture of the Airyas seems to be a reasonable justification to attribute to this region (the mid and northern Eurasian Steppes) the most likely origin of the Gathic and Vedic Indo-Aryan peoples. ”

Achaemenian) Parthians who declared that the fire, *Adar Burzin Meher* was founded by Vishtasp in a temple (near Turzish on Parthian territory) in the front portion of which Zarathushtra himself planted the **Cypress Tree Of Kashmar** (later cut down in 861 AD by the order of Caliph al-Mutawaqqil).

- The Sogdians claimed that their capital, **Samarkand**, was built by Kai Kaus (Kavi Usan of the Avesta) and by Siyavakhsh (Kavi Syavarshan of the Avesta). Further, they said, it was in Samarkand that Zarathushtra came to the court of Vishtasp.

- The land of **Ragha** of the *Vendidad*, too, was 'transferred' via Bactria to become the **Raga** of the Medes (the holiest place of the Medes; present place, Ray in south Teheran) and during the Graeco-Roman period Zarathushtra's birthplace even became **Babylon**.

- **Lake Frazduna**, on the banks of which Kai Vishtasp sacrificed, asking for a boon from the holy Aredvi

What then was the Airyanic society and the way of life during the Prophet's time like, in such a distant land of the Airyas? From the Gathas, the *Ahunavar* and the *Ashem Vohu* prayer and the *Yasna Haptanghaiti* it appears that there lived a fairly homogenous group of people, with some differences in the owning of wealth. There were no alien outsiders (the 'anairyas' of the later *Zamyad Yasht* [verse 68] and *Ashtad Yasht* [verse 2]).

There was some religious diversity, too. Yet an orderly social life in each settlement, composed of family, village and clan land (with its borders well delineated) existed, each probably inherited from an illustrious ancestor. The power was in the hands of a *Khshathra*, the Ruler and a *Sastar*, his Commander. The rich lord master was the tribal chieftain, the 'Ahu', the overseer of properties. The herdsman was the 'vastrya' and the home unit, comprising of cattle and men, was the 'pasu-vira'. There seemed to be no class or trade dis-

inction. Zarathushtra described his followers simply as 'men and women', the women always being on par with the men.

Of the five varieties of hoofed domestic animals (the horse, cattle, camel, sheep and goat), the camel and the ox were harnessed to pull the laden cart and the horse drove the chariot. The family home, (*demana*) was a fixed abode for the extended family (*khvae-tu*). Surrounding such inhabitations were dense "forests of the Airyas" and "White forests of birch trees" (typical of the mid and northern steppes of (modern) Khazakhstan).

Zarathushtra's people were, therefore, non-nomadic settled herdsmen with enough cows (*gava*) and domestic beasts of burden (offering milk, meat, hide and labor) to till their amply watered soil. The general picture we obtain is essentially one of a peaceful way of life in a soil-based social order in this 'land of Airyana Vaejah of the good Daitya'. There were, naturally, some who chose not to fall into this orderly pattern of society -- the offensive ruler (*duzh-khshathra*), the non-herdsmen among herdsmen, '*fshuyasu afshuyanto*' [*Gatha Spenta-Mainyu*, 49:4] and the non-pastoralist '*ava-strya*' [*Gatha Ahunavaiti*, 31:10] in wicked opposition to the pastoralist '*vastrya-fshuyant*'.

Soviet archaeologists have identified three cultures of the 2nd millennium BC (over a vast area of pastoral grassland and wooded forest regions) similar to the above mentioned Gathic society. The *Abachevo culture* along the banks of the River Don and east bank of the River Volga; the *Srubnaya culture* along the west bank of the River Volga upto the River Ural and finally the *Andronovo culture* from the River Ural towards western Siberia. All three have much in common, where lived people of diverse but closely intermingled ethnic groups.

Those specifically in the Khazakhstan region were proto-Indo-Aryans and proto-Aryans of the Andronovo culture living off the alluvial soil, watered by the Rivers Ob, Lena and many smaller rivers

and tributaries. In the Sintasha diggings were found skeletons of horses, sheep, dogs and cattle (some in the collective burials) along with select parts of chariots (the earliest known chariot remnants of the Inner Asian Steppes were dated 1600 BC) and tillers' implements, clay vessels and pottery (nomads do not use them) and copper and tin implements.

They were obviously pastoralists, who tended cattle and sheep and goats and who kept dogs for herding and hunting. The region comprised of rich grasslands and dense forests, some abounding in the white-barked birch trees (the 'White Forests' — '*spaetinish razurao*' of *Ram Yasht*, [verse 31]). They used horse drawn chariots and lived in closely packed rows of houses in extended families. The riding of the domestic horse, in this region of the chilly north wind, had to be accompanied by appropriate clothing for the rider — trousers, knee-length boots, long-sleeved jackets and protective tight-fitting headgear with ear flaps.

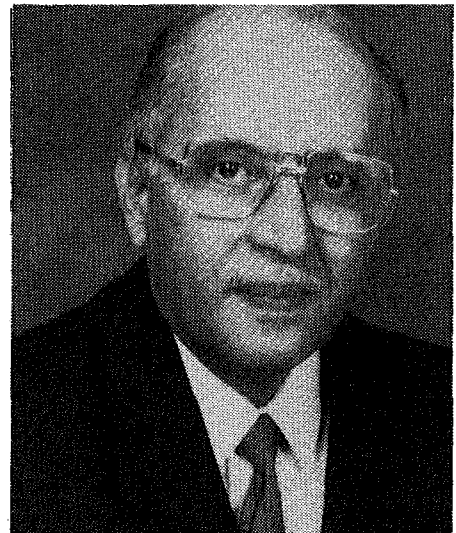
The close relationship of the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age elements of the Andronova culture, of its way of life and of (in many ways) the geography to that of the Gathic culture of the Airyas seems to be a reasonable justification to attribute to this region (the mid and northern Eurasian Steppes) the most likely origin of the Gathic and Vedic Indo-Aryan peoples. There is some evidence to suggest that Zarathushtra's people lived in an area north of the zone inhabited by their cousins, the Indo-Aryans, who were then beginning to move into Central Asia, south of the River Jaxartes, and that it was after Zarathushtra's death that they too began their long march southwards and westwards.

Enough material does not exist for it to be possible to pinpoint a more precise place for the Prophet's 'diocese' in this vast area.

The enclosed map of the said regions might help to compare them with those in the previous map (and essay) and highlight the changes I have ventured to present on a rather elusive subject matter. ■

## REFERENCES AND RECOMMENDED READING

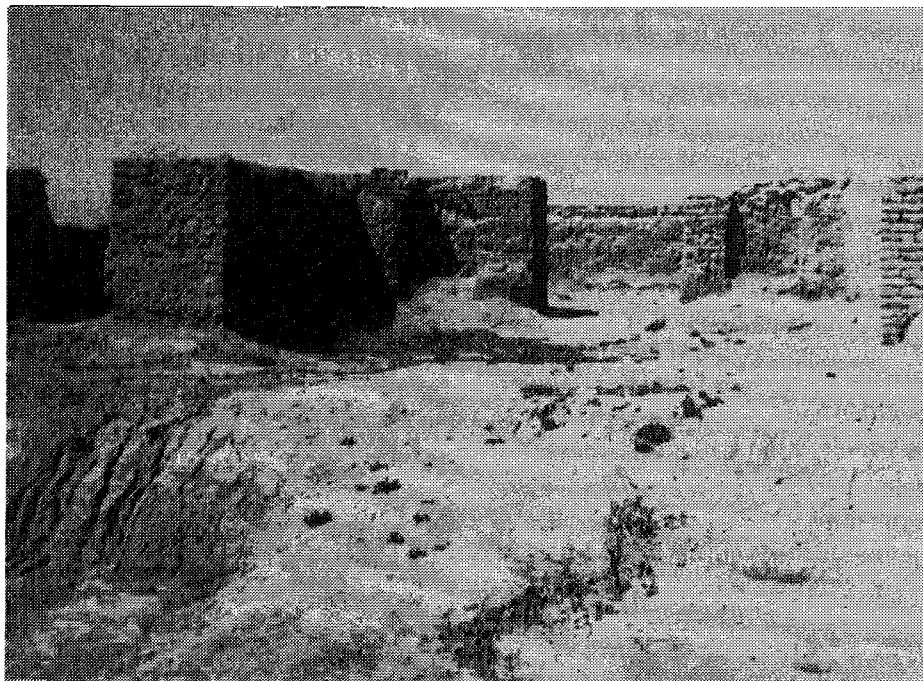
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Following a long and distinguished career as a surgeon in Bombay and London, **Sam Kerr** is currently Consultant Surgeon and holds teaching and research appointments at the University College Hospitals of the University of NSW in Sydney and is also a practicing surgeon. He was awarded the Fellowship of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons in 1974. Author and lecturer on the Zarathushti religion, Sam was a Guest Speaker at the 2nd World Zoroastrian Youth Congress in London in July 1997. A life member of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, he has studied the Zarathushti religion, including parallels in the Vedic texts and in Sanskrit literature and published a long essay on Cyrus the Great.

# The Birthplace of Asho Zarathushtra

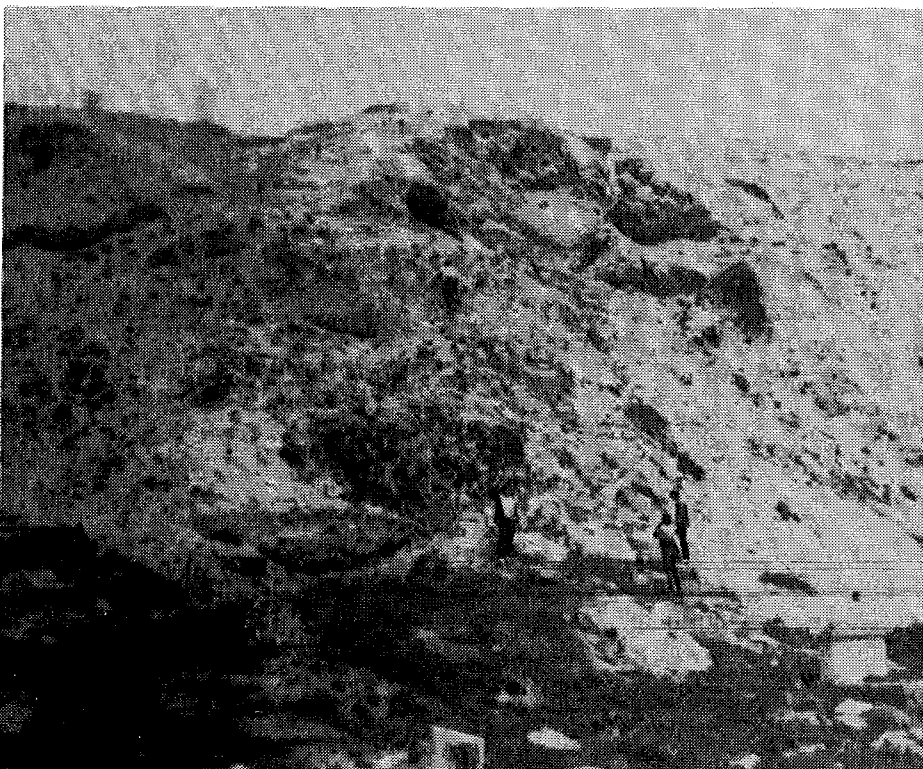
By Khorshed Jungalwala  
Sudbury, Massachusetts



Most scholars agree that Zarathushtra lived and propagated his religion in what is known as Eastern Iran. However, the exact place of birth has been the cause of much speculation, mainly due to inconsistencies in geographical and chronological data and constantly changing boundaries of the ancient countries of Central Asia. [Mention of Western and Eastern Iran is strictly referenced in terms of Ancient Iran.]

**Z**arathushtra was an Aryan prophet. Zarathushtrian tradition calls the cradle of mankind and the homeland of the prophet: Iranvaj, in the Pahlavi language (**Airyanam Vaejah**, in the Old Avestan language) — the Expanse of the Aryas. Zarathushtra is referred to as “famous in Iranvaj” [1]. According to the *Vendidad* text Iranvaj was the first land created by Ahura Mazda, where winter lasted ten months and summer, two. The longest night of the winter was equal to the two shortest days and the longest day in summer was equal to the two shortest nights [2].

*Top, Excavation site near Penjikant in Sogdiana, in ancient Eastern Iran, today a part of Tajikistan. Below, Excavation site in Sogdiana. An area where Zarathushtra spread the message of Ahura Mazda.*



With the onset of the glacial period the Aryans migrated southwards. They were now settled in another Iranvaj where there were seven months of winter and five months of summer [4].

Textual references to Zarathushtra's exact place of birth have varied. Some authors place his birth in Raye / Shiz (Azerbaijan — Western Iran), while others suggest Chorasmia in Eastern Iran.

Benveniste, Nyberg, Messina, Henning and Barr.

The Andronovo culture north of the Aral Sea, with its pastoral background and the Tazabagjab culture to the south, were advanced enough to accept Zarathushtra's pristine message. The people in this region were in the transitory stage between the Stone and the Bronze Age. The hymns (Gathas) of Zarathushtra constantly reflect a pastoral theme. There are references made to the inclement mountain weather, agriculture, animals such as cows and horses. The geography and topography in the Avesta can be identified with places in modern Central Asia — Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

It is important to bear in mind that Zarathushtra's hymns are in Old Avestan, which is an Eastern Iranian language. This language would not have been spoken or understood in Western Iran during the middle of the second millennium BC. Archaeological evidence shows that one group of Iranians moved westward and subsequently became culturally more advanced, due to some degree of influence of the Greek Civilization. Zarathushtra's hymns do not reflect that culture.

Furthermore, in the earlier parts of the Avesta, names of places can be recognized as being in Eastern Iran, whereas no mention is made of any Western Iranian places.

It is also possible that Zarathushtra may have been born in Raye, in Western Iran, and later moved beyond his homeland to live and propagate his religion in areas to the east of his birthplace and ultimately die in Balkh, in Eastern Iran.

Speculations regarding the exact location of Zarathushtra's birthplace will continue, but a large number of scholars have concurred that the northern region of Eastern Iran is the realm of Zarathushtra's birth. ■

- [1] Yasna 4:14.
- [2] Vendidad 1:3,4.
- [3] Bal Ganghadhar Tilak: *Arctic Home of the Vedas*, 1903, p. 368.
- [4] Vendidad 1:4.
- [5] Vendidad 19:4.
- [6] J. Duchesene-Guillemin: *Religion of Ancient Iran*, 1962, p. 101.

A horizontal line of 18 small, solid black diamonds arranged in a single row, used as a section separator.

A horizontal line of 18 small, black, four-pointed star or diamond shapes, each with a central square, arranged in a row.



# Ateshgyakh:

## The Temple at Baku

*The Intourist pamphlet considers the Ateshgyakh at Baku in Azerbaijan — the 'land of fires' — one of the most interesting excursions it offers.*



**T**he temple, located in a village, Surakhany, 15 Km from Baku, is dated as 18th century. The historical roots of the monument go back to the hoary past, to the days when Azerbaijan state was taking shape and the Zarathushti religion, with fire playing the central part of their rituals, was the dominant religion in the country. In many areas of the Apsheron Peninsula, gas escapes from under the ground and burns, and it was believed these fires had miraculous divine power.

These ancient fires probably gave Azerbaijan its name which means 'land of fires'.

Centuries later the country officially adopted Islam as its religion and as time went on, trade flourished between Azerbaijan and other countries. One of them was India, where the news about the ever-burning Apsheron fires reached. By this time Zarathushtris had already made their home in India.

Pilgrims flocked to the sacred fires. Merchants busy with trade did not

stay long but paid money to the local ruler for the right to build prayer rooms, cells, stables and a guest room at the temple. These structures were built during the late 17th to the mid 19th centuries. They were similar to a town 'caravanserai', a kind of inn with a large central court, but the temple had an altar in the middle with tiny rooms for the attendants.

The temple at Surakhany had inscriptions carved on stone walls in Sanskrit and Hindi, which proved that Indians worshipped here. After the 19th century, the fires of Apsheron ceased to be considered divine. Today, natural gas is being used for everyday needs.

Only the places where the fires used to burn remain, under the name of Ateshgyakh — home of fire. ■

*[From "Whats On", the Karachi Banu Mandal newsletter, March 1997, based on materials and photos sent by Dr. Katy Shroff, who has traveled extensively in Eastern Europe].*

**A**lbania is the Land of the Eagle — the double headed Eagle, which flies aloft their flag. Why the double headed Eagle? Because the land is inhabited by two types of people, one in the north and one in the south, who have nothing in common but have co-existed peacefully for centuries.

During my recent visit to this small (until recently closed to the world), unsullied, unsoiled by commercialism, and sans billboards country, I wandered about the Land of the Eagle where I sensed a predominantly Persian influence. I noticed Persian greetings among the old and the young, Persian names, and the use of the samovar to make tea. The predominant religion is Mussulman, as the Albanians call themselves, and the Koran is prominently displayed everywhere.

Talking to the hotel personnel, I learned that they were proud to be able to practice a religion of their choice, which was not possible until four years ago. The country is dotted with mosques, both in the towns and in the most remote villages. The one common theme throughout is that all were recently built. Those which existed during communism are dilapidated because no one was permitted to practice any faith openly. Actually, one of the citadels, high on top of a hill in the town of Berat, has been continuously inhabited since the time it was built, and houses 40 churches and museums within its walls.

Most striking about the Albanians are their characteristics akin to Zarathushtris. All of them appeared hard working, preferred to own stores and restaurants, and be bosses of their own business, making their own decisions. As a child, I noticed Zarathushtris were store and restaurant owners, and whether they lived in Aden, East Africa, India or Pakistan, were very generous with their customers. I also found this to be the case with the Albanians.

For twenty years, Aban Daruwalla, Ph.D., missile scientist in Civil Service for the US Department of Defense, takes two vacations annually, to different parts of the world which are not frequented by tourists. She visits homes, schools, spends a day with students and teachers, learns about the prevailing religion, meets teen groups and scientists, and tells them about her religion. "Regardless of where I am," says Daruwalla, "my focus is on women and their role in that part of the world." Here she describes her visit to Albania, where she sensed a "predominantly Persian influence."

# Albania-Land of the Eagle

By Aban Daruwalla  
Riverside, California

In addition to the Mussulman Albanians, there were the Baha'i and Christian Albanians, which form a minuscule minority of the population. These groups are very active, and have among their number the highly educated professionals. These professionals are the spearheads for constructive activities focused on the youth who are taught to value and live with democracy. Even in the smaller villages, youth groups for democracy cultivate a sense of belonging among the members who attempt to participate in the town government and help influence decisions. The leaders of these groups are in their early twenties and are eager to work for the improvement of their country.

I attended one of the Baha'i festivals in Tirana, the capital city, and addressed the group on Zarathushtra and His Followers the Zarathushtis. I had also compiled an album which I presented to the group, on Zarathushti tradition and customs, like the NoRuz observance, which the Bahai's celebrate as well; the navjote and wedding ceremonies; the jashan; some photographs of agiaries in Iran, India, Dar-e-Mehrs in the US and Canada; and pictures of our ancestors in the 18th and 19th centuries. At that time I found out that the Bahai's acknowledge in their prayers, all prophets of the various religions on earth. They



*Above, the crest of Albania. Below, Daruwalla [center] with two prominent council women of Berat, Yeta and Majlinda, by the walls of the citadel.*

were familiar with what they call Zoroaster, but did not know much about his teachings. I informed them that the correct name of the prophet is Zarathushtra, and they were using the Greek name. Their interest was heightened considerably, because this was the first time ever they had the opportunity to meet a Zarathushti. Adults and children alike had questions in abundance and their genuine delight was immeasurable at the prospect of having amongst them an album on Zarathushtra.

My experiences in the smaller villages were equally pleasant. Music with words in English was heard everywhere. The one that was often repeated in the billiard rooms and video poker places was 'Makarena'. There was no way to escape it.

Another inescapable feature of this country was the bunkers constructed during the Communist days, when the citizens were made to believe that Albania was the best place in the world to live. The bunkers were built to protect themselves against invasion. It was only later they realized, that in fact, they were the poorest of the European countries, and had been fooled all along.

However, in spite of the setbacks, they are ready to meet the challenge and to work towards the goal of achieving their rightful place among the European nations. ■

# Ancient Indo-Iranian Origins

*Exploring the ancient Hindu epics for theories on Indo-Iranian Origins*

By Narayan R. Joshi  
Beaumont, Texas

**W**e all know that in the pre-historic (prior to 600 BC) times, there lived people (Arya or Aryans) on the lands called at present Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Northern India. (Pakistan was created in 1947 and Afghanistan in 1747 AD). From known history (after 600 BC, from the time of Cyrus the Great in Iran and Lord Buddha in India) until 1700 AD, there were only the nations of Iran and India! The joint Indo-Iranian history prior to 600 BC will be called the 'pre-history' of Iran and India in this article.

**Theory of Aryan invasion of Dravidian India (AIDI).** In light of new archeological discoveries at Mehrgarh, Namazgarh and settlements on the North Indian dried-up River Sarasvati, reaching beyond 6000 BC (i.e. almost three millennia before Mohenjodaro and Harappa of 3000 BC) scholars are questioning the current theory of the Aryan invasion of Dravidian India (the AIDI theory).

