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ZOROASTRIAN RELIGIOUS SCRIPTURES GATHAS, YOUNG AVESTA AND PAHLAVI LITERATURE

aat deesh avaedhayamahi Zarathustrahe Spitamahe ashono
yasnaicha vahmaicha khshnaothraicha frasastayaecha.

*Then with worship, homage, pleasure and praise
I dedicate this to truthful Zarathushtra Spitama.*

[Avesta, translation by Pallan R. Ichaporia]

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I thank Editor-in-Chief Mrs. Roshan Rivetna for inviting me to be Guest Editor for this issue of FEZANA Journal. Some time back, I had thought of declining with respect, this offer because of my heavy involvement in extensive scholarly works on Avesta and other publications with Prof. Helmut Humbach, not to speak about editing of some Pahlavi literature with Prof A. Panaino and Prof W. Malandra. I thank my colleagues in the *Zoroastrian Education and Research Society* who have persuaded me to accept this Guest Editorship.

The subject selected for this issue of FEZANA Journal is "Zoroastrian Scriptures: the Gathas, Younger Avesta and Pahlavi Literature".

The subject is vast and had to be accommodated within the allocated pages. I have done my best to briefly touch upon the various aspects of the religious dogmas, doctrines, creeds, convictions, rituals and theology in the restricted space and time at my disposal.

I am overwhelmed by the numerous articles sent to me from members of the community, I thank them for their enthusiasm, but unfortunately due to lack of space as noted, some could not be included.

I have steered the mid-course in selecting the articles. Among the knowledgeable learned non-specialist writers whose articles are accepted, readers will find modernists and the followers of traditions of the scriptures and rituals. Readers will also treasure articles from two practicing priests as well as a very devout believer in the occult and mystical aspect of Zoroastrianism. I also heartily thank scholars who have sent, at my request, articles of a very high standard and I am sure the readers will enjoy going through them as well as the articles from the proficient members of the community.

I have started with a *historical review* of the corpus of Zoroastrian literature:

- Dr. Pallan R. Ichaporia, "Journey of the Avesta".

Broadly speaking, I have then classified the articles as follows:

Views of Scholars:

- Dr. Pallan R. Ichaporia, "Gathic Teachings in the Young Avesta".
- Dr. Pallan R. Ichaporia, "Ethics in Zoroastrianism".
- Prof. Dr. Helmut Humbach, "The Gathas and the other Old Avestan Texts".
- Prof. Dr. William Malandra, "On Reading The Avesta".
- Prof. Dr. Jamsheed Choksy, "The Zoroastrian Doctrine of Sacral Kingship".

Views of Zoroastrian Priests:

- Ervad Jal Birdy, "On the Jashan Ritual".
- Ervad Yezdi Antia, "The Ahuna Vairya, the Ashem Vohu and the Yenghe Hatam"

Views of learned Zoroastrians:

- Behram Deboo, "Views on the Care of a Living Soul"
- Adi Davar, "The Gathic People, their Successors and their Fundamental Belief".
- Sarosh Manekshaw, "On Zarathushtra and his Gathas".

Views of a Zoroastrian versed in mystical and occult aspects of the religion.

- Pervin Mistry: "The Holy Avesta".

All the above articles have thoroughly and carefully examined different aspects of Zoroastrianism. In editing I have only intervened to avoid discrepancies and inconsistencies in the texts to enhance the literary value. The views expressed by the authors are their own, and not necessarily mine.

The works of the various writers are presented to the readership with the ardent hope of enriching their understanding of the great religion of Zarathushtra.

I wish FEZANA Journal all success in the coming years. May it grow and prosper!

Pallan R. Ichaporia
Guest Editor



Getting to know the new Publications Committee Chair

FEZANA Journal welcomes Khorshed Jungalwala as the newly appointed chairperson of FEZANA's Information Receiving and Dissemination Committee (otherwise known as the Publications Committee) under whose aegis this Journal is published.

Khorshed, a contracts specialist with the Concord Insurance Group, and her husband, Firoze, a neuro-scientist at Harvard, have been pillars of the Boston area Zarathushti community, since they came to the US in 1970. They were instrumental in the founding of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater Boston Area and Khorshed served as its president from 1992 - 1996. She is a familiar face at FEZANA AGMs, representing ZAGBA and FEZANA's Historic Preservation and Research Committee.

As one of three Board members of the Zoroastrian Educational and Research Society (ZERS), Khorshed was involved, along with ZAGBA, in the organization of the First International Avesta Conference, in the Boston area in 1997, the Gatha Conference in Houston in 1996, and the next Avesta conference in Alberta in September 1999. She is also co-chair of the Program Committee for the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress in Houston in the year 2000.

Khorshed has been the invited speaker at conferences and congresses, her special interest being in archeology in the Central Asian republics. She has made two visits to archeological sites there and written several articles on the subject.

As a director of the Third World Scholars Consortium in Massachusetts, Khorshed has organized conferences, inviting guest speakers in religion, languages and philology. She also arranges seminars on the Zarathushti religion at Harvard and is a very active member of the Harvard Gatha Study Group.

Khorshed's passion and talents also spill out in the musical world. An LTCL from Trinity College of Music, London, in Piano and Voice, she has performed with the Cambridge Philharmonic in England. She is an ardent opera fan. She is currently President of Metrowest International Concerts Association, which is an affiliate of Columbia Artists management in New York.

Khorshed's daughter Ferzin Patel is a psychologist in New York, and son Jehangir is founder and partner of a computer consulting firm, *Powerdog Industries* in Sudbury, MA.

Very excited about her new appointment, one of Khorshed's goals is to increase FEZANA Journal readership to every Zarathushti household in North America, and in other countries as well, especially Iran. She would also like to encourage subscriptions to FEZANA Journal from academic circles and university libraries.

While she feels the standard of the Journal is very high, she would like to see more diversified perspectives on the religion, as well as broaden areas in the arts, literature, poetry and science, as well as business and enterprise as it relates to our religion and community. She would like to see more articles from young writers.

A multi-talented and committed individual, an excellent manager and organizer, and very personable too, Khorshed will certainly be an asset to the Journal team. - *Roshan Rivetna*

FROM THE PRESIDENT

FEZANA being a federation of Zarathushti associations, must keep its focus on two elements. One, our Zarathushti commitment and heritage; and two, the diversity of our associations. To highlight this, we should constantly consider the religious vision of our prophet which undoubtedly is our most precious heritage. Next, we should be able to draw from this prophetic religious vision the way of life which is the pillar of our faith.

We should make these commitments so widely known that they are taken as accepted aspects of our life and behavior, not only on this continent, but throughout the world. This is our common commitment and each community may add to it as it sees fit.

One way in which our religiosity is clearly demonstrated is by recitation of our prayers. This can be seen in three phases.

In general, meetings, if they are business meetings, need only the briefest indication of our faith, and on such occasions the recitation of Yatha Ahu Vairyo and Ashem Vohu would be appropriate.

At a meeting when general religious matters are being discussed, it would be appropriate to recite any or all of the Manthric prayers of our faith, viz. Yatha Ahu Vairyo, Ashem Vohu, Yenghe Hatam and Airyema Ishyo. For this purpose it would be useful to prepare a flyer with the prayers and their translations.

At meetings when our own religious commitment is the subject of consideration, an appropriate introductory recitation would be the *Jasa me Avanghahe Mazda* with its translation, so that we understand what we

are committing ourselves to. As you know, this is Declaration of Faith and announces our commitment to it.

This is my deeply-held conviction, as I have lived my earlier years in an institution where prayers and religious recitation were part of my daily life. Not only have I been inspired by the moral directives of our faith, but also by the restorative force of our prayers.

Whatever functions FEZANA may be called upon to perform, I could think of nothing more significant than the members of the faith living the religious life. Thus we may justifiably consider ourselves Athraavan (righteous) souls belonging to the faith brought by Asho Zarathushtra, and known as the Religion of Good Conscience.

Let me conclude with an affirmation of my Mazdayasni Zarathushti faith [*from Jasa me Avanghahe Mazda Fravarane – Declaration of Faith*]:

I am a Mazdayasni, a Mazdayasni according to Zarathushtra. Thus firmly do I declare my faith.

I acknowledge my faith in Good Thoughts, well conceived.

I acknowledge my faith in Good Words, well spoken.

I acknowledge my faith in Good Deeds, well done.

I acknowledge my acceptance of the Good Religion of Mazda, that which ends strife and disarms violence, that which makes us righteous and self reliant. It is the religion of those that have been and that shall be, the noblest, the best and sublimest – the religion of Ahura Mazda brought to us by Zarathushtra.

All good derives from Ahura Mazda. Such is the declaration of the Mazdayasni religion.

Framroze K. Patel
President, FEZANA

FEZANA Committee Appointments

As required by Article VI, Section 5 of FEZANA's constitution, I am happy to announce the FEZANA committee chairpersons for the next three years, effective July 1, 1998. The secretary, Dr. Mehran Sepehri invited volunteers to serve on the various committees. The final list of chairpersons is the result of decisions taken by the FEZANA president in consultation with fellow executive officers.

The role of the committees is to work closely with the president to execute and implement the purpose of the federation. Hence, it is imperative that the chairperson should have the freedom to select the members of his/her committee. A complete list of volunteers was sent to the chairpersons with their appointment announcement. The chairpersons may appoint members from the list.

Framroze K. Patel

FEZANA COMMITTEES 1998 - 2001

Planning and Coordination *	Dr. Ardeshtir Anoshiravani, California
Zoroastrian Unity and Welfare *	Kaemarz Dotiwala, Texas
Funds and Finance *	Dr. Keikhosrow Harvesf, Florida
Information Receiving and Receiving (Publications) *	Khorshed Jungalwala, Massachusetts
Census and Survey *	Rashna Ghadialy, Illinois
Zoroastrian Youth of North America (ZYNA) *	Mehernosh Mody, Massachusetts
Education, Conference and Scholarship *	Dr. Lovji Cama, New Jersey
Congress *	Jimmy Mistry, Ontario
Serving Small Groups of Zarathushtris in North America *	Mez Birdie, Florida
Business Network **	Farshid Salamati, California
Historical Research and Preservation **	Dr. Jehan Bagli, New Jersey
ZYNA - Youth Congress **	Mazda Antia, Illinois
ZYNA - Sports **	Bahar Mojgani, California
Directory Project **	Dr. Noshir Langrana, New Jersey
External Affairs **	Rohinton R. Rivetna, Illinois
Public Relations **	Sarosh Sukhia, Virginia

* Standing Committee

** Ad-hoc Committee

Standardized Nomenclature for FEZANA and the World Congress 2000

By Jamshed Udvadia
Lansing, Michigan

At the Colorado AGM (August 1997) the Board of Directors of FEZANA issued a recommendation to standardize the nomenclature for the followers of the religion of Zarathushtra, in order to avoid the various forms that were being used and the consequent confusion among our own youth, as well as others who take an interest in the Zarathushti community and its proceedings.

The standards accepted were: *Zarathushti* and *Zarathushti Din*. This is because both the words derive from the name of the prophet *Zarathushtra*. Because Zoroastrian and Zoroastrianism derive from Zoroaster, which is a Greek and Western corruption of the name of our prophet, it was thought desirable to revert to the more authentic nomenclature.

FEZANA Journal has already implemented this policy. These standards are used except where the author specifically requests otherwise. It is time for the parent organization, FEZANA, to change its name to Federation of *Zarathushti* Associations of North America. This might encourage the local member organizations to make the change in their names also.

The announcement of the World Congress 2000 to be held in Houston, had been labeled "World Zarathushti Congress 2000" in the Spring 1998 issue of FEZANA Journal. For some reason, the announcements in the Summer 1998 and Fall 1998 issues reverted to naming it "Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress" though the logo says "A Zarathushti Odyssey - 2001".

I think it is time we gave up this double reference – Zarathushti and Zoroastrian – for several reasons:

- We should be true to our origins and not make compromises to accommodate Westerners who might be more familiar with the Zoroastrian appellation.

- This Congress will usher in the new millennium. Let us begin it on the right foot.

- Since most of the literature has not been printed it is not too late to make the change right now.

- The Houston community recently inaugurated its community center as the *Zarathushti* Heritage and Cultural Center. It is fitting therefore, that the congress in Houston be also named the “Seventh World Zarathushti Congress”.

Some members of the community opine that since we referred to the previous congresses as Zoroastrian, that name should be continued. Just because we have erred in the past, is no reason to continue that error today.

Some of the other objections are dealt with below:

- *We will not be recognized under the appellation Zarathushti.*

If the world recognized the change to Mumbai from Bombay, to Shri Lanka from Ceylon, to Islam from Mohammedanism, I am sure they would have no difficulty in adjusting to Zarathushti from Zoroastrian. If necessary, we can always use the word Zoroastrian in parenthesis thus: Zarathushti (Zoroastrian) the first time in any document. From then on, it would not be necessary.

- *We need to set up a worldwide committee to decide on the change.*

It would be a Herculean task to merely ‘set up’ a worldwide committee, let alone get Zarathushtis from every corner of the world to agree on any topic.

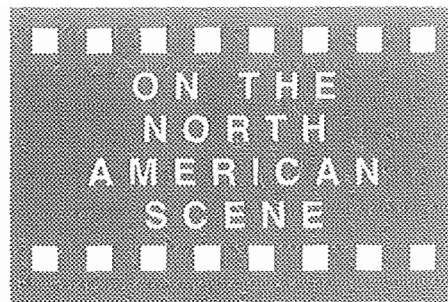
- *FEZANA and ZAH (sponsors of the WZC 2000 congress) do not have the authority to change the name.*

This is not a question of changing the name – we just need to revert to the authentic form of the name, from a Westernized corruption of the same. Besides there is dichotomy, in calling the prophet Zarathushtra and then referring to his followers as Zoroastrian. This would be more difficult for the non-Zarathushti world to grasp.

The organizers of the WZC 2000 have not only the right, but the duty to call the congress by its authentic name. The suggestion to use Zoroastrian in parenthesis will accommodate the few who might not recognize Zarathushti as being the authentic form of Zoroastrian.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, used to say: “Success always goes to those who dare and act – it seldom goes to the timid.” FEZANA, organizers of the World Congress 2000 and all Zarathushtis – it is time to act. If those in the public eye implement this nomenclature, it will soon become standard usage. ■

FEZANA made the recommendation for standardization, as the result of a paper “Zarathushtra, his Religion and Its Followers–Standardization of Names and Spellings” presented by Jamshed R. Udvadia at its 1997 AGM. It will be published in the Spring 1999 FEZANA Journal and is also available from the author at jrudvadia@phonetech.com]



Walkathon to Niagara

On August 6, a small group of Iranian Cultural Kanoun members from the Toronto area, embarked on a trek by foot to the Niagara Falls. They braved four days of rain and scorching sun over 150 km before reaching their destination. Many others joined the determined walkers on their last 30 km stretch.

During their trek, the walkers collected and disposed recyclable garbage en route, and endeavored to reveal our Zarathushti identity to interested by-passers. Kanoun members gathered pledges to raise money for compiling books and refurbishing the ZSO library.

Congratulations to all who participated, in particular, Jehangir Behboodi, Roshni and Farshid Bastani. Special thanks to Jehangir Behboodi and Parviz Rashidi for making this event a success.

- By Pervin Mistry

Celebration of Abangan Festival

On November 15th, the Persian Culture and Civilization Group at the California Zoroastrian Center presented the national, cultural and religious festival of Abangan, as a one-day event with Persian dance, poems and talks. This was the third in a series of festivals in an ongoing effort to educate interested persons about the richness of the Persian culture and the depth and righteousness of the Good Religion of Zarathushtra. Traditional Persian lunch was served. Contact K. Eddie Mehrfar at emehrfar@shl.com.

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Signal Honor for Kaikhosrov D. Irani

Class of 1955 endows \$2 million K. D. Irani Chair of Philosophy at City College, New York.

On October 8th, Professor Kaikhosrov Dinshaw Irani was signally honored by having a chair of philosophy established in his name at City College, City University of New York.

A fund of two million dollars from alumnus of the Class of 1955, endowed the "K. D. Irani Chair of Philosophy" for yearly appointments of visiting professors.

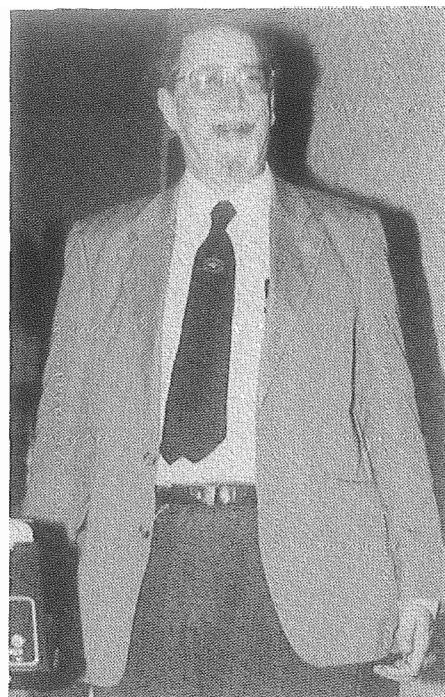
At the announcement of the endowment, the Dean of Humanities, Dr. Martin Tamny felicitated Prof. Irani with the following words:

"For thousands of students who graduated the College during the more than 40 years that Prof. Irani has taught here, he has been the most memorable teacher they have known. The rigor of his thought, the provocativeness of his ideas, his dedication of the mind, and his profound humanity has stayed with his students throughout the years.

"All those students would join me in thanking the donor for honoring Prof.

Irani in this wonderful way. Through his generosity the Philosophy Department will be able to bring the most renowned philosophers of the day to the College. "The presence of these visiting scholars will for ever make City College one of the centers of the philosophical world, and help continue the traditions of excellent teaching and philosophical research that has characterized Prof. K. D. Irani's tenure at this institution."

In 1996, at the Tenth North American Zoroastrian Congress, in San Francisco, FEZANA recognized Prof. Irani's singular achievements with the Lifetime Achievement Award. Dinshaw Joshi, Chair of the Awards Committee described Kaikhosrov as: "A rare treasure whom Ahura Mazda has bestowed upon us ... a Plato among living Zarathushti philosophers and a Socrates to whom Zarathushtis in North America and indeed the world have turned, for scholarly knowledge and wisdom of



our faith ... a tireless ambassador who has selflessly traversed the globe to advance the knowledge of our faith, religion and community."

Zarathushtis around the world can rejoice at the singular honor bestowed upon Prof. Irani by his students and peers, and the recognition that this has brought, in perpetuity, to the Zarathushti community. ■



Left, members of the Valley 3, Mitra and Team Iran Zarathushti soccer teams that took first, second and third place respectively at the First Zarathushti Soccer Tournament August 8th, at Mason Park in Irvine, California. Eight soccer teams participated.

Mehraban Homai, president of the Board of Directors of the Southern California Zoroastrian Center, presented the Zoroastrian Unity Cup and gold medals to the first placed Valley 3 team. The FEZANA Sports Committee, organizers of games, plan to make this an annual event. For information contact Bijan Khosraviani at (408) 244-4602.

Earth receives standing ovation at Toronto Film Festival

Sidhwa, front, on the set of Earth.

Earth, the film adaptation of Bapsi Sidhwa's acclaimed novel *Cracking India* (also known as *Ice-Candy Man*) received a standing ovation from a crowd of over 1500 viewers at the Toronto Film Festival on September 16. It was one of 14 films selected for special screening at the prestigious Elgin Theater. Made by Canadian director Deepa Mehta (whose film *Fire* won international accolade last year and who hopes to complete the trilogy with *Water*) is set against the tumultuous backdrop of the India-Pakistan partition of 1947, as seen through the eyes of a Parsee girl, Lenny, played by Maia Sethna.

Superstar Aamir Khan, who plays Ice-candy-man and other leading actors: the radiantly beautiful Nandita Das, who plays the *Ayah* and Rahul Khanna, son of popular Indian filmstar Vinod Khanna, had flown over from India for the occasion.

They were the center of interest at the lively reception hosted by the distributors to celebrate the screening. Among other celebrities at the glamorous occasion, one noticed Indian superstar Vinod Khanna, artist F. M. Hussain and the Consul Generals of Pakistan and India.

Director Deepa Mehta, who was clearly a favorite with the Canadian audience, introduced the cast and author Bapsi Sidhwa to thunderous applause. The film was produced by a Canadian production team.

Earth received good writeups in the Canadian papers. The *Toronto Star* movie columnist wrote:

ethna "Despite the context of epic horror, the film-maker's tale of a Parsee household in Lahore, with its star-crossed lovers, is, at times, as intimate as the story Mehta told in *Fire* ... The 'train of death' (bearing bloody corpses as 10 million Hindus flee Pakistan for India) is one of many arresting scenes in *Earth*,

which tells the story of dislocation and betrayal through the eyes of an 8-year-old girl from a wealthy, non-partisan Parsee family, who limps from polio ... in fact she is Bapsi Sidhwa, the author of *Cracking India*, an autobiographical novel published in 1992."

"I wish Deepa had not cut so many scenes I'd seen earlier in the rough-edit," laments Bapsi, "but she explained she had to because the western audience cannot sit through more than 2 hours. She adds: "Actually I can't tell what the film is like anymore. Other opinions will now influence mine for some time. The same happens with my writing – I can assess it only after all opinions are in and some time has elapsed."

Earth is due for general distribution in February 1999, and had its London premiere on November 8. "It's a pity I couldn't go," says Sidhwa, "Well, life goes on, and these are the occasions that perk one up." ■

- Compiled by Roshan Rivetna

The Silk Road Tour

In a seven week tour, billed as The Silk Road Tour, that took them to 14 US and Canadian cities this October, the Indo-Persian “Ghazal Ensemble” created music that held their audiences spell-bound. Three virtuoso musicians – Kayhan Kahlor, a master of the ‘kamancheh’ (spike fiddle) joined Shujaat Husain Khan on the sitar and Swapan Chaudhuri on the ‘tabla’ (drums) creating improvisations linking their two classical styles. The synthesis of these two great cultures, India and Persia, started thousands of years ago binding their spiritual and social lives together inextricably.

*If you stand straight, do
not fear a crooked shadow.*

- Chinese proverb

Conversations with a High Priest

Dastoorji Kotwal shares his thoughts and observations on perpetuating Zarathushti religious practices and places of worship in North America

By Rohinton M. Rivetna
Hinsdale, Illinois

From June 2nd through August 9th this year, Dastoorji (Dr.) Firoze M. Kotwal, High Priest of the H. B. Wadia Atash Bahram in Mumbai, accompanied by his wife Navaz, was on a lecture tour of the US, visiting Los Angeles, Indianapolis, Tampa, New York (for the North American Congress) and Chicago. Dastoorji delivered a 5-week series of lectures in Chicago on topics related to Prophet Zarathushtra, the Avesta and Zarathushti ceremonies and rituals.

This article is a summary of extended conversations with Dastoorji during his stay in Chicago, giving his thoughts and observations on matters pertaining to religious practices in North America. His recommendations are generally based on guidance from the scriptures and on traditional practices and customs.

INSTALLATION OF A DADGAH AND YAZESHNE GAH IN NORTH AMERICA

Believing that the imperative for the continued spiritual life of a Zarathushti community is a spiritual center with a continuously burning fire, Dastoorji recommends that we in North America install a continuously burning 'dadgah' fire in a specially built 'gumbad' (sanctum sanctorum), with an adjoining 'yazeshne gah' area for performing ceremonies.

For the consecration of the dadgah, upon construction of the gumbad, a mobed should perform the 'baj' ceremony in honor of Sraosh Yazad, tending a fire in an afargan (fire vase) within the gumbad for three consecutive days. On the fourth day, for the installation ceremony, the fire is moved temporarily to the adjoining yazeshne gah area where several



Dastoorji Kotwal and wife Navaz, in Chicago

mobeds do vigil. At the appointed time, the fire is carried in procession to the gumbad reciting Yatha Ahu Vairyo, and installed in the permanent afargan.

After the fire is installed, the mobed who performed the baj may perform the first 'bui' ceremony and then lead the congregation of mobeds and behdins in supplication with the recitation of the Atash Niyaeshe.

The holy fire is thus dedicated to the Zarathushti community for its spiritual progress connecting the fire with the spiritual fire which burns eternally in the abode of Ahura Mazda. Thereafter devotees may send their sincere prayers to Him through the consecrated holy fire for ages to come.

The fire in the gumbad may be tended by a mobed twice a day in the 'havan' and 'uzirehn' gehs, if all five watches of the day are not possible.

The adjoining yazeshne gah area is built for the performance of baj, afringan, farrokshi and satum cere-

monies. A demonstration of the Yasna (Yazeshne), Vendidad, Visperad and other inner ceremonies may also be given in the enclave for the education and knowledge of those traditional North American Zarathushtis interested in knowing and learning these rituals.

The whole structure should be dedicated exclusively for the use of traditional Zarathushtis only.

PARTICIPATION BY THE CONGREGATION (MAJLIS) IN CEREMONIES

Observing that in North America, Zarathushtis often congregate to recite prayers (such as the Atash Niyaeshe) or to observe the performance of a ceremony (such as a jashan) by the mobeds, Dastoorji endorses the re-introduction of ancient practices which incorporate participation by the 'majlis' (congregation). Participation could be in the form of recitation of certain passages by the congregation

along with the priests, or with certain devotional movements at appropriate points in the ceremony. We look to our mobeds to develop this practice further.

DEVELOPMENT OF MOBEDS FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE

Dastoorji concurs that a well-rounded priest is one (1) who has been ordained with the navar and martab ceremonies, (2) who has facility with the scriptures gained under the watchful supervision of a learned mobed, and (3) some knowledge of ministry of the community gained through reading or attending courses at a non-denominational seminary or a college offering divinity studies.

For the navar-martab ceremonies, an adolescent should learn the avestan text of Yazeshne and the Vendidad (for martab) and undergo the ceremony in India or Iran. It includes a 'bareshnum' (retreat) for 9 nights.

