

THE MOBEDS OF NORTH AMERICA WHERE HAVE THEY COME FROM, WHERE ARE THEY HEADED?

*Each of these questions should the Shepherd ask;
 He shall do deeds of righteousness and seek
 All ways to foster Life through Asha's Law;
 Through humbleness deep, wisdom shall he gain;
 He shall reveal himself unto the wise
 By bringing blessings, teaching truth to men.*

[Gatha Vohukhshathra, Yasna 51.5, I.J.S. Taraporewala, 1979]

2	Editorial by Rustom Kevala; From the President by Framroze K. Patel
4	FEZANA Update; FEZANA AGM 1998; On the North American Scene
11	WZC2000 Houston - Planning Underway
13	The Congress Tradition Lives on in New York by Porus P. Cooper
19	A Tame Affair by Rashna Ghadialy
20	North American Zarathushti Community Awards; Coming Events
24	Cover Story: The Mobeds of North America, Guest Editor Jal N. Birdy
24	The Role of North American Mobeds in the Community by Jal N. Birdy
29	Introducing North American Mobeds by Jal N. Birdy
43	Qualities of an Athravan by Hoshang J. Bhadha
46	Who are the Magi? by Silloo P. Mehta
47	Asho Zarathushtra and the Priesthood in Ancient Iran by Sarosh Manekshaw
51	Zarathushtra the Yazata by Burzin Unwalla
54	Consecration of the Sacred Fire of an Atash Bahram by Zarir Bhandara
58	A Brief History of the Parsi Priesthood by Firoze M. Kotwal
62	Zarathushti Priests in India - A Timeline by Pallan R. Ichaporia
65	Arbab Rustom Guiv Darbe Mehr, Zoroastrian Center of Chicago by Aban Aspy Daboo
69	Personal Profile: Two Noble Spiritual Teachers
69	Mobed Rostam Shahzadi by Jamshid Varza
70	Dasturji Khurshed Shapurji Dabu by Maneck Bhujwala
72	Looking Back: Dastur Dhalla the Man by Roshan Rivetna
75	A True Story by Nariman H. Wadia
77	Youthfully Speaking; Books and Such; Readers' Forum
84	Zarathushti Enterprise, Products & Services; Please Give from your Heart
86	Matrimonials; Personals; Milestones; Events and Honors

ZOROASTRIAN COMMITMENT IN NORTH AMERICA

We've come a long way. The



Eleventh North American Zoroastrian Congress was one of the most successful congresses in memory. The New York Zarathushtis, under the leadership of

co-chairs Gev Nentin and Noshir Langrana, put on a dazzling show of camaraderie, talent, and organizational skills. Each session was meticulously planned to include an array of panelists of different viewpoints and age groups. Many, many people worked very, very hard for almost two years to bring this about.

But that is not all. Noshir Langrana also led a team of computer professionals, demographers and dedicated workers all over North America to bring out a 350-page second edition of the Directory of Zarathushtis in North America.

True to the theme of the Congress: "*Zoroastrian Commitment in the North American Context*," over 100 Zarathushtis gave thousands of hours of their time, freely and voluntarily, to make all this happen.

At last count, 580 individuals were registered for the Congress, including 170 students, plus 154 others for the banquet. Assuming that the 580 registrants spent \$250 each and rest spent only \$50 each, over \$150,000 were contributed to the local economy of Rye, New York, in just 3 days and 3 nights.

The Directory of Zarathushtis in North America contains more than 3,900 family entries, with about 9,000 names. Yet, this directory contains only 50 to 60 percent of the actual numbers of Zarathushtis in North America. Thus conservatively, we can say that there are 6,500

Zarathushti families in North America. Now assuming that each of these families earns only \$20,000 per year, the Zarathushtis in North America represent an earning power of over \$130,000,000 per year! The net worth of the 6,500 Zarathushti families in North America, very conservatively, is likely to be over \$100 million.

But that is not all. We now have 23 Associations and numerous unincorporated small groups. Seven of these have centers which include dar-emehers or prayer rooms, with a total value of over \$5 million. The upkeep of these facilities probably costs our community \$100,000 per year.

Indeed, we've come a long way!

But we need to go much further.

Now let's take a look at FEZANA's budget. According to the report presented by FEZANA treasurer Sarosh Collector at the AGM, the major budgeted expenses in 1997 were: \$22,000 for FEZANA Journal, \$10,110 for operating expenses, \$4,700 for student aid, and only \$650 for the Religious Education Committee. FEZANA collected a total of \$41,000 in 1997, including \$21,250 in Journal subscriptions, \$12,400 in donations, and \$4,500 in Association dues. If we exclude the Journal, all of FEZANA's activities in 1997 had to be conducted from a revenue of only \$16,900!

With expenses so close to the collections, FEZANA's assets are growing at a snail's pace: from \$67,773 in December 1996 to \$75,909 in December 1997 to \$81,929 in December 1998. On the average, FEZANA's 'treasury' contains only \$12.46 per family living in North America!

I do not want to pontificate about the need to increase our commitment towards our community assets and FEZANA's operating funds. The 10-year Strategic Plan for FEZANA (see "Planning for Our Future", FEZANA Journal, Fall 1996) developed under the leadership of outgoing president Dolly Dastoor, sets priorities for several important projects which are

currently operating with voluntary efforts, on a shoestring budget. We need funds for developing religious education materials, supporting higher education and research on our heritage and religion, social welfare, planning and administration.

I think the most important task before Framroze K. Patel, our incoming president, is to set a realistic budget and then raise the funds to accomplish the worthy objectives of the plan. With the financial strength and will of our highly educated and successful community in North America, we must set lofty goals. Nothing less will do.

Note of thanks. This is my last editorial as chair of the FEZANA Publications Committee. My goal, when I took over the responsibility for FEZANA Journal in 1991, was to set the tone for unbiased coverage of the achievements, hopes and religious vision of all Zarathushtis in North America. I hope I have achieved this goal.

The Journal team includes dedicated individuals who have given selfless service to the community. There are many budding, young writers like Aaron Rustom and Tanaz Billimoria on the team; along with mature 'professionals' like Roshan Rivetna, Adel Engineer and Jamshed Udvadia. The Journal is on a firm financial footing, thanks to the help of Mehrdad Khosraviani and Jamshed Gandhi.

Today, the Journal is self-supporting from the generous donations of its readers and a paid subscription base of over 1,300 units. My hope is that this subscription base will continue to grow so that some day, every household in North America, every educational institution, every religious organization and many, many others all over the world, will receive and read the Journal. I leave that task to my successor.

Another arm of the Publications Committee, the FEZANA web site, is ably supported by Rita Kapadia, webmaster; FEZANA assistant sec-

retary Mahrukh Motafram; and FEZANA secretary Mehran Sepehri. I believe that the web site will assume ever greater importance in the years to come by providing up-to-the-minute information on FEZANA, Zarathushti happenings, and the timeless vision of Zarathushtra all over the world.

I must hasten to add that I could not have accomplished anything without the unstinting support and encouragement of FEZANA past-presidents Rohinton Rivetna and Dolly Dastoor. I also want to thank Roshan Rivetna for always doing more than expected; all my committee members for their enthusiastic efforts; and all of you who gave me advice, words of encouragement and support, whenever and wherever I met you.

Ushta te.

Rustom Kevala

NOT A GOODBYE

It has been a real pleasure working with Rustom Kevala as Chair of FEZANA's Publications Committee. It takes a real leader to guide and set course for the team, without being pushy; and Rustom assumed that role well.

As Rustom now steps down and takes on the even more challenging position of FEZANA treasurer, there will certainly be a void on the Journal team that will be hard to fill.

But knowing how intimately he was connected with the creation of the Journal from its fledgling beginnings, and knowing that his secret calling is his penmanship, and knowing how fiercely dedicated he is to putting FEZANA and Zarathushtis on the map of North America – though he is stepping down officially, I am sure his heart will always be with the Journal.

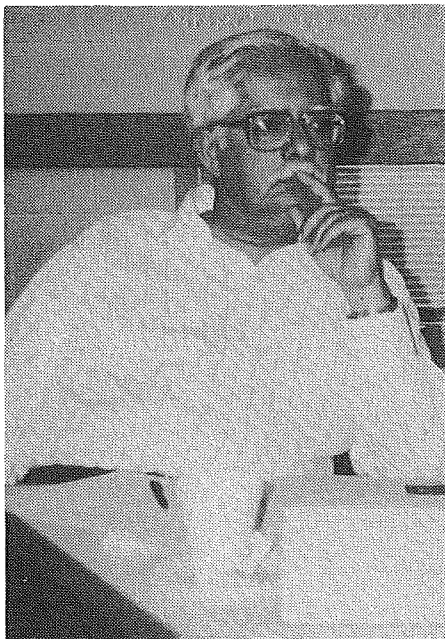
I hope that I can continue to count on him for help and advice.

This is not Good Bye!

Roshan Rivetna
Editor-in-Chief

■ ■ ■ FROM THE PRESIDENT ■ ■ ■

Baname Yazad, bakshayandehe, bakhshayeshgare meherban!



I appreciate the confidence the community has manifested by electing me as president, and I equally appreciate the responsibility that goes with it. I am fortunate in sharing the administration with very worthy office bearers: Dr. Ardeshir Anoshiravani as vice president, Dr. Rustom J. Kevala as treasurer, Dr. Mehran Sepehri as secretary and Mrs. Mahrukh Motafram as assistant secretary.

FEZANA's Role. The role of FEZANA is a delicate one. It is the organization of associations and Anjumans of North America, whose integrity and independence must be kept untouched. FEZANA's primary function is to provide:

- An organizational infrastructure for our social well-being in the American and Canadian context;
- Services for the advancement of our faith; and
- Directions for the future of our religious community on this continent. These directions should be rational, sensible and wise, but not binding.

The most pressing challenge for our religious community is to be united on its vision of what our community is and ought to be. The religious and devotional practices of individuals and associations may vary depending upon their beliefs and commitments; but it would be most ill-advised for us to disagree on who we are. The clarification of that issue for the democratically inclined must be achieved by general, open, honest and respectful discussion. That would be so much preferable to continuing festering disagreements in private groups and correspondence on the internet, which are counter-productive for adequate social resolution.

Issues. There are a set of issues which I would like to bring to the attention of the community, particularly:

● **Maximum possible representation.** Zarathushtis are scattered throughout North America, and for a variety of reasons, do not have representation at FEZANA. Through networking and personal contacts, we will strive to bring most of our fellow Zarathushtis living in North America under the umbrella of local Zarathushti associations. The growth of FEZANA is dependent upon the vitality and vigor of member associations.

● **Safety net programs: senior citizens:** As the first generation of Zarathushtis are aging they need vital information regarding retirement planning, medical assistance and other health care related topics. In particular: social security, medicare, medical information data bank, senior housing, Zarathushti professional yellow pages, funeral pre-planning, and social programs such as Meals on Wheels, transportation assistance, and Help Line ministry.

● **Dissemination of religious knowledge.** We are a literate and educated community; however we lack clarity on the central commitment of our faith. In absence of an

infrastructure for religious education, our ability to impart knowledge to the next generation is limited. FEZANA's role should be that of a facilitator to make religious training material readily available. This is a project dear to my heart.

Finances. Currently the finances of FEZANA depend on membership dues from member associations and interest income and surplus from related activities. This is clearly an inadequate base for strengthening the financial state of FEZANA. We should think of opening avenues of some monetary inflow. Sound advice from fellow Zarathushtis would be very helpful and highly appreciated.

Goals. Our primary goal for the next two years will be to *unify the Zarathushti community of North America*, and terminate divisiveness. Let us resolve to maintain and work towards the enhancement of our unified Zarathushti community, a goal that FEZANA embodies above all, a goal that the previous office holders and governing body of Member Associations so mightily strived to accomplish. In pursuit of that goal my fellow executive officers and myself invite all Zarathushtis on this continent to contribute in effort, insight, dedication and certainly goodwill.

As far as I am concerned, I consider myself a Mazdayasni Zarathushti. I am inspired by the message and teachings of our prophet Zarathushtra. I would hope that our community would do no less.

It is my sincere prayer that the Zarathushti community will be so blessed that:

May understanding obedience
Conquer ignorant disobedience,
May harmony triumph over discord,
May trust replace suspicion, and
May truthful speech prevail
Over falsehood.

[Modified from Daham-Adriti, Ys.60]

Sarosh Yazd Panha Bad!

Framroze K. Patel
President, FEZANA

FEZANA UPDATE

From the Secretary

Communication, Collaboration, Cooperation - the Essence of FEZANA



FEZANA secretary
Mehran Sepehri and assistant secretary Mahrukh Motafram, at the Arbab Rustom Guiv Darbe Mehr in New Rochelle, New York.

What Dolly Dastoor and Rohinton Rivetna have done in the past 11 years is of heroic proportions. The newly elected president, Framroze K. Patel, who is not new to FEZANA, brings a fresh perspective with equal levels of enthusiasm and forward-looking thinking. I am most excited to work with the newly elected officers, all of whom I personally trust as team players.

This year has been an important year for the secretary. A number of key issues were put to vote, including the WZO-WZCF decision and a difficult choice between two high caliber candidates for president. Many associations took the time to publicize and discuss the issues. The 100% response from the membership provided valuable direction.

As the only Iranian member of the Executive (now joined by newly-elected VP Dr. Anoshiravani) I tried to be a liaison with Iranian Zarathushtis. My aim is to promote FEZANA, encourage larger participation, and reflect their views and needs within FEZANA. I made presentations at Iranian gatherings, coordinated a Farsi Page in this Journal, and gathered opinions on various issues.

I traveled extensively in the past year to attend various association functions and meet their local officers and members. From Toronto's silver anniversary, to Houston's Heritage Center grand opening, to Vancouver's 30th anniversary celebration, to

The change of guard is always exciting, but one should keep in mind that *the palace and not the guard is of paramount importance!* As the newly elected executive officers and committee chairpersons organize to move forward, the mission and objectives of FEZANA as well as its collective and democratic process light the way. Dialogs and decisions at the recent AGM proved again the mutual respect and cooperative spirit of member associations and the sound framework of this organization. FEZANA is now established as a truly pyramidal forum for collaboration, communication and cooperation for the North American Zarathushti community.

annual meetings of CIMNA, seminars in Southern California and British Columbia, and the Youth Congress in London, I have shared the pride and message of our Federation, and tried to understand the pulse of our community.

There have been some vituperous attacks on the Internet on FEZANA and its officials, from a couple of radical individuals. We responded very little, because there was no factual basis for the ugly stories. But I would like to urge our friends within the associations (especially the 'Traditional' associations) to disassociate themselves publicly from these isolated, unfounded attacks.

Zarathushtis of North America seem, on the surface, to be divided ideologically into orthodox, liberals, "Gathas-Only", and many other shades and labels. While these groups argue, shout, and accuse, they all share a passion for the religion. FEZANA should build on the areas of agreement, and become a true umbrella with many colors and opinions, and a gathering place of the "thousand points of light".

The New York Congress theme was also most appropriate for FEZANA. Commitment' is much more than talking, arguing, deciding and doing. Commitment means personal devotion and unwavering attention. It was our forefathers' commitment that saved our culture and religion through the Arab invasion and throughout hundreds of years in Iran and India. It is also our commitment which will make the difference in North America.

Studies in the West have proven that the success of communities and organizations requires effective planning, infra-structure and management. It is the strategic decisions and positioning of key resources that provide the leverage for an organization to leapfrog into the next level of capability. It is our work here today that will set direction for the Federation and the community at large. A major responsibility lies on our shoulders. ■

Mehran Sepehri
Secretary, FEZANA

FEZANA

AGM 1998

FEZANA associations meet in New York to do strategic planning for a smooth passage into the next millennium.

It was time once again for the leaders of the Zarathushti community in North America to congregate for discussion and dialog, with the main thrust being strategic planning for our community to set the stage for smooth passage into the next millennium.

It all began on the 30th of June at the Rye Town Hilton located in beautiful Westchester County, a suburb of New York City. Our hosts for this meeting were the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York (ZAGNY)

and its team of extremely warm and helpful members, led by their president Gev Nentin together with Noshir Langrana, his co-chair for the Tenth North American Congress. The FEZANA meeting preceded the congress, which was held from 2nd July through 5th July.

The morning commenced with a benediction given by Ervad Jehan Bagli and Ervad Gev Karkaria, followed by Gev Nentin who welcomed the FEZANA officers, committee chairpersons, Member Associations and guests to New York.

Before commencing her report, Dolly Dastoor congratulated the newest member of FEZANA, Zoroastrian

Association of Florida, located in Miami, Florida, whose current president is Perry Unwalla.

President Dolly Dastoor was reporting for the last time as FEZANA's president after serving four productive years. She started out expressing the need for change as being a very important element for success. She mentioned the goals she had committed her-



FEZANA's newly elected president, Framroze Patel, with outgoing president, Dolly Dastoor

self to, when she first took office:

- Increase awareness of FEZANA.
- Increase involvement of the community.
- Widen the knowledge base of the religion.
- Create internal structures.
- Create a climate of trust among Zarathushtis of all persuasions.
- Move towards a vision of a virtual Zarathushti Nation.

She continued by expanding on each of her goals and accomplishments.

The publication of the 2nd edition of the *Directory and Yellow Pages* of the Zarathushtis in North America with over 9000 names was quite an accomplishment. The creation of the *Fezana* web site will also be instrumental in increasing further awareness for our religion. She added, "It is a matter of pride for the Zarathushti community, to see the amount of research literature currently available and realize that our's is not a fossilized religion but a religion of the present."

Dolly complimented the *Journal* for creating a climate of vitality where people are free to express their creativity and views for the community. She concluded her report by expressing hope for a paradigm shift toward larger issues of raising Zarathushti spirituality and religiosity.

Treasurer Sarosh Collector presented the Statement of funds:

FUND	YEAR END DEC 96	YEAR END DEC 97
General	\$38,511	\$43,695
Welfare	\$16,436	\$18,723
Religious Ed.	\$3,720	\$4,385
Student Aid	\$1,006	\$1,006
Endowment	\$8,100	\$8,100
Total	\$67,773	\$75,909

Secretary, Mehran Sepheri, presented his report by reflecting on the past year as being an important one for the office of the secretary, due to the election process for every executive position except for that of secretary. He mentioned that there was 100% Member Association participation and was impressed with the high caliber of individuals that were chosen for their respective positions.

Assistant Secretary, Mahrukh Motafram, gave an update on the progress made towards writing the *FEZANA Update* section in the *Journal*. The *Milestones* and *Events and Honors* sections in the *Journal* were an added responsibility, as well as forwarding pertinent news items to Rita Kapadia for the *FEZANA* web-site.



Election Results. Election for the position of vice president was conducted at the AGM. All Member Associations present at the AGM participated in the process. The results were as follows:

Framroze Patel was elected president, **Ardeshir Anoshiravani** as vice president, **Rustom Kevala** as treasurer, and **Mahrukh Motafram** re-elected assistant secretary, for the next two years. **Mehran Sepehri**, whose term is not yet up, will continue as secretary. The various committee reports followed.

Awards Committee: chair **Dinshaw Joshi** outlined the 5 categories, nomination eligibility and procedures, evaluation criteria, judging procedure and award design/presentation. This year the awards were given out at a special awards luncheon held on 3rd July. This gives other fellow Zarathushtis a chance to meet and congratulate the recipients on their accomplishments.

Directory and Census Committee: chair **Noshir Langrana** thanked all his co-workers who helped him do an outstanding job of compiling and publishing the 2nd edition of the *North American Directory* for

FEZANA. Some of the data were used for census purposes.

Congress Committee: chair **Bella Tata** reported on the progress made toward the World Congress to be held in Houston, TX in the year 2000. Further details were discussed the next day during a special meeting of the committee for the WZC 2000. The 3 workshops held at the Congress the following day, were organized by this committee.

Education Committee: chair **Kay-omarsh Mehta** (in absentia) reported that the *Zarathushti Religion Education Curriculum* was finalized and enhanced with the introduction of 4 available books at present. The curriculum booklet has been printed and copies were distributed to *FEZANA* Member Associations at this AGM. In addition, a proposal was put forth to undertake a project to start electronic imaging and indexing of Zarathushti scriptures, and plans were underway to ascertain the feasibility of establishing a Higher Learning Institute.

External Affairs Committee : chair **Rohinton Rivetna** reported that the efforts to establish our Zarathushti identity in the inter-religious arena in North America have been fruitful,



AGM 1998: group photo of FEZANA executive officers, committee chairs and delegates of Member Associations.

but cautioned that there is more to be done. The next *Parliament of World Religions* will be held in Cape Town, South Africa in December 1999. He urged Zarathushtis to attend and have our presence felt in the global religious community.

Publications Committee: chair **Rustom Kevala** reported that the committee had grown in size and continues to effectively publish the Journal as well as oversee the FEZANA web-site. He added that the Journal is now mailed to 28 countries all over the globe and went on to add that there was only one paid subscriber in Iran. He urged Zarathushtis to donate gift subscriptions for their friends and relatives in Iran, as also in other foreign countries. Following this report, a host of valid suggestions and ideas were put forth by all present. It is hoped that the FEZANA web-site will provide a vital link between individual Zarathushtis scattered around the world, Zarathushti communities and FEZANA. Rustom Kevala, after having steered this committee since 1991, tendered his resignation as the chairperson of this committee.

Roshan Rivetna, editor-in-chief of **FEZANA Journal**, covered the

Journal report, mentioning: the themes and content of the Journal and its editorial policy; donations and expenses; staffing; and the production process.

Small Groups Committee: chair **Mezdie Birdie**, reported on the active participation of the small groups for the FEZANA Directory and Census Project. He also commented on several small groups holding discussions to form a formal association and hopes that they are successful.

Welfare Committee: chair **Dinshaw Joshi** reported that during the calendar year, 1997, a total of 69 donations were received.

Sports Committee: chair **Bijan Khosraviani** announced that the *6th Zarathushti Olympics* are to be held in California and the *7th Zarathushti Olympics* will be in Houston, Texas, held in conjunction with the WZC 2000.

Youth Committee: chair **Arianne Teherani** reported on the various activities held for the Zarathushti youth. She mentioned the publication of their first newsletter and the fact that approximately 500 copies were mailed out. She went on to add that this committee was in need of more funds.

The afternoon of July 1st, after lunch hosted by ZAGNY, was devoted to New Business. A proposal, previously mailed to associations for review, for a **"FEZANA Educational Trust Fund"** for Zarathushtis was discussed. Member associations voted to transfer an initial amount of \$15,000 to this fund, from which \$10,000 is to be re-invested in an endowment fund, and \$5,000 is to be used for scholarship awards to deserving students. This step will enable FEZANA to help with frequent appeals for financial assistance from Zarathushti students wanting to pursue their studies at institutions of higher learning in North America.

Tributes. At this point glowing tributes were paid to the outgoing president Dolly Dastoor. Individuals from the floor lined up to say a few words about Dolly and how they enjoyed her support and partnership on a personal and association level. On behalf of Member Associations, Bella Tata presented Dolly with a crystal bowl. Outgoing treasurer Sarosh Collector was presented with a crystal plate, and the bulk of the Members' contributions was placed, at Dolly's request, into the newly created Education Trust Fund. Additional funds for the Trust Fund were also raised from the floor.

A report of the **visit to Crestone**, Colorado, previously circulated to associations, was discussed. A 40-acre piece of land has been offered to Zarathushtis by the Manitou Foundation. Though many questioned the practicality and priority of this project, it was decided to continue studying this possibility, and pursue the next step of submitting an appli-



New slate of FEZANA executive officers: Mehran Sepehri (secretary), Rustom Kevala (treasurer), Framroze Patel (president), Mahrukh Motafram (assistant secretary) and Ardeshir Anoshiravani (vice president).

cation, without any major commitment at this point.

A proposal was presented by Bella Tata for a **"Paradise Award"** to be given as an additional award within the bi-yearly FEZANA awards, from the proceeds generated from the video PARADISE. Members approved this proposal in principle, and the Awards Committee was given the task of working out the implementation.

The final hour of the afternoon was devoted to the topic of the **World Body**. Based on last year's FEZANA vote on this issue, WZO and the proposed World Council of Zoroastrian Federations (WCZF) were urged to continue their dialog towards restructuring WZO to incorporate the principles of WCZF, and come up with a single apex world body. Rumi Sethna, the newly elected president of WZO, reported on the draft of a restructured WZO constitution. Under this proposal, a Council of Associations and a Council of Individuals would co-exist within WZO, with separate functions and decision-making structures. Rohin-

ton Rivetna spoke of the principles of the world body, and reported that substantial progress had been achieved from the continuing dialog, but further negotiations remain. FEZANA members voted that by October 1, 1998, a progress report be submitted to associations for review and feedback.

The meeting was adjourned after the introduction of the 1998 - 2000 FEZANA officers and a group prayer. Later that evening, the group was transported to the Darbe Mehr for a visit and dinner hosted by ZAGNY. The morning of July 2nd was devoted to a meeting of the planning committees of the *Seventh World Zarathushti Congress*. Three parallel sessions of FEZANA Workshops were conducted in the afternoon.

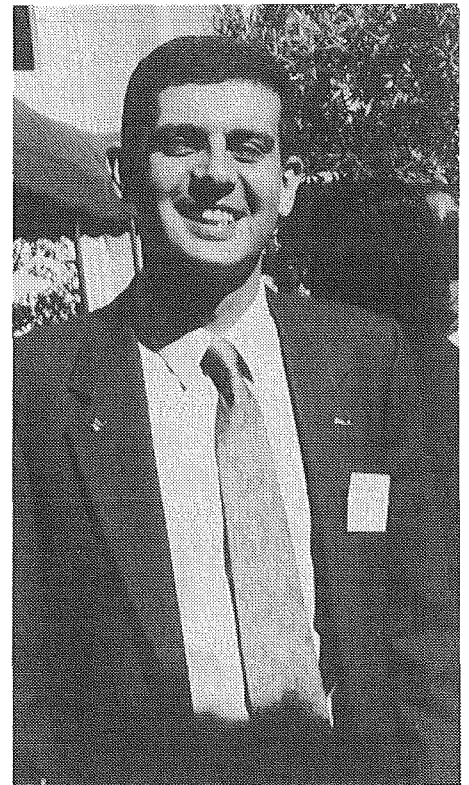
Overall, this year's AGM was extremely productive. The spirit of mutual respect and cooperation was very prevalent, indicating a high level of commitment to the Zarathushti community and FEZANA by all member associations.

*Mehran Sepehri - Secretary
Mahrukh Motafram - Asst. Secretary*

FEZANA Workshops

Three parallel workshop sessions were held on the afternoon of July 2nd, preceding the Eleventh North American Zoroastrian Congress, at the congress venue - the Rye Town Hilton, in New York.

Cyrus Mehta with panelists **Tamina Davar** and **Shahriar Shahriari** [photo below] conducted a workshop on "Dispelling Myths and Misinformation about Zoroastrianism in the Workplace and Media", including a showing of the offending movie "Wishmaster".



Zareen Karani Araoz conducted an excellent, interactive session on "Leadership, Zoroastrian Values and Community Building."

Rohinton Rivetna, with panelists **Sarosh Collector**, **Noshir Dutia** and **Ervad Pervez Patel**, conducted a session on "Zarathushti Business Networking", with a planning discussion on the next Business Conference, in Las Vegas, in Fall 1998. ■

ON THE NORTH AMERICAN SCENE

NAMC holds Mobed- yar Camp at Center in Washington, DC

The North American Mobed Council (NAMC) held its first religious training camp for new mobeds and mobedyars, August 7-9, at the North American Zoroastrian Center in the Washington, DC area.

Ervad Adi Unwalla provided hands-on practice in performance of jashan and navjote ceremonies. Ervad (Dr) Jehan Bagli provided meanings and significance of the rituals, and Ervad Cawas Desai provided additional information on the religion.

Mobeds Minocher Dadachanji (PA), Zal Karkaria (QE), Farhad Panthaki (MA), Jehan Panthaki (VA) and mobedyars Maneck Bhujwala (CA), Rayomand Engineer (FL), Hormuzd Katki (MD) and Jamshid Mistry (MD) received the training.

The first day was spent with a demonstration and practice sessions of the jashan ceremony and a discussion of its significance and historical background, followed by a performance of the ceremony at a dinner function organized by the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington (ZAMWI).

The second day was devoted to instructional videos, practice sessions and explanations of the navjote ceremony.

The religious camp would not have been successful without the excellent organization of the facilities and events by ZAMWI president, Kersi Shroff and his large band of volunteers.

[Extracted from report by Mobedyar Maneck Bhujwala]

On Tour with Soul

Professional speakers, authors and seminar leaders Meher Amalsad and Shahriar Shahriari enthrall audiences and create transformations in their personal and professional lives, with their motivational program, SOUL.



Meher Amalsad (left) and Shahriari Shahriari at a presentation of SOUL, demonstrate how we can use Vohu Manah to understand the difference before we can make a difference in someone's life.

"The entire darkness of this universe cannot take away the light from just one small candle." That is the message seminar leaders Mehr Amalsad and Shahriar Shahriari present in their candlelight meditation exercise that closes their seminar. "The light of inspiration, light of wisdom, light of goodness, light of love through *Ushta* and *Asha* – the light of even one person can make a difference."

Amalsad, author of "*Bread for the Head*", and Shahriari, author of "*Thus Spake the Real Zarathushtra*" and "*1+1=3*", and the video "*PARADISE*" (with Shervin Shahriari) who calls himself a "human imagination consultant" have created this latest seminar, SOUL (Success Out of Understanding Love).

Earlier this year, SOUL was shown to Zarathushti audiences including

Mazdeyasnie Connection, The Zarathushtrian Assembly, North American Mobeds Council, The Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia and Stanford; and to non-Zarathushti teachers, students, rehabilitation centers, prisons and Fortune 500 companies, with standing ovations from all.

In his inimitable style, Amalsad says, of his performance to inner-city kids in LA: "These kids came to our presentation with a **blow** on their face, and left with a **glow** on their face."

This is a seminar that all Zarathushti associations must organize for their members. Call Meher at (714) 895-3097, or email Shahriar at shahriar@zarathushtra.com, or visit their web site at: www.promotional-guide.com/bread or www.promotionalguide.com/tu.

Top, at seminar, standing from left, Homi Italia, Jehangir Sethna, Bella Tata, Dinaz Mizan, Minoo Engineer, Fariborz Rahnamoon (ZSBC Directors); seated, Kaikhosrov Irani, Trity Pourbahrami, Dina McIntyre, Mehraban Khodavandi. Below, "Golden Girls" dance group.

Celebrating Thirty Years

Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia (ZSBC) is probably the first society in North America – having been founded by Zarathushtis who foresaw that this continent would attract more and more Zarathushtis each year – and they were right. We can never forget the founder, the late Jamshed K. Pavri, who did most of the groundwork to establish our society. The original subscribers to the Constitution and Bylaws, which became effective on February 22, 1968, were Jassi Dorabji Bacha, Homi Merwan Engineer, Noshir Minoo Fitter, Sam Boman Irani and Jamshed Khurshedji Pavri. We are thankful to these people and their families for establishing the framework. In 1993, with changing requirements, this document was reviewed, and a new Constitution and Bylaws was registered on March 5, 1997.

To mark this important anniversary, there have been special events – including two dinner fund-raisers and the publication of a cook book of recipes provided by BC Zarathushtis, put together by Gonny Confectioner. It is available for US or Canadian \$8.

Of importance was an all-day seminar on *"The Zarathushti (Zoroastrian) Celebration"* on May 16, at the Empire Landmark Hotel in Vancouver. It was a real success, thanks to our scholars and speakers, Mrs. Dina McIntyre, Prof. Kaikhosrov Irani and Prof. Mehraban Khodavandi.



"PARADISE", the creation of Shahriar Shahriari and Shervin Shahriari was presented live by them. There was a youth panel on "Our Terrific Teens: their Triumphs and their Turmoils", with Trity Pourbahrami and Rustom Appoo as moderators. Azita Oshidary Kanai was the emcee for the day, and was most effective.

At the gala dinner on May 17th, we were privileged to have the Honorable Ujjal Dosanjh, Attorney General and Minister responsible for Multiculturalism, Human Rights and Immigration, for the Province of British Columbia, and his wife, Raminder, with us. Also present, amongst a record crowd, were Mrs. Roda Pavri, Nari Pavri (the late Jamshed Pavri's brother, from Hong Kong), Homi Gilan, founding member with his wife Soonoo, and their children Merwan and Rukshana. Our two emcees, Zubin Amrolia and

Shahpour Mehrabani, kept the evening's activities moving on time in two languages (English and Farsi). The two dance groups – the Atash Dance Group directed and choreographed by Mojdeh Shahriari, and the Golden Girls (dandi ras and diva dances) directed by Piroj Amrolia, were both wonderful.

Awards, in recognition and appreciation of their valuable contribution and service to the Zarathushti community, were presented to: Piroj Amrolia, Zarine Dastur, Farrokh Namdaran, Mobed Jehangir Panthaky and Bella Tata.

Awards in recognition of the contribution in enhancing the visibility of the Zarathushti community were presented to: Mojdeh Shahriari, Shahriar Shahriari, Dr. Mehraban Shahrvin and Mehraban Zartoshty. ■

Bella Tata
President, ZSBC

Dasturji Kotwal on US Lecture Tour

Dasturji (Dr) Firoze M. Kotwal and his wife, Navaz, gave a 5-week lecture course in Chicago during July. Dasturji and Mrs. Kotwal also gave lectures and performed jashans in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Indianapolis, Florida and New York (for the North American Congress).

Summer Activities

Zarathushti youth were busy this summer with numerous camps and other activities. ZAMWI and ZYNA organized a *Z-Retreat* at Camp Misty Mount in the Catoctin National Park, MD; ZAGNY's *Ivy F. Gandhi Young Zoroastrian Camp* was held at Camp Hoover, on Swartwood Lake in New Jersey. The two-week *Camp Pardis* at the Mehraban Guiv Darbe Mehr in Toronto was again, a success. Two one-week sessions were held of CIMNA's *San Jose Camp* at the dare-mehr. Zoroastrian Sports Committee hosted its first *Soccer Tournament* in Irvine, California.

Women prominent on the newly elected Board in Chicago

Five of the six officers elected from the 25-member Board of the Zoroastrian Association of Chicago, are women. President Hosi Mehta will be supported by Arnavaz Elavia (vice president), Aban Vazifdar (secretary), Dinaz Weber (treasurer), Zenobia Tantra (assistant secretary) and Sohi-la Parsinejad (assistant treasurer).

Youth Group in Houston holds May Ball fundraiser

The May Ball fundraiser organized by the Youth Group of Houston on May 30th, at the new Zarathushti Heritage and Cultural Center, netted \$1,606 towards a playground for "our young Zarathushtis to play and grow on", says Diana Engineer. Parsi food, catered by Kaiser Foods at a very reasonable price, and Iranian food from Darband Restaurant complemented the Persian theme. ■

WZC 2000 - HOUSTON

Planning under way in full swing for Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress

Co-chairs *Dolly Dastoor* and *Homi Davier* [photo right] set the excitement

level for the planning meeting of the World Zoroastrian Congress to be held in Houston December 28, 2000 to January 1, 2001. They outlined their goals to make Congress 2000 a hallmark congress, to establish an atmosphere of universal awareness about political, religious, ideological, socio-economical and educational issues that affect Zarathushtis world wide, and showcase Zarathushti successes in the arts, sciences, music, drama, literature and architecture.

Treasurer Sarosh Collector presented a preliminary draft budget of \$840,150 to cover advertising, awards, entertainment, meals, insurance, exhibits, rentals, hotels, printing/mailing, research grant, telephone, travel, supplies, and other expenses. The income from subscriptions, donations, advertisements and special shows, is expected to be \$461,000, for a net deficit of \$379,150.

Co-vice-chairs Sarosh J. H. Manekshaw and **Farrokh Mistree** presented an *Operational Manual* for the congress. **FEZANA Congress chair Bella Tata** (who has since resigned for personal reasons – her vision, dedication and abilities have laid a sound base for future congresses, and will pave the way for incoming chair Jimmy Mistry) presented a Code of Conduct.

Program co-chairs Khorshed Jungalwala, Kaemarz Dotiwala and **Yezdi Rustomji** presented preliminary suggestions for a "dynamic and novelle" congress program to include: exhibits – displays of art works, books, artifacts, coins, cos-



tumes, historical records, and special exhibits at the Houston museum; 12 congress sessions from "Rituals of the Faith" to "Facing New Realities"; and a Mobeds Forum.

Fereshteh Khatibi and **Gordafird Aresh** will co-chair the **Social and Cultural Committee**. **Operations co-chairs Pervin Sagar** and **Roshan Sethna** have negotiated a win-win deal with the luxurious JW Marriott Hotel in the glittering Galleria area of Houston, which boasts 300 restaurants and 600 exclusive shops. It will be able to provide excellent facilities for the 2,000 delegates that the WZC 2000 planners hope to draw.

Dinshaw Joshi was appointed chair of a new **World Zarathushti Community Awards Committee**, and will be seeking suitable candidates

from major regions of the world, to serve on his committee. **Hospitality and Registration** co-chairs are *Rustom Engineer, Dariuosh Vafadari* and *Mehran Sepehri*. The ever-important **Fund-raising Committee** will be chaired by *Rustom Kevala*. Fund raising has been kicked off with the "2 for 2000" promotion (whereby every individual in the world is encouraged to donate \$2, or \$20 or \$200, per year until the year 2000, to support the congress. Chair of **International Relations**, *Rohinton Rivetna*, will be encouraging participation from abroad and inviting regional liaison persons, and regional vice chairs from the major regions of India, Iran and UK. He hoped that by the year 2000, the world body would be a reality.

Rustom Khosravian and *Bijan Khosraviani*, co-chairs of the **Sports Committee** are planning a major Zarathushti Olympics event in conjunction with WZC 2000. **Public Relations Committee** member *Mag-*

dalena Rustomji, on behalf of co-chairs *Aban Rustomji* and *Roshan Rivetna*, spoke about plans to promote WZC 2000. The New

York congress provided a major opportunity for promotion. With

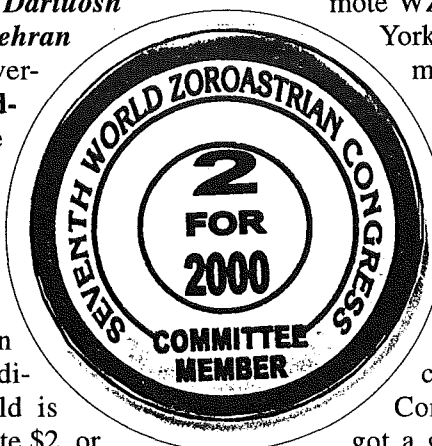
flyers, posters, buttons, bookmarks and other souvenirs, handed out by Artemish and Parmish Khatibi in traditional Iranian costume, NY

Congress participants got a glimpse of things to

come. A one-hour session on "WZC 2000 - a Zarathushti Odyssey" [see next report] afforded another excellent opportunity. We can venture to say, these promotions have been a success, from the number of people who were heard to say "See you in Houston in 2000", as they said their good-byes at the New York congress.

With customary Texan penchant for things **BIG**, the planners are doing everything in a **BIG** way. Expect this congress in Houston, Texas, to be **BIG**!

- By Roshan Rivetna



WZC 2000 ... Takes off at the New York Congress

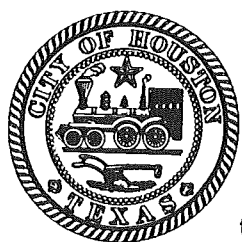
The committee for the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress, which will be hosted by FEZANA and the Zoroastrian Association of Houston (ZAH) December 28th, 2000 through January 1, 2001, was introduced at the Eleventh North American Zoroastrian Congress in Rye, New York.

Nerina Rustomji opened Session VI, bringing greetings from FEZANA and ZAH, with an introduction and invitation to the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress. She introduced Bella Tata who spoke about the hopes and aspirations of the congress which will be held for the very first time in the North American continent. Dolly Dastoor and Homi Davier, co-chairs of WZC 2000 spoke about their vision for this world congress. They introduced the FEZANA and ZAH committee members who were present at the conference.

A most impressive multi-media presentation produced by the congress team and directed and developed by Arish Rustomji gave participants a vicarious moment of what the World Congress in Houston will be. It was well received by an enthusiastic audience.

The presentation initiated the campaign of "2 for 2000", with the idea that if every Zarathushti donates \$2 (or \$20 or \$200) per year towards WZC 2000, a remarkable amount will be collected, and (as is the hope of chair Homi Davier), would make the cost of the congress low enough to encourage maximum participation from countries around the world.

Already, the fruits of this campaign are touching the hearts of Zarathushtis world wide, as the Karachi Zarathushtis, under the leadership of the indefatigable Hutoxy Cowasjee responded with \$3,513 - a one-time donation for three years as



CITY OF HOUSTON OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

As mayor of the City of Houston, I am pleased to extend my warm regards to the participants of the North American Zoroastrian Congress 1998 in New York. I would also like to take this opportunity to let you know how delighted I am that Houston has been chosen as the site of the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress in the year 2000. I am confident that this event will provide a rewarding and inspiring forum for all in attendance.

As an international city, Houston has historically offered an array of activities, organizations, and services that are reflective of our diverse ethnic and cultural makeup. The Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress will continue in that tradition.

While you are in Houston, I hope that you will have an opportunity to share in the Houston experience, taking time to enjoy the spirit, vitality, and tradition that characterize our city. Noted for its hospitality, Houston has many outstanding museums, fine restaurants, exciting sports events, varied entertainment calendar, and interesting places to shop. I look forward to your visit and hope your stay will be enjoyable and rewarding.

Sincerely

Lee P. Brown, Mayor

their community of 400 families gave their \$6.00 each, plus more! Other WZC 2000 activities at the North American Congress included Artemish and Parmish Khatibi beautifully dressed in traditional Iranian costumes handing out WZC 2000 flyers, buttons, magnets and bookmarks.

The WZC 2000 committee salutes ZAGNY for an outstanding and memorable congress! Also appreciated is their warm support in helping the Congress 2000 committee to initiate its North American promotion campaign.

We need *all* North American Zarathushtis to help reach *all* parts of the world, since this congress is committed to universal inclusion and participation from all Zarathushtis and all associations throughout the world.

Remember – “2 for 2000”!

Aban Rustomji

Magdalena Rustomji

Public Relations Committee

WZC 2000

THE CONGRESS TRADITION LIVES ON IN NEW YORK

Voices of grass root Zarathushtis are heard at the Eleventh North American Zoroastrian Congress.

By Porus P. Cooper
Cherry Hill, New Jersey

Of all the Zarathushti rituals examined and re-examined each time one of the North American Zoroastrian congresses assembles, one ritual seems to be growing unchecked, and happily so. That's the congress tradition itself.

The Eleventh North American Zoroastrian Congress, held over the July 4th weekend in Rye, New York, was bigger (with about 650 attending the various sessions and about 750 signed up for the banquet, it was the largest ever) and in some ways more innovative than some of the prior ones. No doubt, the hosts – the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York, in tandem with the Iranian Zoroastrian Association – built on the experience of their predecessors elsewhere.

For instance, gone were the handful of featured speakers, many of them familiar figures, who customarily

anchored sessions at previous congresses. In their place were panels of speakers, many of them appearing for the first time, who examined various topics and invited discussion from those in attendance. Youth was

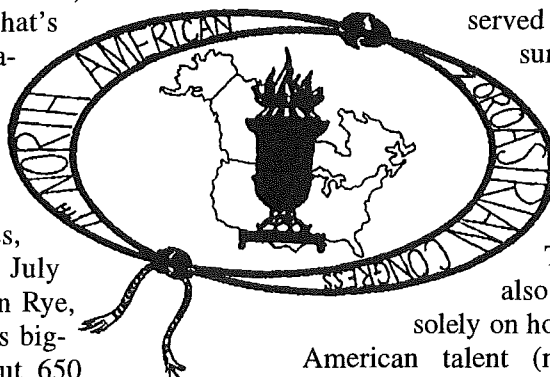
served in ample measure.