According to this theory, the fair colored Aryans from South Central Asia, coming through the Khyber Pass to the Indian sub-continent, invaded the aboriginal Dravidian (dark colored) culture of Mohenjodaro and Harappa around 1500 BC.

Another branch of Aryans reached the Iranian lands and went further west. These are the prehistoric Mdedes, Mitanni, Kassites and Hittites. This theory was also proposed to explain linguistic sistership among the languages of India, Afghanistan and Europe.

**Astronomical data.** In the light of astronomical data found in the Vedas such as references to the Vernal Equinox in Taurus at the time beyond

5000 BC, and new archaeological discoveries in Pakistan and North India, scholars are now promoting the new theory of North Indian Origins of Aryans (NIAO) on the dried-up banks of the Sarasvati. They are suggesting that the Aryan kingdoms of the Kassites, Mitanni and Hittites of the Middle East were established by Aryans that migrated from the Indian sub-continent.

Proponents of this new NIAO theory are, however, ignoring the fact that the Sarasvati River is in the land of present-day Afghanistan. For over two centuries, scholars in India have debated the names Sarasvati and Drishatvati in North India, and Haravhati (Helmand) and Jaxartes in Afghanistan.

According to Grimm's law, the sound 'S' changes to 'H' and therefore Sindhu becomes Hindu, and Sarasvati becomes Harahvati. By the same law, the sound 'D' changes to 'J', and the Sanskrit word 'Dhara' becomes 'Jamin' in Persian. Thus Drishatvati becomes Jaxartes.

**Evidence from the Mahabharata.** While devoted to data from the Rigveda, some scholars completely ignore data from the great Indian epic, the Mahabharata, authored by the great sage, Vyasa, which describes the war between the Kuru cousins.

What is the story? Around 310 BC, Chandragupta Mourya freed the land of (present-day) Afghanistan from the control of the Greek general Seleucus Nikator. In ancient Jain and Buddhist literature one comes across the list of provinces (satrapies) of the Mouryan Empire. In that list, the provinces of Kuru and Kamboja are described in the land of Afghanistan.

Kurus were the ruling dynasty of the Mahabharat empire. The north-west frontier province of present-day Pakistan was the ancient Gandhar of the

epic. In the northern region of Afghanistan is the province of Balkh (ancient Vahilka). Vahilka was changed to Bactria and was known to the Greeks around 326 BC. The Kurus were related to Gandhara on the east, to Vahilkas in the north, to Madras further north, and to Kambojas in the south. The Sindh province of Pakistan was the ancient Sindhu desha, and the modern Baluchistan was the Bhadra desha of the epic.

Thus, the main parties in the Mahabharata can all be placed in present-day Pakistan and Afghanistan, and not in the Harayana province of modern India. And it is also consistent that the mighty capital Hastinapura of the epic is located in the ancient Afghanistan, and Indraprastha of the Pandavas in Iran, and not near Delhi. The names Kuru and Kamboj also appear in the history of the Achaemenids and Cyrus the Great.

**The Zarathushti connection.** Prophet Zarathushtra was associated with the region of ancient Bactria (Sanskrit Vahilka) and Sogdia (Sanskrit Sudugda, or 'abundant in milk'). Also the Dasas and Dasyus of the Rigveda are from the ancient Dahistan and Turkmenistan, and were related to Aryas in the east and northeast of Afghanistan.

There is one more important piece of information from the Hindu Geeta (in the Mahabharata) when Lord Krishna says [Ch. 10-37]: "Among sages I am Vyasa and among Kavis, I am Ushani Kavi." The name of Ushana Kavi is very important in the ancient history of the Zarathushti people.

I therefore suggest that it is necessary to form a joint Indo-Iranian group to study the joint history of the Aryashayanam (Arya-shahar) extending from the eastern Sindhu (Indus) to the Western Sindhu (Tigris) in the context of new evidence from the Mahabharata. The pre-history of this region is that of the ancient Indo-Asians. It is neither that of the north Indians alone, nor of Iranians alone, and certainly not of Indo-Europeans. ■

# YOUTHFULLY SPEAKING

THE MOUTHPIECE OF A GENERATION...

## THE FEZANA AGM, AND HOW IT CONCERNS THE YOUTH...

*By: Aaron Rustom*

On Saturday, August 9<sup>th</sup>, 1997, FEZANA held its annual general meeting in Crestone, Colorado. The youth were represented by ZYNA (Zoroastrian Youth of North America) co-chair, Mehernosh Mody.

FEZANA president Dolly Dastoor, in her president's report; noted that the future survival of the Zarthusti community in North America is no longer in question. Our role as North American Zarhustis is to further our community by establishing ourselves in the world Zarthusti community. The World Congress to be held in Houston, Texas is the first step to showing our brethren in Iran and India, that North America is indeed the new homeland of the Zarthusti culture. Further reports were given by the different committees and associations.

As the different members gave their reports, the feeling became clear that more associations were willing to give the youth a chance to participate as active committee and executive members, if only the youth would take that opportunity.

Adi Davar of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington, spoke sternly to his FEZANA peers, that the need to promote more youth involvement at the decision making level was a must.

Mehernosh Mody talked about the different events that ZYNA had planned such as the "Power of One" workshop they gave at the World Youth Congress in London. Emphasis was placed on the upcoming Z-cruise and the community service project planned on the days following the cruise.

Mehernosh was also able to get a motion passed, that allowed ZYNA and the Sports committee, headed by Bijan Khosraviani, to have control of the funds that are available to them. Both Bijan and Mehernosh must be commended, because they are undertaking a huge responsibility given to their respective committees.

This year we should all be excited to see the types of things both of these committees will do for the youth and community, of which they both serve.

After talking with Mehernosh, I feel good that ZYNA will in fact be the active organization it was designed to be. Although not autonomous, ZYNA will definitely have the freedom to act with the best interests of the youth it serves, always in mind.

## THE WORLD ZOROASTRIAN YOUTH CONGRESS; "A PERSPECTIVE..."

*BY: JASMINE PATEL*

Well, I've been asked to write what I thought about the Z Youth Congress. Hmmmm, where do I begin? I suppose I can start by saying that it was really nice to see over 400 Z youth gathered together in one place. That is a rare occurrence, at least for us in North America (and I'm sure many other places). We get very used to being the only Zarthustis in school, at our jobs, in our neighborhoods, on our sports teams and any other social group to which we may belong. We see other Zarthustis at Z gatherings and functions, but it's not the same as seeing such a large peer group. Seeing so many peers from different parts of the world was certainly a joy.

One thing that really stands out in my mind, was the fact that our youth were quite articulate about their beliefs and convictions. This was really heartening to see. The Congress had a delegation of Mobeds who pretty much had a "one sided" view of things. Due to this unbalance, the youth took it upon themselves to speak-up, question and debate when they disagreed. Usually, the time allotted for questions after a presentation was not enough and talk either ran over-time, or a special time for questions and answers was allocated. The Zarthusti youth spoke with conviction and love for the religion. Because our religion is important to us, we took it upon ourselves to question, search for answers and disagree when illogical or irrational statements were made.

One thing I can say for certain is that a person's heart must be good and pure if he/she is to proclaim that he/she is a Zarthusti. Our thoughts, words and actions must speak for themselves. Hours of prayer or talk of what the religion is about will be worth nothing if a person's heart is bad, untrue or if he/she harbors negative thoughts towards another person. Our hearts and minds must work in unison and should always be in tune with Vohu Mana so that the light, wisdom and love of Ahura Mazda will shine through us to others.

We are to follow the path of Asha and lead the world towards perfection. In order for the world to reach perfection, everyone should be following the path of Asha. If we say that the Zarthusti religion is only for a select few, the world will never reach perfection because there will always be people who are straying from the path of Asha. If people are straying from the path of Asha due to ignorance, it is our job to show them the right path. We are to be warriors of light and righteousness and we must do what we can to assure that the world reaches perfection.

continued...

At the Congress, there were many dedicated youth who will be the leaders of tomorrow. Many are leaders in their communities. We all need to support each other (and the elders need to support us, the youth) in our efforts to bring about a "Zoroastrian Renaissance". Let's be proud of our heritage and our religion and let's share it with the world. Let everyone know the beauty and truth behind Zarathustra's message.

At the Congress, there were excellent presentations on the History of Zoroastrianism, Being a Scholar in Zoroastrian Studies, Zoroastrian Art, Poverty in the Zoroastrian Community Worldwide, the Universal Message of Zarathustra, ZYNA's (Zoroastrian Youth of North America) Power of One workshop and I'm sure there are other really good presentations I've left out.

The only suggestion I have is that in the future congresses, we focus more on the positive. The youth do not want the burden of problems which exist within the Zoroastrian community placed on their shoulders. We did not create these problems and although we are very willing to help solve them, wallowing in a pot of pity and negativity gets us nowhere. How about focussing on the positive and building pride within the community. How about celebrating the fact that ours is one of the oldest religions still in existence today! How about celebrating the fact that although we are a diaspora and we've been displaced from our homeland of Iran, we are still strong, successful people who have adapted to a variety of cultures and we have a strong religion which we love (even though we may have differing opinions). How about celebrating the fact that our youth are educated, successful and care about their religion. How about celebrating the fact that we have parents who raised us well and taught us what is right and wrong, taught us about this beautiful religion and helped us take our first steps on the path of Asha. Let's focus on the positive so our youth feel good about themselves and their religion. Let's remember our religion is what is important! Let the flame of Ahura Mazda burn in your hearts and if the flame has become an ember, fan it till it blazes with love and pride for that Zarthusti religion which has survived over the centuries through many hardships, conflicts and turmoil! We are survivors and I know we have strong, bright and dedicated youth which will lead the community into the future. May we be the warriors of light and "may we be among those who renew the world" (*Yasna* 30.9).

## **"THE LONDON YOUTH CONGRESS"**

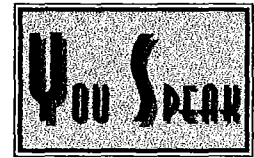
**BY: JAMSHED HORMUZDIAR**

Hello-

Well, I'll take some time to say a word or two about the congress. Overall, it was great. I met (and re-met) many friends. It's cool how we are from so many different cultures, yet in many ways we are the same culture and immediately have something to bond about. I had two great host families! One was my father's best friend from his youth in Pune and his wife, who moved to the UK in the 60's. The other, I was just meeting for the first time, another Parsi family. The hospitality was wonderful! Both cooked me wonderful meals gladly going out of their way to accommodate my vegetarian diet. Both helped me get around the city via train, car, whatever was necessary. My father's friend will be visiting the USA in a couple of months, so I will be thrilled to return some of the kindness.

To whomever cooked the food at Zoroastrian House, bravo! It was excellent! I must say you really put me in some trouble upon returning home when I accidentally blurted out, 'They had the best Parsi food that I have ever eaten!' to my parents. My additional muttered, 'er, umm, just like your Parsi food, which is, er umm, also the best Parsi food that I have eaten.' didn't seem to cut it.

I saw the main London sites- Big Ben, Madame Tussauds, Buckingham Palace, etc. I was expecting to see something closer in culture to continental Europe (where I lived for a year in 1990-1991), but I was actually surprised at how similar England is to the USA. Besides some trivialities (road signs, driving on the left, and of course, sense of humor), it all felt like home to me...I even tried to stir up some controversy by telling a (Parsi British woman that we should really just make England the 51st state...then I corrected myself by declaring that of course England could not possibly be the 51st state, as that distinction is already taken by Canada (sorry Trity). I was of course hearing every sad sigh around me when I did this.



The talks were interesting.

Of course most of the time was spent on the two or three controversial issues that always come up. When I go to North American youth events, there is much less controversy since most North American youth fall on the liberal side of the spectrum, so this congress was something new for me. My impression was that the North Americans are very liberal, the Asians are somewhat in the middle, and the British are very orthodox, (surprisingly enough...I had always just assumed that the Asians would be very orthodox, and that the British would be as liberal as the North Americans). It was also interesting to see how the North Americans reacted differently during the 'matrimonial' discussion. They stayed completely silent. This seems to be one of the big cultural differences between us. The easterners (and from what I saw, the British also) talk freely about this type of thing, even sort of encourage arranged meetings, where as in North American culture, dating is a private matter, something you would never discuss in a room full of people.

One thing that did make me sad were some of the comments in the skits... I can respect someone else's beliefs against mixed marriage or conversion if the beliefs originate from fear of losing identity, or even a strict following of scripture (I may disagree, but I still would defend one's right to believe). But there is a line that was crossed, towards cruelty and racism. Skits which were otherwise very clever, were ruined in my mind by one or two minutes of bad taste. In one instance, they portrayed an American woman as an unintelligent, chain smoking, big haired, overbearing ditz, in a skin tight outfit, as certain audience members yelled "go away and don't come back". Or in another example, one Z complained that Z women were interested in "greasy Mexicans", to the response, "don't worry, you are worth 10 greasy Mexicans". (I am not sure what the Americans or





Mexicans have done to be so disliked by the skit writers). And if you have any doubts about racism in these examples, try flipping things around. How about someone imitating a socially inept Z in an oversized sudra, kusti and topi, bafooning him/her around a stage as audience members yell, "Go away and don't come back". Or, what would you think about the line, "Our women keep going after the greasy Indians (or Iranians, Parsis, Zoroastrians, etc.)", followed by the response, "You are worth 10 greasy Indians (etc.)"...? Suddenly it seems kind of painful, huh?

Other than that, I have had only good things to say to family and friends, and lots of cool pictures to add to my photo album.

## "Dear Mommy"

"Dear Mommy" is written in the honour of the memory of my mother, Roshan Billimoria, who left the physical world on the twenty-fourth of February, 1997. She will live forever in the hearts and minds of the many people that she touched with her gentle spirit and beautiful smile. While alive, she battled cancer twice, in addition to being a manic depressant. Despite her health problems, she had a passion for life and unsurpassed strength and courage, which I will try to bring to light here. I will first address the issue of depression, and write about the cancer in another edition of FEZANA.

A lot of people in our community suffer from depression, perhaps more than we'd like to admit. Societal pressure, embarrassment, denial and confusion are factors that prevent us from dealing with the issue on hand. Although there are many types of depression, I have a first-hand experience with manic depression. It is like any other physical ailment, for the person experiencing it behaves in certain ways due to a chemical imbalance in the brain. Spiritual healers would say that they need to make peace with themselves from within, for all illnesses have a cure in the unconscious. Cognitive and psychodynamic psychological approaches would offer radically different theories for the cause of depression and different treatment options. Speaking from personal experience, I realize that no matter how much anyone may understand about depression and the treatment options, it does not make the pain or confusion associated with depression go away. I just hope that by reading this, someone, somewhere, finds it a little easier to deal with the pain. For others, I hope they take that

first step and admit to themselves that their loved one might be a depressant. Once we get the issue out in the open and talk about it freely, we can all help each other. A community that sticks together and supports each member grows together. If my story starts to sound familiar to you and you want to talk to someone about it, please feel free to contact me:

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## "Dear Mommy"

I heard a noise in the other room and woke up with a start. I sat up in my bed and looked around. My brothers were still fast asleep. I examined the bruises on my arms and cried silently, tasting the salty tears on my lips as I desperately whispered my prayers. The silhouette of a shadow came into clear view in the pale moonlight that crept in through the open blinds. "Oh God,...please don't let it be her". I kept repeating over and over again, as I hugged my knees closer to my body.

Even though my description of the event might sound like an exaggerated script of a Hollywood movie, it was quite real. The fear was very real at the time. Fear that the one person in the world who loved me most could also hurt me the most. Confusion...as to how the same mom who sat at my bedside when I was sick, who kissed my bruises and made them better, who played and laughed with me, who made me smile through my crocodile tears when I was upset, who would in a minute give her life for

## YOUTH EDITORS

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me, could change so much and so suddenly, repeatedly. When she was well, I never had a doubt that she'd die before letting anything or anyone harm us; but when she was sick, she pushed us away. She had violent episodes and hit us with all kinds of things, without reason. She hurt herself without reason.

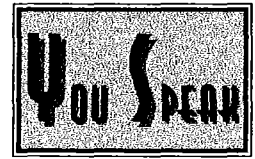
My brothers and I grew up with this fear and confusion as a part of our everyday lives. I can not write about their experiences, perhaps they remember things differently than I do. However, looking back on the sequence of events, I realize that my mom's manic depression condition was a blessing in disguise. It brought me closer to my grandmother, a wise and understanding woman who always explained things to me when I was confused as a child. Whenever I asked her, "Why doesn't my mommy love me anymore?", or blamed myself for my mom's condition, she explained things to me. She told me that my mom loved me, but she was sick, and it wasn't my fault, or my mom's fault. She said that sometimes people just got really sad, and didn't like themselves anymore. They liked feeling sad all the time, and so wouldn't take their medicine, without which, they couldn't get better. I tried to understand, but it was hard. Everytime my mom pushed me away, I had questions. Why can't I hug her? Why can't I kiss her? Why won't she love us?

After my grandma passed on, Daisymasi answered those questions. Daisymasi played mother with her family and ours, without a single complaint. I love my cousins to death, not only did they put up with this irregularity in their lives, but they also supported us every step of the way.

My masi made me believe in myself again. Often I questioned my beliefs and sometimes my very existence. I was an intense child who got upset easily. My masi always listened to me and shared her wisdom with me. She taught me to look at the situation as a learning experience, and with her help, I experienced the beauty of unconditional love. I felt grounded with her support.

Despite her many problems, my mom always found a way to show me she cared about me. Her love was the greatest gift of all. Through all the rough times, it found a way to reach me when I needed to be surrounded by warmth and happiness the most. My mom was not a person who would openly display emotion; those were serious matters to her, not something that should be done or said everyday, for that would make the expression then lose its meaning entirely. She was a strong independent woman by nature and very efficient and successful in practically every venture. She rarely shed tears, and so, a particular incident when she did, stands out in my mind.

I was a young teen and thrilled to finally see her coming to terms with the depression. One day, we took our regular walk to the park and happened to discuss the subject of change, and soon we were discussing the change she went through during her cycles of depression. She just sat there and looked at me, with tears in her eyes and said she couldn't believe that she hurt us so much. Then she hugged me and said that she was lucky to have kids like us, who despite everything, supported her. We both looked at each other for a few moments, without saying anything. Sometimes, silence said a lot more than words.

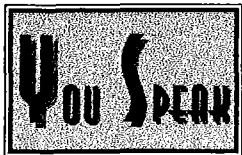


She knew it was hard, especially with friends. Early on though, my family (by choice) adopted the practice of welcoming people to our house only if they fully accepted my mom. I didn't care to have a friend who disrespected my mom or insulted her in any way.

After that day, I felt understood and connected to her like never before. We looked at the flowers and marvelled at the precious gift of life, for in every seed there is creation. In every creation, there is a reason to celebrate each new day and to live life to the fullest. The day marked the end of my mom's depression. Something she saw that day made her change as much as she could, for the better. I was just happy to have my mom back permanently.

Prior to that day, I went through those periods where I felt like she loathed me and at one point, stopped talking to her altogether. I really never fully understood emotionally, that she had no control over the condition once it settled in completely. Her early cycles were a little more serious than the later ones. I remember begging her for two hours to take her medication. It was her will-power and amazing strength that cured her in the end.

The frame of mind that goes hand in hand with depression, is one that makes the person feel like they do not deserve love or caring. They give into a vast feeling of hopelessness that settles in, and lose touch with reality. They keep repeating false negative statements about



themselves until they start believing them. Hence, they do not feel the need or urge to take medication. However, medication is crucial.

It hurt me to see it take over my mom, each time, because it transformed her from a caring sensitive and understanding person, into a suspicious and paranoid one who lost all touch with reality. Sometimes, she wouldn't take the medication because she felt like the doctors were plotting against her, sometimes it was because she felt like we were conspiring against her, sometimes it was just because she did not want to feel any better. However, the medication does not hold the solution to the problem even though it helps a great deal.

It's not an experience I wish upon anybody else, at the same time, I do not have any regrets or need sympathy for experiencing it at an early age. I've learned a lot. I've learned how to go through life smiling and how to listen to my inner self. It's given me an understanding about human nature, and taught me the lessons of patience and understanding. I was ten when I lost my grandmother, and took up quite a few responsibilities at an early age, which has made me very independent. The most important thing I've learned is to always help

others, because feeling alone and feeling like you can't talk to anyone is the worst feeling in the world.

The medicine is not something they can do without, but it is not the final cure. That is something that comes from within, my mom described it as an "enlightenment period...her lesson from the flowers". It is possible to drastically reduce the episodes of depression, with a lot of support. Hiding from it, denying it and being ashamed of it will only make things worse. Sometimes, even though it may feel like you've somehow found the bottom of the bottomless pit, remember that all things come to pass. For a long time, I wondered why my mom tried so hard to push us away, sometimes even when she was well. Now I know that if she let us get too close to her during those years, it would have been more difficult to deal with her illness. I always thought the worst, instead of expecting the best. If you expect a positive outcome, somehow, you'll find a way to achieve it.

Try your best to look at things in terms of a learning experience. Let your frustration and anger out and keep the faith because you'll be a stronger person in the end. Humata. Hukhta. Huvarashta.