DEVELOPMENT OF A CADRE OF LEARNED PRIESTS AND SCHOLARS

Over the centuries, the community has produced numerous learned priests. The essential contributing factors towards producing a cadre of learned priests are an inspired mobed and an inspired community. Study of the scriptures by learned priests and transmission of that knowledge to behdins is a continuous process, without which our community can very easily spiral downwards.

A learned priest is one who is engaged continuously in the study of the scriptures. He is a student throughout his life and communicates his learning to the laity. Since this is not a part-time activity, an inspired mobed should be engaged in these studies in North America. For this purpose, an endowment must be

created, to be held by a Zarathushti organization or a university. Such a mobed would over time, earn the respect of the community and possibly, eventually earn recognition as a dastoor or a dastooran dastoor.



Dastoorji defines an 'ervad' as an ordained priest; a 'mobed' as a practicing priest; and a 'dastoor' as a priest appointed by the community in appreciation of his learning and service to the community.

There are many scholars of the Zarathushti faith, both Zarathushti and non-Zarathushti. Continued encouragement of these scholars is essential. We must bring these scholars together periodically forming an academy of scholars. While there are

numerous scholars in the making, to be recognized as a member of the academy, a student must have engaged in independent research and have produced works that have received peer recognition and acclaim.

ZARATHUSHTI PRACTICES IN THE HOME

A Zarathushti home in North America should have a prayer corner with a continuously burning fire or a lamp, preferably an oil lamp (however, even a small, appropriately designed electric lamp may serve), Khordeh Avestas, caps, spare kushtis, photos of Zarathushtra and of close, departed relatives.

At a minimum, the family must come together to recite prayers twice a day after performing the 'padyab' (washing of the exposed parts of the body for ritual purity) and kushti. Prayers may consist of the performance of the kushti and the daily 'farazyat' (obligatory prayers): Sraosh Baj, the appropriate 'geh' prayers, Atash Niyaeshe, Khorshed and Meher Niyaeshes, Vispa Humata, Char Disha-no Namaskar and Tandarosti.

Parents must be the first teachers, and instill the prayer habit in their children. Festivals and ceremonies should be conducted in a prayerful atmosphere and children should be taught to participate with reverence.

PREPARATION FOR NAVJOTE

Pre-navjote religious education should include:

- ◆ Basic knowledge of the main tenets of the faith, principal observances, practices and customs.
- ◆ Recitation of Yatha Ahu Vairyo, Ashem Vohu, Kem na Mazda, Hormazd Khodae, Jasa me Avanghahe Mazda, Din-no-kalmo, Jamvani baj, Tandarosti and 101 names of Ahura Mazda.

● Performance of kushti padyab, and knowledge of its significance.

● An understanding of the above prayers. Optionally, the child may learn the literal Avesta translation of the words in each prayer.

After the Navjote ceremony, the child may affirm the main tenets of the Zarathushti faith before the congregation.

Non-Zarathushtis may be permitted to observe the Navjote ceremony since it is not a consecration ceremony.

DISPOSAL OF THE DEAD AND ASSOCIATED CEREMONIES

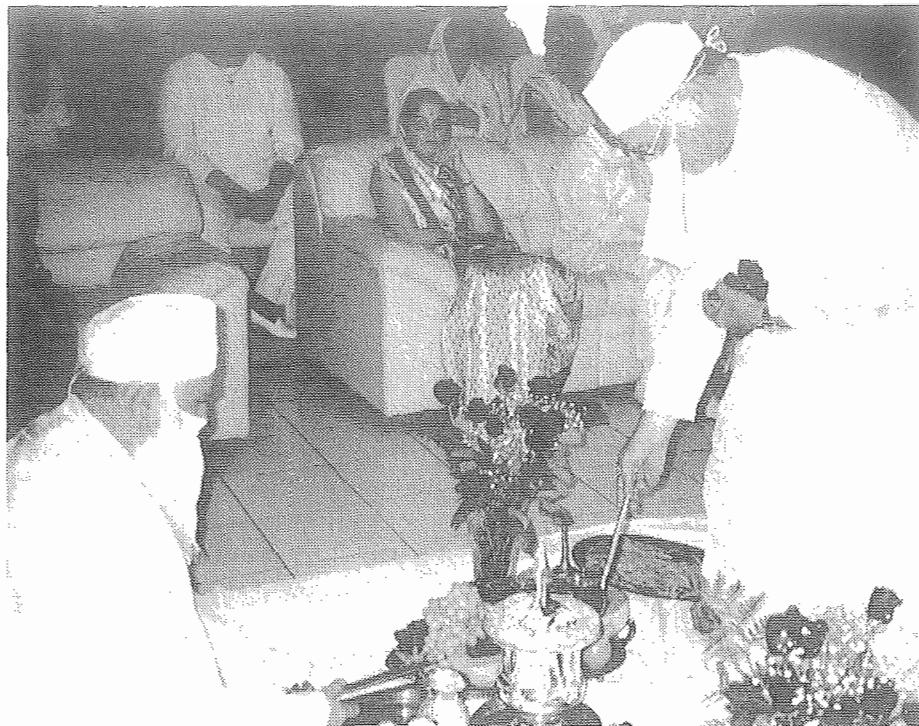
There is no question that if 'dakhme-nashini' facilities are available in an area within a few hours travel time, the best method of disposal of the body (or a limb or other part of the body) should be dakhme-nashini, within 24 hours. However, if such a facility is not available, then the method of choice should be cremation over burial, as Zarathushti tenets forbid the preservation of dead matter ('nasa-neganih'). Burial may be chosen only as a last resort.

While the body is held for the assemblage to gather, the body may be washed, attired in white clothes, with a sudreh and kushti and white trousers and draped with a white cloth. Mobed(s) and close relatives should keep vigil with an oil lamp burning at the head of the body.

At the appointed time, preferably early morning (7:00 am) or early afternoon (1:00 pm), the 'Geh Sarna' ceremony should be performed in a location close to the final disposal site. The body should then be disposed of, after the customary 'sezdo' (last respects by family and friends).

THOUGHTS ON A WORLD CENTER

Because the oldest atash bahram, Iranshah, is housed in Udva, it is the holiest place and Zarathushtis go there regularly on a pilgrimage. If a world center for Zarathushtis is developed in Udva, it will contribute considerably to the enlightened and holy atmosphere of the place. Learned Zarathushti scholars



Dastoorji Kotwal touches the hearts of the South Florida Community. Knowing of his busy US schedule, we were indeed fortunate to have Dastoorji Kotwal visit our community on June 27th. We started with a beautiful jashan ceremony performed by Dastoorji and Florida's Soli Dastur [photo above], followed by a unique lecture on the Life and Death of Our Prophet. In keeping with Zarathushti tradition, a delicious dinner of dhandar, shrimp patio and chicken followed (thanks to Arnavaz Irani). Thanks also to Peter and Daisy Patel for the use of their home. Dastoorji's background as both an accomplished scholar and practicing priest gave us a rare insight into another time – an insight one can simply not get through books or videos. Here is a man who dedicates his entire life and every waking hour to the understanding, translation, recitation and practice of our religion. There is much to learn from the torch-bearers of our religion. One can only wonder what it must have been like to live in the times of ancient Persia ... - Perry Unwalla

and priests can assemble to disseminate the knowledge of our religion. It will greatly help the small and sleepy village to become vibrant with religious and scholarly activities.

OUR PURPOSE IN LIFE

Dastoorji concurs that our purpose as a community is to enhance the spirituality of each Zarathushti, and transform each one to be a better Zarathushti through the practice and application of the principles of the Zarathushti faith. Our goal should be to strengthen the connectedness of each Zarathushti with Ahura Mazda and his creation, with fellow Zarathushtis, and the global family at large.

We should cultivate a spirit of brotherhood and must remain a close-knit community and devise means to advance spiritually and socially. We must have three priorities:

- Follow in the footsteps of our ancestors.
- Cultivate knowledge of the religion.
- Follow the teachings of Zarathushtra.

Our conduct should always be that of a gentleman, always helpful. We must see that both sides give respect to each other's point of view and each other's way of life. ■



A Monumental Undertaking

An appeal to support Dastoorji Kotwal's lifelong mission to research, edit and translate the volumes of the Pahlavi text of the Nirangestan



Lifelong mission. Few of us realize the monumental contribution that Dastoorji (Dr.) Firoze M. Kotwal has made towards the advancement of Zarathushti literature. Besides holding many distinguished posts at prestigious places like Harvard and the University of London, Dastoorji Kotwal also has published many research articles and authored books that have contributed to a better understanding of our religion. Currently, Dastoorji Kotwal is embarked upon the most important mission of his life – completing the remaining volumes of the *Nirangestan*.

The Nirangestan is a major work of Zarathushti literature. It is also one of the most difficult and challenging of texts, and is the only surviving Zarathushti text devoted wholly to the rituals of this ancient faith. It was written by priests for the guidance of priests, and so contains many terse allusions to matters of professional practice which are incomprehensible even to a Zarathushti layman and still more baffling to those not of the faith. A pioneer translation of the whole work was made early in this century by a Parsi scholar, S. J. Bulsara; but welcome though this was, it is evident that the main technicalities contained in it remained obscure to him. Knowledge of the Pahlavi language (in which this book is written) has moreover progressed greatly in the intervening decades, so that a new translation of the *Nirangestan* is a pressing need.

Dastoorji Kotwal is the first scholar since then to have the courage to address himself to this formidable task. He is ideally equipped for this, for he is both a Western trained philologist, whose work has been internationally acclaimed, as well as a dedicated 'yojdathragar' (working

priest initiated into the highest orders). It is also widely accepted that Dastoorji Kotwal has unparalleled knowledge of Zarathushti rituals.

To date, Dr. Kotwal has published the first part of the *Nirangestan* as well as another text, the *Herbedestan* with Prof. Philip Kreyenbroek, Chair of Iranian Studies at University of Göttingen, Germany. This collaboration makes it possible for Dastoorji to make his work thoroughly clear to non-Zarathushtis, and it is precisely this collaboration that holds the highest promise for the remaining 65% of the work to be completed during Dastoorji's life-time.

An appeal. The Zoroastrian Association of Chicago (ZAC) recognizing the importance of this work has started the "Dastoorji Kotwal Research Fund". Funds are to be used to provide modest boarding and lodging for Dastoorji and his wife to stay and work out of an American university (probably Indiana University) and for insurance and research costs, as well as costs of 'intensives' (visits) of 5-6 weeks in Göttingen.

ZAC has donated \$1000 as seed money for this fund, and appeals to FEZANA and its member associations to promote this worthy cause. It is earnestly hoped that everyone reading this appeal will recognize the importance of this project and contribute generously, for:

"If this work is not done now,
then when?

And if not by these two
unparalleled scholars, then who?

Please make checks, marked "Dastoorji Kotwal Research Fund" and send to ZAC, 8615 Meadowbrook Drive, Hinsdale, IL 60521. For information call Zubin or Zenobia Tantra at (630) 924-1076, email: zubintantr@aol.com

FEZANA JOURNAL

wishes
readers a
happy, healthy
and prosperous
New Year 1999

Hazaran hazar afrin bad, sal kho-
jasteh bad, roz farrokh bad, mah
mubarak bad ... Tan darosti bad,
neki bad, khub bad, aedun bad,
aedun tarazbad!

*May there be thousands and thou-
sands of benedictions upon you. May
the year be auspicious, the
day victorious and the month full
of good luck ... May good health be
unto you, may goodness be unto
you, may prosperity abound!*

[From Tandarosti prayer]

Community Greeting Card

FEZANA JOURNAL invites
readers to send Noruz
(Jamshedi Navroze) greetings
to fellow Zarathushtis on a
"Community Greeting Card" to
be published in the Spring
1999 issue of the Journal.

\$30 per insertion

Send your check (made out to
FEZANA, marked "greetings") and
your short message (about 50 words)
to the Business Manager by January 1.

Do Zarathushtis Celebrate December 25th?

Long before the birth of Jesus, and long before there were printed calendars with December 25th marked in clear, red characters, the 'magi', who were Zarathushti priests well-versed in astronomy, watched the great clock of the heavens and celebrated a very special religious festival at the time of the winter solstice.

During its annual orbit, the earth comes closest to the sun on December 22. On that day, the sun (Mithra or Meher Yazata) reaches the southernmost point of descent and begins the return journey northwards. Symbolically it turns its course and there is regeneration of sunlit days. This, mystically the rebirth of the spiritual, unconquered sun, was celebrated as the *Festival of Yalda*, by keeping the hearth fires burning to mark the end of long nights.

According to Zarathushti doctrine, 72 hours ('chahrum') are required for the soul, after the death of the physical body, to be resurrected into the spiritual world. On December 22, the sun ends the descent and is reborn after 72 hours, on December 25th.

This mystical tale of the birth of Mithra symbolizes the inner experience, the awakening of the divine self within each one of us. This awakening happens at the appointed hour, when the dark cycle of 'crucifixion' (crucifying the vices arising out of the darkness of ignorance) ends, and light (the inner light, spiritual illumination) is reborn.

So, when people ask if Zarathushtis celebrate December 25th, we say "Yes, indeed, we do!" ■

- By Pervin Mistry



COMING EVENTS

Calendar of Festivals

Shab-e-Yalda		
<i>Mah Daye, Roz Daepadar</i>	Wed Dec 23	(F)
Death Anniversary of Zarathushtra		
<i>Mah Daye, Roz Khorshed</i>	Sat Dec 26	(F)
Maidhyarem Gahambar		
<i>Mah Daye, Roz Meher - Bahram</i>	Thu Dec 31 - Jan 4	(F)
Jashan-e-Daegan		
<i>Mah Daye, Roz Daepdin</i>	Thu Jan 7	(F)
Jashan-e-Bahmangan		
<i>Mah Bahman, Roz Bahman</i>	Sat Jan 16	(F)
Paitishahem Gahambar		
<i>Mah Sheherevar, Roz Ashtad - Aneran</i>	Thu Jan 14 - Jan 18	(K)
	Sat Feb 13 - Feb 17	(S)
Jashan-e-Sadeh		
<i>Mah Bahman, Roz Meher</i>	Sat Jan 30	(F)
Porseh Hamegani (Remembrance of the departed)		
<i>Mah Aspandarmad, Roz Hormazd</i>	Sun Feb 14	(F)
Meher nu Parab		
<i>Mah Meher, Roz Meher</i>	Fri Mar 5	(S)
Ayathrem Gahambar		
<i>Mah Meher, Roz Ashtad - Aneran</i>	Sat Feb 13 - Feb 17	(K)
	Mon Mar 15 - Mar 19	(S)
Char-Shanbe-Soori (Heralding the New Year)		
<i>Tuesday prior to Noruz</i>	Tue Mar 16	(F)
NoRuz or Jamshedi Navroze (New Year)		
<i>Mah Fravardin, Roz Hormazd</i>	Sun Mar 21	(F)
Khordad Sal (Birthday of Zarathushtra)		
<i>Mah Fravardin, Roz Khordad</i>	Fri Mar 26	(F)
Ava Ardavisoor nu Parab		
<i>Mah Avan, Roz Avan</i>	Sat Feb 27	(K)
	Mon Mar 29	(S)
Fravardegan (Remembrance of the departed)		
<i>Mah Fravardin, Roz Fravardin</i>	Thu Apr 8	(F)
Jashan-e-Ardibeheshtgan		
<i>Mah Ardibehesht, Roz Ardibehesht</i>	Thu Apr 22	(F)
Atash-nu-Parab		
<i>Mah Adar, Roz Adar</i>	Tue Apr 27	(S)
Maidyozarem Gahambar		
<i>Mah Ardibehesht, Roz Khorshed - Daepmeher</i>	Fri Apr 30 - May 4	(F)
Zarathusht-no-Diso (Death anniversary of Zarathushtra)		
<i>Mah Daye, Roz Khorshed</i>	Sat May 29	(S)

(F)=Fasli, (K)=Kadmi, (S)=Shenshai

Yalda Celebration in Washington

The story of Yalda and how this ancient Persian holiday has influenced the traditions of Christmas.

By Heather Elizabeth Peterson
Washington, DC

Cars streamed steadily into the parking lot of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Vienna, Virginia, passing the sign that listed the times for Christmas Eve services. On December 20, five days before Christmas, the hall of the church was crowded. People walked by the creche, stood next to the light-studded tree, and sat under the banner that proclaimed, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people."

Jasmine Patel, a graduate student from Baltimore had good tidings to tell: she was describing the night's holiday to a visiting couple. "Yalda is the celebration of the solstice, when the days begin to grow longer again," she said, "Our new year is in March, and this is the first sign of the New Year coming. Fruit is a big part of the holiday because it represents spring." Around her neck hung a pendant depicting a man with wings – a symbol of the divinity within humanity, a concept first described by the prophet Zarathushtra (Zoroaster in Greek) founder of the Zarathushti (Zoroastrian) faith, to which Ms. Patel belongs. The couple with whom she spoke, Firoze and Susan Rao of Washington, DC, were no newcomers to the faith, but the holiday was new to them, for they came from India, where Yalda Night festivities are not held.

Zoroastrianism, once the state religion of the mighty empire of Persia (modern-day Iran), now has fewer than 300,000 followers, most of whom live in Iran and India. Over the centuries, different Zoroastrian traditions have developed different calendars, with the result that Zoroastrians of one ancestry may be unfamiliar with the festivals of other Zoroastrians.

"For those of us from India and Pakistan, this is new," said Shara Godi-

walla, a schoolmate of Ms. Patel's. "We don't know anything about this." The Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington, Inc., one of 21 Zoroastrian associations in North America, is composed of Zoroastrians of different traditions; "As a result," said Kersi B. Shroff, president of the association, "We celebrate each other's festivals."

Indeed the association's first formal Yalda celebration proved so popular that it had to be moved to the church hall from the association's building next door. Out of the 189 families listed in the association's directory, 110 individuals signed up for the festivities. To ensure that everyone in the room understood the significance of the holiday, trustee Orang Demehry gave a short historical introduction.

"How many people have Christmas trees in their homes?" he asked. Very few hands were raised. "Yalda trees?" he asked, and laughter rippled through the room. "That's what you should be having – Yalda trees – because the Christmas tree came from the Yalda tree.

"During ancient times in Persia, Yalda was symbolized by the ever-green tree. Being straight, upright and resistant to cold, it was a symbol of hardship. It represented the birth of the sun. During this time, young girls wrapped their wishes in silk cloth and hung them on a tree and decorated it. And it slowly evolved that they put presents under the tree so that their wishes would come true.

"Still later in Christianity, Pope Leo in the fourth century wanted to destroy the practice. To his dismay, he was unable to do that; so instead of trying to destroy it, he adopted it. Christ's birthday – which is January 6th or some people say is in the

springtime – he moved it to December 25th, so that it would coincide with Yalda and people would not have to change their practices. And later, a German Lutheran in the eighteenth century learned of the Yalda tree and he created the Christmas tree.

"Because of our history – Islam having conquered us, and the Arabs having come in – we had to go into hiding. We forgot about these traditions, we forgot about Yalda, but in Persia and Iran it was kept alive.

"So what do we do at Yalda? We have a get-together like this, try to stay up all night because it is the longest night of the year, read poetry, eat plenty of fruits, and we sing and dance."

As midnight approached on the longest night of the year, Washington's Zoroastrians, of Persian, Indian and Pakistani ancestry, had spent several hours listening and dancing to Persian music. Firoze and Susan Rao, the couple from India, headed out the door to catch the metro back to their home, pausing to look back.

"Isn't this fun?" said Mrs. Rao. ■

[Reprinted, with permission from Greenbelt Interfaith News, Washington, January 1998; <http://www.greenbelt.com/news/>]

ZYNA Ski Trip

On the heels of their successful "Z-Cruise" last winter, ZYNA announces its second major event – a 5-day ski vacation at Big White mountain, 4 hours from Vancouver, BC, December 28th to January 2nd. Cost \$210 (US) or \$325 (Cdn). Contact Arianne Teherani at (562) 928-5544, email: teherani@usc.edu.

Mazdayasnie Connection Retreat

The Retreat with Ervad K. N. Das-toor, previously announced for September, has been postponed to January 3rd to 10th, 1999, and will be held in the Los Angeles area. Contact Silloo Mehta, Mazdayasnie Connection, at (714) 995-8765.

1999 FEZANA AGM

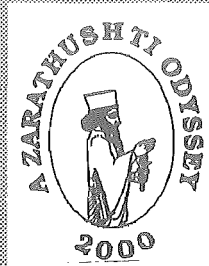
The 1999 annual general meeting of FEZANA is tentatively scheduled for mid-June 1999 in the Washington DC area. Contact FEZANA Secretary at (408) 866-8633, email: Ron_Sepehri@amat.com.

Zoroastrian Olympics

The Zoroastrian Sports Committee is happy to announce the return of the Zoroastrian Olympics. The games will take place on the 4th of July weekend, 1999. We would like to encourage all Zarathushti associations to motivate and sponsor sports teams for the '99 Olympics. Sports events are one sure way to unite young and old, athletes and sports lovers within our community. Contact ZSC president Niaz Kasravi, at nkasravi@diamond.sococo.uci.edu.

Avesta Conference

The Second International Avesta Conference will be held September 24 - 26, 1999, at the Ramada Inn, Calgary, Alberta. The conference is arranged and sponsored by the Zoroastrian Education and Research Society and will be hosted by the Zoroastrian Association of Alberta. Papers will be presented by world-renowned scholars from USA, UK, Germany, Italy, India, Israel and Japan. Contact Dr. Pallan Ichaporia at (610) 589-5419.



WZC 2000 CONGRESS CALLS

SEVENTH WORLD ZOROASTRIAN CONGRESS

Houston, Texas, December 28, 2000 to January 1, 2001

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

From California to Muscat and all the places in between, WZC 2000 excitement is building. Emails are flying, committees are meeting and hotel arrangements are set. And we have some great news to bring you up to speed.

Artful Ideas. One of co-chair Dolly Dastoor's goals for the Congress is to showcase Zarathushti artistic talent, and she has asked associations around the world to list their talented Zarathushtis. She is exploring the feasibility of holding a Zarathushti Cultural Festival, a Zarathushti book fair and film festival. Performance and visual artists are to contact Dolly at (450) 656-2036.

Writing a Legacy. Farrokh Mistree introduced the idea of a Legacy Project at the Congress in New York this summer. This project will commemorate the Zarathushti past and express optimism for the future. Possibilities for the project include: creating a virtual seminary to train priests; providing an endowed chair at a university for Zarathushti studies; offering scholarships for students; and building a retirement home. Please call Farrokh Mistree at (404) 325-3300 or Dolly Dastoor and give them your input.

[Continued on next page]

The 8th North American Youth Congress

will be held at McGill University in Montreal, August 12-15, 1999. Mehernosh Mody, Mazda Antia, Rustom Appoo and Arianne Teherani of ZYNA, have put out a call for volunteers. Watch for further details. For information contact Mehernosh at (617) 928-0953, email: mmody@media.mit.edu.



Parliament of the World's Religions, Cape Town, South Africa, December 1 - 8, 1999

Religious, spiritual, cultural and civic leaders and communities are working with the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions (CPWR) to make the 1999 Parliament an unforgettable gift to the world. The Parliament in Chicago in 1993 was inspired by the historic first Parliament, held in that city in 1893. In 1999 the Parliament moves to a different continent and hemisphere. South Africa will offer a dramatically different vantage point from which to view the challenges and opportunities facing our world.

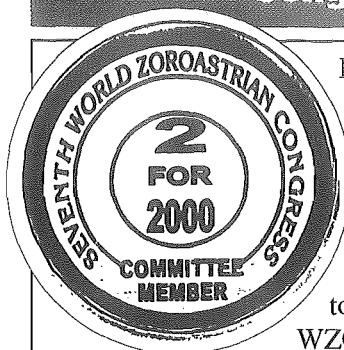
Call for programs: CPWR invites program proposals for presentations on religious traditions, spiritual paths, inter-religious dialog, critical issues, spiritual practice and other topics. Proposals must be received by March 31, 1999.

Call for Gifts of Service: CPWR invites individuals and organizations to offer gifts of service to the world. Gift proposals must be received by March 31, 1999.

Registration:	Before December 30, 1998:	Individual - \$250, Family/Group - \$200
	Before March 30, 1999:	Individual - \$300, Family/Group - \$250

Rohinton Rivetna, a trustee of the CPWR, will be visiting South Africa with the planning team this winter, and will coordinate the Zarathushti participation. It is hoped that Zarathushtis make their presence felt in large numbers as they did at the Parliament in Chicago. For registration/information contact Rohinton Rivetna at (630) 325-5383.

Congress Calls (continued) ...



Part of that legacy is already being planned through a commemorative volume by Pheroza Godrej and Firoza Punthakey Mistree of Mumbai. They are co-editing a book covering 3,500 years of Zarathushti history, culture, doctrine and rituals. The volume, with its 300 photographs, will be educational enough to study and beautiful enough to display. The authors will release the book at the WZC 2000 as a tribute to all Zarathushtis.

Fund Raising. Co-chairs Rustom Kevala and Raymie Daroga have sent out letters for fund-raising. Seed money from associations in North America is also being requested. This amount will be used for initial Congress costs for the deposit for hotel arrangements and printing costs.

But the real excitement about Congress donations is taking place at the individual level. Ardeshir Anoshiravani of California gave a short speech about Congress 2000 at a gahambar ceremony. Immediately afterwards people lined up to grab the "2 for 2000" buttons. Since he had only 20 pins, a spontaneous auction took place. One person gave \$100 for two buttons! Ardeshir is asking for more pins for the next function, and they are on the way.

Even those who cannot purchase the magic buttons are donating their \$2 for 2000. A student called Homi Davier from the University of Texas and said her grandmother in India said to send him \$6.00 – she knows not why, but she was fulfilling her grandmother's request.