In fact, the room fairly crackled with energy when the younger people spoke. The organizers

also decided to rely solely on homegrown North

American talent (no resident of Europe or Iran or India or Pakistan was invited to be on any of the panels). With one exception, all the speakers were Zarathushtis. With the exception of a few student speakers whose expenses were reimbursed, no speaker was compensated for appearing.

On display were the sinew and fiber of a community that has grown not only in numbers (to 20,000 in the United States and Canada, by some estimates) but also in maturity and organizational sophistication. And



I would be happy if ...

*I would be happy if only
I could sing a love song to
God unconditionally.*

*I would be happy if only
I could absorb the light
of God thoroughly.*

*I would be happy if only
I could be a co-worker
with God wisely.*

*I would be happy if only
I could live from within to leave
My body and touch my soul.*

*I would be happy if only
I could gain the experience to free
My spirit and reach my goal.*

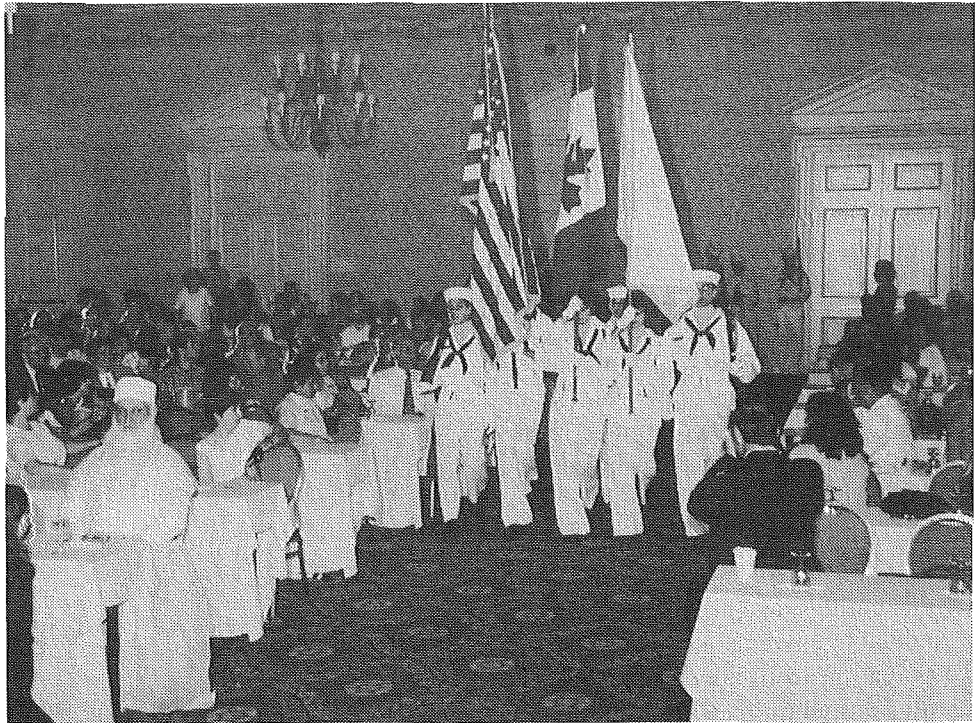
*I would be happy if only
I could dream of the mountain top
To gain the wisdom and free my soul.*

*I am a soul, born of love,
In this journey to freedom, to God,
My strength comes from its love
And my courage from its wisdom.*

- By Kambiz Tehrani

Right, ZAGNY youth in naval cadet uniform, leading the Mobeds and association delegates at opening ceremonies.

Far right, Representatives at the Opening Ceremonies: From IZA, Eraj Yektashena, president Shirin Kiamanesh and vice president Sima Gojgini; from FEZANA, outgoing president Dolly Dastoor and incoming president Framroze Patel; and from ZAGNY, joint secretaries Armaity Patel and Sheroo Kanga (not in picture) and treasurer Dinshaw Bardoliwalla.



new technology has expanded the sense of community. The host group, ZAGNY's informative internet web page beckoning people to come to the congress was evidence of this wider community. It joined an already thriving Zarathushti community on the web and off it. At least two video productions tracing the life and times of Asho Zarathushtra were on sale, along with numerous publications, some scholarly, some of immediate practical use, such as the second edition of the directory of North American Zarathushtis. The congress, as others before it, seemed only to make this growing community connectedness more visible.

For three days, every two years, in one big hotel ballroom, the illusion is perpetuated that there's a whole lot of us. Let's stop talking about survival, let's start talking about a thriving community. Some of the speakers counseled with a degree of ebullience that the overall numbers may belie.

Noshir Langrana, an engineering professor at Rutgers University in New Jersey and co-chairman of the congress, presented the initial find-

ings of a demographic survey. The survey elicited 3,919 responses from heads of households for a total of 8,851 individuals. But fewer than half the entries were complete, Langrana said, with many leaving out essential information such as ages. Factoring in non-responses and the fact that the community is not well organized everywhere, Langrana hazarded the estimate that there are close to 20,000 Zarathushtis in North America.

"We have a problem of inventory," said Anahaita N. Kotval, a 30-year-

“ For three days, every two years, in one big hotel ballroom, the illusion is perpetuated that there's a whole lot of us. Let's stop talking about survival, let's start talking about a thriving community ... ”

old New York lawyer for the Securities and Exchange Commission, who was discussing the impulse toward interfaith marriages among many of the younger generation.

Expectedly, the panel on interfaith and intrafaith marriages drew the greatest interest. The hall was packed, and the personal testimony

of the speakers, sometimes tormented, sometimes defiant, always strikingly candid, could have riveted the attention of any Oprah Winfrey viewer. In the minds of many, marriages outside the Zarathushti community remain a key cause of its erosion. Turn marriage from an exit point to an entryway, some counseled in response. Accept the children of such marriages into the faith, they said, and the faith, if not its ethnic complexion, will be safe.

"We must do everything we can, as a community, to encourage parents of interfaith marriages to bring up their children as Zoroastrians," said Zarine Weil [see photo]. She and her Jewish husband, Richard, have two children, Darius and Delna, and have "adopted a lifestyle where Zoroastrianism is the dominant faith," Weil said.

Zareen Karani Araoz, president of an international cross-cultural management consulting firm, said her first marriage, to a Zarathushti, ended after seven "challenging" years. She is now married to a non-Zoroastrian. "I am not here to advocate interfaith marriages," she said, but asked: "Is it better to have an unhappy, un-Zoroastrian marriage to a Zoroastrian than a genuinely sacred



and happy marriage that demonstrates Zoroastrian ideals with someone from a different community?"

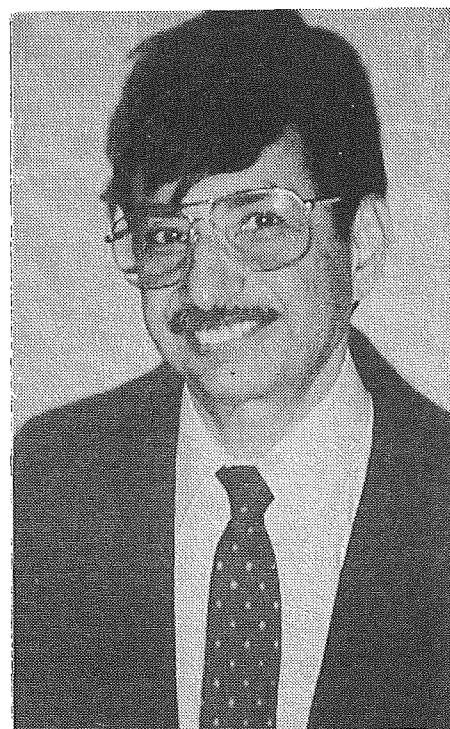
That sort of sentiment was echoed by Spenta Cama, 26, a law student at Rutgers University. "From the outset I'd like to say that I am not arguing that interfaith marriages are better. In fact, my belief is that intrafaith marriages are preferable," Cama said. "However, given the Zoroastrian integration into North American society, interfaith marriages will occur. The real issue then becomes how the Zoroastrian community can and will respond to something that has happened, is happening and will continue to happen." Her wedding rites incorporated both Zarathushti and Methodist traditions. If the community rejects the children of marriages such as hers, Cama said, it would lose not only that one member but also that member's children. She also said that non-Zarathushti spouses often are the most dedicated members of the community: "They are greatly involved in planning events and activities, give generously of their time and money, and can be counted on at any time for any kind of help – all very Zoroastrian-like qualities."

In the Brooklyn neighborhood where she makes her home, said

Mina Zand Siegal, a graphic arts entrepreneur, there are few Zarathushtis. Her 'community' there is all Jewish. "When I need help or have to go to a hospital, I have no Zoroastrian to turn to for help. ... I have to rely on those other people." She and her Jewish husband have been married for 13 years, she said. Looking back to the anguish, her decision to marry outside the community caused in her family all the way back to Iran, she said she now wonders, "What was all the fuss about?"

Stating the case for emphasizing and encouraging marriages within the community was Jamshed Gandi, a San Francisco CPA. "Being of the same faith has brought a great commonality amongst us parents in espousing our common beliefs, traditions, rituals, customs, goals especially in the matter of religion, faith, and other spiritual matters, to our children," he said.

Looking in from the outside, James K. Lovelace, a Washington-area non-Zarathushti spouse, tried to get to the soul of the debate. "Have you been grasped by Zoroastrianism?" asked Lovelace, associate vice president for academic affairs at the University of Maryland Biotechnology



Moderator Lovji Cama: "... the panel only reflected the wider community's response ..."



Panelist Zareen Karani Araoz: "I am not here to advocate interfaith marriages..."



Panel on Faith and Community, from left, Mazda Antia, Dinshaw Patel, Shiraz Antia (hidden), Zarin Hakim, Nenshad Bardoliwalla, Navroz Gandhi, Kaikhosrov Irani (moderator), Shahriar Shahriari, Ardeshir Anoshiravani, Natalie Vania, Dina McIntyre and Mehran Sepehri (at podium).

Institute. "Is your spiritual life your ultimate concern? Chances are if you don't take your spiritual life unconditionally seriously, neither will your children."

Respect our choice, speakers who have married outside the community said. Respect our choice to hew to tradition, countered some like Kaemar P. Dotiwala, a businessman and leader of the Houston Zarathushti community.

Some felt the very panel was skewed toward presenting the case for accepting interfaith families. Moderator Lovji Cama said the panel only reflected the wider community's response – few came forward to articulate the case for the intrafaith marriages that many feel comport better with Zarathushti tradition.

The standoff was never acrimonious, though Ervad Kersey Antia from Chicago brought up its dark side. He

said he and another mobed had received death threats for trying to perform an interfaith marriage. The debate was hardly ended at the 11th congress; what it afforded, however, was a forum for creative potential ways to move beyond the ideological impasse.

Tamina Davar, 30, a journalist working in New York, has found a way to create a larger, look-alike community of South Asians and other Asians around her. At least some of the impulse among young Zarathushtis to marry outside the community comes from a lack of self-esteem, she conjectured, the result of living in white suburban enclaves. "When kids grow up among people of their own color, they tend to like themselves," she said in an interview. In this respect, the opportunities that the congress allowed her to socialize with fellow Zarathushtis were most valuable, she said. Others pointed out

efforts, including on the Internet, to connect Zarathushtis looking for mates of their own faith.

"The Zoroastrian Commitment in the North American Context" was the theme of this congress. For most of the speakers, that translated into a search for some common ground to override the obvious divisions that remain. For some, like Prof. Kaikhosrov D. Irani, that meant a quest for a common goal. "Every religion has a core belief," said Irani, who is emeritus professor of philosophy at City College of New York and a venerable figure in the North American Zarathushti community. "There may be variations in the core belief, but there must be a common goal. The function of religious practice is that it binds the community through common actions." As he has in other settings over the years, Irani exhorted those gathered to examine "our total traditions, beliefs and prac-



Congress co-chairs Geo Nentin and Noshir Langrana with members of all the committees of the Eleventh North American Zoroastrian Congress including: Finance (chair Dinshaw Bardoliwalla), Logistics (chair Armaity Patel), Technical Program (chair Noshir Langrana) and Social (chair Mahrukh Cama).

tices and ask, what must be maintained and what may or may not be and what ought not to be or cannot be maintained. Scientific and other advances require adjustments – rationally and with respect. Traditions cannot be permitted to die out casually, but they cannot challenge reason and survive.”

Dina G. McIntyre, a Pittsburgh lawyer, has searched for and found her religious core in Zarathushtra’s “own words” – the Gathas. “If we must express the teachings of Zarathushtra in a nutshell, I think it is the concept of the amesha spentas,” McIntyre said. “In the Gathas, they are the beginning, the end, and how we get there. According to Zarathushtra, they are the essence of divinity – the attributes with which he describes God. And they are also the way to God. They are what we worship and how we worship. They are Zarathushtra’s way of life and the purpose of life.”

For Dotiwala, it may be time to seek out a new way to maintain a common Zarathushti goal in the form of two coalitions of groups, one on the traditional side and one liberal. “A rather broad spectrum” of approaches to the practice of the faith has fragmented the community, he said, tracing the spectrum from the Kshnoomists and Pandolites on one end to “orthodox fundamentalists” to “moderate traditionalists” (who would frown on any tinkering with the corpus of Zarathushti scriptures) and “moderate liberals” (who would allow such tinkering) to “the Gathas-only fundamentalists.”

“I believe that the time is ripe for our community to think of, after careful consideration, starting a new experiment of the formation of a new Zarathushti group that would embody the outlook of the groups falling under the moderate liberal and the Gathas-only fundamentalists.

In order for the experiment to succeed, I believe that in the initial, formative years, the leaders of the new group be from those who are born Zarathushtis. The gates may be cracked initially to allow the children and spouses of Zarathushtis, rather than be thrown totally open. What this will do is allow the children of a Zarathushti to be sustained within the community. What it will also do is that the traditional groups will continue to maintain the religion in its totality the way it has been practiced. This will serve as a safety net for the community in case the experiment runs into a hitch. The leaders of both the groups will have to work with each other honestly and help each other blossom and flourish within their own parameters.”

For Yezdi Minocher Rustomji, a lecturer in sociology at the University of Houston, it meant moving beyond a “tribal” concept of the Zarathushti

community, where somehow the religion is transmitted as "genetic material" would. "I will not hesitate to say that the reasons for adherence to the tribal concept by Zarathushtis range from outright racist feelings, to claims of cultural exigency, and a superstitious acceptance of what amounts to nothing more than ideological canards."

For Keki Bhote, a Chicago executive and international consultant, the question to ponder is, will there be a new renaissance of the faith in North America. "We can no longer look to India for inspiration. The Parsi century there is over. We can no longer look to Iran, because despite Khatemi [the current, reform-minded president], the mullahs still reign." Bhote stressed the taking of individual responsibility – from learning the scriptures to practicing the practical tenets of the faith, including environmentalism – to perpetuate the religion.

For Villy Gandhi, it meant better parenting. Parents, educators, priests and other members of the community, all "share the ultimate responsibility of studying, understanding and modeling the precepts of our religion as well as its rituals in a balanced and knowledgeable way," she added. "Why then would our children want to abandon this inspiring religion?" Those who do, she said, may well be discarding "cultural baggage" rather than the faith itself.

For Shiraz Darius Antia, a young healthcare administrator, it has meant expressing her faith in action. When there was some damage to the New Rochelle Darbe Mehr, she said, "in a

matter of less than a week, there were eight of us who came on a Friday night to clean the walls and repaint the prayer room. That is faith," she said.

For Aysha Ghadiali, a first year student at the University of Boston, it has meant comprehending the prayers both spiritually and literally. "It is the literal translation (in English) that opens the door to help us to under-

increase in the traditional age of Navjote initiates. Firdosh Mehta suggested a variant of that, with the Navjote ceremony followed at a later date, "after the individual has attained a contemplative commitment to the faith at some stage of adulthood," with a second "affirmative" Navjote.

For Ardeshtir Homozayari, a first year student at the University of Boston and a member of Kankash-e-Mobedan, or the Council of Iranian Mobeds, the Zarathushti commitment in North America has meant enrolling in the "Pre-Mobed-yar" program to deepen his knowledge of the religion. The program, set up in cooperation with the (Parsi) North American Mobed Council, teaches youth "how to be the leaders of the next generation of Zarthushtis," Homozayari said.

For Sam M. Vesuna, an Ontario CPA and founder-member of FEZANA, it meant sharing his years of experience in running

successful volunteer projects. A spirit of compromise is essential here, he said. "If there is no interest in the project," he said, "ask yourself the question: Is the project worthwhile?" For Bijan Khosraviani, a Stanford graduate student and chairman of the FEZANA Sports Committee, it meant emphasizing a better rounded life, celebrating art, music and sports skills as much as academic accomplishments.

For Yasmin and Jamshed Ghadiali, the Zoroastrian commitment in North America has meant tending to their roots in India. They created, and for years have led, an effort to raise funds for the Parsi General Hospital



Gev Nentin and Noshir Langrana, co-chairs of the Eleventh North American Congress in New York, passing on the Congress trophy to Dolly Dastoor, co-chair (with Homi Davier) of the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress to be held in the year 2000 in Houston.

stand spiritually what we were taught as children," she said. One way to do that would be to routinely follow traditional ceremonies with an English translation, she suggested.

For Kaizad Cama also, soon to be a senior at Tenafly High School in New Jersey, it meant especially making the Navjote ceremony understandable to the child being initiated into the faith. Cama said he surveyed about 40 Zarathushti youths, asking them if they had realized what pledges they were making when they underwent the Navjote, and of the 24 who responded, 19 said they did not. He suggested both an English interpretation of the ceremony and an

in Bombay. For their quiet but dogged service to the less fortunate, they received the Jamshed Pavri Humanitarian Award.

For Ardeshir Anoshiravani, a Southern California psychiatrist, it meant admonishing the community's leaders to work hard to forge unity and show "moral courage." In the Gathas, Anoshiravani said, "there is no evidence that Asho Zarathushtra did ever engage his opponents in a verbal or physical battle."

For Behram S. Deboo, president of the Zoroastrian Society of Washington State, it meant exploring why Parsis do not celebrate Mehragan, Tirgan and Jashan-e-Sadeh, which Iranian Zarathushtis mark to this day.

For many, it meant giving a blood sample in hopes of finding a bone-marrow match needed to save the life of a young Zarathushti.

For Mehru Cama, co-chairperson of the logistics committee, it was one of the small army of volunteers who worked selflessly behind the scenes. What she took special pride in was that she designed the logo for the 11th congress – a kushti encircling an afargan superimposed on a map of the United States and Canada. ■

[This article published courtesy of Parsiana magazine. Photographs: Rusi P. Sethna and Roshan Rivetna]

A Tame Affair

A perspective on the congress in New York

By Rashna Ghadialy
Chicago, Illinois

A close friend inquired on my return to Chicago from the 1998 ZAGNY/FEZANA Congress of my impressions and the most appropriate answer to the inquiry was "politically correct." The congress was well organized and interesting topics were chosen for discussion for the panels but hardly a few presentations hit home. However, the congress did serve as a reunion of sorts to many as we had an opportunity to meet with our friends and relatives.

The AGM started off punctually on Wednesday and a lot was achieved between the hours of nine and five. In general, wisdom did prevail and among the wise motions that were passed were: the creation of a separate Education Trust Fund, a start of the Crestone Project, and continuation of talks between FEZANA representatives and WZO leaders to

create a world Zarathushti body. That evening courtesy of ZAGNY, we attended a reception followed by a delicious dinner at the New Rochelle Darbe Mehr.

On Thursday I went off to Manhattan to sightsee and discover what was new in the City. I was pleasantly surprised by the new sense of cleanliness and politeness in Manhattan. A trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art though dampened my 'new' impression of the Big Apple. In the Near Eastern Room, the blurb along with the artifacts of the Persian dynasties refers to the Achaemenians, Parthians and Sassanians as worshippers of gods and their divinities. I sincerely hope that other Zarathushtis who visit the Met Museum also make it a point to see these artifacts and write a letter of protest to the museum's curator to correct the blurb.

Right, ZAGNY's Zoroastrian Orchestra, of over 30 members under the baton of Piroozi Cooper, practiced for months. They played Star Spangled Banner and "Chayye Hame Zarathushti", specially arranged for them by Piroozi's brother Farobag Cooper.



Meanwhile, the congress started Friday morning with a big bang. Although I did not return from Manhattan to witness the proceedings of the opening ceremony, I made it in time for the awards luncheon. The long speeches and the prolonged clapping went way beyond schedule and delayed the afternoon session by an hour.

Burzin Unwala truly stole the limelight in a presentation emphasizing the subtle meaning often lost in Gathas and Avesta transliteration, especially by European scholars.

Saturday sessions were the ones to which I looked forward the most. The morning session on *Standard Rituals in a Meaningful Context* was a highlight of the conference. Kaizad Cama and Aysha Ghadiali articulated the lack of understanding of prayers and preparation which young children undergo, prior to the navjote ceremony and suggested some changes to this ritual. K. D. Irani expressed his dismay at the odd marriage customs of cracking coconuts and eggs. Kersey Antia strongly pointed out that in order for us to thrive spiritually and religiously in North America, we have to financially invest in building libraries, seminaries and schools.

The Saturday afternoon sessions left a lot to be desired. The presentations in the *Social Structure in the Zarathushti Community* sessions sounded more like lectures in an introductory sociology class and only two panelists truly addressed the structures in Zarathushti communities. The rest addressed bland and general issues which were already outlined in detail by the panel organizer.

The last session of the day was on the thorny topic of *Intra and Inter Faith Marriages* which had an overwhelm-

ing audience. This session should have been titled just *Interfaith Marriages* as the people who were chosen to speak on behalf of intrafaith marriages hardly did any justice to their assignments. Somehow the challenges and expectations of intrafaith marriages were completely ignored. Promoting intrafaith marriages would have been totally politically incorrect and unacceptable to most liberals in the audience and so was not voiced.

Even the interfaith marriages discussion was a bit farcical to say the least. One presenter tried to convince the audience that it was better to be in a "Zarathushti" marriage than married to a Zarathushti. If that were to hold true, then one wonders if anyone has to be Zarathushti to be in a Zarathushti marriage. However, no one suggested that we should develop means by which to educate a non-Zarathushti spouse about our religion and accept him/her in our fold just as some other religious communities have done. I think the mention of such a 'revolutionary' idea would not have held well with the orthodox in the audience and thus was not mentioned.

The evening social banquet was indeed an event for which it was worth missing the fourth of July fireworks. We were entertained by the antics of the MCs in their quizzing of the audience; by the piano and piano-oboe duet recitals, dances and pieces played by the ZAGNY Zoroastrian Orchestra whose members ranged from the tender age of eight to the thirty-something concert master and conductor. The rest of the night was spent in mingling and dancing away to various tunes.

The next day I moved on to relax in the Hamptons, Long Island before returning to Chicago. ■



Rohinton Rivetna Outstanding Zarathushti Award was presented to **FARANGIS SHAHROKH**. Born in Iran, Mrs. Shahrokh founded a clinic for the poor, an orphanage in Hamadan, Zoroastrian Women's Organization of Iran, Ancient Iranian Cultural Society, Iranian Handicraft Organization and organized the first Iranian Women's Congress. On migration to USA she founded the California Zoroastrian Center and was instrumental in the establishment of the Rustam Guiv Dar-e-Mehr and its Kaikhosrov Shahrokh Library and the Ardeshir Yeganegi Library. Farangis is the author of "In Search of Truths" and has been a speaker at North American conferences.

Excellence in Business or Profession Award was presented to **YASMIN THANAVALA** along with a revolving trophy donated by Jamshed and Shirin Guzdar. Dr. Thanavala has a Ph.D. in Immunology from University of London. She is Senior Scientist and Professor of Immunology and heads her own laboratory at Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo, NY. She is a popular speaker at conferences and jointly holds 3 US patents. Her current focus is the development of "edible vaccines" for Hepatitis B, through genetically engineered foods.

Jamshed Pavri Humanitarian Service Award and a revolving trophy donated by Mrs. Rhoda Jamshed

Above, Dinshaw Joshi (seated, center) chair of the FEZANA Awards Committee and 1998 North American Zarathushti Community Award winners: Phiroz Tarapore (at piano); standing, Orang Demehry, Parastu Dubash, Yasmin Thanavala, Jamshed Ghadiali, seated Shida Anoshiravani (accepting for Mrs. Farangis Shahrokh, photo at right) and Yasmin Ghadiali.



North American Zarathushti Community Awards

Community awards, orchestrated by the FEZANA Awards Committee, chaired since its inception by Dinshaw Joshi, have been presented at the bi-annual North American congresses since 1988. The 1998 awards were presented at a special Awards Ceremony on July 3rd, at the Eleventh North American Zoroastrian Congress.

Pavri, was presented to **YASMIN & JAMSHED GHADIALI**. Yasmin, a dentist, and Jamshed an account executive, have provided assistance to many Zarathushti individuals during their stay in USA for specialized medical treatment. They provided emotional, physical and financial support, and hosted them in their home for extended periods of time. Through their donation drives several Zarathushti individuals and institutions in India (notably Parsi General Hospital) receive large donations annually.

Outstanding Young Zarathushti Award was presented jointly to **ORANG DEMEHRY** and **PARASTU DUBASH**. Orang graduated in 1996 in Accounting from George Mason University in Virginia. He is currently completing a project for US Department of Defense and concurrently doing market research and developing best business practices, and a fixed assets and inventory tracking system for the House of Representatives. He holds a CPA from the State of Virginia. He

was the founding president of the Zoroastrian Youth Group in Metropolitan Washington area, and is an active participant in ZYNA. He has also served on the ZAMWI Board and was instrumental in getting ZAMWI recognized by the Interfaith Council.

Parastu received a Ph.D. in Psychology from Carnegie Mellon University in 1980, and has taught Psychology at Universities in Rhode Island and Massachusetts. She has co-authored a publication which appeared in Journal of Experimental Psychology, and a chapter entitled "Toward Understanding Emotions in Interpersonal Relationships" for a text book. Parastu was a Board member of the Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania, and is currently serving her second term as president of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater Boston. She is also a very active member of the Boston Youth Group (BAWAS). In 1997, she was co-chair of the local conference committee of the First International Avesta Conference in Boston.

Outstanding Zarathushti Student Award, a revolving trophy donated by Mehraban and Faridoon Zartoshty and a \$1,000 scholarship, was presented to **PHIROZ TARAPORE**. Phiroz, a straight "A" student since fourth grade, was placed in the 99th percentile in PSAT and SAT examinations. Phiroz was on his school team which tied for gold at the county level, and individually won 7 medals out of a possible 10, including 3 gold. He has been awarded a National Merit Scholarship and is an International AP (Advanced Placement) Scholar. Phiroz will attend Stanford in Fall 1998. In addition to his academic excellence, Phiroz is a musical prodigy and has played the piano since he was 8. He has numerous recognitions and concert performances to his credit, notably his performance at the San Francisco (1996) and New York (1998) Zarathushti congresses. ■

[Excerpted from a report by Dinshaw F. Joshi, Chairperson, FEZANA Awards Committee]

Calendar of Festivals

September - February

Fasli (F), Shenshai (S) and Kadmi (K) dates for festivals from June through February 1999, are listed below:

Fravardian Jashan

Mah Fravardin, Roj Fravardin Mon Aug 10 (K)
Wed Sep 9 (S)

Maidyozarem Gahambar

Mah Ardibehesht, Roj Khorshed - Daepmeher
Tue Sep 1 - Sat Sep 5 (K)
Thu Oct 1 - Mon Oct 5 (S)

Paitishahem Gahambar

Mah Sheherevar, Roj Ashtad - Aneran
Sat Sep 12-Wed Sep 16 (F)

Jashan-e-Mehergan

Mah Meher, Roj Meher Fri Oct 2 (F)

Ayathrem Gahambar

Mah Meher, Roj Ashtad - Aneran Mon Oct 12- Fri Oct 16 (F)

Jashan-e-Avangan (Avan Ardivisur Parab)

Mah Avan, Roj Avan Mon Oct 26 (F)

Maidyoshem Gahambar

Mah Tir, Roj Khorshed - Daepmeher
Sat Oct 31 - Wed Nov 4 (K)
Mon Nov 30 - Fri Dec 4 (S)

Jashan-e-Adargan (Atash nu Parab)

Mah Adar, Roj Adar Tue Nov 24 (F)

Death Anniversary of Zarathushtra

Mah Daye, Roj Khorshed Sat Dec 26 (F)

Maidhyarem Gahambar

Mah Daye, Roj Meher -Bahram Thu Dec 31 - Jan 4 (F)

Jashan-e-Daegan

Mah Daye, Roj Daepdin Thu Jan 7 (F)

Jashan-e-Bahmangan

Mah Bahman, Roj Bahman Sat Jan 16 (F)

Paitishahem Gahambar

Mah Sheherevar, Roj Ashtad - Aneran
Thu Jan 14 - Mon Jan 18 (K)

Jashan-e-Sadeh

Mah Bahman, Roj Meher Sat Jan 30 (F)

Ayathrem Gahambar

Mah Meher, Roj Ashtad - Aneran Sat Feb 13 - Wed Feb 17 (K)

Paitishahem Gahambar

Mah Sheherevar, Roj Ashtad - Aneran
Sat Feb 13 - Wed Feb 17 (S)

Jashan-e-Mehergan, "Unity Day" in North America

Mah Meher and Roj Meher, which falls this year on October 2nd according to the Fasli calendar, is celebrated as the autumnal festival of Mehrgan. In Iran, Mehrgan is second in importance only to NoRuz, the new year. Every year Zarathushtis gather in the hundreds for the Mehrgan function at Tehran Pars (in Tehran) and other Zarathushti population centers in Iran.

Typically, a special table is laid with the fire vase, a copy of the Khordeh Avesta, a mirror (for self-reflection), water (source of life), various grains (for prosperity), fruits and flowers, sweets, wine, coins and candles. A priest recites the Meher Niyaeshe. After appropriate talks on the history and significance of the festival, feasting, music and dancing follow late into the night.

Historically, Mehrgan signifies the victory of Kaveh, over the cruel king Zohak, and the succession of Feridoon of the Pishdadian dynasty. It is also known as the "Festival of Kings" since the Persian monarchs celebrated it in a grand style. Meher is derived from the ancient Indo-Iranian deity, Mithra, who controlled the cosmic order – day and night, the changing of the seasons.

Meher is the symbol of light, signifying both spiritual and material enlightenment with wisdom and knowledge. Meher is the symbol of love bringing communion to human hearts and creating happiness all around. Meher is the symbol of justice. In Avesta, Meher Davar is the judge who judges the deeds of the departed souls.

The popularity of this ancient Iranian festival is now spreading in Zarathushti centers in North America. At its 1994 Annual General Meeting, FEZANA Member Associations approved a proposal to celebrate Mehrgan as "Unity Day" and a new tradition was born.

Mazdeyasnie Connection plans Retreat

The Mazdeyasnie Connection of Southern California announces its Fall Religious Retreat, "Understanding Our Religion" to be conducted by Ervad Kaikhoshroo N. Dastoor, September 27 - October 3, 1998, at Waterways Campground on Big Rideau Lake in Portland, Canada.

These seven golden days of a spiritual feast will reveal the esoteric side of the religion that was lost and long forgotten, through a three-fold approach: scientific, practical and devotional. Registration is \$325 per person or \$600 per couple. Boarding and lodging at the camp will be free for all mobeds. Call Silloo Mehta at (714) 995-8765.

1998 Zarathushti Business Conference

The 1998 Zarathushti Business Conference will be held at Circus Circus Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada, November 13 - 15, 1998 [see page 85].

Second International Avesta Conference

The Zoroastrian Education and Research Society (ZERS) announces The Second International Avesta Conference, in Calgary, Alberta, September 25-27, 1999. It will be co-sponsored by the Zoroastrian Association of Alberta.

The aim of this conference is to promote knowledge and understanding of all aspects of the religion of Zarathushtira from the Gathas, Young Avesta, Pahlavi, Parsi-Zarathushti literature, and rituals and traditions as they have evolved in the last three thousand years.

The conference is designed for scholars, academicians, students and interested members of the community. World renowned scholars have been invited to share their research. Contact Dr. Pallan R. Ichaporia at (610) 589-5419, Khorshed Jungalwala at (978) 443-6858, or Sarosh Manekshaw at (281) 870-9317.

SEVENTH WORLD ZOROASTRIAN CONGRESS

Houston, Texas

December 28, 2000 to January 1, 2001

<http://www.fezana.org/WZC2000>



WZC2000 is sponsored by the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA) and hosted by the Zoroastrian Association of Houston (ZAH).

Our aim is to celebrate our 3000-year old history and to commemorate Zarathushti contributions to the evolution of world religious thought, and to the development of

the world of fine arts, visual arts, music, dance, sports, cinematography, literature, business and science. As we want WZC2000 to be a true Zarathushti celebration to foster our coming together, we seek your moral and financial support and most importantly, your participation.

Promotion for WZC2000 was started at the New York Congress in July, with a one-hour presentation that included a dramatic, audio-visual show, and distribution of flyers, buttons (\$5 each), magnets, bookmarks and posters. Our campaign slogan for WZC2000 is "2 for 2000", where we request every Zarathushti around the world to contribute \$2 per year (or \$20 or \$200) until the year 2000. Please help us to achieve our goal of 2 for 2000 by sending your check, money order or bank draft to Sarosh Collector, treasurer, WZC2000, 3000 Richmond, Suite 270, Houston, Texas 77098, USA.

Please join us in this gathering of the world Zarathushti community. Together we will kick off a new millennium whose promise is as vast as the Texan horizon.

Homi M. Davier

Congress Co-chair
6654 Southwest Freeway
Houston, TX 77075, USA
Tel: (713) 339-2222, Fax: (713) 339-2223
email: Davier5@aol.com

Dolly Dastoor

Congress Co-chair
3765 Malo, Brossard
Quebec, J4Y 1B4, Canada
Tel: (514) 656-2036, Fax: (514) 462-4638
email: Dasdol@douglas.mcgill.ca

IN COMING ISSUES OF FEZANA JOURNAL

Winter (December) 1998: **Zarathushti Religious Scriptures:
The Gathas, the Late Avesta and
Pahlavi Literature**

Dr. Pallan Ichaporia will be Guest Editor of this issue. Articles or letters for publication may be submitted to Dr. Ichaporia at 253 South 4th Street, Womelsdorf, PA 19567, tel: (215) 589-5419. Submission deadline is October 1.

Spring (March) 1999: **A Search for the Zarathushti Identity**

Readers are invited to submit articles and letters expressing their views and perceptions of the Zarathushti Identity. Who, in your opinion, is a Zarathushti? What makes one a Zarathushti? Your personal feelings and experiences will be welcome. Submission deadline is January 1.

1999 Parliament of the World's Religions will be held in Cape Town, South Africa, December 1 - 8, 1999. It is hoped that Zarathushtis will make their presence felt in large numbers for this exciting event, as they did at the 1993 Parliament in Chicago. Call Rohinton Rivetna (630) 325-5383.

Since this issue of *FEZANA Journal* is devoted to the mobeds of North America I will begin with a few words of introduction about them. I will then try to paint to the reader as truthful a picture of the present situation of the mobeds and the Zarathushti community as I see it. I will also try to give my view on the role of mobeds in improving this picture during the coming millennium.

North American Mobeds Council.

The mobeds have organized themselves into *The North American Mobeds Council (NAMC)*, which is a body comprising of some 40 to 50 ordained mobeds mainly from the Indian sub-continent. It has been in existence in an informal capacity since 1983 and was organized into an official non-profit organization in 1993 under Canadian Law. The existence of NAMC provides the mobeds an opportunity to meet each other annually and discuss matters of mutual interest.

Besides the primary objective of serving the spiritual needs of the community by performing basic religious ceremonies like jashans, navjotes, weddings and funerals and sometimes taking part in teaching the basics of their religion, the aim of NAMC members is to expand and improve their knowledge of the history, theology, doctrine and rituals and at the same time evolve spiritually themselves. By so doing, they aim to emphasize the teachings of Zarathushtra and rekindle the faith and devotion of their co-religionists on this continent.

The priestly tradition in the past. In the past, when most Zarathushtis lived off the land, a youngster was brought up and trained in religious knowledge and priestly duties in the home, by parents and elders who were themselves well versed in religious matters. He was ordained as a priest at a young age, began by assist-

The role of North in the Community

A picture of the present situation of the mobeds and a view on the role of mobeds in improving the



American Mobeds

By Jal N. Birdy, Guest Editor

*the Zarathushti community in North America
culture in the coming millennium.*

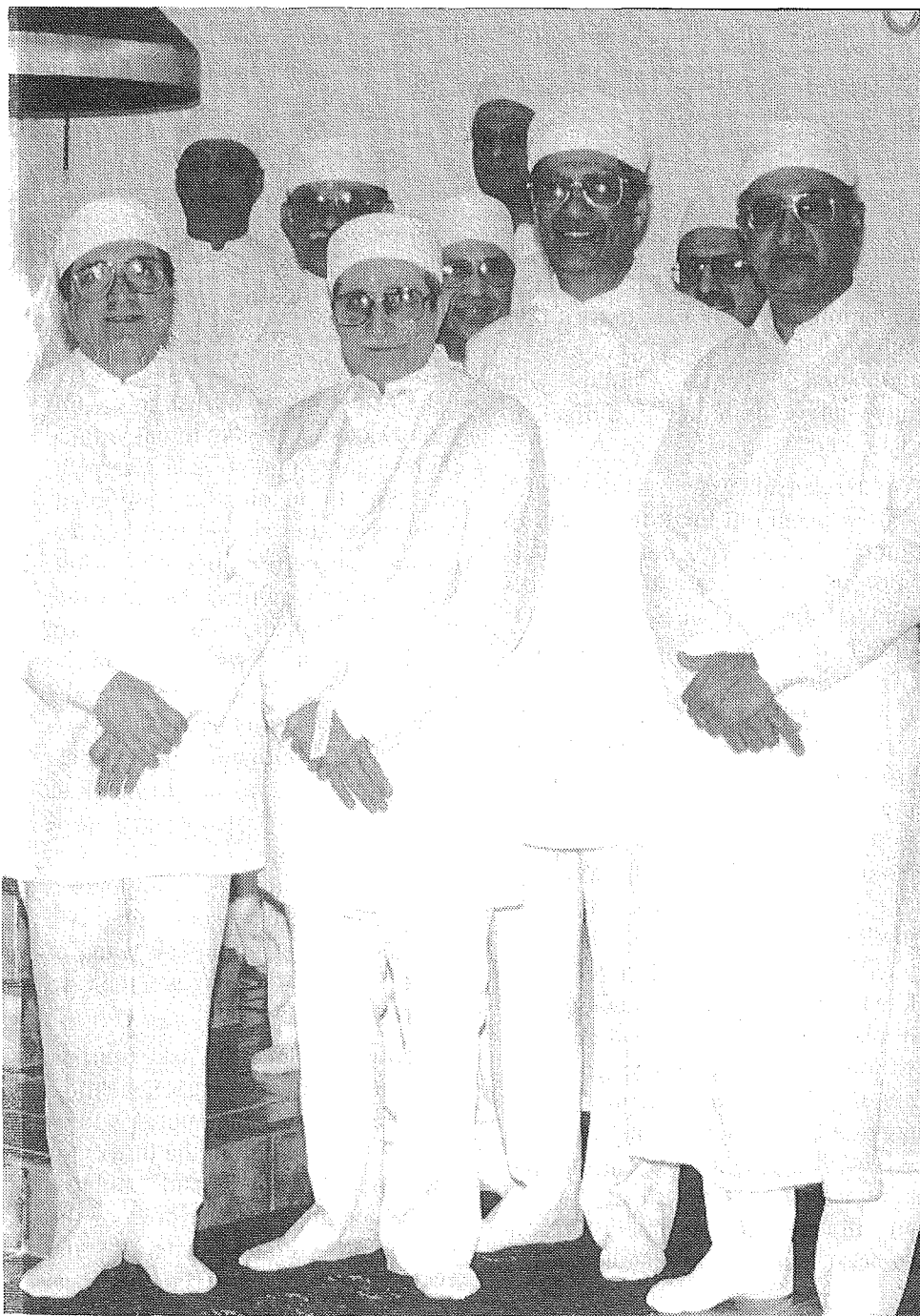
Jal N. Birdy is Guest Editor of this special issue of FEZANA Journal on "The Mobeds of North America". [See profile on page 33]. Jal would like to thank his daughter, Meher Afshad Mistri of Mountain View, California, for her help with typing, initial proof reading and providing valuable suggestions in compiling this feature section.

ing his family elders and eventually practiced his vocation as a full time priest for the rest of his life. In this way the continuity of the precepts and practices of the religion were preserved for centuries, mainly by oral tradition and on-the-job training. The mobed's needs were few and he was amply looked after by his community, more in kind than in cash. It was an honor to belong to a mobed family and be a practicing mobed.

With economic development, times changed and the community focus shifted from religion to material well-being. Training of youngsters shifted from the home to Madressas, the emphasis being more on memorizing prayers and rituals rather than on overall religious training, on methods of passing on religious knowledge, or on inculcating faith and devotion towards their Prophet or towards their religion. In time, mobeds became disillusioned by their lot and drifted away to other vocations, which they found more lucrative.

Mobeds at a meeting of the North American Mobeds Council in April 1996 at the Darbe Mehr in Chicago: from left, Ervads Nozer Kotwal, Zarvan Karanjia, brothers Hoshi and Neville Vazifdar, Minoo Kanga, Neriosang Karanjia, Behram Daboo, Peshotan Unwalla, Kobad Zarolia, Behram Panthaki, Adi Unwalla, Gev Karkaria, Ardaviraf Minocherhomjee, Jal Birdy, Pesi Vazifdar and Xerxes Bamji.

[Photo: ROSHAN RIVETNA]



Coming to North America. Most mobeds who have come to North America came to improve their economic and social conditions, and are practicing in fields other than religion, to earn their livelihood. Most of them have received little formal training in religion, or in imparting religious knowledge. Since, according to tradition, they were ordained into the priesthood in their homelands at a young age, they found themselves pitched into the deep end in performing religious ceremonies. Most of them are doing an excellent job without any formal training.

With the exception of a very few mobeds who may consider themselves to be 'scholars', most of us can be termed 'casual part-time students'. With what little spare time we have left after earning our livelihood during the week and attending to our religious demands on week-ends, we try to acquire some religious knowledge to be better able to guide our community. In doing so we have come to realize that to gain proper religious knowledge is a major uphill battle.

We find that scriptures written in ancient and extinct languages have been interpreted differently by Zarathushti and non-Zarathushti 'scholars' alike. Some interpret Ahura Mazda as omnipotent, while others say He is not. Some interpret re-incarnation in our scriptures, while others interpret otherwise. Some believe that to belong to a religious group is a matter of choice, others believe it is not.

We are told that only the *Gathas* should be followed as they alone are the true teachings of Zarathushtra and the rest of the *Avesta* discarded, because it is of doubtful origin. But when we look at the translations of the *Gathas*, we find that there are over forty five different versions, each different from the rest. We find that the *Gathas* themselves seem to

contain the source of some of the greatest controversies among 'scholars' today. One prominent present day translator has openly admitted that there are so many difficulties in translating the *Gathas* that there is no guarantee that present day translations even remotely approach the true intent of the Prophet's words. He also admits that the *Gathas* are doomed to remain a "text bound in seven seals". Mind you, these pro-

“ Not all the education in the world will generate an iota of faith and devotion unless one also practices the prayers and rituals that go with our religious teachings. After all, faith is really what religion is all about. ”

nouncements do not come from someone who pursues Gatha interpretation as a hobby or does it as a superficial study. These come from dedicated full-time scholars who have devoted their entire lives to their study.

We ask ourselves: why is there such a free-for-all out there in matters of interpretation? Are the interpreters using the right keys to unravel the true meanings of our scriptures? Do they really understand their hidden, mystical content? We ask ourselves - if the *Gathas* alone are the true scriptures, should we pray the Pazand *Hormazd Khodai* in our Kushti prayers? If the *Vendidad* is to be scrapped, should we pray sections from the *Vendidad* in the *Kem-na-Mazda* while doing the Kushti? The intellectual exercises of the different interpreters, instead of increasing our knowledge, are in fact leading to a diminution in our faith and devotion, which is what religion is really all about. Mobeds are becoming hard pressed to find a clear answer themselves, leave alone passing on their knowledge to others; for that, they are attracting ridicule and insult from so-called scholars and intellectuals.