## **VOICES OF THE NEW GENERATION**

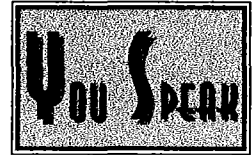
**Read what a new generation of North American young adults voiced to adult leaders, for the first time on this continent, as its perception of "ISSUES FACING CONTEMPORARY ZOROASTRIANS". These voices were heard at the interactive seminar in May of 1996, pioneered by ZAMWI, and supported by the World Zoroastrian Organization and FEZANA. Limited copies are available for free distribution in North America. Those wishing a copy, should phone or e-mail Aaron Rustom. Any donations to help defray costs will be welcome.**

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# The Last Zoroastrian

by: S.G.



89,000 and dying  
All the people are crying  
How can we be  
After grand Persian and Indian history

By far the best  
With all our zest  
Tata, Guiv, and Mehta  
Proudly wore the feta

One wears the sari another a dress  
To celebrate the wedding each of us bless  
We still take our partner as an absolute equal  
To cherish a bond and continue the sequel

So Iranis have a burial and Paris have the  
tower  
We all enrich environment after our final  
hour  
Adapting to our land is all that we have done  
As these were our promises to keep the reli-  
gion.

No changes for the sake of change  
Fear of change  
Get rid of tradition  
It's the Muslim/Hindu rendition

What is Zoroastrianism?  
We ask priests and academicians  
But the search  
Leaves us in the lurch

All of us quote  
From the same note  
Yet every translation  
Gives a different interpretation

Elders wisely indifferent with hope  
Parents learning to cope  
Children like wandering dopes  
The next generation will be hanging on ropes

Can we endure  
And still stay pure  
Or shall we oblige  
And compromise

Good thoughts, words, and deeds  
By birth only one creed  
Extinction has come to question  
We resolve faction and fraction

Ethnocentricity home tonight  
However, the most Westernized in thought  
So advanced and so adaptable are we naive  
and gullible?

Denial is the key  
To the tainted harmony  
Meet an idle  
Lasting future battle rival

Some shall convert  
Some stay active and alert  
Some remain conservative

Passive and inactive

Tajikistan warred and looted  
Gujarat farmers below poverty and putrid  
Iranian refugees totally at loss  
Community charity out in one toss

Mobeds working like old charitable elves  
Barely able to provide for themselves  
The sudras and kustis who will make  
Better. Yet who will take?

The rich donor gives a loan  
To the poor recipient in hope of a home  
After the construction the recipient has a  
grouse  
As the donor's nephew ends up with the  
house.

Uneducated are we to profess as we do  
How many of us truly know scriptures, at  
hand, a few.  
We mumble Avesta knowing maybe the gen-  
eral mold  
But do we know exactly what is told?

Foolish we seem to divide into groups  
Creating more separations and intricate  
routes  
A united renaissance of re-education is need-  
ed  
To recover Zarathustra's plant once seeded

Differences of opinion from our very guides  
How can we see through this disguise  
No one pope to take a stand  
But battling dictators to confuse the land

Conferences and congresses to discuss our  
plans  
World-wide gatherings and local bands  
Brainstorming idea, one tete a tete  
Action forgotten and more diverse opinions  
set.

Zoroastrians abroad lacking identity  
In the residential country discrimination  
plenty  
Eastern thought inherited, Western in compe-  
tition  
Internal conflict - What in the world is your  
position?

Higher education, first of all  
Dating - Parent's call  
He's Zoroastrian have the keys, car and extra  
dough  
She's not one of us, "oh, you cannot go"

Astrology matched, personalities beefed  
Medical records and reputation gossip  
briefed  
Marriage very late in life  
The once relative, now is your wife.

Iranis or Parsis, children of non-be

Orthodox or free

These are today's reasons for factions  
But the youth avoid radical actions.

A patrilineal society appropriate once upon a  
time  
But with tradition in time, we will only sub-  
lime  
Some accept our offspring as community  
Other compare it to adultery

The Zoroastrian plight  
Is towards the best light  
The future hold the key  
Yet youth plea or flee

Youth unanimous in thought  
Accepting other who are not  
Realizing tomorrow's trouble  
Could pierce the precarious bubble.

Unknown to the public world for what we  
aspire  
'Zoroastrians, are you the cult that worships  
fire?'  
Besides the history which made us famous  
Presently nothing in decades has served our  
status.

Universal principles upon which most of the  
world abides  
Is all this first religion seems to prescribe.  
A revelation of its time deserves better con-  
sideration  
Than to watch cultural differences destroy its  
preservation.

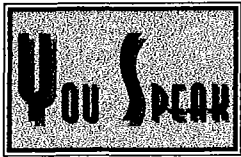
Such an intelligent people progress  
In everyday distress  
Every top profession we possess  
Yet our own religion, a mess.

Judge not your neighbor based on what you  
see  
But upon which you truly believe that person  
to be

Respect one another no matter what they  
think  
Perhaps someday your daughter may marry  
the fink.

Force not thy child to see life as you do  
But educate your of fspring as an individual  
true  
Allow the mind to progress in Asha as  
Zarathustra said  
How would it feel to be the last Zoroastrian  
dead.

(This was sent in anonymously. It was origi-  
nally written in 1993, but the author felt it  
was still pertinent to today's youth and the  
adults who help raise them.)



## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

*This issue will mark the completion of one year for me as editor . I appreciate all of the help I received from my co-editors Tanaz Billimoria and Pervez Mistry. I must admit, Jim Engineer wasn't kidding when he told me how much time it would entail.*

*For me this has been quite a learning experience. I certainly have had to learn how to better manage my time. The Fall 1996 issue was laid out by Roshan Rivetna. I was asked if I could begin doing the layouts for this section, as Roshan was already very busy with the majority of the journal. I literally had to cut and paste the Winter issue together, as I did not have a publishing program as of yet. Quite an experience...*

*Finally I received a layout program and for the past few issues, I have been playing around with the format and the look of the "Youthfully Speaking" section. For me, this experience is a "hands-on" course in learning the editorial trade, so to speak; or as my boss likes to say, "learn as you burn".*

*I am slowly beginning to find my way with the help of Roshan and Rustom Kevala. The first thing I'll admit to having trouble with is "deadlines". This I am going to master, I promise. So, to Roshan and Rustom, thanks for your help and patience.*

*It has been a long road for me to even get to this point and I know that this will always be a continuous learning process. However, I do feel that this section is beginning to take form as I envisioned it. As I said when I accepted this editorship, things change; and indeed the look of this section has changed. I hope that it is in keeping with what FEZANA and the Journal represent. I do encourage you to provide me with feedback and any other suggestions you might have. Remember, this is a vehicle for you to voice your opinions, bring up issues, or provide North America with a chance to see your creativity.*

*This issue is especially important to me, because it marked the first time I had more material than I had room for. I therefore had to make a decision on what to leave out. What I chose to leave out was "part II" of my short story, entitled ASHES OVER BATIAN.*

*I will include "part II" in the next issue. I chose to edit out my submission for two reasons. I think all of you need to read about the events that affect your community as youth.*

*I also did not want to leave out any part of Tanaz's heart-felt description of the issue she so eloquently brought to light. I was truly touched by her willingness to open up to a community, that far too often ignores these important issues, that in some ways touch all of our lives.*

*These types of stories and the continuous reporting of events like the Youth Congress are the things I want this section to be all about. And again, I don't want to have to hear about them from just the editorial staff, I want to hear it from you. Pictures are something the section has been lacking in. So if you have pictures of events, send them in to me.*

*Thank you for all your support and thanks again to Roshan and Rustom for their guidance. I promise only good things over the next year for "Youthfully Speaking".*

*sincerely,  
Aaron Rustom  
AUSTIN, TEXAS "Y'ALL"*



## The HK\$200 million Zoroastrian Building at 101 Leighton Road, in downtown Hong Kong is possibly the most valuable Zarathushti asset in the world today.

The original two storey building was built in 1931 at a cost of HK\$48,000 including the land. In 1970, a third storey was added. The building was demolished in April 1991 for redevelopment, and the Hong Kong anjuman was located temporarily in rented premises at B-6, Fontana Gardens in Causeway Hill.

The new Zarathushti Building, a 23-storey centrally-air-conditioned concrete and glass commercial tower, was officially inaugurated on Jamshedi Navroz day, March 21, 1993, a day that will be etched in gold in the history of this enterprising community, and of Zarathushtis world-wide. A time capsule was placed underneath the ground floor lobby's marble tiles, and a limited edition of specially crafted sterling silver souvenir medals, with a portrait of Zarathushtra on one side, and an etching of the new building on the other, were minted to commemorate the historic inauguration. A large gold Farohar adorns the front facade of the black and white glass building. Gold *afarganyus* with softly glowing lights flank another gold Farohar in the white marble lobby.

Four floors of this building are currently being used by the community, whilst the rest of the floors are rented out as shops and offices. Most of the redevelopment cost of HK\$33 million was financed by taking out a loan, mortgaging the land. The loan was fully paid back in November 1996 and the building now belongs completely to the Incorporated Trustees of the Zoroastrian Charity Funds of Hongkong, Canton and Macao.

# The

PHOTOS: COURTESY PARSIANA



Hong Kong's 'Zoroastrian Building' at 101 Leighton Road, built in 1931 for HK\$48,000 (right), and (above) the HK\$200million building as it stands today, redeveloped in 1993 for HK\$33 million.

*Parsi merchants Pestonjee Cowasjee, Rustomjee Dhunjishaw and Framjee Talati were present when the British landed in Hong Kong on January 26, 1841. 156 years later, on June 30, 1997, in the final hours of British rule in Hong Kong, the Zarathushtis of Hong Kong gathered for dinner and other festivities at the Zoroastrian Building premises. They awaited the arrival of their new government, like other Hong Kong residents, with varying degrees of excitement and apprehension. "No one can accurately predict the future," says President Jal Shroff of the Zoroastrian Charity Funds of Hong Kong, Canton and Macao, "but based on the evidence available to us at present, I am pleased to say that the local Zarathushti community is confident that after the change of sovereignty, Hong Kong will continue to flourish, maintaining its present prosperity and stability. Our community has been in Hong Kong and China for many generations, contributing in a small way to the success of the region, and God willing we will be here for many generations to come."*

# Good Life in Hong Kong

## LIFE AFTER THE HANDOVER.

Hong Kong Zarathushtis feel Hong Kong will enjoy a high degree of autonomy with no change in lifestyle. "It will continue its own political, social and economic systems," says Viraf Parekh, Honorary Secretary and Trustee of the Incorporated Trustees of the Zoroastrian Charity Funds of Hong Kong, Canton and Macao. He points out some interesting facts with regard to the handover:

- HK\$ will remain as a separate, internationally recognized currency linked to US\$.
- Visa requirements for visitors and residents will remain as they are, except for a few changes, some of which are even for the better.
- Laws and the judicial system as practiced before July 1997, will remain in force.
- Security will be maintained by the same local police force that has made Hong Kong one of the safest cities in the world.
- Border and immigration control from the rest of China will be maintained.

- English will remain an official language and English signage will be maintained.

## HISTORICAL OUTLINE OF THE HONG KONG ZARATHUSHTIS

**Zarathushtis in ancient China.** Ancient historical accounts show that from the 6th century, even before the Parsis migrated to India, the Zarathushtis of Pars in Persia had taken a commanding lead in the trade with China. Historians even mention small Parsi settlements with 'fire temples' and 'mobeds' in China in the 8th and 9th centuries.

**Eighteenth century entrepreneurs.** More recent history also shows that Parsis were pioneer traders in this region. From 1756, as the monopoly of the East India Company gradually eased, they did a thriving trade along the China coast. They had the money, built their own ships, and most of all, had the entrepreneurial spirit to engage in risky ventures, having left the shores of Bombay on a sail and a prayer, some only in their teens. They were also well known for their integrity and fair play, and were deeply respected by both the

British and the Chinese as associates, and as rivals.

**Beginnings of the Trust.** The beginnings of the present-day Trust started quite humbly in the year 1822, when a piece of land was purchased on the slopes of Guia Hill in Macao (which, until 1844, was administered from Goa) for the establishment of a Parsi cemetery. It became operational in 1829. Canton, however, was the hub of China trade in those days, with firms like that of Cowasjee Pallanjee & Co. establishing 'factories' (which were warehouses and residences of 'factors' or agents) there as far back as 1794.

The first Parsi association formed in this area was in Canton in 1834, and was known as the *China Canton Anjuman*. Parsis had begun to settle in Macao in the 1820s, and in Hong Kong in the 1840s after the establishment of British administration, and in Shanghai in the 1850s after it was opened up to foreigners.

On September 19th, 1845, the Zarathushti community living in the area met in Canton and created a wider anjuman body, covering Hong

Kong, Canton and Macao, for the purpose of establishing and maintaining burial grounds, having places of association, and rendering financial assistance to the needy. Zarathushti cemeteries were established in Hong Kong in 1845, in Whampoa (near Canton) in 1847, and in Shanghai in 1854. A bungalow was built in Whampoa in 1860, and a house purchased in Macao in 1874. The house in Macao was sold in 1939.

**Community prospers in the nineteenth century.** As the resident Parsi community in Hong Kong increased and prospered, the first premises for use of the Zarathushti community was rented in 1857, and the first house purchased at 49 Elgin Street in 1861. This house was later sold, and a plot was bought at 101 Leighton Road, where the original Zoroastrian Building was built in 1931 and the redeveloped 23-storey building was completed in 1993 [see page 54].

**Parsi charities.** Parsis have always been noted for their charity, and the first remittances of money by the Trust to India were made as far back as 1848. Charities for the relief of local destitute Chinese began in 1854. With new income from their commercial property (the Zoroastrian Building), the Hong Kong Zoroas-



*Trustees at the inauguration of the new Zoroastrian Building on March 21, 1993 [from left]: Homi Italia, Ruby Master, Jal Shroff, Viraf Parekh and Keki Jokhi. [Photo courtesy Parsiana]*

**The Trust is formed.** The name *Zoroastrian Charity Funds of Hong Kong, Canton and Macao* first came into existence on July 30th, 1874, with the formation of a Deed of Trust with Rules & Regulations, parts of which are still incorporated today. Major revisions to these Rules & Regulations have been done twice. First in 1920, certain disputes and differences arose, and revisions made for the anjuman by Sir Dinshaw Davar, a Bombay High Court judge, were adopted. In 1989, due to the growing size and complexity of the funds, and due to the planned redevelopment of the Zoroastrian Building, it was decided to incorporate the Trust, and to update and revise many of the Rules & Regulations. The Trustees were officially incorporated on December 6, 1989.

**Laudable legacy.** Though the number of Parsis in Hong Kong has rarely exceeded 200 at any time, their contributions to the development of Hong Kong have been significant. Early 19th century 'taipans' such as Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, the first Indian Knight Bachelor & Baronet, and Pestonjee Cowasjee Sethna,

founder of Cowasjee Pallanjee & Co. were often known as the 'Princes of Eastern Merchants'. Pestonjee Cowasjee, Rustomjee Dhunjishaw and Framjee Talati were present when the British landed in Hong Kong on January 26, 1841. Pestonjee Cowasjee, Dhunjibhoy Bisney (the Trust's first President), Framjee Jamsetjee and Dadabhoy Rustomjee made substantial purchases at the first land auction in Hong Kong in June 1841.

In the first 25 years of Hong Kong's history as a British colony, as many as a quarter of all foreign firms in Hong Kong belonged to Parsis. The latter-day Parsis too, have not only made tremendous contributions to the growth of Hong Kong's trade and commerce, but have also helped in the formation and development of financial, educational, medical, social and sports organizations there.

Sir Hormusjee Nowrojee Mody, President of the Trust in the 1890s, was one of the principal founders of the Hong Kong University and the Kowloon Cricket Club. He helped reclaim Central Praya, activate the Hong Kong share and bullion mar-

“ In the first 25 years of Hong Kong's history as a British colony, as many as a quarter of all foreign firms in Hong Kong belonged to Parsis. ”

trians are now foremost among donors of charity funds, giving freely for Zarathushti projects worldwide. Substantial donations are made annually to individuals and institutions in India and Hong Kong. A large number of educational subsidies are also granted to students every year.



*In 1964, 12-year-old Rashna Homji became the first Eastern woman, in the history of the British Royal Ballet, to be accepted into its exclusive ballet school. In the 30-plus year association with Royal Ballet Company at Covent Garden Royal Opera House in London and with its touring arm, the Sadler's Wells Ballet Company, Rashna and husband Stephen Jefferies have both risen to be star performers at that prestigious Company. Last year they were invited to Hong Kong to take up their latest challenge -- to turn the Hong Kong Ballet into a top-notch, international, classical ballet company.*



# The Last Emperor

*Below, Rashna Homji (right) in a performance of the Royal Ballet at Covent Garden Royal Opera House in London*





*Among the heady celebrations for the handover of Hong Kong this June, is a series of gala performances of a new dance drama *The Last Emperor* at the 1,800-seat Performing Arts Center in the heart of Hong Kong. Prime movers behind this spectacular production of the Hong Kong Ballet company are classical ballet dancer Rashna Homji and her husband, dancer and artistic director Stephen Jeffries.*

# — in Hong Kong

By Roshan Rivetna

**R**ashna (daughter of FEZANA founding Vice President Homi Homji and Villie of Toronto, Canada) and husband Stephen Jeffries moved to Hong Kong last year with their children Lara, 12, and Christopher, 10, following a dancing career spanning over 30 years on the other side of the world, with the Royal Ballet in London. Stephen was appointed Artistic Director of the Government funded Hong Kong Ballet, charged with the mandate to turn the ambitious Asian company into a top-notch, international, classical ballet company.

Rashna is Artistic Director of the Hong Kong Ballet Group, a collaboration of dance schools in Hong Kong, currently working on a production of *Swan Lake*. She is also Guest Teacher at the Hong Kong Ballet Company, the National Ballet of China in Beijing, the Shanghai Ballet Company and the Academy for the Performing Arts in Hong Kong.

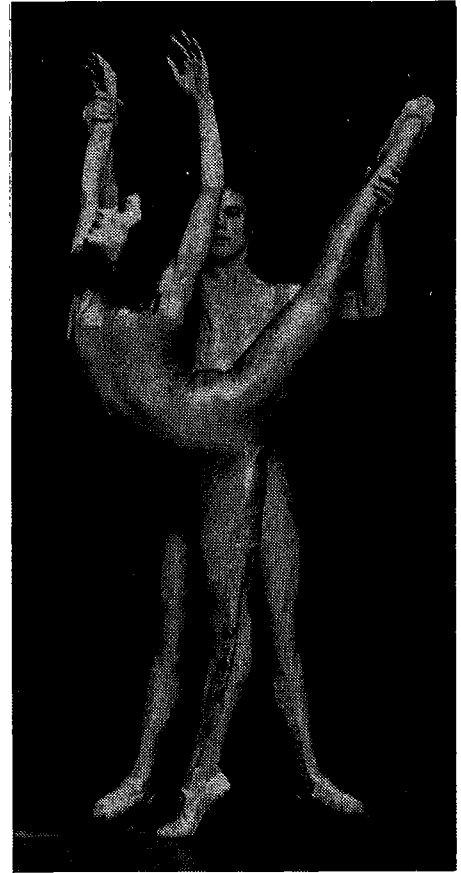
**Early years.** Because her feet were weak and "turned in", Villie Homji enrolled 6-year-old daughter Rashna in ballet classes with a British lady in Karachi, Pakistan, where the family lived, and where Rashna was born (in

1951). Rashna showed exceptional promise as a dancer, and quickly passed with honors a series of examinations with the British Royal Academy of Dancing, in Karachi.

In 1962, when Homi was appointed Head of the Social Affairs Division for Asia and Far East with the UN, the family moved to Bangkok, and Rashna resumed ballet classes under a French and a Thai teacher.

**The audition.** From Bangkok, with currency exchange restrictions no longer a damper, Rashna could now travel to London to realize her dream of auditioning with the British Royal Ballet. Encouraged by past ballet teachers and Royal Academy examiners who all proclaimed she "had the makings of a dancer", Villie and Rashna, now 12, traveled to London.

The audition at the Royal Ballet school was short. Just a half-hour. Of the 25 girls auditioning that day, she was the only one accepted into White Lodge, the residential lower school of the Royal Ballet. "But there are no guarantees," the Principal told Villie, "as she grows up, if she becomes too big physically, she may never be a dancer." To prepare



*Above, Rashna Homji with husband Stephen Jeffries in the Royal Ballet's production of *Genesis*, at Sadler's Wells Theatre.*

for this, the students were all drilled to repeat 10 times a day: "I may be a teacher, not a performer."

But Rashna was a "born performer" as the principal told Villie when Rashna graduated 3 years later, and was selected to join the exclusive Upper School of the Royal Ballet.

**At the Royal Ballet.** Rashna was the first Eastern woman in the history of the Royal Ballet to be accepted into that prestigious school.

Her first break at a 'real performance' came when she was 18, and still at the Upper School. Two dancers of the Royal Ballet Company were taken ill while on tour in Vienna. With little time to prepare, Rashna and another girl were select-

ed and flown to Vienna overnight to take the sick girls' positions in the *corps de ballet*. It was a performance of *La Bayadere* at the Vienna Opera House, and a night to remember for Rashna.