The Fund Raising Committee is sponsoring the "2 for 2000" campaign. Each Zarathushti is requested to donate 2 dollars for each year leading to the Congress. $2 + 2 + 2 = 6$! The total collected so far from this campaign is \$5528. Please send your checks, made out to ZAH/WZC2000, to Sarosh Collector, Treasurer, 8787 West Airport Boulevard, Houston, TX 77071.

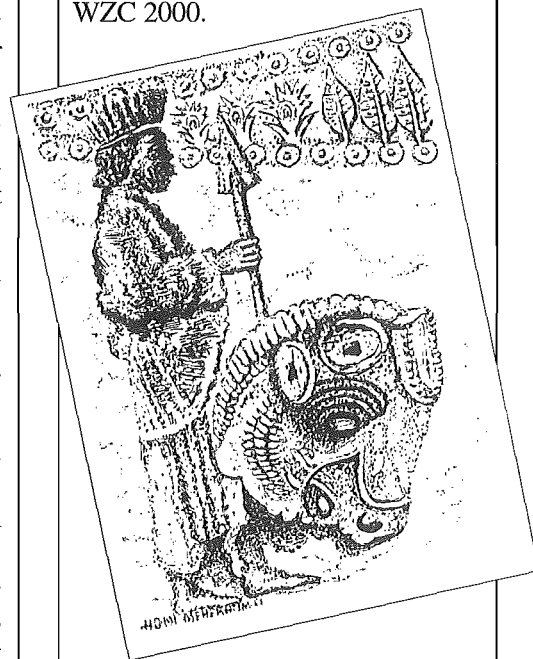
A power-charged meeting. Team Congress met for two days in Houston on October 31st and November 1st. Co-chair Dolly Dastoor from Montreal, FEZANA President Framroze K. Patel from New Jersey, FEZANA Congress committee chair Jimmy Mistry from Toronto, Fund Raising co-chair Rustom Kevala from Maryland, Program co-chair Khorshed Jungalwala from Boston met with Homi Davier and the Houston team members for a power-charged meeting to plan the next six months. But all was not work, work, work. ZAH, with the WZC-2000 committee had planned a Halloween party fund-raiser.

Web-site. For up-to-date information, check out the FEZANA web site maintained by webmaster Rita Kapadia at <http://www.fezana.org>

"Our mission is to recognize, learn and celebrate our Zarathushti heritage"

[From back cover of the greeting cards]

Two artists from Karachi, renowned Jimmy Engineer and Homi Meher-Homji, have donated beautiful artwork for WZC 2000. Engineer has created a logo and brochure for an upcoming cover design. Meher-Homji's design has been made into 10,000 cards. The proceeds of these card sales will be donated to WZC 2000.



Printed in Karachi, they are being sold in Muscat, London, Houston, Maryland, Montreal, Toronto, Dallas, and yes, you can buy them too. Credit goes to Toxy Cowasjee of Karachi, for arranging the printing and transportation to get this project going.

There are two designs. Each pack has five of each.

Price is \$10 for 10 cards.

Order from Aban Rustomji, 526 Woodbend Lane, Houston, TX 77079, tel: (281) 493-1275, email: rustomji@tenet.edu. Please make checks to ZAH/WZC2000.

IN COMING ISSUES OF FEZANA JOURNAL

Spring (March) 1999: Making of a Zarathushti - Religion or Ethnicity?

Readers are invited to submit articles and letters expressing their views and perceptions of the Zarathushti identity. Who is a Zarathushti? What makes one a Zarathushti – religion or ethnicity? Your personal feelings and experiences will be welcome. *Submission deadline is January 1.*

Summer (June) 1999: A Celebration of Zarathushtis in Music

Readers are invited to submit articles on Zarathushti musicians, past and present, along with photographs. *Submission deadline is April 1.*

سرمقاله : مهمترین هدف هیأت مدیره نوین فدراسیون انجمن های زرتشتیان آمریکای شمالی هماهنگی و اتحاد تمام زرتشتیان این منطقه است، در ۲۰ سال پیش بیش از پانزده هزار زرتشتی در این منطقه اقامت گزیده اند که از نظر فکر و عقیده یکسان نیستند. تشکیل و گسترش سازمانی یگانه متشکل و پیشرو که بتواند در سازندگی آینده و پیشرفت آرمان های مشترک اجتماع نوین زردشتی کوشش کند حیاتی است. پیروزی این سازمان به کمک و تعهد تک تک ما در اینجا بستگی دارد. بنابراین ما اختلافات و نظرات شخصی را باید کنار بگذاریم و به پیشرفت هدف های اصولی سازمان مشترک خود کمک کنیم.

هفتمین کنگره جهانی زرتشتیان : همایش جهانی زرتشتیان در دسامبر ۲۰۰۰ در شهر هوستون آمریکا برگزار خواهد شد که بیش از دو هزار نفر از سراسر دنیا شرکت خواهند کرد. کمیته سازمانی به ریاست دالی دستور و همائی داور از سال پیش شروع به کار کرده است. این کنگره نیاز به کمکهای فکری و مالی همه زرتشتیان دارد. امید است که این همایش بزرگ سبب نزدیکی و اتحاد هر چه بیشتر تمام زرتشتیان جهان شود.

کتاب سوزمین جاویدان : مجموعه مقالات و سخنرانی های کنگره جهانی زرتشتیان جون ۹۶ در تهران بزودی منتشر می شود. این کتاب ارزنده به همت دبیر خانه کنگره های زرتشتیان جهان در تهران به ریاست دکتر مهیار اردشیری تهیه شده و شامل عکس های رنگی و گزارش کامل این کنگره تاریخی است. برای پیش خرید و تهیه این مجموعه نفیس لطفاً با دبیر فرزانا تماس بگیرید. **گانون فرهنگی زرتشتیان در ونگوور :** به همت آقایان فریبرز رهنمون و دکتر ایرج پور کریمی مدت چهار سال است که در شناخت فرهنگ و آیین ایران و آداب و رسوم زردشتی فعالیت دارد. **جلسه های شاهنامه خوانی در ونگوور :** به ریاست ارباب رستم زرتشتی که بنیان گزار این جلسات است هر جمعه با همکاری انجمن زرتشتیان تشکیل میشود. **انتخاب دکتر انوشیروانی به معاونت فرزانا :** در مجمع عمومی سالبانه ۱۹۹۸ فرزانا آقای دکتر اردشیر انوشیروانی به اکثریت آرا به معاونت فرزانا انتخاب گردید و مسؤولیت کمیته برنامه ریزی و اساسنامه را هم به عهده گرفت. این انتخاب شایسته را به انجمن های زرتشتی آمریکای شمالی تبریک گفته و برای ایشان آرزوی پیروزی هرچه بیشتر در خدمت به جامعه زرتشتی را داریم.

نامه های رسیده : از دفتر انجمن زرتشتیان تهران و هم چنین دبیر خانه کنگره های زرتشتیان جهان پیام تبریک برای انتخابات اخیر فرزانا دریافت شد. از این پیام ها صمیمانه تشکر می کنیم. نامه پیشنهادات و توضیحات آقای دکتر ایرج پور کریمی دریافت شد و بررسی خواهد گردید. چند نامه از آقای جهانگیر موبد گشتاسب اشیدری دریافت شد که باور های خرافاتی زرتشتی و مطالب چندین نشریه را انتقاد و بحث کردند. **گاهنامه پیگ مهر :** این نشریه ارزنده به همت فرزانه دکتر مهران شهروینی از ونگوور منتشر می شود شامل خبرها و مقالات اجتماعی و دینی بالارزش است. برای اطلاعات و اشتراک این نشریه لطفاً با ۷۵۵۰-۹۸۶-۶۰۴ تماس بگیرید. **ماهنامه مرکز زرتشتیان کالیفرنیا :** به سردبیری موبد بهرام شهزادی هر دو ماه منتشر می شود. لطفاً با ۴۷۳۷-۸۹۳-۷۱۴ تماس بگیرید. **کتاب های فارسی :** در مورد فرهنگ و آیین زرتشتی به قلم آقای جمشید ییشدادی منتشر شد. برای تهیه این کتابها با تلفن ۸۲۲۹-۳۵۸-۴۰۸ تماس بگیرید.

AROUND THE WORLD



Ketayun, left, with Dolly Dastoor, past president of FEZANA, who was visiting Paris for a Zonta conference.



Toxy Cowasjee, under whose leadership KZBM is reviewing its image, mission and objectives.

The Paris Connection

Past secretary of FEZANA and past president of the Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania and New Jersey, Katayun Kapadia is on a 3-year appointment in Paris, France, as manager with Rhone-Poulenc Internal Audit Group, one of the 10 leading pharmaceutical companies in the world. Her husband Kersi and children, Zarin and Farrokh, have also moved to Paris.

There is a growing Zarathushti community in France and they meet often to celebrate festivals. There was a lunch to celebrate the Parsi New Year at the residence of Roxanne Godiwalla, complete with dhan dar and patio, papeta-per-eedoo, sev and dahi.

With her lifelong commitment to Zarathushti community affairs in the US, she will be a most vocal and effective ambassador for FEZANA and WZC 2000 in Europe. The Kapadias would be happy to meet visiting Zarathushtis from North America. Their address is 24, Rue Felicien David, 78100 Saint-Germain-En-Laye, France, email: katayun.kapadia@paris.rhone-poulenc.com.

Vision 2000

The Karachi Zarathushti Banu Mandal held a "Vision 2000" workshop in April, to focus on the image of KZBM, and to make an attempt at writing its mission statement and set objectives for the next five years. From these exercises the following has emerged, all of which are being addressed:

- KZBM has some committee members who want to be just status symbols and are not dynamic.
- Have a more balanced representation, both age and income-wise, so that the community feels comfortable coming to KZBM for assistance.
- There should be more stress on education and medical counseling. There should be emphasis on self-development.
- Provide more privacy for those who take aid, so that the real indigent are assisted.
- Inculcate a sense of commitment in the volunteer workers.
- Provide flexible workstyle to permit involvement of working persons and busy youth.
- Keep an open mind to new ideas.

By Roshan Rivetna
Hinsdale, Illinois

Persis Khambatta was rushed to the hospital from her Nepean Sea Road, Mumbai apartment where she lived alone, on Monday, August 17th. She suffered a massive coronary attack from which she died early Tuesday morning. Persis, who is survived by her mother and brother, had undergone a by-pass operation in 1983. Perhaps the only Zarathushti who had climbed the rungs of success as an actress in Hollywood, she will be sorely missed by her fans around the world.

Khambatta started her career as a model at age 14 for a soap advertisement while at school (in Villa Theresa and Walsingham) in Mumbai. She was crowned Film Princess by film star Raj Kapoor in 1963 and went on to win the Miss India title in 1965 dressed in off-the-rack clothes she bought at the last minute. She received the Best Newcomer of the Year award for her role in the Hindi film *Bombay Raat ki Bahonmein*.

In her early twenties, Khambatta left for London to seek fulfillment for her many talents, with just the permissible Rs. 100 in her pocket. There were times when she lived for a week on just a bag of potatoes, she recalls "If today I can eat at the best places in the world, it is because I worked hard for it."

Her international acting career started with the movie *The Wilby Conspiracy* opposite Sidney Poitier and Michael Caine. Then followed others like *Conduct Unbecoming* with Sir Richard Attenborough and Michael York, her role as the navigator in *Star Trek – the Motion Picture* for which she shaved her head, *Night Hawks* and *Mega Force*. She was a guest on TV talk shows hosted by Johnny Carson, Phil Donohue, Merv Griffin and Mike Douglas.

Khambatta also enjoys the distinction of being the first Indian to present an Academy Award (in 1982) and be featured in Blackwell's Best Dressed list for the same year.

From Star Trek to Spirituality

The story of Persis Khambatta

Her obituary in London's *The Guardian* was aptly titled "Beauty – Actress – Humanist" for Persis Khambatta was all three. A 1965 Miss India beauty queen, Khambatta enjoyed some years of international stardom notably as Lt. Alia in *Star Trek – the Motion Picture*, until her return to her native Mumbai in the early nineties. In recent years she directed her attention to philosophy, meditation, self-improvement and writing, dedicating her book "Pride of India" about former Miss India's, and royalties therefrom, to Mother Teresa's charities.

Ms. Khambatta died suddenly of a heart attack at age 49, in Mumbai, on Tuesday, August 18, 1998.

PHOTO: PARSIANA



PHOTO: PARSIANA, SAVVY

Khambatta, as model (left), actress (above) and Miss India 1965 (top).

In the early 1990s, after living abroad for almost 30 years, she returned to Mumbai, and turned her energies to humanitarian causes and to writing her book "Pride of India" chronicling the story of beauty queens of India. "Material things never mattered" she states, as she donated her royalties to Mother Teresa's Mission of Charity.

Over the years Khambatta enjoyed the experiences of various religions and philosophies but believed that Zarathushtra's message of good thoughts, words and deeds is "the only truth." ■

[Compiled from "Beauty and the Book" by Parinaz Gandhi, Parsiana, February 1998, API and Reuters]

PHOTO: PARSIANA

YOUTHFULLY SPEAKING

THE MOUTHPIECE OF A GENERATION...

WHY ME GOD? WHY NOW?

Over the past year, particularly within the last six months, I have had to try to understand tragedies of varying degrees. It is impossible for any of us to go throughout this life, without having some great misfortune befall us or someone whom we know and love. When something bad goes wrong we look for the reasons "why". It is in our human nature to find out why this happened, and more importantly, "Why did this happen to me?". This is the question that has crossed humanity's lips for so long.

How is it, that a just God like ours would allow for us to go through such pain and discomfort? Why did a righteous God choose me to suffer? Can I go on living a life for a God who does not appear to care about me and my life? What kind of God allows these types of human suffering to go on without interference? Is there a God? ...questions we have all asked, at one time or another.

It is highly implausible for us to believe with absolute certainty, that Ahura Mazda is just and righteous, when we are feeling so much pain in our lives. Right...?

Or, is it that Ahura Mazda, in all of his infinite wisdom, plans for us to suffer at times, in order that we may learn about life and experience aspects of another's pain? What kind of God would he be if he did not test us? What kind of God would allow us to see only happiness and not experience the pain and suffering of others in this world? What kind of God would protect only some from harm, whilst others lived within the realities of injustice and horror?

To see a child starve to death is clearly not right! But somehow it is in Ahura Mazda's plan. The fact that children in Bosnia are watching their mothers and sisters being raped and their fathers

and brothers being tortured and killed, is not just! Yet, for whatever reason, this too happens under God's watchful eye. And, for understanding that goes beyond our comprehension, we must accept it as deified reasoning.

What is even more complex is that when atrocities such as this occur, we as Zarathushtis are somehow obligated to fight for truth and righteousness. Ahura Mazda commands that we right the wrongs and silence the evil! This is clearly not the religion of the weak! This is the religion of fighters, an army placed here on Earth to champion the cause of Asha!

But I would be lying if I told you that I always fight wrong-doing and never succumb to my own weaknesses. For I, like you am only human. So then, am I a hypocrite when I get on my knees and ask, "Ahura Mazda, why oh why have you let this happen? Why have you forsaken me in my time of need?". How do I reconcile with my conscience, the fact that I look to our "Lord of Wisdom" for help, when I myself am not a full-time warrior for good? The answer to that question is a firm, "I do not know."

However, I do know this. If I am to question Ahura Mazda, the "supreme being", I must first question myself, my motivations, and my responsibilities. Am I looking to live a life of Asha so that when I need God's help, he will look upon me favorably? Surely, I think not!

Although, I know in some manner, that for whatever reason, that if I continually do good for myself and my fellow brothers and sisters, that in some mysterious way, I am looked after and blessed.

Which brings me back to my first point... Why is it that Ahura Mazda can allow people I love and people you love, to sometimes be taken away from us tragically, violently, suddenly, and without question? When things go wrong in my life or the lives of those around me, who is to blame? Me...? God...? No one...?

“ New Faces in the Coming Issues...”

It is my great pleasure to welcome back several old members of the Youthfully Speaking editorial staff, as well as extend a warm welcome to a few new ones. I would also like to extend my sincere gratitude to Rustom Kevala who helped us throughout with Youthfully Speaking. We will miss Rustom and hope to carry on his vision of excellence. Although Rustom will be missed, we are excited about the prospects of working with Khorshed Jungalwalla and know that she too will be committed to helping us make Youthfully Speaking an integral part of the journal. Coming back to the editorial staff is Tanaz Billimoria and Pervez Mistry. New members of the editorial staff are, Nenshad Bardoliwalla and Gev Karkaria. I know that I look forward to working with each and every person on the staff. With new faces come new ideas and with old ones comes renewed confidence...

“WHY?” ...continued

It is an ambiguous question at best. We cannot be reasonably expected to accept blame for the deaths of those around us. We certainly are not the ones who are at fault when a corrupt system of politics keeps us from seeing justice done. And we should not be held accountable for the wreckless disregard and unrighteous acts of others.

As young Zarathushtis we are at an advantage over our parents and grandparents in some respects. We can explore the deeper meanings of why and how. We are not living in an age where blind faith is mandated by all. We, like the ancient philosophers, theologians, and even our own Zarathustra, are required to question our existence and religious fervor!

I may never understand “why” this past year was filled with pain and suffering. I may

even be a little remiss for considering my suffering to be greater than that of my fellow human beings, my Zarathushti brethren, my friends, and maybe even you.

I know for a fact that I have never experienced in my life, the type of genocide currently going on in Bosnia. I do thank Ahura Mazda for that!

But I also know that it is not wrong or sinful, to consider the realities of your own personal situation as being tantamount to utter hopelessness.

I also know that in some ways, the things that hurt us or make us struggle are not lacking in Ahura Mazda’s love or wisdom.

I have been in situations where I see no hope. And as much as she has tried, my mother has not always been able to convince me that prayer and faith in Ahura Mazda will carry me through the hardest of

times.

But with age comes wisdom...and over time, her words have rung true.

Every scar I have, physical, but more importantly emotional, has given me the strength to go on in times of crisis. I have everyday reminders, that challenges will occur, tragedies will befall me, and injustice may find me. Yet I do have my faith, my mind, and my desire to fight and live!

So whenever I ask God, “Why is this happening?”. I listen very closely for the answer. It may take some time, it may be quite subtle, it may seem non-existent...but I know it will come. And when it comes, it usually comes from within. That too is no surprise...Ahura Mazda and the answers are all inside of us...the questions mind you, are often the tragedies and misfortunes.



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8TH NORTH AMERICAN ZOROASTRIAN YOUTH CONGRESS

ZYNA is pleased to announce the 8TH NORTH AMERICAN YOUTH CONGRESS to be held at MCGILL UNIVERSITY in MONTREAL from AUGUST 12 - AUGUST 15, 1999.

THE 8TH NORTH AMERICAN YOUTH CONGRESS is going to be DIFFERENT from any youth congress attended before. The FORMAT of this congress is going to follow the THEME of "TURNING WORDS INTO ACTION". The congresses' EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES will focus on RESOLUTIONS and CHANGE but predominantly EMPHASIZE THE DEVELOPMENT OF PATHWAYS that Zoroastrian Youth in North America can take back to their HOME COMMUNITIES and the larger NORTH AMERICAN COMMUNITY to BRING ABOUT CHANGE.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION and FURTHER DETAILS will be AVAILABLE in the beginning of 1999 through the NEXT ISSUE of the FEZANA JOURNAL, the WEB and/or LOCAL ASSOCIATION. For MORE INFORMATION (or to VOLUNTEER to HELP) please feel free to CONTACT any of the following PEOPLE:

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Zoroastrian Scriptures: the Gathas, Young Avesta and Pahlavi Literature

By Pallan R. Ichaporia, Guest Editor

A historical review of the corpus of Zoroastrian religious texts along with perspectives on the religious dogmas, doctrines, creeds, convictions, rituals and theology contained therein.

The views expressed in these articles are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of FEZANA or those of the Guest Editor. Per its Editorial Policy, FEZANA Journal does not endorse or espouse any specific perspective.

COVER STORY



Dr. Pallan R. Ichaporia, CEO and President of Pharmaceutical Marketing Networks, Inc., has a BA in Avesta/Pahlavi from Bombay University, did post-graduate work in Iranian Studies at Columbia University and has a doctorate in Business Administration from Oklahoma. He is a Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, Member of the American Oriental Society and the American Academy of Religions. He has lectured at International conferences and delivered 3 lectures on Yashts as the Government of India Research Scholar at the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, which will be published in their Journal. He has authored *The Gathas of Asho Zarathushtra* and co-authored with Prof. Helmut Humbach, *The Heritage of Zarathushtra, A New Translation of His Gathas* in 1994 and *Zamyad Yasht, Yasht 19 of the Younger Avesta, Text, Translation and Commentary*, in 1998. He is Founder President of the Zoroastrian Education and Research Society, Chairman of the 2nd North American Gatha Conference and President of the First International Avesta Conference. He is Associate Professor, teaching Comparative Religions at Alvernia University in Pennsylvania, and is presently involved in joint works with Prof. Helmut Humbach on a *Concordance of the Gathas* and with Prof. A. Panaino and Prof. W. Malandra on editing and translating the Pahlavi text of *Dinkerd*.

In the long and checkered history of Zoroastrianism, its religious texts have suffered many setbacks. Neither the dates nor the authors of most of these texts have been conclusively established. At best the dates of their origin can be said to probably span anywhere from legendary history down to pre-Achaemenian times. Collections and redactions of the scattered texts began in the Arsacid (Parthian) era (completed in the early Sasanian era) followed by written canonical texts in the Sasanian era and finally the written Pahlavi literature of the ninth century CE.

JOURNEY OF

A historical review of the

By Pallan R. Ichaporia

LEGENDARY HISTORY – KAYANIAN ERA
OLD AVESTAN TEXTS, GATHAS
From the time of Zarathushtra 1700 - 650 BCE



The legendary history of Zoroastrianism as given in Shah Nameh states that Kai Vistaspa, patron of the prophet kept the original written Avesta in the treasury of Shapigan [cf. *Dinkerd VIII*]. Hermippus wrote in the third century BCE that Zarathushtra composed two million lines of poetry. Pliny in his *Natural History* [first century CE], confirms Hermippus. Masoudi in *The Meadows of Gold* alludes that Zoroastrian scriptures were written on 12,000 cow-hides in golden ink. Tabari corroborates this statement. Shah Nameh reduces 12,000 cow-hides to 1200 parchments and also states that they were written in golden ink. These legendary statements are at best legendary.

Since the date of Zarathushtra is debatable and as the original Avesta including the Gathas, can be traced to the time of Zarathushtra this could be between 1700 BCE to 650 BCE.

It is well known that Avesta was not transmitted in written form until much later in Sasanian times. There are no Avestan words for 'reading' and 'writing' but there are Avestan words 'daretha' (to memorize) and 'maretha' (to remember).

The Old Avestan texts probably dating back to Zarathushtra himself, include the following sections of the Yasna liturgy, notably the four most sacred formulas of Yatha Ahu Vairyo (or Ahunavar), Ashem Vohu, Yenghe Hatam and A Airyema Ishyo, and the five Gathas:

Ys. 27.13	Yatha Ahu Vairyo or the Ahunavar
Ys. 27.14	Ashem Vohu
Ys. 27.15	Yenghe Hatam
Ys. 28 - 34	Ahunavaiti Gatha
Ys. 35.3 - 41.7	Yasna Haptanghaiti (Yasna of the Seven Chapters)
Ys. 43 - 46	Ushtavaiti Gatha
Ys. 47 - 50	Spenta Mainyu Gatha
Ys. 51	Vohukshathra Gatha
Ys. 53	Vahishtoishiti Gatha
Ys. 54.1	A Airyema Ishyo

These are the only extant portions of the Avesta composed entirely in the Old Avestan language.

Compilation of materials, design and layout by Roshan Rivetna

THE AVESTA

corpus of Zoroastrian religious texts

PRE-ACHAEMENIAN ERA Prior to 549 BCE



Perhaps the composition of the older sections of the **Greater Yashts** or Hymns dedicated to the Yazatas took place during pre-Achaemenian times [Cf. *Malandra*, 1989]. They are in the Young Avestan language:

- Avan Yasht** (Yasht 5)
Dedicated to the waters
- Mah Yasht** (Yasht 7)
Dedicated to the moon
- Tir (or Tishtar) Yasht** (Yasht 8)
Dedicated to Tishtrya or the Sirius star
- Gosh Yasht (Dravasp)** (Yasht 9)
Dedicated to Dravasp yazata of strong horses
- Meher (Mithra) Yasht** (Yasht 10)
Dedicated to Mithra – yazata of friendship, contracts
- Rashne Yasht** (Yasht 12)
Dedicated to Rashnu Razishta -yazata of truth/justice
- Fravardin Yasht** (Yasht 13)
Dedicated to the fravashis.
- Behram Yasht** (Yasht 14)
Dedicated to yazata of victory
- Ram Yasht** (Yasht 15)
Dedicated to Ramn Khastra, yazata of the atmosphere
- Din Yasht** (Yasht 16)
Dedicated to the yazata of religion with knowledge (chista)
- Astad yasht** (Yasht 18)
Dedicated to the land
- Zamyad Yasht** (Yasht 19)
Dedicated to the earth
- Haom Yasht (in Yasna 9 and 10)**
Dedicated to Haom Yazata

ACHAEMENIAN ERA 549 - 330 BCE



Dates are debatable and uncertain, but perhaps redaction of the Greater Yashts took place during the last half of the 5th century BCE, along with the composition of other smaller Yashts, like:

- Ahura Mazda Yasht** (Yasht 1)
- Ardibehest Yasht** (Yasht 3)
- Vanant Yasht** (Yasht 20)
- Hadokht Nask (Part 1,2,3)**
(Yasht 21 and 22)
and possibly other Yashts.

According to Gershevitch [1967] the probable dates of composition of the Yashts are 430 - 420 BCE.