As if this was not enough, the strain of moving from our socially conservative homelands into a socially liberal environment of North America adds to the mobeds' confusion in matters of religion. Add to that the fact that diverse Zarathushti cultures and practices from Iran and the Indian sub-continent are coming together in North America and mobeds are being asked to establish a common order. It will soon become clear why our position here is not an enviable one.

Can the mobeds do anything to rectify this chaos? Can we do anything to restore faith in our co-religionists, instead of just looking on while our scriptures are being torn apart? If the

community is eager to improve its religious health on this continent, it must realize that the mobeds cannot do this alone without help from the community itself.

(1) Education. If we ask any community member today to name three things that will preserve and perpetuate our faith on this continent, chances are the answer will be **education, education and education**. But is it really only education that will cure all our ills? I don't think so. How many of us who lived on the Indian sub-continent before the 1960s would claim that the cohesiveness of the community evident during those times was due to religious education alone? How much religious knowledge did we have ourselves? If the answer is "not much", then there must be something else that contributed to the well being of the community which we took so much for granted.

Of course, education is essential. One must know the basic teachings of Zarathushtra, the moral values taught by the religion, the history of one's people, the legends and the basic meanings and purpose of the various prayers and rituals. For the average person, however, that is as

much education that is really needed. FEZANA and NAMC have co-sponsored a basic textbook, soon to be published, which will provide this basic knowledge. In addition, a lot of information about our scriptures and texts are now easily available on the Internet. There are annual religious camps, local religious classes, tapes, libraries, etc., which are frequently advertised and easily accessible to anyone wanting to be educated in religious matters. One mobed has even offered to answer questions related to religion on the Internet. All that is needed is a bit of effort and commitment to learn. There is no reason for anyone wanting to gain basic knowledge to complain that education material is not available. As the saying goes: "You can lead the horse to water, but you cannot make him drink."

(2) Faith. But while education is essential, there is no reason why everyone must become a so-called scholar of one's religion. The reason is simple. Our scriptures are Divinely inspired compositions, created by highly evolved souls of the distant past, in languages which are now extinct and difficult to accurately decipher. Unless special keys are used to understand them even one's whole lifetime would be inadequate to unravel the mysteries contained in them. Linguistics and philology alone are not enough. Our scriptures deal not only with morals and ethics but also the whole creation and its function. They are composed in a way that while conveying a message for guiding us ordinary humans, their recitation also creates certain beneficial influences within ourselves and in the Universe.

Not all the education in the world will generate an iota of faith and devotion unless one also practices the prayers and rituals that go with our religious teachings. After all, faith is really what religion is all about. So the second most important factor is the cultivation of implicit

faith in our rituals, whether they be at the personal level or at the community level. As youngsters, we were required to do our *kushti* daily, to say our prayers and spend some time at the end asking for Ahura Mazda's blessings and 'favors'. During *hamkar* days we were required to make a trip to the *agiary*. We were

“ For any small community like ours to survive in a sea of people from different backgrounds, it must practice certain exclusive rules, preferably based on religion. The Parsis proved this admirably by surviving almost intact in India for 1300 years. ”

taught to say a *Yatha* when starting something important. We were taught to elevate Asho Zarathushtra's status to that of a *Yazata* and show profound respect to Fire. Practicing these simple personal rituals without question somehow cultivated an implicit faith in ourselves. We were told that if we asked God for something, He would give it to us in the form of a seed, which if planted and nurtured, would grow into an answer to our prayer. Somehow, we mysteriously obtained a certain strength and courage to see a difficult job through.

In recent times we have somehow forgotten the simple rules, which gave us so much inner peace and solace and also blossomed faith and devotion within our hearts. In our zeal to find our feet in the New World and make a buck, we ignored passing on these valuable teachings to our younger generation. Of course the environment of the New World has not helped either. These practices must be reinstated at the family level as well as at the overall community level if we are to bring back faith and devotion in our community. Children must see their parents practice these rituals if they are expected to follow them. If *agiaries* are not available, a simple *divo* (oil lamp) at home to focus thought and devotion, will have to do. It is heartening to read

Aban Daboo's article [see page 65] about the practices in the Chicago darbe mehr in this respect. Mobeds can help but the major onus is really on the family and the community itself.

(3) Lessons of the past. The third most important thing we did as a community on the Indian sub-continent was practice the lessons taught by our forebears. Our community in North America is as microscopic as it has ever been on the Indian sub-continent. Its faith and identity are interdependent. Sociologists have always maintained that for any small community like ours to survive

in a sea of people from different backgrounds, it must practice certain exclusive rules, preferably based on religion. The Parsis proved this theorem admirably by surviving almost intact in India for 1300 years mainly by adhering to certain tough, exclusive, time tested rules devised by their forebears. The cardinal among these, were rules against mixed-marriages, conversion of outsiders and certain unique and exclusive practices like wearing of the *sudreh-kushti*, maintaining exclusive fire-temples, providing means for maximum interaction between the community youth, holding exclusive gatherings for religious purposes, etc. And, of course, there were sanctions against those who broke these rules.

These rules were made for the preservation of our faith as well as our identity. They were not selective or racially discriminatory and we applied them to all non-Zarathushtris equally. History proves that we have lived harmoniously with all sections of the peoples on the Indian sub-continent to whom we owe so much and who have in turn showered accolades upon us for our contributions to our adopted homelands. We preserved these rules even when we ventured out to seek new opportunities in Aden, Africa, the Near East and the Far East. But we

seem to have somehow forgotten them here on this continent.

Unlike other larger communities, the microscopic Parsi and Irani Zarathushti communities just do not have the mass needed to absorb mixed-marriages and conversions, particularly in the relative freedom prevailing in North America. If such practices are openly accepted by the community, or we just close our eyes to them, or if the handful of mobeds, who currently encourage such practices, do not start instead to speak out and discourage them, their rate will accelerate. There will soon come a time when outside influences in our families and community gatherings will become so pronounced, that not only our identity but also our faith will become unrecognizable.

Again, the community must take the initiative to bring about the frame of mind needed for adhering to these time-tested rules, if it is looking for long-term survival. It was relatively easy to apply these rules within the caste system prevailing on the Indian sub-continent; it will be much more difficult in North America. Both Iran and Pakistan had a caste system for Zarathushtis, although they were on completely different lines than the one prevailing in India. The community leaders have a responsibility to see that maximum interaction is available for our youngsters so that they are able to find life partners from within our fold. Situations like the one at the recent New York Congress, where the organizers allowed people married outside to preach the benefits of mixed-marriages to our kids, must never be repeated. Again, mobeds can only help if the community shows determination.

How can the mobeds help their community in North America? First of all mobeds must be completely united among themselves. They must follow one set of rules; not each one to his own, as is the case now. The Mobeds Councils should be led by an Inner Council of three or more

respected mobeds, chosen from among its members, who must also act as trustees for the community. The Inner Council must be empowered to control and discipline individual mobeds and ensure that community interests are never jeopardized. Being finally selected as a mobed to serve the community must become a well respected, rewarding and full-time profession.

Resources must be made available by the community on an ongoing basis to train and maintain full-time mobeds in each local region to serve the spiritual needs of their flock. A procedure must be worked out whereby suitable candidates of high caliber undergo further training and examination. Our religious resources in India must be utilized for this training to the fullest extent possible. Volumes of religious material written in difficult Gujarati on mysticism in our scriptures must be edited and put into lucid English. The training must be in religion as well as in passing on religious knowledge effectively to bring about spirituality and devotion in the individual. The mobed must be a spiritually advanced person himself. Only after achieving satisfactory training and proving his worth should a candidate be employed as a full-time mobed-cum-teacher in our communities or before he is even allowed to sit on the Mobeds Councils. The community must be warned to stay away from part-time mobeds, who surreptitiously carry out ceremonies considered harmful to the community. Again the community must show willingness and take the lead in these matters.

I will be the first to admit that to do what I have just described will be a time-consuming and formidable task, particularly in the free and hectic environment of North America. Some will even feel it is unrealistic. But unless something similar is devised, we will just continue to drift along, feeling happy about what little our migrant generation has achieved over the past quarter of a century.

We would have done little to use the experience of our forebears and chart a course for the coming generations. We will have allowed the future to take its own course. This process is insidious. We will not feel the downward slide taking place within the time-span of our generation, or perhaps even in our children's generation, but it will surely be evident soon after that.

If, however, the community cannot muster the collective will and courage to survive in the long term, it can at least rely on one thing in the short term: the mobeds of North America will remain undeterred by the insults and innuendos that are currently being flung at them, individually and collectively through the media and the Internet, by so-called 'scholars' and 'intellectuals'. They will continue to remain optimistic and serve their communities with humility and devotion, in a voluntary, part-time capacity to the best of their ability, as they have done now for decades.

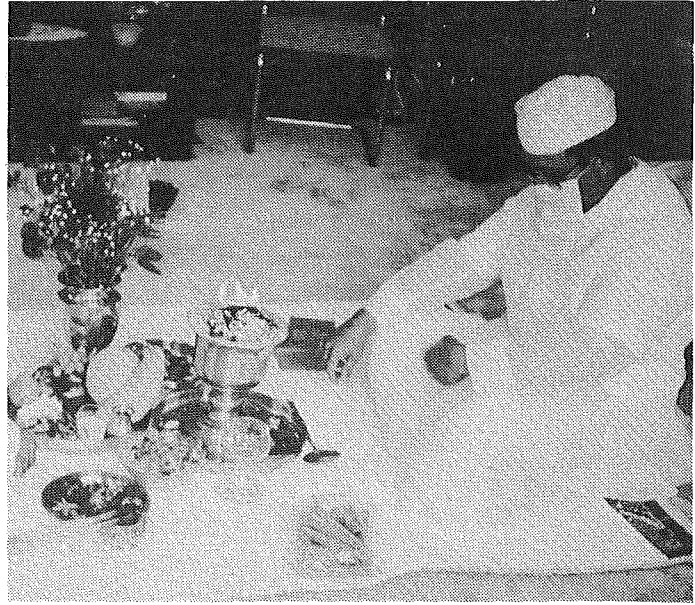
NAMC will also continue to encourage the future generation of mobeds to step into their shoes in the interim. We have three young mobeds who have contributed articles in this issue of the Journal. These young mobeds are very enthusiastic about their faith, are not afraid to speak their minds and continue our traditions into the next century. They need the support of the community, however, if they are to be of any help.

May Ahura Mazda give us the wisdom to set effective goals and the collective strength to achieve them. ■

All articles presented in this issue of the Journal (as in all issues) are the personal views of the authors. Per its Editorial Policy, FEZANA Journal does not endorse or espouse any particular view.

Introducing North American Mobeds

By Jal N. Birdy
Guest Editor



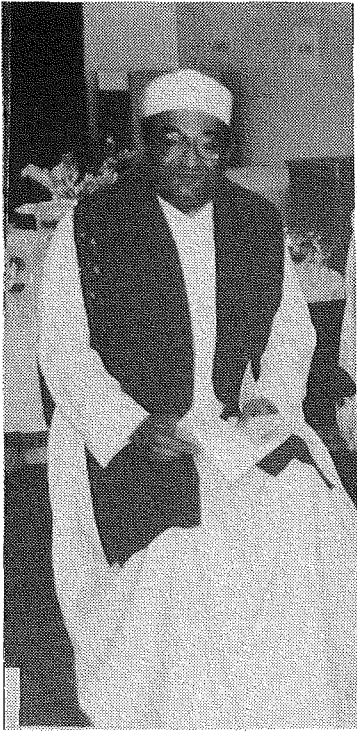
Ervad Jamshed C. Antia

This is probably the first ever attempt at identifying the mobeds who serve their North American communities in a volunteer capacity. It has not been an easy task, since many mobeds are reserved individuals who do not wish themselves to be exposed in a widely circulated Journal of this nature. Some mobeds did not want their profiles published, while others were averse to having their photographs published. Some mobeds even did not want to use the title of Ervad before their names, either because they felt they were not qualified enough to use the title or for other reasons. In each case their wishes have been respected.

This compilation is therefore by no means complete. Out of an initial 60 questionnaires mailed out, just over half were returned. What is compiled here has been gleaned through their replies and in several cases from the personal knowledge of the guest editor. Mobeds from almost all geographical areas of North America, coast-to-coast, have been contacted. It is possible that some information may have been inadvertently omitted. Care has been taken to present the information as accurately as possible, but if there are any inaccuracies, we ask for the mobeds' forgiveness in advance.

Going through their profiles it will be noticed that most mobeds are engaged in a variety of professional fields ranging from the arts, computers, education, engineering, finance, medicine, military, science and technology. Some of them are highly educated and all are very successful in their chosen vocations. Yet, they are men dedicated to their community and their faith, who give freely of their time and energy without seeking anything in return. They derive genuine pleasure in serving the spiritual needs of their communities and consider themselves fortunate that God has given them the opportunity to do so. In addition, their families also become involved in the work that they do - particularly their wives. It is for this reason that we have also included the names of their wives, wherever possible, as a gesture of grateful acknowledgment.

We sincerely thank and salute those mobeds who have chosen to share their lives with us in this Journal, those who have chosen to remain silent and also those whom we have not been able to include.



Far left, Ervad
(Dr.) Kersey H.
Antia. Left, Ervad
Yezdi Antia

Ervad (Dr.) Darius Eruchshaw

Antia: Ervad Darius is one of four active mobeds serving their community in the New York area. Darius was born in Mumbai in 1934 and was ordained a navar at the Vadi Dar-e-Meher in Navsari in 1947. He was educated at the St. Xavier's High School in Mumbai and received his M.B.B.S in 1958 and M.D. (Pediatrics) in 1962 from the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Medical College, Indore, India.

Ervad Darius believes mobeds must have more frequent contact with the community than they currently do and should become more proficient in the art of communication and propagating the message of Zarathushtra if they are to have a role in preserving and propagating their faith on this continent.

Darius and his wife, Hilla, live in New York where Darius currently serves as an attending pediatrician at the Elmhurst Hospital Center in New York.

Ervad Jamshed C. Antia.

Jamshed was born in Nargol in 1950, but spent most of his childhood in Navsari, where he received his reli-

gious education and training. He was ordained a navar and a martab at the Vadi Dar-e-Meher in 1965. Jamshed offered his services as a priest to the community during Muktaf days.

Jamshed holds a Mechanical Engineering degree from the Sangli Engineering College and came to the States in 1974. Since that time he has been active in community affairs and in providing priestly services to the Zarathushti community of Illinois, where he lives with his wife, Arnavaz.

Ervad Jamshed hopes that mobeds can teach our children the true meaning of our religion, by holding regular religious classes, seminars and similar gatherings.

Ervad Jimmy K. Antia. This second generation mobed is the son of Ervad Kersey Antia of Orland Park, Illinois and was born in the U.S.A. in 1979. Jimmy traveled back to Mumbai in 1990 for his ordainment as a navar in the Jijibhoy Dadabhoy Agiary, Colaba. To a question in the form sent to him asking for his place of residence prior to coming to the States, he replied "somewhere in the other world - wish I knew exactly where", signifying that at least he is

well aware of the belief in the physical (*geti*) and spiritual (*minoi*) worlds according to the Zarathushti religion.

Ervad Jimmy is currently a sophomore at the University of Illinois, in Champaign, Illinois and is only moderately active in community affairs. He feels he needs to learn more about his faith from someone well versed in the subject and who also appreciates the role of mobeds in the North American environment.

Ervad (Dr.) Kersey H. Antia.

Ervad Antia was born in Surat in 1938. He received religious education at the M. F. Cama Athornan Institute, Mumbai, from 1945 to 1954. Kersey was initiated both a navar and a martab from the Vadi Dar-e-Meher, Navsari, during 1950. He served as a part-time mobed at the Jijibhoy Dadabhoy Agiary, Mumbai, during 1956-1957 and helped during Muktaf days at the same agiary for seven years from 1950-57.

Kersey graduated from the University of Bombay in 1958 and completed higher studies at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences in 1960. He was employed as a personnel officer with the Tata Iron and Steel Company and the Tata Chemicals Limited. After arriving in the US in 1965, Kersey obtained his Ph.D. in psychology from North Carolina State University in 1969. He is currently self employed as a psychologist in private practice; perhaps the only such Zarathushti in North America.

Ervad Kersey has been active as a priest ever since he arrived in Chicago in 1970. From being the sole mobed on arrival, there are now at least a dozen mobeds in the Chicago area, where Kersey lives with his wife, Dilshad. Kersey frequently travels out of town to perform religious ceremonies and is well known

for his writings on religious topics. For his efforts, Kersey was given the title of a High Priest by the Zoroastrian Association of Chicago in 1977.

"Our religion is mankind's most precious spiritual heritage ever since man began searching for God and spirituality," says Kersey. "We priests owe it to our community to bring out its spiritual essence and eternal value which lay hidden in our sublime rituals for centuries, so that we can ensure our community's allegiance to its faith, in a society which competes hard for its souls. Mobeds should familiarize themselves with the fundamentals of our religion and rituals and should be actively involved in preaching and teaching."

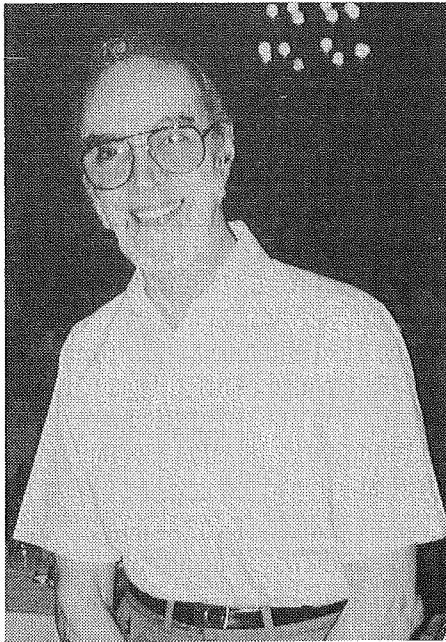
Ervad Yezdi Antia. Yezdi was born in Deolali in 1922, where he completed his basic schooling. He was ordained a navar and a martab at the age of 11 and 12 years, respectively, at the Vadi Dar-e-Meher in Navsari. Yezdi holds a B.Sc. degree from the University of Bombay and received his Bachelor of Engineering degree in civil engineering from the Engineering College, Poona in 1950. He was employed in various engineering positions with different firms while in India.

Yezdi arrived in Toronto, Canada in 1967, where he lived with his wife, Perin, until she succumbed to cancer and passed away recently. Both Yezdi and Perin were very active community members. Recently Yezdi retired as a coordinator for building projects in the Province of Ontario.

Ervad Yezdi believes that the key to our survival as a community lies in the need to practice our religion in the home. Practices like lighting a *divo* on all important days of the Zarathushti calendar, holding daily prayers as a family unit, performing jashans at home frequently and having basic religious textbooks available in the home for the family to read are some of the ways that religious consciousness and community camaraderie can be cultivated. Yezdi

also supports the proposal to establish a chair in Zoroastrian Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London.

Ervad (Dr.) Jehan Bagli. Jehan was born in Mumbai in 1928. He received his religious education in Mumbai and underwent the navar and martab ceremonies at the Vadi Dar-e-Meher in Navsari during the early 1940's. Jehan only functioned in the capacity of a mobed on rare occasions before migrating to the States in 1955.



Ervad Jehan Bagli

Jehan received his doctorate in Medicinal Chemistry from London, England and came to John Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland on a post doctoral fellowship. He worked in pharmaceutical research in Montreal until 1983 and then transferred to Princeton, New Jersey, from where he retired as a Distinguished Research Fellow in 1997.

During the early 1960's, Jehan and his wife, Freny, saw the Montreal community evolve where he rendered his services as a priest. For many years he published the *Gavashni* magazine and was also the first editor of *FEZANA Journal*. He was elected president of the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec in 1967.

Ervad Jehan believes that "mobeds on this continent have an obligation to expand their role far beyond merely performing rituals. They must try to understand the historical aspects of rituals, have an awareness of the prayers and be able to explain the rationale behind the gestures and actions during their performance. All Zarathushti rituals are communions with Divinity and following certain rules one can evolve a sentiment of devotion in one self. Mobeds must make an effort to bring out this devotion among the laity."

Ervad Xerxes Bamji. Born in Calcutta in 1943 into the well-known Bamji family, Xerxes did not have any shortage of religious education. Taught by no lesser teachers than his father Farrokh Bamji, Major Sohrab Bamji and Dastoor Nowrooz Minocherhomji, Xerxes was ordained a navar at the Navsari Vadi Dar-e-Meher in 1954 and completed his schooling at the St. Xavier's High School in Calcutta.

After school Xerxes did a four-year apprenticeship as a Marine Engineer and spent the next twenty-six years at sea as a qualified Marine Engineer in the merchant marine. At the time of leaving his sea career, Xerxes was Chief Marine Engineer (Steam and Diesel).

Since arriving in Canada in 1976, Xerxes and his wife Thrity have been very active in community affairs; Xerxes serving as an active mobed and Thrity as treasurer with the Zarathushti Society of Ontario (ZSO) for six years. Xerxes feels all mobeds must gain a good religious education to be able to answer all questions posed by the community in a convincing way. Xerxes is currently on the Executive Committee of the North American Mobeds Council.

Xerxes is an all-round sportsman and athlete, having played in 1st division cricket, hockey, football, rugby, table tennis, etc. Since coming to Canada he served as an inspector in the Min-

istry of Consumer and Commercial Affairs (Pressure Vessel Safety Branch) with the Government of Ontario, where he is Regional Manager now for the last four years.

Ervad (Dr.) Hoshang J. Bhadha.

Born in Mumbai in 1963, Hoshang received religious training at the Cama Athornan Institute. He was ordained a navar at the age of 14 and a martab a year later in the Iranshah Atash Bahram at Udvada. He served as a practicing mobed in various agiaries and atash bahrams for almost 20 years.

Hoshang completed his schooling from the Behramji Jeejibhoy High School and obtained a double Bachelors degree in Arts and Law from the Jai Hind College in Mumbai. He also received a double Masters degree in Financial Management and Marketing Management in 1988. He worked in the Building Management department of the Hotel Oberoi Towers in Mumbai prior to coming to the States in 1988.

Ervad Hoshang continued his higher education after arriving in the U.S.A. and received an MBA and a Ph.D. in Business Management in 1996, while serving in the U.S. Navy. He currently works as a Budget Analyst with the Veterans Administration in Los Angeles.

Ervad Hoshang holds traditional views on religion and regularly posts religious articles on the Internet. In addition to performing religious ceremonies and serving the spiritual needs of his community, Hoshang holds regular religious classes for local Zarathushti children and adults. He has also offered to impart religious education via the Internet to any Zarathushti who is genuinely interested in learning about his/her religion and wants to cultivate faith.

Ervad Hoshang lives with his wife Tanaz in Orange County, Southern California.

Ervad Zarir F. Bhandara. Here is one of our few young mobeds who has undergone formal religious training in the Athravan Educational Trust (AET) Program under Dastur Firoze M. Kotwal. Born in Mumbai in December 1962, Zarir was ordained a navar at the RustomFaram Agiary in May 1972 and a martab at the Banaji Limji Agiary a year later. After completing schooling in Mumbai and four years of advanced priestly training under the AET, Ervad Zarir served as a part-time mobed under Dastur Minocher Jamasp Asa at the Anjuman Atash Bahram and also at the Mumbai Doongerwadi and other agiaries for nearly 20 years. His other vocation at the same time was being a martial arts instructor.

Ervad Zarir has received high commendations from Dasturji Kotwal for his work in Mumbai and was awarded the Best Student Award from the A.E.T. He also assisted Dasturji in a paper on the significance and methodology of the jashan and afringan rituals.

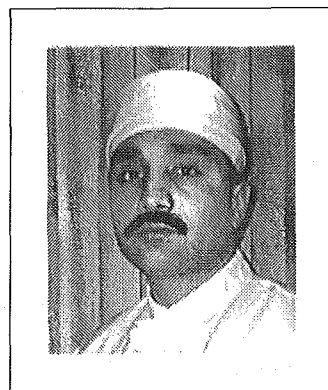
Ervad Zarir feels that although the Zarathushti religion is the oldest revealed religion, we can make it a very dynamic, alive and practical one if we follow its tenets and imbibe it in our daily lives. He seeks to have more interaction with the community, trying to quench the spiritual thirst of the different age groups. He would like young mobeds to become role models for our children. He would like to see them act as friend, philosopher and guide and also as counselors, who can help resolve different community issues by talking less and listening more.

A member of the NAMC, Ervad Zarir is very active in community affairs and lives in California with his wife Tenaaz and two young chil-

dren Danish and Xerxes. He works as a technician in the film industry in Hollywood.

Ervad Kersi Bhedwar. Kersi was born in Bardoli, India, in 1936. He received his education at the Athornan Madressa at Dadar and the M. F. Cama Institute in Andheri. He was ordained a navar and a martab at the Vadi Dar-e-Meher in Navsari at the age of eleven and twelve respectively. After his ordainment, he served in a part-time capacity as mobed at the Anjuman Atash Bahram and at the Sethna Agiary in Tardeo.

Ervad Kersi is a Bachelor of Commerce and also holds a Bachelors in Avesta Pahlavi from Bombay University. He worked as an accountant in Mumbai prior to coming to Canada in 1967, where he took additional income tax and computer courses. He is now a self-employed tax accountant and financial advisor in Montreal, Canada.



Top, Ervad (Dr.) Hoshang J. Bhadha; below, Ervad Jal N. Birdy; facing page from left, Ervads Behram Daboo and Zarir Bhandara.



Kersi believes it is vital for our religion to be practiced in the home by the entire family if we are to gain spiritual upliftment and preserve our faith and heritage. Children will only follow the teachings of Zarathushtra if they see their parents doing the same.

Ervad Kersi and his wife, Roshan, are very active in community affairs in Montreal, where Kersi serves the community in a volunteer mobed capacity.

Ervad Jal N. Birdy. Jal Birdy was born in Nagpur, India, in December 1936, where he finished his basic schooling. He received his religious training at home under his grandfather and was ordained a navar at the age of eleven and a martab a year later at the Vadi Dar-e-Meher in Navsari.

After obtaining a Bachelor of Engineering (Honors) degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Jabalpur and working for three years

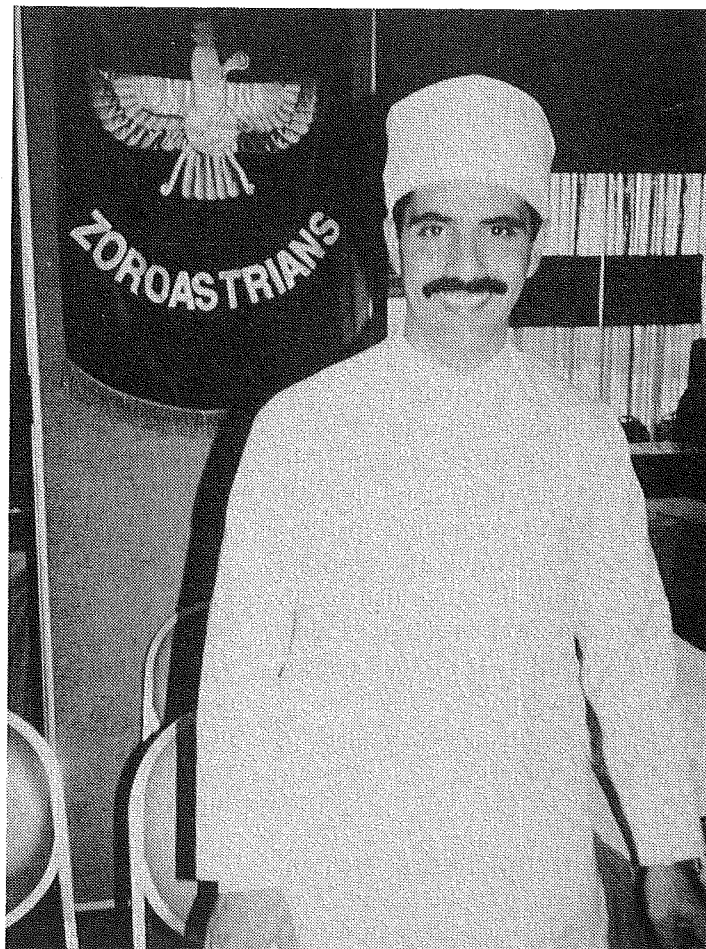
in India, Jal finished his graduate studies at the Imperial College, University of London and obtained his professional license in both civil and structural engineering. He worked in England for nearly 20 years on a variety of innovative projects which gained him a British patent in the field of deep-water offshore structures.

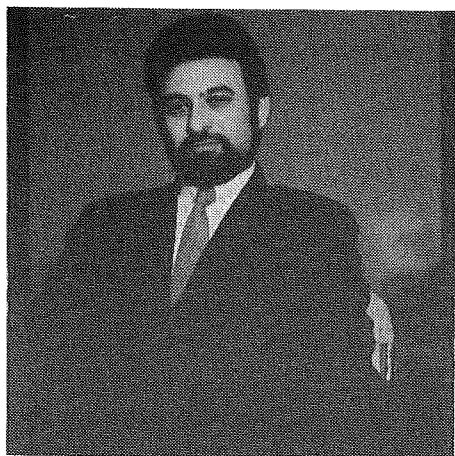
Jal transferred from England to Houston, Texas, in 1980, where he was again involved in innovative work, this time in the field of offshore arctic structures for seven years and was awarded four further U.S. patents. He has served as a member of council of the Institution of Structural Engineers in London and as chairman of the American Concrete Institute's Marine and Offshore Structures Committee for four years. Currently Jal is a vice president and lead structural engineer in a Southern California engineering firm, specializing in port and harbor structures, new

bridges and strengthening existing bridges against earthquakes.

Jal holds traditional views on religion and believes that the only way our microscopic community will survive on this continent is by following some of the basic traditional rules that our forebears laid out for their survival on the Indian sub-continent. These rules are mentioned in his article on mobeds in this issue of the Journal.

Jal has been actively serving the Zarathushti communities in London, Houston and currently California as a volunteer part-time mobed for a total of nearly thirty five years. He has recently been re-elected for a second term as the president of the North American Mobeds Council and has served as the vice president of the local Traditional Mazdayasni Zarathushti Anjuman (TMZA) for several years. He lives with his wife, Soonu, in Corona, California.





Ervad Firdosh J. Bulsara. Firdosh was born in Mhow, India in 1950. He received his religious training at the Mota Shapur Dar-e-Meher in Bulsar, where he was ordained a navar in 1963 and a martab in 1966. He completed his schooling in Mumbai and also performed priestly duties during the Mukta days at the Kappawalla and Sethna Agiaries.

Firdosh completed his inter-science in Mumbai in 1970, worked in Iran for four years and was a manager with British Airways in Bombay until his departure to Canada in 1981. On arrival in Canada, he took a course in travel and tourism at the Kitchner Business College. Currently Firdosh is a director of Product Development with the North American Leisure Group in Toronto.

Firdosh would like to see the role of mobeds upgraded from the current status of a mere provider of services like the jashan, navjote, marriage, etc. In India, this routine has drained the mobeds of their self-esteem. He would like to see their status upgraded by making the community participate more actively at religious services. Mobeds must also try to educate themselves in religious matters and learn to pass on their education to the community.

Firdosh lives with his wife, Chisty, in Mississauga, Ontario.

Ervad Behram Daboo. Behram was initiated as a mobed at the Jeejeebhoy Dadabhoy Agiary in Mum-

bai in March 1979. He migrated to the U.S. with his family in December 1982 when he was fourteen. Behram is a graduate in Accounting from North Central College in Naperville, Illinois, and is at present studying for his MBA at Northern Illinois University. He is working as a Financial Supervisor in McDonald's Corporation for the last eight years. He was married to Roxanne Buhariwala of Mumbai in 1996.

Ever since Behram moved to the Chicago area in 1983 he has been a voluntary priest at the Chicago Darbe Mehr and has taken part in jashans, navjotes, and Sunday prayer meetings at the darbe Mehr. He has also served on the ZAC Board as assistant treasurer and treasurer for the last several years.

Ervad Mehbhad Dastur. Ervad Mehbhad Dastur works as a computer programmer in Toronto, Canada and is a member of the North American Mobeds Council. He was born in Mumbai in 1972 and studied at the Dadar Athornan Boarding Madressa under Ervad Rustomjee Panthaki. He was ordained a navar at the Banaji Atash Bahram in 1986. Mehbhad served his community in Mumbai as a mobed during Mukta season at various atash bahrams and agiaries in Mumbai.

Ervad Mehbhad graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce degree from Bombay University in 1994 and was employed with the Tata Economic Consultancy Services in Mumbai before arriving in Toronto in 1995.

Mehbhad feels grateful to have been born in the excellent Zarathushti religion. He wants the community to hold more social functions for young Zarathushtis so they have a better chance of selecting a marriage partner from among the fold. He also feels the meanings of our prayers should be readily accessible.

Ervad Mehbhad is a very active volunteer mobed in his community in Toronto and frequently travels out of

town on priestly assignments. He is currently employed as a Software Development / Computer Programmer with Computer Methods International Corporation, Toronto.

Ervad Cawas J. Desai. Cawas Desai was initiated a navar in the Vadi Dar-e-Meher in Navsari in 1953 at the age of fifteen. He graduated in Commerce and Law from the University of Bombay and was a partner in a chartered accountant firm before arriving in the States in 1968.

Although only moderately active in a mobed's role in New Jersey, where he lives with his wife, Kamal, Cawas has some pretty firm thoughts about the roles of the priesthood and the community as a whole. "If we expect a future for our priesthood, we must embark upon a program of education. Napoleon once said, "To educate the child one must first educate the mother". It is our generation that must be educated and trained so that in turn we can educate our children. We must change our attitude towards our religion and our clergy and, by the same token, our clergy must change their own attitudes towards the society in which they live," Cawas says.

He continues "Funds must be raised and set aside in trust for the purpose of educating ourselves and our children. We must ensure that our religious, historical and cultural texts are available in English. Out-of-print books must be reprinted and those in Gujarati translated into English. We must encourage those of our priests who are learned enough to explain the teachings of our religion in easily understandable English."

Cawas is currently Director of Operations in NovaSoft Information Technology Corporation, New Jersey.

Ervad Darius Desai. Ervad Darius is the son of Ervad Cawas Desai of New Jersey and a second generation mobed. He was born in Mumbai in 1966 and came to the States at the age of two. He was ordained a navar at the Banaji Atash Bahram in 1984.

Darius was educated at the College of William and Mary and graduated as a surgeon from the Jefferson Medical College, in 1992. He is currently a fellow in Surgical Oncology at Ohio State University. Although not actively involved as a mobed, Darius is generally a traditional Zarathushti and feels the key to preserving and perpetuating our faith on this continent lies in education – right down from the mobeds themselves to the youngest member of the community, the most important being the role of the parent in educating their young.

Ervad Fareedoon Desai. Fareedoon was born in Ahmedabad in 1959. He completed his schooling at the Dadar Parsi Youth Assembly High School in Mumbai and received his religious training at the Dadar Athornan Madressa as a day scholar. Fareedoon was ordained a navar at the Vadi Dar-e-Meher, Navsari in 1968. He obtained a Bachelor of Chemical Engineering degree from the University of Bombay and came to the States in 1981, for further study at the University of Akron, Ohio.

Fareedoon, after completing his Masters and Ph.D in Chemical Engineering from Akron in 1989, he carried out Post Doctoral Research in Environmental Engineering for 4 years in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Currently Fareedoon is a Research Engineer with Proctor & Gamble in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Fareedoon is one of our younger mobeds who decided to serve their community in areas where mobeds are either not available or in short supply. Although having little formal training, mobeds like Fareedoon are doing an excellent job and have the admiration of their community. Fareedoon respects traditional values and lives with his wife Bakhtavar and children Shireen and Havovi in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Ervad Urmez Hozdar. This young mobed arrived in the States only three years ago, in 1995. Born in Mumbai in September, 1972, Urmez received religious training in the family environment. He was ordained a navar in the Banaji Atash Behram at the age of eleven years and completed his schooling at Saint Mary's High School in 1989. He received a bachelor's degree in Commerce from the R. A. Podar College in Mumbai in 1994.

Since arriving here, Urmez has received an MBA in Marketing from the Bentley Graduate School of Business in Ohio. While in College he played an active role in the Graduate Students Association, serving as treasurer and was instrumental in producing the first Graduate Students Yearbook. Currently Urmez is a Pensions Administrator (401K Plans) in Creative Retirement Systems of Cincinnati, Ohio.

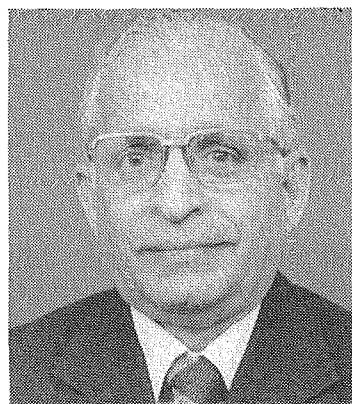
Ervad Urmez holds traditional views on religion and serves as a priest when called upon by the small local Zarathushti community. He lives with his wife, Farzana, in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Ervad Kobad Jamshed. Born in Udvada in 1951, Kobad received his religious training at the Cama Athornan Institute in Andheri, Mumbai. He was ordained a navar in the Iranshah Atash Bahram, Udvada, in 1963 and a martab at the same location in 1964. Kobad provided his services to the community as a mobed in Mumbai, specially during Muktdad days.

After completing special courses in Air-conditioning and Refrigeration, Kobad worked for many years with the Voltas Engineering Co. in Mumbai. He moved to Iran from 1976 to 1979, working in the same field and returned to Mumbai to work briefly for the Godrej organization, before migrating to San Francisco in 1980.

Ervad Kobad has been very active in the Zoroastrian Association of Northern California, where he is currently a Trustee. He provides his services as a mobed, frequently traveling out of town on priestly assignments. He has also taught religion to local Zarathushti children at their Sunday School.

Kobad currently works as an Air-conditioning and Refrigeration Engineer with video manufacturing firm Ampex Corporation and lives with his wife Daugdo in the San Francisco Bay area.



Ervad Dinshaw F. D. Joshi. Dinshaw was born in Mumbai in 1921 and completed his schooling in Nasik, India. He was ordained a navar in the Jijibhoy Dadabhoy Agiary at Colaba, Mumbai, in 1932. Dinshaw obtained his B.Sc. from the University of Bombay and his Bachelors in Electrical and Mechanical Engineering from the Engineering College, Poona. He was the Deputy Director General with the Department of Telecommunications in the Indian Government in New Delhi and came to the States in 1973.

Although not active as a mobed, Dinshaw has been very active over the years in community affairs, particularly in FEZANA. He is currently a telecommunication consultant with the World Bank in Washington, D.C.

Ervad Fali J. Kanga. Fali Kanga was born in Navsari in 1922, where he received his basic schooling and religious training. He was initiated a

We regret a delay in processing your checks and subscriptions.

Subscription manager, Mehrdad Khosraviani is laid up with broken bones, following a fall from his rooftop. But he is recovering well, and we hope to be caught up by the Winter issue. Thanks very much for your patience.

navar at the Navsari Atash Bahram at the age of twelve and a martab a year later in the Vadi Dar-e-Meher. Fali functioned as a part-time mobed in Mumbai from 1944 to 1948 and later in Karachi from 1949 until he migrated to California in 1994.

Ervad Fali advises parents to give their children basic religious education and teach them our prayers at an early age. They should be encouraged to take an interest in our rituals and ceremonies and the grandeur of our religion should be impressed on their minds from childhood. Mobeds should study their religion and spread the light around.

Ervad Fali and his wife, Sunnu, now live in Southern California where they are both still active in community affairs.

Ervad Minoo D. Kanga. Minoo was born in 1940 and received his religious training at the Athornan Madressa, Parsi Colony, Dadar. He was ordained a navar at the Rustom Faram Agiary in Mumbai in 1956 and helped with the Mukta ceremonies in the same agiary for seven years.

He received his education at the Don Bosco High School and Ruia College in Mumbai. Minoo worked as a weaving assistant with the Bombay Dyeing Textiles and also in Indian Airlines before coming to Canada in 1975. Ervad Minoo believes in making our ceremonies and customs more interesting and educational particularly to our young, by way of a short talk at every opportunity.

Minoo and his wife, Dogdo, currently live in Mississauga where Minoo is employed as a machine assistant with CIBC, Canada.

Ervad Gev Karkaria. Born in Mumbai in 1943, Gev was ordained a navar and a martab at the Navsari Malesar Agiary in 1955. He received a Bachelor of Commerce degree from the University of Bombay in 1963 and has also qualified as a Chartered Accountant. He was

employed with Air India as Accounting Manager in Mumbai prior to coming to Canada in 1975.

Gev and his wife, Shirin, have both been very active in community affairs throughout their stay in Canada. Gev is currently both, the president of the Zarathushti Association of Quebec and the treasurer of the North American Mobeds Council. Although quite satisfied in his present role as a mobed, Gev feels there is much room for religious self-education and an increased commitment to educate the youth. Although he does not advocate indiscriminate acceptance of any and everyone into the religion, he is in favor of accepting the children of mixed marriages.

Gev thinks mobeds have a responsibility to fulfill the spiritual needs of the community and wants a concerted effort by NAMC to motivate our young mobeds in the performance of rituals through religious camps, classes, etc.

Gev is currently the vice president and controller at Wirth, Ltd, in Montreal, Canada.

Ervad Zal Karkaria. The son of Ervad Gev Karkaria of Quebec, this second generation mobed was born in Mumbai in 1976 and completed his schooling in Montreal. He visited Mumbai in 1987 to be ordained a navar at the Banaji Atash Bahram and has been moderately active in providing his services as a mobed to the Montreal community. Zal wants mobeds to be a source of knowledge on our religion and feels they should promote the positive, modern aspects of our religion. According to Zal, mobeds should be more open to new ideas and be less reactionary.

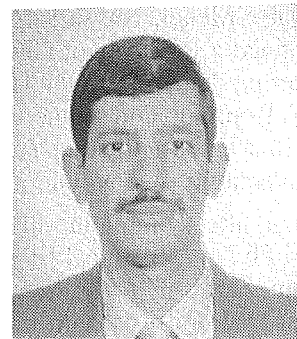
Currently Zal is completing a course in journalism and history in Montreal.

Ervad Minoo Katrak. Minoo was born in Kashmir in 1944 and received religious training in the Dadar Athornan Madressa in Mumbai. He was ordained a navar and a martab at the

age of eleven in the Vadi Dar-e-Meher in Navsari. Minoo completed his schooling from the Don Bosco High School in Mumbai and after finishing inter-science, worked in the National Organic Chemical Industries, Ltd. in Mumbai.

Minoo arrived in the States in 1972 and received a bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering from the West Coast University in Los Angeles. He currently works as a foreman in the film industry in Hollywood.

Minoo has been very active in local community affairs, serving his community as a part time mobed and teaching religion to local Zarathushti children. He was vice president of the Zoroastrian Association of California during the late eighties. Minoo lives with his wife, Pervin, and two children in Southern California.



Ervad Kerman Katrak. Kerman was born in Mumbai where he received formal religious training before being ordained a navar and a martab at the Vadi Dar-e-Meher in Navsari. He completed his education in Pharmaceuticals in Mumbai and worked with a pharmaceutical firm in Tehran prior to coming to Canada in 1988.

Ervad Kerman emphasizes the role of education if our faith is to be preserved and perpetuated on this continent. He is very active as a mobed and serves his community in Ontario, Canada, where he resides.

Kerman lives in Toronto and is currently employed in the computer operations field by the Canadian government.

Ervad Boman D. Kotwal. Born in Navsari, India, in 1930, Boman has lived in East Africa and London, England prior to coming and settling in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada in 1967. He received his formal religious training in Navsari where he was ordained both a navar and a martab in 1940.