Upon graduation she was accepted into the Royal Ballet Company, and her dancing career reached new heights. She played a number of soloist and principal roles: in *Les Sylphides*, *The Rake's Progress*, *The Invitation*, *Solitaire*, *Concerto*, *La Fête étrange* and others, performing at the Covent Garden Royal Opera House in London, as well as with the touring Sadler's Wells Ballet Company and in guest performances all over the world.

**Marriage.** In 1972, Rashna married dancer Stephen Jefferies a "shining star of the Royal Ballet". He has been compared to the likes of the legendary Rudolf Nureyev and Merce Cunningham. "Among the Royal Ballet dancers of 1970s and 1980s," says a

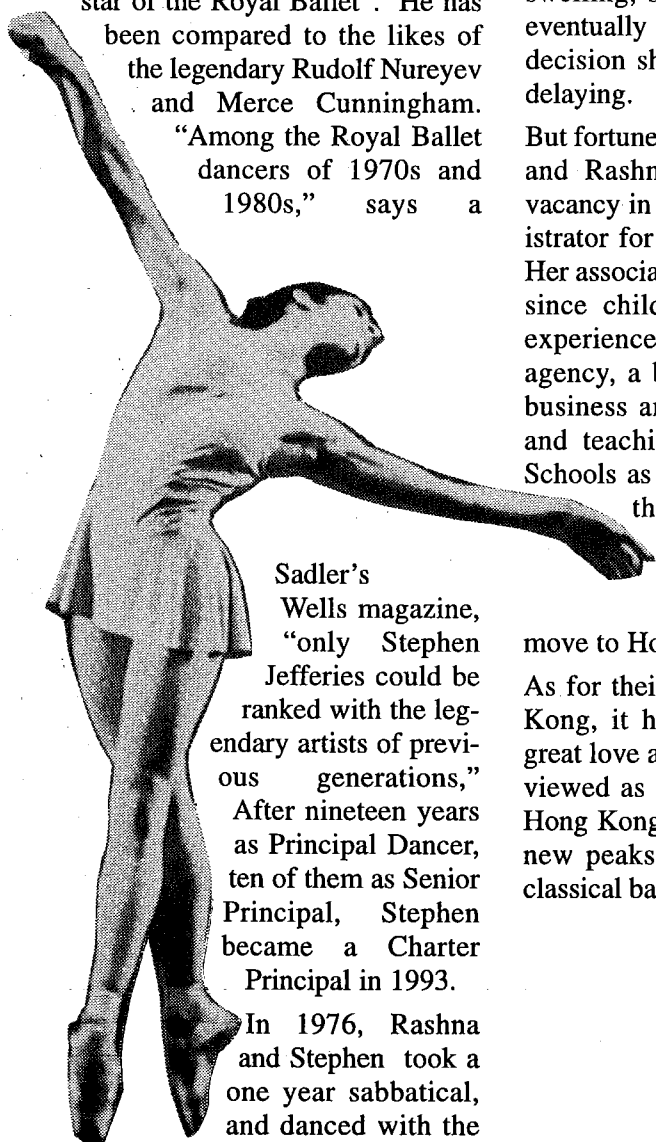
National Ballet of Canada, delighting Canadian audiences, especially all the Parsi friends of the Homjis. She danced the *Pas de Trois* and *Prologue* variations in Rudolf Nureyev's production of *The Sleeping Beauty*.

**A turn in her career.** Shortly thereafter, fate dealt a hard blow that cut Rashna's dancing career short. Just before going to Canada, she had a knee cartilage operation, and had given some thought to giving up dancing, but decided against it. As she was about to rejoin the Royal Ballet after the year in Canada, an accident in class — a kick in the back of the knee — ruptured the cruciate ligament. Unfortunately this was not diagnosed until much later, and she underwent a second cartilage removal operation. But the knee kept swelling, she could not dance, and eventually had to make that difficult decision she had been so hopefully delaying.

But fortune smiled on her once again, and Rashna was invited to fill a vacancy in the post of Ballet Administrator for the Royal Ballet School. Her association with the Royal Ballet since childhood, and a wealth of experience — running a theatrical agency, a beauty therapy course, a business and book-keeping course, and teaching (at Arts Educational Schools as well as guest teaching at the Royal Ballet School) had made her eminently suitable for this position, which she held until their move to Hong Kong.

As for their new challenge in Hong Kong, it has all the makings of a great love affair. Stephen Jefferies is viewed as the "man for the job" as Hong Kong Ballet is poised to reach new peaks as one of the foremost classical ballet companies in Asia. ■

*Left, Rashna as a Pas de deux Girl in the ballet Concerto. Right, Jeffries in The Prodigal Son.*



# Facts from History

By Keikhosrow Mobed  
Westmont, Illinois

**1700** Thomas Hyde published a book called *The Ancient Religion of Iran [Historia religiois veterum Persarum, eorumque Magorum, Oxonii 1700]*. He was the first European scholar who expressed his views on Zarathushtra, the Prophet of ancient Iran, and his principles. Hyde wrote: "Zarathushtra was the first prophet who informed people of the appearance of Moses and Jesus Christ." [op. cit. pp. 379 ff].

**1756** Voltaire used this idea as a weapon against Christianity and the Church. He said: "Before Christ, Zarathushtra emphasized Truth and Righteousness and led people to the right path of life" [*Essai sur les mœurs et l'esprit des nations*, Bd. I, Paris 1805, p.50, Bd. II, p. 71]. Since this time, European scholars were encouraged to research the Zarathushti religion in order to find the origins of Christian beliefs through a study of the Zarathushti religion. But the problem was that they did not have access to the Zarathushti religious text, the Avesta.

Schaeder, in his book [*H. H. Schaeder, Goethes Erlebnis des Osten*, Leipzig, 1938, p. 134.] writes: "These two, Hyde and Voltaire, were the first persons to speak out about the old Iranian religion of Zarathushtra. Walther Hinz [*Walther Hinz, Zarathushtra*, Kohlhammer, Stuttgart, 1961, p.12] also writes: "These two were the first to speak about Zarathushtra."

**1754-71** After extensive research about Zarathushtra, Anquetil-Duperron, who was interested in finding a

Zarathushti community learned that many Zarathushtis (Parsis) lived in India. On November 7, 1754 the young Frenchman started his adventure to come to India [E. G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, Bd. I, New print, Cambridge, 1951, p. 46] and [Raymond Schwab, *Vie d'Anquetil-Duperron*, Paris, 1934.]

Anquetil-Duperron traveled as a French soldier of the East India Company. He was a very poor man, and had packed just a few books, two shirts, two handkerchiefs and a few socks for his trip. He experienced many difficulties upon arrival in India, including a bout with fever and malaria.

Anyway, he contacted some Parsis and learned the Avesta, Pahlavi and Farsi languages. Eventually, he was able to get a copy of the Avesta from a Parsi in India. He returned to France in 1762 taking with him, a number of Avesta, Gatha and Farsi books. In 1771 he published his book, *Zend Avesta [Zend-Avesta, ouvrage de Zoroastre, L'abominable fatras que l'on attribue a ce Zoroastre-zitiert bei J. Duchesne Guillemin, Western response page 15.]*

This book started a controversy. The church was against this book. He had a very hard time since they said that the book was a work representing his ideas.

**1776** In 1776, the Avesta was translated into German and published as the *Zend Avesta [Jon. Fr. Kleuker, Zend Avesta, Zoroasters lebendiges Wort*, Riga, 1776-7]. Consequently, scholars and researchers found the book very interesting, and began to investigate further into the Zarathushti religion.

**18th** Century. From the 18th century onwards, some scholars continued the research, and the Zarathushti religion became one of the main topics of discussion. It was so interesting that it influenced the philosophy of the time.

**1883-85** Friedrich Nietzsche compiled a book in 1883-85, *Thus Spake Zarathushtra [Friedrich Nietzsche, Also Sprach Zarathushtra]*. At first sight, everyone thought the book dealt with the Zarathushti religion. But the fact is that it has nothing to do with Zarathushtra or his religion. Nietzsche had only used the name of Zarathushtra as the title of his book. The book, rather, represents Nietzsche's personal views as an atheist.

The author knew that, contrary to his ideas, Zarathushtra believed in one God, as shown in some of the quotations in this book: "Zarathushtra, such a spiritual man did not know that God is dead or it does not exist at all" [*Also Sprach Zarathushtra, Kröner Taschenbuch*, p. 8]. The author of this book also writes: "Whenever you go to a woman, you should not forget to take your whip"! [op. cit. p. 31]. Nietzsche wrote disgracefully about Zarathushtra and his religion.

**1886** In his next publication *The Other Side of Good and Evil [Jenseits von Gut und Böse, Ecce homo*, Leipzig, 1922, p. 118], published in 1886, Nietzsche writes: "I am sorry to say that nobody came to ask me whether I knew anything about Zarathushtra or not; to tell them that I do not have any information about this religion ...". He also writes: "I am sorry to have caused damage to the history of Persia, because I did not follow morality and manner in my writing. But, at the same time I am proud of Zarathushtra and pay respect to him and Iranians, who laid the foundation of the civilization of the world" [*In*



## RELIGION AND HISTORY OF THE PARSEES

By Meherbano Kekobad Marker

### RELIGION AND HISTORY OF THE PARSEES

Available from Toxy Cowasjee, Karachi  
Zartoshti Banu Mandal  
Sohrab Katrak Park Parsi Colony,  
Karachi 74400, Pakistan, Tel: 5892069

Written in brief and easy to comprehend terms, especially with her grandchildren in mind, Mehera Marker has covered the basic tenets of the religion of Zarathushtra, a concise history and customs, into this latest publication on the Parsees. Published in hard cover and printed on elegant paper, this attractive volume was designed by Tannaz Minwalla.

were published in the French magazine *Geo* [March 1997]. Kazemi is looking for a grant or sponsorship to publish a book of his photographs. Contact Kazemi in Tehran at 98 21 87 32 675 or by email at zoka.cyb@vdp.fr

### 'Pestonji' on Video

See a bit of Bombay Parsi culture in the movie *Pestonji*, which is available on video. The actors Naseeruddin Shah (Piroj), Anupam Kher (Pestonji) and Shabana Azmi (Jeroo) give a very realistic performance as Parsi characters. It shows scenes from the Parsi Gymkhana in Mumbai, a Parsi family at home, shots of Dasturji Minocher Homji performing a wedding and other interesting sequences. Written and produced by Rusi Karanjia, publisher of the Mumbai paper *Blitz*, *Pestonji* is a serious story with some good humor.

### Film on Iranians in America

Wakan Film Productions in Washington D.C. is producing Farewell to Rumi, an extraordinary independent American film about Iranians in America, with Scriptwriter-Director-Producer Khashyar Darvich and Producer Amir Naderi, committed to correcting negative stereotypes about Persian culture.

Possibly the first American film to give a positive impression of Iranians and Persian culture, the film, which is planned to be shown in theaters and on video, will showcase poems of Rumi, Persian and Sufi music, the talents of Persian actors and artists, and a story about the cultural struggle of an Iranian family in America.

### New Books Available

The following new books are available from Marzban Giara, Dhunmai Building, 667 Lady Jehangir Road, Dadar, Mumbai 400 014, India, Tel: 416 6204. Arrangements to order these books may also be made by calling **The Zoroastrian Shop** in New Jersey at (609) 768-8351.

### Bapsi Sidhwa's Cracking India on Film

Bapsi Sidhwa's book *Cracking India* (which won the 1991 Literature Prize in Germany), will soon be made into a film *Earth* by producer-director Deepa Mehta. *Earth* is a story about the destruction of innocence in the name of nationalism and religion. Sidhwa, a resident of Houston, and originally from Pakistan, is a renowned author and has won many awards. Mehta has financial support from a Toronto businessman, for the movie which is estimated to cost \$3 million.

### Directory of Zarathushtis in UK and Europe

The Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE) has announced the publication of the 3rd edition of the ZTFE Directory of Zarathushtis of UK and Europe, 1997. Superbly printed and bound, this updated and enlarged Directory is available at £3.00 (plus £1 shipping) from The Secretariat, Zoroastrian House, 88 Compayne Gardens, London NW6 3RU, Tel: 0171-328-6018.

### Shah Nameh on Indian TV

A new 104-episode TV serial, based on Firdowsi's renowned epic *Shah Nama*, has been approved for transmission on the Indian National Television Doordarshan. [From *What's On*, August 1997]

### New Weekly — Parsidom

A new bi-lingual (English and Gujarati) weekly newsletter, *Parsidom*, has emerged on the Parsi Zarathushti scene in India. Billed as "A Newsletter On Parsi Matters", *Parsidom*, edited and published by Dara Kadva, focuses on issues facing the Parsis in India—housing, Trust matters, Panchayet politics and such. To subscribe or to send a donation (needed to defray printing and mailing costs) contact *Parsidom*, PO Box 8067, Vile Parle-W, Mumbai 400 056.

### "Pars Vision" TV Series

Shahram Mavandadi of Toronto is producing a five-part TV program with Vision TV of Canada, 10:30-11:00 pm on Saturdays, called "Pars Vision." This English and Farsi program will cover Zarathushti history, culture, religion, literature, art, poetry and music, to bring an awareness of the Zarathushti community to North American audiences. Contact Mavandadi at (416) 512-8969.

### Photographer Looking for Sponsor

Professional photographer Kaveh Kazemi of Tehran has spent 2 years taking pictures of Zarathushti communities in Yazd, Kerman and Tehran — of jashans, atashkadehs and of daily life in the Zarathushti villages. Some of these photographs



- The Vision of Zarathushtra*  
Feroze G. Davar Rs.200
- My Simple Book of Zoroastrianism*  
L. N. Moos Rs.200
- Gatha-Ba-Maeni(in English)*  
Kawasji Kanga Rs.100
- A Guide to Our Prayers*  
T. S. Pardiwala Rs.10
- Pherozechah Mehta*  
*-Maker of Modern India*  
Nawaz B. Mody Rs.250
- The Parsis and their Religion*  
R. C. Chothia Rs.30
- The Good Parsi*  
T. M. Luhrmann Rs.495
- Parsis and Racial Suicide*  
F. C. Davar Rs.20
- Godrej - a Hundred Years*  
B. K. Karanjia Rs.290
- The Parsis, Vol. III*  
Mme. D. Mennant Rs.600
- Parsi Food and Customs*  
B. Manekshaw
- Stories from Shah Nameh-Peshdad*  
R. P. Karanjia
- The Zarathustrian Saga*  
Tina Mehta
- Our Zoroastrian Religion*  
F. N. Rabadi

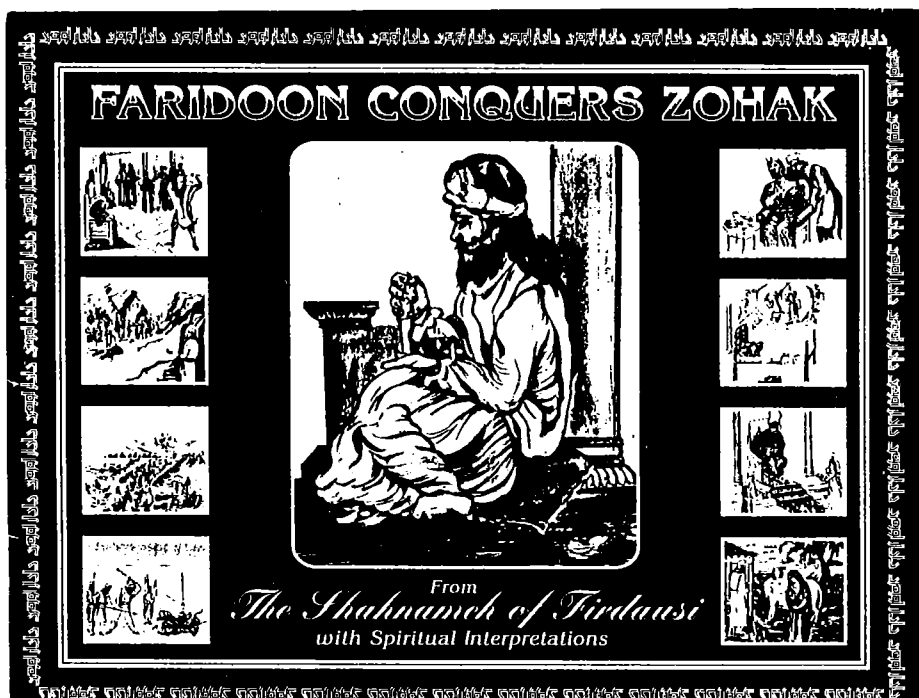
(Shipping and handling is not included in these prices).

### Rohinton Mistry on Film

Booker Prize-winning author Rohinton Mistry's acclaimed novel *Such a Long Journey* is set to go places yet again, this time in the form of a full-length feature film. To be directed by renowned Toronto-based film maker Sturla Gunnarsson and jointly produced by Canadian Paul Stevens of Filmworks and England's Simon MacCoraindale of Amy International, the film will be shot extensively in India, with Indian film stars (yet to be cast). Screenplay is being done by Sony Taraporewala, noted for her earlier work in Mississippi Masala.

Planned for a worldwide release, the film will be in English with some Hindi and Gujarati.

[From India Abroad, July 12]



## FARIDOON CONQUERS ZOHAK

*From the Shahnameh of Firdausi with Spiritual Interpretations*  
**Compiled by Silloo Mehta**

Soft cover, Color illustrations,  
50 pp, 1997, \$11.

Published by Mazdayasnie Connection,  
9528 Walker Street, #5,  
Cypress, California 90630,  
Tel: (714) 995-8765

**W**e all know that *Shahnameh* is one of the masterpieces in the world of poetry. But somehow the story "Faridoon Conquers Zohak" has a very special meaning because Faridoon was one of the fore-runners of Asho Zarathushtra.

What makes this book more appealing is that the Mazdayasnie Connection have gone the extra mile by introducing spiritual interpretations. As a result this book becomes even more enlightening and meaningful to our children and adults alike.

With a beautiful cover design by Phil Avari and colorful illustrations by Dr. Homai Kasad on almost every page,

this glossy, soft-cover book takes us on an inner journey that mythologises the different aspects of human life with prime focus on Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds.

The *Shahnameh* was written to create consciousness awareness in humanity. This book serves as a guidepost for the following essential messages:

- (1) Everything we do, speak or think has an effect.
- (2) One can be strong or courageous and still be kind.
- (3) Through the power of prayers and the power of dreams, one can accomplish anything
- (4) Goodness always prevails.

May Ahura Mazda bless Silloo Mehta for compiling this wonderful book for our children. It is a must for your spiritual library.

By Meher D. Amalsad  
Westminster, California

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# THE PARSIS, Vol. III

## By Delphine Menant

Translated from the French by  
Anthony D. Mango  
Hard cover, 364 pp, 1997  
Published by Jeroo Mango of Danai,  
Mangal Smruthi Housing Society,  
14th Khar Danda Road, Khar,  
Mumbai 400 052, Tel: 648 7123

This is a labor of love by Delphine Menant, who was so enchanted by her father's scholarly work on the Zarathushti religion and by a few Zarathushtis that came to confer with him, that she sailed from France to India almost a hundred years ago to study the Parsis first hand.

This Volume is especially important because it was never published in English, and nobody even knew of its existence. Credit goes to Jeroo (Billimoria) Mango, proprietor of the popular Mumbai bookshop, Danai and her husband Anthony Mango, the Greek Consul General in India, for securing and translating the rare French copy.

It was in 1993 that Jeroo Mango chanced upon a translation of Menant's *Les Parsis* by M. M. Marzban written in 1917, in an old bookshop in Delhi and reprinted it a year later as Volumes I and II. However, it was Professor Mary Boyce, who, pointed out that Marzban's work only covered the first three chapters of Menant's work, and five other chapters, perhaps the most interesting, had never been translated into English.

Over a cup of tea at Mary Boyce's house in the UK, Jeroo immediately said: "That's no problem, my husband will translate them." "And so it was," says Anthony Mango, "that a Greek from Constantinople found himself translating from French into English, a book on the Parsis." We owe them all a world of gratitude for opening up a window to our past which we did not even know existed. Few books I have read on our recent history provide us with first hand and

authentic information about Parsi life and history in the 18th and 19th centuries, as this work. The book is a veritable mine of information for this period in Parsi history. It is regrettable that there are no more volumes by Ms. Menant, and the accounts of various events and personalities mentioned in the existing volumes seem rather terse, though they were perhaps adequate when written a 100



years ago. The account does not cover any period after 1902, as that is when Ms. Menant visited India.

How one wishes her efforts would inspire someone, especially a North American youth, to write such a book or do a Ph.D. thesis on our history here. A hundred years hence we will have much less capacity and resources to do so.

The author has given references for all her observations, which too will prove so very valuable to historians. She is obviously enchanted by the Parsis but does not fail to be critical of them, if needs be, which is however very rare. This may pamper our pride in ourselves, which seems to be our pastime at present.

It is interesting to learn about our customs and practices, including birth, death, Navjote, wedding ceremonies, as observed 100 years ago, as also about the rise and fall of the Parsi Panchayet. (Upto 1823, the Panchayet was empowered by the

British, to beat up a Parsi sinner with shoes, or declare him an outcaste; later the judiciary took over these functions). Accounts of distinguished Parsis in commerce, literature, education and public service also make good reading.