Pahlavi books allude to the fact that the Avesta of the Achaemenian era had 815 chapters and was divided into 21 parts, but no trace of it has been found. Three major books of Avesta were scattered after the end of the Achaemenid Dynasty.

Alexander brought an end to the Achaemenid dynasty and it is generally believed that the Avesta was destroyed [Dinkerd IX] and scattered "by the Greeks who translated into their own language the scientific passages of which they could make use" [J. Kellens, 1989, *Encl. Iranica*, Vol. III].

ARSACID (PARTHIAN) ERA 247 BCE - 227 CE



A first restoration of the Avesta was made by the Arsacid king Valaksh who had the scattered Avesta collected, including both written fragments and those compositions that had been transmitted orally [J. Kellens, *Encyclopedia Iranica*, Vol III, 1989]. Most probably the first to be collected and restored was:

The Yasna (Pahlavi: Ijeshne)

including the *Gathas* and *Haptanghaiti*, and the *Yashts*. The *Vendidad* is more a canonical than a ritual text [Humbach, 1991] and seems to be recent, and may have belonged to a particular liturgical school [J. Kellens, 1989].

The existence of a written Arsacid Avesta was the center of dispute in the early twentieth century. The Pahlavi book Dinkerd postulated the existence of an Arsacid (Parthian) archetype, but linguistic evidence shows that although the existence of an archetype is possible, it could not have had any practical influence.

Prayer . . .

is not asking. It is a longing of the soul. It is better in prayer to have a heart without words than words without a heart.

– Mohandas K. Gandhi

SASANIAN ERA

From 220 - 651 CE

Ardeshir Papakan, founder of the Sasanian Dynasty, continued the collection and restoration of the scattered Avesta under Tansar. The writing and canonization of the texts was under Shapur II (240 - 272 CE) by his Prime Minister and High Priest Aturpat Marespandan. Some writings continued into the fourth century CE. The Sasanian Avesta was written in the specially invented alphabets in order to render with extreme precision, the slightest nuance of the liturgical recitation. The collection included:

21 Nasks divided into 3 major books of 7 chapters each:

I. The Gasanig (7 Gathic nasks)

- 1) Stot Yasn Discovered just fifteen years ago, it has survived completely as Ys. 14 - 16, 22 - 27, 28 - 54 (which includes the complete *Gathas*) and Ys. 56.
- 2) Sutkar Few fragments have survived.
- 3) Varshmansar Lost. Ch. 2 & 3 were *Commentaries on the Gathas*.
- 4) Bag Survived as *Yasna 19 - 21*. Originally there were 22 chapters.
- 5) Vastag Lost.
- 6) Hadokht Only *Yasna 58*, *Yasht 11* (known as *Sraosh Yasht Hadokht*), *Afrin -e Zartost* and *Haptanghaiti* para. 1.2 are left.
- 7) Spand This was the biography of Zarathushtra. A few fragments are left.

II. The Hadag-mansarig (Av. Hadha Manthra: sacred ritual prayers)

- 1) Damdad On cosmogony. A few fragments are left.
- 2) Naxtar Lost.
- 3) Pajag Described the connection of liturgy with the division of days and years. Parts have survived as the *Geh* and *Siroza*.
- 4) Rathvishtaiti A few fragments are left.
- 5) Barish On religious ethics. A few fragments are left.
- 6) Kashkaysraw On how to annul an incorrectly performed ritual. A few fragments are left.
- 7) Vistaspa Yasht Survived as the later part of *Afrin-e Zartost* and *Vistaspa Yasht*

III. The Datig (books on law)

- 1) Nikatum Law book. A few fragments are left.
- 2) Duz-sar-nizad Law book. A few fragments are left.
- 3) Husparam Law book. Only *Nirangestan* and *Herbedestan* are left.
- 4) Sakatum Law book. A few fragments are left.
- 5) Videvdad This law book, also known as *Vendidad*, has survived completely.
- 6) Chihrdad Mythical history of Iran. A few fragments are left.
- 7) Bagan Yasht Survived as Ys. 9 (*Haom Yasht*), Ys. 10 - 11, Ys. 57 (*Sarosh Yasht Vadi*) and *Yashts 5 -19*.

Besides the collections in the 21 Nasks, Aturpat Marespandan also collected and put down in writing the following texts:

- All the **Yashts** (greater and smaller) [*see previous page*].
- **Afrins** and **Afringans** used in the jashans, baj and farrokshi ceremonies.
- **Visperad (vispeh-ratu)**. Prayer for all the 'ratus' (leaders) used mostly during gahambar.

● Niyaeshe:

Khorshed Niyaeshe

Litany to the sun

Meher Niyaeshe

Litany to Mithra (yazata of friendship, contracts)

Ardvi Sura Niyaeshe

Litany to yazata of water

Atash Niyaeshe

Litany to fire

- **Yasna of 72 'has'** (chapters) includes:

The Old Avestan Gathic texts [*see previous page*]

Ha 9 Haom Yasht

Ha 12 Confession of Faith

Ha 57 Sraosh Yasht (Vadi)

Ha 60 Daham Afriti with a part of Hoshbam prayer (para. 12)

Ha 62 Atash Niyaeshe

Ha 65 Ardvi Sura Niyaeshe

- **Khordeh Avesta** (or 'Little Avesta') is a collection of essential daily prayers for the laity, including:

Kushti prayers

Five Gehs

Sraosh Baj

Niyaeshe

Smaller Yashts

Nirangs

Sitayeshne

Tandarosti

Patet Pashemani

101 Names of Ahura Mazda

- **Pazand prayers**, including:
Ashirwad (wedding ceremony)

**POST-SASANIAN ERA
(PAHLAVI AND PAZAND TEXTS)
651 CE to 9th century CE**



After the fall of the Sasanid Dynasty in 651 CE, numerous religious texts were written by various authors in the Pahlavi and Pazend languages.

PAHLAVI TEXTS written in the ninth century CE:

- **Namakiha of Manushcihr**
The epistle of Manushcihr, written in 881 CE.
- **Datastan i denik**
Religious opinions, by Manushcihr in 881 CE.
- **Vichitakiha of Zatspram**
Selections of Zatspram, brother of Manushcihr.
- **Bundahishn**
The book of primal creations.
- **Dinkerd**
Acts of religion, writings started by Aturpat i Farrakhvzatan in 820 CE and completed by Aturpat i Ametan in 890 CE.

These were supplemented by numerous other texts:

- **Pahlavi texts**
Several texts.
- **Rivayet accompanying Datastan i denik**
Traditions accompanying Datastan i denik.
- **Frahang i Pahlavik and Frahang i oim**
The Pahlavi collections.
- **Datastan i menok i khrta**
Opinions of the spirit of wisdom.
- **Karnaml i Artakhsha i Papakan**
Accomplishments of Ardeshir Papakan.
- **Pandnamak i Aturpat Maraspandan**
Book of advice from Aturpat Marespandan.
- **Artay Viraz Namak**
Book of the truthful Viraz.
- **Gazastak Ablish**
Accounts of disputes between the heretic Ablish and Atar Frenbag, son of Farrokhzat, in the court of Caliph Mamun, 813-833 CE.
- **Shhriha i eran**
Cities of Iran
- **Matikan i hazar datastan**
Book of Thousand Laws, written during the time of Khusrow II. Compiled by Farokhmard, son of Vehran, the great jurist.
- **Shkand-gumanik vizar**
Doubt-dispelling explanations.

PAZEND TEXTS include several long and short thanksgiving, supplicatory, benedictory, confessional and penitentiary prayers composed in Sasanian times by dastoors, mostly by Aturpat Marespandan. These Pazend prayers are also placed at the beginning and end of the niaeshes, yashts, afringans, afrins and sitayeshes.

**RECENT WRITINGS
(RIVAYETS)
Post-ninth century CE**



SANSKRIT TRANSLATIONS by Neriosang Dhaval of the Khordeh Avesta and other texts; circa 1166 CE.

PERSIAN RIVAYETS

These are mostly the compositions of dasturs of Iran sent as answers to religious questions from the Parsis in India. 'Rivayet' is a Persian word ('rava'=lawful, 'raftan'=to go) meaning "that which is current".

Compiled Classified Rivayets are those that were classified by subject, e.g.

- Darab Hormuzdyar's Rivayets (1678-79).

Compiled Collective Rivayets are collections of all Rivayets in one volume, e.g.

- Collective Rivayets of Barzo Kamdin.

Individual Rivayets bear the names of the individuals who went to Iran with religious questions and brought back answers to the Parsis. They are also known as 'maktubs'. They are the works of the dasturs of Iran. There are over 15 individual rivayets, starting with:

- Rivayet of Nariman Hoshang (1478)

The last four rivayets are:

- Rivayet of Jamasp Asa (1721)
- Rivayet addressed to Mobed Kaus and Dastur Sohrab of Surat (1743)
- Rivayet addressed to Manekji Sett (1747)
- "Ithoter Rivayets". A series of 78 questions sent by the kadmis of Surat to the Zoroastrians of Yazd and Kerman (1773).

PERSIAN MONAJATS were written by Parsi dastoors in Persian language and included at the end of the Khordeh Avesta (18th - 19th centuries).

LANGUAGES OF ZOROASTRIAN SCRIPTURES

Old Avesta. A branch of the Old Iranian languages. Others are the **Median** and **Old Persian** of the Achaemenians. The characteristic features of Old Avesta is the lengthening of all final vowels.

Young Avesta. Language that developed later. Here the final vowels are short. It is akin to Old Persian in syntax and grammar.

Pahlavi. A Middle Persian language, classified as Parthian Pahlavi, Manichaen Pahlavi and Zoroastrian (Sasanian) Pahlavi.

New Persian. The modern Persian language of Iran.

Zand Avesta. It is the Avestan exegesis (explanation) of Avestan texts. Sometimes the scriptures of Zoroastrians are also known by this name.

Gathic Teachings in the Young Avesta

The Gathas, together with vast Avestan literature suffered two major catastrophes, first when the last Achaemenid emperor Darius was defeated and the accursed Alexander burnt the Zoroastrian scriptures. It happened again in 650 CE, when the restored scriptures were destroyed by the invading Arabs. The extant Gathas that we have inherited, are the fragmented and truncated parts of the original extensive ones. The original corpus most probably had exegesis written in prose after each poetic verse. This can be seen in the statement from Yasna 57.6 where the Sraosha (yazata-the worshipful one) is alluded as the first to recite five Gathas of Zarathushtra in prose and poetry with exegesis. Of special interest are the lost teachings of Zarathushtra from the Gathas which are fortunately preserved in the Young Avesta.

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Unlike the Rig Veda, the extant Gathas have verses which are very abrupt from each other, lack smooth flow of thoughts and ideas from one verse to another, and are not systematically connected in an orderly fashion. But it must be noted that each verse of the Gathas is complete in itself. Of special interest are the lost teachings of Zarathushtra from the Gathas, which are fortunately preserved in the Young Avesta. Numerous examples can be cited. The sequential mentioning of Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds, the bedrock of Zarathushtra's teachings is missing from the Gathas but is found in the Yasna Haptanghaiti, the later prose text in the Gathic language now generally taken as the composition of the prophet himself [cf. Boyce, *History of Zoroastrianism - I*] where Ahura Mazda is addressed as the blessed, abundant 'Yazata' [Ys. 41.3] and worshiped. The Avestan word for worship is 'yazamaide' [Ys. 37.1]. These two words yazata and yazamaide occur almost in every paragraph of the extant Young Avestan scriptures.

Another important example that can be cited is the absence of the idea of body resurrection in the Gathas which is so fundamental to Zoroastrianism and must have been the integral part of Zarathushtra's teachings. This teaching is lost in the Gathas but preserved in Zamyad Yasht, paragraph 19, Yasht 19 of the Young Avesta. [See Humbach and Ichaporia, *Zamyad Yasht, Text, Translation and Commentary*, Harrassowitz, 1998 and *Vendidad* 18, 51; also cf. Albert de Jong, *Traditions of the Magi*, apud, 1997].

In order to emphasize the above fact, thoughts and teachings from the Gathas are cited first, followed by examples of how they are further alluded to and amplified in the Young Avesta. This article will amply show that numerous ideas in the Young Avesta flow from the Gathas. The Gathas came to us not even close to original as the Rig Veda, and this can be seen from the internal textual evidence. They have been redacted and several unconscious changes have intruded into the Young Avestan characteristics.

As noted above, there is clear evidence of the lost teachings of the prophet from the Gathas being faithfully preserved in the Yashts, Yasna, Visperad and Vendidad. This evidence overwhelms any denial of this fact. In the course of time the Gathic textual transmission has developed several corruptions. The loss of the line in Yasna 46.15 [*Ushtavaiti Gatha*] together with another lost line in Yasna 53.5 [*Vahishtoishiti Gatha*] are self evident. The Gathic text established by Geldner is fairly reliable, except for a few corrections done by Bartholomae.

Zarathushtra was a practicing priest, well trained in rituals; he speaks of himself as a leading ritual priest, 'zaotar' [Ys. 33.6] a term synonymous with 'athraavan'. [cf. *Vedic*, 'hotar' = *ritual priest*]. This is further alluded to in Visperad [Ch. 3.7]:

Tum no athraom zaotaste.

You O Athraavan are to be our Zaotar
(leading priest).

Moreover the Young Avesta -Yasht 4,7 [*Khordad Yasht, para 7*] is also explicitly clear about Zarathushtra being the priest:

Ye Zaota Zarathushtro
Zarathustra who is a (Zaotar) leading
priest.

The composition of the Gathas reflects the priestly poetic art in a similar fashion as the hotars' [Vedic: ritual priest] composition of the Rig Vedic poetry. This is further given credence from the ritual vocabulary of the Gathas themselves [See Kelens-Pirart, *Les Textes Vieil-Avestiques*, 1988]. Yasna which embeds the Gathas, is a very old Iranian liturgy and its date may in all probability be traced to the time of Zarathushtra.

The following shows examples of Gathic teachings in the Young Avesta.

AHUNAVAITI GATHA

In Ahunavaiti Gatha [Ys. 28.9] says:

yoi ve yoithema daseme stutam.
*We who are standing at offering of
praises to You (Ahura Mazda).*

The above is expanded in the non-Gathic Yasna 11.9:

yo no aevo at te uye thryodhai tureh
mandaedhai xvidem haptandhai yoe
ve yaethm.

We are standing and offering one, two,
three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine
times praises to You (Ahura Mazda).

Ahunavaiti Gatha [Ys. 28.11]:

tavem mazda ahura fro ma sisha
thvamat vaochanghe.....yaish
angheus pouruyo bavat.

*O Mazda Ahura, teach me with your
mouth, in accordance with your spirit,
how the first existence came into
being?*

Question. How did this first existence come into being?

Answer: The answer is not found in the Gathas. No explanation is given anywhere in the Gathas. The answer and explanation are lost. One can find them both in Hormazd Yasht [para 26]:

mana xvrathvacha chisticha yaish a
angheus pouruyo bavat.

Through my (Ahura Mazda's) wisdom
and intelligence, the first existence
came into being.

Ahunavaiti Gatha 30.4 says:

.... hyatcha anghat apemem angheus.

.... and in this manner the existence
will be in the end.

Question: How (in which manner)?

Answer: The answer, again, comes from the above citation in Hormazd Yasht [1.26]:

mana xvrathvacha chisticha
yathacha anghat apemem angheus.

*Through my (Ahura Mazda's) wisdom
and intelligence the existence will end.*

Ahunavaiti Gatha [Ys. 28.4] says:

yavat isai tavacha avat xsai aeshe
ashaya.

*For as long as I can and am able, I
shall look out in search of truth.*

The same thought is reflected in Fravardin Yasht, 4:

I must search for truth as long as I
am able.

Ahunavaiti Gatha [Ys. 30.10] proclaims:

ada zi ava drujo avo bavaiti skendo
apayathrahya.

*For then destruction will come down
upon deceit through its elimination*

This is further explained in the Westergard Avestan Fragments (named after Westergard who discovered these fragments):

*Destruction and deceit both will be
eliminated.*

Ahunavaiti Gatha [Ys. 30.11] the whole stanza says:

*O you mortals, when you observe the
rules that Mazda has established for
good behavior and about where not
to go, and when you consider the
long-lasting harm which is (in store)
for the deceitful, and also the benefits
for the truthful, then (you will realize)
by those (rules) the things desired will
be there.*

Question: What are these rules?

Answer: The answers are not found in the Gathas but are preserved in Visperad 13.1:

These rules are reverence for the
Manthras (Holy Words), Amesha
Spentas and the sayings of
Zarathushtra and these (rules) are
for the benefit of the truthful.

Ahunavaiti Gatha [Ys. 31.18a]:

manthrascha gushta sasnaoscha.
*listen to your manthras and (your)
teachings.*

Zarathushtra wants:

*No adherent of the deceitful needs to
listen to your manthras and teachings.*

Question: Who was the first to listen to Zarathushtra's teachings and manthras?

Answer: The Gathas have lost the answer but the answer is saved in the Young Avesta, in Fravardin Yasht, paragraph 95:

Maidyoimaonghahe arstyehe...yo
paoriyo Zarathsushtrai manthermcha
gusta sasnaoscha.

*(The truthful) Maidyoimah son of
Araste was the very first to listen to
the manthras and teachings of
Zarathushtra.*

Question: Was there any other man who listened to God's manthras and teachings?

Answer: The answer is lost in the Gathas but we have an answer from Fravardin Yasht [para 87]:

Gaya Merethen (the first mortal) first
listened to God's manthras and
teachings.

It must be noted that Gaya Merethen was never alluded to as the messenger of God in the manner as Prophet Zarathushtra is known. There is no question of Gaya Merethen listening to Zarathushtra's teachings and manthras, which Zarathushtra heard from Ahura Mazda, because Gaya Merethen predates Zarathushtra and Gaya Merethen had listened to God.

Ahunavaiti Gatha [Ys. 31.20] says:

A long period of darkness, foul food
and the word 'woe' – to such an existence
your religious views will lead
you, O deceitful ones, because of
your actions.

Question: Are there any particular deceitful ones?

Answer: No answer is found in the Gathas, but such an answer is elaborated upon in the Vendidad [Fragard 5, para 62]:

*The heretics because of their religious
views and because of their
actions, they will lead themselves to
dark existence.*

Further expansion of this Gathic idea is in Vendidad [Fragard 7, para 22]:

O deceitful heretic ones, your actions and your religious view will lead you ultimately to the worst existence.

Ahunavaiti Gatha [Ys. 32.2] states:

We choose your holy and good right-mindedness (Armaity). Let it be ours.

This is further reflected upon in Yasna 12.2:

Let holy and good right-mindedness (Armaity) be mine.

Ahunavaiti Gatha [Ys. 32.6] states;

hata-marane = You who remember (this is about Ahura Mazda).

This is further cited in Hormazd Yasht as Ahura Mazda's 16th name:

hata-marenis = He who remembers.

Ahunavaiti Gatha [Ys. 32.15] states:

The (truthful) will be cared by these two (integrity and immortality) in the house of good thoughts.

The same idea is alluded to in Vendidad [3.29] and Vistasp Yasht [35]:

He/she will be taken care of, by his/her attainment of good name (the good name comes from being righteous).

Ahunavaiti Gatha [Ys. 33.1] says:

The straightest action following the laws of first existence ...

Question: Which are the laws of first existence?

Answer: The answer is found only in the following Young Avestan Yasna 54.2, Yasna 55.6, Yasna 58.9, Yasna 59.33 and Yasna 71.18:

The straightest action is Stoa Yasnas and Stoa Yasnas are the laws of first existence.

In Ahunavaiti Gatha: [Ys. 33.6] Zarathushtra declares himself a priest:

ye zaota asha arezus.

(Zarathushtra) a leading priest straightforward in truth.

Zarathushtra's priesthood is further confirmed in young Avestan Khor-dad Yasht, para 4 [Yasht 4.5]:

ye zaota Zarathushtra.

Zarathushtra who is the leading priest.

In Avesta Zaota = leading or first officiating priest, Pahlavi Zot (zwt), Gujarati Joti.

Ahunavaiti Gatha [Ys. 33.7] says:

(O Mazda) with truth and good thoughts for which I (i.e. Zarathushtra) am heard far beyond the faithful offerers. Let the bright reverential gifts be manifest among us.

The same idea is alluded to in Vendidad 17.7:

O Zarathushtra, with truth and good thoughts you are heard far beyond.

Furthermore in Pursishniha 36 (Pursishniha is a Pahlavi book where questions are asked and answers are given) we find:

Let reverential gifts become evident to us.

Ahunavaiti Gatha [Ys. 34.5]:

We have declared you (Ahura Mazda) to be superior to all 'daevas' (false gods), beasts and (evil) mortals.

This is further elaborated in Yasna 19.2 and Yasna 19.4:

Superior to sky, superior to water, superior to land, superior to fire, superior to righteous men, superior to evil men, superior to 'daevas' (false gods), beasts and superior to all.

Note: Ahura Mazda is superior to all including righteous men, which is not alluded to in the Gathas. It is definite that this expanded praise for Ahura Mazda is lost in the Gathas and found intact in the non-Gathic Yasna.

Ahunavaiti Gatha [Ys. 34.7]:

In Truth, I do not know any other than you, so protect us.

In Yasna 58.5 we find this idea expanded:

(O Ahura Mazda) You protect us, protect Amesha Spentas, protect good rulers.

Ahunavaiti Gatha, [Ys. 30.9]:

Thus may we be those who make existence brilliant.

Ahunavaiti Gatha [Ys. 34.15]:

Through your power make real existence brilliant in value.

Question 1: Who are 'those'? The Gathas do not elaborate.

Question 2: Is there anything else which will make existence brilliant in value. Again, the answer is missing in the Gathas.

Answer 1: Answers are to be found in several non-Gathic Avesta texts:

From Yasht 19.11 [Zamyad Yasht]:

The victorious benefactors will make the existence brilliant. (saoshyantam verethrajanem = victorious benefactors)

From Yasht 13.9 [Fravardin Yasht]:

The benefactors make existence brilliant.

From Yasht 19.9 [Zamyad Yasht]:

The Amesha Spentas will give existence which is brilliant in value.

(Amesha Spenta are the six emanations of Ahura Mazda: Good Thought (Vohu Manah), Truth (Asha), Good Dominion (Vohu Khshathra), Holy Right Mindedness (Spenta Armaity), Integrity (Haurvatat) and Immortality (Ameretat).

Answer 2: We find the answer to Question 2 in the Young Avesta Yasna 55.8 :

Staota Yesniya which get the existence (which is) brilliant in value.

This can be explained as: Staota Yesniya (plural), the parts of Yasna liturgy will also make the existence brilliant in value i.e. by constantly praying Staota Yesniya and following the prophet's teachings.

'Ferasha' (= 'brilliant') is the Gathic word. The Young Avesta word is 'frasha'.

This idea of 'frasha' is very well depicted in Zamyad Yasht, para 10. [see Humbach-Ichapor, Zamyad Yasht, 1998]:

Ahura Mazda created the creatures, many and good, many and wonderful, many and brilliant (frasha), many and bright.

In Vendidad Fragard 1 and paragraph 20, 'frasha' = 'brilliant' is said of places:

Lands and regions, beautiful, deep, esteemed, brilliant and bright.

USHTAVAITI GATHA

Similar parallels can be drawn in passages from the Ushtavaiti Gatha. Ushtavaiti Gatha [Ys. 43.2] says:

...vangheus mayao manangho
The blessings of Good Thought

In Yasna 10.12, we find:

...te baeshaza irrathare vangheus
Thy remedies are linked with the blessings of Good Thought.

Ushtavaiti Gatha [Ys 43.7] we have:

hyat ma vohu pairi jasat manangha
When one attends Me with Good thought (here 'Me' is Ahura Mazda)

In Yasna 60.12 [Hoshbam prayer]:

daresame thava pairi thava jamyama
We wish to see You and we would like to attend You (here 'You' is for Ahura Mazda)

There is a similar thought from Rig Veda 9.98.70:

yo devan visvan....pairi madena saha gachati.
Who attends all gods (devas) with exhilaration.

Ushtavaiti Gatha [Ys. 43.8] states:

...thava...staomi...ufiacha
I praise and extol Thee

In Yasna 17.18, we find:

(fravashyo) staomi zbayemi ufiemi
I praise, call and extol (Fravashis).

Yasht 13.15 [Fravardin Yasht] says:

ko no stavat ko yazayte ko ufiat
Who will praise, who will worship, who will extol?

Ushtavaiti Gatha [Ys. 44.3]:

ke ya mao ukhshyeiti nerefsaitti thavat
Through whom the moon waxes and wanes?

In Yasht 7.2 [Mah Yasht] we find:

kat mao ukhshyeiti, kat mao nerefsaitti, panchadasa mao ukhshyeiti, panchadasa mao nerefsaitti.
How long the moon waxes? How long the moon wanes?
Fifteen (days) moon waxes. Fifteen (days) moon wanes.

Ushtavaiti Gatha [Ys. 44.10]:

tam daenam ya hatam vahista.

That religion (or Religious Views) which is best for those who exist.

There is a reinterpretation in Fravardin Yasht 13.91:

daenayai yat haitinam vahistayai.
The religion (or religious views) which is best among the existing (religions or religious views)

Ushtavaiti Gatha [Ys. 44.13]:

katha drujem nisa ahmat nish nasma
How can we drive deceit out of ourselves?

The answer is given in the non-Gathic Yasna 61.5:

katha drujem nis ahmat nasma
How can we drive deceit out of ourselves?
nish nashama saoshyanto drujem
We can drive (deceit) out, by acting as a benefactor (saoshyant).
katha nish.nashma
How can we drive (it) out (as a benefactor)?
yatha him janama...vishpaish hacha karshvan yais hapta
By casting out from all the seven continents.