Ervad Boman is an arts graduate from Mumbai and pursued a career in sales in Canada, where he now enjoys a retired life with his wife, Silloo. He is, however, still very active in community affairs functioning as a mobed. Ervad Boman stresses the importance of sticking to our traditions if we are to preserve and perpetuate our faith on this continent.

Ervad Nozer Kotwal. Ervad Kotwal has been actively involved in community affairs ever since he arrived in Montreal, Canada in 1966. He functioned as the treasurer of the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec (ZAQ) for a number of years before moving to Mississauga, Ontario in 1977. Since the inception of the North American Mobeds Council (NAMC) in the late 1980s he has been the treasurer and is currently the secretary.

Nozer was born in Bombay in 1941 and ordained a navar at the Vadi Dar-e Meher in Navsari in 1953. He was ordained a martab much later in 1984 at the same time as his son Sorab became a navar. Nozer was educated at the St. Xavier's school in Mumbai. He took courses in accounts and auditing after coming to Canada. He has worked all his life at the Bank of Montreal in Canada and was the Manager of Audit and Control Planning just prior to retirement.

He is still very active in community affairs as a mobed and frequently travels out of town to perform religious ceremonies. Nozer and his wife, Nergish, live in Mississauga, Ontario.

Nozer's son **Ervad Sorab Kotwal** was also ordained a navar in 1984

and is a graduate in Marketing from the Georgian College in Barry, Ontario. He is employed in the auditing department of GMAC and occasionally assists his father in the performance of religious ceremonies.



Ervad (Brigadier) Behram Panthaki. Behram Panthaki was born in Udvada, in December 1942, into a priestly family. He received his religious education at the M. F. Cama Athornan Institute, in Mumbai, under the guidance of Dastur Firoze Kotwal. He was initiated a navar in 1955 and a martab in 1956 from the Boyce Agiary in Tardeo, Mumbai. Behram is a graduate of Science (B.S.) from Poona University in India. He pursued a career in the Indian Army and served with the Gorkha Regiment for over 30 years.

During his service in the Indian Army he has held many coveted appointments, most notable being ADC to the first field marshal of the Indian Army, famous Zarathushti Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw of 1971 fame. Panthaki has served on Indo-China and Indo-Pakistan borders, fought insurgency in the Eastern States of India and the Punjab and has served on the faculty of two top military training colleges of the Indian Army. He commanded a brigade in Delhi and was responsible for the security of VIPs. He voluntarily retired in 1994 after over 31 years of distinguished service, having earned 12 military honors, to join his family in USA.

Behram, during his army career, kept in touch with priesthood by perform-

ing religious ceremonies for friends and family. He also performed inner and outer liturgical ceremonies in various agiaries in Mumbai during this period and helped his father during Muktaf days. He has to his credit a number of navjotes and weddings.

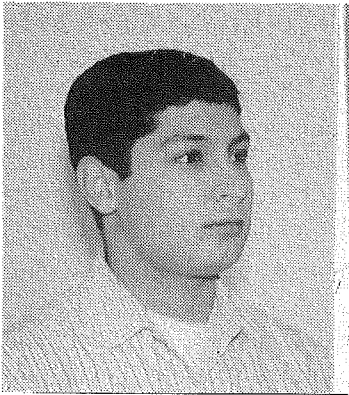
Ervad Panthaki is the only practicing priest in the Washington Metropolitan Area. Since his arrival in the USA, he has greatly helped in uniting the Zarathushti community of Metropolitan Washington by performing various religious ceremonies at the Zoroastrian Center and at homes. In addition, every month he conducts religious education classes for children. He has also conducted two summer youth camps and successfully trained the first paramobed on the East Coast.

In his professional life, Brigadier Panthaki is Director of Human Resources in a computer consultancy company in Fairfax, Virginia, where he lives with his wife, Zenobia.

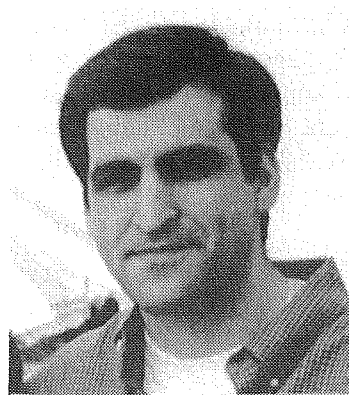
Ervad Darayus Panthaky: Born in Mumbai in 1949, Darayus received his religious training from his elders in Udvada and also at the Banaji Agiary in Mumbai, where he was ordained a navar at the age of twelve. After completing his schooling at the Cawasji Jehangir High School, Darayus obtained a Bachelors degree in Commerce from the University of Bombay.

Darayus arrived in Canada in 1996 and since that time has been only moderately active as a mobed. He lives with his wife, Dhun, in Mississauga and is currently the Manager of North American Audit Operations at the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC) in Toronto.

Ervad Jal. N. Panthaky. Jal was born in Ahmedabad, India, in 1940 and raised in Nargol, where his father, Ervad Noshirwan Framroze Panthaki, held a Panthak in the local Agiary. Jal received religious training at the hands of his father and was



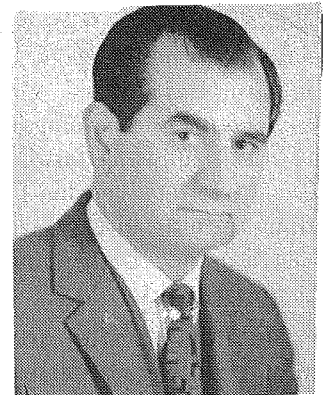
Ervad Jehan B. Panthaki



Ervad Cavas S. Pavri



Ervad Shapur E. Pavri



Mobed Bahram Shahzadi

ordained both a navar and a martab at the Nargol Agiary when he was about eleven years of age.

After completing his schooling in Nargol, Jal attended the K.C. College, Mumbai up to the Inter-science level and obtained a Diploma in Mechanical Engineering from the Victoria Jubilee Technical Institute (VJTI), Mumbai. He worked with Voltas and later with the Glaxo Laboratories until emigrating to Canada. Ervad Jal served as a priest in Mumbai on a part time basis helping during Muktaad days at the Kappawalla Agiary.

After arriving in Montreal in 1967, Jal worked in various fields, including pharmaceutical manufacturing, property development and investment. For the past nine years, he is manager of the Maintenance Department at the Exhibition Place, City of Toronto.

Both Jal and his wife, Meher, are very active and well known in the local community. Jal has served as a priest since arriving in Canada and has also traveled out of town and out of the country to perform ceremonies. He considers himself to be broad minded when it comes to religious and communal questions. He believes that the community will prosper only if members having different viewpoints on key issues will accept compromises and formulate uniform policies. His view on the Mobeds role is that they should first enlighten themselves on religious knowledge; only then can they hope to educate the laity. Mobeds should

explain the meanings of rituals that they perform in order to pass them on to our future generations.

Ervad Jal is very active in the North American Mobeds Council and has served on its Executive Committee. He and his wife, Meher, live in Mississauga, near Toronto, with their son and three daughters.

Ervad Khush J. Panthaky.

Khush was born in Montreal in 1969 to Ervad Jal and Meher Panthaky. He received religious training at home under his father and was ordained a navar at the age of twelve in the Dadar Agiary, Mumbai.

After his basic schooling in Mississauga, near Toronto, Khush received an Applied Arts bachelor's degree in Radio and Television Broadcasting from the Ryerson University, Toronto, in 1995. Six months after graduation he landed a job with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in Toronto as a writer and researcher for one season. He has been a TV reporter for a local television station in Toronto for the past three years. He is seen quite frequently on television reporting on local events. Khush has also been involved with multi-cultural stations reporting on local Indian and Pakistani events and profiling prominent community members. Khush is now easily recognized on the street and is of course very well known in the Zarathushti community of Toronto.

Khush has regularly served his community as a priest since becoming a

Navar. In 1984, while riding his bicycle, Khush was involved in a very serious automobile accident. This left him comatose for a whole month and hospitalized for a further six months. The whole Toronto community rallied around him, holding constant prayer vigils and with the grace of God, Khush finally pulled through. This experience and the power of prayer has left a very lasting impression on Ervad Khush, who is very thankful to God and also to his community.

Ervad Jehan B. Panthaki. This second generation North American mobed is the son of Ervad (Brigadier) Behram Panthaki of Virginia. Born in Mhow, India in 1976, Jehan was ordained a navar at the Jogeshwari Agiary in 1991. He served the Zarathushti community of Delhi till his family decided to migrate to the States in 1994.

Ervad Jehan is currently a student, studying Finance and Management Information Systems at the University of Virginia. He assists his father Ervad Behram whenever needed and wants to learn as much as he can about our faith and practices. He believes mobeds should support the community, not necessarily guide it.

Ervad Jehangir Panthaky. Born in 1927 in Pardi, near the town of Valsad, India, Jehangir received his religious training at home and was ordained a navar and martab at the age of 13 in the Vadi Dar-e-Meher, Navsari. He completed his schooling

at the Bharda New High School, received a Bachelor's of Commerce degree from the Podar College of Commerce and Economics in 1950 and worked as an articled pupil in the firm of Ferguson & Co., Mumbai.

Jehangir emigrated with his family to the then Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland in South Central Africa, where he worked in the Revenue and Income Tax Department for many years, until he emigrated to Vancouver, Canada in 1966. Jehangir worked for the Canadian Federal and Provincial government and is currently in private practice.

Ervad Jehangir is a realist, but would like to see Zarathushti customs and traditions upheld in North America. He lives with his wife, Khorshed, and two grown children in Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada.

Ervad Pervez P. Patel. Born in Udvada in January, 1939, Pervez received his religious training at the Cama Athornan Institute in Andheri, Mumbai. He was ordained a navar at the age of twelve and a martab a year later in the Iranshah Atash Bahram in Udvada. He served various atash bahrams and agiaris as a part-time mobed during Muktdad days. After completing his education in Accounts and Auditing from Mumbai in 1960, Pervez worked as an accountant with the Godrej and Boyce Manufacturing Co., Mumbai.

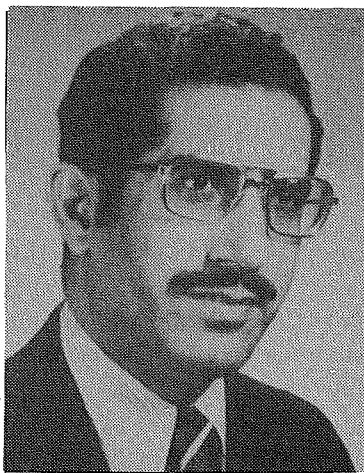
Since arriving in the States in 1970, Pervez has established his own business in Financial Strategies and Services in the New York area.

Pervez is one of four mobeds who are very active in New York and believes that the Zarathushti religion will not only survive but flourish in our community, however small it gets. He prefers a small but sincerely devoted community to a large indifferent one. He feels that the community should not merely talk but live the lessons taught by Asho Zarathushtra. Mobeds should follow their convictions based on their own studies,

beliefs and traditions. Pervez lives with his wife Katie and daughter Avan in the New York area.

Ervad Cavas S. Pavri. A second generation mobed, Ervad Cavas was born in 1972 in Camden, New Jersey, and graduated from Kingwood High School, Kingwood, Texas in 1990. He was ordained a navar at the Banaji Atash Bahram, Mumbai, in 1987. Cavas is the son of Ervad Shapur and Yasmin Pavri who have lived in the Houston area now for over two decades.

*From left,
Ervad
Pervez
Patel and
Mobed
Fariborz
Shahzadi*



After completing his Bachelor's of Finance from the University of Texas at Austin, Texas, in 1994, Cavas received a Doctor of Jurisprudence degree from the University of Houston Law School in May, 1997. He has just completed (1998) his Master of Law in Securities & Financial Regulations from the Georgetown Law School, Washington, DC.

Cavas is one of several young mobeds in Houston, Texas, who are well liked by the community where they regularly provide their voluntary services at jashans, etc.

Ervad Shapur E. Pavri. Shapur was born in 1942 and initiated a navar at the Anjuman Atash Bahram, Mumbai, in 1953. He was educated in the St. Xavier's High School and Sydenham College in Mumbai, where he graduated in Commerce, in 1960. He worked as an accountant for

Esso Standard Eastern, Inc. in Mumbai, until his departure to the States in 1969. Shapur obtained his CPA and currently lives in Kingwood, Texas, a suburb of Houston with his wife, Yasmin. Both Shapur and Yasmin are very active serving their community – Shapur as a volunteer mobed and Yasmin serving on the committee of the Zoroastrian Association of Houston.

Shapur considers himself a traditional Zarathushti but is tolerant of opposing views. He accepts the reality of the new world in which we live and advises that we woo our youth with

patience and understanding, shunning rigid dogmas which are self-defeating. To preserve and perpetuate our religion in the next millennium, he advises our youth to marry within the community and have numerous progeny. He feels that mobeds should be a bridge between orthodox and liberal and tolerate dissent. They should act as a cohesive force in uniting the community. Shapur works as a CPA in the Controllers department of Texaco, Inc. in Houston.

Mobed Bahram Shahzadi. Born in Yazd, Iran, in 1925, Bahram Shahzadi received his religious training at special classes conducted by the Mobed Council of Tehran in 1976. He was initiated a navar in the Tehran Agiary in 1993 and performed the functions of a mobed in a part time capacity in Tehran. Mobed Bahram Shahzadi has a bachelor's



Ervad (Dr.) Khushru B. Unwalla

degree from the Faculty of Literature of Tehran University and was employed at the Ministry of Education while in Iran. He lived in London for some time prior to arriving in Chicago in 1980.

Mobed Shahzadi puts great emphasis on the need for imparting proper religious education to our children if we are to preserve and perpetuate the Zarathushti religion. He points out that in order to do this, mobeds must first be knowledgeable themselves.

Mobed Bahram lives in California with his wife, Banu, and serves as a full-time mobed at the California Zoroastrian Center. He is also the custodian of the well-stocked library at the Center and edits the local newsletter, *Mah-Nameh*.

Mobed Fariborz Sohrab Shahzadi. Fariborz was born in Nasik, India, in 1947 and received his religious training from his father, Mobed Sohrab, in Mumbai from 1964 to 1968. He was ordained a navar and martab at the Dadyseth Atash Bahram in Fanaswadi, Mumbai, in 1965. As a young mobed, he assisted his father in priestly duties at the atash bahram.



Ervad Kobad Zarolia

Mobed Fariborz lived in Iran before coming to the USA in 1978. He took courses in Microbiology and Business Administration after arriving here and is now a District Sales Trainer for Key Pharmaceuticals in California, where he lives with his wife, Manigeh.

Mobed Fariborz is well known in the community, particularly among the younger generation, for his work in organizing Zarathushti youth camps and classes several times each year throughout the country.

He has recently co-authored a textbook, published by FEZANA, giving basic information about the essence of our religion together with an explanation of our rituals, ceremonies, customs etc., which will prove very useful for members of the community. Mobed Fariborz is also developing correspondence courses and tapes about our religion.

Mobed Fariborz is actively involved in the running of the Council of Iranian Mobeds of North America (CIMNA) and frequently travels out of California to perform religious ceremonies in other parts of the country.

Ervad Kayomarz Yezdi Sidhwa. Born in Bombay in November 1967, Kayomarz completed his basic education from Sir Cawasji Jehangir High School in 1983. He was ordained a navar in the Banaji Limji Agiary, Fort, Mumbai at the age of thirteen. Kayomarz served as a part-time priest for a total of six years, initially at the Dastur Agiary in Poona and later at the Batliwalla Agiary in Tardeo, Mumbai.

Kayomarz received his Bachelor of Commerce from the Jai Hind College, Mumbai University and did vacation work with the Bank of Tokyo and also Godrej & Boyce Company in Mumbai, until he moved to the States in 1991.

His further studies after arriving in the States were on an evenings-and-weekend basis at the Nova South Eastern University in Florida, from where he received his MBA, specializing in Accounts. Kayomarz is currently employed as a Software Consultant with the Deloitte & Touche Consulting Group/ICS and at the same time is working to obtain his CPA.

Ervad Kayomarz holds traditional views on religion and is very active as a mobed, serving the Miami Zarathushti community. He lives with his wife, Farzana, and newly born daughter, Friyana, in Miami, Florida.

Ervad Adi J. Unwalla. Born in Mumbai in 1932, Adi Unwalla received religious education from childhood first at the Athornan Boarding Madressa, Dadar (Mumbai) from 1942 to 1948 and then at the K. R. Cama Athornan Institute, Andheri from 1948 to 1953. He was initiated a navar and martab in the Iranshah Atash Bahram at Udvada in 1946 and 1948 respectively. Ervad Adi worked as a mobed as required during Mukhtad days and holidays in the Boyce Agiary, Dadyseth Atash Bahram and Iranshah Atash Bahram in Udvada.

After completing his basic education in Mumbai, Adi received a Bachelor of Engineering degree from the BMS College of Engineering, Bangalore, India in 1959. He worked as an Engineer with Shapurji Pallonji & Co. and P. Kudianivala Associates in Mumbai prior to arriving in the U.S.A. in 1969. After arrival Adi received an MBA from Temple University, Pennsylvania. He is currently a Senior Engineer with the Highway Department, Burlington County, New Jersey.

Ervad Adi and his wife, Nergis, live in New Jersey, where they are both very active in community affairs. Adi, apart from being active in teaching religious classes and serving the community's religious needs, held executive positions in the Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania and New Jersey (ZAPANJ) almost continuously since 1979 and was also vice president of the North American Mobeds Council (NAMC) from 1996 to 1998.

Ervad (Professor) Darab B. Unwalla. A mobed-cum-university professor, Darab was born in Udvada in 1928 and received his religious training at the Dadar Athornan Madressa. He was ordained a navar at the age of 13 and martab a year later in the Iranshah Atash Bahram. After completing his schooling, Darab received his Bachelor of Arts from St. Xavier's College, Bachelor of Law from the Law College, a Masters from the School of Economics and finally a Ph.D. in Human Relations from Bombay University in 1957.

From the day he became a navar to the day he emigrated to the States in 1958, Ervad Darab assisted his father Ervad Behramji Jamshedji Unwalla in running his Panthak, first at the Dadyseth Atash Bahram and then at the Boyce Agiary in Mumbai. During this time Ervad Darab was also receiving higher education and, from 1952 to 1958, served as a Professor at various colleges attached to the Bombay University.

After arriving in the States, Darab served as a Professor at the University of Chicago for two years, Michigan State University for nine years and currently is Professor and Chairman of the Department of Management, International Business and Entrepreneurship at Florida Atlantic University.

With all his University commitments, Ervad Darab is still moderately active as a mobed in the Florida community. Also, despite his advanced education and exposure to life in the New World for forty years, Ervad Darab still holds traditional views on religion. He currently lives with his wife, Nellie, in Boca Raton, Florida.

Ervad (Dr.) Khushro B. Unwalla. Ervad Unwalla actively serves his community in Southern California as a volunteer mobed. He was born in Mumbai in 1953 and was ordained a navar at the Iranshah Atash Bahram in Udvada. Educated at St. Mary's High School in Mumbai and the Kasturba Medical College in Manipal, South India, Khushro ran a private medical practice in India.

Since his arrival in the States in 1987, Khushro studied single-mindedly on his own and passed the qualifying medical examinations at the very first attempt, which is considered quite a feat. He is currently employed in the Faculty at the Department of Psychiatry of Loma Linda University in Southern California, where he lives with his wife, Farah and daughter, Roxanne.

Ervad Perry (Piroj) D. Unwalla. Born in Lansing, Michigan, in 1964, Perry finished his schooling in Boca Raton, Florida. He received his religious training and learned the Yazeshne prayers at home under his aunt in Florida. He then spent about four months at the Wadiji Atash Bahram training under a practicing priest and was ordained a navar at the

Iranshah Atash Bahram in Udvada in 1977. Within five minutes of becoming a navar, Perry walked over to his uncle's house and joined in the performance of a navjote with twenty other priests, which he thinks was pretty "neat".

Perry received his Bachelor of Marketing from Florida Atlantic University in 1987 and his MBA from Cal State University, Dominguez Hills, California, in 1990. He began his career working in real estate but transferred later to life insurance. Perry is currently an agent for State Farm Insurance in St. Augustine, Florida and has received numerous performance awards from his firm.

Perry is one of only three or four priests serving the Florida Zarathushti community, which includes his father, Ervad (Professor) Darab Unwalla. He is currently the president of the 200 strong Zoroastrian Association of Florida. Perry is also very involved in organizing Zarathushti youth activities, the most recent being the ones to Estes Park, Colorado and the Zoroastrian Youth of North America (ZYNA) east coast cruise.

Ervad Ratansha Behramgore Vakil. Ratansha was born in Mumbai in 1961 and received his religious training at home under his father. He was ordained a navar at the Banaji Atash Bahram in 1970. Since childhood Ratansha lived with his family in Singapore, where he graduated with a B.Sc. in 1986. Ratansha then moved to San Diego, California, where he finished his MBA.

During his stay in the States from 1987 to 1995, Ervad Ratansha was very active as a mobed. After marriage, he and his wife Nitash went back to Singapore on business, where he was also active as a mobed. They have now recently returned to the States and are currently residing in Carrollton, Texas. Ratansha now works as a Senior Computer Education Consultant for the Oracle Corporation. His frequent visits abroad

leaves little time for him to function as a mobed as much as he would like.

Ervad Pesi A. Vazifdar. Pesi was born in Mumbai in 1951 and was raised in the Dadar Parsi Colony. He received religious instruction at the hands of his uncle and was initiated as a navar at the Vadi Dar-e-Meher in Navsari at the age of twelve.



Pesi completed his school education from Don Bosco High in Mumbai and obtained his bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering from the Victoria Jubilee Technical Institute, Mumbai, in 1974. He obtained his master's degree in the same field from the State University of New York at Buffalo in 1975. Pesi is currently engineering manager at the General Motors Locomotive Group in La Grange, Illinois.

Ervad Pesi Vazifdar is very active in the Zarathushti community in Illinois, where he lives with his wife, Aban. Pesi feels mobeds should really elevate their status, be more versatile and take on leadership roles within the community. Only by doing this will they be able to command the respect that priests in other religions are accorded. Pesi served as the president of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago during the mid 1990s.

Pesi's two sons **Ervad Hoshi Vazifdar** and **Ervad Neville Vazifdar** both underwent the navar ceremony at the Banaji Atash Bahram, Mumbai, in 1993 at the ages of 12 and 11 respectively. Both young priests are

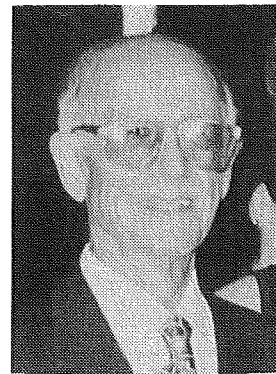
also very active in serving as volunteer mobeds for their community when required.

Ervad Kobad S. Zarolia. Ervad Zarolia was born in 1943 and received his religious training at the Petit High School in Pune. He was ordained a navar at the Nargol Agiary but completed his schooling in Pune. He was employed as a construction foreman with Cementation India in Mumbai. Kobad arrived in Canada in 1969 and ever since then has been actively serving his community in Toronto as a volunteer part-time mobed.

Kobad was one of the founding members of the North American Mobeds Council and has served as its president for 10 years since its inception in 1983. He wants North American mobeds to be leaders, not followers, and be more involved in community work. He is also a past president of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario from 1987 to 1989 and served as its executive officer and vice president for the prior eight years. He has been re-elected as president of the ZSO this year. He was also the president of the Zoroastrian Cricket Club from 1978 to 1993. Kobad works for an insurance brokerage practice in Toronto and lives in Mississauga with his wife Nergish and children Zubin, Sanobar and Persis.

Mobed Mehraban Jamshid Zartoshty. Mehraban Zartoshty's name is a very familiar one in the Zarathushti community. Together with his elder brother, Faridoon, the Zartoshty brothers are well known

for their charities supporting Zarathushti causes worldwide.



Mehraban was born in Yazd, Iran, in 1919 where he received his religious training. He was ordained a navar and a martab in Tehran when he was 15 years old. Graduating in biology from Bombay University, he has been a successful businessman all his life and has lived in Tehran, Mumbai and London prior to arriving in the U.S.A. in 1981.

In New York, Mobed Mehraban completed a course in Business Administration and now resides with his wife, Paridokht, in Vancouver, BC and San Diego, California. Although now retired, Mehraban is still very active in community work and is currently president of the Council of Iranian Mobeds of North America (CIMNA).

Mobed Mehraban's hope is that "we try to bring up our children as true Zarthushtis, honest, kind hearted and proud of their religion and heritage." He wants mobeds to get educated in the philosophy of our religion, know something about other religions also and thereby teach our community convincingly about the beauty of our own religion. ■

*Living each moment as if t'were my last
Wishing each day didn't go by so fast
Trying to learn from the things in the past
Happy, content and at peace, at last!*

- Author unknown

Qualities Of an Athravan

An athravan's grade is determined by the qualities or virtues he has energized within him. These qualities are rungs in the ladder of spiritual advancement. As an athravan ascends this ladder by fully awakening the associated quality, certain spiritual powers become manifested in him and he becomes a true religious guide for the laity.

By Hoshang J. Bhadha
Cypress, California

Rituals and ceremonies form an integral part of the Zarathushti religion. In today's liberal environment, however, it is extremely difficult for a priest to practice his religion in its entirety. The scriptures and religious practices that we have with us today are the gifts of those learned, pious priests of Iran and India, who despite adverse conditions, preserved them for us to practice for thousands of years to come. Though it is hard to replace those dedicated priests, their knowledge and wisdom has streamed through their families to enable the fire in their hearts (*atash-e-vohu friyan*) to burn bright for their future generations, who are expected to protect and preserve their religion.

The Zarathushti religion, or *daena*, is a Divine Path designed for the unfoldment of the human soul, or *urvan*, and to transport it to its final resting place in the abode of Ahura Mazda. An athravan is a guide, protector and caretaker of his *daena*. He has to play multiple roles in modern society to be effective in spreading His message among his community.

Our scriptures designate 8 grades (or status) of athravans. The *Uzirehn Geh* [*Geh III, 5*], *Visperad* [*III, 1*]

and *Vendidad* [*V, 57*] refer to them. Listed in ascending order of grade they are: *Frabaretaar*, *Aaberetaar*, *Aasnataar*, *Rathwishkara*, *Haa-vanaan*, *Aatharvaksha*, *Zaota* and *Saroshavareza*. An athravan's grade is determined by the qualities or virtues he has energized within him.

These qualities are 16 in number. An athravan possesses all 16 qualities, however, some of these may have been awakened, while others may be dormant. Thus the level of advancement and control over the qualities varies from grade to grade. These qualities are rungs in the ladder of spiritual advancement. As an athravan ascends this ladder by fully awakening the associated quality, certain spiritual powers become manifested in him and he becomes a true religious guide for the laity.

The Pahlavi *Dadistan* [*XXXXVII, 38*] and the Persian *Rivayets* [*The Persian Rivayet of Hormazyar Framarz and Others*, by Ervad B. N. Dhabhar, Mumbai, 1932, p. 330] list 15 of these 16 qualities.

Table I shows the quality associated with each grade of athravan. Commonly, a particular grade of athravan is also associated with a particular

role in performance of rituals. This seemingly mundane aspect, however, is a subject of a separate essay all by itself. What follows in this essay is a treatment of the esoteric side of the subject, with emphasis on the development of the spiritual and moral character of an athravan for belonging to a particular grade. It demonstrates the high demands placed on the standards of an athravan in ancient times, compared with what we have today.

SPIRITUAL GRADES AND THEIR ASSOCIATED QUALITIES

GRADE 1: FRABARETAAR. The three qualities energized to attain this grade are:

(1) *Avizeh-heem* (pure conscience and disposition) enables an athravan to lead a life free from lustful, contagious and infectious influences and practices his commandments without any compromises or exceptions. He has developed in him a strong union of mind, speech and behavior, has a pure conscience, harbors no ill feelings towards others and is not hurtful or revengeful in any way.

(2) *Aasnideh-kherad* (innate wisdom) provides him with exceptional capacity to understand his *daena* and its implications under earthly conditions. He understands the reasons for economic disparities between rich and poor and is respectful towards everyone regardless of their race, gender, religion or culture.

(3) *Deen-aspanargaan* (restoring or embellishing the religion) enables him to lead, direct and revive faith in people. It enables him to spread the religion among those unfortunates who are ignorant of their role and the gifts of life offered in our scriptures. He always wears the *sudreh-kushti*, follows all prescribed rituals (*tarikats*) and makes them his most powerful weapons against evil (*druj*). An athravan who has fully developed *deen-aspanargaan* is capable of performing miracles to revive our faith (as Arda-e-Viraf did during early Sassanian times).

GRADE 2: AABERETAAR. The following four additional qualities must be energized to reach this grade:

(4) **Yazdaan-minidaar** (attunement with Divine Entities). He constantly attunes his thoughts with Yazatas and can attract and absorb the energies that have their brightness. He has the ability to conserve spiritual power in his *sudreh-kushti*. Through this power he can cure minor illnesses, overcome magical spells and rid his surroundings of evil spirits.

(5) **Mainyo-vinashne** (looking up to the spiritual world). With his eyes he can 'see' spiritual phenomena occurring and can understand their secrets.

(6) **Paak-minashne** (pure thoughts). Like the rays of the sun, his thoughts are all-permeating and are capable of converting evil into good. He can calm wild animals, prevail on snakes to give up their 'poisonous' attitude and cause prostitutes to become faithful wives.

(7) **Raast-gavashne** (truthful utterance). By constantly speaking the truth, his speech has reached such an exalted status, that whatever he says will happen. Such athravans speak very little, almost always remain in silence (*baj*) and recite manthras day and night.

GRADE 3: AASNATAAR. An athravan who ascends to this grade can now identify the presence of Ahura Mazda in both good and bad and can identify the product of both good and evil deeds. The three additional qualities energized are:

(8) **Kherdi-kunashne** (perform deeds of wisdom). Through this spiritual power an athravan can make the laity see the results (*keherps*) produced while performing the inner liturgical (*Pav-mahal*) ceremonies. For instance, with the gaze of his eyes he can purify *alats* like the *nirang* during the *Nirangdin* ceremony for the laity to see.

(9) **Chisti-vastrem** (spreading his highest wisdom). His mere physical

Table I. Grades and Qualities of an Athravan

QUALITIES	GRADES							
	1 Frabaretaar	2 Aaberetaar	3 Aasnataar	4 Rathwiskara	5 Haavanaan	6 Aathravaksha	7 Zoota	8 Saroshavareza
1 Avizeh-heem	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
2 Aasnideh-kherad	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
3 Deen-aspanargaan	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
4 Yazdaan-minidaar		x	x	x	x	x	x	Reached
5 Mainyo-vinashne		x	x	x	x	x	x	by
6 Paak-minashne		x	x	x	x	x	x	Maghavs
7 Raast-gavashne		x	x	x	x	x	x	Only
8 Kherdi-kunashne			x	x	x	x	x	x
9 Chisti-vastrem			x	x	x	x	x	x
10 Yaozdaathra-tan			x	x	x	x	x	x
11 Shivaa-hizvaan				x	x	x	x	x
12 Narm-nask					x	x	x	x
13 Raast-avesta					x	x	x	x
14 Paadyaav-saazashni						x	x	x
15 Khub-nirang						x	x	x
16 Naavar-zivaan							x	x

presence dispels the spiritual pollution in the environment and refreshes it. This quality is found in the Hom Yasht, but not among the 15 listed in the Pahlavi or Persian writings and "could have been omitted by a scribe's oversight", according to Dr. P. K. Anklesaria, principal of the Cama Athornan Institute, in a lecture in Mumbai on August 9, 1966.

(10) **Yaozdaathra-tan** (pure body). With this quality, his body has reached the peak of purity. Each of the 16 energy centers within his body have reached a high state of purity. He can exorcise evil spirits and turn them into good.

GRADE 4. RATHWISHKARA. The energy of his *Fravashi* is now perfectly attuned with his soul. As *Ratu*, he serves athravans of even higher status than himself. He has energized within him, the following additional quality:

(11) **Shiva-hizvaan** (sweet tongue). His speech is in perfect tune with his conscience. Through his power of speech, he is capable of convincing his opponents in any debate. He can make anyone accept the truths contained in his religion.

GRADE 5: HAAVANAAN. This grade is reached by fully developing the following two additional qualities:

(12) **Narm nask** (having full knowledge of the *Nasks*). He can now grasp the esoteric meanings hidden in the 21 *Nasks* and has the authority of a *Rainidaar* to extract and rearrange portions from scriptures to suit current conditions. The last such athravan and *Rainidaar* was Dasturan Dastur Adarbad Marespand, who lived in the fourth century AC and has composed the prayers we pray today.

(13) **Raast-avesta** (reciting Avesta correctly). He can recite the Avesta manthras in such an efficacious manner that the whole earth is blessed and rejuvenated by them. Those fortunate enough to hear such an athravan reciting the Avesta, experience great joy and cause a certain energy to rise within them which cuts the strength of *ghana-mino* (evil).

GRADE 6: AATHRAVAKSHA. At this stage, an athravan naturally acquires divine strength to be faithful to his *daena* and show the true path

to his followers. Such an athravan can activate the divine energies in the implements used in religious ceremonies (*alats*) and has the power to consecrate an atash bahram, perform the *Bui* ceremony and has the ability to communicate with Sarosh Yazad attached to consecrated atash bahrams. The following two qualities are required to be energized to reach this grade:

(14) **Paadyaav-saazashni** (all previous qualities sharpened). All the above qualities are further sharpened such that this grade of athravan can achieve the appropriate results of his power without the need to untie and re-tie his *kushti*.

(15) **Khub-nirang** (power to activate curative manthric formulas). He can activate powerful manthric formulas (*nirangs*) to cure even the most serious of illnesses. It is said that such an athravan can be called a true medical doctor, who can cure without the use of conventional medicines.

GRADE 7: ZAOTA.

(16) **Naavar-zivaan** (living the life of a High Priest). After the age of 52, a certain form of energy called *naavar zivaan* blossoms in an athravan, which lands him in the *Zaota* grade. He no longer thinks or behaves as an ordinary human being. He spends his life understanding the secrets of nature and becomes eligible for elevation to the title of *Dastur* or the highest grade of athravan in the physical world.

GRADE 8: SAROSHAVAREZA.

An anjuman of *Maghavs* constantly watches over athravans. *Maghavs* are free from human needs of family or procreation because their souls have reached a sufficiently advanced stage to be rendered free from future life cycles (also known as *khaetvo-dath*). Such an anjuman comprises of 72 *Maghavs* led by the *Saroshavareza*. Such spiritually advanced beings are believed to live hidden from human civilization. During the latter part of the nine-

teenth century, a Parsi gentleman from Surat, India, Behramshah Shroff, was destined to come in contact with such a group to learn the esoteric side of the Zarathushti religion, which is known as 'Ilm-e-Kshnoom' today.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN MODERN TIMES

There are several issues related to the quality, role and responsibilities of the present-day athravan.

● First and foremost, the parents of an athravan must guide and educate their son from childhood in religious matters. They must prepare him to serve the community by becoming one of his faithful servants, protecting and preserving the tenets of our religion. It is the parents' responsibility to make sure their son receives religious knowledge which will ultimately allow him to lead a religious life and become a role model for his community.

● In modern times the athravan's role has become even more challenging as he has to develop means to help him protect and defend the original teachings of Asho Zarathushtra from being corrupted and ridiculed by every Tom, Dick and Harry claiming to be a scholar of the Zarathushti religion. Such persons seldom possess the knowledge of the esoteric side of the religion, which can only come from being brought up in athravan family surroundings. Also, such persons can only rely on superficial literal translations or understanding of scriptures and can never equal the spiritual composition of an athravan in interpreting his daena in its true form.

● An athravan acts as a medium between the spiritual world and

material world. Under no circumstances is he allowed to reformat, alter or compromise any part of our scriptures. Neither can he offer his services to any Zarathushti based on his/her economic or social status. Whether his services are needed in India, Pakistan, United States or Hong Kong, he has to follow his commandments with no exceptions.

● Every athravan possesses the above mentioned 15 qualities within himself. Few recognize, however, their presence and methods of cultivation of their spiritual energies. It is a matter of social upbringing and how far one is educated in religious matters and also the effort one is prepared to go through for effective implementation of his commandments.

I would like to end this article with an extract from Bahman Yasht, where Ahura Mazda speaks to Asho Zarathushtra Spitaman thus:

"O! Zarathushtra, teach this daena and its Avesta, Zand and Pazand to the priests so that they may act according to them and teach them in turn to their flock. Those who are not acquainted with the religion may become acquainted, have hopes of the Future Existence and learn about the release of their souls. During these difficult times, religious men will undergo great trouble and difficulty at the hands of non-believers; but although their bodies will have to endure trouble and distress on earth, their souls will eventually flourish and be happy in heaven. If a person does not put his body in sore trial in this world, then he keeps his soul in need in the spiritual world, enfeebled, in pain and in trouble."

Atha Zamyat Yatha Afrinami. ■

[For a profile of Ervad (Dr.) Hoshang J. Bhadha, please see page 32]

*Asha is God's Law of Goodness, Truth and Purity.
It is the best and the highest. By following Asha
In being good and truthful and pure in mind
In all you do each day, you will be very happy.*

- Ashem Vohu prayer from "A Garland of Prayers" by Pareen Lalkaka

Who are the Magi?

By Silloo P. Mehta
Cypress, California

There is some magic in the term 'Magi'. Ervad Phiroze Masani, in his book "*Zoroastrianism Ancient and Modern*", explains the term Magi to be the plural of the Latin 'Magus', derived from

'Magnus', meaning 'Great'. It is rendered as 'Magoos' in Persian, which is a derivation of the Avestaic 'Maghavan'.

The terms, Magoos or Maghavan, are thus applied to a sublime personage or a person par excellence or, more literally, a protector of moral and spiritual greatness.

The Maghavan is the highest grade of Zarathushti priesthood.

There are in all eight grades through which a Zarathushti priest must pass in his upward progression to becoming a Maghavan [See page 43]. In Gatha [Ys. 33.7] Zarathushtra himself is regarded as a Maghavan, proving this to be the highest designation for a person advanced in purity and spiritual development.

The term Magi has confounded even the best of writers and it has become a term of wide application ever since its first use by Asho Zarathushtra [Gathas Ys. 51.15 and Ys. 33.7]. For instance, Greek historians have applied the term incorrectly to mean all Zarathushti priests, irrespective of

their grades. Sometimes the term Magi has also been wrongly used to mean the entire Zarathushti fold.

Today we have no Magi living in our society anywhere in the world. However, the Magi had foreseen the downfall of the Sassanian Empire a few



decades before it actually occurred. They had felt the need to isolate themselves from the existing disorder and go into seclusion, from where they could not only practice the religion but also better serve humanity at large.

One such group of Magi, known today as Saheb-e-Delans, left a hundred years before the invasion of the Arabs and had settled in Chaichasta, a place near the Caspian Sea. A second group of Magi left fifty years later and settled in Kuh-e-Demavand near Tehran. Their descendants are the unknown and unseen guardians of our religion today, who have with them the original as well as the lost parts of our scriptures. It is believed that Kuh-e-Demavand, a place of mystery, which has defied all archaeological and geological excavations, has 72 Maghavs living there at present. Their fascinating account and life-style is given in a little book called "*A Mazdaznan Mystic*", which I will be happy to share with anybody who wishes to learn more. ■

Our Times

We have taller buildings

But shorter tempers;

Wider freeways

But narrower viewpoints;

We spend more, but have less;

We buy more, but enjoy it less;

We have bigger houses

And smaller families;

More conveniences but less time;

We have more degrees

But less sense;

More knowledge but less judgment;

More experts but more problems;

More medicines but less wellness.

We drink too much, smoke too much, spend recklessly, laugh too little, drive too fast, get too angry.

We stay up too late, get up too tired, read too seldom, watch TV too much, and pray too seldom.

We have multiplied our possessions,

But reduced our values;

We know how to make a living,

But not a life;

We've added years to life,

Not life to years;

We've conquered outer space,

But not our inner space;

We've done larger things,

But not better things;

We've cleaned up the air,

But polluted the soul.

We write more, but learn less:

Plan more, but accomplish less;

We've learned to rush,

But not to wait;

We have higher incomes,

But lower morals;

More acquaintances,

But fewer friends.

We build more computers

To hold more information,

To produce more copies,

But have less communication.

These are times of fast food,

And slow digestion;

Tall men and short character;

More leisure and less fun;

Of fancier houses,

But broken homes;

Much in the show window,

But nothing in the stockroom.

[Submitted by Ester Bamji]

Asho Zarathushtra and the Priesthood in Ancient Iran

That the religion of Zarathushtra has survived for 3 millennia is attributed to the sheer genius of Zarathushtra, who through his profound wisdom developed an enlightened and enduring message, to the Zarathushti priesthood who zealously preserved this message for over 100 generations and to the rich heritage and traditions developed by Zarathushtra's followers.

By Sarosh Manekshaw
Houston, Texas

That the Zarathushti din has survived for 3 millennia as an active, living religion, despite the destruction caused to it first by Alexander circa 330 BC and then by the centuries of Islamic rule in Iran, should be attributed, amongst others, to three factors:

- The sheer genius of Zarathushtra, who through his profound wisdom developed an enlightened and enduring message. This simple message of hope was a prescription for all mankind – follow Ahura Mazda's path of *Asha* (truth or righteousness), thereby eliminating the *druj* (evil or the lie) caused by Ahriman;

- The Zoroastrian priesthood who zealously preserved this message of Zarathushtra and carefully passed it down, in oral form, from father to son for approximately 100 generations; and

- The rich heritage and traditions developed by Zarathushtra's followers, which when practiced by the laity, helped remind them daily of Zarathushtra's doctrines.

It is well known that very little information exists about Zarathushtra. In fact, we are not even sure about his date or place of birth; and various conflicting theories exist, with the most probable being that he was born between 1400 and 1100 BC, some-

where in Eastern Iran [see *FEZANA Journal*, Fall 1997, for further details of Zarathushtra's date and place]. The little information that we have on Zarathushtra comes to us mainly from the Avestan and Pahlavi literature, as well as from early Greek and Roman reports [see *Jackson: 1928*, for a detailed list of sources].

The only facts that we do possess from Zarathushtra's own time come from the Gathas, the hymns that Zarathushtra himself composed. Since what we have left of them is so small, approximately 6,000 words comprising 17 chapters, and since they deal mainly with his doctrines, it is difficult to extrapolate from them to develop a complete personal profile of the prophet, much less to determine the social, cultural and religious environment that existed during his time.

The Gathas are simply the fervent hymns of an enlightened soul, seeking to point out the way for individuals, and mankind as a whole, to reject, overcome and destroy the evil that exists in this world. How, then, do we develop a better understanding of Zarathushtra's time?

We are fortunate that we do have access to some additional sources of information, which while they are not from Iranian sources of Zarathush-

tra's period, are from a kindred people of that time, who shared much in common with the Iranians. These kindred people are the Indo-Aryans, who migrated from the steppes of Central Asia to the plains of India, and who followed the Vedic religion. Fortunately, their literature was better preserved because it was not subject to the cycles of destruction that the Iranian literature suffered.

INDO-IRANIAN BACKGROUND

Around 3000 BC, the Indo-Iranians, a branch of the Indo-European family of peoples, started migrating southwards from the steppes of Central Asia. By 2000 BC, the Indo-Iranians themselves had separated into two branches, the Indo-Aryans who migrated South-eastwards and settled in the Northwest of India; and the Iranians who migrated South-westwards and settled on the Iranian plateau [Boyce: 1987, p. 513]. Before their separation the two groups of people shared a common culture, language and religion. After their separation, and based on the circumstances in their new homelands, the cultural and religious ideas of each group developed separately. Yet, some aspects of commonality continued to exist for centuries after their separation.

These migrations and separation of peoples did not take place suddenly. Rather they continued in waves, over decades and centuries. Even after the separation into the two societies, the Iranians and the Indo-Aryans, in many parts of Central Asia the two peoples lived together speaking slightly different languages and following different religious practices. In order to clarify the distinctions between the various groups, the following definitions will be used:

Indo-Iranians: The joint family of people before they separated into Iranians and Indo-Aryans.