While she writes about the achievements of the Parsis in the 18th and 19th centuries, she also points out that just as the British started showering titles on them, they were losing their grip on national and international trade already, in the late 19th century, as other communities by then started competing vigorously. The decline in trade seems continuous since then, but historians have often found such declines inevitable, especially for a microscopic race.

The book gives us an idea of how cohesive and productive the community was just 150 years ago, when it was not beset with the full impact of westernization and dispersions to the diasporas in the West. Even J. N. Tata, per Menant, reserved his scholarships for three Parsi students every fourth one being a non-Parsi. If we were to believe my Pahlavi teacher, the late Bejanji Chacha, J. N. Tata had even specified in his will that all those from the priestly families of his native town of Navsari, be given first preference in any of his companies as they in essence functioned as an extended family. My grandfather invested almost all of his savings in Tata Steel, though it did not bear any dividends until World War I, due to the opposition by the British.

The community then was more symbiotic cohesive and productive a force than even Japan Inc. in our times, and had our numbers been just a couple of millions, we would have surely put India well ahead of Japan. For example, the Tatas started stiff competition to the P&O Steamship company, as also steel, cotton and hydro-electric companies in the 19th century.

A perusal of this book makes us wonder if it is the same community any

more. But that is the price we have to pay for westernization and for westward migration.

The book cannot possibly fail to impress us with the greatness we had just a hundred years ago, and the promise of such greatness in our future, if we can only learn to seize the opportunity. That is what makes this book compulsory reading in every Zarathushti household, especially in the West where it can be the best gift we can bequeath to our children.

If we do so, the labors and devotion of a non-Zarathushti author will also get the deserts they so richly deserve. Alas, in the humdrum of daily living, it is so easy to neglect the significance of such works and such labor of love.

I had the privilege of growing up in a family that had its own library of books and now I have one of my own, but even those that are not bibliophiles should grab this book, not just for themselves, but as a bequest to their children – some obvious spelling errors in translating from the French notwithstanding.

What can be a greater tribute to our ancestors than a first-hand account of our heritage by a scholarly French daughter of a renowned French scholar, not even known to have existed but for the kind efforts of Mary Boyce, the doyen of all scholars on the Zarathushti religion, in our times.

By Dr. Kersey A. Antia  
Orland Park, Illinois



## Gathic Concepts : Explorations in our time

Aspi D. Moddie

### **GATHIC CONCEPTS:** *Exploration in Our Times* By Aspi D. Moddie

*Published by Aspi D. Moddie,  
Revills, 45 Cuffe Parade, Mumbai  
400 005, 27 pp., 1997.*

I was a little leery when asked to review a 27-page booklet funded by WZO, but as I read it, I realized, one is not a true follower of Zarathushtra unless one studies his very words in the Gathas, reflects on them as Zarathushtra advises us [Ys. 30.2] and guides oneself by Zarathushtra's timeless philosophy. One will be amply rewarded in one's spiritual sojourn on this earth and the one

beyond, if one takes time to interpret the Gathic message for oneself as Moddie has so admirably done.

The book reveals he is a very well-read man, and yet finds the Gathas so timeless and so appropriate for our times and our lives. Since even the best of literary translations of the Gathas are hard to understand, he has set out on a journey to understand what each means to him and has shared his journey with us. Moddie does not make any claim to be a scholar nor does he claim to have studied all the Gathic translations, and yet he presents a very succinct and useful understanding. His example should inspire others to do the same, as each one will see something meaningful for oneself in the Gathas.

Moddie for one, finds it interesting to compare how Job in the Bible, Arjuna in the Gita and Goethe's Faust fare in Gathic terms. Others may not agree, but they can make comparisons in terms of their own experience and background. That's what makes the Gathas so ageless and awesome. The booklet is well-written and the Gathic terms are well-spelt (except for Haurvatat).

One will find the real meaning of being a Zarathushtrian by perusing Moddie's book, and by pursuing one's quest of his/her mission on this earth in terms of Zarathushtra's Gathas.

Dr. Kersey A. Antia  
Orland Park, Illinois

### **From Cyrus to Alexander:** A History of the Persian Empire Pierre Briant

*2 cloth volumes, c.1250 pp., 1997, \$69.50  
Scholar's Source, Eisenbrauns Inc., PO Box 275, Winona Lake,  
IN 46590, Tel: (219) 269-2011, email: order@eisenbrauns.com*

**From Cyrus to Alexander** is a work that has no precedent or parallel in Achaemenid studies. A. T. Olmstead's *History of the Persian Empire* is now fifty years old, and has often been corrected. This work is at once compendious in its

amassing of evidence and integration of older and contemporary scholarship, and groundbreaking in its expository approach. It combines narrative history with analysis, minute characterization of evidence with critical assessments, subtle handling of texts, fresh and lucid results, all accompanied by thorough documentation, carefully sorted and evaluated. This work was first published in French in 1996, as *Histoire de l'Empire Perse: de Cyrus à Alexandre*.

Pierre Briant, trained as a historian of classical antiquity, has spent decades acquiring an encyclopaedic command of historical, archaeological, iconographic and philological evidence from the whole extent of the Achaemenid territories.

# Amalsad's Bread for the Head On the Way to the Top

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By Meher D. Amalsad

Jain Publishing Company

Fremont, California

Tel: (714) 895-3097

ISBN 0-87573-038-8, \$5.95

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On the internet at:

[www.promotionalguide.com/bread](http://www.promotionalguide.com/bread)

Meher Amalsad is working hard to get his latest book of clever and inspirational quotations and philosophies, *Bread for the Head* into the

New York

Times No

1 Best

Seller List,

and is

appealing

to Zara-

thushtis around the world to help him get there.

This handy, pocket-sized book, which focuses on how to live the principles of Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds with catchy quotes is already going places. It has been translated into Spanish and Vietnamese, and is being used by schools and churches, police departments and community groups (e.g. African American Battered Women and various gang groups).

Engineer turned author and inspirational speaker, Amalsad also has a booked calendar of speaking engagements. To gang members and LAPD law enforcement officials, he speaks about how to handle violence with love through the principles of Asha and Ushta. "Hugs are better than Drugs" he proclaims. In August, he was a featured speaker at the "Hands Around Our Community" event for over 3,000 persons in the Watts area of south central Los Angeles. He also spoke at the Pasadena Invention Convention (on Creativity through Good Thoughts, Words and Deeds)

and at the World Health and Enrichment expo (on Love Grows and Shows Only when it Flows).

Soon, Amalsad will have his own Radio and TV Talk Show for Children in which he will focus on the wisdom of each one's inner child.

Dolly Dastoor, President of FEZANA writes: "It is not often that Zarathushtis have the opportunity of showing their support and solidarity in promoting a book written by one of them to the *New York Times* No. 1 Best Seller List. We now have such an opportunity. ... Meher has been one of the rising young

Zara-

thushti

stars in

North

America.

The "Help-

ing Hands"

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- By Roshan Rivetna

# LOST TREASURES OF PERSIA

By Vladimir Loukonine  
and Anatoli Ivanov

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The Hermitage Museum, the National Library of Russia, museums and art galleries in Moscow, Kremlin, Tbilisi, St. Petersburg, Tashkent, Kiev, Russian Academy of Sciences, Museum of Azerbaijan History, Rudaki Museum and other museums, libraries and institutes in Russia and the republics of the former Soviet Union, all house some of the most magnificent treasures of Persian art.

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Loukonine, Director of the Oriental Art section of the Hermitage Museum, documents the major developments of Persian art, from the first signs of civilization on the plains of Iran some 10 centuries BC up to the early twentieth century.

# THE VISION OF ZARATHUSHTRA

By Feroze Cawasji Davar

Translated by B. I. Taraporevala  
from the Gujarati original  
*Zarathushtra Darshan* by the late  
Prof. Feroze Cawasji Davar,  
Softcover, 223 pp., 1997  
Hukhta Foundation, India House  
No. 2, August Kranti Marg, Mum-  
bai, 400 036, India.

Prof. Davar had a deep and abiding interest in the history of Iran. His *Zarathushtra Darshan*, published in Gujarati in 1970, and translated by Taraporevala in 1996, presents the author's views about the prophet, his vision of the cosmos and his system of philosophy and how it became transmuted by lapse of time and historical circumstances into baser material.

**History.** Since history forms a backdrop of religions and literature, Prof. Davar in his introduction briefly outlines the history of Iran, its five ruling dynasties, the prevailing languages and religious literature. The first, Peshdadian Dynasty is regarded as prehistoric and is referenced to salvage historical elements from myths and legends. Zarathushtra established his faith during the reign of Shah Gushtasp of the Kayanian Dynasty. After the death of Shah Gustasp, the history of Iran is quite hazy. During this period, conditions were quite chaotic, foreign rule was established and contemporary Zarathushti scriptures had lost some of their purity.

The Achaemenian Dynasty was founded by King Cyrus in 558 BC and ended in 330 BC at the hands of Alexander of Macedon. In the subsequent destruction of Persepolis, Zarathushti scriptures suffered their worst loss. Seventy five years later, Greek rule was replaced by the semi-Zarathushti dynasty of Parthians (255 BC - 226 AD). During this period attempts were made to collect the scattered scriptures. In 226 AD, the Iranian Shah Ardeshir Babagan

established the Sassanian Dynasty and Zarathushti scriptures were resurrected and revived. In 651 AD, the Arab invasion ended the Sassanian Dynasty. Iran was vanquished, its religious texts destroyed once more and many Iranians forcibly converted. Some Iranians migrated to India to preserve their religion. Since that time, Iran has been an Islamic nation.

**Languages** *Avesta* was not only the name of a very ancient language of old Iran, but Zarathushti scriptures written in that language are also called *Avesta*. The five incomplete Gathas composed by Zarathushtra are in the most ancient 'Gathic' dialect of the *Avesta* language. This language changed during the Achaemenian period. The Achaemenian kings had inscriptions carved in mountains in a script called *Old Persian*, which was the prevailing language in Western Iran. By this time, the *Avesta* language was almost forgotten, though due to the oral tradition of the priests, the language and scriptures were preserved.

The *Pahlavi* language originated during the Parthian era and was current during the Sassanian age. The Sassanians translated entire available Avestan scriptures into Pahlavi since hardly anyone then spoke *Avesta*. Pahlavi was later modified into *Pazand* and after the Islamic conquest, the Aryan *Pazand* was mixed with Semitic Arabic to create *Farsi*.

**Literature.** The entire Avestan literature is contained in twenty-one 'Nasks' or volumes. The Roman author Pliny the Elder noted that at one time there were two million verses of Zarathushti literature. Arab historians Tabari and Masudi believe *Avesta* literature was written on 12,000 cowhide vellum volumes and stored in two vast libraries in Perse-

FEROZE CAWASJI DAVAR

## The Vision of Zarathushtra



polis. One of the libraries perished in the fire started by Alexander, the other library's contents were taken to Greece.

A further calamity was the Arab invasion of Iran. German scholar Dr. Geldner believes at present, the sacred *Avesta* literature has only 3,000 words, down drastically from the original two million.

**Zarathushtra's date.** In Chapter 2, Davar helps determine the time period of Zarathushtra's life. Davar refutes the commonly held 600 BC date, on the grounds that many early historians used calculations from Pahlavi books which were erroneous. The same error was committed by Ferdowsi.

Pahlavi authors were ignorant of the Hakhmani (Achaemenian) Dynasty. The four monarchs who in turn succeeded King Gustasp — Bahman, Homai, Darab and Dara — were not Kayanian but Hakhmanian. If Pahlavi writers had used inscriptions carved by King Darius I on Mount Behistun (which were deciphered by western scholars only in the 19th century), and if they had read books by Greek historians Herodotus and Xenophon, or seen the references in



the Old Testament about the Achaemenian kings, they would never have placed Zarathushtra at 600 BC.

To add to this confusion, numerous Head Priests who lived after Zarathushtra called themselves Zarathushtratemo. To distinguish the two, the prophet was called 'Spitama Zarathushtra'. But occasionally the word Spitama was dropped, causing further confusion. Also, there were kings named Zarathushtra who had lived after the prophet.

Several Indian scholars have studied the issue and arrived at the following dates for the period of Zarathushtra:

Pallonji B. Desai	2638 BC
Meherjibhai Kuka	2300 BC
Khurshedji Cama	1300 BC
S. D. Bharucha	1200 BC

Ervad Jamshed Katrak, after a special study, believed Zarathushtra lived about 3,600 years before our time.

S. K. Hodiwala [*Zarathushtra and his Contemporaries*] found references in the Rig Veda to some of Zarathushtra's contemporaries with slight modification in the Vedic literature, therefore leading to the claim that Zarathushtra and the Vedas are contemporaneous. Many Indian scholars place the Vedic age at 2,500 BC. Dr. Martin Haug, European scholar and Sanskrit pundit places it at 3,500 BC. No scholar has ever placed the Vedic age at 600 BC.

The Indus Valley civilization flourished between 3,500 BC and 2,750 BC when the Aryans came to settle in India. There had been sharp differences of view [Chapter 1] amongst the Indo Iranians causing some Aryans to settle in India. We can place their period of migration to India in the period from 2,900 to 2,050 BC.

One approach is to assume that Zarathushtra lived around 3,000 BC or earlier. For this period, Davar has

relied upon the text of linguistics, because of intense mutual similarity between the Avesta and Vedic sister-languages. Davar concludes that due to the discovery of the era of the beginning and end of the Indus Valley civilization, in this century, it is now possible to fix the approximate time of arrival of the Aryans in India. This is an indirect verification that helps us determine the age of Zarathushtra.

**Other topics.** Other topics covered by Prof. Davar include: the Essence of the Zarathushti Religion (Ch.5), Status of Morals (Ch. 6), State After Death (Ch. 7), Status of Fire (Ch.8), Dualism (Ch. 9) and Philosophy Behind the Fravashis (Ch. 10).

The book is enriched with a bibliography and an index and is fully referenced for further study.

- By Adel Engineer

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GATHA CONFERENCE  
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1996

Edited by:  
Sarosh J. H. Maneckshaw  
and  
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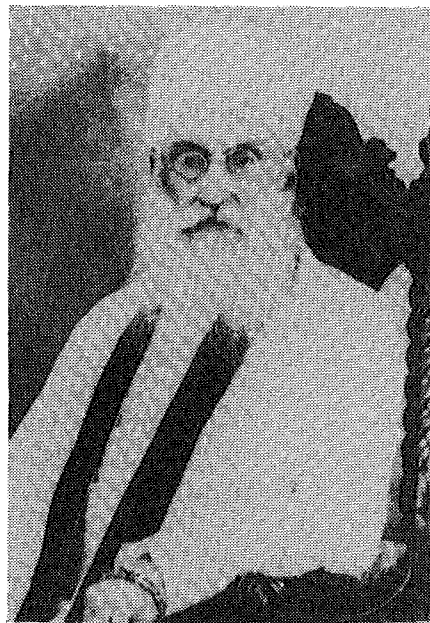
# Such is The Stock I am Made Of

By Dinaz (Sorab) Kutar Rogers  
Albany, Oregon  
with Phiroze Noshirwan Kutar

It would be a gift for his beloved Parsi community — a line by line, word for word translation of the *Shah Nameh* of Firdowsi from Farsi into Gujarati. That germ of an idea came to Faramroze, one of the four Kutar brothers and was bolstered by Zarathushtis in the community who approached our grandfather, whom we affectionately called 'motabawajee': "Dastoorji ... with your command over both Farsi and Gujarati you would perform a great service to the community by translating the *Shah Nameh* from Farsi to Gujarati — otherwise this great epic is lost to most Parsis."

At the same time, others discouraged motabawajee from taking on this monumentally difficult, time-consuming task. But motabawajee was not a man to shirk from a challenge, which by now he had come to think of as his obligation to the Parsi community.

**The translations begin.** And so, without further ado, with the help of the 'Holy Yazdaan' and with his brother Mahiar assisting, our grand-



Dastoor Faramroze Navroji Kutar  
1868-1957



Ervad Mahiar Navroji Kutar  
1865-1940

*The making of the first Gujarati translation of the Shah Nameh by the Kutar brothers in 1914. This narrative is compiled by Faramroze Kutar's grand-daughter from bits and pieces of stories handed down in the family.*

father painstakingly began the monumental task.

Every day, after the day's duties were done, the two brothers would devote some hours to studying, reading, making notes by hand and scrupulously learning all they could about the great poem. Faramroze was aware of partial and complete translations in English, French, Italian, Russian and other languages and also knew the great joy these tales brought to all who heard them.

In North India and in Kashmir the exploits of these Persians were celebrated in the Urdu language. Sir Henry Laird had reported in his travelogue how little children in Iran and the surrounding regions would weep at the recital of the tales from this extraordinary book. As the translations progressed, so did Faramroze and Mahiar's elation and enthusiasm.

Our Grandfather approached K. R. Cama of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute in Bombay, for a loan of his copies of the 10 volumes of the French translation by the German Orientalist, Julius Mohl. But Mr. Cama turned down the request. The volumes were in his private collection. Disappointed, but undaunted, Grandfather kept searching.

Shortly thereafter, as though in answer to his prayers, Faramroze saw an advertisement in the Jam-e-Jamshed offering the said Mohl translations for sale. He immediately purchased the volumes. It is said Ervad Dr. Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, noted Avestan scholar of the time, was also looking for the same volumes, and procured them from Paris, though it took him five years to do so. Progress on the translations was slow but sure. The brothers worked over

them for ten long years, with great personal hardship and sacrifice. Family members pitched in and helped — from fetching a glass of water or a plate of food, to looking up a reference book. A major part of the translations were done at the Bandra Agiari in Mumbai.

**The next step – publication.** Finally, the translations were completed. But the brothers did not have the courage, the means or the know-how to publish their monumental work of ten volumes.

Then help came from precious friends: Meherjeebhai Behramji Dotiwalla, a Farsi scholar and a devoted, religious man, without whose help the volumes would never have reached the community; and Jivanji Modi who wrote a glowing six-page *deebacho* (foreword). This is worth reading as is the *khola-so* (explanation) and *deebacho* by the Kutar brothers. Many other stalwarts of the community helped.

Now Grandfather had pledged to sell each volume for two rupees [less than 6 cents at today's rate of exchange]. That would be twenty rupees for the set. But there was one thing no one had counted on — World War I. The War had inflated the price of paper and printing ink. The cost of each volume was now estimated to be almost seven rupees! No one would print the volumes for two rupees. But my Grandfather had given his pledge to the community — they were to be two rupees per copy; he refused to renege.

Once again, as though by divine intervention, his prayers were answered, and Grandfather was able to purchase a defunct printing press (at Frier Road and Karvar Road, in the Fort, Mumbai). He named it the *Shah Nameh Press*. Volume I was printed there in

1283 YZ (1914 AD), and Volume X four years later.

**An unfinished dictionary.** Besides Persian, Faramroze was a scholar of Avesta, Pazend and Pahlavi. At the age of 61 he started writing a Persian-Gujarati dictionary, but he was unable to finish it, even after 15 years of hard work. So, at the age of 75, due to old age and failing eyesight, after writing 175,000 word, the last few letters in the Persian alphabet were left unfinished. No one has tried to continue his work.

He was also the author of *An Account of Navsari Atash-Behram*, and the life of Sir Jamshedji Jeejeebhoy and Desai Khurshid in Persian verse.

Iran, was a humble Muslim poet called Firdowsi. He composed this epopoeia of Iran in pure, classical Persian, using the minimum number of Arabic words, which were a reminder of the defeat and subjugation of Zarathushti Iran by Islamic Arabia. It took this man, born near Tus, in Khorassan in Eastern Iran, some thirty years to complete the 60,000 couplets, in 1010 AD. The long years of this labor of love had left the poet in an impoverished state.

"Firdowsi was promised a treasure in gold coins and 7,000 dinars by the king, on completion of his epic poem. Assuming that a poor poet from Tus would not know what to do

with such wealth, or failing to understand the value of this classic, a treacherous minister substituted a chest-full of silver coins instead. Gravely disappointed at this deceit, the poor, embittered poet died in 1020, ten years after the completion of his magnum opus.