A further answer is given in Zamyad Yasht 19.12:

nish tat paiti drukhsj nashaite yadhat aivi chit jagamat.
Deceit will be driven out to that place from where it originally came from.

Question: Which is that place?

Answer: the answer is missing in the extant Gathas as also in the entire extant Avesta, but is preserved in the Pahlavi Bundahishn:

Deceit will be finally driven out to the place from where it has originated, which is the dark abysmal abode of ahriman (Angra Mainyu).

In Ushtavaiti Gatha [Ys. 43.3]:

at hvo vengheus vahyona na aibi jamyat
May that man attain better than good
In Yasna 59.31, we find:
jamyat vo vanghaot vanghu
May you attain better than good.

Ushtavaiti Gatha [Ys. 45.7]:

yehya sava ishaonti radangho
(The truthful one) whose benefits the bounteous ones implement.

In Yasna 7.24 we find:

ashyano paiti jamyat yehya sava ishaonti radangho
With truth we approach one whose benefits bounteous ones implement

A very interesting Gathic idea is seen in Visperad 18.2:

vispayumcha ushtatateim yazamaide, ya narsh sadra dravato
Bounteous benefits are revered, (but) these are 'woes' for heretics.

Some parallels between Ushtavaiti Gatha and the Rig veda are examined below:

Ushtavaiti Gatha [Ys. 43.16]:

khveng daresoi khshathroi khyat armaitis
In the (full) view of the sun, may armaiti (right mindedness) be in power.

Rig Veda 5.66.2:

ksatram....svarna.....darsatam
In full view.....in power.

Ushtavaiti Gatha [Ys. 44.3]:

kasna khveng stermcha dat advanem
Who created the course of the sun and stars?

Rig Veda [1.71.9]:

adhvanah.....suryah
The course....of sun.

Rig Veda [10,179.2]:

suro advanah
The course of sun.

Rig Veda [1.24.8]:

chakara suryaya panthem anvetava u
(Varuna has made) the course for the sun to travel.

Ushtavaiti Gatha [Ys. 44.4]:

kasna dereta zamcha ade
Who holds the earth down below?

Rig Veda [7.99.3]:

dadharta pritvim abhitah
(Devas) firmly hold the earth from below.

Ushtavaiti Gatha [Ys. 44.4]:

ke apo urvaraoscha

Who preserves the water and plants?

Rig Veda [7.34.23]:

apa osadih

(rich).water and (may) plants (grow).

Ushtavaiti Gatha [Ys. 44.4]:

Ke vatai dvanmaibyascha yaoget asu

Who yokes the swift teams to the wind and clouds?

Rig Veda [1.118.4]:

yuktasa asavah

Yokes the swift (falcons).

Rig Veda [5.58.7]:

vatan hy asvan ayuyure

Yoked to the wind (the pole).

Ushtavaiti Gatha [Ys. 44.4]:

kasna dereta zamcha ada nabaoscha
avapastoish ke apo urvaraoscha

Who holds the earth down below?

Who prevents the sky from falling?

Who (preserves) the water and plants?

An answer exists in Rig Veda [2.17.5]:

adharyat prithivim...astabhat...dayam
avasrasah

*He holds the earth, He supports the
skies from falling.*

Ushtavaiti Gatha [Ys. 44.9]:

yam hudanaosh paytise

A generous person

In Rig Veda [1.136.3] we find:

danunas paiti

A generous lord.

SPENTAMAINYU GATHA

Spentamainyu Gatha [Ys. 48.5] alludes to:

hukhshathra khshentam ma ne
dushekhshathra khshenta

let good rulers rule over us

Here it does not specifically indicate male and female rulers, but this is clearly ascertained in Yasna Haptanghaiti [Ys. 41.2]:

hukhshathrastu ne va nairi va khshaeta

May a good ruler, male or female,
rule over us.

Even more of this is seen in the Young Avesta [Ys 58.5], where protection for good rulers is requested.

Spentamainyu Gatha [Ys. 48.2]:

kat ashava mazda venghat dregvan-
tem ?

*Will the truthful defeat the deceitful
one, O Mazda?*

Hormazd Yasht, para 28 [Yt. 1.28] asks the same question and gives the answer:

kat ashava mazda vanat dragvan-
tem?

Will the truthful defeat the deceitful?

ashava vanat drujim

Truthful will defeat the deceit.

ashava vanat dravantem

Truthful will defeat the deceitful.

Spentamainyu Gatha [Ys. 48.6]:

at akhyai asha mazdao urvarao vakhshat
*Mazda shall make the plants grow for
her (cow) with truth.*

Vendidad [Ch. 11, para 6 and Ch. 17,
para 5] and Frahang-i Oim [4d] say:

asha mazdao urvarao vakhshat

Mazda makes the plants grow with truth.

Spentamainyu Gatha [Ys. 49.11]:

drujo demane haithya anghen astayo
*They (deceitful) will be real guests in
the house of deceit.*

This is echoed in Vendidad [Ch. 8,
para 108 and Ch. 14, para 18]:

drujo nmane haithya anghen astayo

*They (sinners) will be real guests in
the house of deceit.*

VOHU KHSATHRA GATHA

Vohukhshathra Gatha [Ys. 51.11] asks the question:

ke urvatha spitamai?

*Who is the man (who can be) an ally
of Spitama (Zarathushtra)?*

The non-Gathic Yasna [Ch. 19, para 14] provides the answer:

drigubyo vastarem cheenastee

yatha urvathem spitamai

*He who is the shepherd to the poor,
that (man) is the ally of Spitama
(Zarathushtra)*

This elaborates on Yatha Ahu Vairyo.

Vohukhshathra Gatha [Ys. 51.13]:

yehya urva khraodaiti - chinvato
peretao akao khavaish shyaothanaish
hizvasxha ashaya nasvao patho.

*His soul facing (him) at the Account-
keeper's Bridge, will make him trem-
ble, for he has strayed from the path
of truth by his own action and those
of his tongue.*

This is echoed in Vendidad [Ch. 5,
para 4]:

jit ashem khraodat.urva peshotanus
frena

*Truth will make the living soul of the
sinful tremble.*

or

*Truthful living will make the sinful soul
tremble.*

VAHISTOISHTI GATHA

Vahistoishti Gatha [Ys. 53.9]:

tat mazda tava khshathrem
ya erezejyoi dahi dregave vahyo

*It is in your power, O Mazda, through
which you will grant what is
better to the poor living decently*

In the non-Gathic Yasna 19.4:

tat mazda tava khshathrem
drigubyo vastarem chinastee

*It is in your power O Mazda
to grant (perceive) the shepherd to
the poor.*

This is an elaboration on Yatha Ahu Vairyo.

A brief history of Asho Zarathushtra, composer of the Gathas, follows [see next page].

Read

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PROPHET ZARATHUSHTRA – COMPOSER OF THE GATHAS

The composer of the Gathas is the ancient Iranian prophet Zarathushtra, known in the West as Zoroaster.

Date. Zoroastrians often date him around 6000 BC following Greek

around 1200 BC has emerged and is now accepted [Cf. Boyce and Humbach-Ichapor-ria]. This date has a basis in the identification of Zarathushtra's patron and more on the language, style and

authors who have misinterpreted ancient Iranian sources.

The great significance of this age is that Greeks acknowledged him to be the first of the world's religious prophets. There has been much scholarly debate over his dating. Until the 1980s the most commonly given date was about 650 BC [Cf. Gershevitch and Zehner *apud*] but recently a much earlier date of

imagery deployed in his teachings.

Place. There is now general acceptance that he lived in the North East Iranian

lands. The broad setting of his religion was in the Indo-Iranian tradition reflected in the Rig Veda, the language style of which seems roughly contemporaneous. However the theology of the Gathas is widely different from the Rig Veda.

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Ethics in Zoroastrianism

Zarathushtra's teachings in his Gathas give the external appearance of the presence of transparent, sheer monotheism, since Ahura Mazda, his God is the beginning and end of everything, meaning He encloses the whole development of the world and all that is good in it. But on close scrutiny, it is discernable that Zarathushtra's religion is the dualistic religion par excellence, i.e. a religion in which the evil in the world is not attributed to God's inscrutable ways, as is necessary in monotheism, but in which God's antagonists are blamed for it.

By Pallan R. Ichapor-ria
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The core of Zarathushtra's teachings is that, there is one God to be venerated whom the prophet called Ahura Mazda, the Lord Wise. Whether he coined this word or borrowed from ancient beliefs is still very much debated by scholars. Lommel suggests that this name is not really a proper name but an expression of His being. Yasht 1, 7-8 [*Hormazd Yasht*] gives twenty names of God, of which Mazda is the last name. Furthermore in the same Yasht more names describing the qualities of God are presented.

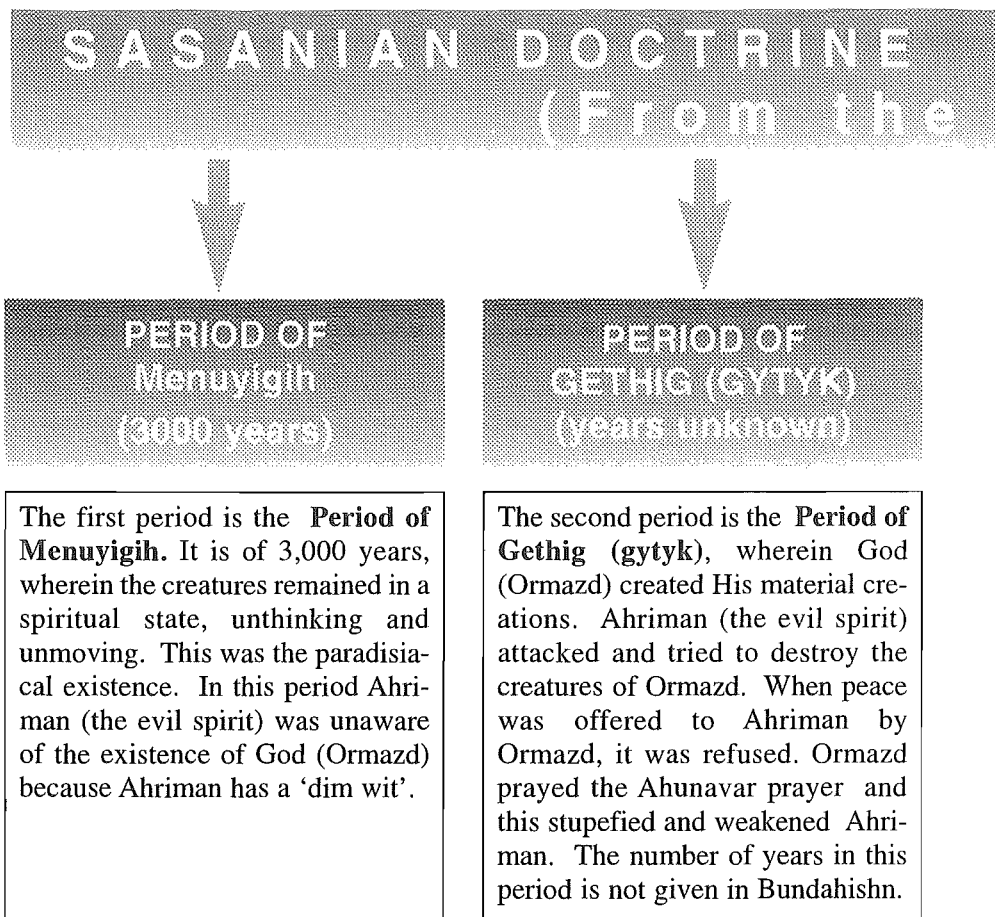
Zarathushtra's teachings in his Gathas give the external appearance of the presence of transparent sheer monotheism, since Ahura Mazda, his God is the beginning and end of everything, meaning He encloses the

whole development of the world and all that is good in it. But on close scrutiny it is discernable that [*Hum-bach-Ichaporla, The Heritage of Zarathushtra*, p. 12]: "Zarathushtra's religion is the dualistic religion par excellence, i.e. a religion in which the evil in the world is not attributed to God's inscrutable ways, as is necessary in monotheism, but in which God's antagonists are blamed for it. As a matter of fact, the life of the world from the loss of paradise caused by Yima (YAv. Yima Khshaeta, NPers. Jamshid) to its renovation is painted in the Zarathushtrian tradition as a continuous conflict between Ahura Mazda and the 'daevas' and their respective ideals, between the principle of truth (asha) and that of deceit (druj), between good and evil, between the truthful and the deceitful."

"Yet for the following reason the dualistic interpretation must be somewhat modified. In the Gathas, Ahura Mazda is described as being at the head of a group of divine beings called 'ahuras'. These ahuras evidently are the antagonists of the daevas, but among the latter there is no individual antagonist of Ahura Mazda, such as evil spirit, as there is in the Young Avesta (Angra Mainyu) and the Middle and New Persian literature (Ahriman). This is a very monotheistic aspect of Zarathushtra's spiritual world."

"The picture at the end of this material world drawn by the prophet is also purely monotheistic. By the renovation and transfiguration of the world called "brilliant making", Ahura Mazda and the truthful, guided by the prophet will finally succeed in eliminating evil, restoring paradise on earth and securing Ahura Mazda's rule for ever." This will be discussed in details later.

The idea of twin spirits is well presented in the Gathas, and in all probability may have been adopted from older traditions of the Iranian mythology and the choice between



good and evil is open to all humans. It is easy to understand that to be good one needs to be moral, and to be moral one must have a good set of ethics to guide his/her life. The bases of ethics are in the intellectual nature of man, that lies in the free will and that is to be comprehended in the fact

that the prophet hammered again and again into the minds of his followers, humata, hukhta and huvaresha against dushmata (evil thoughts), duzukhta (evil words) and duzvaresha (evil deeds). This basic ethic is first seen in the Yasna Haptanghaiti and then found disseminated throughout the later Young Avestan text.

Perhaps the nature of the Gathas being so complicated to fulfill the task of simple teachings, may have left this to the Gathic prose text of Yasna Haptanghaiti. The Gathas most probably were meant for the inner circle of initiates and it is certain that the highly enigmatic style of the Gathas must have been completely unintelligible to the prophet's public, for example the so called "Lament of the Cow" in Yasna 29 is unsuited for any didactic nature; however, the majority of the Gathic stanzas are addressed to Ahura Mazda.

“ When evil comes from God, as in a purely monotheistic religion, then the question of why is it so, must remain beyond human comprehension. ”

that there is no sin of birth [*cf Dinkerd III, 100.13*] "Infants and young children can not exercise their reasons and thus are not responsible for their acts and so they commit no sins" [*op cit.*]. That brings to the forefront the basic teaching in Zoroastrianism about Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds. Although not alluded to in the prophet's Gathas, I have no doubt

OF FOUR PERIODS OF THE WORLD (Pahlavi Bundahishn)



PERIOD OF WIN(N)ARDAN OR FIXATION (9000 years)

The third period is the **Period of Win(n)ardan - Fixation**, wherein Ormazd fixed nine thousand years for combat divided as follows:

- (1) **Hamagih-Kam-e Ormazd**. The first three thousand years will pass according to the "Will of Ormazd".
- (2) **Gomezisn**. The second three thousand years will pass as the "State of Mixture", wherein the will of Ormazd and the will of Ahriman will persist.
- (3) **Zaman-e Bar-e Karm** (lit. Period of Action). The third and final three thousand years will pass as the "State of Contest". when Ahriman will be rendered useless.



PERIOD OF WIZARSHAN OR SEPARATION

The fourth period is the **Period of Wizarshan - Separation**. The appearance of Zarathushtra heralds this period of separation of good from evil with the final and total defeat of Ahriman for ever, followed by the final renovation 'frasa(a)gird'. The creatures of Ormazd will become everlasting. This is regaining paradise on earth. The number of years is not given in Bundahishn.

'Manah' (thinking or thoughts) 'vacha' (speaking or spoken words) and 'shyaothana' (acting or action) are the fundamentals of human behavior and depending upon its goodness or badness, enter into human ethics. In other words among the basic ideas is the categorization of human behavior into manah, vacha and shyaothana. In the ascending climax these fundamentals give the impression of originating from the psychological human archetype in the sense of C. G. Jung – the basic idea of humanity arising from different corners of the world in a similar fashion. One finds this in the Buddhist (dhamapada) and Christian sources (confession: I have sinned in thoughts, words and deeds).

With the distinction between Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds against evil thoughts, evil words and evil deeds, we now enter the area of ethics. The distinction is most consequent in the Zoroastrian religion where they are praised:

humatanam hukhtanam huvare-
htanam adacha verezyananamcha

*We are the eulogizer of well thought
(thoughts), of well spoken (words)
and well performed (actions).*

Man is basically created good [see *Dinkerd IV, 136*]. If he does evil, he obeys Ahriman. This is due to his ignorance of the nature of Ahriman [see *Dinkerd III, 79*]. The question one has to ask is why does man not use his mental faculties to understand the nature of the evil spirit, Ahriman. *Dinkerd III, 150* alludes that this happens because Ahriman binds man's intelligence and conceals from his eyes the reward of virtues and punishments of sins [Cf. *Mino-i-Kharet (Spirit of Wisdom), XL 26-27*].

One must keep his/her eyes open to the fact that the world as well as his/her life is constantly involved in the real spiritual battle between good and evil and this battle is waged in all ages and all climes. The world is the place of trial [*Dinkerd IV, 137*] and man must be an active partner in this

trial. Furthermore *Dinkerd I, 48* clearly states that "the temptation to do evil commences from the time when the faculty of thought starts developing in the child."

Doctrine of Redemption. For comprehension of how evil originated, one has to grasp the doctrine of redemption. Zarathushtra distinguishes, in his Gathas, two periods of the world:

- (1) Paradise on earth which ended with the invasion of evil.
- (2) Period of combat between good and evil, ending in the defeat of evil, and the renovation of the world.

Zarathushtra calls himself and his followers 'saoshyants', the strengtheners and saviors who will renovate this world and make existence 'brilliant' thereby restoring the paradisiacal state and making this world perfect. This idea was further developed in Sasanian times into the Doctrine of Four Periods [See Figure above]. This is well laid out in the Pahlavi

Bundahishn, a Zoroastrian encyclopedia. Of special interest are the first and last periods corresponding to the two periods alluded to in the Gathas.

Of further special interest is the epoch making event that took place between the third and fourth periods. This was the time when Zarathushtra made his appearance and heralded the Period of Wizarshan i.e. the Period of Separation of Good from Evil bringing forth the "final renovation of the world" at the end of time. This Zoroastrian ethical doctrine makes it easy to comprehend the existence of evil and final triumph of goodness. The "making brilliant" of existence known in the Young Avesta as 'Frashokereti' and in Pahlavi as 'frasa(a)gird' is described for the first time in Zamyad Yasht. Understanding the independent existence of evil facilitates cognizance of Zoroastrian ethics.

This picture of the development of the world as discussed above was understood by the dastoor of mid-nineteen century as dualistic. In 1861, Martin Haugh, Prof. of Sanskrit at Poona University, who was studying Avesta Pahlavi under the dastoor, put forward the 'monistic' interpretation of the scriptures. The dastoor refused these monistic interpretations and emphasized, instead, the difference of views in Zoroastrianism from other purely monotheistic religions. It is a fact that all the Abrahamic religions admit the existence of the devil (cf. Christianity mentions him in the New Testament) but the devil plays no part in their religious instructions and his existence is psychologically suppressed whereas the Zoroastrian religion has developed a system of opposite notions covered by the terms; hu-manah, hu-vacha and hu-shyaothana and their opposites dush-manah, duzvacha and duzshyaothna.

As noted above, this is what makes Zoroastrianism a dualistic religion with the final establishment of pure

monotheism resulting from the utter conclusive destruction of Angra Mainyu, the evil spirit.

When evil comes from God, as in a purely monotheistic religion, then the question of why is it so, must remain beyond human comprehension. Yet in spite of the correct understanding of the learned dastoor of the mid-nineteen century, it seems that from that time onwards, Zoroastrians endeavored to align themselves with

“The picture at the end of this material world drawn by the prophet is purely monotheistic. By the renovation and transfiguration of the world called “brilliant making”, Ahura Mazda ... will finally succeed in eliminating evil, restoring paradise on earth and securing Ahura Mazda’s rule for ever.”

the pure monotheistic doctrine of an Abrahamic religion with which Zoroastrian doctrine agrees only in so far as the end of the world is concerned. At that time evil is expected to be eliminated finally and ultimately goodness will triumph which is common in both religions. This arrangement may seem to be warranted but at the same time Zoroastrians have taken a wrong turn and began to abandon the possibility of explaining that all the evil in this world only comes from Angra Mainyu.

Whenever pure monotheistic religions are confronted with the problem of theodicy i.e. justification of evil in the world, they are at a loss because if there is no evil spirit, then evil cannot come from anybody except from God who produced it in "His inscrutable ways". Zoroastrians have to withstand and refuse to shy away from discussing their dualistic doctrine for an explanation of the existence of evil. This will then strengthen the doctrine of their religion and gather powerful momentum in its understanding.

VIRTUES, DUTIES, EVIL DEEDS AND QUALITIES OF AHRIMAN

Pahlavi literature has defined virtues, duties, evil deeds and qualities of Ahri-man (Phlv) or Angra Mainyu (Av.)

Virtues. Virtues are known (in Pahlavi) as 'hunar' and good deeds are 'kirbag'. According to Dinkerd IV, 141-2, they are: liberality, veracity, celebration of joyful festivals like gahambars, observation of rituals, worship of Ahura Mazda, kindness towards all, friendliness towards the good, virtuous thoughts without infidelity, courage without discord, industry without selfishness, love of wisdom and research of knowledge. Furthermore Dinkerd III, 109 describes special virtues as faith in the creation of the world of Ormazd, and love towards the Creator.

Duties. Dinkerd III, 133 treats the subject of duties for the king and his subjects as: to follow the good religion (i.e. Zoroastrianism), possess good wisdom, good disposition, good beneficence, cheerful nature, severity towards the wicked, just behavior, repression of avarice, and undying service to Ormazd.

Evil Deeds. Thirty evil deeds are given in Dinkerd III, 109.

(1) Pedestry, (2) sodomy, (3) murder (4) dissolution of marriage without valid reason, (5) impending astrology (6) destruction of sacred fires, (7) destruction of dogs (8) idol worship, (9) carelessness for religion, (10) breach of trust, (11) assistance afforded to falsehood, (12) idleness, (13) heresy, (14) Sorcery, (15) Apostasy, (16) worship of false gods, (17) theft, (18) breach of promise, (19) malice, (20) oppressing innocents, (21) calumny, (22) persecution of the just, (23) pride, (24) adultery, (25) ingratitude, (26) falsehood, (27) affliction given to the helpless, (28) taking pleasure in disturbing the good, (29) continuous sinning, and (30) regretting doing good to others.

Nature of the evil spirit (Av. Angra Mainyu, Phlv. Ahriman) per the Bundahishn. Ethical living benefits from knowing the qualities of Ahriman (Angra Mainyu) so each man and woman can be better prepared to fight him. All references below are from the Bundahishn.

● *Ill Will*: Whatever the origin of the evil spirit (Ahriman) he is of ill will and malicious nature [2.10]. There is a perpetual opposition between him and the Good Spirit. He is cowardly and cruel [28].

● *Ignorance*: He is ignorant and possesses imperfect knowledge. His knowledge is the knowledge of after events [1, 3, 9]. He was ignorant of the existence of Ahura Mazda.

● *Timidity*: When Ahura Mazda prayed the Ahunavar and announced to him about his final destruction, he was utterly stupefied and fell back upon his knees and was reduced to a pitiful state of impotence for 3000 years.

The following epithets are applied to him: full of death (pur-marg), destroyer (marenchindar), of evil religion (dush-dini), wicked (darvand), druj par-excellence, evil creator (dush-dat), evil-knowledge (dush-danak).

By exposing the true nature of the evil spirit (Angra Mainyu or Ahriman) the Old and Young Avestan corpus and Pahlavi literature forewarn us to know him better and recognize his duplicity, deception and deceitfulness, so we do not fall into his trap. This is the key to living a good ethical Zoroastrian life and leave this world a better place when we depart to our Maker. ■

Upon request by the Guest Editor, spellings (of Zarathushtra, Zoroastrian, Zoroastrianism and other Avestan and Pahlavi names and terms) in this issue of FEZANA Journal are as used by scholars in academia, and do not necessarily conform to the standards adopted for FEZANA Journal.

The Gathas and the other Old Avestan Texts

An understanding of the Gathas of Zarathushtra and the other Old Avestan texts: Yasna Haptanghaiti and the sacred formulas of Yatha Ahu Vairyo, Ashem Vohu, Yenghe Hatam and A Airyema Ishyo, based on pioneering research by the author on philological aspects of these sacred verses.

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I. THE GATHAS

The Gathas are the literary heritage left by Zarathushtra, a collection of seventeen hymns [see figure next page] forming the nucleus of the Yasna, the great Mazdayasnian liturgy. The Yasna constitutes about one third of what has come down to us of the original Avesta. This liturgy is recited during the Yasna ceremony performed in the fire-temple (NPer. *atash kadeh*) and consists of two successive preparations of the 'haom' drink. At the end of the first preparation, the haom is partaken by the 'zaotar', the officiating priest; and after the second preparation, it is offered by him into the well of the fire-temple.

Each of the five Gathas consists of one to seven 'haitis' (chapters) and grouped on the basis of their five different meters. It is possible that the formal arrangements of the Gathic hymns according to their respective meters reflect the original order of composition as planned by the prophet himself. The second to fifth Gathas are named after their respective opening words; and the first one, Ahunavaiti Gatha is named after the Sacred Prayer *Yatha Ahu Vairyo* (YAv. *Ahuna Vairya*) [Ys. 27.13], which has been counted as the beginning of the Gathas in an earlier redaction of the Yasna.

The Gathas are an object of veneration as early as Young Avestan times. For example see Yasna 71.6:

vispaecha pancha gathao yazmaide.