Indo-Aryans: The subgroup of Indo-Iranians who split from the Iranians and migrated South-eastwards to eventually settle in the plains of Northern India.

Proto-Indoaryans: These were the people of Indo-Aryan stock, who had already separated from the Iranians but, who either settled and remained behind in Iran and Central Asia, or who had followed in later migratory groups which did not make it all the way to India [see Burrows: 1973].

Iranians: The sub-group of Indo-Iranians who split from the Indo-Aryans and migrated South-westward and settled in Eastern and North-central Iran.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRIESTLY CLASS

Let us start by looking at the Indo-Iranian period. In 1930, Dumezil proposed that the Indo-Iranian society was divided into three classes: (1) priests (Av. *zaotar*, Skt. *brahamana*), (2) warriors (Av. *rathaeshtra*, Skt. *kshatriya*), and (3) herdsmen (Av. *vaastryo fsuyant*, Skt. *vaisya*). [See Frye: 1993, p. 21 for an elaboration of Dumezil's theory; see also Lincoln: 1981, p. 134; Duchesne-Guillemin: 1973, p. 122].

It is apparent that the establishment of each class (or specialization)

would be dependent on the speed with which the society developed. Thus, the most primitive societies would have been classless, with different classes gradually emerging depending on the growth and social and economic development within that society. However, even in most primitive societies there was a general awareness of supernatural powers and spirituality, and a group of people would have come to the fore to minister to the needs of the popula-

“ “ The Indo-Iranians had a tradition of religious practices. Along with the rituals which the priests learned, they also had to memorize many sacred words or prayers, both of which they faithfully taught to the next generation. ” ”

tion. This would have led to the priests becoming the first functional subdivision.

We are well aware that the Indo-Iranians were a deeply religious people. They were very conscious of a spirituality that existed all around them, and they accordingly prayed and sacrificed to various gods. That many of the gods were common to the Indo-Aryans and the Iranians is an indication that they had a common origin from Indo-Iranian times. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that priests, as a functional group, must have existed to tend to the religious needs of these peoples. Specifically the sacrificial ceremony (Av. *yasna*, Skt. *yajna*) would by necessity have to have been officiated over by trained priests, who were skilled in the correct formulations to be recited and in the correct procedures for executing the rituals.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF PRIESTS

There is additional information that definitely confirms the existence of a priesthood. This information comes from the Gathas themselves. The Gathas give us four terms: (1) *zaotar*, (2) *ma(n)thran*, (3) *usig*, and

(4) *karapan*. Each of these is a term used for a priest, although of differing race and function.

Zaotar was the chief or officiating priest, and was used by Zarathushtra to describe himself – the term itself has been translated as either ‘invoker’ or as ‘sacrificial priest’, (we will deal with this term in more detail later), and exactly corresponds to the Skt. *hotar*, who was also the chief or officiating priest in Vedic times.

Ma(n)thra has been defined as “formulated meditation, the utterance which was the ‘instrument of thought’” [Boyce: 1989a, p. 8]. Boyce goes on to state: “The *mathra* accompanied rituals; and an inspired priest would compose such utterances.

... Zarathushtra repeatedly uses an Iranian equivalent, ‘*mathran*’, of himself. In general, it seems, priestly utterances were regarded as inspired in the strictest sense, being revealed or revealing themselves, for such inspiration was held to come either from a deity or from a faculty within the priest himself.” [ibid.].

The Avestan term *usig* has an exact correspondence to Skt. *usij*. While *usig* appears once in the Gathas [Ys. 44.20], *usij* appears approximately 30 times in the *Rig Veda*. The *usij*-s are the priests who aid the warriors in their bid to raid cattle [Lincoln: 1981, p. 61]. And it was for this reason that they are condemned by Zarathushtra in the Gathas [Humbach and Ichaporia: 1994: Ys. 44.20]:

“...the *karapan* and the *usig* take hold of the cow for wrathful treatment...”

Burrows [1973: p. 131] finds *usij* to be a proto-Indoaryan term for a certain class of priest. Burrows further argues that the proto-Indoaryan warriors (*mairya*-s) were the cattle rustlers who preyed on the peaceful, pastoralist Iranians and wrought so much destruction and evil; and it was the *mairya*-s (the proto-Indoaryan warriors) along with their priests, the

usij-s and the *karapan-s*, who were the *daeua* worshippers. The three principal *daeua-s*: *Indra*, *Nang-haithya*, and *Saurva*, were Indo-Aryan or proto-Indoaryan gods [*ibid.*, p. 128], and it was these *daeua-s* (along with the proto-Indoaryan priests and warriors) who Zarathushtra condemned.

The term *karapan* can be derived from the Skt. *kalpa-* (rite), or from the Avestan *karp-* (to mumble), [*ibid.*, p. 132]. In the former sense it would be associated with a proto-Indoaryan priestly function. In the latter, it was used derogatorily to describe these same priests, who in Zarathushtra's opinion, were to be condemned, since they too were *daeua* worshippers.

Thus, it is clear that Zarathushtra's wrath was exclusively aimed at the proto-Indoaryans, the cattle-raiders, and their priests (the *usig-s* and *karapan-s*), whom he labeled the *daeua* (false gods) worshippers. There is not the slightest evidence in the Gathas, the Younger Avestan or Pahlavi literature that Zarathushtra ever condemned Iranian priests. This distinction is extremely important.

The Indo-Iranians had a tradition of religious practices. Along with the rituals which the priests learned, they also had to memorize many sacred words or prayers, both of which they faithfully taught to the next generation. Boyce [1989a: p. 8] has identified three types of religious utterances:

(1) the *mathra* [see above], represented in Iran by the *Ashem Vohu* and *Yatha Ahu Vairyo*;

(2) the 'songs of praise', which were intended to please the gods in order to show the worshippers favors. In Iran, such hymns are represented by the *yashts*;

(3) 'religious poetry', represented in Iran by the Gathas, and composed by *zaotar-s* who had undergone intensive training in order to master the complex intricacies of composing this type of verse.

ZARATHUSHTRA – THE PRIEST

Was Zarathushtra himself a priest? The information that we do possess shows, with a high degree of certainty, that he was.

First, in his own words, Zarathushtra calls himself a *zaotar* [Yasna 33.6]. This term *zaotar* has been variously interpreted by the translators of the Gathas as either '(sacrificial) priest' or 'invoker'.

Gershevitch [1959: p. 272] states: "The word for 'priest', *zaotar* ... goes back to Indo-Iranian times (cf. Ved. *hotr*), when two meanings coalesced in '*zhautar*': (1) 'he who performs libation' (Ved. *juhoti* to pour), and (2) 'he who calls the gods' (Ved. *havate* to call)."

A further explanation of the term *zaota* can be obtained from Geldner [1925: p. 278]: "While Justi and Darmesteter derive the word *Zaota* from the root *Zu* (to call), Modi [1922: p. 78] supports the derivation from *zu* = Skt. *hu*, *juhoti*; and herein he is, of course, right. But Modi says on p. 202, that *Zaota* literally means 'the performer of ceremonies or the offerer of offerings,' only the second meaning is etymologically correct. *Zaota* is from the very beginning the sacrificing priest, in whose activity comes everything, that had developed in course of time around the proper sacrificial offering." Geldner goes on to add: "The custom of

Boyce [1989a: p. 5] defines "*zaotar* (priest), (as) either 'he who makes offerings' or 'he who invokes'."

From the above we may conclude that there are two possible meanings for *zaotar*: (1) invoker, one who calls, or (2) the sacrificial priest; and that at some time during the Indo-Iranian period these two meanings coalesced [Boyce, 1989a: p. 6, n.15].

What is patently clear, however, is that regardless of whether, etymologically, the term *zaotar* is ascribed to the function of 'invoking' or to the function of 'sacrificing', it refers to the individual who conducts one or more functions during religious ceremonies; and the common definition for such an individual is 'priest'.

Again, while philologists may wish to argue the derivation and exact meaning of the term, for most lay persons, it suffices to understand the term *zaotar* simply as 'priest'.

It should also be emphasized that in all the translations of the Gathas where the term *zaotar* has been translated as 'invoker', none of these authors has specifically stated that the term does not mean 'priest'. Rather, they too have differentiated between a priest who is an 'invoker' as opposed to a priest who 'sacrifices' [Taraporewalla, 1991, p.323].

Second, in order to have been able to develop the skills to compose Gathic poetry, it would have been necessary for Zarathushtra to have been schooled in the art of such composition. These skills would have been limited not only to those who were being trained for the priesthood, but in addition, to only the brightest of those priestly students who showed a exceptional gift of knowledge.

On this issue Boyce [1989a: p.9] writes: "...there is the poetry represented in Iran solely by the Gathas composed by the *zaotar*, Zoroaster, and in India by the "wisdom" poetry of the *hotar*, with characteristic eleven-syllable verses. This *zao-*

“ Zarathushtra, not only received formal training as a priest, but his very admission in his Gathas, that he was a *Zaotar*, indicates that he was a practicing priest as well. ”

offering the sacrifice in the sacrificial fire may have been prevalent also in Iran before Zarathushtra.”

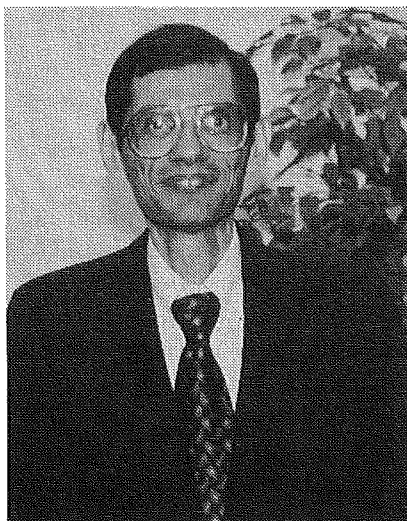
Now in Vedic times, Geldner states [*ibid.* p. 277], "The *Hota* was the chief priest, who had to care for the recitation during the sacrifice and for the hymn ...". Note that Skt. *Hota* is equivalent to Av. *Zaota*.

tar/hotar poetry, with its predominantly instructive content, is extremely elaborate, the product evidently of a long and learned tradition; and it was intended plainly for the ears of those familiar with that tradition, who would be capable of understanding its highly artificial constructions and elucidating its meanings, despite a "marked inclination to enigmatical obscurity". Those priests who composed this kind of verse must have devoted years of concentrated study to mastering its techniques and modes of expression; and it seems probable, to judge from the intellectual content of this type of literature, that the *zaotar/hotar* schools of poetry were maintained by the thinkers among the priests."

Gnoli [1980: p. 228] adds: "Zarathushtra was a *zaotar*, a priest who was versed in the traditional training, as can be seen from the language and structure of the Gathas". And further, [ibid., p. 189], "Moreover we must not forget that Zarathushtra was a *zaotar*-, a qualification that was not gained without going through a complex, traditional training."

Here again, we may safely conclude that the author of the Gathas must have, in his early childhood, received a strict education, and that on his showing an exceptional talent, he received even further training in the art of composing 'wisdom' poetry. Such education and training would clearly have been reserved only for priestly initiates.

Thus, Zarathushtra, not only received formal training as a priest, but his very admission in his Gathas, that he was a *zaotar*, indicates that he was a practicing priest as well. ■



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.

REFERENCES

- M. Boyce, (1987): Priests, Cattle and Men, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 3, pp. 508-526.
- M. Boyce, (1989a): *A History of Zoroastrianism*, Vol. 1, Leiden.
- M. Boyce, (1989b): Avestan People, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Vol. III, ed. Eshan Yarshater.
- T. Burrow, (1973): The Proto-Indoaryans, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, pp. 123-140.
- W. Geiger, (1886): *Civilization of the Eastern Iranians*, tr. D. P. Sanjana, London.
- K. F. Geldner, (1925): *ZAOTA*, in *Indo-Iranian Studies in Honour of Dastur Darab Peshotan Sanjana*, London.
- G. Gnoli, (1980): *Zoroaster's Time and Homeland*, Naples.
- J. Duchesne-Guillemin, (1973): *Religion of Ancient Iran*, Bombay.
- S. K. Hodiwala, (1924): Indo-Iranian Religion, *Journal of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute*, Vol. 10.
- H. Humbach and P. Ichaporia, (1994): *The Heritage of Zarathushtra*, Heidelberg.
- A. V. W. Jackson, (1928): *Zoroaster: The Prophet of Ancient Iran*, Columbia University Press, New York.
- B. Lincoln, (1981): *Priest, Warriors and Cattle*, Berkeley.
- J. J. Modi, (1922): *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees*, Bombay.
- J. H. Moulton, (1913): *Early Zoroastrianism*, New York, reprint of 1913 ed.
- *Nirangastan: Aerpatastan and Nirangastan*, tr. S. J. Bulsara, New York.
- I. J. S. Taraporewala, (1991): *The Divine songs of Zarathustra*, Bombay.

Read

FEZANA JOURNAL

Send a gift subscription to family and friends

Zarathushtra the Yazata

Asho Zarathushtra is often referred to just as a great philosopher, thinker, reformer and human being par excellence. He may have been all that, but he was also much more. According to our scriptures, he is considered not a mere mortal but a Yazata, a Divine Being.

By Burzin Unwalla
Houston, Texas

Nowadays it is quite common to hear of Asho Zarathushtra being referred to just as a great philosopher, thinker, reformer and a human being 'par excellence'. He may have been all that, but it is usually forgotten that according to our scriptures and religious texts, he is considered to be a Yazata, a divine being and not a mere mortal.

Evidence from scriptures and texts. If one considers scriptures like the *Gathas*, the *Yasna*, the *Vendidad*, the *Yashts*, the *Niyaeshes*, the *Gehs*, or even texts like the *Denkard* or the *Shah Nameh*, one thread that runs through all of these shows us clearly that Zarathushtra was not a mortal human being but a Divine Being, or a Yazata, who was sent to this earth in human form to fulfill a Divine Mission.

This essay is written to highlight portions of our scriptures and texts, which show this clearly. Only by keeping this fact in our minds can we hope to develop within ourselves a measure of faith and devotion toward him and toward our religion. If we think of Zarathushtra only as a great philosopher or reformer, it will do nothing for us and it would in fact be

a grave insult to our beloved and great Prophet.

We will first identify particular passages in our scriptures which point to Zarathushtra as being a Yazata. Due to lack of space, only a brief selection is presented here.

The second verse in all of our five *Geh* prayers starts off with one attuning oneself (*Yazamaiday*) with Ahura Mazda, Asho Zarathushtra, the Ameshas Spentas, the valiant Fravashis, etc., in that order. It is important to note that Asho Zarathushtra's name occurs between Ahura Mazda and the Ameshas Spentas, clearly signifying the Yazatic status of our prophet.

In Chapter 3 of the *Yazeshne* (or *Yasna*), Asho Zarathushtra has been referred to in conjunction with Sarosh Yazad and Athra (Divine Fire Energy) as, in that order:

"Saraoshahe Ashyahe-
Okhto naamano Yazatahe,
Zarathushtrahe Spitamahe-
Okhto namano Yazatehe and
Athra Ahurahe Mazdao Puthra-
Okhto naamano Yazatahe",

"Okhto naamano Yazatahe" indicating "A Yazata by the Name of ..."
We cannot ask for a clearer and more direct indication of his status.

The Yazatic status of Asho Zarathushtra again becomes evident from *Ashisvangah Yasht* [Karda 2-20]. Ahriman is described as wailing:

"Even Yazatas could not break me down, but Zarathushtra is the only One, who with his stone-like weapon Ahunavar, beats me and wants me to tread the path of good."

Zarathushtra derived the highest consciousness and inspiration directly from Ahura Mazda, which in technical terms, is called 'yaan'. It is not possible for humans to achieve such an advanced state of consciousness. In the preamble to the *Gathas* [*Yasna* 28.0], this exalted *yaan* is praised:

"Yaanim mano, yaanim vacho,
yaanim shyothnem ashaono
Zarathushtrahey"

"Zarathushtra's Thought, Word and Deed flow from the Highest Inspiration (from Ahura Mazda)."

The Pahlavi texts are also very clear about the Yazatic status of Asho Zarathushtra. Again, only a couple of the many references, are mentioned here. *Denkard* [Book 5, Chapter 2, *Sanjana Edition*] states:

"... God, in order to give joy to the good creation, had from the beginning of the world, created, in pure and luminous essence, the Holy Zarathushtra as an associate of the Ameshaspands, endowed with all their qualities ..."

It also states:

"Further, when He was born, there was a light like the blaze of fire, a glare and a twilight irradiating from his house in all directions, high in the air and to a great distance on the earth, as a token of his greatness and exaltation ..."

Does this sound like a mortal or a Yazata?

The mystical science of Ilm-e-Kshnoom. Before we go on, a word about 'Ilm-e-Kshnoom' would be appropriate here. Just as man has his invisible counterpart, the soul, and the world its unseen realms, every great religion also has its mystical side. It is difficult to understand the Zarathushti religion by merely studying the literal meanings, grammar and philology. The genuine key to the Avesta is its understanding in the

light of its mystical content, or 'Kshnoom'. This Avesta word occurs in various grammatical forms in the Gathas [Ys.48.12, 53.2 and elsewhere]. The word 'Kshnoom' implies 'knowledge leading to the highest ecstasy' (Avesta root 'Kshnu' = 'to rejoice') and technically suggests the idea of the key to esoteric teachings of the Zarathushti lore.

Philology has its own function, but it has its limits too. A philologist cannot enter into esoteric matters. He cannot discuss the state of the soul after death, the higher rituals, or the unseen worlds. So it is where philology is unable to explain further, that Kshnoom comes in. It is this most ancient key to the Avesta, forgotten for so long, which embellishes philology, and gives the finishing touches to interpretations of Avesta words.

Legends and Stories in the Light of Kshnoom. Having considered the scriptures and texts, let us now turn to some legends that are commonly quoted about Asho Zarathushtra. The *Denkard* contains descriptions of many miracles performed by Zarathushtra. A brief selection of these are mentioned here in the light of the mystical science of Ilm-e-Kshnoom.

Denkard [Book VII, Chapter II, 1-2] states that a miracle occurred at the time of the Prophet's birth. He laughed while being born and the 'seven nurses' present there were frightened and retreated. On the face of it, this sounds mundane and absurd until one searches for the hidden meanings.

An ordinary human child cries at the top of its voice upon being born. The infant's soul (*ruvan*) is conscious that this birth will again be a struggle against the evil Angra Mainyu and the start of possibly another sinful life. The *ruvan* even 'sees' the evil forces roaming about as if ready to

strike. The infant therefore cries and laments at coming down to earth to start a new life.

“ It is difficult to understand the Zarathushti religion by merely studying the literal meanings, grammar and philology. The genuine key to the Avesta is in its understanding in the light of its mystical content, or 'Kshnoom'. ”

Zarathushtra, on the other hand, was a Yazata and not an ordinary mortal soul. He did not come to earth to improve his own soul, rather to fulfill a Divine Mission. The evil Angra Mainyu could not touch him. In fact our scriptures state that Zarathushtra could smite the evil Angra Mainyu by merely reciting the *Yatha Ahu Vairyo* prayer and wielding his nine-node stick. Zarathushtra therefore laughed to express his mirth at the commotion caused amongst the daeva's due to his birth.

In the same way, when a mortal child is born, the main course of its destiny is determined by planetary influences existing at that time. Because of Zarathushtra's Yazatic status, however, the seven planets of mortal destiny (in the form of the seven nurses) had no influence on him and they retreated. Zarathushtra, therefore, laughed upon seeing the nurses' retreat.

There are stories about the attempts to kill the infant Zarathushtra by throwing him into the paths of stampeding herds, throwing him into a blazing fire, leaving him to be devoured by wild animals and by poisoning him. In each story, when the daevic act failed and the Child remained unharmed, his mother, Doghdova, would arrive on the scene, lift the Child in her right arm and return home along a straight path. Lifting the Child in her right arm signifies that in the evolution of the humans and of Creation, Zarathushtra is showing the right path. The path, which had become

crooked and gone wrong will now become straight and right. Creation is now shown the right way to reach Ahura, leaving the evil defeated and dazed.

Denkard states that at the age of 30, the Ameshaspand Vohu Mano led Zarathushtra to Ahura Mazda for seven Divine conferences. This is again a clear indication that

Zarathushtra was a Yazata and not a mere mortal. These conferences have been referred to as dialogs at various places in the Avesta. The Gathas [Ys. 44] narrate certain questions asked by the Prophet to Ahura Mazda. The passages do not directly answer the questions; but the answers are hidden in them and can be deciphered only if the spiritual and mystical significance is understood. For example, in Yasna 44.18, Zarathushtra asks for ten obedient mares, a stallion and a camel. This sounds absurd coming from a great prophet unless one knows the hidden meanings. In this case, the ten mares are the ten senses of perception, the stallion is the mind and the camel, Divine Consciousness.

After his conferences with Ahura Mazda, Zarathushtra entered the Court of the then King Vishtaspa of Iran. The story goes that Vishtaspa's favorite black horse, Aspesiah, had become disabled with all four of its legs withdrawn inside its body. The king was unable to ride on the horse and asked Zarathushtra to help. Thereupon, Zarathushtra miraculously withdrew the legs from the horse's body one by one, but in turn asked the King to accept his religion, which the King did.

If we look at the same story from the mystical side, the explanation that flows is a more convincing one. Although Vishtaspa was a valiant fighter against Daeva Yasni, he still possessed certain faults of the flesh. This is represented by the black horse and its inability to move.

Zarathushtra, the Yazata, by his natural God-given abilities was able to make the King see his weaknesses and improve himself, so that he was able to resist the daevic onslaught. The King was now in full control of the 'black horse' within himself and could ride on it with ease.

Thus, Zarathushtra gave the King a spiritual 'nahan', which cleansed his inner composition, making him spiritually advanced and more powerful. He could now help Zarathushtra in his Divine mission. He now became the grand pillar supporting Zarathushtra and his Mazdayasni Daena [Farvardin Yasht, Karda 25].

Zarathushtra's 'wives' and 'children' – formulations of divine forces. Let us now look at the often mentioned three wives, three sons and three daughters, said to constitute Zarathushtra's family. This is mainly derived from Pahlavi writings. [Bundahishn: Baab 32-3].

As we saw earlier, Zarathushtra is considered a Yazata and had no mortal needs, like marriage and procreation, in the normal sense. The existing Avesta does not have any direct reference to the three wives, three sons and three daughters. If we try to reconcile the Pahlavi and Avestan references to arrive at some consistent picture, we find greater inconsistencies and absurdities. Again we will not go into great detail, but by way of example, it is not clear from the Avesta whether Havovi was indeed Zarathushtra's wife, daughter or mother.

Another puzzle from the Avesta leads one to the absurd conclusion that Zarathushtra gave Pouruchisti, his apparent daughter, in marriage to the brother of his own father-in-law. This absurdity was pointed out by no other than the famous Khurshedji Cama.

Religious writings are universally known to present apparent contradictions. Sages and saints have warned that wherever such contradictions occur, one must seek for the hidden

meaning. The root of the matter here lies in the word '*keherpem*' in the Gathas [Ys. 51-17]. *Keherp* signifies the spiritual energy-body within us. The 'wives and children' of Zarathushtra are such *keherp* formulations. They are subtle energy-bodies created to perform certain specified functions. It is beyond the scope of this essay to take you into the modes, manners and methods leading to the creation of these *keherps*. Suffice it to say that these creations required certain exertions (*Yasna*) in the ultra material realms of Nature.

Zarathushtra, being a Yazata, performed such divine Yasnas to create his three 'wives', three 'daughters' and three 'sons'. They are formulations of divine forces in Nature each entrusted with a special function to advance humanity in its march towards Ahura. For instance, Kshnoom indicates that Pouruchisti's *keherp* induces humans to achieve the highest level of consciousness, Freny inspires divine love and devotion in them while Thrity infuses the currents of patience and spiritual strength to overcome earthly difficulties. If one looks at the picture in this light, it removes all apparent complexities, contradictions and absurdities and the pieces fall into their proper place.

Can Zarathushtra ever die or, worse still, can heever be murdered? Can 'death' as we understand it come upon a divine being who, as we have seen before, stands equal in status to the Ameshaspands? The Avesta proclaims that he cannot be killed by anyone, not even by the arch evil doer Angra Mainyu [Tir Yasht, Karda 13], [Ashisvangah Yasht, Karda 2-20].

The Avesta does not contain a single reference about his death, much less murder. The Avesta has described him as immortal, not in a figurative or poetic sense, but as a statement of truth. Then from where do we get the story of Zarathushtra's death? From some scattered Pahlavi and Persian

writings. But there also, if we collect all Pahlavi references about his alleged death, the result is not this murder story, but a collection of apparent inconsistencies.

Denkard, in its Zarathushtra-Namah refers to the miracle (*afdihi*) of Zarathushtra's '*vikhiz*' and going to '*Pahloom Ahvan*' [Denkard: Book VII, Chapters IV and V]. '*Vikhiz*' does not mean death; it means 'to ascend'. He did not die, but ascended to a plane called *Pahloom Ahvan*. These references are at the beginning of the chapters in *Denkard*, which describe certain events before and after the *vikhiz* of Zarathushtra.

In *Sudder Bundahishn* (a Persian book based on Pahlavi writings) it is stated that after Zarathushtra completed his mission of emanating the Mazdayasni Din throughout the seven Keshvars, he ascended to '*Airyana Vaij*'. The picture that emerges is that Zarathushtra is invincible. He destroyed one *toor-baratoor* and that was his last act in human form. He then ascended to *Pahloom Ahvan*, a place beyond the physical earth. That is neither death nor murder.

Turning now to the explanation given by Kshnoom, we are told that our every thought, word and deed during our earthly life creates a reaction in nature. A kind of ultra-magnetic whirlpool is shot out in the universe. Every thought, word or deed shoots out either a white, black or a mixture of white and black whirlpools. They are then polarized, with white accumulating towards the South (*Dadar-e-Gehan*) and black towards the North (*Apakhtar*). These white and black accumulations assume certain forms, called '*Kerdars*', which are shown to the soul after death, as a replay of its life [Vendidad: Paragarad 19-28]. When Zarathushtra arrived on earth, evil was rampant and Mother Earth had sent a message of alarm to Ahura Mazda. The evil work of man and the daevas had created tremendous black whirlpools and their accumulation had taken up a

huge menacing form, which was utterly destructive of every good thing in the Universe. Truth, beauty, good order and purity, all creations and forces of Asha, were being strangled.

It was Zarathushtra's mission to stop this avalanche of evil storms and whirlpools. In his human form he first taught man to fight evil and destroy or convert all the daevas hovering on earth. After these tremendous tasks were executed, the time arrived for his last miracle in human form. And that was the destruction and conversion of the devastating accumulations of the black whirlpools. It is this huge accumulation of black whirlpool that is called *Toor-bara-toor*. It is not a soldier or warrior or a human being. It was a tremendously powerful ultra-magnetic cloud constituted out of the infinitely huge amount of evil thoughts, words and deeds, which were rampart before Zarathushtra arrived.

We attune ourselves with the 'Ashoi' and the 'Fravashi' of Zarathushtra, the Yazata, who was the first Athravan (the Protector of the Holy Fire which lights within man and which is the Divine Energy behind the Universe);

Who was the first Rathestar (the Divine Warrior who fought with the hostile forces of Ahriman, the Lord of Evil);

Who was the first *vastriosh* (the spiritual farmer, who tilled the barren land of man and universe, and made them fertile, so that they may march towards Ahura);

Who was the first to turn round the wheels of daevic and hostile forces and to convert them to the Good;

Who was the first to bring down the showers of divine blessings on the whole Creation;

Who was the first to break down the daevic materialism and to inspire faith and devotion in man towards Mazda.....

[Fravardin Yasht, Karda 24]

May his light remove all our darkness... ■

*Judge a tree from its fruit
Not from its leaves.*

The Avestan word 'Atar' means fire. The reverence of fire can be traced back to ancient times. Fire was a source of comfort as it provided the Proto-Indo-Iranians with warmth and light during their wanderings on the south Russian Steppes. Our forefathers worshiped fire by offering it clean dry wood and incense. Fire, in the Zarathushti religion is the focal point of worship, praise and propitiation. Fire is associated with truth and order, for Zarathustra in his Gathas declares: "As the gift of veneration to you, Fire, I shall think of Truth to the utmost of my power" [Ys.43.9].

According to the creation story as stated in the Bundahishn, the radiance of fire is from Endless Light, the abode of Ahura Mazda. When man prays before a sacred fire, the fire assumes the role of a master who is propitiated by man in order to gain a personal experience of truth, purity and righteousness.

THREE GRADES OF FIRE TEMPLES

In ancient times, Zoroastrians had no fixed places of worship. Within each home, a house fire was venerated and worshiped. From the reign of King Darius-I (522-486 B.C.) onwards there is evidence to show that communal worship directed to Ahura Mazda was offered in the open in front of fire, while the kings used personal fire altars. There are three grades of fire temples:

● *Atash Bahram*

This is the highest grade of fire and is considered to be the 'Fire of Victory'. Bahram is a martial deity, and in Sassanian times, after winning a battle, gold and silver offerings were made to the bahram fire by the victorious kings. It is recorded that King Shapur I sent wheat flour, wine and sheep as gifts to mobeds in the atash bahrams. The region of Azerbaijan in Iran derives its name from Pahlavi *Adur Abadagan* which means 'made prosperous by fire'.

● *Atash Adaran*

This fire is of a lower grade than the atash bahram fire and is formed from embers of the hearth fires of members of the four different classes of Iranian society, viz., priests, warriors, farmers and artisans.

● *Atash Dadgah*

In the *Vendidad* [Chapter VIII], the Dadgah is called the 'Daityo-gatu' meaning the 'appointed place'.

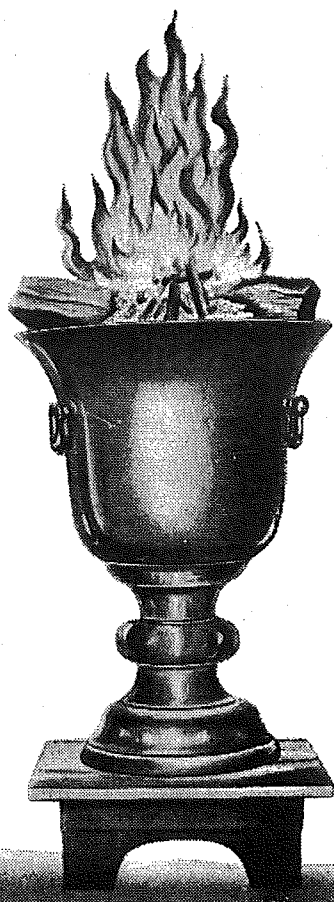
The first two grades of fire can only be tended by *mobeds* (priests), whereas the atash dadgah grade of fire can be tended by *behdins* (laymen).

ATASH BAHRAM CONSECRATION RITUAL

An atash bahram fire is consecrated through an elaborate series of rituals during which the highest laws of ritual purity are maintained by the team of priests involved in the process of making the fire. Fires from 16 different sources listed in Table I, representing the natural order as well as

Consecration of the Sacred Fire of an Atash Bahram

By Zarir Bhandara
Costa Mesa, California



trades and classes of ancient Iranian society, are individually collected, purified and consecrated. Only mobeds having the highest physical, mental, spiritual and moral purity, are qualified to perform these ceremonies. The 16 ritually purified fires are then commingled in a large afarganyu (fire urn), and then enthroned in the sanctum sanctorum of the atash bahram.

Thus the atash bahram fire is kindled into existence through the performance of an extraordinary series of complex rituals complemented with over 14,000 hours of recitation of prayers by mobeds, that could well span a period of over 18 months.

	Source of Fire	Number of consecrations	Yazata Honored
1	Burning corpse	91	Hormazd
2	A dyer	80	Bahman
3	A King	70	Ardibehesht
4	A potter	61	Sherevar
5	A brickmaker	75	Aspandarmad
6	An ascetic	50	Khordad
7	A goldsmith or alchemist	60	Amardad
8	A mint	55	Daep-adar
9	An ironsmith	61	Adar
10	An armourer	61	Avan
11	A baker	61	Khorshed
12	A brewer or an idol worshipper	61	Mohr
13	A soldier or traveler	35	Tir
14	A shepherd	33	Gosh
15	Atmospheric electricity (lightening)	90	Daep-meher
16	A Zarathushti (created by friction)	184	Meher
	Total	1,128	

Table I. Sources of the sixteen fires used in the consecration of an atash bahram. Each fire is iterated through the required number of collection, purification and consecration rituals as indicated in column 2. Column 3 shows the Yazata that presides over each fire.

The stages of creating an atash bahram fire are:

- Stage 1:* Collection of 16 fires and their initial purification through pits.
- Stage 2:* Purification of the 16 fires by ladle.
- Stage 3:* Consecration of the 16 fires.
- Stage 4:* Unison of the 16 fires into one sacred fire.
- Stage 5:* Consecration of the temple and sanctum sanctorum.
- Stage 6:* Enthronment of the united fire.

(1) Collection of the 16 fires and their initial purification through pits. A number of pits equal to the number of required iterations as shown in Table I are dug in an open field about one foot apart. Dried sandalwood and frankincense and other easily combustible substances are placed in a heap in each pit. The specific fire (e.g. fire from a burning corpse) is placed near the first heap. The heat and blaze of this initial fire is carried by the wind and ignites each of the successive heaps in turn. For example, for the first fire (from a burning corpse), Ninety-one successive heaps will be ignited. The fire from the final heap is collected and saved for the next stage. This collection process is repeated for each of the 16 fires.

There are strict requirements for initially collecting each of the 16 fires. For example, before collecting the fire from a burning corpse, a person should take the *Baj* of Sraosha, because Sraosha is the Yazata for protection. Only *behdins* (not priests) should collect the fire from a burning corpse; and after that they must take a *nahan* (purificatory bath) before entering an agiary.

The 15th fire is that of lightening, which has to be witnessed when the lightning strikes the earth by two Zarathushtis, before it can be used in the consecration of an atash bahram.

The 16th fire, that of a Zoroastrian, is made up of a fire taken from the house of a Dastur, a mobed and a Behdin. The fire which is brought from a behdin's house should be a fire which is lit by flint stones or by friction.

(2) Purification of the 16 fires by ladle. Two mobeds in a state of high ritual purity, must recite the '*das-turi*', during which they ask for ritual permission to perform this part of the ceremony from Ahura Mazda, Amesha Spentas, the Yazatas, Zarathustra, Adarbad Mahrespand and lastly the High Priest in charge of the consecration. They then take a perforated ladle upon which is placed dry sandalwood and hold it above the fire collected in Stage 1. The sandalwood on the ladle must be allowed to ignite by the heat of the fire burning below it. This process is repeated the number of times as shown in Table I. The final ladle containing the refined fire is then kept aside and preserved for the next stage – of consecration. This process of purification is repeated for each of the sixteen fires.

(3) Consecration of the 16 fires. Then begins the elaborate process of consecration of each of the 16 fires. On the first day, a portion of the purified fire from Stage 2, is consecrated by the performance of the *Ijeshne* (also called *Yasna* or *Yazeshne*) and *Vendidad* ceremonies along with the *Kshnuman* dedicated to the presiding Yazata as shown in Table I. This consecrated fire is then kept burning in a separate container. On the second day, another portion of the purified ladle fire is taken and is likewise consecrated as the first portion. This second fire is then mixed with the consecrated fire of the first day. On the third day another portion from the ladle fire is consecrated with the performance of the *Yasna* and *Vendidad* ceremonies along with another *Kshnuman* in honor of Hormazd. This consecrated fire is then mixed with the combined consecrated fires of the first and sec-

ond days. This process is repeated during successive days as many times as indicated in Table I for each specific fire.

As an example, the consecration rituals performed on the first kind of fire (from a burning corpse) is shown below.

The following rituals are performed in honor of the presiding Yazata – Hormazd in this case.

1 Ijeshne + 1 Vendidad on Zamyad Roz
- 1 day

1 Ijeshne + 1 Vendidad on Mahrespand Roz
- 1 day

1 Ijeshne + 1 Vendidad on Aneran Roz
- 1 day

The following rituals are performed in honor of the appropriate Yazata for the day:

30 Ijeshnes and 30 Vendidads from Hormazd to Aneran Roj (1st month) - 30 days

30 Ijeshnes and 30 Vendidads from Hormazd to Aneran Roj (2nd month) - 30 days

28 Ijeshnes and 28 Vendidads from Hormazd to Zamyad Roj (3rd month) - 28 days

This gives a total of 91 days of rituals, in the case of the first type of fire (from a burning corpse).

[Note: Traditionally, Vendidad cannot be performed on Aneran Roj as it would run overnight into the next month; so 2 Vendidads are performed on the previous Roj, Marespand.]

Similarly, for the 16th fire (from the houses of a dastur, mobed and behdin) as another example, 184 *Ijeshnes* and *Vendidads* are recited to consecrate the three combined fires. The process starts on Meher Roj, the presiding Yazata for this fire, with the *Kshnuman* of Meher being recited for the first three days.

This consecration process is employed to consecrate each of the 16 fires, using the appropriate number of steps for each as given in Table 1.

(4) Unison of the 16 fires into one sacred fire. All 16 purified and consecrated fires are commingled, one by one in a large afargan, on the first Gatha day [note: the Gatha days are the last 5 days of the Zarathushti cal-

endar]. The following prayers are then performed in honor of Sraosha Yazad on the succeeding days: one Ijeshne and 1 Vendidad on the 2nd and 3rd Gatha days; one Ijeshne and 2 Vendidads on the 4th Gatha day; and one Ijeshne on the 5th Gatha day. Then, starting from New Year's day for the whole month one Ijeshne and one Vendidad are performed each day, but as before, two Vendidads are performed on Marespand Roj and none on Aneran Roz.

The combined fire is then preserved and looked after by the mobeds until the day of enthronement of the Holy Fire which in Gujarati is addressed as 'Padshah Saheb'.

(5) Consecration of the temple and sanctum sanctorum. The sanctum sanctorum, [Latin: 'a holy demarcated area'] is first washed and cleaned with gomez or unconsecrated bull's urine. The area is then washed with well water and dried. For three days, two mobeds perform one Ijeshne and one Vendidad daily inside the sanctum sanctorum in honor of Sraosha Yazad. The fire used for this purpose is the fire borrowed from the Dadgah, which is shifted back to the Dadgah after the completion of the three day rituals.

(6) Enthronement of the united fire. In the morning of the day the fire is to be enthroned, two mobeds perform an Ijeshne in honor of Sraosha Yazad, the protector of all atash bahrams. The fire is then taken in procession to the sanctum sanctorum by all the priests involved in the consecration. On the enthronement day the first Bui ceremony is done at 9:30 am by the Dasturji who is in a high state of ritual purity having taken the *baresnum* (a higher grade of the *nahan* purificatory bath).

After enthronement of the atash bahram fire, the Bui ritual is performed daily during each of the five *gehs* (or watches of the day). The *bui* ritual indicates that as the *geh* is changing, the Holy Fire has to be tended and cared for with the ritual offering of sandalwood, incense and

prayers. It is a tradition to strike the bell nine times during the *bui* ceremony in order to ward off evil, during which time those hearing the bell must stop all activity. The bell is struck upon recitation of the words *duzhmata*, *duzhukhta*, *duzhvareshta* (bad thoughts, words and deeds).

ATASH BAHRAMS TODAY

In India, today, there are eight atash bahrams:

- 1) *Iranshah*, (Shenshai) in Udvada, established in 1419 (in Sanjan), and moved to Udvada in 1742.
- 2) *Anjuman Atash Bahram* (Shenshai) in Navsari, 1765.
- 3) *The Dadyseth Atash Bahram* (Kadmi) in Mumbai, 1783.
- 4) *The Modi Atash Bahram* (Shenshai) in Surat, 1823.
- 5) *The Vakil Atash Bahram* (Kadmi) in Surat, 1823.
- 6) *The Wadiaji Atash Bahram* (Shenshai) in Mumbai, 1830.
- 7) *The Banaji Atash Bahram* (Kadmi) in Mumbai, 1845.
- 8) *The Anjuman Atash Bahram* (Shenshai) in Mumbai, 1897.

In Iran, there are two Atash Bahrams:

- 1) *Atash Bahram in Yazd*, built by Maneckji Hatara and Sir Dinshaw Petit.

2) *Atash Bahram in Sharifabad*, believed to be the oldest in the world, has been kept burning in an inner chamber for 2,000 years.

CONCLUSION

It will be seen from the above account that an atash bahram fire is no ordinary fire, but one that has been kindled with care and reverence with an elaborate series of complex rituals and recitation of Zarathushti scriptures. It is no wonder, therefore, that thousands of Zarathushtis have derived immense gratification in presenting themselves in front of atash bahrams for millennia and will continue to do so. Not only do they treat such places of worship with reverence, they also have their noble wishes granted if they show sincere faith and devotion towards Ahura Mazda and Asho Zarathushtra through the medium of the consecrated fire. ■

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Portions of the text in this article have been excerpted from "Zoroastrianism, an Ethnic Perspective" by Khojeste P. Mistree, for which grateful acknowledgement is made.

Reference was also made to "The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees" by J. J. Modi.

The Sanjan Story – a Legend to Live By

Whether you're a skeptic, whether you're a believer
In legends and myths, stories and a miracle
As Zarathushtis, we know the story of the bowl of milk and sugar
That gave us asylum in Sanjan, India, a thousand years ago!
This is a crowded world, like Jadi Rana's full bowl of milk
It would have been easy to turn back the band of newcomers
But Naryosang Dhaval dropped some sugar in the bowl
And we tried hard to live in peace and harmony like milk and sugar.
We landed in Sanjan and grew and prospered
Pak Iranshah was installed as Ahura Mazda's beacon.
May we always remember the legend of the bowl of milk and sugar
As we grow and prosper in our new homeland of North America.

- Message to FEZANA Journal readers from a well-wisher

By Firoze M. Kotwal
High Priest, H. B. Wadia Atash
Bahram, Mumbai

The founding fathers of the Parsi community reached the shores of southern Gujarat in 936 CE, and soon began making preparations for installing a sacred fire on the soil of their new haven, Sanjan. They sent two priests overland to Khorasan to undergo the purificatory ablutions (*bareshtnom*) and to bring back with them the ritual implements (*alat*) necessary for consecrating a sacred fire. Other Khorasani priests, well-versed in executing such holy works, accompanied them on their return to Sanjan where, in accordance with the dictates of the religion, they consecrated the sacred fire and installed it in about the middle of the tenth century CE.

Origins of the priesthood. For about three centuries, the Parsis lived together in Sanjan. When their numbers grew, members of both the clergy and the laity began to move away towards the northern part of Gujarat, and to establish colonies.

Priests naturally formed the backbone of the new settlers. Their early history down to the time of Shapur Shahriyar, the common ancestor of almost all Parsi priests, is irretrievable. Besides Shapur Shahriyar, the ancient commemorative list of departed worthies contains the names of Hormazdyar Ramyar and Neryosang Dhaval, his grandsons, from whom the priests of four major groups trace their lineage. Of these two grandsons of Shapur Shahriyar, Neryosang Dhaval is celebrated as a Sanskrit scholar who lived in Sanjan in the latter part of the twelfth century.

Among the Parsis who migrated northwards from Sanjan, there was a band who settled in the little town of Navsari in about 1275 CE; Zarthosht Mobad, a grandson of Hormazdyar Ramyar, accompanied them together with his two sons, Kamdin and Mobad, to cater for their religious needs. Afterwards, Zarthosht's younger brother, Bahram Mobad, left Sanjan for Bharuch (or Broach) with



A Brief History of

The group of Zarathushtis that migrated to India (Sanjan) in 936 CE included priests who established the first Atash Bahram in India with ritual implements (alat) brought from Khorasan. After centuries, their descendants dispersed to different parts of Gujarat, and founded five well-defined panthaks: the Sanjana, Bhagaria, Godavra, Bharucha and Khambata priests. All Zarathushti priests trace their descent from a common ancestor, Shapur

another batch of Parsis, to become eventually the ancestor of the Bharucha priests. In Navsari, Pahlan Mobad, a grandson of Zarthosht Mobad, chose to go to Surat and eventually became the ancestor of the Godavra priests.