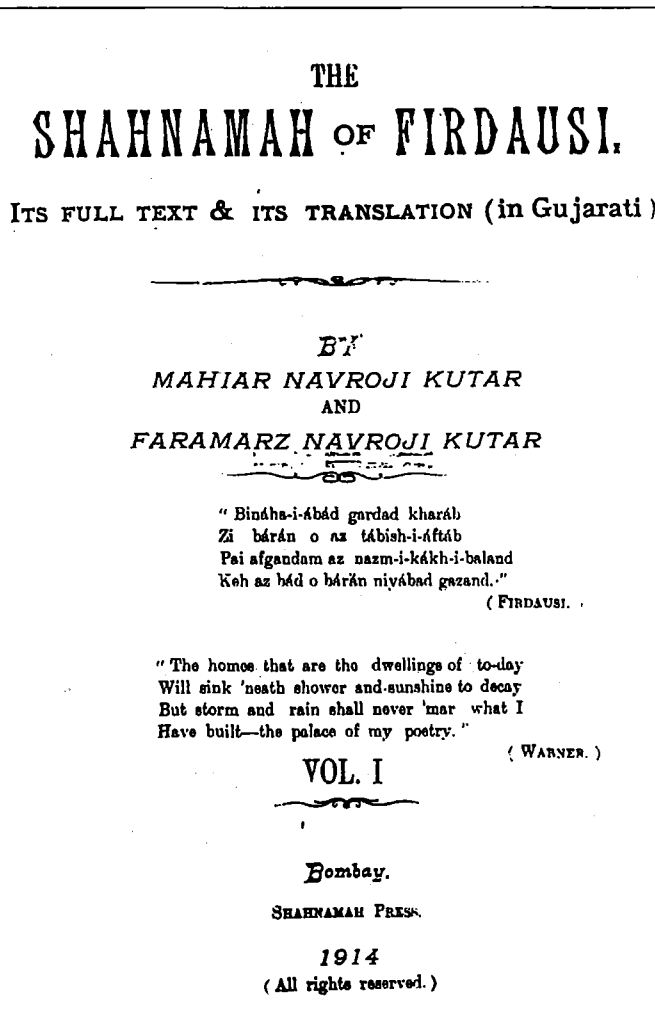
"Meanwhile the king's conscience troubled him, so he dispatched the promised payment of gold coins to Firdowsi. As the caravan of twelve camels bearing the gold was making its way to the poet's home through the Rudbar Gate, Firdowsi's funeral procession was heading the other way from the Gate of Razan to the cemetery."

"If Firdowsi did not make any money for his *Shah Nameh*," said Grandfather, "Why should I?"

True to his word, Grandfather sold the *Shah Nameh* volumes for two rupees, personally absorbing a loss of over Rs. 5,000 — a great sum of money in 1914.

*"Such is the stock I spring from"*

- Titus Maccius Plautus
- Roman Dramatist.
- C254-C184 BC



**A promise kept.** Urged to sell the *Shah Nameh* volumes at a higher price than the promised two rupees, Grandfather narrated the following tale.

"The author of these magnificent tales of pre-Islamic (i.e. Zarathushti)

# READERS' FORUM

Letters (under 600 words) are invited from readers. All submissions must satisfy the Journal's Editorial Policy [see p.7].

## Zarathushtrian Congresses

Following the Sixth World Congress in Tehran, and the various articles published in *FEZANA Journal* and *Pake e Mehr* in this regard, I would like to put forward my views.

In my view this Congress was one of the biggest get together organized in recent years. I hope that we take advantage of this event in our history. The Resolution passed at the end of this Congress included the idea of setting up a committee to execute the Resolution. This committee has been set up in Tehran and is working on the Resolution. In fact this is the first time that such an action has been taken.

For this committee to be successful three things are necessary: men, money and time. All of these should be synchronized together to give the best results.

As for the Tenth North American Congress in San Francisco, it was a weak turnout, but had an important topic on its agenda — the question of Leadership. This topic has been *Pake e Mehr's* baby for over two years.

We should continue the discussion on Leadership at the Eleventh North American Congress in 1998 and in the Seventh World Congress in Houston, we should make it a reality. It will be a fitting start for the year 2000. The Seventh World Congress should move a step ahead and perform rather than discuss.

In conclusion, I support Dolly Das-toor's suggestion [*FEZANA Journal, Winter 1996*] for people to come forward with suggestions for the next World Congress. We have enough time and we should put in our combined and united efforts to make it a success.

Mehraban Shahrvini  
Editor-in-Chief, *Pake e Mehr*

## 'Founding Fathers'?

This is in response to the article The World Zoroastrian Organization by Mr. Adi Davar in *FEZANA Journal [Summer 1997]*. It is an interesting and amusing article. There may be good intentions, but it shows a complete lack of understanding and knowledge of the subject matter on the part of the author.

The author refers to the group of individuals who had no mandate and no permission from the world Zarathushti community, to create a World Zoroastrian Organization as 'founding fathers' and 'leaders'. We know that there were no official representatives from Iran or India, the two major regions of the world, nor from any of the other countries. The group of individuals had no official capacity. How can you have a World Zoroastrian Organization without official participation from the two principal countries nor from any of the other countries?

This is an insult to the intelligence of the world Zarathushti community. And I certainly would not refer to them as "founding fathers".

It is a fact that in three World Zoroastrian Congresses, 1962 in Tehran, and 1976 and 1978 in Mumbai, there were calls and acknowledgement of a need to create a world organization. That same call was made again at the 1996 World Congress in Tehran, and approved by a show of hands. If WZO was a legitimate and official 'world body', there would not have been a need for such a call to action and approval by a show of hands!

WZO was created suddenly in the UK in 1980 by a group of self-serving and self-appointed individuals without a mandate (vote) from the Zarathushti people. They do not deserve to be called founding fathers.

Just because one registers an organization in the UK and puts the word 'world' in the title, does not make it a world body; certainly not as long as they were self-appointed and do not represent the will of the world Zarathushti community.

The author mentions that Canada and the US are "represented" on the WZO Committee by certain individuals. Could he please tell us who voted for these individuals? Better yet, please tell us who voted for the so-called founding fathers to create the WZO to represent us?

Another important point. These individuals are referred to as 'leaders'. Nothing can be further from the truth. The Zarathushti individuals on the Committee from Iran are not, and never have been our leaders.

Zarathushtis all over the world are well educated, wise, free-thinking and knowledgeable people, and armed with our divine prophet Zarathushtra's teachings of Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds, they do elect people to serve and represent them, but they do not have and never have had the need for such 'leaders'.

For Ahura Mazda's sake, do not try to divide our small community. The truth about the people who try to do this will ultimately come out.

K. Harvesf, M.D.  
Jacksonville, Florida

## Zarathushtra – First Known Apocalyptic Seer

There is an interesting article in the *Economist [December 1996]*, entitled Turn of the Millennium by Damien Thomson. Essentially it deals with what Thomson calls "pre-millennium tension". In it there is an interesting reference to Zarathushtra, reproduced below:

"Intriguing too, is what Mr. Thomson has to say about Zarathushtra, an early Persian prophet with lasting influence, whom he identifies as the first known apocalyptic seer.

Zarathushtra, he recounts, was the main source for Hebrew visions of a time of tribulation and destruction, followed by a new-made perfection, a common pattern, it could be added, for later doomsaying prophecy.

"It is from Zoroaster, Mr. Thomson goes on, that the Manichaean vision of a universe split between warring powers of light and darkness, spirit and matter, descends; and this dualism survives, repressed or absorbed, in Christianity."

How much do we really know of the influence that Zarathushtra, and later the faith, exerted on the Hebrews, Greeks and Christianity and in what way. This influence would surely be significant as it would represent the wealth and benefit of mankind and different faiths; not only Zarathushtis.

Why then do we turn today from spreading our faith, confining it to a diminishing constituency of semi-zealous (myself included) followers?

Jehangir Pocha  
Singapore

## God is Omnipotent, not Impotent

I am truly glad to see the constructive and forward thinking of our Zarathushti Community in North America, unlike those in UK and India, unfortunately crippled by petty politics and ego fantasies (I am also partly guilty).

I was quite impressed by the introduction of Professor Nigosian's book *The Zoroastrian Faith* [FEZANA Journal, Spring 1997] and even more so by Nigosian's viewpoint on the concept of Cosmic Dualism. It is quite evident that the Law of Cosmic Dualism is an integral part of nature, at least as far as our galaxy, and the universe that we presume to understand, are concerned.

The article entitled *A Critical Look at Nigosian's The Zoroastrian Faith* misguides readers by implying that the concept of an 'omnipotent God' was influenced by Christian Protes-

tant teachings. The sacred belief that Ahura Mazda is omnipotent (all powerful) has never been questioned in the history of the Mazdayasni Zarathushti religion. Since it was the very first religion on this earth, it must have influenced all the other religions that followed, with the true concept of an Omnipotent God, a factor which plays a predominant part in the understanding of Cosmic Dualism.

Those who believe that Ahura Mazda is an adversary of Ahriman are obviously far from understanding the principle of Cosmic Dualism. With their misconceptions of the One God who is beyond any doubt 'Omnipotent' – they make him 'impotent'! For only He has created everything, including Angre Mainyu (the Evil Mind) and Spenta Mainyu (the Good Mind) – Light and Darkness (without light), Being and Not Being (yet existing). How can the maestro who created the concept of Good and Evil, become an adversary to the same? How can the producer and director of a film who has created the drama of negative and positive roles for his actors, become an adversary to his own creation?

It is logical then, that the war is not between Ahura Mazda and Ahriman, but as so rightly stressed by Prof. Nigosian, related to the "principle of human choice (between Good and Evil) together with the Law of Consequences." Prof. Nigosian concludes this same fact, stating "The whole conflict is therefore a war of moral choices: right or wrong, truth or falsehood, justice or injustice." If the above theory was void, then all our holy scriptures would be rendered meaningless.

I wish to present some scriptural evidence from the translations of our scriptures by one of the greatest scholars of our religion – Ervad Kavasji Edulji Kanga. May I refer to our basic kushti prayers, to show that we seek Ahura Mazda's assistance to fight Ahriman and pray to Him only – to eradicate evil.

If Ahura Mazda was not Omnipotent, then why would we pray to Him? If He were an adversary of Ahriman, (which makes Him at the same level) we would have a choice to pray to Ahriman as well. But no Zarathushti scriptures have ever suggested that. All pray to God only, for the destruction of evil.

We begin our Kushti prayers with *Kemna Mazda*. I refer to the last paragraph: "Pata-no tbishantat pairi Mazdaoscha ... Nemaschaya Armaitish izhacha" It is very clear from Kanga's translation that we seek protection against evil from Ahura Mazda, the all powerful, and seek total destruction of all that is evil. We then untie our Kushti and recite the most powerful prayers, Hormazd Khodai, which states:

"Hormazd is the creator of the entire world and is the ruler over it. There is none equal to Him. May Ahriman and all his devas, drujas, sorcerers, tyrants, etc. be shattered, smitten and defeated! O Holy Protector! For whatever wicked thoughts I have harbored, for whatever wicked words I have spoken and for whatever wicked actions I have done, or have been executed by me unknowingly, for all these types of sins, I sincerely repent and atone for."

Once again, it is amply clear that it is we (the 'created') who are in conflict with Ahriman — for which we seek Ahura Mazda's support to triumph over evil, and humbly beg His pardon for all our misdoings. In fact, all our prayers are directed with the sole purpose of eliminating the 'negative' from the cosmos, so that the 'positive' may prosper — bestowing happiness and joy to Ahura Mazda's creation. Therefore it becomes mandatory upon every Zarathushti to be an active fighter against evil forces and not become merely a passive spectator of the war between Good and Evil. As Edmond Burke has said:

"For Evil to triumph — Good has to do nothing."

Prof. Nigosian is on the right path of understanding the concept of Cosmic



Dualism — unlike those who oppose his views simply because “It does not explain the extant predominance of evil in this world.”

*Ervad Darius N. Sethna*  
Mumbai, India

### Correcting Misconceptions in Washington Times

The following letter was written in response to an article *Ethnic Groups Near Extinction* by N. Fernandes of API, in the *Washington Times* [October 21, 1996] which featured the Parsis of Mumbai and the Kalash culture of Pakistan as “endangered people”.

“They helped build nations and megacorporations. They enriched the world’s arts and culture. What members of India’s dwindling Parsi community cannot do, it seems, is save itself from extinction. ... Every year the Parsis record 1,000 deaths — and only 400 births. Just 76,000 remain. By 2021, when India is projected to have 1 billion people, there likely will be only 30,000 Parsis left ...”

The specter of extinction raised in the article does not convey the whole truth about our long-term prospects worldwide. While it is accurate, as asserted in the story, that our numbers are declining in India, the story does not pinpoint why. Missed is the fact that the increasingly older population in India is a result of a movement of younger, marriageable-age Zarathushtis to Europe and North America.

More Zarathushtis now live outside India than in it. In their new homes, Zarathushtis are actively passing on their faith to their children. It is premature to write our obituary.

While our numbers are indeed small, we are strongly committed to the Zarathushti religion. We are well organized through a series of associations (23 so far) in Canada and the US. We are also represented by a Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America and a World Zoroastrian Organization. Every two years, we hold a North American Congress, and a world congress

every four years, to assess our direction and plot the future. Our association in the Washington area has been steadily growing in the 17 years of its existence. We even have several Web sites for anyone interested in learning about the Zarathushti religion.

One last comment, please: The label of “fire worshippers” used in the story is misapplied. Fire is present in our houses of worship, as are crucifixes in some Christian churches. In neither case can it be said the symbol is “worshipped”. Fire to us is the symbol of Ahura Mazda the Wise Lord. By the way, Zarathushtra’s (our prophet) monotheism, his concept of good and evil for which we will be judged after death, and his prophesy of a Messiah were all incorporated into the Judeo-Christian ethic.

*Kersi B. Shroff*  
President, Zoroastrian Association of  
Metropolitan Washington

### “Keep Snapping that Rope”

I read with great interest *The Immigrant Experience* [FEZANA Journal, Spring 1997], and thought your readers might enjoy reading my arrival story.

I arrived in Milwaukee after a 24-hours-plus journey from Bombay. I was to begin a Master’s program in Electrical Engineering at Marquette University that fall, and my feelings at that time were a mixture of excitement, apprehension and fatigue. As instructed in my orientation papers, I found my way to the local YMCA, where a room was supposed to have been reserved for me. No such luck! However, the folks were extremely helpful and somehow managed to find a room for me at one of the University dorms down the road. They even helped me lug my bags the couple of blocks to the dorm, and I was grateful to have a comfortable bed to crash into.

The next morning I went about the process of registering for my courses. Not having been through anything similar before, it was a wonder I was able to emerge from the process with

courses that were actually relevant to my desired area of specialization. It was late afternoon by the time I was done, and I went back to my room to freshen up before I started apartment hunting.

Imagine my shock and surprise upon opening the door to be greeted by the biggest man I had ever seen, dressed in nothing but white briefs which contrasted starkly with his ebony skin. Wendell Phillips was a 6’ 8” basketball player, and about as gentle a giant as you would want.

Needless to say, neither of us could figure out a word the other was saying for the first few minutes. When we eventually realized that each of us was speaking English, albeit with slightly different accents, I finally figured out that this was his room that I was crashing into. He was most gracious about the situation and said I could stay for as long as it took me to find an apartment.

I felt I had a lot to be thankful for that night, and before turning in, I donned my topi and went about saying my kushti prayers. Wendell sat on the bed, leaned forward, chin in hand, watching me with utter fascination. When I was done, he asked me what that was all about. I mumbled something about thanking the Lord for a good day.

I’m not sure what transpired the next day, but I do remember going to bed by 9 pm, given that I was still suffering from jet lag. About 10 o’clock, I find myself being gently but persistently shaken awake by my roommate. “Feroze”, said he, “Wake up! You didn’t pray to the Lord today!” Believe me, I had neither the gump-tion nor the desire to argue with him, so I got out of bed and did my kushti under his approving gaze. And thanks to Wendell, in twenty years since, I have never skipped this ritual.

A couple of days later, I was ready to move out, having found an apartment. Wendell was amazed that I was able to do this in such good order in spite of the semester being under

way, and, of course, attributed it to my regular prayers.

"Man," he said, "Whatever you're doing is pretty effective. You keep on snapping that rope y'hear? And, while you're about it, snap it a couple of times for me too!"

I would run into Wendell on occasion on campus, and he would ask me if I was still "snapping the rope." I would assure him that I was, whereupon he'd make approving sounds and continue on his way. I don't know where Wendell is today. I lost touch with him after I graduated. But I will never forget him.

*Feroze Motafram  
Brookfield, Wisconsin*

### **A Journal to be Proud of**

I read your articles on Professionals in North America [*FEZANA Journal, Summer 1997*] and as usual they were marvelous. Every Zarathushti in it should be congratulated for leaving their home country, be it India or Iran or Pakistan or Africa ... to come and settle in a foreign land and achieve success in their fields.

You need to be praised and congratulated for your dedication and for your excellent writing and editorial work. Zarathushtis thank you for giving them such great articles to enjoy reading or at least something to gossip about.

I sent my son stationed at Fort Polk, the article about the twin sisters in the Army. I also sent my other son, who just finished his MBA, the article about the two gentlemen who are partners in Deloitte & Touche, since he will be starting with that company this fall. My Italian daughter-in-law was raised in Pakistan and her mother knows Bapsi Sidhwa. So, you see, your Journal is used widely for networking, and helps to bring Zarathushtis in touch with each other!

*Adi M. Maneckshaw, P.E.  
Waldorf, Maryland*

My heartiest congratulations on the Professionals issue of the Journal. I stayed up until 2 am reading it — couldn't put it down. I found so much useful information and will be contacting some of the people.

I don't know how you do it. The logistics alone would be a nightmare, and you do it all, issue after issue, with such grace. Marvellous! Once again, my admiration and gratitude, and every good wish for continued success.

*Rubina Patel Lovelace  
Silver Spring, Maryland*

The latest issue (on Professionals) is one of the best and most interesting ones I have seen. The range of professions covered in the profile section just shows our diversity. Bravo!

*Rashna Ghadialy  
Washington, DC*

Congratulations on an exceedingly well researched and produced issue on professionals. You have once again rendered yeoman service in chronicling an important aspect of contemporary Zarathushti history in the New World.

In India, not since Darukhanawala's *Parsi Lustre on Indian Soil* has anything on this scale been attempted.

We were wondering if we could reprint the supplement in Parsiana. Though the issue is much thicker than our normal issue, we will absorb the cost as the material is invaluable.

*Jehangir R. Patel  
Editor and Publisher  
Parsiana magazine, Mumbai*

Congratulations on an excellent Summer 1997 issue. What a lot of hard work has gone into this; but it is well worth it. The records emanating from this will, in themselves, be worth a fortune in years to come.

I am sure producing something of this magnitude cannot be easy: frayed nerves, rising hopes, exciting moments, despair, and what not. The key to your success must have been calm minds, communicating, and Dolly's Summer Garden Hints [*page 90*]. We are proud of you. Thank you for enriching our lives.

*Bella Tata  
Vancouver, BC*

Thank you for all your hard work. It truly is a Journal to be proud of.

*Villy Gandhi  
Glen Rock, New Jersey.*

Congratulations on your excellent Journal. I look forward to receiving and reading the very informative and delightful articles — it has become one of my favorite magazines. The last 2 issues portrayed many who left the security of their homes in the East for the West, and in spite of the odds became very successful. Very commendable indeed!

I have a burning question that I would like answered — what does our religion say happens to us after death? Do we believe in reincarnation or not? It would be interesting to see what the Zarathushti religion says on this.

*Nelly Doctor  
Singapore*

### **Increasing Awareness**

How can I emphasize enough the importance for each Zarathushti here in North America to increase the awareness of Americans and Canadians about our religion and our history.

As foreign students in North Carolina in the mid-1960s, my wife and I were invited to so many churches and Sunday morning religious TV programs, to talk about our heritage, and it never failed to impress others. We were pleasantly surprised when years later, some friends in Philadelphia told us they saw us on a TV program in 1967!

I always carry literature on the Zarathushti religion with me, even at my clinic, including a Gatha translation, as it proves very informative.

However, for surviving on this continent, we need to define for our children what the Zarathushti religion really is and how they can easily practice it here, instead of confusing them with differing opinions which they won't be able to sort out on their own, once our generation passes away.

The Zarathushti religion cannot possibly survive here otherwise. ■

*Kersey H. Antia  
Orland Park, Illinois*

## ZARATHUSHTI ENTERPRISE PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Please support our Zarathushti entrepreneurs and advertisers and purchase their products and services.

### Opportunities Wanted

**Accountant, M.Com** from Mumbai with 6 years experience with DHL, currently on a Visitor's visa, is desperately looking for a job and an employer willing to sponsor him for an immigrant visa. His wife, a **Registered Nurse** licensed in the State of Georgia, with 6 years experience in ICU at Bombay's Parsi General Hospital, is also looking for an employer willing to sponsor her.

They are both willing to work hard and will be eternally grateful to you for the opportunity. Contact Roshan Rivetna at (630) 325-5383.

### Passing of the Pickle Era

The man who founded the Patak Indian pickle empire from the

kitchen of his Kentish Town (UK) home died in March 1997, aged 72. Laxmishanker Patak, emigrated to London in 1956 from Kenya with £5 and used it to build a £60 million food business.

He began by frying samosas in his basement and selling them to homesick immigrant families. He worked 18 hours a day from his kitchen, and by 1968 was supplying the growing number of Indian restaurants in Britain. In 1965, a huge over-ordering of pickles almost ruined the business. But Patak turned the error into an opportunity, invented new recipes and bottled the pickles.

Today Patak's pickles are the hallmark of the industry, and can be found in food stores around the

world. The slogan "Pukka people pick a pot of Patak's" has helped the firm achieve sales of close to £30 million a year. [From ZTFE Newsletter, April 1997]



### The Zoroastrian Shop

The Zoroastrian Shop stocks sukhad, lobban, sudrehs, topis, kushtis, silk flower torans, farohars, prayer books, silver ses, books and much more. Ask for a catalog. Orders will be taken. Call Khurshed Bapasola at (609) 768-8351.