We worship all the five truthful Gathas.

The five Gathas comprise chapters 28-34, 43-51 and 53 of the Yasna. The first four Gathas can be grouped together. The fifth one, Vahistoishti Gatha belongs to a different literary genre. This is easily discernible from the extraordinary complexity of the first stanza of the Ahunavaiti Gatha [Ys. 28,1] and the last stanza of the fourth one, Vohukhshathra Gatha [Ys. 51.22] which suggests that the prophet meant Ys. 28.1 and Ys. 51.22 as an opening and conclusion of the Gathic collection. The fifth one seems to be a sort of appendix. The Gathas contain very few references to external circumstances.

Although it is taken for granted that Zarathushtra's message represented a fundamental break in the religious tradition of the Iranians, there is much more evidence in his poetry which bear witness to a continuity with the past. For example the beginning of Yasna 30 and Yasna 45 exhibit the same pattern:

at vakhshya ishento ya mazdatha

O you approaching ones, I shall now proclaim ... [Ys. 30.1]

and

at fravakhshya ... yaecha asnat durat ishatha

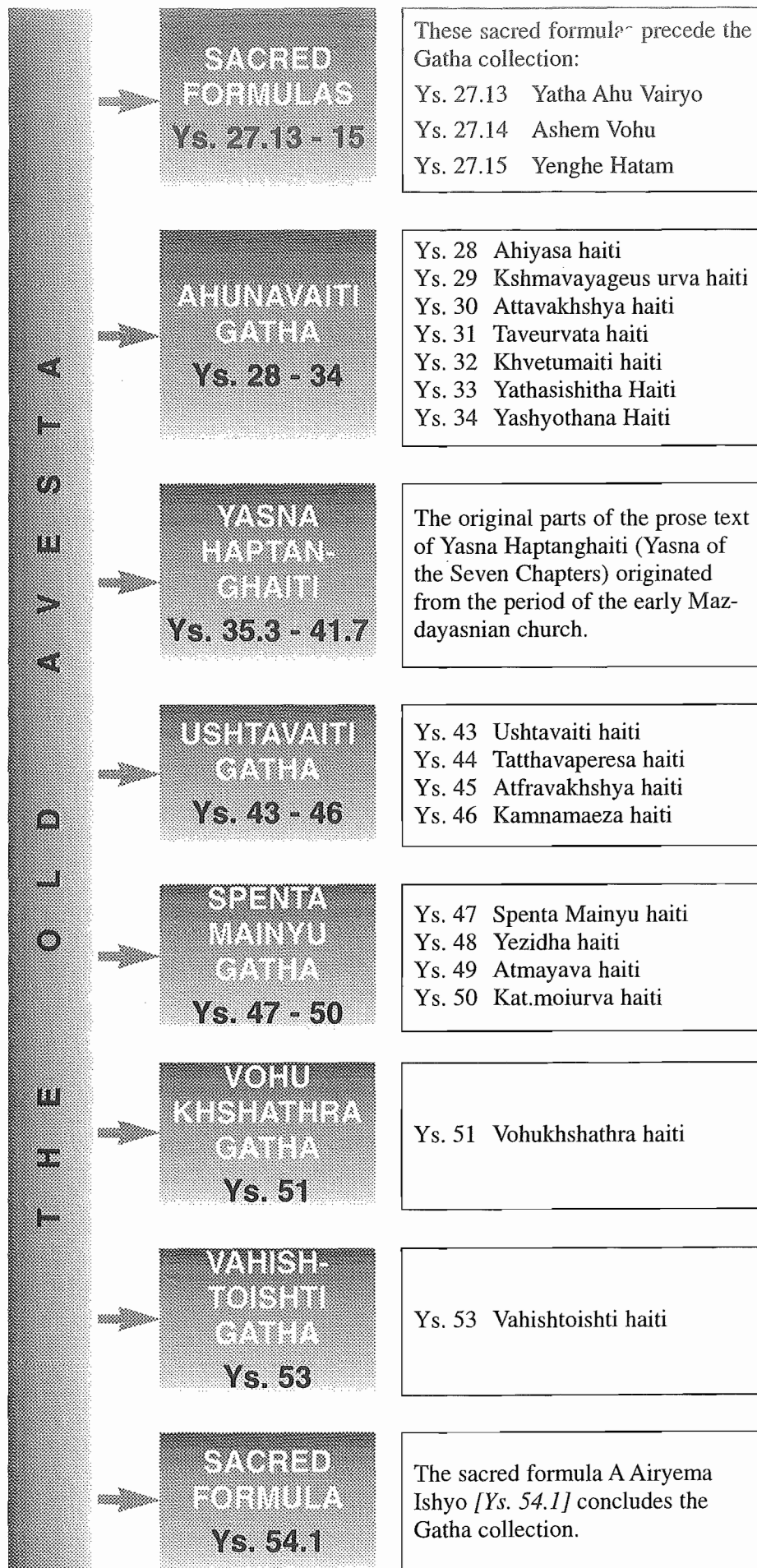
Now I shall proclaim, O you who are approaching from near and far, now take a note of ... [Ys. 45.1]

This types of introductory formulas are from the ancient tradition, as proved by passages from the Rig Veda [1.32,1]:

Indrasya nu viryani pra vocham

I am proclaiming now the heroic deeds of Indra ...

Right, a diagram of the collection of texts that comprise the Old Avesta. The language of this collection, that includes the Gathas, is more archaic than the main body of the Avesta and exhibits several dialectal peculiarities.



II. OLD AVESTAN, YOUNG AVESTAN AND ARCHAISTIC YOUNG AVESTAN.

Avestan, the language of the Avesta is an Old Iranian language. Other Old Iranian languages are Median and Old Persian. Median, the language of Median tribes in northwestern Iran, is now hardly known. Old Persian, in southwestern Iran (Pars) is reasonably attested in the Achaemenian inscriptions. Both, a northwest Iranian and east Iranian location of Avestan have been suggested, but we now know that the former (northwest) has now been long discarded. Furthermore the language of Avesta as it has transmitted is not homogeneous and probably contains elements belonging to different areas and different chronological strata.

The language of the Gathas is more archaic than the language of the main body of the Avesta, and by comparison it exhibits several dialectal peculiarities. The two are called Old Avesta (OAv.) and Young Avesta (YAv.). In addition to the Gathas several other texts are in Old Avesta [see figure].

The most characteristic phonological feature of Old Avestan is the lengthening of all final vowels, in contrast to Young Avestan where they are short. The Old Avestan lengthening also appears in several Young Avestan word forms as they have intruded during the transmission of the texts.

The lengthening of final vowels is also found in the several archaistic Young Avestan passages, e.g. in Yanghe Hatam [Ys. 27.15] where 'yengee' is archaized from the Young Avestan 'yenghe'. It should have been Old Avestan 'yehya'. Similarly in the Old Avestan text Yasna Haptanghaiti, the Old Avestan word 'Amesang Spentang' is wrongly substituted with the archaistic Young Avestan word 'Amesha

Spentae' and also Old Avestan word 'yasnaya' is replaced in error by the archaistic Young Avestan 'yasnahee' [Ys. 42.1]. These errors seem to have occurred during the long history of text transmission.

Another typical feature of Old Avestan is the preservation of intervocalic voiced stops which in Young Avesta have developed into fricative e.g. Old Avestan 'hudah' and the Young Avestan 'hudha' (munificent).

A dialectological problem within the Avestan language is offered by the name of the prophet. By common consensus Zarathushtra is divided into 'Zarath' and 'Ushtra' (possess-

❧ The Sasanian recension of the Avesta was not based on a literary but on an oral tradition. It was written in a phonetically highly differentiated script which was specifically invented for the purpose of recording the smallest phonetic details of the oral tradition. ❧ ❧

ing camels), but the meaning of Zarath is still controversial. For biological reason, one would like to connect it etymologically with the Avestan 'Zairi' (yellow) to become 'possessing yellow camels' or with the verbal root Avestan 'Zar' (to be angry, furious) to become 'possessing furious camels'.

All these etymologies suppose that Zarathushtra stands for Zarat-ushtra, which is what one actually expects in Young Avesta. If so, the name of the prophet is likely to contain a phonological peculiarity alien to Avestan and originating from other unknown Old Iranian language which may have been the prophet's mother tongue. This was originally proposed by Karl Hoffmann as early as the 1950s. This would imply that the problem of the homeland of the prophet and that of the localization of the Avestan language must be separated from one another. Old Avestan,

according to this theory, is likely to be a traditional religious language, a sort of 'Medieval Latin' adopted by the prophet for his religious purpose, a very attractive hypothesis.

N. L. Westergaard's critical edition of the Avestan Texts [1852] is largely superseded by K.F. Geldner's edition [1986-96] *Avesta, the Sacred Books of the Parsis*. It is based on a vast number of manuscripts and is confined to such texts still used by the Parsis in their ritual practice. It thus includes Videvdad, which is not a ritual but a canonical Zoroastrian text. Geldner excluded the Aogemadaechea, a ritual text, Erbedestan-Nirangestan, Pursishniha, Hadokht Nask, Afrin i Zaratukhsht, Vistasp Yasht, Frahang i Oim (Avesta-Pahlavi glossary), and other small fragments such as those collected by Darmesteter and other scholars in his *Le Zend-Avesta III* [1983]. Recently Vaetha Nask [Humbach-JamaspAsa], Pursishniha [JamaspAsa-Humbach], Aogemadaechea [JamaspAsa], and Erbedestan [Humbach-Elfenbeisn] have been published as of 1990.

Oral and Written Traditions. The indigenous tradition on the history of the Avesta has always stressed that it is the written transmission that has played a decisive role in the history of the text. Only incidental information regarding oral transmission is found in those sources. The oral tradition, however, played a much greater role, for it is exactly in the limits concerning this oral tradition that we are able to trace the development of the Avesta Text from its original form to the Sasanian recension and beyond.

Hoffmann was the first to deal systematically with the inconsistencies of the graphical form of the transmitted text of the Avesta, especially of the Gathas. In his opinion a great part of these inconsistencies has its root in unconscious modernisations of the original Avesta text, and in a

few instances Hoffmann succeeded in localizing some early modernization by drawing attention to several later developments and phonetic peculiarities in the text, and he concluded that the transmission of the Avesta from the country of its origin to Persis must have involved Seistan and Arachosia. He thought that Arachosia deserves special attention since it is attested many times in the Aramaic inscriptions on the ritual mortars and pestles (used for the Haom ceremony) discovered in the treasury of Persepolis in 1936-1938.

In the course of transmission of the Avestan text, internal monosyllabic 'y' and 'v' developed into the disyllabic 'iy' and 'uv'. Hoffmann explained this development as an adaptation of the pronunciation of the Old Persian of the Achaemenids. This suggests that the transfer of the holy scriptures to Persia took place in Achaemenian times, after Arachosia came under Persian influence.

Internal and External Evidence. While the Old Avesta prose of the Yasna Haptanghaiti sometimes shows tendencies to stylistic elaboration, the Gathas and the Sacred Formulas (Ahunavar, Ashem Vohu) are composed in an extremely poetical and cryptic style. The corpus of the Old Avestan texts is so small that sufficient material for internal comparison is simply not available and this prevents the use of the Gathas as a source of the history of the Iranian religion and culture.

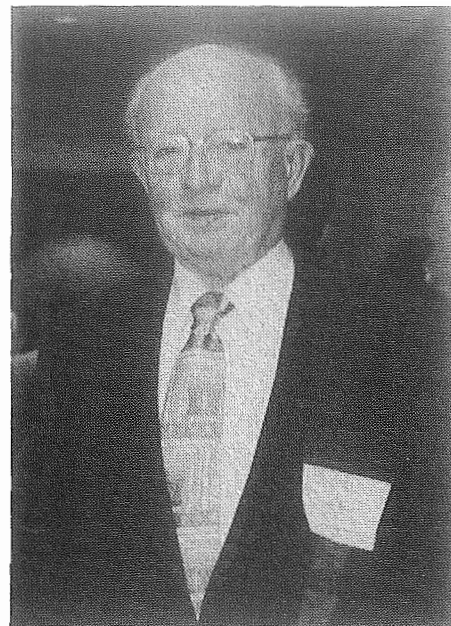
In addition to the Old Avestan texts even the sketchiest picture of Prophet Zarathushtra and his teachings must take into account a large variety of secondary sources. Among these are the Younger Avestan texts and Greek and Latin classical references. The indigenous religious tradition is first represented in the Younger Avesta, which, has come down to us only in a very fragmentary state. It is supplemented by much later, and more copious, Middle Persian Pahlavi literature which originates from the later Sasanian and early Islamic periods.

Sasanian Recension. The Sasanian recension of the Avesta was not based on a literary but on an oral tradition. Sasanian Avesta archetype was written in a phonetically highly differentiated script which was specifically invented for the purpose of recording the smallest phonetic details of the oral tradition. The written text thus established was not uniform, a fact in part due to unconscious alterations during the previous transmission of the text, as described above. This was in part due to compromises between the different text traditions represented by the authors of the recension and in part also due to conscious influence, based on ideas understood to be 'scientific' by their authors.

By the time of the Sasanian recension, a number of strange orthoepic and in consequence, orthographic rules were imposed on the Avesta texts. Please refer for technical details to my *The gathas of Zarathushtra, Vol. I*. Unfortunately, it is impossible to trace the stemmata of the various Avestan manuscripts back to the Sasanian archetype. All the extant manuscripts of yasna, together with the Gathas, like those of the other Avestan Texts originate from one single ancestral manuscript which was written in the 11th century BCE and is called sub-archetype which shows numerous signs of dissolution of the script system of the archetype.

Over three thousand years have passed since Spitama Zarathushtra walked the earth, at the dawn of history of the Iranians. He profoundly influenced religious thought as the founder and prophet of the pre-Islamic religion of Iran which, as a cultural unit from Achaemenians onward, covered not only present-day Iran and Afghanistan, but a large part of the adjacent territories in present-day Central Asia, Pakistan and probably had an extensive influence throughout the entire Achaemenian Empire.

Although his followers are very few today, the religion he founded has intensely affected all the great religions which came after him. ■



(This article is based on the pioneering work of Helmut Humbach's *The Gathas of Zarathushtra*, Vol. I, Heidelberg, 1991)

Prof. Dr. Helmut Humbach is Professor Emeritus at Johannes Gutenberg University, Mainz, Germany. He has a PhD in Indo-European Linguistics from the University of Munich and was also Professor of Comparative Linguistics and Oriental Studies at University of Saarbrücken and Professor of Indo-European Linguistics at University of Mainz. In "Die Gathas des Zarathushtra" [1959], he introduced the philological aspects of the Gathas, which is considered as a far reaching pioneer work in the study of the Gathas. The "Gathas of Zarathushtra and Other Old Avestan Texts" [1991] was followed by "The Heritage Of Zarathushtra – A New Translation of His Gathas" [1994] in collaboration with the Parsi scholar Dr. Pallan R. Ichaporia and followed by their co-authoring "Zamyad Yasht – Yasht 19 of the Younger Avesta, Text, Translation and Commentary" in 1998). His "Geography of Ptolemy with Emphasis on East Iranian Lands" is in the press. He is involved in co-authoring "Concordance of the Gathas" and "Avesta Dictionary" with his co-worker Dr. Pallan R. Ichaporia.

On Reading the Avesta

The primary source of materials for all the great religions is textual. Texts can be supplemented with relevant archeological remains and works of art, but in every instance the real data of the religion resides in its texts. As one turns to consider the Avesta in particular, one can state at the outset that it presents one of the most opaque texts of all the world's religious literature.

By William Malandra
Woodberry, Minnesota



The primary source of materials for all the great religions is textual. Texts can be supplemented with relevant archeological remains and works of art, but in every instance the real data of the religion resides in its texts. Texts vary a great deal, not only from religious tradition to religious tradition, but also within one and the same tradition. A large number of factors may contribute to the variety and heterogeneity of a religion's textual tradition.

Before one can begin to read a text intelligently, one must be able to place it in a proper context, to discern its historical position, its authorship, its intention, and so on. The most frequent errors made in the field of comparative religion are those born of an imperfect appreciation of the problem of textual criticism. Texts cannot simply be read and compared indiscriminately.

One's knowledge of ancient languages is different from that of modern ones, in that one has, in most cases, no live informants, native speakers, whom one can question

regarding the meaning of words or syntactic structures. If the corpus of extant literature is vast enough, the texts themselves can become their own informants. When a literature is rather narrowly circumscribed, however, one can be confronted with all sorts of words and peculiarities of syntax that have no convenient source of elucidation.

Another vexing problem is that most texts, with the exception of rock-cut inscriptions, cuneiform tablets and the like, have endured a long history of transmission from generation to generation, usually in the form of manuscript copies, sometimes even in an oral tradition. As the history of transmission lengthens, the opportunity for error naturally increases. Often a philologist will be confronted with many manuscripts of a single text, all of which may differ significantly from one another. The point to be understood here is that a religious text is a fragile document whose literal interpretation itself may be difficult.

As one turns to consider the Avesta in particular, one can state at the outset

that it presents one of the most opaque texts of all the world's religious literature. This fact is due to its language, mode of composition, and abysmal state of preservation.

Ancient Iran, encompassing the modern state of Iran proper, Afghanistan, parts of Iraq, Pakistan and Central Asia, was an area of cultural unity amidst wide diversity. Although the Achaemenian empire founded by Cyrus the Great, did much to unify many peoples who, like their Indian relatives, called themselves Aryans its monarchs were always "king of kings" (OPers. khshayathya khshayathanam, NPers. shahan shah). To the present day, cultural and linguistic regionalism has continued to play a decisive role in Iranian history.

History's ancient languages. In history's ancient period only three different languages are attested to, even though Iranian injustices indicate a far more complex situation. These languages are: (1) Old Persian, known primarily through the Achaemenid inscriptions, and spoken in the northwestern region of

Persia; (2) Median, a language spoken in the northwestern region of Media and (3) Avestan, the religious language of the Avesta preserved in two dialects, Gathic and Young Avestan. It is not known for certain just where these dialects were spoken, but it is plain from both their linguistic form and the cultural-geographic references that they were native to eastern Iran, though probably not so far as the Pamirs and the Hindu Kush.

Date of the Avesta. It is impossible to date the Avesta with any degree of accuracy. Also the dates for Zarathushtra's life are the subject of debate. Some hold that he was a contemporary of the Vedic era, which would place him in the second half of the second millennium BCE. Others argue that he was active at the beginning of the sixth century BCE. Wherever the truth lies, everyone now agrees that he cannot have lived beyond the first decades of the sixth century, that is before the rise of the Achaemenid empire.

The situation with the Younger Avesta is exceedingly confused, in that it contains much material that is very ancient, but in the present form has to be the work of redactors, priests who compiled an often eclectic mixture of inherited traditions. Scholars believe that the redaction of the oldest portions of the Younger Avesta took place some time during the last half of the fifth century BCE. In any case, the composition (not redaction) of the older sections, especially the great Yashts belong to time prior to the rise of the Achaemenids.

The written Avesta. Crucial in all of this is that the Indo-Iranians did not know any script. They were illiterate in the sense that all their rich literature was oral. The first use of writing in Iran and India were in the areas of commerce and government. The priesthood and literati especially had nothing but scorn for the written word. In the Achaemenid empire,

written business was carried out, not in Old Persian, whose cuneiform script was invented only for formal inscriptions, but rather in the Semitic Aramaic language or in Elamite. The first script for an eastern Iranian language was the Greek alphabet adapted to the Bactrian language of the first or second century CE. Therefore, one can be absolutely sure that Avestan originally had no script, its literature being passed on orally from generation to generation.

The next question is: "When was the Avesta put into writing?" There is tradition current in the Pahlavi books of the ninth century CE that prior to the "evil rule of Alaksandar, the roman" (Alexander) the entire Avesta existed, written in gold upon ox hide and kept in the archives at Istaxr. These Alexander burned. Although the Pahlavi books are ambiguous, it seems that a second redaction of the Avesta consisting of written text only took place as late as the middle of the sixth century CE under the patronage of the great Sasanid king Khusrow I. For this a new script was invented based on the contemporary Pahlavi script.

“ The Avesta, such as it comes to us today is a battered fragment of what one can imagine to have existed in, say, the fifth century BCE ... ”

Two points are to be made here. First, the story of the ox hides can be given little historical credence in that it is probably a piece of apologetics calculated to show the Muslims that Zoroastrianism was genuinely a Religion of the Book. Secondly, although there is internal evidence to support the idea that some form of the Avesta written in a Semitic script existed prior to the Sasanid text, not a single remnant of this hypothetical text exists. It would be idle to speculate about its antiquity or even its precise form or content. The compi-

lation of the Sasanid Avesta was probably based on both oral traditions and upon whatever written materials there were.

After the ninth century, the history of Zoroastrianism is rather sad. An oppressed minority, the Zoroastrians fell on hard times. During the early part of the tenth century, a group emigrated from Khorasan to the western Indian state of Gujarat, where they became known as the Parsis (Persians). Under conditions of poverty and backwardness the textual tradition suffered terribly. Manuscripts were lost and copies were bungled. It was only Western orientalism and the vastly improved social and economic position of the Parsis under British Raj that saved the Zoroastrian textual tradition from inevitable destruction. The situation today is that, although there are numerous Avestan manuscripts, the earliest goes back only to the fourteenth century.

Because of these developments, the Avesta, such as it comes to us today, is a battered fragment of what one can imagine to have existed in, say, the fifth century BCE. In many ways it is a wonder that this great relic of Iran's ancient heritage, has been preserved. One is also in a position to appreciate how difficult it is to interpret such a text. To begin with, one's most basic understanding of the language of the text is often imperfect, owing primarily to the poor manuscript tradition,

but also to other problems inherent in the interpretation of ancient texts. Then one is confronted with a host of problems concerning dating, relative chronology, authorship and authenticity. Somehow weathering this storm of difficulties, however, one may hope to proceed onward to a deeper understanding of its religious and symbolic content ■

[Article based on Prof. Malandra's work, "An Introduction to Ancient Religion", University of Minnesota Press, 1983.]



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TAINTED GLASSES

If you hold firmly to some set of beliefs or other, you look at everything through that particular prejudice or tradition and automatically translate what you see according to your prejudices. You experience it according to your conditioning as a communist, socialist, capitalist, or some other 'ist'. Whereas, if you are none of these things and therefore do not look through the screen of any idea or belief, you will notice what an extraordinary relationship there is between you and what you observe. If you have no bias, no prejudice, everything around you becomes extraordinarily interesting, tremendously alive.

- Krishnamurti

The Zoroastrian doctrine of sacral kingship

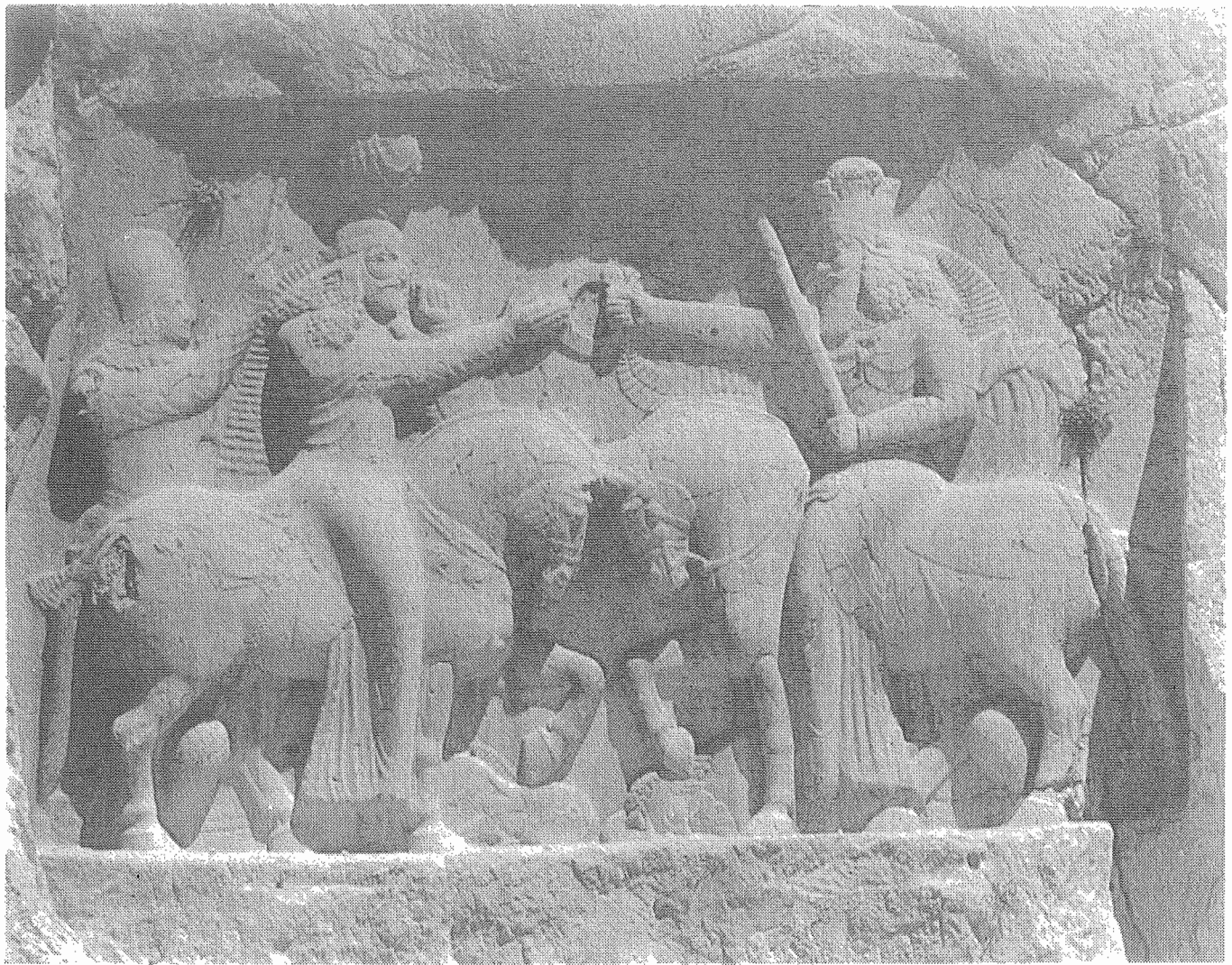
The king in Zoroastrian belief, as sovereign of Iran and the entire corporeal world, was the designated protector, religious and secular authority and guide of the material creation. He served only in the corporeal world, while Ahura Mazda does the same role but in both the material and the spiritual worlds.