At the end of the fourteenth century, the Parsi population of Navsari

increased considerably, and the descendants of Kamdin Zarthosht had to employ another priest, named Hom Bahmanyar, from Sanjan. Hom Bahmanyar came to Navsari with his only son Faredun as an employee of the descendants of Kamdin Zarthosht, but continued also to serve the Sanjan Atash Bahram, with his



Four notable Parsi priests of the 18th and 19th centuries, from left: Dasturji Edulji Darabji Sanjana (1776 - 1847) High Priest of Bombay; Dastur Rus-tomji Mobedji Dastur Kumana (1819 - 1890) Head Priest of the Kadmi sect, Surat; Dastur (Dr) Jamaspjee Minocherjee Jamaspasana (1830 - 1898) High Priest of Bombay, the Punjab and Aden; and Dastur Noshirwan Dastur Kaikhushru (1822 - 1897) High Priest of the Shenshai sect, Surat.

he Parsi Priesthood

Shahriyar and two of his grandsons Hormazdyar Ramyar and Neryosang Dhaval. This article traces the long and tortuous history of the five panthaks and the feuds that ensued between them, primarily over encroachments into each others' ecclesiastical jurisdictions. Through the vicissitudes of time, however, this unbroken lineage of priests have preserved their sacred fire, and maintained the spiritual link with the ancestral fire of Khorasan.

son. After some years, the descendants of his brother Hormazdyar Bahmanyar in Sanjan objected to their earning a livelihood in two places, and asked Faredun and his two sons to work either in Navsari or in Sanjan.

Faredun and his sons referred their case to their employers and indicated

their willingness to settle permanently in Navsari and forgo their right to serve the atash Bahram in Sanjan, provided that the descendants of Mobad Kamdin, headed by Pahlana Anna and Kaka Dhanpal, agreed to share the proceeds of ceremonies.

The Bhagaria lineage. The family members of Pahlana Anna and Kaka

Dhanpal agreed to this proposal, and the three sons of Faredun Hom became equal partners with them, to be called thereafter the **Bhagaria** or **Bhagarsath**, ('the co-sharers'). These five priests became the lineal ancestors of all Bhagaria priests, forming, as it were, five family groups or stocks, called *pols* (Guj. *pol*: 'a street, a lane'). A leading member from each of the five *pols* held an important religious office conferred on him by the Bhagarsath Anjuman. The five offices are:

- (1) The Kaka Pahlana stock conducted the recitation of the formula of *sosh* for a departed soul.
- (2) The Kaka Dhanpal stock was custodian of the *nirangdin*.
- (3) The Asha Faredun stock conducted the penitentiary prayers (*patet*) for the departed soul.
- (4) The Mahyar Faredun stock gave permission for *navar* and *martab* initiations into the priesthood.
- (5) The Chanda Faredun stock maintained records and preserved documents for the Anjuman.

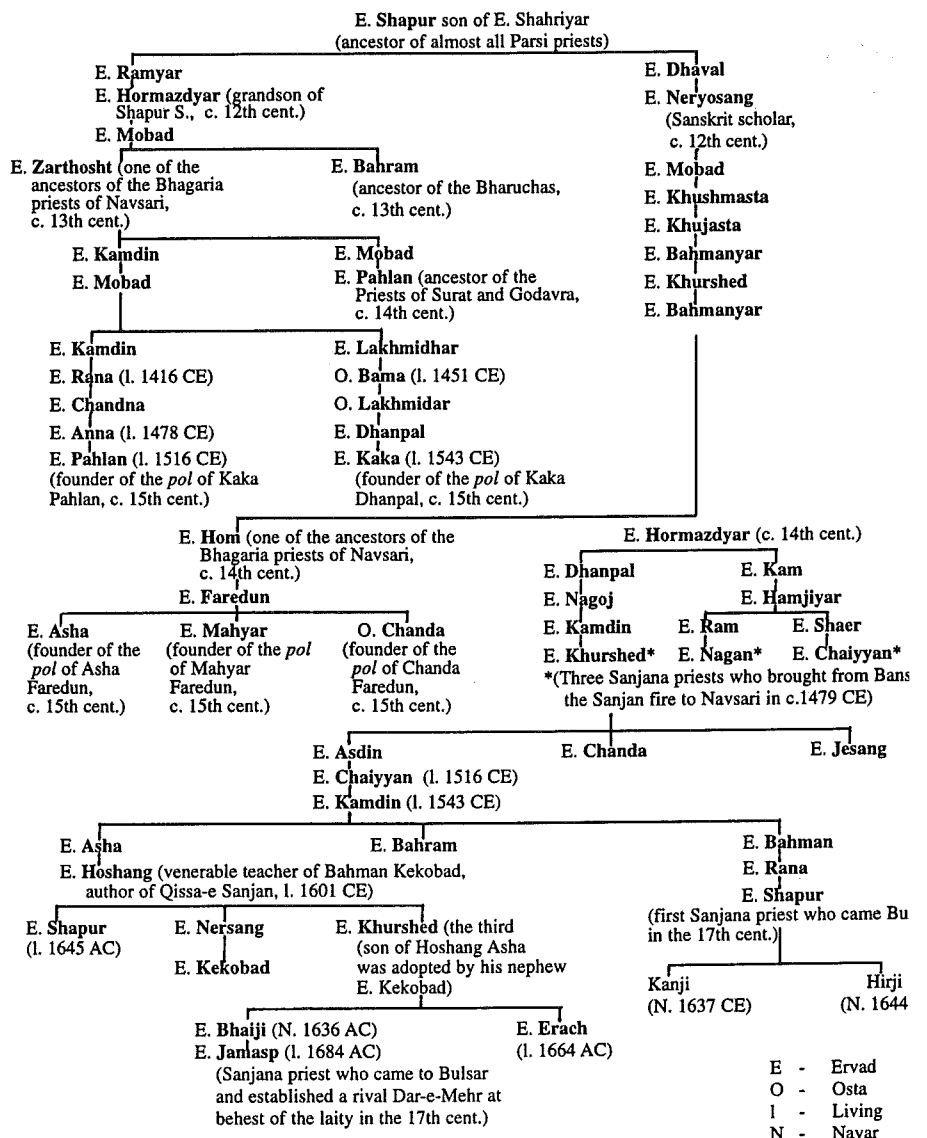
These five offices seem to have been allocated in about the middle of the fifteenth century and remained undisturbed until 1579 CE, when the



Above, Dastur Meherji Rana (1510 - 1591), first High Priest of India.

Right, genealogy chart of the Parsi priesthood from the time of arrival from Iran, to the mid 17th century.

GENEALOGY OF PARSI PRIESTS



whole Anjuman of Navsari appointed Meherji Rana as the first High Priest (Vada Dastur) of India.

The five panthaks. By the mid-fifteenth century the priests seem to have settled comfortably in groups within different regions of Gujarat. In order to safeguard the interests of each group, the elders met in conference in Sanjan and established five priestly jurisdictions, called *panthaks*:

- (1) **Sanjana** priests: from the river Dantora to the river Par.
- (2) **Bhagaria** priests: from the river Par to the river Tapi.
- (3) **Godavra** priests: from the river Tapi to the river Narmada.
- (4) **Bharucha** priests: from the river Narmada to the river Mahi.

(5) **Khambata** priests: from the river Mahi to the river Sabarmati. The oldest existing document which reflects this state of affairs is dated 1543 CE. It is an agreement between the whole Anjuman of Navsari and the Sanjana Anjuman, spelling out the priestly jurisdictions of the two major groups, the Sanjanas and Bhagarias.

Atash Bahram moves from Sanjan to Navsari. In the latter half of the fifteenth century, Sanjan fell on evil days on account of the devastating attack by the armies of Sultan Mahmud Begada of Gujarat in 1465 CE. To protect the sacred fire against possible sacrilege by the Muslim conquerors, the valiant Sanjana priests carried their most precious possession to the mountain of Bahrot, four-

teen miles south of Sanjan, and hid the fire in a cave-dwelling in the steep rocks.

After a brief stay in the Bahrot hills, the atash Bahram was taken to Bansa, and then, through the good offices of Changa Asha, a wealthy layman of Navsari, it was carried thence to Navsari in about 1479.

The three courageous priests who brought the sacred fire to Navsari were Khurshed Kamdin, Nagan Ram and Chaiyyan Shaer, from whom the nine existing families of Sanjana priests are descended. They still enjoy the exclusive right to serve the sacred fire.

Bhagaria-Sanjana feuds. With the enthronement of the sacred fire in Navsari, both the Sanjana and Bha-

garia priests began to live amicably, helping each other in the affairs of the religion and respecting the covenant entered into by their elders more than a century before. Because of the calamities which had befallen the Sanjana priests in Sanjan and its vicinity, their economic condition became strained. The Bhagaria priests helped them out by granting them the diocese of Bulsar. The Sanjana Anjuman of Navsari sent Shapur Rana to serve the Parsi community there, and another *dar-e-mehr* seems to have been established in Bulsar under the charge of Jamasp Bhaiji, a Sanjana priest. In course of time, the descendants of Shapur Rana and Jamasp Bhaiji began to manage the affairs of Bulsar independently from the Sanjana Anjuman, refusing to pay the ecclesiastical dues, and consequently they lost their right to serve the sacred fire.

In the last quarter of the seventeenth century, there arose in Navsari a deadly feud between the Bhagarias and a few lay members of the Parsi community called the *behdins* ('those of the Good Religion') who resolved in a meeting in 1673 that they would have ceremonies of their households performed by priests of their own choice. In course of time the feud took an ugly turn culminating in the murder of two Bhagaria priests in 1686. This dastardly act agitated the Bhagarias so much that they, in their agony, killed six behdins in retaliation. In order to implement their resolution of 1673, the influential behdins won over to their side a dissident Bhagaria priest, Minocheher Homji, and three more Bhagaria priests, who came to be known as '*Chaharo Sath*' (the 'United Four').

The bitter feud about encroachment of mutual rights, however continued for some years. In 1734, the Bhagarias made a petition to Gangaji Rao, the Governor of Navsari, who appointed an arbitration court, comprised of ten respected Hindu citizens, to probe into the long-standing matter. The court gave its verdict

largely in favor of the Bhagarias, although the secessionists were recognized as an independent group and the *dar-e-mehr* set up by the behdins for the use of the priests of the United Four was accorded validity.

For a couple of centuries, all went well in Navsari between the Sanjanas and Bhagarias. Then, because of an increase in their numbers and disruptive support and encouragement by the behdins of Navsari, the less-disciplined among the Sanjana priests began to break the covenant made by their elders by performing the ceremonies within the jurisdiction of the Bhagarias. The Sanjana priests filed a suit in the court of the Gaekwad of Baroda, the then ruling authority. The verdict was in favor of the Bhagarias.

Atash Bahram moves to Udvada.

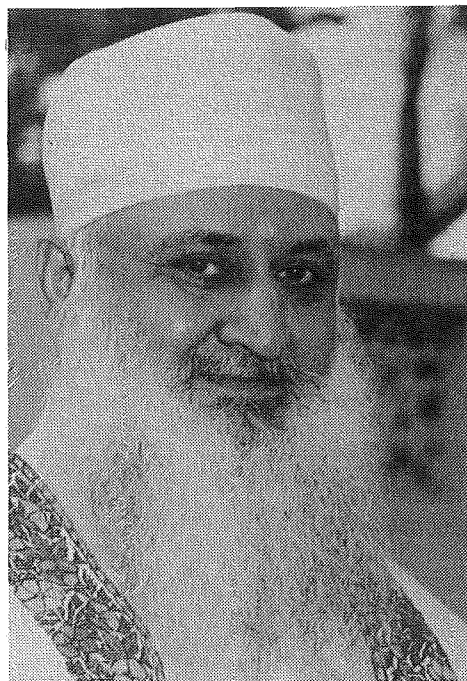
The Sanjana priests, who owned some 25 to 30 houses in Navsari, then left the town with the sacred fire in 1740 and took shelter in Bulsar. Not finding themselves at ease there, they ultimately established a permanent home for their sacred fire within their own panthak at Udvada in 1742.

To sum up, the Khorasan group who came to Sanjan in 936 CE, included priests who established the first atash Bahram in India with ritual implements (*alat*) brought from Khorasan. After centuries, their descendants dispersed to different parts of Gujarat and founded five well-defined ecclesiastical regions.

All the Zarathushti priests of India, except those from Khambat (Cambay), trace their descent from a common ancestor, Shapur Shahriyar. The priests from Broach, Godavra (including those from Surat) and Navsari (only priests who belong to the *pols* of Kaka Pahlān and Kaka Dhanpal) are descended from Hormazdyar Ramyar, the grandson of Shapur Shahriyar; whereas the priests of Navsari who belong to the other three *pols* and also those surnamed 'Sanjana', and the priests of Bulsar and Udvada, are all descended from Neryosang Dhaval, another grandson of Shapur Shahriyar.

The spiritual link (*silsila*) with the Khorasan fire, through the consecrated fire-ash, *alat* and priests, has been maintained unbroken in India. Although the monarchy of Iranian kings is ended, the spiritual kingship of Iran still lives on through Zarathushti ceremonies. It is hoped that it will be preserved till the time of the resurrection. May Ahura Mazda's blessings be on those who work for the religion. Amen! ■

[Excerpted, with permission from "A Brief History of the Parsi Priesthood" by Dastur Kotwal, Irano-Judaica, 1990.]



DASTURJI DR. FIROZE M. KOTWAL was installed as High Priest of the H. B. Wadia Atash Bahram in Mumbai, in 1977. Over 100 priests and hundreds of lay persons participated in the ceremony, as he was invested with the 'Dasturi' shawl in recognition of his extensive academic learning and comprehensive knowledge of Zarathushti liturgies. Dastur Kotwal has spent a lifetime working on Avesta and Pahlavi texts. He lectures widely to academic and lay audiences around the world, and has authored numerous publications, notably his contributions to *Encyclopedia Iranica* published by Columbia University.

Zarathushti Priests in India

A timeline from the earliest times of settlement through the mid-fifteenth century

From the time of landing of the Zarathushtis on the west coast of India, the meritorious deeds of Zarathushti priests have blazed the path for the Parsis on that sub-continent. Their brief early history is capsulized in this timeline. A subsequent article is planned in a future issue of FEZANA to bring the timeline up to current times.

By Pallan R. Ichaporia
Womelsdorf, Pennsylvania

850 CE	Mardan Farrokh, author of the Pahlavi <i>Shikand-Gumanik Vihar</i> came to India to consult with the Parsi priests about religious matters.
902 – 986 CE	Some settlements of Parsi priests and laity in Sind were noted in Ousley's <i>Oriental Geography</i> as settlements of "guebers."
955 CE	Dastur Dinpanah Erpat Dinpanah wrote the Pahlavi texts at Broach in Yazdegard 324, i.e. 955 CE.
1011 CE	Dastur Dinpanah Erpat Dinpanah further wrote some guidance for his pupil Shazad Shat Farrokh Aurmazd in Samvat 1067 on Roz Gosh, Mah Ardibehesht (Cf. Dastur Peshotan Sanjana, <i>Ganje Shaya-gan</i> and Behramgore Anklesaria's <i>Introduction to Pahlavi Texts</i>)
1025 CE	Dastur Ardeshir Bahaman copied a Pahlavi manuscript of the Vendidad (presently at the University of Copenhagen, manuscript K1) for a Parsi priest Mahyar from Sind. It was copied at Sistan in 1025 CE. Erpat Mahyar was sent by the Head Priest of Sind, Dastur Shahamard, son of Mahyar, son of Shahzad, son of Mitrojiv (equivalent to present-day Meherji). [Cf. Dastur Darab Sanjana's <i>Pahlavi Vendidad</i> , p. 9].
Late 11th century	Battle of Variav – a day of sorrow for Parsis. The Rajput chief of Ratanpur took revenge for the Parsi refusal to pay a poll tax and for the defeat suffered by his troops sent to enforce his tax collection. When all the Parsi men had gone for a religious feast outside the settlement, the Rajput perpetrated a cowardly act by attacking undefended Parsi women and a few elderly priests, who had remained behind. The women, donning the armor of their husbands, and the elderly priests fought heroically, giving their lives to defend their colony. Some women preferred death to dishonor and drowned themselves in the river. This day of infamy and disaster (Mah Fravardin, Roz Ashishvang) is still commemorated in Navsari and Surat with special religious ceremonies.

1142 CE

Mobed Kamdin Zarthosht, came to Navsari from Sanjan to perform proper religious ceremonies for the Parsis of the Navsari anjuman.

circa 1166 CE

Dastur Neriosang Dhaval, the most renowned scholar of his time, translated the following texts into Sanskrit:

- Khordeh Avesta Arthah
- Ijeshne (Pahlavi Yasna)
- Skanda Gumani Gujara
- Arda Gvira
- Aogemadecha
- Shodasa shlokas
- Kushyah Karanam.

Neriosang was introduced to the West for the first time by Anquetil-Duperron in 1758. Ormuzyar son of Ramyar, another learned Dastur, was the contemporary of Neriosang. Actually the life-time of Neriosang is unknown but he should not be confused for his name-sake, Dastur Neriosang Dhaval of Sanjan, the leader of the Parsis, who brought them from Iran to India. Dastur Firoze Kotwal, one of the three present scholarly High Priests of the Parsis, is a direct descendent of Dastur Neriosang Dhaval, the renowned Sankritist of the 12th century.

1205 CE

Erpat Mahyar returned to Uchh in the Punjab after staying in Sistan, Iran, for six months. He brought back a copy of the *Vendidad* manuscript from Iran.

1214 CE

Erpat Hom Bahmanyar came from Iran, first to Broach and then to Navsari, to discuss religious matters.

1257 CE

Erpat Kamdin Sharyar Neriosang Shahmard wrote manuscripts of Ayibtkar-e Vazog Mitro. He was the grandfather of Dastur Peshotan Ram Kamdin Yazatyar, a leader of the Parsis.

1259 CE

An Iranian priest **Mobed Rustom Mithrapan** came to India with several manuscripts of the Yasna and the Vendidad.

1278 CE

Mobed Rustom Mithrapan of Iran came a second time from Iran to India and wrote a manuscript of the Vispered at Ankleswar.

1324 CE

Mobed Mithrapan Kaikhusrow, great grand nephew of Mobed Rustom Mithrapan, wrote two manuscripts of the Pahlavi *Yasna*, and two manuscripts of the Pahlavi *Vendidad*, in Cambay.

1392 CE

→ **The Battle of Sanjan** was fought almost 700 years after the arrival of the Parsis from Iran to west coast of India [see: *Kisseh-e Sanjan*]. The Hindu Raja of Sanjan called upon the Parsis to help him fight the invasion of Alafkhan, a general of Sultan Mahmud. Under the leadership of Ardeshir Sanjani, an army of Parsis, including many young mobeds, was raised and they defeated Alafkhan in the first battle. In the second battle, however, against a much larger army of their adversary, many Parsis including young priests, Ardeshir Sanjani and the Hindu Raja were killed. After the Battle of Sanjan, the Iranshah Atash Bahram was brought to Bahrot.

1397 CE

→ **Dastur Peshotan Ram Kamdin Shahriar Neriosang Shahmard** wrote the famous manuscript M6 of the Bundahishn at Broach.

1414 CE

→ **Dastur Shapurji Rana** was requested by 26 behdins with a memorandum to the Navsari Anjuman, to head a team of priests and perform the long ceremony of *Nirangdin*.

1415 CE

→ **Ervad Rana Kamdin** (the old designation of the Pahlavi word Erpat is now changed to the Gujarati Ervad) wrote a manuscript containing Sanskrit and Gujarati translations of the wedding 'Ashirvad'. At the same time Ervad Dindaru Bahman translated the Pahlavi Ashirvad into Sanskrit which became famous as the 'Sanskrit Ashirvad.'

1419 CE

→ **The Iranshah Fire** was brought to Navsari by a team of devoted priests at great risk to their lives. The date of 1419 CE is found in the manuscript of Ervad Hormazdiar Faramroze written in 1660 CE.

1430 CE

→ **Ervad Andhiaru Ardeshir** wrote a medical textbook in Sanskrit, based on Hindu medicines (possibly Ayurveda).

1478 CE

→ A priest, **Nariman Hosang** brought the earliest known Rivayet from Iran. Eight years later he brought another Rivayet, also from Iran.



Dr. Pallan R. Ichaporia is a senior member of the Marketing Management Group at Bristol Myers Squibb. Pallan is founder-chairperson of FEZANA's Research and Historical Preservation Committee and the Zoroastrian Education and Research Society (ZERS). He has authored papers in both the first and second issue of the FEZANA Research Journal and is also co-author, with Helmut Humbach, of *The Heritage of Zarathushtra — a New Translation of His Gathas*.



Arbab Rustom Guiv Darbe Mehr Zoroastrian Center of Chicago

An account of the Zarathushti community and the priesthood centered around the Darbe Mehr in Chicago, typical of many established in the New World in the last 30 years.

By Aban Aspy Daboo
Woodridge, Illinois

On a recent trip to Mumbai a friend asked me "When are you going to the Udvada Atash Bahram?" and I replied, "I can't make it this time because I've come for a short while and have to make preparations for my son's wedding." At that moment I wondered why I did not feel a need or a calling to visit Udvada this time, and the answer was very simple. In Chicago

we have a beautiful Darbe Mehr comparable in spirituality, surroundings, purity and simplicity to many places of worship I've visited. Add to that a loyal and dedicated band of voluntary mobeds. We are so fortunate to have a group of 10 to 15 voluntary mobeds in Chicago – some of whom (first generation Americans) were initiated in the early 1990's. We are blessed with a thriving vibrant community of Iranian and Parsi Zarathushtis who have shared their religion and cultural back-

grounds to foster better understanding amongst themselves and, more importantly, amongst their children. Over the years we have become family and like all families we have our differences and arguments, but we can always come together and bond in our joys, our trials and tribulations. It is a super support group and most of us do not get homesick because of the lasting relationships we have built over the years.

The Chicago Darbe Mehr was born as a glimmer of hope in a few

Zarathushti hearts with a dash of pure 'Zarathushti Jusso'. With generous donations from the Arbab Rustom Guiv Foundation and a few members of the community, a lot of hope, hard work and dedication, the project achieved fruition. On a beautiful day in September 1983 hope turned to reality when the Darbe Mehr was declared open with a grand Jashan and two days of continuous festivities.

Our family had just moved to the area in late 1982 and from day one we got involved with the Zarathushti community. We were welcomed with open arms and were never made to feel like outsiders, but were encouraged to participate in all the activities including the inauguration ceremonies and celebrations. In the summer of 1983 (prior to the inauguration), we were involved in finishing and painting the Darbe Mehr and this has given us a sense of ownership and commitment to our Darbe Mehr.

The building is an imposing structure with a large hall which can accommodate 250 people comfortably for all religious and social events. At one end of the hall is a stage with a back drop of a beautiful oxidized silver Farohar. A well furnished prayer hall, library, kitchen and children's room were part of the original building which are now undergoing changes under the Expansion Plans

Our band of active mobeds include our head priest, Kersey Antia and his two sons Mazda and Jimmy, Neville Karanjia and his son Zervan, Pesi Vazifdar and his two sons Hoshi and Neville, Jamshed Antia, my son Behram Daboo, Keikhosrow Mobed, Ardaviraf Minocherhomjee, Jimmy Ravji, Yazad Godiwalla and Rohinton Dadina. Each and every priest offers voluntary services and it is a sheer joy to see the younger generation of mobeds exhibit such pride and dignity while carrying out their religious duties – whether it is a jashan, navjote, or mukhtad prayers.

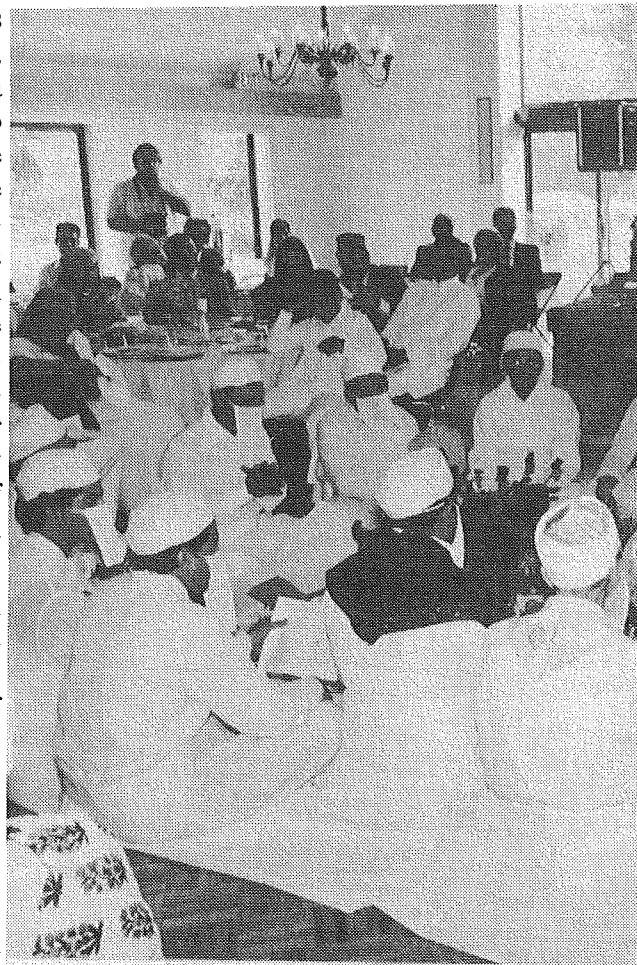
On the second Sunday of each month we have our monthly meeting for the

entire community. The day starts with a Board meeting, followed by prayers and a guest speaker. Then we have the much awaited *dhansakh-kavab* lunch prepared by two host families each month. It is very comforting to see our young children and teenagers come together for Sunday prayers. All the tiny tots and kids put on caps, remove their shoes, get a prayer book and stand to attention while the mobed is reciting the *Atash Niyaishe* and *Tandarosti*. Anyone who has witnessed this scene will tell you it is one of the most emotional experiences to see these traditions followed by our young ones and we know the ancient religion of Zarathustra is safe in their hands!

The Jewel in the Crown of our community is the monthly prayer class. On the third Sunday of each month there are prayer classes for different age groups. The kids are divided into two main groups – under-teens and over-teens. The Saturday night before classes, the children go over to two host

families for an evening of social activities – skating, movies, circus, bowling, etc. – followed by dinner. They stay overnight with the host families – almost like indoor camping with their sleeping bags and toilet kits. The following morning they go over to the Center for religious classes. The kudos for organizing and conducting the classes should go to Kayomars Mehta who has devoted endless hours of personal time, and spent tons of energy in making this activity the success it has achieved. He is assisted by a band of loyal volunteers: Pesi Vazifdar, Jimmy Ravji, Hootoxi Minocher-

homji, Jer Udvadia (who has recently moved to New Jersey), Dilshad Antia, Bakhtawar Press and Dinaz Weber. After the classes the highlight of the day is going to the McDonald's down the road for Big Macs and fries. This activity has now been conducted continuously



Jashan to celebrate the inauguration of the A

for the last 15 to 20 years. We have seen a whole generation of kids grow up into mature adults and in the process they have fostered lasting friendships amongst themselves. The children and their dedication and enthusiasm for the sleepovers and prayer classes is something to be seen to be believed.

Every year we celebrate Jashan-e-Sadeh, Navruz, Gahambars, Shenshahi New Year, Zarhost-no-Diso and Mehrangan in the traditional way with traditional foods and festivities. We also have our fun and games at picnics, youth camps, camping trips,

fun fairs, senior citizens outings, Halloween and Christmas. We have a New Year's Eve party on December 31, welcoming the first day of the year with our families and friends. Young and old join together in singing Auld Lang Syne. After midnight (during the first few minutes of

and some are even mailed out to other towns in the US. The whole day has a picnic-like atmosphere. We start early in the morning, take a lunch break for *masoor-pau*, then a tea break which turns into a *pori* tasting session! By evening we are exhausted but happy. The participants range from 6 and 7 year olds to grandmas who are veteran *pori* makers and dough inspectors (like Freney Aunty and Tehmi Aunty)! This activity is the brainchild of ZAC's very own senior citizen, Freney Mehta, who trained all of us into expert *pori* makers!

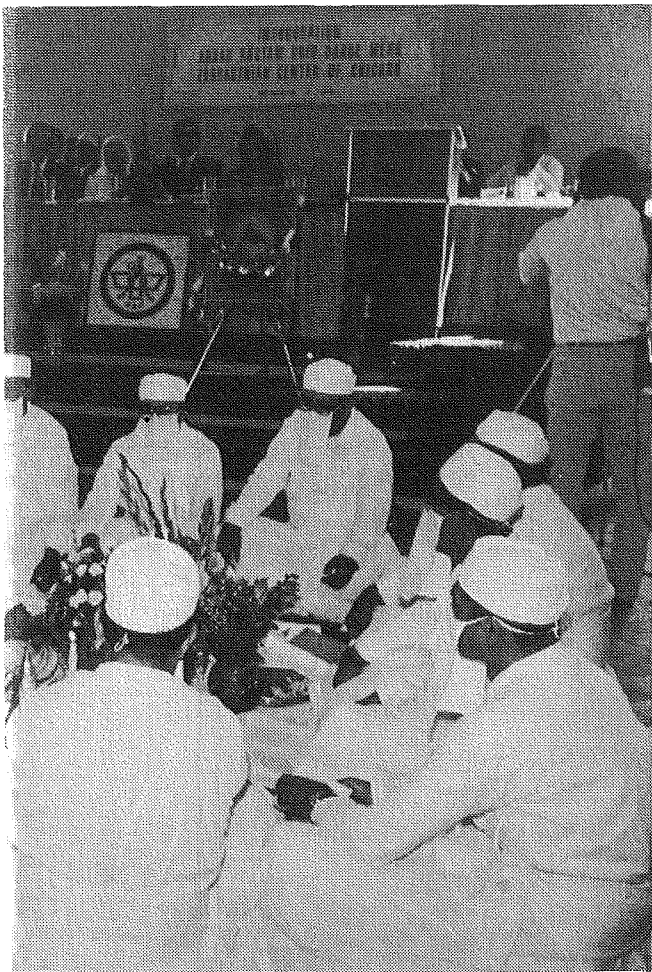
Our summer calendar is filled with graduations, wedding showers, baby showers, navjotes, weddings and Bar-B-Qs. The whole community shares in celebrations — be it cooking food, decorating the hall, choir singing, or accommodating out-of-towners at our houses. With the help and advice from our senior citizens we continue our traditional practices from Iran and India. And again, it is fun to watch the kids helping with the chalk, *toran*, decorating and

cooking. Navjotes and weddings become family affairs for all and we jump right in and celebrate together. This I can relate from my personal experience when my daughter Shireen got married four years ago. The groom, Firoz Ghandhi, and his family and friends came from Detroit. All our friends opened their homes and hearts for our guests, took part in the four days of fun activities, and made it a joyous occasion for us to cherish for the rest of our lives.

There have been instances when the community has helped Zarathushtis who are total strangers celebrate their

weddings and navjotes. Often there are families who are in neighboring states like Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin, Iowa where there are no other Zarathushti families to celebrate these occasions with them. Without hesitation, the community gets into the celebration mode, combines their talents and expertise, and assists such families to have a special day. Very often we've had people come up and say "I remember you very well — you made *sev* for my wedding!" or "I remember you guys helped me put the wedding together because my parents couldn't come from Mumbai". And even though we may have forgotten these little details, we feel good for having made someone's special day a joyous one so they can remember the little things and take time to say "thank you" again and again.

The five days of the Gathas in mid-August are celebrated with such spirituality and dignity that I always say "our ancestors must surely be smiling down on us and blessing us to go forward with our faith and prosper in health, wealth and happiness." We have joint prayers for our dear departed ones. It is a community prayer and the list of names runs into approximately 5 to 6 computer pages. All our mobeds make special efforts to participate in the prayers each day. The prayer hall has three white marble tables where everyone arranges their vases with home-grown roses and beautiful flowers of varying scents and colors. The prayers are recited outside in the main hall witnessed by at least 50 to 60 people each day, going up to more than 100 people on weekends. The *Satum* is recited in the prayer room by junior mobeds. After everyone has offered *loban*, we get together for humbandagi where old and young offer their prayers with utter dedication and unison. This is followed by a short lecture on the meaning of the specific Gatha being celebrated that day. Dinner follows and the evening ends with a feeling of community and unity that defies description. You



Custom Guiv Darbe Mehr in Chicago in 1983.

the New Year) we all go into the prayer hall to join the priests in saying Tandarosti for the whole community.

The *Avan Yazad Parab* brings the ladies together for a bake-a-thon. They prepare *dar-ni-pori* jointly at the Center. Approximately 50 to 60 moms, grandmas and kids, and some gents (who can stand the noise level) prepare sweet dar filling, mix and roll the dough, shape the poris and bake them at our center. This has now become an annual ritual and we raise anywhere from \$800 to \$1000 for the Youth Fund. The poris are purchased by the local Zarathushtis

have to experience it to feel it! Those of us who take part in these five days know what I'm talking about.

Luckily our numbers have grown! We have new additions to our community by way of new immigrant families, new babies, new brides and new bridegrooms. This has brought

“ It is a sheer joy to see the younger generation of mobeds exhibit such pride and dignity while carrying out their religious duties — be it a jashan, navjote or muktd prayers. ”

forth the necessity to expand our facilities which get crowded on many occasions. For the last two years we have been working on the Expansion Plans for our Darbe Mehr and the first phase of *Kushti* rooms and *pani-nu-parab* is completed. Rohinton Rivetna and his band of dedicated volunteers meet every month to assess the progress and designate action items for coming months. With the first phase complete, there are plans for providing adequate space for the children's room and facilities, expanding the existing kitchen and washrooms as a part of second phase. We are actively soliciting donations and pledges for the expansion.

In addition to the regular ZAC activities, our Center was the birthplace of FEZANA — the Constitution Committee's meeting was held here. ZAC has hosted the Second North American Zoroastrian Congress, North American Zoroastrian Youth Congresses, North American Mobeds Council meetings, invited learned speakers from India and taken active part in inter-faith religious discourses. A few summers ago we were enthralled by a lecture series given by the late Dasturji Minocherhomji. This year we have the good fortune of hosting Dasturji Dr. Firoz Kotwal for a lecture series

on Zarathushti Rituals and the Life of Asho Zarathushtira.

Recently we hosted a lunch and variety entertainment program for Maestro Zubin Mehta, and his wife Nancy. Due to time constraints we had just a little under three hours to wine and dine him. Due to the well organized band of volunteers we achieved outstanding results which brought forth a generous donation from Zubin and Nancy for our Expansion Fund.

We have grown from a handful of Zarathushtis who dreamed in the early 1960's to a sizable congregation that today overflows the prayer room at the Darbe Mehr. Our Center is a testimony to the hopes of the first immigrant families from India and Iran, a testimony to the dedication of our priests and their families, a testimony to the hard-working crew who completed the Darbe Mehr in 1983, and a testimony to our children who have celebrated their navjotes, graduations, showers and weddings here. We would challenge the proponents

of doom and gloom to visit our Center, then look us in the eye and tell us that Zarathushtis are a dying race!

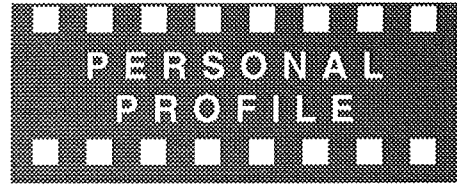
Today the Arbab Rustom Guiv Darbe Mehr is the nucleus of all Zarathushti activities in the Midwest. It has given a sense of belonging not only to the first generation of immigrants but to our children, and hopefully will kindle the same spirit for our children's children and all future generations of Zarathushtis who have the good fortune to be a part of the Chicago community.

Hodding Carter has said: "There are only two lasting bequests we can hope to give our children. One of these is roots; and the other, wings." The Zarathushti community has established strong roots in the Midwest. Future generations will know they have wings to fly away and practice Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds and will always have a safe nest to return to their roots — the Arbab Rustam Guiv Darbe Mehr — Zoroastrian Center of Chicago! ■

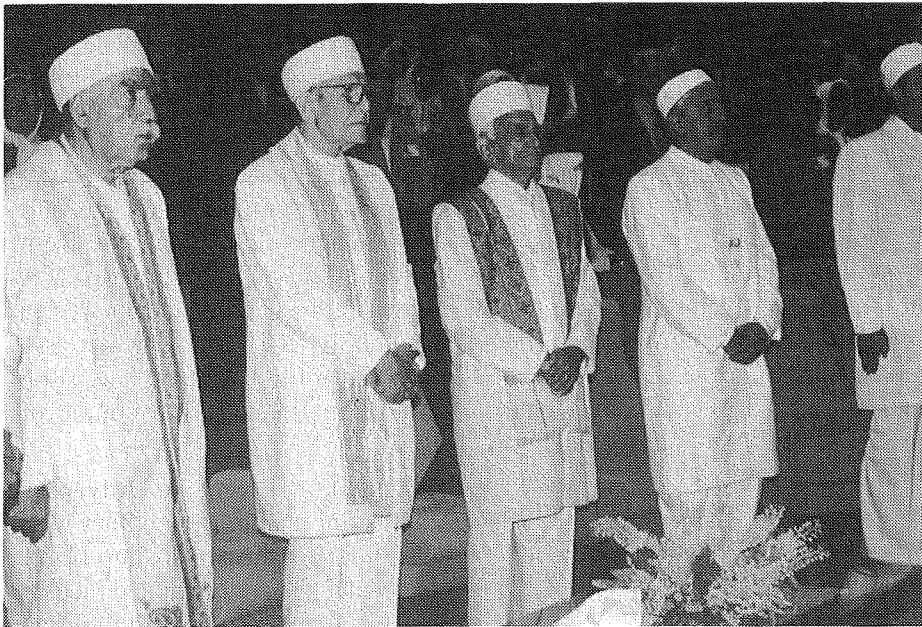


Aban is an Economics graduate of the Bombay University. She migrated to the U.S. with her husband Aspy and two children in December 1981. For the last twelve and a half years she has been working at the world headquarters of McDonald Corporation in Oak Brook, Illinois. The Daboos are active members of ZAC and take pride in their heritage. Their son, Behram, was married recently to Roxanne Buhariwala in Bombay and they are now settled in Naperville, Illinois. Their daughter Shireen is married to Firoz Ghandhi and they live in Sterling Heights, Michigan.

Two Noble Spiritual Teachers



Photo, Mobed Rostam Shahzadi, Mobed-e-Mobedan of Iran (third from left), with Mobed Jehangir Oshidari, Mobed Firooz Azargoshasb (since expired) and Mobed Sahles, at the Sixth North American Zoroastrian Congress, in Tehran, 1996.



Mobed Rostam Shahzadi **Mobed-e-Mobedan of Iran**

A brief account of his life, publications and contributions to the Iranian, Zarathushti community

By Jamshid Varza
Palo Alto, California

I feel honored to write about Mobed Rostam Shahzadi — Mobed-e-Mobedan of Iran. A life-long, selfless devotion and service of the Zarathushti religion and community makes him nothing short of a living Zarathushti hero.

The highest religious position — Mobed-e-Mobedan — in the Zarathushti community of Iran, for the past forty years, has been served

by the late Mobed Ardeshir Azargoshasb, late Mobed Firuz Azargoshasb (the younger brother of Mobed Ardeshir) and Mobed Rostam Shahzadi.

Mobed Rostam was born about 86 years ago in Yazd, Iran. He received his early education in Yazd and later graduated from Tehran University, receiving a law degree. His graduation thesis was a book on Sassanian

law and its interpretations which he dedicated to Mr. Sohrab Jamshid Bulsara, his teacher. He received his religious education in India, and then returned to Iran.

Mobed Rostam has held numerous positions in the Tehran Anjuman and taught theology in Zarathushti schools of Tehran. Members of my generation know him for being the performing mobed in our Sudreh Pushi or wedding ceremonies. Last year, while attending a wedding ceremony in Iran, I saw him offering a few words of advice to the newly wed couple. I asked him whether he remembered me. He gave me a fatherly hug and asked me: "Are you teaching the Zarathushti religion to your children as I advised you in your own wedding ceremony?"

Mobed Rostam has written several Farsi books, including: *Interpretations of Gathas*; *Zarathushti Laws of the Sassanian Era*; *Zarathushti Ceremonies in Ancient Iran*; and *Zarathushti Traditions*. He has also authored numerous articles related to Zarathushti subjects in Zarathushti and national journals of Iran.

The condition of Iran during the 1979 - 1980 period was an unstable, revolutionary government, with the American hostage crisis, the bloody war with Iraq, internal turmoil and Mujahedin's street fighting and bombings. The Zarathushti Anjuman of Tehran was occupied by radical members, harassing older members

Cama Athornan Institute who wanted Khurshed in Greater Bombay in 1946. The progeny of the priestly class benefitted immensely in training and discipline when he became principal of the Institute.

During his tenure of office at the Cama Athornan Institute, an offer of Dasturship was made to Khurshed by the trustees of Hormusji B. Wadia Atash Bahram in Bombay. Dabu accepted the post with much reluctance in 1948, and retired in 1977 due to old age.

During this period of nearly three decades, he rendered yeoman service to the Parsi community by imparting religious knowledge, especially of its esoteric side, of which many Parsis were totally ignorant. This spiritual knowledge he attributed to his study of Zarathushti scriptures and mystical problems in the light of theosophical teaching.

It is the opinion of this reviewer (Peshotan Peer) that in the last century, no other religious scholar imparted *manthra spenta* (the most sacred knowledge) in its true spirit as ably as Dabu did. Most of our Parsi scholars blindly follow Western savants whose Zarathushti studies do not go beyond the letter of the scriptures and are merely a play upon words. But Dabu was a staunch follower of Zarathushti *tariqat* (way of life). His explanation of age-old ceremonies was praiseworthy, especially the inner meanings of the *Yasna* ceremony, the philosophy of worshipping the sun, moon, fire and other elements of nature, and the mystic emblems of angels Aban, Hom, Bahram and Barsam.

Regarding the disposal of the dead, Dabu was in favor of *dokhmenashini* and fervently criticized cremation and burial as un-Zarathushti, giving

scientific explanations and scriptural references.

In the matter of conversion Dabu expressed himself against it with references to the doctrine and history of the religion. In 1942 an incident occurred that took the Parsi community by storm. A few Parsi priests performed the Vansda (*juddin*) navjotes in a group. A huge *Samast Anjuman Sabha* (public meeting)



was called at the Sir Cowasji Jehangir Hall in Mumbai, under the able chairmanship of Sir Behramji Jeejeebhoy, where many erudite scholars spoke against these navjotes. Dastur (then Ervad) Khurshed Dabu was the main speaker and carried the audience by his eloquence and profound scholarship.

Above all, Dabu always fought against intercommunal marriages and never performed a single navjote of a child born in such marriages. In his biography the author cites several

quotations from the scriptures [pp 113 to 118] which support the Dastur's stand.

In accordance with the tenets of the Zarathushti religion, Dabu was a teetotaler. His daily food was purely vegetarian. Mostly he was dependent on fruits, dry fruits and milk. Though a borderline diabetic from his youth, by his willpower and control over diet he lived to the ripe old age of 91.

Dabu was loved and appreciated by both the orthodox and the reformists because of his immense integrity and sincere guidance to his flock. He was free of all pretenses. Even his opponents had respect for his piety.

Dasturji Dabu's pious soul passed away peacefully in the early morning of October 30, 1979 (*Roz Aspandarmad, Mah Khordad*, 1349 AY). The biographer has noted down some condolence messages from his students and from various institutions. Here are some excerpts:

"It is no exaggeration to say that in the death of the revered Dasturji Khurshed Dabu we have lost a father and patron. He treated us all as his sons and molded our careers and future."

"It was he who through the moral influence of his spotless character steered our lives."