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## Tracing Your Family Tree

Rubina Patel Lovelace of Maryland has offered to create computerized individual family trees. She can process data for several generations to produce a printout tracing your family's blood lines. Contact Rubina at (301) 754-2762.

## Spiritual Healing through Prayer

Health is happiness. It is the greatest blessing of life. With health, life has everything, without it — nothing. Health is the richest possession of man upon earth:

"That healer is the best healer who cures by health-giving mantras (holy words). He is the righteous man who leads the soul. Such healer is the best conquering healer."

- Yasht 3.5, Ys 10.9, Ys. 68.11, Yasht 3.6

Being a priest I practice spiritual healing through our prayers. If your family member or friend is seriously ill, please contact me. Through our prayers one can be cured, or at least comforted, to overcome the painful situation. Mobed Zareer Bhandara, Tel: (714) 434-1936.

*There is nothing so useless as doing efficiently that which should not be done at all.*

- Fed Newsletter

PLEASE GIVE FROM YOUR YOUR HEART

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].

## Yadgari Donations for Zoroastrian College Building Construction

Phase 1 of The Zoroastrian College building construction in Sanjan, which commenced in October 1987, has been completed. But the College is now faced with repaying large Bank loans. Dr. Meher Master-Moos, President of the College is making an earnest request to Zarathushtis to support this worthy cause.

For donations over Rs. 5,000, names will be engraved on a special Roll of Honor in the main College building and included in the Fravardegan Prayers and Jashans at the College. Donations over Rs. 50,000 may have a portion of the College building named in their honor. Please send your checks, payable to FEZANA, marked "Zoroastrian College" to the FEZANA Welfare Committee [see address above].

## United Way Contributions

ZAPANJ, Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania and New Jersey (and possibly other Zoroastrian Associations) are registered with several United Way agencies. Donors to United Way are requested to make their contribution payable to

ZAPANJ. For information on how your Association can benefit from this scheme, please contact Katayun Kapadia at (609) 795-0946.

## Parsi General Hospital

Fund-raising drives for the B. D. Petit Parsi General Hospital in Mumbai are being conducted on the East and West coasts. This is the eleventh year Yasmin and Jamshed Ghadiali of 2686 Belcher Street, Baldwin, New York 11510, tel: 516-378-4516, are conducting their annual drive. To date, they have collected and sent over \$95,000 to the hospital. On the West coast, Arvi Kasad at 6 Somerset Ct., Belmont, CA 94001, Tel: (415) 591-2813 conducted their Tenth Annual fund-raising dinner. Every penny of the monies collected is sent directly to the hospital.

## Gift of Life

In North America and elsewhere, cremation is preferred or burial is performed. When a person dies with all the vital organs intact and healthy, imagine how many lives could be salvaged, if only one thinks in a rational manner and takes a humane approach by donating an organ — an eye, a kidney or a heart — to save the life of another. Why cannot we, as

*Khshnothrá Ahuré Mazdao*  
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**FEZANA JOURNAL is looking for help with text entry and production of the Journal.** Must have access to a PC or MAC and be comfortable with desktop publishing applications. Need a reliable, responsible person committed to working under deadline pressures for 40-50 hours every quarter. \$7 per hour. Contact Roshan Rivetna at (630) 325-5383.

Ahura Mazda's assistants donate a gift of our vital organs after death to a human being, rather than wasting them with the dead body. To take a step further, one can start, the good deed when alive, by donating blood or bone marrow. Contact your local donor organization or Hira Bhandara at (714) 434-1936.

### Thanks from Imroze

Marzban Ardeshir, father of 13-year old Imroze Ardeshir writes: "

"To the people of FEZANA: I am happy to announce the success of the Bone Marrow Transplant of my daughter. She was discharged from Hammersmith Hospital in London in February 1997 after four gruelling months, with the first transplant being a dismal failure. She returned to Bombay in June ... I am very grateful to you for your contributions. ... The turn of events from utter grief to relief is largely owing to your generosity and goodwill. Thank you all for your help in saving my daughter."

### Help for Melanoma Surgery

Navaz Mehta, 33, underwent three operations at Johns Hopkins Institute for melanoma of the face. The tumor was safely removed but regrettably the flap surgery failed, and she has now opted, instead for prosthesis. Experts at Sloan Kettering in New York are now making her a new palate, nose, cheek and eye to make her look close to normal.

Johns Hopkins has presented a bill of \$150,000. Thus far only \$11,000 has been collected. The expected bill from Sloan Kettering will be in the region of \$20,000. The family is appealing for help to meet these staggering bills. Please mail your donation checks payable to FEZANA, to the FEZANA Welfare Committee at the address on the previous page.

# Suggestions for Student Aid

By Aban Daruwalla  
Riverside, California

**F**EZANA Journal often prints appeals for Student Aid. I would like to answer that you cannot depend on donations to put you through school. You can however, depend on scholarships, fellowships, assistantships, research support, student loans and grants.

In this country students do not realize how fortunate they are with respect to the amount of financial aid available to them. There are funds that lie idle year after year because no applications are submitted. Students are not aware of the wealth that is at their disposal. All they have to do is to take the time to find out what best fits their needs, and apply.

How does one find out about these funds? I am providing you with a list of directories that have lists of scholarships for different fields, at various levels. These directories are available in college, university, and some public libraries, in the Reference section.

The US Department of Education has assistantships. They have a Web page too. The Federal and State Governments both have educational program funding and should be accessed first. Other funding sources are shown below.

(1) Financial Aids for Higher Education: (17th edition) Ed. Keeslar Santamaria, Nicholas Victor Santamaria.

Items (2) through (7) are published by Reference Series Press:

(2) High School Seniors Guide to Merit Scholarships.

(3) College Students Guide to Merit Scholarships.

(4) and (5) Directory of Financial Aid for Minorities; and Women.

(6) Directory of Financial Aid for Research and Creative Activities Abroad.

(7) Financial Aid for Study and Training Abroad.

(8) Foundation Grants to Individuals: 9th Ed., Ed. L. Victor Hall.

(9) International Scholarship Directory: 3rd Ed., J. David Cassidy, President. This has graduate and undergraduate sources in every major field of study.

(10) Graduate Scholarship Directory: 3rd Ed. A complete guide to scholarships, fellowships, grants, loans for graduate or professional study.

(11) Fellowship in International Affairs. A guide to opportunities in the US and abroad.

(12) Peterson's Grants for Post Doc. Study. A comprehensive list of fellowships and grants.

(13) Directory of Research Grants, 1997: Lyn E. Miner. Also has a guide to proposal planning and writing.

(14) The Grants Register: 1997. Complete guide to postgraduate funding world wide.

(15) Financial Aid for the Disabled and their Families: Gail Ann Schlacter and David Weber.

Each of these sources has its own web site too. Though some work needs to be done, it is worth the effort. If you have any success stories, please send in your experiences to FEZANA Journal, so those who read it may be motivated to take that route to independence. ■

## Seth Viccaji-Seth Pestonji Meherji Parsi Fire Temple

To commemorate the 150-year anniversary of the Agiary in Secunderabad, the trustees are reproducing the *Pestonshahi Sicca*, the only coin, in the 1300-year history of the Parsis in India, ever to be minted by a Parsi family. Sir Pestonji Meherji, founder of the agiary (with his brother Seth Vicaji) was permitted by the



Nizam to mint coins in the Aurangabad Mint in 1832; 2.2 million silver coins were minted. Commemorative silver coins are available for \$20 (US) or \$28 (CD). All proceeds will be used for repair and renovation of the Agiary. Please send checks payable to Zoroastrian Association of Quebec, to Adi Chinoy, 4829 des Cageaux, Pierrefonds, Quebec, Canada H9J 3R5.



## Acknowledgements

FEZANA most gratefully acknowledges donations received this quarter, through June 30, 1997. Donations may be made for the FEZANA fund categories: Welfare, Religious Education, Student Aid, Youth, FEZANA Journal, General or for a specific appeal.

### Received by Welfare Committee for Various appeals:

Pervin Amroli (\$30); Anonymous, MD (\$21+\$21+\$21); Poras Balsara, TX (\$51); Arnavaz Dua, WI (\$100); Behram Irani, TX (\$50 + \$100 + \$50); Rusi Gandhi, NJ (\$50); Dhun May, CA (\$30); Darayus Mehta, MN (\$25); Shahrokh Mehta, NY (\$25); Parvez Mukadam, MN (\$50); Shirmard Corporation, NY (\$100); Noshir Vatcha, MD (100); Rohinton Ogra, IL (\$27); Kavas Thunthy, LA (\$25); Raymond Unwalla, PA (\$50+\$51); Well-wisher, MI (\$25); Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (C\$651).

### For Welfare Fund

Cyrus Austin, AZ (\$300); Kaizad Hansotia, FL (\$101); Behram Irani, TX (\$100); Hoshedar Tamboli, FL (\$101).

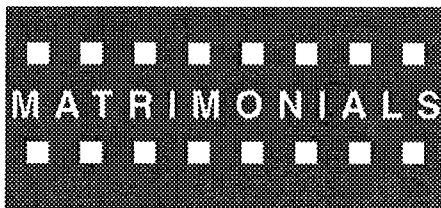
### For FEZANA Journal:

Anonymous, GA (\$930); Tehmtan Arjani, CA (\$11); Mehelly Bam, TX (\$11); Jeroo Daruwalla, CA (\$15); Dara Deboo, WA (\$15); Darayus Elavia, IL (\$11); Noshir Karanjia, NJ (\$50); Hoshang Khambatta, CA (\$20); Fredoon Khory, Ont (\$20); Minocher Reporter, OR (\$30); Bella Tata, BC (\$51).

Mrs. Rhoda J. Pavri, BC, in loving memory of her beloved husband **Jamshed Pavri**, a respected founding father of the Zarathushti community in North America, (\$1500). ■

**Marketing manager in Dubai**, male, B.Com, 'strong and silent' type, artistic, good swimmer, cook, audiophile - enjoys music. Looking for good home-maker, 20-30. Also brother, **manager in Dubai, 5' 9", athletic**, fair, good sense of humor, artistic, excellent dancer, plays piano, culinary skills. Looking for good-natured woman 22-30, with strong family values. Call sister at (416) 924-5045, email: natech@usa.net. [M97-35, M97-36]

**Male, B.Com, 33**, good-natured, religious. Enjoys cricket. Call brother at (305) 271-1525. [M97-37]



*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).*



### CUPID STRIKES!

FEZANA Journal is delighted to learn of three new matches through this column: M95-14 and 95-15; M95-30; F97-04. Congratulations to the happy couples!



**Male, 34, M.D.** practicing in a clinic. Enjoys music, theater, outdoors, interested in meeting pleasant, slim, educated, outgoing woman. Call friend at (905) 764-6667. [M97-19]

**Female from Australia, mid-40s**, graduate, in service with Australian government, financially independent. Kind, caring, fun-loving person, enjoys traveling, gardening, sewing, creative arts. Looking for a "soul-mate" with whom she can "relax and enjoy life". [F97-20]

**Male, 28, very good looking**, fair, friendly, B. Com., commercial pilot license, owns used-car dealership. Interested in cars, outdoors, music, dancing, (301) 428-3238. [M97-21]

**Male, 33, used-car dealership** with brother (above), graduate of catering college. (301) 428-3238. [M97-22]

**Male, Ph.D. in Chemistry**, doing research. [M97-24]

### Club Z

Make friends with Zarathushti singles through the internet email discussion group. Send email to: hcommiss@mipos2.intel.com

**Male, 30, MBA**, controller of accounts. [M97-25]

**Young man from Sweden**, interested in meeting girls from good Zarathushti family. Contact Mrs. Shirin Om, Hyppingeplan 14, 3 TR., 16362 Spanga, Stockholm, Sweden. [M97-26]

Alliance invited from well settled Parsi boys for attractive graduate **daughters 24 (5' 2", computer graphist) and 21 (5' 5", MBA student)** in Mumbai. Contact Mrs. Mistry, A-16 Cusrow Baug, S. B. Road, Mumbai 400 001, Tel 282-4918. [F97-27] and [F97-28]

Father interested in finding a suitable Zarathushti match for **daughter, 24, living in Finland**, Masters degree in Economics. [F97-29]

**Attractive, slim woman, 24, 5'5"** B.A., working at travel and tourism job in Mumbai. Home-loving, has taken craft and bakery courses. Call cousin (630) 289-0156. [F97-30]

**Educated gentleman, mid-30s**, good looking, 5'10", athletic, secure job, looking for life-time partner to share the pleasures of life. (201) 587-0212. [M97-31]

**Male, 30, MBA**, well-settled, senior financial analyst, enjoys traveling, photography, music, sports. Looking for attractive woman with pleasant personality and good sense of humor. (630) 739-7023. [M97-32]

**Slim, pretty lady, 41** (but looks 30), owner of beauty salon in London, UK, 5'3", Warm and home-loving. Contact friend Yasmin at (301) 977-3544. [M97-33]

**Male, 32**, from Paris, France, MBA, working in bank, international upbringing, widely traveled. Enjoys dancing, reading, table-tennis, karate, Call France 331 64-248294 or uncle in Pittsburgh (412) 243-3032. [M97-34]

### Mumbai Matrimonial Bureau

The Mancherji Joshi Memorial Trust runs a successful Matrimonial Bureau. Interested persons please contact Mrs. Jesia at 414-9571 or Mrs. Parekh at 414-8128 in Mumbai.

## PERSONALS

**Adoption.** Zarathushti family resident in USA, is interested in adopting a Zarathushti child. Readers with experience, suggestions or contacts with agencies in North America or India that would help in this regard, contact via Roshan Rivetna [see back cover].

**Penfriend.** I am interested in knowing about other countries, and would like to correspond with penfriends in other countries. Write to Mr. J. Niezagany, P.O. Box 17765-135, Tehran, Iran.

## MILESTONES

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

### Births

Cyrus Xerxes and Avan Navaz, twins, to Judith and Xerxes Colah of Clinton, Iowa, on May 6.

Zal and Tarana, twins, to Parizad and Darius K. Joshi, of Walled Lake, Michigan, grand nephew and niece to Roshan Ester Bamji of Chevy Chase, Maryland, and to Dr. Cyrus Joshi of Kentucky, on June 6.

Shireen, a girl, to Homa and Bahman Abesteh, on May 5.

Zoish, a girl, to Mishez and Rohinton Bellihomji of Chicago area, granddaughter to Shahezar and Minoo Avari, on February 18.

Darya, a girl, to Mehrnaz (Poulad) and Feraidun Khosravi, in Toronto, on March 9.

Sherzad, a boy, to Bakhtawar and Cyrus Press of Chicago area, brother to Carmin, and grandson to Tehmina Fatakia, on May 28.

Public  
Sudreh-  
Pushi cere-  
mony of 12  
children in  
Yazd, Iran,  
in August  
1996.



PHOTO: PAK E MEHR

Yazmin, a girl, to Delnaz and Eric Rustomji of Hainesville, Illinois, granddaughter to Rashna and Adi Patell, on January 30.

Danny, a boy, to Mahrugh and Phil Sidhwa, of Ontario, brother to Lila and Farokh, grandson to Katy and Dinyar Dinshaw and Dinoo and Bejan Sidhwa, on March 3.

Amy Serena, a girl, to Persis and Sorab Vatcha of Mountain View, California, grand-daughter to Scylla Vatcha and late Rusi Vatcha of Mumbai, and niece to Roshan Rivetna of Chicago, on June 9.

### Birthday

Jill Byram, perhaps the longest resident Zarathushti in Ottawa celebrated her 90th birthday on June 7 with family and friends. She and her sister, Sill always made new Zarathushti immigrants welcome and helped them to settle.

### Navjotes

Rustom Avary, son of Zenobia and Dara Avary, of London, Ontario, on July 12. Ervad Tehemton F. Mirza officiated.

Fredoon Mistry, son of Kashmira and Kurush Mistry, of London, Ontario, on July 27. Ervad Tehemton Mirza officiated.

Jehan and Garrit, sons of Renate and Pheroze Nagarwalla, of St. Charles, Illinois, at the Darbe Mehr in Chicago, on June 28.

Sezin Patel, son of Kersi and Meena Patel, of Scranton, Pennsylvania, on June 28. Ervads Jehan Bagli and Noshir Hormuzdiar officiated.

Zreh and Stivant Raghina, sons of Shahrookh and Farida Raghina, in Delta, British Columbia, on May 18.

Farzin Shahryari, son of Farida and Houshmand Sharyari, at the Darbe Mehr in Chicago on June 7.

Farrah, daughter of Munira and Farokh Siganporia, at the Darbe Mehr in Chicago, on July 26.

Diana Kelly, daughter of Phee and Phil Vania, of Ontario, on June 15.

### Engagement

Dr. Rustom Kevala, [photo below] Chairperson of the FEZANA Publications Committee, son of Banoo and the late Jal Damkevala and brother of Bomi Damkevala of Chicago, is engaged to Yasmin Naterwalla, formerly of Dubai, Tehran and Mumbai. The wedding is planned for September, at the Darbe Mehr in Chicago. The couple will reside in Potomac, Maryland.

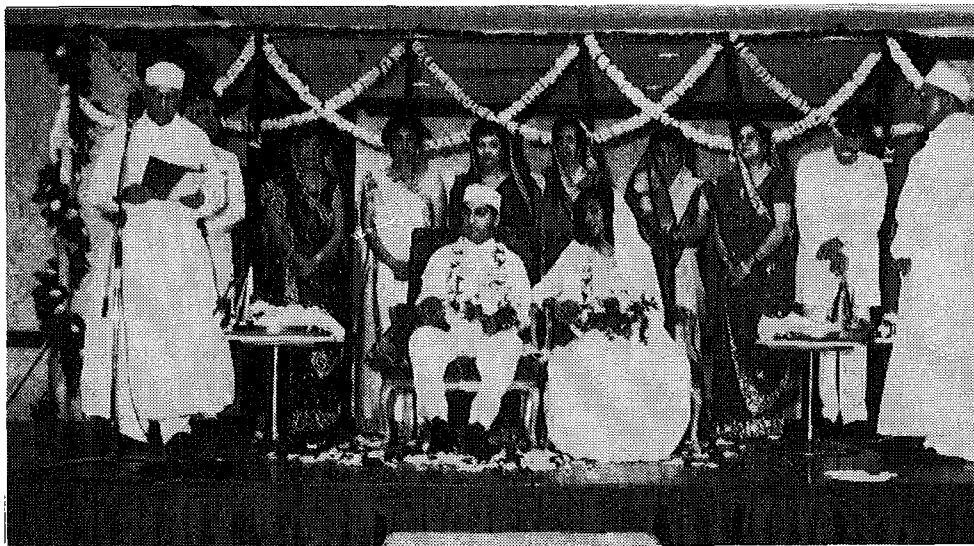


### Weddings

Parvin Amanat, daughter of Rostam and Fereshteh Amanat, to Babak Oshidary, son of Namdar and Parichehr, in Vancouver, on April 26.



**Public Sudreh-Pushi (Navjote) in Toronto.** In a ceremony conducted by the North American Mobed Council, the ZSO (Iranian Zarathushti Cultural Canoun) and the Council of Iranian Mobeds of North America, at the Mehraban Guiv Darbe Mehr in Toronto, on August 31, 1996, eleven youth were inducted into the faith. Photo shows: Anahita, daughter of Nooshin and Hooshang Farahmand (by Mobed Firdosh Balsara), Anita and Babak, children of Farkhondeh and Parviz Rashidi (by Mobeds Gustad Panthaki and Xerxes Bamji), Ariandokht, daughter of Mitra and Hooshang Namiranian (by Mobed Yezdi Antia), Armita and Kaveh, children of Karan and Fariborz Farahmand (by Mobeds Jal Panthaki and Fariborz Shahzadi), Babak and Faranak, children of Kiandokht and Jahangir Rashidi (by Mobeds Minoo Kanga and Nowzar Kotwal), Gitty and Pantea, daughters of Nooshin and Hooshang Farahmand (by Mobeds Kerman Katrak and Fariborz Shahzadi), Nikzad, son of Mahnaz and Iraj Kianianfard (by Mobed Neriosang Karanjia). To arrange a Sudreh-Pushi ceremony, contact Mobed Fariborz Shahzadi at (714) 348-2735.



**Cooper-Dastoor wedding.** Jasmine Cooper, daughter of Katy Fali Cooper (behind the bride), and Zubin Dastoor, son of Phiroz and FEZANA President Dolly Dastoor (behind the groom), were married at Hotel Delta in Montreal on June 7. Ervads Gev Karkaria (at microphone) and Nozer Kotwal officiated. The couple will reside in Virginia.



## Traditions mingle at Parsee Wedding

By Ashok Chandwani

"There were more guests at the wedding than there are followers of their ancient faith in Montreal," read the half-page article entitled Traditions Mingle at Parsee Wedding, in the Montreal Gazette, "But the 323 friends and relatives who gathered to witness and celebrate the simple, flower-laden ceremony, provided eloquent testimony to the resilience and brave vibrancy of what is arguably the world's tiniest religious minority.

"The wedding was a marriage of many styles, dominated by the couple's Parsee background. The banquet hall at the Delta hotel was awash in gold and embroidered silk sarees in colors of rich purple, red, blue, cream, salmon and jade. "As a pianist played Handel's Water Music, the bridal couple, both wearing white and garlands of roses, entered in a procession of female relatives carrying a ceremonial silver tray containing water, rice, an egg, dry fruits, a coconut and an oil lamp — all symbols of light, prosperity, fertility and happiness...