By Jamsheed K. Choksy
Bloomington, Indiana

The Zoroastrian religion which served as the religious basis of Sasanian sacral kingship, incorporated this doctrine into its tenets, and preserved it after the fall of the Sasanian dynasty with the conquest of Iran by 651 CE. The doctrine as represented, legitimized, propagated and preserved by the religion, can be constructed from the Zoroastrian Pahlavi literature of the ninth century CE. These texts, although compiled in their final forms after the Arab conquest of Iran, are based on doctrines and practices which evolved during the long history of Zoroastrianism. They thus serve as a valid and accurate source of information on Zoroastrian doctrines and

practices of the pre-Islamic period, especially the Sasanian era.

The main source for Zoroastrian doctrine of sacral kingship is the *Dinkerd* (Acts of Religion) an encyclopedia of Zoroastrian knowledge, which greatly emphasizes on the importance of this doctrine. The Pahlavi and Pazend *Shkand Gumanik Vizar* (The Doubt Dispelling Explanation) an exposition of Zoroastrianism and didactic criticism of all other major religions – Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Manichaeism – contains references to the intimate connections between the social hierarchy of the Sasanian empire and orthodox Zoroastrian doctrine. This text also emphasizes the role of the Sasanian



monarch as the supreme representative of Ahura Mazda on earth. Other Pahlavi sources include the Greater or Iranian Bundahishn, (The Book of) Primal Creation whose final redaction dates from 1078 CE, the Karnamag i Ardashir Papakan (the Book of the Feats of Ardashir, son of Papak) the legendary story of the founder of Sasanian dynasty, and the *Zand i Wahman Yasht*, the Commentary of the Prayer to Vohu Manah, an apocalyptic and eschatological work whose final redaction dates from the thirteenth century CE. The concept of sacral kingship among the Sasanians is also preserved in *Shah Nameh*, Book of Kings of Firdowsi.

The King. Sovereignty over Iran, in every age, was believed to be restricted to a single family. Iranian history was perceived as the eras of these ruling families: the rule of Gay-

omard (Av: Gaya Merethen), the prototype of humanity and the beginning of the human race. The Peshdadian dynasty and the rise of civilization, the Kayanian era which in the Sasanian belief included the Achaemenian dynasty and the Arsacids and the Sasanian royal family [*Dinkerd* 292,1-17].

The *Dinkerd* states that the source of the Sasanian king of king's nobility was perfection [*Dinkerd* 529, 17-18]. His own physical person was inviolable because he was chosen by God to rule Iran and had been granted the sacred royal glory. Although a king's glory, sovereignty and authority arose from Ahura Mazda, the king was at all times considered mortal and never a god incarnate [*Dinkerd* 300, 3-4], hence the king, although chosen of god was never regarded as divine. According to the doctrine of

sacral kingship "the symbol of the Beneficent Spirit manifests itself on earth in the good and righteous king, one whose will is inclined on increase, whose nature is pure, whose desires for his subjects are righteous." [*Dinkerd* 401,3-5]. But the domain of the King's authority excluded from the spiritual essences of his subjects while he was the lord of the seven climes [*Shkand Gumanik Vizar*, 1.8-1.9]

Thus the king in Zoroastrian belief, as sovereign of Iran and the entire corporeal world, was the designated protector, religious and secular authority and guide of the material creation. He served only in the corporeal world, while Ahura Mazda does the same role but in both the material and the spiritual worlds.

Textual Evidence. Evidence for the practice of sacral kingship as a polit-



Far left, On this rock relief from Naqsh-e Rostom Ohrmazd (right) offers the diadem and gift of kingship to Ardeshir I (224 - 241 AC).

Left, Ardeshir II (379 - 383 AC) is shown receiving the crown from Ohrmazd (on the right). On the left is Mithra with a crown composed of the rays of the sun, holding the sacred barsom.

Relief from Taq-e Bustan.

[Photos and captions from Persian Mythology by John R. Hinnells]

ical ideology by the Sasanian monarchs is present in textual sources dating from the Sasanian period onwards. The textual evidence consists of tradition preserved in Pahlavi, New Persian, Arabic, Classical and Syriac sources.

The Pahlavi traditions are found in the Dinkerd, and the Greater or Indian Bundahishn. The Shah Nameh and the Letter of Tansar are the primary New Persian sources. The Zoroastrian Pahlavi books discuss the interdependence between the king and religion in terms of the Sasanian monarchs assisting and propagating the faith. Sasanian monarchs in conjunction with the high priests defined the orthodoxy of Zoroastrianism, determined its religious canon, and supported the clergy. According to the Dinkerd, Ardeshir I, acting on the authority of

Tansar, had the Zoroastrian canon codified. Shapur I is said to have added to this canon, while Shapur II and Khusrow I persecuted heresy and strengthened the four social classes [Dinkerd 412.11 -412.11].

The Greater Bundahishn also states that Ardeshir I greatly promoted the faith [GBd 214,14-215,11], while Khusrow I restored orthodoxy after slaying the heretic Mazdak, and suppressing the Mazdak movement, which taught un-Zoroastrian practices [GBd 215.13-216.1], thus stating the close association between the monarchy and the state religion during the Sasanian era. These passages reflect the sacral legitimacy given by the Zoroastrian religion to kingship. They also reveal that the clergy accepted the authority of Sasanian monarchs in both secular and religious affairs, confirming that each

ruler was indeed the highest authority in the material world.

Ardeshir I is reported to have said that "Religion and the kingship are two brothers and neither can dispense with the other" [Masudi 1.289]. Thaalibi [488] attributes another saying to Ardeshir I: "Kingship preserves itself by religion and religion strengthens itself by kingship."

Thus Pahlavi and Islamic sources find religious doctrine and political ideology to have commenced crystallization during the reign of Ardeshir I. The authority of the Sasanian monarch over the religion and the clergy, even in conflicts between the state church and adherents of other faiths, can be found in the works of at-Tabari [Tabari 268]. The influence of this ideology of sacral kingship on Zoroastrian literature of the Sasanian and post-conquest periods

resulted in the Sasanian king Kawad I being considered an evil monarch because he supported and assisted the heretic Mazdak in contrast to his son Khusrow I who restored Zoroastrianism to supremacy [GBd 215,9-216.1].

The doctrine of sacral kingship dictated that the ruling family be of royal blood and descent, a continuation of earlier belief of royal legitimacy in which there was a chain of dynasties transferring kingship from one family to another [Dinkerd 292-1.17]. A claimant to the throne had to be a direct member of the royal family, a doctrine placed by Tha'alibi, in the words of Gurdoya, the wife of the Persian General Bahram Chobin, who rebelled against Khusrow II [Tha'alibi 683]. A similar indictment of rebellion against monarchy is voiced by the elder son of Shahrabraz, a rebellious general under Ardeshir III [Tha'alibi 733-34].

Islamic literature also indicated that the Iranian royal blood was sacred and the personal sanctity of Sasanian kings ought not to be violated. Burzmihr, whose father Sukhta had been slain by Kawad I, was prevented by his belief in the sanctity of royal blood from slaying Kawad when the latter was deposed and placed under Burzmihr's authority [Tha'alibi 509]. Hamza al-Isfahani mentions that to this day the people of Marw referred to the descendants of Mahoe, the governor of Marw who betrayed the last Sasanian monarch Yazdagird III, and hence

caused the king's death as 'khudakushan' king-killers [Isfahani 63].

The Classical sources provide contemporary evidence of sacral king-

“Religion and kingship are two brothers and neither can dispense with the other.”

ship. Ammianus Marcellinus offers a sharp contrast between the claims of Sha-

pur II and Constantius Caesar [Ammianus Marcellinus 17.5.3]:

"I, Shapur, king of kings, partner of the stars, brother of the sun and moon, to my brother Constantius Caesar offer most ample greetings"

and

"I, Constantius, victor by land and sea, perpetual Augustus, to my brother king Shapur, offer ample greetings."

Numerous accounts indicate that during the reign of Khusrow II this doctrine of sacral kingship was used extensively in his aspiration to universal rule which have been symbolized on the canopy above his throne by gold stars, signs of the zodiac setting a sky of lapis lazuli and a depiction of the seven climes of the Zoroastrian world view [Tha'alibi 699]. He himself was supposed to have been portrayed enthroned in heaven on the dome of the building at Takh-e Sulaiman (ancient Ganzaka).

These accounts of Khusrow's throne rooms probably are legendary, but indicate that the ideology of Sasanian sacral kingship was sufficiently powerful both during the Sasanian era itself and thereafter in the Islamic period, to influence the legends and myths which surrounded Sasanid rulers. ■

[This article is based on the author's work published in the *Bulletin of the Asia Institute*, 1988].



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By Jal N. Birdy
Corona, California

Since there are no consecrated agiaries or atash behrams outside the Indian subcontinent, it is not possible to perform the inner liturgical ceremonies like the *yazeshne*, *vendidad* or *baj* in North America. Outer liturgical rituals such as the *jashan*, *afringan*, *farokhshi* and *satum* can, however, be performed in any clean place outside of our consecrated places of worship. Most well known among these ceremonies is the *jashan*, which many North American Parsis are familiar with. The salient features of the *jashan* are described in this article.

THE PADYAB-KUSHTI

While the *jashan* is a joyous occasion, it is also a solemn one requiring certain rules and prerequisites to be observed. The rules of the *Jashan* require the priests as well as all those attending to be in a heightened state of physical and spiritual purity, which can only be achieved by the performance of the 'padyab-kushti' ritual. This comprises, at a minimum, wearing appropriate clothes, covering the head, washing the exposed parts of the body with water and ceremonially untying and re-tying the kushti while reciting the appropriate prayers.

JASHAN DAYS

It is customary to hold community *jashans* on the following days:

Navruz – New Year Day.

Rapithwan – two days after the New Year to mark the end of winter.

Khordad Sal – birthday of Asho Zarathushtra.

First Farvardian – 19th day of the first month to honor all souls who have passed away.

Second Farvardian – 19th day of the ninth month, Adar, to remember souls whose actual day of passing away is unknown.

Sadeh – 10th day, Avan, of the tenth month, Daye, to mark mid-winter by lighting fires. This is celebrated a month later in Iran.

THE JASHAN

A Zarathushti Celebration

The word 'Jashan' is the Pahlavi equivalent of the Avestan word 'Yasna', which signifies worship accompanied by religious ritual. A *Jashan* is performed as a celebration, a thanksgiving or for seeking the blessings of Ahura Mazda before undertaking any new venture. It is also performed for remembering departed souls and speeding their progress in the spiritual realm. *Jashans* serve to bring the community together and foster camaraderie. The prayers recited enable us to attune ourselves with Ahura Mazda and His Yazatas while singing their praises and asking for their blessings.

Zarathostno Diso – 11th day, Khorshed, of the 10th month, Daye, to remember the passing of Asho Zarathushtra.

Fravardegan – remembering the souls of the departed at the end of the year.

In addition to these special days, there are jashans for each of the six seasonal festivals, or **gahambars**, and also during each month to commemorate the **yazata** for that month. Gahambar jashans must be held during 'havan' and 'uzirehn' gehs only. There is no such restriction on other jashans.

Further, jashans are held publicly or privately as a thanksgiving to mark an important event, be it an auspicious one like the start of a new business or moving into a new home or the end of a calamity, illness, etc.

JASHAN IMPLEMENTS

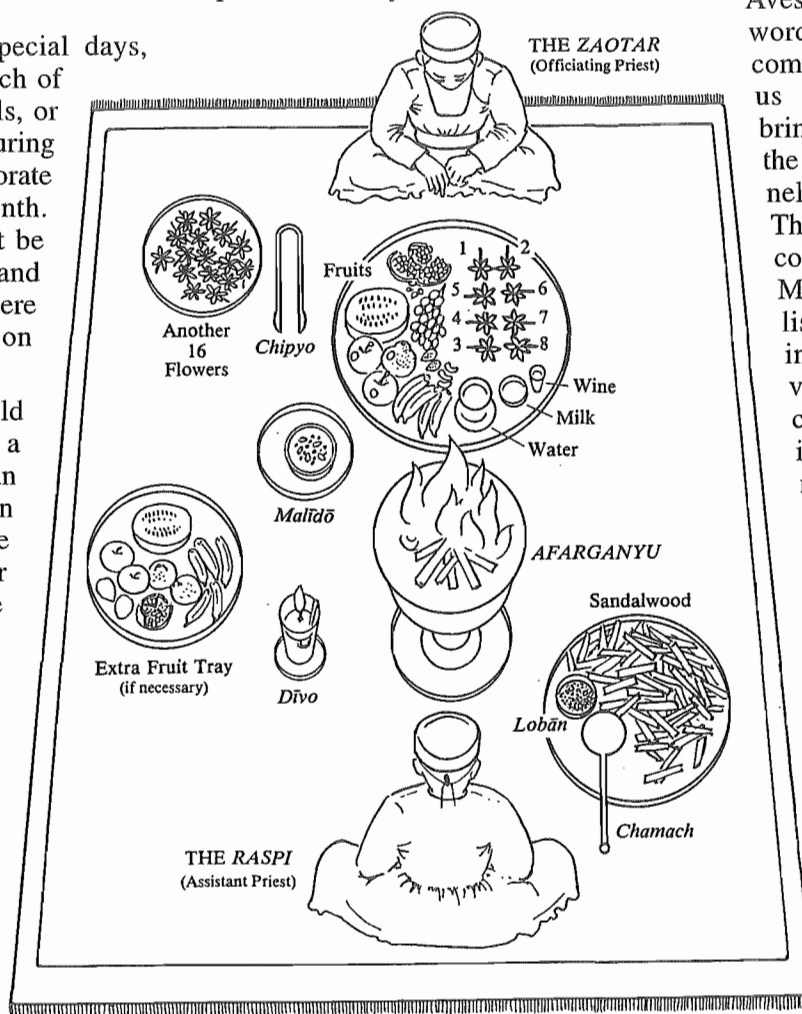
The first seven days of each month, which represent the primary channels of Divine Consciousness, collectively known as Amesha Spentas, are represented by certain items in the Jashan ceremony. All of these items are placed in metal trays, arranged so that there is physical contact between them. The currents that are generated during the ritual produce beneficial effects within them, which in turn are passed on to the congregation.

Hormuzd (or Ahura Mazda) the Wise Creator, is represented by the 'zaotar' or the officiating priest conducting the ceremony.

Bahman (or Vohu Manah) signifying wisdom, and who is protector of the animal kingdom, is represented by the milk placed in a metal container. **Ardibehesht** (or Asha Vahishta), signifying truth and order, who is also

associated with the various energies present in the universe, is represented by the fire in the urn.

Sheherevar (or Khshathra Vairya), signifying strength and courage, the guardian of the mineral kingdom, is represented by



Layout of a jashan ceremony

[From Zoroastrianism, An Ethnic Perspective by Khojeste P. Mistree]

the metal containers used in the ceremony.

Asfandarmad (or Spenta Armaiti), signifying devotion and humility and also having domain over mother earth is represented by the white cloth spread on the floor.

Khordad (or Haurvatat), signifying perfection and who is also the protector of the waters on earth, is represented by water in the metal container.

Amardad (or Ameretat), signifying immortality of the soul and having domain over the vegetable kingdom, is represented by the fruits and flowers.

JASHAN PRAYERS

Our prayers are 'manthra', or potent beneficial spells. These manthras were composed by highly evolved souls and are based on the divine science of speech vibrations, known in Avesta as 'Staot Yasna'. The words and sentences are so composed as to set up within us certain feelings, which bring about attunement with the appropriate yazatic channels operating in nature. Through these channels our communication with Ahura Mazda is firmly established. Since they are intended to generate such vibrations, their correct chanting is of primary importance; knowing their meaning is secondary. The prayers recited during the jashan are briefly described below.

Atash Niyaeshe. When the priests stand and recite the Avesta manthras of Atash Niyaeshe, they perform the initial attunement with Ahura Mazda through the medium of fire (or atash), which is ablaze before them. Atash is repeatedly referred to in this prayer as:

Atash Puthra Ahurae
Mazdao

Atash, the son of Ahura
Mazda.

This is because atash signifies the vast expanse of energy and motion, which is part and parcel of Ahura Mazda. This energy was instrumental in creating the universe and is also essential for its functioning. Through the medium of atash, the priests attune themselves with Ahura Mazda and ask for blessings for the spiritual upliftment and physical well being of the congregation and their families. Three times during this prayer the priests make contact with the Fire urn and offer sweet smelling

wood, i.e., 'sukhad' (sandalwood) and 'loban' (frankincense) with devotion.

Doa Nam Setayeshne. This short but beautiful prayer, was composed in Pazand by the last savior of our faith, Dasturan-Dastur Adarbad Marespandan, who lived during Sasanian times, in the fourth century AC. The prayer sings the praises of the omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent Ahura Mazda, His various creations, including His finest creation, Man. It also praises His messenger, Asho Zarathushtra, who brought for us the noble Mazdayasni Zarathushti religion and its potent manthra prayers. The priests ask for strength, courage and determination so that we may live by the principles of our noble religion. Only by so doing can we successfully achieve our main purpose in life, i.e., the conversion of all evil into good, thus making our journey across Chinvat (Bridge of the Separator) in the after-life a painless one.

Hamazor. After completion of the Doa Nam Setayeshne, the priests exchange hand-clasps, saying:

Hama Zor, Hama Asho Bade

May we gain strength and righteousness (to uphold our noble religion).

They then take their seats cross-legged on the carpet for the main prayers, which follow.

Afringans. Afringan prayers are attributed to each of the thirty-three yazatas. At jashans, usually three yazatas are invoked by reciting the appropriate afringans one after the other. The first is dedicated to Dadar Hormuzd, the second to Daham (i.e., the yazatas and co-worker yazatas appropriate for that day) and the third one to Sraosh Yazata, who guides and protects us during this life and also in the life to come.

Only a few key aspects of the afringan ritual are described here due to limited space. The zaotar, or the officiating priest, reciting alone mentions the yazata being invoked together with the name of the city or state in which the jashan is being performed. When you hear the phrase:

"Pa-Ganj-e-Dadar Hormuzd" he is asking Ahura Mazda to store His

blessings in a special 'ganj', or treasury, from which they will be apportioned to all members of the congregation as and when needed.

The zaotar then announces the names of the living or departed souls for whose benefit the ceremony is performed, together with the name of the person or persons requesting it. He remembers the fravashis of Asho Zarathushtra, his family members and his ancestors going back nine generations. This is followed by the fravashis of the illustrious departed souls who have upheld the Mazdayasni faith through the millennia.

Lastly, he remembers the souls of the Mazdayasni faith in an unbroken lineage from the first king Gayomard to the last savior, or 'saoshyant', who will step on this earth at the time when all evil will have been vanquished. The Pazand introduction ends with the zaotar and his assistant, 'raspi', together announcing "Khesh pirozgar bad" invoking the ceremony to have the desired beneficial effect in nature. Both priests now continue with the prayers.

Baj of Yatha. At a certain juncture the two priests join their hands, look intently into each other's eyes and exchange the Baj of Yatha:

Yatha Ahu vairyo zaota fra may
mrutay, Atha ratush ashat chit hacha
fra ashava vidhvao mrotu.

This exchange is to remind the congregation that the Ahuna Vairya, or the divine laws of nature, were first revealed by Ahura Mazda to Asho Zarathushtra, who in turn taught them to mankind for the furtherance of righteousness and to aid in the progress of their souls to perfection.

Karda. The afringan continues with the 'kardas' (paragraphs) appropriate for the particular afringan. There are eight different kinds of kardas for different afringans, all of which are in Avesta manthra. Each karda is known by its introductory words, for example:

Invitation to the departed souls: The "Yao visaad" karda is recited to revere the good, brave and holy fravashis of the righteous. It extends an invitation to the fravashis to grace

the occasion and partake of the food that is offered. This karda comes from the Fravardin Yasht.

Seeking blessings for the congregation: The "Tao ahmi namanay" karda comes from Yasna 60 and calls for spiritual and material blessings on members of the congregation.

Seeking spiritual guidance: The "Sraoshim ashim" karda comes from Sraosh Yasht Vadi [Yasna 57] and seeks the spiritual guidance and protection of our guardian spirit Sraosh Yazad.

Similarly, there are special kardas for gahambar, rapithwin and other jashans.

The flower ceremony. At the commencement of each afringan, eight flowers are arranged in the metal tray placed between the zaotar and the fire urn. Six of these are arranged in three rows of two each, with their petals facing towards each other with a space in between. The last two are arranged below with their petals pointing towards the fire urn.

After the recitation of the karda and three ashem vohus, the zaotar gives one of the two flowers pointing towards the fire urn to the raspi and keeps one for himself. They hold the flowers vertically in their right hand acknowledging the supremacy of Ahura Mazda.

Then follows the recitation of the "Afrinami-Khshathrian" prayer which invokes Ahura Mazda's blessings on the ruler of the land:

*May he have a long, healthy life;
may he have the strength and
courage to always uphold righteousness
and smite those who are evil;
may he enjoy the best existence in
paradise ...*

On the words "Atha jamiyat, yatha afrinami" the zaotar and raspi exchange the flowers they hold, symbolizing the exchange of souls between the physical and spiritual realms. It is also an invitation to the holy fravashis to come and bless the congregation.

Humata-nam, hukhta-nam, huva-reshta-nam. At the same time the priests make a circuit or 'paiwand', with the metal trays and twice recite

the manthras of “humata-nam, which begins the process of generating beneficial currents in the various implements and their contents. While reciting the first humata-nam the zaotar lifts the three flowers to his right in descending order and hands them to the raspi, who is standing on the right with his ladle touching the fire urn. This symbolizes the coming down of the soul from

the spiritual to the physical world. It is also a signal for the holy fravashis to descend and bless the congregation. The raspi then moves from

the right to the left side of the zaotar, still maintaining a circuit with his ladle. This symbolizes the work that the soul does in the physical world.

While reciting the second Humata-nam the zaotar lifts the three flowers to his left in ascending order and hands them to the raspi who is now standing on the left. This symbolizes the return of the soul to the spiritual world. It is also a farewell to the holy fravashis who now depart having mingled with and blessed the congregation.

The manthra of humata-nam, hukhta-nam, huvareshtha-nam, is a reminder that our soul was once with Ahura; that it is now on this earth to cleanse itself and its surroundings of evil; and finally be re-united with Ahura after fulfilling this function. While on this earth this can only be achieved by practicing good thoughts, words and deeds.

Pazand section. The ritual continues with the recitation of a Pazand section beginning with “ashoan fravashchiran” in a muted undertone, since Pazand manthras cannot be recited aloud when sandwiched between Avesta manthras. This section praises the fravashis of righteous persons, asks for the ceremony to reach Ahura Mazda and wishes the essence of Zarathushtra’s teachings to be spread to the far corners of this earth. This is symbolically done by the zaotar, who touches the top of the water urn with his ‘chipyo’ (ladle) at the

eight points of the compass. At the end of the humata-nam ritual, the raspi hands over all the flowers to the zaotar, who places them in another tray. This symbolizes the merging of the soul with Ahura Mazda after its work on this earth is complete.

The afrins: There are in all seven ‘afrins’, or prayers of blessings, of which only three are performed at

“ We ask for the congregation to be blessed with long, healthy and useful life and righteous offspring, who will become the stalwarts and protectors of the community, earn name and fame, and smite its enemies.”

regular jashans. They are recited aloud by the zaotar after all afringans have been completed. The seven afrins are: Arda Fravash, Buzorgan, Hamkar (also called Daham or Haft Ameshaspand), Gahambar, Rapithwan, Myazd (recited on Roj Meher, Rashne, Behram, Ashtad and Aneran) and the afrin of Zarathushtra. Of these only the last one is in Avesta, the rest are in Pazand.

The three Afrins recited during normal jashans are:

Arda Fravash: Through this afrin we seek attunement with Dadar Hormuzd, His Amesha Spentas, Asho Zarathushtra, the righteous souls who have gone before and who are living today, the radiant fire and other energies which exist in the universe, the five gehs, the six gahambars and the five Gathas. We seek that the beneficial effects of these manthras and rituals reach Dadar Hormuzd and be collected in His treasury for distribution to deserving souls, right from the time of Gayomard, to those that are living today, to those that are yet to come, to the very last Savior. We ask for all evil influences to be kept at bay from righteous souls.

Afrin of Buzorgan: We wish upon the congregation all the good qualities and characteristics possessed by our ancient sages and divine spiritual beings. Qualities such as righteousness, humility, bravery, affection,

selflessness and charitable nature are sought. We ask for the congregation to be blessed with long, healthy and useful life and righteous offspring; offspring, who will become the stalwarts and protectors of the community, earn name and fame and smite its enemies.

Afrin of Hamkars: Each of the Amesha Spentas, together with the co-worker hamkars, are praised in this afrin. The evil which each of these beings combat and control is also mentioned. The souls of Asho Zarathushtra and

our ancient sages from Gayomard to Asfandiyar are remembered and praised. At the end a section is recited by the zaotar and the raspi, praising the congregation for taking part in the jashan. They are blessed with an increase in righteousness, aiding them in earning a place in the highest heaven.