Dabu's services to the masonic world and to humanity at large were extraordinary. He was the beloved guru of young people. A rational thinker, he was yet a profound religious leader and a faithful servant of Lord Ahura Mazda. ■

[Excerpted by Maneck Bhujwala from "*Rushaad Dastur Khurshed Dabuni Jeevan Zalak*" biography of Dasturji Dabu, in Gujarati, by Noshir Khurshed Dabu, published by the Surat Parsi Punchayet in 1991, reviewed by Dastur Peshotan Peer in *Parsiana*, November 1992]



Dastur Dhalla

The Man

As High Priest of the Parsis of Karachi, Pakistan for over 45 years Dastur Dhalla was a scholar and teacher of rare brilliance, who stood unruffled through many communal controversies. This article portrays the man behind the Dasturji, as his grand-daughter remembers "Bapa".

By Roshan Rivetna
Hinsdale, Illinois

"Bapa was a person to whom birds, animals and children came on their own. It was as if they felt and knew that he was someone special who would be a friend to them" recalls Pouruchisti Bharucha about her grand-father.

"I remember when our compound was much bigger and we had all sorts of birds in a huge cage in the garden and animals – dogs, a monkey, a goat, a cow, a horse and a very sweet little deer. After lunch Bapa would come down and feed the animals and birds who would be waiting for him. It was not their normal food, but things he had saved for them from his own lunch. He talked to them as if they were his friends and they seemed to understand what he was saying. He would then water his plants and talk to them too.

"When we went out with him in the 'gari' (horse-carriage), he would point out a tree or a cloud or little kids playing or even a pretty woman

– to him, everything had a touch of God and was to be admired."

'Bapa' was Dasturji Dr. Maneckji Nusserwanji Dhalla, M.A., Ph.D., whom the Parsis of Karachi (now in Pakistan) had appointed as their High Priest and which office he served, not only as a ceremonial dastur, but also a scholar and teacher, for over 45 years until his death in 1956.

'Bapa' was the public servant and citizen on whom the British government had bestowed the exalted title of "Shams-ul-Ulema" in 1935. Only three Parsis (Dastur Peshotan, Dastur Darab Sanjana and Ervad Jivanji Mody) had earned this prestigious title before him.

'Bapa' was the scholar of Avesta, Pahlavi, Persian, Gujarati and English literature, on whom Columbia University has bestowed the degree of Litt. D., on the occasion of its 175th anniversary, in 1929.

'Bapa' was the eminent theologian, who, alone, could convincingly satiate the desire of the modern Parsi youth for enlightenment in matters spiritual. By dint of his profound

intellectual powers, unmatched knowledge of the doctrine, and persuasive rhetoric, he was instrumental in creating a resurgence of religious awakening among the youth, who flocked by the hundreds to hear his brilliant lectures.

'Bapa' was the orator and speaker eagerly sought for speaking engagements all over India, UK, and the US; who spoke with flaming enthusiasm and animation, stirring up religious enthusiasm among his hearers. He taught that religion is a thing of the heart, not of the head. When he spoke, his countenance radiated light and his listeners felt that their souls had awakened to a new life!

'Bapa' was the genius that flowered in his nine major books and countless papers on Zarathushti religious literature, history and theology.

But, as Pouruchisti remembers, most of all, "Bapa was a very kind and gentle soul." She adds:

"I have never seen him angry with anyone. He enjoyed doing his own daily work, such as making his bed,

dusting his books and washing his own teacup.

"He was so highly learned, but he was a simple soul when it came to matters of money. He would have to turn a coin over to read its worth.

"I remember once, he received Rs. 101 'ashodad' (gift) for performing a child's navjote, which in those times was a very large sum. He showed me the notes and said: 'Pouruchishti, aaprey aatla badha paisa-nu shoo karshu? (what will we do with so much money?).' I am sure my Dina Fui, who looked after Bapa's money, was very pleased with this amount."

Early life. Maneckji Dhal-la was born in 1875 at Surat. His parents lived in a hovel in one of the poorest parts of the city, where his father and uncle practiced priesthood. According to the custom of those times, Maneckji was married at the age of nine to a girl, Cooverbai, from a well-to-do priestly family of Navsari, who was barely 5 or 6 years old.

Pouruchisti tells a little story about the marriage.

"Bapa and Motamama had their navjote performed in the morning and got married the same evening. After the wedding Motamama stayed with her family in Navsari. When Mama was nearly 18 years old, Bapa went to Navsari with his family to bring his bride home. As they arrived in Navsari, Bapa went out for a walk in the afternoon, to pass the time until the family went to the bride's house that evening. He came upon a well where several young girls were drawing water. There he saw, and immediately fell in love with one of the girls. He went back home and told the story to his family – that he had chanced upon a girl at the well, whom he had fallen in love with at first sight.

"Of course, the family forced him to go to his in-laws that evening. And

to his utter surprise and joy, the 'dream girl' he had fallen in love with at the well, turned out to be his own wife."

Maneckji was ordained a navar at the age of 12. At 19, in order to make a living, he took up a clerical job in Karachi, which he held for 8 years. But all through this period (1894 - 1901), Maneckji did not forsake his over-whelming aim in life – to become a scholar. He would get up at 4 am, and devote at least three hours every morning to reading and writing before proceeding to his

“ Dastur Dhalla was a commanding figure in the most august assemblies. Dressed in the spotless, white cotton robes, cummer-band and turban of the Zarathushti priest, his shawl denoting the rank of Dastur, he impressed every gathering ... ”

office. After work he would stop by the library, and devote another three hours every day to his studies.

Through his painstaking studies, he had acquired enough knowledge about the Zarathushti religion, to publish a monthly pamphlet called *Gulshan-e-Danesh* at the age of 20. At 22, he published his first book (of 120 pages) on the religion reflecting his views during this highly orthodox, early period of his life.

During this time, Maneckji was also making his mark as an erudite and knowledgeable public speaker. On one such occasion, he so impressed an eminent, visiting theologian, Mr. K. R. Cama, [after whom the renowned K. R. Cama Oriental Institute of Mumbai is named] that the latter made a fervent appeal to the Parsis in Karachi to send Maneckji for a training course at the Athornan Madressa in Bombay. With Rs. 25 per month from the Karachi Parsi Anjuman and a matching amount from K. R. Cama himself, Maneckji came to study at the Madressa. Working hard day and night, with

zeal and diligence, he completed the 5-year course in 3 years.

His teachers at the Madressa had instructed him in knowledge based on tradition. But "tradition", Dhalla averred "is stagnant, and knowledge is ever on the move. Besides, tradition is wedded to the time that is dead, and knowledge looks forward to the time to be born."

Further studies at Columbia. Dhal-la was now filled with a longing to proceed abroad for further studies in Avesta-Pahlavi with scholars at Oxford, Berlin or Columbia University. With monthly pledges of Rs. 125 from the benevolent Tata Trust funds, Rs. 50 from the Karachi Anjuman, and additional amounts from K. R. Cama and Jivanji Mody, Dhalla left the shores of India in 1905, by sea, via Genoa, to study under Prof. A. V. W. Jackson at

Columbia. His wife and (by now) four children stayed behind in India.

At Columbia, Maneckji devoured the writings of the great thinkers, sages, writers and historians. He got up at 4 am and was the last pupil to leave the library hall at 11 pm every night. For him there was no delight to compare with intellectual delights; and moreover, he felt he was in debt to the entire Parsi community, and wanted to prove worthy of their trust.

On his return from Columbia, Dr. Dhalla was a transformed man. His ideas, views and thinking had undergone a metamorphosis. His studies at the University gave him a historical perspective, logical reasoning, and critical acumen. He had sought the truth by coordinating and collating all the philosophies and sciences, which now gave a different color to the orthodox and staunch views on rituals, ceremonies, social customs and prayers, that he had held in the past.

Dr. Dhalla later learnt that our religious writings do not contain the teachings of our Prophet alone. They



Dasturji Dhalla at the wedding of his grand-daughter Pouruchisti with Jamshed Bharucha in 1949. Standing is Dasturji's son Nariman and his wife, Shernaz [left] parents of Pouruchisti. Also shown in the photo are Jamshed's parents.

[PHOTO COURTESY VAHISHTA CANTEENWALLA.]

embody a conglomeration of the beliefs, rituals, superstitions, allegories, myths and mysticisms prevailing in the post-Prophet era. Our religious books incorporate both 'sacred teachings' and 'secular ideas'. With the passage of time, both were recognized as gospel truth, and were passed down to posterity as 'religion'.

Dhalla concluded that Prophet Zarathushtro never gave 'ceremonies and rituals' the predominant position they hold in religion today. He affirmed that ceremonies as such were not the be-all and end-all of the Zarathushti religion. Heavenly bliss cannot be gained merely by the performance of death ceremonies. Only a righteous life, a virtuous life, a helpful life on this earth would open up the doors to 'Garothman Behesht'.

High Priest. In 1909, at the age of 35 years, Dr. Dhalla was installed as the High Priest of Karachi. Blessed with a pleasant and dignified personality, Dastur Dhalla was a commanding figure in the most august assemblies. Dressed in the spotless, white cotton robes, cummerbund and turban of the Zarathushti priest, his shawl denoting the rank of a Dastur, he impressed every gathering as he acknowledged its respectful homage before taking his seat. When he rose to speak, he held his audience spell-bound. Dastur Dhalla served the community in this office for over 45 years.

Books and writings. More than just a 'ceremonial priest', Dhalla was also a prolific author.

Among his earliest works was "*Niyaishes or Zoroastrian Litanies*", in 1909. In this valuable work, each

Niyaishe is treated, passage by passage, in the transliteration of its five versions: Avesta, Pahlavi, Sanskrit, Persian and Gujarati, with an English translation by Dr. Dhalla.

His "*Zoroastrian Theology*" was launched at Columbia, in 1914 for which he made his second visit to the USA, with his wife, Cooverbai. World War I broke out during their stay in the USA, and their return voyage was fraught with danger from enemy action on the high seas. While in England on his way back, he performed Europe's first navjote ceremony. *Zoroastrian Theology* provides, in one book, a complete history of Zarathushti religious beliefs from pre-Gathic times to the present day.

In 1921, Dastur Dhalla and Cooverbai once again sailed to the USA to

publish his book "Zoroastrian Civilization." Here he deals with abstract concepts of the religion in a manner meaningful to the lay person. He reviews, in the pages of this book, the course of Zarathushti history, discusses the evolution of the religion from earliest times to the downfall of the last Zarathushti Empire in 651 AD, the development of Zarathushti society, and the evolution of the Zarathushti way of life.

In 1929, Dasturji and Cooverbai were invited by Columbia University to attend celebrations for its 175th anniversary. On this occasion, Dastur Dhalla was awarded an honorary Litt. D. degree. He also took the opportunity to publish "Our Perfecting World – Zarathushtra's Way of Life." In this volume one sees flashes of transcendental beauty and devout fervor. His wisdom, knowledge based on vast reading and careful observation, and righteousness are reflected in its pages.

During his fifth and last visit to the USA, Dastur Dhalla published his classic "History of Zoroastrianism", a revised and much enlarged edition of *Zoroastrian Theology*, which had long been out of print. Here he surveys the millennia in six chronological periods: pre-Gathic, Gathic, Avestan, Pahlavi, a Period of Decadence, and a Period of Revival.

In his autobiography "Ek Atmakatha", he displays that as a true Zarathushti, he ungrudgingly accepted the fact that in his life there was a mingling of joy and sorrow, peace and strife, happiness and suffering.

Family. Within four months of the publication of his autobiography, his beloved Cooverbai passed away, and for Dasturji, life without her comforting presence seemed unbearable.

"Bapa and Motamama's love was something so beautiful that it touched everyone around them," writes Pouruchisti, "There was nothing they would not do for each other. After Motamama died, Bapa was

never a whole person. He missed his other half. Each time he performed a navjote or wedding, he would take his garland and flowers, place it near his beloved Cooverbai's photo, and talk to her about the ceremony."

"If he had been a lesser person, he would have wished to die with her. But his faith in his God was very strong, and he knew that only God knew what was best."

Dasturji passed away fourteen years later, at the age of 81, in 1956. Of him was written [1]:

"He was a unique genius who passed through this troubled world like a brilliant comet, radiating light and brilliance everywhere he went, elevating the thoughts and inspiring the lives of people. He appealed to the loftiest principles within the hearts of man in general, and Zoroastrians in particular; not only by the enviable logic of his astute mind, but by the invincible purity of his noble soul."

This article was compiled by Roshan Rivetna from materials provided by Dastur Dhalla's grand-daughter, Pouruchisti Jamshed Bharucha of Karachi, and her daughter Vahishta Canteenwalla. Vahishta came to Canada in 1975, and lives with her husband Jambi and two daughters, Shauna, 17, and Zara, 20, in Montreal, Quebec. Coincidentally, Vahishta and Jambi were married on Dastur Dhalla's 100th year birth anniversary.

Grateful acknowledgement is also given to the authors of the following two papers, from which information has been freely taken:

[1] Eruch Kaikhushru Pavri, "Life and Works of Shams-ul-Ulema Dastur Dr. Maneckjee N. Dhalla", Published by Dastur Dr. Dhalla Memorial Institute, Karachi, 1973.

[2] Miss Khorshed C. Laskari, Dastur Dhalla Memorial Essay, "Life and Works of Shams-ul-Ulema Dastur Dr. Maneckji Nusserwanji Dhalla", 1973.

A True Story

By Nariman H. Wadia
Mumbai, India

My family has always looked upon a certain learned Dasturji for guidance and sometimes, ceremonial assistance. This Dasturji was extremely well regarded by all Zarathushtis, his erudition and scholarship unchallenged. Therefore, I always desired to know his personal views on, not only acceptance into our religion, but also conversion.

He never gave us his opinion.

Once, visiting him, we found him reciting prayers into a cassette recorder, interrupting himself often, to record some commentary. We asked him what he was doing. He replied that he was expecting some Japanese students, who had requested him to record some specific texts, with his comments.

[The following conversations with him took place mostly in Gujarati; I will try to retain their sense and flavor in English. Phonetic transliterations would be exhausting!]

I asked him, "Dasturji Saheb, after studying our religion, do not these people wish to be initiated into our religion?"

"Yes, some of them really do!"

"Then, Dasturji Saheb, what is your own, personal view on accepting such people, who after deep study wish to be one of us?"

"Bandaa, my personal view is exactly that – *personal*. Being in the position I am, any public expression of that view, one way or the other, would generate controversy; and I feel it my function to promote harmo-



ny, not cause further divisions.” And that was that – for the moment. My next chance to try finding out his personal view, came some years later.

[Please understand, I was not trying to “put him on the spot” or anything like that. His opinion would have mattered deeply to me.]

Driving him to, and then from, my home for a Jashan ceremony, I related the following experience to him.

“Dasturji Saheb, over twenty-five years ago, 1960 to 1962, I was a student in London. I was returning home, first overland to Italy and then by ship from Genoa to Bombay.

“A friend of a friend asked me to carry a small parcel to Paris, and deliver it to a lady at a certain address. I agreed, and took the parcel, not knowing its contents.

[In those days there was no problem of security.]

“On reaching the address in Paris, I was aghast to find that the lady was in fact a night-club dancer, a “strip-tease artiste”, What I had carried was a jar of body make-up. I was a ‘pucca bawaji’ prude in those days, *[still am!]*, and was greatly embarrassed in the presence of this girl, a tall and very attractive South American – Brazilian, Argentinian, I do not remember her nationality.

“Acutely uncomfortable, I wanted to give her the parcel, and get out of there as soon as possible!

“Although she sensed my unease, she could not just let me run away, and tried to make small talk. Suddenly she asked me if I was a Parsi.

“I said I was, and expressed surprise that a South American ‘artiste’ had even *heard* of our little community *[this was early 1962!]*.

“She became quite agitated, and began to ask me questions about our community, our religion, our ceremonies. I was ashamed to parade my total ignorance, but expressed my curiosity – why was *she* interested?

“Well, it turned out that she was a student at Sorbonne University, and her subject was Comparative Religion.

The ‘dancer’ occupation was only an occupation which gave her the means to continue her education. *She declared herself to be a Zoroastrian.*

“I laughed, and said she could not be! She became very serious and asked why not! I once again acknowledged my *profound* lack of knowledge of my own religion, but could only stammer that it was impossible for her to be a Zoroastrian, without a navjote ceremony.

“*But I am, I am. I am a Zoroastrian!* She repeated over and over again. I affirm my belief in the teachings of Zarathushtra, therefore I am Zoroastrian. I say my prayers. Look! I even stitch my own sudrehs and wear a common string around my waist, instead of a kushti. I cannot weave myself a kushti!

“I was shocked, but more so when, before she allowed me to go, she said, “Please promise me. As soon as you reach Bombay, get me a real kushti, and send it to me. Please promise.”

“She convinced me, and I promised to send her a kushti soon.”

[In my car, sitting next to me, the Honored Dasturji was absolutely still. I did not even know if he had been listening to all this.]

“Dasturji Saheb, are you with me?”

“Haa, Biradar, hoo badhoo samajhyo. (Yes, brother, I have understood everything). You were shocked by the woman’s profession, you were shocked at her faith in Ahura Mazda, you were shocked that she asked you for a kushti. Yet you told her you would send her one. I have understood everything.”

“Dasturji Saheb, that is not the end of the story. When I got back to Bombay, I asked one of the elders in the family to obtain a kushti, for such-and-such waist size, as I did not know how that translated into the *gaj* size normally quoted. The extremely small size surprised my aunt, and she asked me whom it was for. I told her the whole story. There was an uproar, Dasturji. I was lectured soundly on the holiness of our kushti,

how it should not be given to anyone that was not of our religion, that it would be defiled by the very touch of such a woman, and so on.

“I do not believe, having seen the fervor of that girl, that I would be committing a grave sin by sending her the kushti which she so badly wanted. Over the next few months, I allowed myself to forget. But over these many years, I have sometimes been deeply concerned.

“Tell me, Dasturji Saheb, should I have listened to the elders? Did I do right, not sending the kushti, or did I do wrong?

My revered Dasturji was silent. I was watching his eyes in my rear-view mirror. I saw a look which said, “I understand your trick, my friend. You are still asking the *same* old question. I understand perfectly.”

He was silent while my car slowly crept, from just before Chandanwadi, to beyond the first few sari shops on Queen’s Road (Mumbai). That was maybe two or three long minutes.

After which, he put his hand gently on my knee. Taking his time, he gently rocked my knee as he spoke, quite sadly and regretfully,

“Bhool kidhee, Dost! Bhool kidhee. (You did wrong, my friend! You did wrong.)”

I had my answer. ■

Nariman H. Wadia is a consultant for manufacturing jewelers in Mumbai, India. He joined the family jewelry business, “K. Wadia Jewellers”, a hallmark in the business, in 1957; he is a Convener and Member of various committees of the Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council, a semi-governmental body and a long-standing elected member (and the only Indian) of the Appraisers Association of America. Wife, Coomi Wadia is a noted musician, and conductor of the Mumbai-based Paranjoti Chorus. Son, Sorab Wadia is a musician, pianist and singer who studied at the Peabody Conservatory at Johns Hopkins University.

YOUTHFULLY SPEAKING

THE MOUTHPIECE OF A GENERATION...



Memories of Colorado

By Perry D. Unwalla
Boca Raton, Florida

On Memorial Day weekend 16 Zarathushti 'youths' made their way to Estes Park, Colorado and the breathtaking Colorado National Forest. The trip started by meeting at the new Denver airport, and then staying in Denver with Bucky Amaria and her terrific family. A day in the city of Denver followed, taking in the university, quaint shops, and a vibrant downtown. The next day everyone was 'in' as the Z's made the one and a half hour trek to the mountains.

Over the next three days, what followed was a ton of fun in the most breathtaking scenery and backdrops you can imagine. The cabin was no palace but we weren't exactly 'roughing it' either (though one or two begged to differ!) We had a rustic spot in the city of Estes Park, surrounded by lakes, mountains, rustic lodges, hay rides, and more.

With camera in hand, Cy Fatkia attempted to record the cycle of events for posterity. It all began with a morning trek with guides through the Rocky Mountain National Forest. The hike was at times steep, always scenic and full of plenty of adventures. We saw unique rock formations, incredible valley views and had lunch at a lake on top of the world. Then, just to make things exciting, one of the Z's twisted her ankle on the trail, a long way from

the bottom of the mountain. Using their very limited but true Boy Scout preparedness, the lads made a human chair (though originally it looked like someone signally a plane to land) and carried her down. A short trip to the hospital followed. We had a deep sprain and some bruises, but the memories were left unscathed.

The next day the Z-campers headed to the ranch to round up some horses for a ride through the mountains. Our lives in the cities sometimes remove us from the sights and smells of the outdoors. Never was this truer than on the trail. Perry's horse in particular added to the interesting aromas! The horses were walking at a slow trot yet no one was complaining. With a John Denver look-alike as our guide, we saw elk, deer, and mountain lion tracks.

That afternoon, a few brave souls tried a mountain-bike ride. The first half hour was terrific – that is until the wheels fell off – literally! Perynaz took a tumble, but got up like a fighter, and got the nickname "Pretty Tuft". We weren't expecting the cold, snow and rain that followed; and were never as happy as when Roxanne and Cy turned up with cars. We laughed like crazy that evening over a bonfire/BBQ.

The next day our white-water rafting trip never materialized as a few of us were on 'Parsi time' and missed our meeting with the raft guides. So we headed for the snow-capped peaks for some classic snowball fights! There is nothing like being in 70 degree weather with snow all around!

Our last evening was back with our terrific hosts the Amarias, as we held a Zarathushti 'workshop'. We talked about the impact of our religion in each of our lives and how we might be able to live an even more Zarathushti lifestyle. The next morning we said our goodbyes and headed back our separate ways, loaded with lots of great memories.

Where will the next get-together be? At a congress? A lodge in Whistler, Canada? Or a cruise ship off of Mexico? Stay tuned – or better still join us. Don't just read about it! Be a part of it!

YOUTHFULLY SPEAKING

THE MOUTHPIECE OF A GENERATION...

OF TWISTED ANKLES AND MEETING ZARTOSHTIS

Meeting fellow Zartoshtis in the world outside India, Iran and Pakistan is a rare occurrence and I'm sure many a reader will have a favorite tale of his/her experiences in this regard. Here is my story of how I met two very nice Zartoshti families. While this account is completely factual, I have changed the names of the people concerned to protect their privacy. Should they read this account they will know I am talking about them.

This tale goes back to 1993 when I was a student at Texas Tech University, Lubbock. For those not familiar with the state of 'Tejas' Lubbock is located in the far north-west corner of this massive state. It's a dry, flat town of approximately 200,000 people. Summer in Lubbock is blistering hot and the winters quite cold (for Texas). It's a temporary home for many international students, particularly Asians, because tuition at the university is a steal (it was \$18-36 per credit hour for Texas residents when I was there), and because of the low cost-of-living. Despite its rather large Asian student population, Lubbock is not known for being multiethnic, although its residents are some of the friendliest people I have met in the United States. When I got there in January 1992, some of my Indian colleagues informed me that I pretty much was the only Bawaji there. I later learned that there had been a couple of Zartoshti students in Lubbock in the late eighties.

An unusually cold winter had us all awaiting spring, and the associated sand-lot games, with much anticipation. I was playing touch-football with some colleagues and students (I don't think my medical insurance covered the costs of an injury playing the real game) when a rather exuberant personality from the opposing team decided to try and catch a decidedly ill-directed pass. In the process he rolled all over my foot. He caught the pass, but I could not stand let alone walk or run. One of the self-appointed medics on the field took a brief look at my leg and pronounced his diagnosis, severely twisted ligaments in the right ankle.

This happened on a Saturday evening, and when cold and hot compresses did little to ease the swelling or the pain I was forced to drag myself to the student medical center on Monday morning. I was teaching class later that day so there I was in my formal shirt and trousers with one leg sticking out like a barge pole. Trust me business casual dress and bathroom slippers when worn together do not make a positive fashion statement. I'm glad none of my students was there to see this sight.

A nurse initially examined my ankle and then ushered me in to see a Dr. Mehta. A what? I was in pain but I didn't think that pain affected hearing quite so acutely. I politely asked her to repeat the doctor's name. I had heard right the first time. Well, so what? Mehta is a common last name it may not be a Zartoshti, I mumbled to myself as I hobbled down the hall to the examination room. I sat there at the edge of the bed with my leg dangling and wondered how I was going to stand and lecture for fifty minutes later that afternoon. My thoughts were interrupted by the appearance of Dr. Fardoon Mehta, a tall, thin, patrician gentleman in a white smock. He looked at his clipboard, read my name, and asked me, Am I saying this correctly? I did not what to say. By American standards he was butchering my name, but he had pronounced it the way my parents intended it to be pronounced. I gave him one of those non-committal nods, the kind where your head revolves around in a circle. He assumed it was an affirmative answer and proceeded to examine my ankle. He asked me whether I was taking any pain-killers and when I responded negatively (I deduced correctly that he would not consider alcohol as a painkiller), he gave me a rather baleful look as if to say, and why not

young man? After strapping the ankle he gave me several packets of Advil with the advice, take them if you are in pain and proceeded to order an ankle brace and a temporary pair of crutches. In less than ten minutes I was out on the street hopping along inexpertly on the crutches. No questions asked as to where I was from, what I was doing, was I a Zartoshti. So much for busted ankles and meeting Zartoshtis.

Fortunately, the story does not end here. Some days later I received a call from the good doctor inquiring about my well-being. He asked me all the questions that he had not asked me at the medical center. He mentioned that he was originally from Bombay as well, and that he had little time to engage in a detailed conversation the other day, because he had a number of patients waiting to see him. He also invited me to his home for dinner the following weekend. Here was the perfect occasion to practice the social graces that one of my colleagues at work had been trying to teach me. My buddy was an old hand at social etiquette (the fine wine and flowers thing) since he had been in the United States far longer than I had.

I actually shaved that weekend (shaving on weekends was considered sacrilegious for graduate students because it was an unnecessary chore), armed myself with a bouquet of flowers, made sure I had washed behind the ears and presented myself at the good doctor's doorstep. A Parsi-looking lady opened the door and I hastily offered her the flowers. She stepped aside and politely requested me to give them to Angela, the tall white lady who was Dr. Mehta's wife. There are times when you wish the earth would open up and swallow you. This was one of them. I gulped really hard a couple of times and tried to muster my mental resources to get out of that gaffe, but my social coach had not taught me how to extricate myself from a faux pass of this magnitude. Eventually, when the introductions were over and I had regained my composure, I learned that the Parsi-looking lady, Jerbanoo Jehani and her husband Shahrokh (also a doctor), and their three daughters were also residents of Lubbock.

I met both families a couple of times over the summer and then, much to my regret now, did not stay in touch. I graduated after a semester and then moved to Austin, Texas and subsequently to Allentown, Pennsylvania. Last month I was reading the summer issue of the FEZANA Journal when I found a letter by Dr. Jehani. That's what prompted me to write this article and offer my belated apologies to the two families for not staying in touch. Their companionship, however brief, offered a welcome respite from the rigors of graduate school.

I also learned a very valuable lesson: Do not view the world through tinted glasses. I naturally assumed that Dr. Mehta's wife would be a Parsi-looking lady. The only basis for this assumption was my limited perception of Zartoshtis in the United States. I should have listened to the wise words of William Blake, If the doors of perception are cleansed, everything would appear as it is, infinite. Finally, I submit that twisting an ankle is one of the more interesting and painful ways to meet a fellow Zartoshti. However, there are better, more social and less painful ways of doing so. I suggest you try them first.

Ushta Te!
By: Hoshang

"All you need is Love," John Lennon once sang. After the Eleventh North American Zoroastrian Congress, I'd have to agree. The atmosphere of the latest major Zoroastrian event was filled with goodwill and cheer from everyone. It was this Love and good cheer that made this latest congress a success. Unlike the other congresses that I have attended, there was very little, if any, open conflict between Zarthushtis on the so-called "controversial" issues. Instead, all of the speakers spoke their mind on the issues they felt were important, and I felt that for the most part they were received warmly and respectfully by members in the audience. The topics covered by the speakers were all extremely informative, everything from demography to Zoroastrian history. Also, thanks to the "blessed buzzer," the lectures were kept interesting and concise.

If one wasn't excited by the lectures, there were still other fun things to do during the day. Many Zs took advantage of the incredible weather to relax in the pool, play outdoor games, or just kick back and chat with friends. My personal favorite daytime activity was watching World Cup matches with fellow Zs, which inspired us to start our own soccer game!

However, the fun didn't end when the sun went down. Youth Night was a blast! It wasn't because of the music or the dancing, but because there were so many Z youths together celebrating in the spirit of peace and brotherly love! Parsis jammed to

Persian dance-music, and Iranians rocked to bhangra beats. No divisions, just a bunch of Zs celebrating and having a good time! The following evening's banquet and entertainment show rocked as well! I was really impressed with all of the artists and musicians who performed that night. Kudos to the participants, as well as the MCs!

The planned events of the congress were well organized and a lot of fun; however, the best part of the congress was catching up with old friends and meeting new people. What else can be said? No event beats hanging out with fellow Zs throughout the night (which is probably why I felt like a zombie during the day).

In all, the congress was definitely a success. I'm extremely grateful to ZAGNY and all of the other people, who through their tremendous time and effort, put together a truly incredible event for the rest of us. Though this was technically not a youth event, I felt that young Zoroastrians who attended were just as much a part of the congress as the adults. This congress in my opinion was an example of how, though there may be differences of opinion on certain issues, our community can come together and peacefully exchange ideas without the usual politics and squabbling that have plagued many past congresses. Hope everyone will bring the Love down to Houston in 2000!

*by: Cyrus F. J. Cama
Cyrus is from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and is currently a sophomore at the George Washington University in Washington, DC.*

"MAY WE BE AMONG THOSE WHO HEAL THE WORLD."

I know the above quote is used often in the opening of articles or speeches, but I think it can be a pretty relevant and powerful motto for many Zarathushti youth in North America. I'm continuously surprised by the number of Zarathushti youth I meet who are doing things that aim at improving the world and the lives of others. It seems to me that a huge number of Zarathushti youth are involved in community service-type projects, and yet there is no real way for any of us to hear about what others are doing or why they are doing what they are doing.

There are those who are teaching Zarathushti children about their religion; others who are creating service groups in their high schools to feed homeless people and to clean up local parks; and still others who are volunteering their time in college to tutor kids from disadvantaged background. Then there are the young Zarathushti professionals who are dedicating their time and energy to social, environmental, education and health issues affecting our society and world. By working to solve local or global environmental problems, improve the financial and physical health of poorer communities through legal and political activism, or teach youth of all backgrounds how to think for themselves and to improve their chances for future success, these young Zarathushtis are making a positive difference.

Community service, social activism, philanthropy, and a commitment to bettering the world and the lives of Zarathushtis and non-Zarathushtis alike are all nothing new in the history of our religion. This fact has always been a source of a lot of pride for me. I like thinking that the concept of doing good for its own sake --one of the fundamental messages in the Ashem Vohu prayer-- is not just lip service. Rather, I like to think that this powerful commitment to goodness and to service to others has been guiding the lives and choices of many of our ancestors, our friends, and our family members even to this day. I like thinking that my peers, each in their own way, are answering Zarathustra's call to renew, to renovate and to refresh the world.

Please send in stories about any service related projects you are involved in. Feel free to talk about what you are doing, why you and your group got involved, as well as the successes you've had and any obstacles you are facing. We have an opportunity to create a meaningful new Zarathushti community and identity in North America. Let's see if we can start by supporting, inspiring, and helping each other in answering our religion's call to service.

BY: ARASH ANOSHIRAVANI

...AND WHAT ABOUT ZYNA?

Welcome to ZYNA - Zoroastrian Youth of North America - time. Over the past year, ZYNA has begun organizing retreats in conjunction with local youth groups. Retreats are smaller events meant for groups of 15 to 30 people. The focus of these retreats may be religious or not. The goal of a retreat is to set up smaller events which are less expensive and more geographically community oriented.

ZYNA has been involved in two retreats. The first one taking place in the Catoctin mountains near Baltimore, Maryland - June 1998. It was organized and run by ZAMWI - Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington. The primary organizers were Ms. Jasmine Patel of Baltimore, Maryland fame and Mr. Orang Demehry of Vienna, Virginia fame. It was a three day event which included hiking, swimming, canoeing, and extensive religious workshops. Unique workshops were conducted on the Shah Nameh, Piers, and the role of young Z's in North America. A fun time was had by all as they cooked, told stories, and danced by the campfire.

The second retreat will be held in beautiful Whistler, British Columbia, located an hour and a half outside of Vancouver - August 1998. As opposed to the Maryland event, the primary focus of the event is on outdoor activities and not religion. The idea behind the Whistler event is to provide a forum for Zoroastrians to get together and have a good time with others Z's.

It will include hiking which will give people a chance to enjoy the breath taking views this part of the world is known for. A full day of fun rafting the rapids of the Squamish-Elaho river and a Sunday brunch on the top of Whistler mountain is planned - weather permitting. It gives one a wonderful view of the Whistler area. Other than the planned activities, fun will be had at the cabin just hanging out and getting to know one another.

Just a reminder that ZYNA is having its 2nd annual winter event this year in Mexico. Last year's cruise was a blast - an article about it is in the last FEZANA journal. To find out more about ZYNA and check out some pictures from the cruise check out ZYNA's newsletter on the web. To access the ZYNA newsletter go to: www.fezana.org/zyna.htm (this can also be accessed by simply going to the FEZANA web page - www.fezana.org - and clicking on ZYNA).

If you wish to organize a local retreat with ZYNA's help or by being a ZYNA representative please don't hesitate to contact us:

Arianne Teherani (Los Angeles): 562-928-5544 / email: teherani@scf.usc.edu

Mehernosh Mody (Boston): 617-928-0953 / email: meher@ix.netcom.com

Rustom Appoo (Vancouver): 604 - 738-4124 / email: rustom@unixg.ubc.ca

I WOULD PERSONALLY LIKE TO THANK ALL OF YOU WHO SENT IN ARTICLES THIS ISSUE AND APOLOGIZE TO THOSE WHOSE ARTICLES WE WERE NOT ABLE TO INCLUDE. THOSE ARTICLES WILL BE FEATURED IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF FEZANA'S YOUTHFULLY SPEAKING. FOR THOSE OF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEND IN ARTICLES PLEASE SEND THEM TO YS EDITOR AARON RUSTOM.

ALL SUBMISSIONS MUST BE SENT TO...

**AARON RUSTOM
944 HIGHLAND
HOUSTON, TX 77009
(713) 854-5145
ARUSTOM007@AOL.COM**

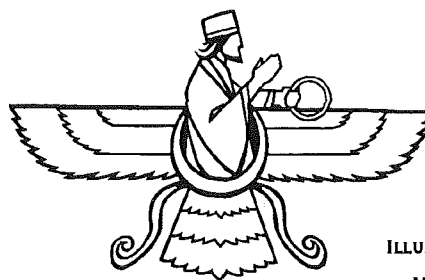


ILLUSTRATION BY:
MARK GERVAIS

GLOBAL DIRECTORY OF ZOROASTRIAN FIRE TEMPLES

By Marzban J. Giara

Hardcover, 208 pp. with 168 glossy, full color photographs, 1998,

Available from Marzban J. Giara, Dhunmai Building, 667 Lady Jehangir Rd, Dadar, Mumbai 400 014, India, tel: 416-6204. Rs. 1200 in India; \$60 US by registered airmail; \$100 by courier; 10% discount for orders of 10 or more. Can also be ordered from "The Zoroastrian Shop", New Jersey, tel: (609) 768-8351.

By Dolly Dastoor
Montreal, Quebec

The *Global Directory of Zoroastrian Fire Temples* is a book whose every page vibrates with love that its author Mr Murzban Giara feels for the Zarathushti community. The Directory, which is a hard bound book lists 187 places of worship in 9 countries on 4 continents, with 168 color photographs on art paper, making it an excellent coffee table item. However one has to be thankful to the author that he did not follow through on his original intention of producing a simple booklet, *The Zoroastrian Pilgrim's Guide*, giving only the names and addresses of fire temples. If he had, the community would have been deprived of an invaluable source of historical information.

The *Global Directory of Zoroastrian Fire Temples* is not only an inventory of places of worship for the Zarathushtis around the world, but a book from which the reader can glean the socio-religious structure of the community, through the description of each fire temple. The infor-

mation was very painstakingly collected by the author through various sources: direct mail, telephone, surveys, personal interviews, references to published materials, books, souvenirs and memorial volumes. Mr Giara personally visited all the fire temples in Mumbai and almost all in Gujarat and Maharashtra to collect information first hand.

Featured in this book are the eight atash bahrams of India: 1 in Udva-da, 1 in Navsari, 2 in Surat, and 4 in Mumbai and in addition 1 atash bahram in Sharifabad, Iran (a village of Yazd), which is considered to be over 2000 years old – the oldest fire temple in the world. Forty-eight dar-e-mehrs in Mumbai (housing adarans and dadgahs) are listed alphabetically from Andheri to Walkeshwar, 102 dar-e-mehrs in the rest of India from Abu Road, to Zai Bordi, and 29 centers in Australia, Canada, England, Hongkong, Iran, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and United States of America. Even though the majority of the fire temples are in India, it is regretted that the places of worship in Iran, the birth place of the religion, are listed under "rest of the world" rather than given

a more prominent place in the directory. It would have been interesting if the contents were listed chronologically giving the reader the sense of historical growth of the community and its spread from Iran. Perhaps Mr Giara would consider this for the second edition!

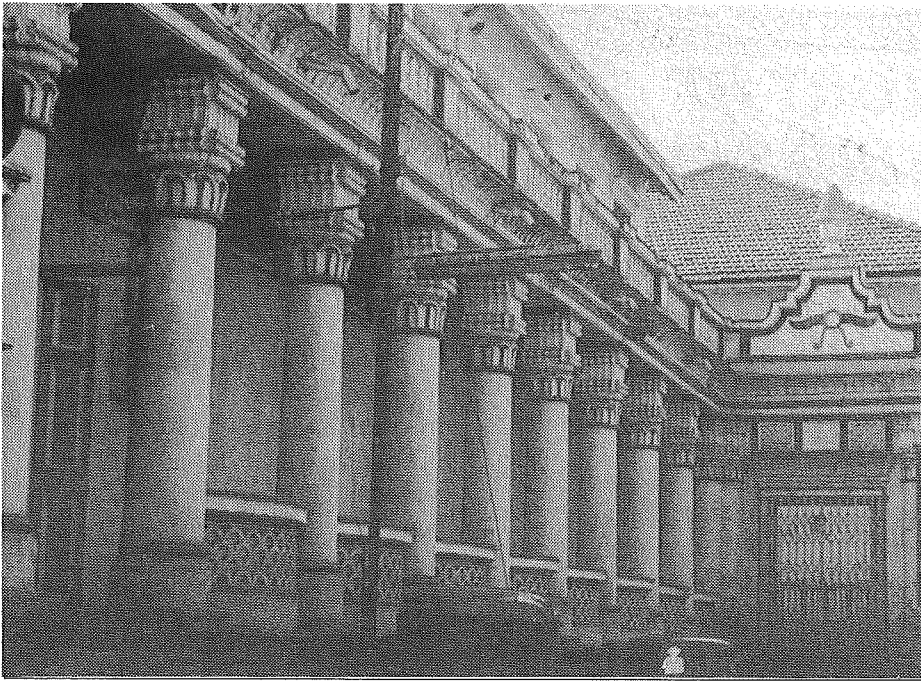
The book details the status of *atash* in the Zarathushti religion and the significance and power of the fire temples. It outlines the process in the consecration of an atash bahram and explains the three grades of fire temples, viz., the fire enshrined in an *atash bahram*, an *adaran*, and a *dadgah*.

It also lists little-known facts, e.g., that the Pune Dar-e-Meher was built in 1892 by contributions from the Kadmi and Shenshai Zarathushtis, the first atash bahram to be consecrated in Mumbai was the Kadmi Dadyseth Atash Bahram, followed 47 years later by the Shenshai Wadiaji's Atash Bahram.

In 1913, the foundation stone of the Tehran Atash Kadeh was laid by the Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs – a muslim official, in the presence of a large gathering of Muslims, Jews, Armenians and Zarathushtis, indeed an unique event in Zarathushti history suggesting the spirit of adaptability and compromise.

The photographs of each fire temple allow the reader to see the varied architecture, ranging from Roman style as in agiaries at Surat and in the Sethna Agiary in Mumbai, to a mixture of Greek, Roman and Persian styles as in the Sett Agiary in Mumbai, to pure Persian style at the Kappawalla and Thoothina Agiaries in Mumbai, to a mixture of Gothic and Saracenic style in the Vakil Agiary in Ahmedabad and a Sassanian style in the Ahmednagar Agiary. The Mithaiwalla Agiary in Amroli is patterned after the domestic architecture of Gujarat. The agiary in Thane is in a rustic style and the agiary in Valsad in Art Deco form.





The Vadi Dar-e-Mehr in Navsari, is shown in the directory as the oldest known dar-e-mehr in India, nearly 850 years old. It is used mainly for performing rituals and for training and initiating Parsi priests as navars and martabs. It was established by Zarthosht Mobed who came to Navsari from Sanjan in 1142 CE.

Some structures even merged with the environment in their architecture while others have the most basic element of construction with a total absence of motifs or decorations. Some structures have a strong expression of vernacular architecture, while others look like homes bearing very little evidence of a dar-e-mehr, as can be seen in the structure in Bhavnagar. It is surprising that in spite of the destruction, which the Zarathushtis received at the hands of the Greeks, many Zarathushti places of worship still have Greek features incorporated into them.

The design of the community religious space would very easily be the topic of another book by Mr. Giara. Some have priests quarters attached to them, some have a dokhma or an aramgah and some have a dharamshala.

The book connects the reader with the past and raises questions as to the future of these consecrated places, as the populations they were meant to serve dwindle. The dilapidated condition of some of these structures is reflected in the number of

Zarathushtis left in that area. Some are serving a population of less than 50. In Calicut where there is only 1 Parsi family of 5 people, there is a prayer hall but no permanent fire. The regular appeals which the community in North America gets for donations for renovation and maintenance of these structures will have a new meaning when the donor will be able to refer to this directory.

The book not only lists the places of worship but also gives the reader an outline of the evolution of the community by discussing the shift in location of the Parsi population and with it the need to relocate the agiaries. It is hoped that one could be relocated to Canada or the USA in the not too distant future.

By giving the reader a well researched history of each place of worship, Mr. Giara gives us insight into the social structure of the community and the role various members of the community played in maintaining the religion. Zarathushti men and women in a position of financial strength took it upon themselves to build agiaries for communal worship, in communities

where the population warranted. The Nagpur Adaran was built because Sir Dinshaw Petit Baronet, on visiting Nagpur in 1889, felt the residents of that community did not have a place of worship of their own. The directory is full of examples of philanthropic acts of the Zarathushtis of the past.

Also, it is heartening to note that the same spirit is still alive in the philanthropic acts of the Zarathushtis of the present. Arbab Rustom Guiv and his wife, Morvarid Guiv, were the benefactors of most of the dar-e-mehrs in North America. Mobed Mehraban and the late Faridoon Zartoshty continue to shower their philanthropy for places of worship in North America.

Women also played a significant role in the establishment of the religious infrastructures in India. Some of the women were independently wealthy and donated large sums in the memories of their fathers, brothers or husbands to either establish, or improve or renovate the places of worship. The most noteworthy are the contributions of Motlibai Maneckjee Wadia for the

“ “ Giara has created a book which should be the pride and joy of all Zarathushtis. It should be made available in all places of worship all over the world, in the madressas and in reference libraries. ” ”

fourth renovation of the Udvada Atash Bahram. Among others the dar-e-mehrs in Delhi, Deolali, Nargol, Vyara, and Davier, the dadgahs in Olpad and Hubli, the adarans at Gowalia Tank and in Hyderabad, are all due to the generosity of Zarathushti women.