"The two things that struck me the most about the ceremony were the abundance of flowers and kisses. The dais was decorated with flowers, there were flowers on the ritual trays, the couple wore garlands of roses and carried bouquets of them too and a shower of rose petals concluded the ceremony. And throughout, they were constantly being hugged and kissed by their parents, relatives and the priests..."

[Excerpted from *The Gazette, Montreal*, June 9, 1997]



Dinshaw Balsara of Urbana Illinois, to Rashna Modi of Mumbai, in Mumbai, in May.

Jasmine Unwalla, daughter of Dorab and Nelly Unwalla of Boca Raton, Florida, to Rustom Deboo of Michigan, in Florida on May 26.

Cyrus Gazdar, son of Sam and Dhun Gazdar, and nephew of Khurshed Gazdar, to Mikiyo, daughter of Shoshiro Masuda, in Toronto, on June 14.

### Anniversaries

Nilufer and Danny Mama of Ontario celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary on June 20.

Yasmin and Kanti Kothari celebrated their 25th anniversary with a dinner reception at the Darbe Mehr in Chicago, on August 30.

### Deaths

Amy Jal Dotiwalla, mother of Rumi, Pheroze and Zubin, sister of Keki Printer of Toronto, and Percy of Montreal, in Toronto, on July 17.



Burjor Rustom Engineer, father of Rustom Engineer and grandfather of Eric and Diana, of Houston area, in Mumbai, on June 5.

Ebrahim, husband of Aloo Dadabhai of Toronto, father of Ferhana and Farhad, on May 3.

Homi Manekshaw Kolah, husband of Tehmi and father of Jehangir, of Ontario, on May 30.

Camal Nentin, wife of Firoz Nentin, mother of ZAGNY President Gev Nentin, Mahrukh and Armin, on June 4.

Naval Sidhwa, 68, of Los Angeles, passed away suddenly on February 11. Naval, father of Rashne Baetz of Ontario, touched many people with his kindness, cheerfulness and positive outlook. He cared deeply for his community and was very active in both the New York and Los Angeles Associations.

Mehrbano Soheil (Yeganegi), 82, mother of Pari Yeganegi of Vancouver and Parviz Soheil and Homa Zartoshty, in Tehran, on May 1.

*Far left, Farida Ichaporia, daughter of Pallan and Hutoxi Ichaporia of Pennsylvania, to Berjes Shroff, son of Freny and Eric Shroff of Mumbai, on June 15, at Albless Baug, Mumbai.*

*Left, Leena Lakdawala, son of Ness and Roshan Lakdawala of Montreal, was married to Aurelio Useche on June 28. Ervads Nozer Kotwal and Zubin Dastoor officiated.*

### Obituary

I met him while I was in Iran in June 1997. He had come to attend the World Zoroastrian Congress. I was in Shiraz with my family at that time. He, the old Parsi Dastur and other fellow Parsis were touring Iran, and by coincidence, I got to meet him. My wish to meet one of the senior Parsi Dasturs came true.

**Dastur Framroze Peshotan Peer** was quite old. He held a Jashan ceremony with other Dasturs in the Shiraz fire temple. You could feel the dedication that he had towards his faith. He recited Avesta with all his soul and belief. He spoke Farsi quite well and my wife and I talked with him at length in Farsi.

Many of his opinions and beliefs may seem strange to many of us: his mystic views towards our sacred literature, his strict anti-acceptance of others, not accepting mixed marriages, and so on. But it was a pleasure to sit and talk to him.

There was so much tranquility in his voice and attitude that you were unwittingly attracted to him. He was peaceful. He never said he was tired. A couple of times I asked him if he was tired after his long travels, and he said: "I never get tired, I am a vegetarian." You could feel that he practices what he preaches. I will never forget his advice: "If you feel you cannot convince somebody, and if you feel he or she is doing wrong not listening to you, leave him or her



alone. Do not cause hatred and anger. Never cause anger!"

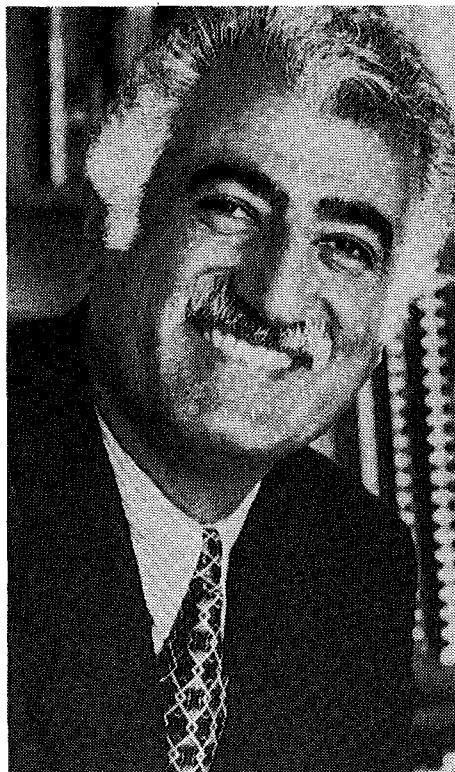
Here is the basic tenet of the good religion of Mazda. Here is the strict separation between goodness and evil, light and darkness, truth and lie. No mixture. It is either true or false. Either Spenta or Angra. You cannot achieve goodness with evil tools. You cannot wipe out falsehood with more lies. You cannot destroy Ahriman with the tools of Ahriman. Dastur Framroze Peshotan Peer passed away in India, shortly after his visit to Iran.

[From a posting to the Zarathushti email alias by Dr. Bahman Noruziaan]

## EVENTS AND HONORS



**RODABE AMARIA**, daughter of Navroze and Bucky Amaria was honored by the Denver Post as a "Top Kid" from the metro Denver area. Roda is a straight 'A' student and is on the varsity swim team. She is student body president this year, and was one of two students chosen from the State of Colorado to receive the American Academy of Achievement 1997 Salute to Excellence award. Rodabe was chosen by the NIH as a student volunteer in the Genetics department at Children's Hospital in Denver. She plans to attend the University of Colorado to pursue a career in biological sciences.



**DR. MEHRABAN KHODAVANDI**, education and psychology professor at Lakeland College in Wisconsin, was named the 1996-97 recipient of Lakeland's annual Underkofler Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching Award, the third time he has been thus honored. He and the College will each receive a \$2,000 stipend. In 1983, he was named Lakeland's "Outstanding Professor of the Year", and again a year later, in a poll of both students and faculty members, notes the Lakeland newspaper: "The bonding power Mehraban has with students not only produces changes in their personal habits, it establishes a powerful incentive for learning. ... There's no one on campus like him. He's one of a kind."

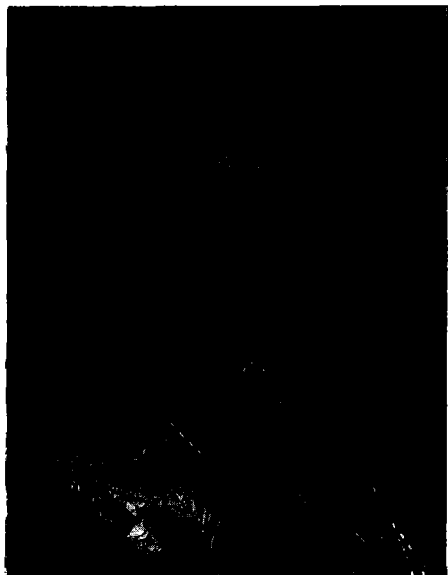
Chicago psychologist and Head Priest, **DR. KERSEY ANTIA** has been invited by the Citizen Ambassador Program of People to People International to participate in a delegation of professionals in religion and philosophy to travel to China.

[FEZANA Journal regrets that Dr. Antia was not profiled among the Psychologists in the Summer 97 issue. He may possibly be the only full-time psychologist in North America in solo practice. In these days of HMOs and Managed Care, he is a role model of entrepreneurship and hard work.]

Theater actor **FIRDAUS BAMJI** of New York, son of Roshan and Ester Bamji, will perform in *The King and I* at Kennedy Center. The tour company will be visiting over 30 US cities during 1997 and 1998.

The important contributions by one of its "most notable, long-standing and active members — **DOLLY DASTOOR**," were acknowledged by the Alzheimer Society of Montreal on the occasion of its 15th anniversary. "Professionally she has left her mark", notes the ASM newsletter, "by developing, in cooperation with Dr. Martin Cole, an

assessment tool which is widely used throughout North America for the measurement of the severity of dementia. In 1982, Dastoor spearheaded the creation of the ASM."



**SHEHNAZ BHUJWALA** [above] daughter of Maneck and Mahrukh Bhujwala of San Jose, California, graduated from UCLA with a Bachelor of Psychology with Honors, and plans to study Law.

At the invitation from the Boy Scouts Association of Trinidad and Tobago, Scouter **MANECK SATTHA** of the





Left, Shahtokh Tarapore, eagle scout. Right, At opening of Cyrus Vesuna Auditorium, daughter Maparviz and son Darius with portrait of Vesuna.

100th Toronto Scout Group attended the XIth Caribbean Jamboree as the Deputy Camp Chief of the First Arima Sea and Air Scouts. As a goodwill gesture, he presented them with a Canadian flag. A congratulatory note from Mel Lastman, Mayor of North York, reads:

"I ... congratulate you on your outstanding contributions to Scouting in our community. ... You serve as a great example to young people and you offer them the encouragement, understanding and a listening ear ... You are one of those special people who has what it takes to be effective. Thank you for being there for us. You're great, Scout's honour!"

Almost all of the 12 Zarathushti families in the Greater New Orleans area, and other friends, eighty in all, attended **SHAHROKH TARAPORE's** Eagle Scout Court of Honor (at the young age of 14). This year Shahrokh, son of Armin and Rohinton Tarapore of Kenner, Louisiana, graduated from Middle School with Honors and was selected "Outstanding Student of the Year" twice. Active in the school's football and track teams, he also plays the trumpet and drums in the school band. His Social Studies Fair project on the Zarathushti religion won him awards at the school and district levels.



On May 8, the Inova Fairfax Hospital in Northern Virginia opened its new *Cyrus Vesuna Auditorium*. The marble plaque reads:

This auditorium is named in memory of  
CYRUS D. VESUNA, MD  
By his Friends and Colleagues at  
FAIRFAX ANESTHESIOLOGY  
ASSOCIATES, INC.  
and by his children  
MAPARVIZ JULIA VESUNA  
DARIUS VESUNA

During his tenure of over 19 years as Chairman of the Department of Anaesthesiology, **DR. CYRUS VESUNA** developed that hospital into a nationally acclaimed medical center. Dr. Vesuna is the son of Daulat and the late Dr. Minocher Vesuna, and brother of Sam and Rumi. He met his untimely death on May 30, 1993 from a heart attack on his boat in Daytona, Florida.

**DR. AVA J. UDVADIA**, a Post-Doctoral Fellow of Duke University in North Carolina, was awarded a National Research Service Award for two years, to study mechanisms involved in axon growth in the developing central nervous system (CNS). Axons form the basis of the communication network that connects the brain to the rest of the body. This work is undertaken with the goal of promoting nerve regeneration and recovery of function, following CNS injuries. Ava is the daughter of Jamshed R. Udvadia of Lansing, MI.

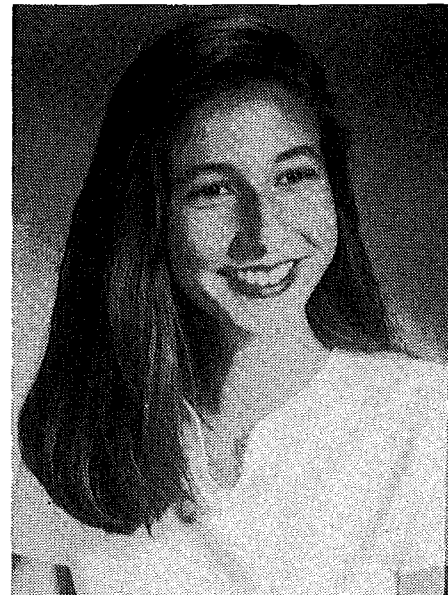
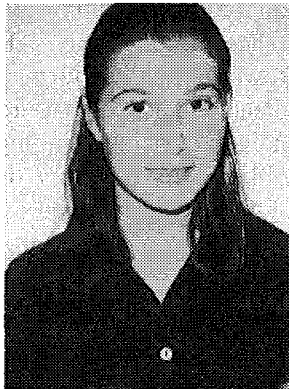
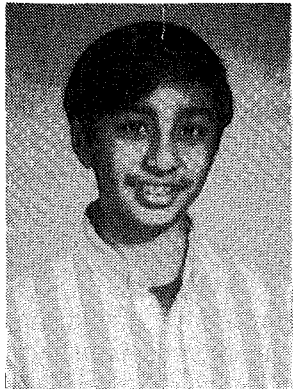
## Celebrating the Good Life

By Villy Gandhi  
Glen Rock, New Jersey

It is a matter of tremendous pride for a community when its youth take to heart the message of Zarathushtra and put into laudable practice the precepts they learn. In the past two years, the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York has awarded the prestigious Good Life Medal to ten such youngsters who quite commendably committed themselves to the program,

The award is a culmination of both the formal application of knowledge through an academic program and the conclusion of a self-directed project to benefit the larger community. The awardees are profiled below:

**ARNAZ RUSTOMJI**, a high school student in New Canaan, CT, volunteers her time at the YMCA teaching children to swim. Arnaz teaches at all levels of this program — Guppy, Minnow, Fish and Sharks, at the end of which, kids are able to swim 400 yards, perform all the strokes perfectly including somersaults, flip turns and dives. Arnaz also organized a helping committee during a Navruz function to assist in set up, decorating the Darbe Mehr and cleaning up.



*Clockwise from top, Arnaz Rustomji, Kaizad Cama, Daena Ghadially, Temi Ghadially, Aysha Ghadiali and Diana Bharucha.*

**TEMI GHADIALLY** says: "Someone once said the best work you do is often done when you are not even thinking about it. This is exactly the case with my Good Life project. I enjoy teaching youngsters and when I was offered an opportunity to teach religious classes, I jumped at the chance. I taught a group of 5 preschoolers the basics of the Zarathushti religion. Every month, I had to come up with new and exciting ways to teach information that most 5-year-olds do not find interesting."

Temi is currently at Rutgers University with the goal to become a successful Psychology and Social Studies teacher. She also remains actively involved with the Zarathushti community, and is the ever popular DJ at ZAGNY functions.

**DAENA GHADIALLY's** project was "to make the inside of the kitchen at the Darbe Mehr as nice as it was on the outside." She typed up flyers and advertised her project, and collected donations of either items or money. With part of the \$300 she raised, she purchased dishes, cutlery, knives, a clock, utensils, towels and other kitchen items to beautify the kitchen. Daena is a high school student in Marlboro, NJ, and remains very involved with fundraising activities and youth camps at ZAGNY.

**KAIZAD CAMA's** project to collect clothing and blankets for the needy proceeded in four stages. First, he put up signs at the Darbe Mehr and an article in the ZAGNY Newsletter.

Next he contacted agencies and put a donation box at the Darbe Mehr. The fourth stage involved distributing the clothing and blankets. The items were donated to 'Clothes for Kids', the Salvation Army, some women's jackets and shirts to a women's shelter in New Rochelle, and the majority to a homeless shelter in Newark. Kaizad is a student at Tenaflly High School in New Jersey. Among his favorite activities is Tae Kwon Do.

Combining the skills learnt at school with a message of love and appreciation from the heart, **DIANA BHARUCHA** made a picture of Zarathushtra as an art project using a unique and painstaking process, and presented it to ZAGNY President Gev Nentin at the Awards Ceremony at the Darbe Mehr. "I really appreciate everyone's interest in keeping our religion alive and coming to classes every month," says Diana. Diana also made and sold Zarathushti ornaments, the proceeds of which were donated to ZAGNY's Scholarship Fund.

Diana, a student at Pine Bush High School in Middletown, NY, is extremely active in school co-curricular activities, significant among which is writing poetry. One of her poems has been submitted to the National Library of Poetry for publication. Diana volunteers her summers at a hospital, and hopes to become a pediatrician.

**VISHTASP SOROUSHIAN** completed his Good Life project in Vancouver, BC, when on a trip to visit





*Top, Farhad Irani with scoutmaster.  
Below, Bahman and Rayomand Wadia.*

his grandparents. For two and a half months he helped them out, working in the garden and around the house. During one of his visits to the Darbe Mehr in Vancouver, he spent half a day cleaning up the premises. Vish-tasp and his family have since moved to California where he is currently enrolled in high school.

**FARHAD IRANI's** project was multi-dimensional in scope. He worked on raising funds through a garage sale, sold raffles, participated and assisted at Gahambars and celebrated International Night with a skit

on the Zarathushti religion, attending rehearsals regularly. He contributes towards helping to maintain a safe, clean and friendly environment in his neighborhood, extending this even to animals by rescuing those that are injured or abandoned.

**AYSHA GHADIALI's** project was that of safeguarding the environment — an issue that is important not only to her and the Zarathushti community, but for humanity as a whole. For her project she chose to recycle 400 cans and bottles both at home and at ZAGNY, donating the money collected to the ZAGNY Scholarship Fund. Aysha also volunteers her time at the Franklin General Hospital Nursing Home once a week. Aysha graduated recently from Woodmere Academy in Long Island and is now college bound.

**BAHMAN** and **RAIYOMAND WADIA** [left] are Boy Scouts. In addition to their scouting commitments, they undertook miscellaneous community tasks to earn the Good Life Medal. They assisted Barton Creek West in cleanup after a picnic; helped in community cleaning of Austin Town Lake by picking up garbage and recycling cans; helped to clear a trail path; assisted in building benches for outdoor services for a local church and volunteered at Seton Hospital.

Bahman is studying for a BS in Applied Sciences at the University of Texas, and is the proud recipient of scouting's highest honor — the Eagle Scout Award. Raiyomand attends Westlake High School in Austin, Texas, and is working towards the Eagle Scout Award. Both are talented musicians and sportsmen, excelling in Martial Arts.

**DINAH BARIA** fulfilled her project in two parts. The first part dealt with her community where she volunteered at St. Joseph's hospital in Stamford. She plans to continue as a volunteer till it's time to leave for college. "Volunteering," she says, "gives me a feeling that I am giving back to the community." For the second part, Dinah helps teach the

younger kids at ZAGNY. "I really enjoy teaching the kids," she says, "because I'm helping spread the religion to the younger generation ... If we want our religion to survive, we have to educate the youth."

Dinah is 16, and will be a Senior at Westhill High School in Stamford, CT. She is a member of their highly ranked gymnastics team, and was inducted as a member of the National Honors Society this year.



**JIMMY ANTIA**, a Navar, participates and gives of his time to perform Jashans, Gahambars, Satums and Navjote ceremonies at the Zoroastrian Center of Chicago. Furthermore, he has also been performing the *Boi* Ceremony for all the youth who attend religion classes. He played an active role at the

Sixth North American Zoroastrian Youth Congress in London.

This year, Jimmy was honored with the Eagle Scout award at a Court of Honor attended by a large number of friends and relatives. Not every scout can qualify for the high rank of Eagle Scout. The physical requirements (camping, first aid, swimming, life-saving) are strenuous and mental and moral requirements above average.

The commendable achievements of these youngsters bear strong testimony both to their own dedication and commitment as well as that of their parents, family and friends. Requests for this program have been received from other Zarathushtis, scouting organizations and individuals, all over the US and abroad.

For information on the Good Life Program and Medal, contact Mrs. Villy Gandhi, 704 Harristown Road, Glen Rock, NJ 07452-2334, Tel/Fax: (201) 445-3917, email: villy@cybernex.net. ■

# FEZANA

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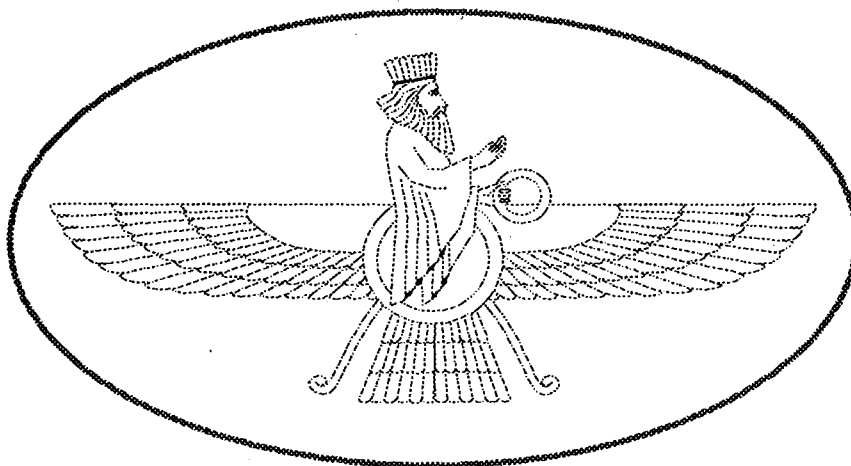
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