The Directory allows the readers to reflect on the role played by the mobeds in the preservation of reli-

gious continuity and of fulfilling the religious needs of the community. Many of the agiaries were served by several generations of priests, the present Panthaki of Dumas Dar-e-Meher is of the 5th generation serving since 1838 (the present population is about 10). The Anklesaria family has been serving the Ankleswar Dar-e-Meher for 150 years, the Sena family served the Bisney Adaran in Surat for a 100 years and the Dastur family served the Patel Dar-e-Meher in Pune for over 154 years.

The dasturs also played a leading role in the construction of the fire temples. Dastur Dr. Jamaspji Minocherji Jamaspasa, personally oversaw the construction and consecrated many fire temples all over India. The first fire to be consecrated in India was the Iranshah Atash Bahram in Sanjan in 721 CE by Dasturji Nairyosang Dhaval. The plaque on the Udvada Athornan Anjuman Atash Bahram outlines the journey of the sacred Iranshah from its consecration to its enthronement in Udvada in 1742 CE. Unfortunately, no references are made to the lineage of Iranian priests of Kerman, Shiraz, Yazd or Esfahan.

Mr. Giara has fulfilled the tenets of his religion of giving back to the community what he gained from it, as well his father's advice to "be a creator and not a spectator". He has created a book which should be the pride and joy of all Zarathushtis. It should be made available in all places of worship all over the world, in the madrasahs and in reference libraries. The punchayets and anjumans in India, Iran and in the diaspora should also donate this book to all schools and universities in their jurisdiction, but specially to schools managed by them. If our community wants to make a positive impact on the larger world community, then this quality production needs wider distribution. It needs to be on the shelves of all North American Zarathushti homes. Mr. Giara deserves our encouragement and support to motivate him to publish other volumes of this calibre.

ZAMYAD YASHT, YASHT 19 OF THE YOUNGER AVESTA, TEXT, TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY

by **Helmut Humbach**
and **Pallan R. Ichaporia.**

Published by Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, Germany. Available at \$82 from P. Ichaporia, 253 Adam's Dr., Womelsdorf, PA 19567.

Zamyad Yasht is a history of salvation of the Iranians, starting with the description of Ahura Mazda's creation and ending with Frashokereti, its perfection and renovation by the Saoshyant, the Savior.

THE ZARATHUSHTI RELIGION – A BASIC TEXT

Adapted and collated by Mobed Fariborz Shahzadi, in collaboration with Khojeste Mistree.

Published by FEZANA, distributed free. Any donation welcome (suggested \$30) and will be applied to the Education Fund. Order from Farrokh Mistree, 2846 Greenbrook Way, Atlanta, GA 30345, tel: (404) 325-3300, fax: (404) 325-1227, email: farrokh.mistree@me.gatech.edu.

Chapters include: Zarathushtra the Prophet, Doctrine and Ethics, Iranian Languages and Texts, Basic Prayers, Religious Calendars, Sacred Fires, Priests, Dates with History.

Cookbooks from "The Zoroastrian Shop"

The following titles are available from **The Zoroastrian Shop**, 7 Fox Hollow Road, Voorhees, NJ 08043, Tel: (609) 768-8351.

AN ADVENTURE IN EXOTIC PARSİ INDIAN COOKING

By Nergish Karanjia and Nergis Unwalla \$15

PARSİ WEDDING, NAVJOTE & OTHER TRADITIONS

By Roshan Bharucha \$10

JAMVA CHALOJI, PARSİ DELICACIES FOR ALL OCCASIONS

By Katy Dalal \$15

PARSİ FOOD & CUSTOMS

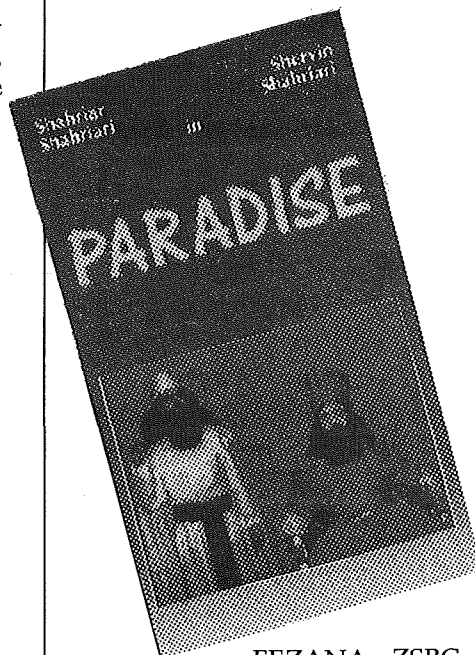
By Bhicoo Maneckshaw \$15

PARADISE Live has enthralled audiences in San Francisco, Houston, San Jose, Montreal and Karachi.

PARADISE

A historical and inspirational journey into the Zarathushti nation's past, present and future.

NOW ON VIDEO



FEZANA, ZSBC, 11 other associations in North America, and several benevolent Zarathushtis have sponsored the video production to bring the renowned creation of Shahriar and Shervin Shahriari to your living room. The premiere screening of PARADISE Video received a huge standing ovation from an energized audience in Vancouver.

Proceeds will be used to support Zarathushti talent and enterprise.

\$15.00 US, \$20 Cdn, Rs. 300.
Add \$3 shipping for the first video and \$2 per additional video.

Make checks payable to PARADISE, and mail to Paradise, #702-1725 Pendrell St., Vancouver, BC V6G 2X7, Canada.

READERS' FORUM

New Opera

I am an American composer working on a new opera about the Persian hero Rostam. I need to connect with some individuals or organizations that can help me bring this opera to the stage. The most urgent need at the moment is to make a demonstration tape of some excerpts from the opera that can be sent to prospective producers,

The work will be about three hours long and requires a full orchestra with singers and ballet.

I will appreciate if you can put me in touch with a willing benefactor or someone with fundraising skills to help raise funds for this project. All suggestions will be appreciated.

Donald C. Dilworth
webmaster@alborzi.com

On the New York Congress

I would like to offer my comments on the Eleventh North American Congress in New York in July.

On pollution. Discussing the issue of pollution, in answer to a question on how many are committed to preserving the environment, many hands went up. Have all these individuals given up using cars, air-conditioners, refrigerators and electricity? The burning of fossil fuel and CFCs are the major pollutants today. Perhaps the only persons who really do not pollute the environment in North America are communities such as the Amish! Others may please refrain from raising their hands!

On conversion. A statement was made that the "myth and stigma of conversion was invented in India only since the last 1,000 years." Nothing could be farther from the truth! *Dadistan-i-Dinik* [41.3, *SBE*, vol.18] states: "An adult is worthy of death on account of the good religion they would abandon". This was not written in India, but in Iran, in 9 CE!

If there was no "outward" conversion, how can there be any acceptance of juddins into our religion? Proselytism was unheard of in ancient Iran. There is no record of Achaemenians proselytizing. The only conversion taught by Asho Zarathushtra is the ethical one. Enigmatically, promoters of proselytism use double standards! They protest when Zarathushtis convert to other religions. If they truly believe in proselytism, they should also graciously accept that their "free will" led the Zarathushti to renounce the religion of birth!

History records some Sassanian kings, for political gains, inter-married. The consequences were disastrous. Sons of Zarathushti kings supported heretics like Mani and Mazdak. Zarathushtis lost an Empire due to internal strife. History also records groups of Zarathushtis leaving Iran to preserve their religion and identity, rather than embrace Islam. Of all these groups, only the Parsis in India survived as a religious community. Others integrated, inter-married and converted out of existence.

On menstruation. Menstruation was referred to as "sacred" since the lining of the uterus bears a foetus! Common sense dictates that because no life was created, the lining was shed. Non-life is synonymous with angra mainyu. The resulting excretion is therefore 'nasu', 'druj', caused by decomposing forces. Is there anything sacred about decomposing material?

It appears that congresses are used as a forum to ridicule and change the religion, rather than to promote and inspire the teachings which are revealed, time-tested and scientifically correct.

Should such gatherings be identified as "Zoroastrian"?

Pervin J. Mistry
Mississauga, Ontario

ZARATHUSHTI ENTERPRISE PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Positions Available

There is an opening in Rockford, Illinois for a **Mechanical Engineer** (Bachelors). Focus on materials and tool life testing. Will train. Call Urmaze at (815) 987-6469.

Software development positions at Sun Microsystems, Inc. Requires MS in EE or CS with minimum 7 years experience in system software/firmware. Call Mehrdad Khosraviani at (408) 544-0328.

It's Time to Incorporate

So you have decided to start a business venture. You have sorted out questions like what, where, how, etc. Your friends have cautioned you about the excessive paperwork if you incorporate. Others have confused you with the concept of double taxation. And you've heard of LLC. You are confused! Well, let's try to sort it out, with a disclaimer that no entity is perfect for all situations. The following forms of organizations apply to US entities.

SOLE PROPRIETORSHIP. If you do not incorporate and don't have a partner, by default you are a sole proprietor. **Legally, you and your business are the same.** Your business' net profit is taxed as your income (through Schedule C on your 1040) and you are personally liable for business debt. You need to register your business with the county clerk's office.

PARTNERSHIP. If you have partners, you could form a partnership instead of incorporating. Partnership as an entity pays no taxes. The partners will pay taxes on their personal returns. Like sole proprietorship, partners are personally liable for business liabilities of your partners. Action taken by one partner binds all partners. Your personal assets are at risk if the partnership assets have been exhausted. It is desirable that the partners have a partnership agreement. Form 1065 return provides information to IRS of annual partnership profit or loss.

CORPORATIONS. The major benefit of a corporate entity is **protection from liability and continued life.** A corporate

entity is considered a separate and distinct entity from the shareholders. The corporation, not the owners, enters into business deals, owns the assets, negotiates business loans and other business activities. Your need to file a Certificate of Incorporation with the Secretary of State. Bear in mind that *corporate protection is not absolute*. You are still responsible for your bad acts. You are held accountable for personal guarantees. The "trust fund taxes" (sales tax, withholding taxes) liabilities are still payable in spite of corporate liability protection. You have three options:

A '**C Corporation**' files and pays corporate income taxes (Form 1120). As a shareholder you risk being taxed twice: once at corporate level on the current year's income, and again, when you receive a share of the profit called a dividend.

An '**S Corporation**' is mostly suggested for small business entities and start-ups. It avoids double taxation. The S Corporation does not pay Federal Income Tax. The shareholders are taxed. The earnings and losses are passed directly through to

shareholders just as in a sole proprietorship and partnership. All shareholders must be US citizens. Some of the fringe benefits such as health insurance, group term life insurance and deferred compensation plans cannot be deducted as an expense.

A '**Limited Liability Company (LLC)**' incorporated many of the benefits of corporate structure, namely: it offers personal asset protection (liability is limited to shareholder's investment). The corporation does not pay taxes, partners do. Operating requirements are less formal than those of the corporations. However, filing requirements are quite complicated.

PROTECT YOUR PERSONAL ASSETS. One of the primary reasons for incorporating is to protect your personal assets from business liability. Follow these guidelines:

- Don't commingle cash or assets. Always operate your company as a separate entity, distinct from you.
- To the extent possible, do not sign or endorse corporate documents personally. Always include corporate name on all documents. Always sign in your corporate capacity.

● If you own multiple companies, operate all companies independently. Maintain separate records for each.

● Always maintain and document complete records.

● Always identify your business as a corporation. Put the creditors on notice that they are dealing with a corporate entity.

● Keep your corporation in good standing. Pay all taxes and file all information and statutory returns on time. If the corporation has debt, do not dissolve it voluntarily. You may be liable as a shareholder.

As the needs change, you can alter your business. To summarize, no one type of entity is appropriate for all situations. Start with the simplest form that satisfies your needs. It is easy to move along from a sole proprietorship, to LLC or S Corporation, and finally to a C Corporation.

Framroze K. Patel, CPA, MBA, CVA, has an accounting practice at 9 South Circle, Woodbridge, NJ, tel: (732)-634-8585, email: fkp1@idt.net.



Kekoo Irani, CEO

1240 Iroquois Avenue, Suite 402

Naperville, Illinois 60563

Tel: (630) 357-4122, Fax: (630) 357-4388

Email: csi11@aol.com

Web: <http://members.aol.com/csi11/>

Current Source, Inc (CSI) provides professional staffing services to assist businesses with special projects. Our services offer management a solution to current business demands. CSI recognizes the importance of a full staff to maintain business efficiency. Therefore, CSI furnishes skilled personnel assistance to businesses during temporary employee shortages.

CSI is dedicated to service

1998 Zarathushti Business Conference

**Circus Circus Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas,
Nevada, November 13 -15, 1998.**

Zarathushti businesses, entrepreneurs, prospective entrepreneurs and supporters (and their families) from around the world are invited to come and network with fellow business persons and entrepreneurs. This 1998 conference promises to be of exceptional value: for promoting your business; for persons considering setting up a new business in the future; and for promoting business as an attractive option for our younger Zarathushtis.

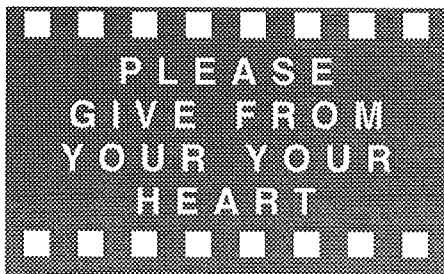
Registration: \$40 per person

Hotel: \$65 (incl. tax) per room per night.
Accommodates up to 4 persons.

Meals: \$40 per person, includes breakfasts, lunches and dinners for 2 days.

For information, call Rohinton Rivetna at (630) 325-5383. To register, contact: Cowas Patel, 1620 Benbow Street, San Dimas, CA 91773, Tel: (626) 967-0037.

**Network with Zarathushti businesses and
professionals on the Internet at
www.zbnet.com**



Donation checks, payable to "FEZANA", may be sent to the address in the appeal, or to Dinshaw Joshi, FEZANA Welfare Committee, 4515 Willard Avenue, #1609-S Chevy Chase, MD 20815, Tel: (301) 654-6250. For tax exemption eligibility please refer to FEZANA Journal [Winter 1994, p.60-61].

Give the Gift of Sound

Doctors have advised that Jennifer Daruwalla of Mumbai, 3, who was born with congenital deafness undergo a "surgical cochlear implant" at International Cochlear Implants Ltd. in NSW, Australia. The cost is A\$145,000 (US\$88,000). Please send your donations to help little Jennifer get the gift of sound. Please send your checks to FEZANA Welfare Committee.

Surat's Atash Behram

The 175-year-old Kadim Atash Behram in Surat is in dire need of major repairs. The Mobed Sahebs serving the Holy Fire are grossly underpaid. Daily essentials (*kathi*, sandalwood, *loban*) have become very expensive. Funds are also being raised for a block of apartments for mobeds, at a cost of Rs. 20 lakhs. Major contributors' names will be commemorated on a marble plaque.

"We Parsis, one and all, have to come forth to donate generously", says the appeal from the Trustees, "This we owe to our children to perpetuate these priceless institutions ..." Please send your checks to FEZANA Welfare Committee.

Parsee General Hospital

The 12th annual fund raising luncheon for the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital in Mumbai, organized by Yasmin and Jamshed Ghadiali of New York, was held in July at the Darbe Mehr in New York. Last year,

a record amount of \$16,476 was raised and sent to the hospital for ongoing improvement of its aging physical infrastructures, medical technology, and supporting the large volume of highly subsidized social welfare care. Donations may be sent to the Ghadiali's at 2686 Belcher Street, Baldwin, NY 11510, Tel: (516) 378-4516.

Message of Hope

Letter sent to Thrity Patel, who has appealed for help in fighting her cancer [FEZANA Journal, Summer 1998].

Dear Mrs. Thrity Patel:

I heard of your plight from FEZANA Journal. I wish to tell you that I too have suffered from ovarian cancer since 1986. I took a full set of chemotherapy and more surgeries and the cancer was in remission for two and a half years. Of course, the treatments were very rough on my body but somehow I went through these. Then it recurred in 1989. Once again, a full round of chemotherapy followed and later two more surgeries and I was in remission for nearly seven years.

I led a very full and happy life. Our two daughters graduated from the university and married two very nice Parsi young men and then I became a grandma for the first time, in April 1997. What joy that has brought in our whole family. But a month after that, my cancer recurred, and once more, I have now taken eleven rounds of chemotherapy. Two months ago, our youngest daughter became a mother, and to our joy, our first grandson was born.

I want to tell you this because I feel that I had some goals in my mind while taking the treatments ... If you, too, set yourself some good goals, with strong family support and devoted friends and well-wishers, this new treatment will do wonders for you. Believe me, the treatments are not easy, but soon you will see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Perviz Bejan Malbari
Concord, California

Acknowledgements

FEZANA gratefully acknowledges donations received this quarter through June 1998.

For Welfare Fund:

Jaloo Captain & family, FL (\$25) in memory of Dossa Firoze Karva of Mumbai.

Jaloo Captain, FL (\$50).

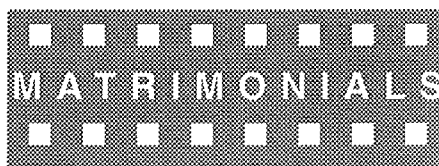
For Student Aid Fund:

Rita Engineer, FL (\$25).

For Various Appeals:

Pesi Sagar, FL (\$25).

For FEZANA Journal: Dr. & Mrs. Ardeshir Anoshiravani, CA (\$50); Dr. & Mrs. Farokh Contractor, LA (\$91); Meher Dastur, CA (\$30); Mehraban Dinyarian, TX (\$10); Jamshed Fozdar, Singapore (\$50); Burzis Kanga, LA (\$10); Hoshedar Mehta, FL (\$15); Hoshi P. Mehta, IL (\$10); Kavay Mistry, TX (\$10); Zarawar Mistry, MN (\$10); Sarosh Motivala, FL (\$11); Erach Munshi, NY (\$25); Minoo Pithawalla, NJ (\$21); Dr. Parvez Pohowalla, OR (\$50); Rostam Rostami-Asrabadi, OH (\$41); Prochy Sethna, CA (\$20); Erach Songadwala, IL (\$25); Daryoosh Vakhshoori, MA (\$90); Ratansha Vakil, TX (\$21); Dick Vazir, FL (\$51). Pesi & Aban Vazifdar, IL (\$41).



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

Female, 33, B.Com, Administrative Executive in Mumbai. Interested in reading, music, traveling, sketching, trekking, meeting people. Call Mumbai 837-0019 or brother at (514) 856-0805.

[F98-22]

Niece, 31, B.Com, petite, working in Mumbai. Call uncle at (905) 886-2885.

[F98-23]

Female, 33, 5' 6", B.Com, executive in Mumbai, outgoing, enjoys reading, music, sports, outdoors. Call sister at (732) 818-0440.

[F98-24]

Female, 35, B.Com, working in International Bank in Mumbai, friendly, pleasant personality. Call Mumbai 367-2479, or brother at (201) 626-5833. [F98-26]

Male, 41, 5' 5", manager of 7-11 store, musician, jazz, lover of nature, religious, interested in down-to-earth woman, willing to cope with needs of life. [M98-28]

Female, 31, 5' 5", in travel and tourism in UK, enjoys meeting people, cooking,

socializing, outgoing. Looking for genuine, caring, gentleman, with nice personality. Call UK 011-44-161-973-1545 or sister at (305) 865-9887. [F98-29]

Female, 29, 5'4", MBBS (OB/Gyne) working at KEM Hospital in Mumbai. Very creative, fond of drawing, sociable, Call Mumbai 011 91 22 308-1954.

[F98-30]

Female, 34, MA in English, interested in settling in USA/Canada. Call Mumbai 386-6234.

[F98-31]

Attractive girl, 30, seeks correspondence from kind, good-humored gentleman. Should be educated, financially secure, interested in family life and a westernized lifestyle. Write to: PO Box 342, 2 Bloor Street West, Ste 100, Toronto, ONT M4W 3E2, Canada. [F98-32]

PERSONALS

I am looking for an **old friend**, Rusi Jasawalla. If anyone knows his whereabouts, please contact Burjis Shroff at burjiss@aol.com.

Zarathushti couple is interested in **adopting a Zarathushti child**. Call Shirin at (602) 963-5189.

MILESTONES

Births

Aurash, a boy, to Mina and Sohrab Aidun, on March 26. Mina's parents, Paricher and Rostam Salamati live in Dallas, TX.

Rushad, a boy, to Pervin (Dholoo) and Yezdi Antia on February 26, is the newest member of the Antia family of Gaithersburg, MD. Rushad joins big sister Avan.

Danesh, a boy, to Kashmira and Mehelly Bam of Lewisville, Texas on February 11. A grandson to Tahemton and Khorshed Bam and Freney Bhada.

Alexander, a boy, to Kashmira (Divecha) and Farhad Bharucha, grandchild to Bapuji and Gulbanoo Divecha, on January 13, in Toronto.

Freya, a girl, to Laila Daroga on May 16, in Houston, Texas. Papa Raymie and brother Zal are both very happy and proud.

Maleena, a girl, to Roshni and Daren Dell, on April 29, at New Westminster, British Columbia, Canada.

Jessica Lynn Devine, a girl, to proud parents Benaifer and John Devine, sister to Sarah Nicole. Proud grandparents are Nargis Shahrugh Kermani and Helen and Jack Devine, in Maryland, on April 2.

Tara, a girl, to Mitra and Bahram Jam, of Toronto, sister to Nadia, and granddaughter to Parvin and Jamshid Jam and Katayoon and Dr. Dinyar Hakhamaneshi, on April 9.

Sinclair Pheroze John, a boy, to Kimberley and Pheroze Jeejeebhoy of Toronto, brother to Zenobia, grandchild to Olive and Khush Jeejeebhoy, and Debby and John Sinclair, on April 14.

Jay Farhad, a boy to Anita and Jamshid Karanjia, on May 31 in California, grandson to Pervez and Bejan Malbari of California and Aimee and Jehangir Karanjia of Toronto, Canada.

Gauri, a girl, to Nergish and Gautam Khandke of Toronto, on March 31.

Riaan, a boy, to Binaifer and Rustom Mirza, on April 28. Proud grandparents are Putli and Noshir Mirza and Hoshang Surti, of Toronto.

Serena, a girl, to Fiona Setna on May 9, in Houston, Texas. Papa Rustom and brother Kevin are both very happy and proud.

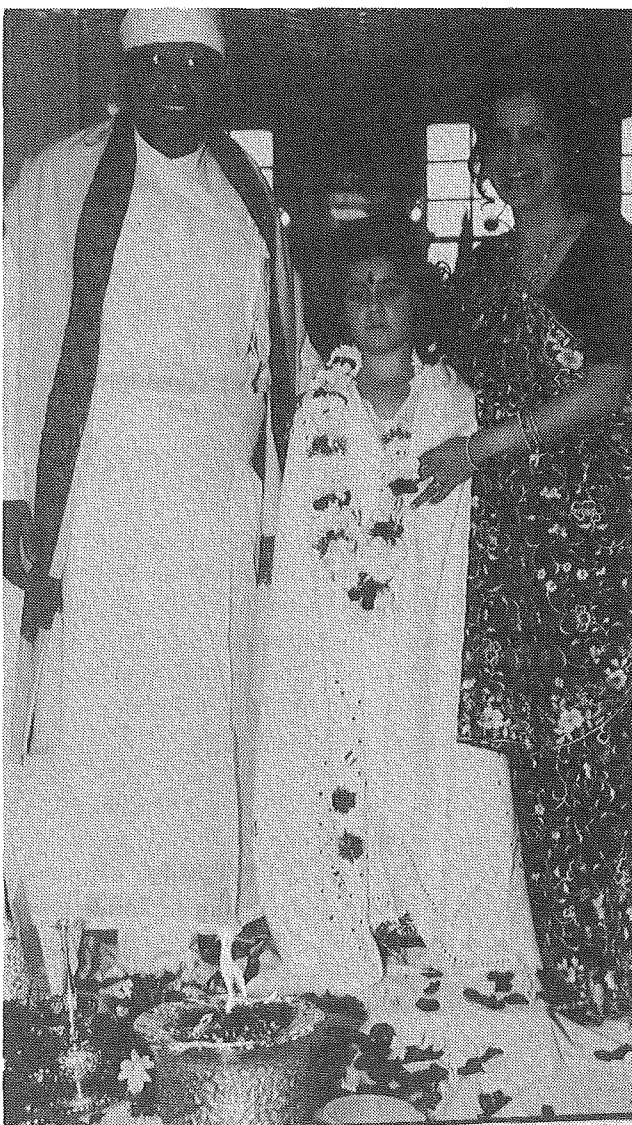
Aidan Genevieve, a girl to Khorshed and Darrin Tooth of Toronto, sister to Zara and Emma, and grand-daughter to Moti and Russi Balsara and Shirley and Clifford Tooth on March 26

Navjote, Sedreh Pushi

Zareen Bhandara, daughter of Feroze and Shernaz of Houston, TX, on June 7.

Eric Jamshed and Jennifer Roshan Cooper, children of Dr. Viraf and Mariam Cooper of Fresno, CA, on April 5.

Serena and Sonia Elavia, daughters of Swati and Tony Elavia, in Edina, Minnesota, on July 4.



Roxanne Unwalla, daughter of Dr. Khushro B. Unwalla (left) and Farah (right), at her Navjote ceremony on December 20, 1997, at the California Zoroastrian Center in Westminster. The navjote was performed by her father along with Ervads Jal Birdy, Hosang Khambatta, Minoo Katrak and Zarir Bhandara. The function was attended by over 300 Zarathushtis and non-Zarathushtis, with every attempt to recreate the traditional rituals as performed by the Parsis in Mumbai and Karachi. The guests were served ravo and mevo after the ceremony, and later the traditional dinner on banana leaves.

Tanya Mavalvala, daughter of Farhad and Mayling Mavalvala of Richmond, BC, in Karachi, Pakistan, on March 23.

Eddi Udvadia, son of Jer and Fili Udvadia of Basking Ridge, New Jersey, brother of Nina, grandson of Gool and Edul Udvadia of Chicago area. Mobeds Kersey Antia and Neriosang Karanjia officiated at the ceremony, at the Arbab Rustom Guiv Darbe Mehr in Chicago, on July 18.

Weddings

Parisa Khosravi, daughter of Parvin and Ardeshtir Khosravi of Chicago area, to **Goodarz Bozorgechami**, on April 11, in Atlanta, GA.

Yasmin Bhathena, daughter of Katy and Kersi Bhathena of Glen Ellyn, IL, to **Reji Kothari**, son of Yasmin and Kanti Kothari of Romeoville, IL on May 15.

Jarafsha Mobed, daughter of Roshni and Jamshed Mobed of Houston, Texas, with **Tehmus Mistry**, son of Thrity and Yazdi Mistry of New Zealand, on June 6.

Cyrene Billimoria, daughter of Niloufar and Jamshed Bilimoria of Ooty, India, to **Farhad Shahparast**, son of Behnaz and Sohrab Shahparast, on May 11, in Mumbai, India. The couple will make their home in Toronto.

Mithra Kadhodaian, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Hooshmand Khadkhodaian, and **Matthew Edward Zaucha**, on July 11, in Schaumburg, Illinois.

Deaths

Manchi Batliwalla, father of Viraf, Persis Banker and Meher Love, brother-in-law of Cawus and Jim Patel, in Kitchener, Ontario, on March 22.

Sheroo Keki Behramkamdin, 77, wife of Keki, mother of Bakhtawar and Behram, sister of Rustomji (Tehmi) Bilimoria, aunt of Yazdi Bilimoria and Nergish (Kayomars) Mehta of Chicago area, in Ahmedabad, on July 18.

Alamai Behramji Chinoy, mother of Roshan Patel (of Secunderabad), Feroze (of Ootacamund) and Jehangir (of Toronto), on May 6, in Secunderabad, India.

Hira Keki Contractor, mother of Perin (Khushroo) Katrak and Dinu (Benjamin) Taylor-Baptiste, on April 21, in Toronto.

Jamshed Darabshaw Doctor, husband of Amy, brother of Banoo Jal Damkevala, uncle of Rustom (Yasmin) Kevala of Maryland, Boman (Bachi) Damkevala

of Chicago and Shirin (Viraf) Kanga of Chicago, in Mumbai, on July 20.

Firouzeh Foroutan, 92, mother of Goli Farhangi of West Vancouver, and Iradj Afsari of Norway, on March 24, in North Vancouver, B.C.

Golbanoo Shahmardan Goshtasbi, 86, mother of Parizad Kavoosi, Kiandokht, Ardeshtir and Homa Shahmardan, on February 13, in San Francisco, California.

Father of Behram and Rohinton Irani. [from ZANT Newsletter].

Sohrab Cowas Irani, husband of Homai, father of Cyrus of Chicago, Darius of Los Angeles and Dr. Godafriid of London, in Los Angeles, CA, on July 7.

Parvin Sorooshian Kaboli, in California. Memorial and Porseh were held on May 31 at Redwood Shores, California. Condolences to the family – Soroosh, Parnian and Susan.

Noshir Mama, husband of Banoo of Karachi, father of Cyra Kanga of Houston, on May 11. Noshir was brought from Karachi to Houston for medical treatment, but despite all efforts, he succumbed to his illness. Cousins Shernaz and Feroze Bhandara organized the Sarosh prayers, in Houston.

Armin Medhora, 40, on June 9 in Nagpur, India. Deepest condolences to Hiraz, Rieana, Benaz of Worcester, MA, and the entire Medhora family.

Dara Rustomji Motafram, husband of Dhun, father of Feroze (Mahrukh) Motafram of Wisconsin, and Shirine (Gev) Karkaria of Montreal, in Mumbai, on July 18.

Freny F. Motiwala, sister of Thrity Dordi, aunt of Zarin (Minoo) Press of Chicago area, on June 19, in Mumbai.

Sabar Erach Patel, mother of Saker Anklesaria of Indore, India, and Poras, of Toronto, on April 22, in Toronto.

Dariush Soroush, husband of Parivash, father of Kamyar of Los Angeles, Mondana of Vancouver and Sepehr of Vancouver, in Tehran, in July.

Gool Pheroze Thanawalla, mother of Nazneen (Ehler) Spliedt, formerly of Hong Kong, Sarfaraz (Feroz) Golwalla of Karachi, and Anahita (Feroze) Sidhwa of Dallas, Texas, in Karachi, on July 30. As a Montessori school teacher for over 30 years, she touched the lives of hundreds of Parsi children in the Bai Virbaji Sopariwalla Parsi School.

Mani Phiroze Vajifdar, mother of Zarine (Jehangir) Chenoy, Shernaz Colabewala and Khushroo, mother-in-law of Eti Vajifdar and grandmother of Dini, Shara and Arash, on June 14 in Toronto.

Obituary



Taleyarkhan (white Gandhi cap) with Karar Singh (left) and L. M. Singhvi at the Parliament of World's Religions, Chicago, 1993.

PADMASHRI

HOMI J. H. TALEYARKHAN

A champion of the Parsi community in India and abroad and a patriot of India (for which he was awarded its highest civilian title of "Padmashri"), Padmashri Homi J. H. Taleyarkhan passed away at the age of 86, in Mumbai, on June 27, 1998. He is survived by his wife, Thritty.

During his long and highly successful political career Padmashri Taleyarkhan served in India as Cabinet Minister, Chief Whip of the Congress Legislative Party, Member of the Legislative Assembly for twenty years, Governor of Sikkim, Ambassador to Italy and Libya, Ambassador for Food and Agriculture organizations of the United Nations, and Senior Member of the Minorities Commission. He also took a great interest in promoting tourism and small scale industry, and rendered invaluable service to numerous humanitarian and social causes.

Mr. Taleyarkhan endeared himself to the Zarathushtis of North America during his stay in Chicago for the

Parliament of the World's Religions in 1993, in which he played a leading role. On one occasion when the Parliament proceedings were interrupted by militants in regards to the Kashmir Issue, he was the first to stand up (from his front row seat in the audience) and defend the Government of India, and present, very eloquently, the Indian position on this thorny issue.

A born orator and a prolific author, Taleyarkhan was also a great lover of flora and fauna, an environmentalist and conservationist and has also written poetry at times, such as the poems he wrote on the tragic death of his son Firdaus, in a mountain-climbing accident in the Himalayas, a few years ago.

Most recently, Taleyarkhan spearheaded the "Save Udvada" project, and was instrumental in securing a grant of Rs. 50 lakh from the Indian Government to build an embankment along the shoreline to prevent erosion and seawater ingress threatening the sanctum sanctorum of the Parsis, the *Iranshah* fire temple.

Most remarkable about Taleyarkhan was his indefatigable energy and drive, that belied his age. He was a human dynamo. He did not spare himself nor those who worked with him. Till the very end, he kept on going, from one project to another, with unabated zeal and complete dedication.

And it could well be said that he adorned everything he touched.

A great son of India, and a stalwart in the Parsi community, Padmashri Taleyarkhan has certainly left this world a little better than he found it.

By Roshan Rivetna

ARDESHIR BAZADEH (IRAN'S GREATEST DAF PLAYER)

It is sad to know that the greatest Zarathushti *Daf* player of Iran, died of cancer, on May 29 at the age of 67. He is survived by his wife Kian and his children Bahram and Homa. *Daf* or *Arabooneh* is the traditional drum-like musical instrument used at celebrations and ceremonies.

Ardeshir Bazadeh was born and lived in Khoramshah, one of the oldest Zarathushti sections of Yazd. He organized a weekly music class in Yazd, at which he taught Arabooneh to young Zarathushti men and women, and was the winner of several awards for his musical talents.

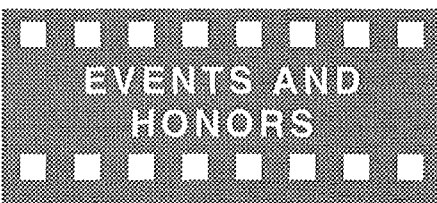
I saw Ardeshir in May 1995 in his home in Khoramshah. He mentioned that teaching young Zarathushtis is his last attempt and hope to transfer the art of playing this traditional instrument to the next generation.

Although he was not in very good shape physically, his mental and emotional condition was encouraging. He told me (never mentioning his illness or impending death): "After me, my class will spread my spirit. That is why I have to work with them even with pain and sorrow."

Once I went to one of his classes, of mostly teenage boys and girls, sitting in a circle with Ardeshir. There was a tear in my eye as I thought: "Who is going to be the next Ardeshir in transferring the art of Arabooneh?" In that circle he was clearly a link between the last generation and the next.

He was a beautiful link, full of love and happiness. He spread his love to others and finally joined our ancestors in their heavenly abode. Khodayash Biamorzad! ("God bless him!").

*Daryoush Mehrshahi
Sheffield, UK
Feraaydoon Demehri
Vancouver, BC*



TAILA ANANDASAGAR, 9, participated in the Dance Educators of America's regional competition at the Toronto International Plaza Hotel. Taila performed with a tap, ballet and acrogym group and carried away two gold and one silver awards.

The 6-member **IRANIAN MATHEMATICS TEAM** ranked first among 76 countries, winning 5 gold medals and one silver, at the international Mathematics Olympiad. The Physics Team ranked third in the Physics Olympiad.

BURZEEN KARANJAWALA, son of Eruch and Lily Karanjawala of Santa Maria, California, was selected to attend the 1998 National Youth Leadership Forum on Medicine in San Francisco. He was among 300 outstanding high school students from across America who were selected for their outstanding academic achievements and interest in medicine. Burzeen plans to study Molecular Biology at University of California at Berkeley.



DR. PROF. MEHER MASTERMOOS [photo above] was conferred a Knighthood, Grand Star of Natural Medicine in recognition of her dedicated work for promoting the cause of Alternative Medicine, through Zoroastrian College. The investiture ceremony, in April, at the Church of Mary Magdalene, in Brighton, UK, was conducted by the Royal Order of Natural Medicine, headed by H. R. H. Prince, Dr. Leonard Carr, Crown Prince of Lithuania.

HOVI SHROFF, wife of Dr. Burjis Shroff of Boca Raton, Florida, was elected president of the Florida Chapter of the American Indian Association for a 2 year term.

MARUKH TABAK, vice-principal at a Scarborough High School, won the 1998 City of Toronto Award for

Race Solutions and Harmony, for her voluntary work with the Boys Club, students and the elderly. This award was presented to a selected few by Mayor Mel Lastman on March 18.

DR. YASMIN THANAVALA, Professor of Immunology at Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo, New York was awarded the prestigious (New York State) Governor's Award for Excellence in Health Advocacy for 1998. Dr. Thanavala is also the recipient of the FEZANA Award for Excellence in Business or Profession [see page 18].

RAIYOMAND WADIA, son of Aspi and Ketty Wadia of Austin, Texas, placed within the top 10% of his high school class, and was given the President's Education Award and the UIL Scholar Award. He was a member of the Mu Alpha Theta Math club, National Honor Society, film & chess clubs, played football and participated in track and weightlifting. He became an Eagle Scout in November. Raiyomand plans to study computer engineering at the University of Texas.

SAROSH ZAIWALLA, a prominent British solicitor of Indian Zarathushti origin, was honored with the Freedom of the City of London award by the Court Chamberlain in London, recently.

We Goofed!

■ Please note that the *Guide to Historical Places in Iran* [FEZANA Journal, Summer 1998] is not available from Phiroz Dastoor. Please order from Mr. Giara in Mumbai, tel: 416-6204 or The Zoroastrian Shop in New Jersey, tel: (609) 768-8351.

■ The price of the video PARADISE was incorrectly advertised as US\$10 [FEZANA Journal, Summer 1998]. The correct price is US\$15, as advertised in this issue [page 83].

■ The phone number to order *Religion and History of the Parsees* by Meherbano Marker [FEZANA Journal, Summer 1998] was incorrect. Please order from Aban Rustomji at (281) 493-1275. ■

Neuroscientist Firdaus Dhabhar

Remarkable new research on stress and the immune system

A new theory – that mild stress enhances the body's immune system and steels the body against disease – was presented by two neuro-scientists for the first time in November 1995 at the annual meeting of the Society of Neuroscience, a gathering of nearly 23,000 brain specialists from around the world.

The two researchers are Firdaus S. Dhabhar, Research Associate at Rockefeller University's Laboratory of Neuroendocrinology, in New York, and Bruce McEwen, a leading authority on stress hormones and the brain.

This startling discovery, which is contrary to the traditionally held belief that stress weakens the immune system, was widely reported in research journals as well as in the popular press.

"Everyone knows stress is bad for you," said the report in the *New York Times* [November 21, 1995], "It weakens the immune system. It increases your susceptibility to infections and diseases ... But now it turns out ... there is another side to the story. Under certain conditions, a stressful experience can marshal immune cells to travel to distant parts of the body, ready to do battle with any foreign agent ..."

In experiments with rats, Dhabhar puts the rats into a psychologically stressful situation by squeezing them into a glass tube, while another control set of rats is not stressed. Then both sets of rats are dabbed with a noxious chemical. The results are dramatic.

Dhabhar is quoted in the *NY Times* article as saying: "The stressed animals show an inflammatory response that is three times larger than that seen in the unstressed animals."

This research has far reaching implications in the world of medicine. Firdaus has published his findings widely in peer-reviewed journals and at conferences and symposia. His work has been duly recognized with numerous awards, citations, fellowships and grants. His doctoral thesis on stress-induced enhancement of immunity, was selected from nationwide nominations to receive the

Council of Graduate Schools' "Distinguished Dissertation Award".

"His thesis represents very creative and novel thinking" says the head of Rockefeller University's Neuroendocrinology Lab, "It is elegant, supported by hard evidence, and

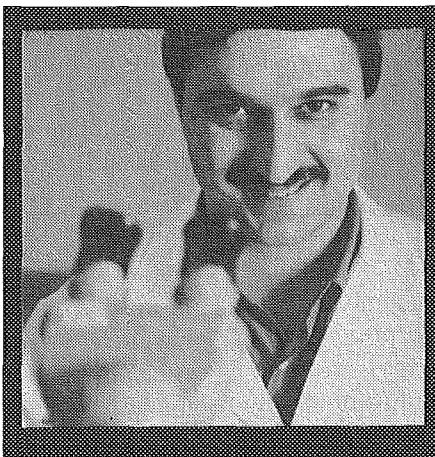
makes a strong point about a topic that most people are interested in."

Firdaus Dhabhar, son of Soli and Thrity Dhabhar of Ahmedabad and Mumbai, came to the US in 1986 on a scholarship from Dartmouth College and Trusts in Mumbai. While at Dartmouth, he was on the Solar Racing Team, that built a solar powered car and "had a wonderful time" racing in the Tour de Sol, a solar car rally held annually in Switzerland.

Dhabhar is not married, but is "looking to be". He enjoys photography, hiking, travel, percussion and people. As a researcher in biological connections between emotions, stress and health, he tries to apply his findings to his personal life. "Keep things in perspective as you go through life," he says:

"Don't live in the past, and don't keep waiting for the future; living with good thoughts, good words and good deeds, enjoy the present!" ■

- By Roshan Rivetna



FEZANA

FEDERATION OF ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA

<http://fezana.org>

President **Framroze K. Patel** 9 South Circle (732)634-8585 president@fezana.org
Woodbridge, NJ 07095 F (732)636-5957

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

Chairperson Vacant

Editor-in-chief **Roshan Rivetna** 5750 S. Jackson St. (630) 325-5383 rivetna@lucent.com
Hinsdale, IL 60521

N.A./FEZANA News **Mahrukh Motafram** 2390 Chanticleer (414) 821-5296 mahrukh@aol.com
Brookfield, WI 53045

Editors **Tanaz Billimoria** (714) 573-3954 tanaz@ea.oac.usf.edu
Adel Engineer (630) 983-7792
Aaron Rustom (512) 833-0824 Arustom007@aol.com
Jamshed Udvadia (517) 393-1021 jrudvadia@phonetech.com

Business Manager **Jamshed Gandhi** (415) 905-0330 rashna@aol.com

Subscription Manager **Mehrdad Khosraviani** (408) 544-0328 mehrdad.khosraviani@sun.com

Advertisement Rates

	Per Issue	4 Issues
Full Page	\$200	\$600
1/2 Page	\$100	\$300
1/4 Page	\$ 50	\$150
1/8 Page	\$ 30	\$100

To place an advertisement in or to sponsor an issue of the FEZANA Journal, please write to or call the Business Manager:

Jamshed B. Gandhi, Tel: (415) 905-0330 (office)
Bertorelli & Co. Fax: (415) 512-7742
Suite 1700, 150 Spear Street e-mail: rashna@aol.com
San Francisco, CA 94105

ere

FEZANA Journal ° Subscription/Address Change Form

Make additional copies of this form as needed, and mail with check or money order in US\$ to:

Rustom Kevala, Treasurer, FEZANA

8812 Tuckerman Lane, Potomac, MD 20854, USA.

Make check/money order to: FEZANA

Subscription Rates (4 issues/year) Years (3 max.)

USA	US\$10/year	_____
Canada	US\$15/year	_____
Overseas (Air Mail)	US\$25/year	_____

Personal Subscription ☐ New ☐ Renewal
Gift Subscription ☐ New ☐ Renewal

☐ Address Change

Attach current address label, if available

Mr./Ms./Dr.

circle Last name First name Middle Initial Tel. No.
Street Apt. No.
City State/Province Zip/PIN code
Country E-mail address

Amount enclosed: Subscription US\$ _____ Additional Donation US\$ _____ Total US\$ _____



1219 Elderberry Drive
Sunnyvale, CA 94087

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
NAPERVILLE, IL
PERMIT NO. 176

ADDRESS SERVICE
REQUESTED

TO:

Mr. Hoshang T. Sethna
2603 W. Pebble Beach
Missouri City, TX 77459
Expires Now

----- PUBLICATION OF THE FEDERATION OF ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA -----

FEZANA JOURNAL *is the official publication of the
Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America*

FEZANA JOURNAL is published four times a year, for the purpose of disseminating news and views, as well as educational and inspirational articles about the Zarathushti religion, culture and practices as they pertain to Zarathushtis in North America. The views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of FEZANA.

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 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. All submissions must have the author's name and address. Anonymous letters will not be published. The editors reserve the right to accept or reject articles, letters, announcements and advertisements, hold them for future use, and edit them for clarity or to meet space constraints. The editors further reserve the right to publish any materials sent to them, with due acknowledgment, unless specifically requested otherwise. The official language of FEZANA, and that of the Journal is English.