The Hamazor greeting: While the zaotar recites the three afrins alone, the raspi moves about in the congregation exchanging the ‘hamazor’ greeting. The hamazor consists of sliding the palms of both hands alternately through the palms of the other person, in a special gesture while saying:

Hamazor, hama asho Bade

May we both be righteous and strong in upholding our noble religion.

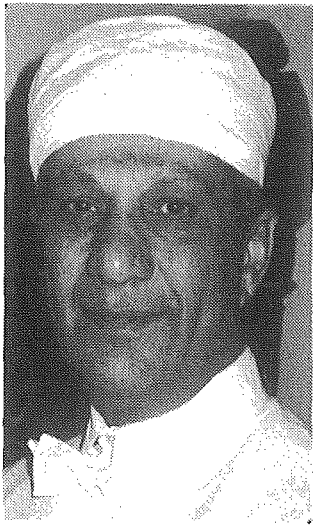
This traditional ritual strengthens unity and promotes goodwill among community members.

Doa Tandarosti: After the afrins are completed, the Doa Tandarosti is recited wishing for the congregation, health, long life, faith in the religion and pursuit of Zarathushti virtues. Sometimes the congregation joins in a ‘hum-bandagi’ where a second Doa Tandarosti is recited by all.

Partaking of the chashni. As the saying goes, the show is not over until the fat lady sings. It is much the same with the jashan – it is not over until everyone has tasted the ‘chashni’ or the consecrated food used in the ceremony. The same

sense of devotion and decorum must be maintained and the head must remain covered. Care must be taken to use just enough food in the jashan that can be eaten by the congregation. Consecrated food that goes to waste is not desirable.

This ancient Jashan ceremony, which takes approximately one hour, gives blessings of body and spirit and brings the community together in worship, praise and devotion, as it has done for our forefathers for untold generations. ■



An ordained navar and martab, **Ervad Jal N. Birdy** completed his graduate studies at Imperial College, London, and obtained his professional license in both civil and structural engineering. He worked in England for 20 years gaining a British patent in deep-water offshore structures. Jal transferred to Houston, Texas, in 1980 where he was awarded four further U.S. patents. Currently Jal is a vice president in a California engineering firm.

Jal has been actively serving the Zarathushti communities in London, Houston and currently California as a volunteer part-time mobed for thirty five years. He has recently been re-elected for a second term as the president of the North American Mobeds Council (NAMC) and has served as Vice President of the Traditional Mazdayasni Zarathushti Anjuman (TMZA).

SACRED FORMULAS

Ahuna Vairya, Ashem Vohu and Yenghe Hatam

The practical wisdom of the ages is captured in these three small, but most sacred formulas recited by Zarathushtis with special reverence and devotion.

By Yezdi P. Antia
Willowdale, Ontario

The Gathas include the sacred prayers of the Ahuna Vairya, also known as the Yatha Ahu Vairyo, Ashem Vohu and Yenghe Hatam. These prayers are eulogized in Yasna 19, 20 and 21 respectively.

AHUNA VAIRYA OR YATHA AHU VAIRYO

Yatha Ahu Vairyo atha ratush, ashah chit hacha. Vangheush dazda manangho shyaathnanam angheush Mazdai. Khshathremcha Ahurai a yim dregubyo dadat vastarem.

Again and again in our prayers it is stated that the Ahuna Vairya protects the body: "ahunim vairyim tanum paiti." In Yasna 19.3, Ahura Mazda declares that the Ahuna Vairya was given to Zarathushtra as a gift from Ahura Mazda Himself and in Yasna 19.5 it also states that this prayer, when chanted properly, is equal to a hundred holy chants.

Why is this prayer so important? Unfortunately, Yasna 19, which extols the virtues of chanting this prayer does not give a clear answer to this question. Therefore we must try to utilize the message and the thought of this prayer itself, with help from the Gathas, to lead to an understanding of the Ahuna Vairya's overwhelming importance. A translation based on I. J. S. Taraporewala's follows:

Just as the ruler (is) all powerful (among men), so (too is) the spiritual teacher, because of his Asha. The gifts of the Good Mind (are) for (those) working for the Lord of Life. The strength of Ahura (is granted) unto (him) who to (his) poor (brothers) giveth help.

Asha generally means truth, righteousness and holiness. It also means the divine plan or the order in nature. In the first sentence of Yatha Ahu Vairyo, the status of the ruler is compared to that of the spiritual teacher, because of his asha. The message of this line, therefore, is that the spiritual life that finds its highest expression in a spiritual leader, is as important as the material life symbolized by an all-powerful king. In other words, it is as important for us to follow a spiritual life as it is to follow a worldly one.

The spiritual life is generally thought of as pertaining to divinity, an exploration of our origins, the reason for our existence or the pursuit of holiness or Asha. The material life is generally considered one spent in the pursuit of wealth, position and power. The thought behind the first line impresses upon us that most people, who spend a better part of their lives acquiring positions and power, should spend an equal amount of time acquiring spiritual values.

In the second sentence of the Yatha Ahu Vairyo, what does the phrase "Lord of Life" mean? Yasna 30.9 clearly explains the actions and behavior expected from us:

Acha toi vaem khyama yoi im fere-sanem kernaun ahum

May we live like those who have prospered the world!

Man's purpose in life is to further the good and help the world progress towards ultimate perfection. He has to further the sum total of human joy and happiness by advancing the cause of goodness and making the world a better place to live in. By making others happy, he achieves happiness himself.

The third sentence is self explanatory and promotes the value of help to the needy.

ASHEM VOHU

Ashem Vohu vahishtem asti
ushta asti, ushta ahmai
hyat ashai vahishtai ashem.

The message of the Ashem Vohu is simpler to comprehend. Based on Taraporewala's translation:

Righteousness is the best of all that is good. The radiant goal it is of life on earth. This light is attained when one lives righteously for the sake of highest righteousness alone.

Therefore it can be said that the Ashem Vohu and the Yatha Ahu Vairyo promote the following:

- Asha – truth and righteousness,
- Spirituality, service to humankind and help to the needy.

We can now see why the Ashem Vohu and the Yatha Ahu Vairyo are so important. Indeed, between the two of them, they embody the essential teachings of our religion. It does not require a great leap of imagination to see that the above principles are the foundations on which all Zarathushti activities are based. All the practical wisdom of the ages, is captured in two small, magical prayers. Therefore, it is of little wonder that the Ashem Vohu and the Yatha Ahu Vairyo are consistently eulogized and repeated in our prayers.

YENGHE HATAM

Yenghe hatam aat yasna paiti
vangho Mazdao Ahuro vaetha ashat
hacha, yaongham-cha tascha
taoscha yazmaide.

Yenghe Hatam can be interpreted as:

We revere and respect all those men and women amongst the living who have been recognized as best and noblest by Mazda because of their Asha.

There are two messages in this prayer:

- All men and women who are ashavan are to be respected.
- Women and men are both worthy of respect and deserve equal status.

This brings us to the question of why these lines are repeated so often in our daily prayers and rituals. Here again, the Gathas can provide us with clues. The golden thread of Asha and Vohu Manah – Righteousness and Good Mind, which permeates these Holy Scriptures cannot but impress anybody who has read the Gathas. If one opens Insler's translation of Yasna 28, one observes that truth and good thinking are mentioned in all the stanzas of Yasna 28.

Why the emphasis on Good Thinking? Because only good thinking can lead to good words and good deeds.

How do we cultivate good thinking so that it may lead to good actions? From the contents of most of our prayers it is easy to observe that **the primary function of prayers – apart from asking God for His help, guidance and blessing is to direct one's mind to good thoughts so as to inspire one to good deeds.** Do not forget that when these prayers were formulated, Avesta was a living language. Therefore these prayers were mainly used to convey the message of the religion.

The Ahuna Vairya and the Ashem Vohu encapsulate the very fundamental values of our religion. By repeating these prayers, the messages of Asha, spirituality, service and charity become a part of one's personality and therefore increase one's chances of putting these principles into action. ■



Ervad Yezdi Antia 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. Yezdi arrived in Toronto, Canada in 1967, and has been, with his late wife Perin, very active in the Zarathushti community. He is also an active member of the North American Mobed's Council. Ervad Yezdi believes that the key to our survival as a community lies in the need to practice our religion in the home.



ONE SOUL

*One Soul abides in all,
There is one humanity,
There is one brotherhood.
None is high, none is low;
All are equal.
There is only one caste,
The caste of humanity.
There is only one religion,
The religion of love.
There is only one commandment
The commandment of truth.
There is only one law,
The law of cause and effect.
There is only one God,
The omnipresent, omniscient Lord,
There is only one language,
The language of the heart.*

- Swami Sivananda

Zoroastrian View of Care of a Living Soul – Body, Mind and Spirit

Applying the wisdom of ancient healing to overcome
physical, mental and spiritual conditions.

By Behram Deboo
Everett, Washington

There is an abundance of literature about the soul in writings by Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine, Freud, Jung, Menninger, Moore, Allan Watts and others. The concept of the soul varied from author to author, and was at times, confusing. In this article I will discuss related ideas I have found in Zoroastrianism. Today scientists, healers and therapists are applying the wisdom of ancient healing with a spiritual meaning to overcome physical, mental and spiritual conditions. It is also applied to the process of death and dying.

According to Yasna 55.1, a human being has nine parts (later, two more were added) divided into three categories:

I. Purely material. These parts are subject to the laws of 'arta' or 'asha' that regulate birth, growth, decay and death.

1) *Gaetha*, the primal elements constituting the human body.

2) *Tanvas*, the entire physique of a person [Ys. 33.14].

3) *Astavant* or *Azdebish*, the bony substance including flesh, blood and tissues [Ys. 43.16].

II. Mixture of material and spiritual. These are:

4) *Ushtana*, the breath of life [Ys. 33.14], called 'prana' in Hinduism. Through it, the soul remains in touch with the material parts.

5) *Kehrpa*, the subtle body beneath the covering of flesh. After death, the soul makes its abode in this psy-

cho-plasmic body. A similar idea is found in Buddhism.

6) *Tevishi* [Ys. 33.12] is the mental faculty where higher and lower desires originate. Thus, it is the strength and vigor to be desired for the perfection of the soul. It is the psycho-dynamic mental aspect. It is important for a living soul to control destructive desires ('vasna') and not to succumb to evil tendencies – violence, drugs, injury to others, etc.

III. Purely spiritual.

7) *Boadha*, the discerning intellect and spiritual principle of awakening to the highest level of consciousness. The word 'Buddha' comes from the same word root.

8) *Urvan*, the soul. It is endowed with free will and makes a choice between Spenta Mainyu and Angra Mainyu.

9) *Fravashi*, the pure spiritual essence of God in man [Fravardin Yasht, 30, 32, 34]. It is through the Fravashi that God becomes immanent and his presence is felt throughout creation. And yet, God is transcendent. Boadha and Urvan strive to unite themselves with Fravashi, a process that continues after physical death.

10) *Ahu*, spiritual existence or being. We are all spiritual beings. We see this very clearly manifested in the Yatha Ahu Yairyo prayer.

11) *Daena*, the inner self, conscience and visionary perception. Also in generic terms, it means 'faith'.

From the above it is clear that a living soul has a physical life, a psychic (mental) life and a spiritual life. A similar idea is expressed by the philosopher Borna in his book *Third City*. So, according to Zoroastrianism, these three faculties make us human. A living soul is a complex of body and mind, heart and spirit, will and reason, depth and inner reality, sensations and feelings, character and actions.

After establishing the premises of a living soul, let us see what the Gathas have to offer. To understand this we go to Yasna 29.1 where we hear the voice of Geush Urvan (the soul of the living world) crying out for help. This hymn in reality represents the suffering of humanity due to the human emotive character of wrath and oppression (*ashmo*), fury (*hazas*), outrage (*remo*), aggression (*deres*) and rapine (*tevis*).

In response to her plea, Mazda Ahura sends Zarathushtra for relief and justice on this earth. Zarathushtra recognized his mission as that of caring of the soul of the living world. In Yasna 28.1 he prays to God for the joyous support of Spenta Mainyu, so that he could perform all his actions with the wisdom of the Divine Mind in harmony with the universal divine order to bring healing, relief and tranquility to the living soul and establish the kingdom of God.

Zarathushtra was not a reformer in the sense that Martin Luther was to Roman Catholicism. He was an original thinker, a fact recognized by the Greeks. He brought new manthras in the Gathas and fresh ideas about what an ideal society ought to be. It was a drastic change from the old paradigm of violence and suffering caused by the hoama-intoxicated Aryans. Is mankind any different today? No, except that mankind is now doing everything in a big way with more powerful resources.

Free will. Free will or choice does not mean a form of libertarianism. An individual's free will has its own consequences that affect the mind,

body and spirit. Zarathushtra did not believe in enforced morality, practiced out of fear of punishment. He gave us a choice.

Combating strife, death and disease. What does Zarathushtra have to offer to combat all the strife going on in the world – crime, violence, ethnic cleansing, tribal genocide and self-destructiveness? He leads us to Yasna 30.4 to the choice one makes between Spenta Mainyu (the creative, healing spirit of the advancing soul) and Angra Mainyu (the destructive, disease and death-inviting spirit). It is a mental and spiritual choice that affects our whole being. Our destructive mentality that comes in many forms, is responsible for countless acts of brutality.

We find his spiritual counseling in Yasna 45.2. He emphasizes that our thoughts, doctrines, beliefs, wills, words, deeds, conscience, or soul will not agree with the destructive spirit on the well-being of an individual, a family and the whole world. Again, besides the three cardinal virtues, we see in this yasna, the connection between body, mind and soul.

How can we explain death and disease among us mortals? It is subject to the law of nature as explained above. Natural disasters fall into the same category. Except for tragic events, war and crime, we do have some control over our body. It is proven beyond doubt that our physical and spiritual being are affected by our way of living, life style and pattern of thinking. In the end, it pervades the immune system making changes in it. Once our immune system breaks down, disease takes root

and our soul also suffers from pain and anguish.

Five healing processes. For physical and spiritual healing, holistic medicine looks at an individual in all aspects of illness, to get a total picture. It is amazing to find such an idea in the Zoroastrian prayer Ardibehesht yasht. Here five healing processes of the body, mind and soul are described:

- 1) *Asho-baeshajo*. Healing done by righteousness, right thinking and right living.
- 2) *Dato-baeshajo*. Healing done by fairness and justice. Millions of people have been victimized and victims are crying out for justice.
- 3) *Kareto-baeshajo*. Treating illness with surgery and other techniques.
- 4) *Urvaro-baeshajo*. Healing the illness with plants, herbs and medicine.
- 5) *Manthro-baeshajo*. Mental and spiritual healing. Mantras like prayers are the healing words which bring mental and spiritual equilibrium. They purify the subconscious, release the energy and give a new outlook to life. This is considered to be the best type of healing.

Zarathushtra says there is a right way of living for both the worlds. Once things are reasoned out through the wisdom of the divine mind ('khratu') follow your conscience with Asha in the heart. Zarathushtra emphasized living a virtuous life. To be virtuous is to let Vohu Manah fill the mind, so that it becomes an organizing principle of good thoughts, good words and good deeds. These become like

flowers, spreading their fragrance into the minds of other living souls bringing peace, harmony and happiness. ■



Behram Deboo is a founder member and president of the Zoroastrian Society of Washington State. He studied religion at Sir C. J. Madressa and was the recipient of the Avesta Gold Medal. He has been a speaker at North American Zoroastrian congresses and also at the 4th and 6th World Zoroastrian congresses. He is involved with the Interfaith Council of Washington State and has spoken at various churches and other local groups. Professionally he is retired head of the microbiology department of Everett Clinic.



A WISH

Close your eyes and what do you see?
Everything is black,
It's the same between you and me,
If the rest of the world
Were to do the same
There would be no one to blame.
We would see things from
The same point of view.
So why is it you hate me and I hate you?
Why judge on looks?
Open your eyes and take a look,
Listen to your heart and soul deep inside.
Why can't we all just be color blind?
If it was to happen
My wish would come true.
I might hear you love me
and I love you.

By Negin Sharyari
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THE GATHIC PEOPLE

Their successors and their fundamental belief

Zarathushtra's vision of his universal faith suffuses the Gathas which he composed.

By Adi Davar
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Zarathushti societal structures were multi-national and multi-ethnic for some 3,000 years after Zarathushtra preached his faith around 1,500 BCE. Irrespective of the society in which one lived, or the nation or tribe to which one belonged, any believer anywhere could choose to follow the path of Ahura Mazda that he taught. That was Zarathushtra's vision of his universal faith and suffuses the Gathas which he composed. [See particularly *Yasna* 30.1, 30.2, 30.11, 31.3, 31.11, 34.3, 45.1, 45.5. For their translations, see I. J. S. Tarporewala, *Divine Songs of Zarathushtra*, 1991; Humbach and Ichaporia, *the Heritage of Zarathushtra*, 1994; and D. Irani, *Hymns of Zarathushtra*, 1998].

However, the forefathers of many Zarathushtis taught that he gave his religion only to the Aryans and hence, only to those born to parents of Iranian origin. It is therefore hardly surprising that many Zarathushtis today believe in this relatively young 200 years old tradition of an ethnic faith based exclusively on descent.

Migrating tribes. Let us see what we can learn from the faith's history. The early third millennium BCE migration of Indo-European tribes from south Russia did not penetrate into the Iranian plateau. In those times, while an occasional traveler could traverse through the dense

deciduous forests belting the southern Caspian Sea and the lofty Elburz and Khorasan ranges backing them, they were formidable physical barriers to the mass movement of people. [See M. Boyce, *Zoroastrians, their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, pp. 2-4, 48, 1979; A. Davar, *Zoroastrianism: a Universal Faith that Remained Regional?*, Part I,

“... any believer anywhere could choose the path towards Ahura Mazda. Ample historical and archeological evidence supports this.”

Humata, Spring 1998.] The migrating tribes therefore settled to their north, and for centuries mixed with the natives of the central Asian steppes, called ‘Turan’ in the Gathas.

Original Gathic peoples. When these multi-ethnic and multi-national societies again migrated in the late third millennium BCE, they could penetrate southward into Seistan in northeast Iran only through the narrow Khorasan Gap in the lower peaks of the Khorasan range. They settled there and intermingled further for some centuries with the native people of Seistan. This mixed population chose to give up its many gods and follow Zarathushtra, once his teachings were embraced by their Kayanian King Vistaspa. They, together with the Fryana tribe in Turan, were the original Gathic peo-

ples who adopted the religion of Zarathushtra before them.

The inhospitable geographical barriers of the salt depressions of Dast-i-Lut and the Dast-i-Kavir desert, backed by the 200 miles wide Zargos range running from the north to the south of the Iranian plateau, blocked penetration west and south of Seistan. Hence, Zarathushtra's disciples and their successors could spread the faith from its Iranian cradle in Seistan to those choosing to embrace it: in the east and south across the Helmand valley towards modern Afghanistan and north Pakistan and, northward to the different peoples and nations on the central Asian steppes who could be reached through the Khorasan Gap.

Silk Road. Subsequently, the Zarathushti central Asian traders plying the Silk Road established colonies (which included their priests) to break travel on that arduous route. [S. Bulsara, *Religion of Zarathushtra Among Non-Zoroastrians*, K. R. Cama Oriental Institute Journal, 1942, pp. 70-80]. Over the centuries, they must have mixed around their colonies with peoples of various

nations on that route up to Ch'ang-an (modern Zian) in north-east China. Their priests spread the faith – as enjoined by Zarathushtra's vision of a universal faith – to those wishing to embrace it. [A. Jackson, *Zoroaster*, pp. 85-90, *Cambridge History of Iran*, Vol. 3(i), 1961]. There is historical and archeological evidence of the existence of Zarathushti beliefs and practices among nations along the Silk Road.

While the faith thus advanced north and east of the Iranian plateau for some 1,000 years, lands to the west and south of the Zargos range on the plateau and beyond on the adjacent Mesopotamian plains (modern Iraq) were inhabited by polytheistic Semitic nations: Elamites, Kassites, Lurians, Gutis, Assyrians and others.

[Continued on next page]

By Sarosh Manekshaw
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On Zarathushtra and his Gathas

Study of the Gathas, the Yasnas, the Vendidad and the various Pahlavi texts, shows a thread of Gathic thought running unbroken through the entire corpus of Zoroastrian literature. It is this doctrinal consistency that binds the tradition together and gives it continuity. We also find that these doctrines are symbolically represented in the various rituals and ceremonies that are still practiced today.

It is truly remarkable that we Zoroastrians have preserved the exact words of our prophet, for over 3,500 years. This feat becomes all the more incredible, when we consider that for the bulk of this time his words were never even put down in writing. How then were they preserved? First, from the very earliest times these words were treated with the highest degree of reverence. Second, because of this high regard for the words of the Prophet, they were memorized by the priests and this knowledge was passed down from generation to generation. This memorization was so faithful, that the priests could be considered to be human tape recorders, capable of reciting the words perfectly each time without a single error.

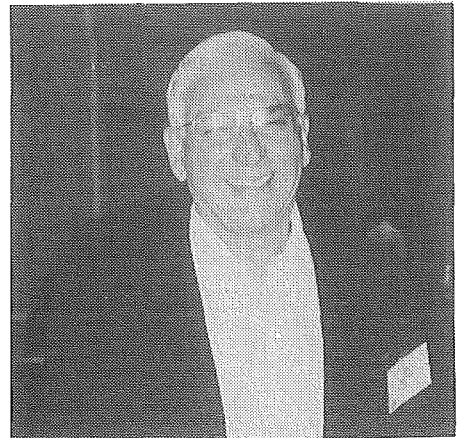
These words of Zarathushtra are known to us as the Gathas. The Gathas are the hymns or poems that

[Continued from previous page].

Recorded history tells us that the Indo-European Medes and Parsua tribes settled on those plains only in the 9th century BCE [Boyce, *op. cit.*] as the subjects of the Assyrians. They too intermingled with the Semitic peoples living in those lands for centuries before they arrived. Like them, the Medes and the Parsuas also venerated many gods. The Parsuas eventually absorbed the Elamite and Kassite nations, to establish the kingdom of Anshan around modern Fars in 700 BCE. Two hundred years later, the Medes overthrew their Assyrian overlords and absorbed the Parsua and the Zarathushti Seistan kingdoms.

State religion. Through the influence of the Zarathushti athravans and the captured prince of a conquered Seistan, the sacerdotal Magi group of the Medes adopted Zarathushtra's teachings. In turn, they probably persuaded Cyrus the Great to declare

Zoroastrianism as the state religion of his Achaemenian empire around 549 BCE. Through their zeal for a newly-found faith and the subtle approaches they implemented to spread it, the multi-national and multi-ethnic peoples west of the Zargos, including the Parsuas, slowly adopted the religion of Zarathushtra. Meanwhile, it continued to be practiced among nations up to north-east China. Under the Achaemenians, Parthians and Sasanians (549 BCE - 652 CE) the faith also spread to the west of modern Iran across modern Turkey up to Thrace, and to the south up to modern Arabia, Libya and Ethiopia. The indigenous subject people of such nations were allowed to embrace it, since the fundamental belief of the successors to the original Gathic people continued to be, that any believer anywhere could choose the path towards Ahura Mazda. Ample historical and archeological evidence supports this. ■



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Zarathushtra dedicated to his god, Ahura Mazda, and they contain the core of his doctrines. The Gathas are in an ancient, east-Iranian language known as Gathic Avestan. This language was already considered dead by the time the Achaemenians came to power in approximately 600 BC. Since they are in poetic form, the Gathas are rich in metaphor, and further because of the difficulty of comprehending the grammar and syntax of this language, they have been extremely difficult to understand and translate. No two translations are alike. Perhaps it is in this uncertainty of translation that a certain mysterious

beauty lies – each individual can study the Gathas and experience for himself a unique understanding of its hidden meanings.

The Gathas. The extant Gathas consist of 17 ‘has’ or chapters, which are divided into 5 groups according to their meter. The standard nomenclature used to identify each of the Gathas is to refer to them by their respective chapter number in the Yasnas (the larger body of Avestan literature within which they are contained). The 5 Gathas are: *Ahuna-vaiti* [Ys. 28-34], *Ushtavaiti* [Yasna 43-46], *Spentamainyu* [Ys.

47-50], *Vohukhshathra* [Ys. 51], and *Vahishtoishiti* [Ys. 53].

It is highly probable that Zarathushtra composed many more hymns, and must have also had many discussions with his disciples in which he gave a more detailed explanations of his philosophy and theology. Unfortunately, none of this has survived. But it is almost certain that his immediate disciples, who subsequently composed the Yasna Haptanghaiti, were intimately familiar with, and faithful followers of, his teachings.

Zarathushtra’s God – Ahura Mazda. Zarathushtra recognized

Table I: the Amesha Spentas (emanations or attributes of Ahura Mazda) and the material creation that each Amesha Spenta protects.

[Adapted from Zoroastrianism: An Ethnic Perspective by Khojeste P. Mistree, Mumbai, 1982]

Amesha Spenta		Meaning	Role	Protector of
Av. Spenta Mainyu Ph. Spennag Menog		Bounteous spirit	God’s active, creative motivating force	Man
Av. Vohu Manah Ph. Vahman		Good mind	Enables man to comprehend intellectually, in order that he may discern and choose correctly.	Cattle
Av. Asha Vahishta Ph. Ardvaishiti		Best order, truth and righteousness	Regulates order on a physical level, truth on a psychological level and righteousness on a spiritual level.	Fire
Av. Khshathra Vairya Ph. Sheherevar		Desirable / sovereign kingdom	Represents the power and strength in the Kingdom of God	Sky and Metals
Av. Spenta Armaiti Ph. Spendarmad		Bounteous piety / devotion	Maintains the receptive, beneficent and devotional qualities within the Wise Lord’s good creations.	Earth
Av. Haurvatat Ph. Hordad		Perfection / health / completeness	Reflects the goodness, completeness and perfection of God in the world.	Waters
Av. Ameretat Ph. Amurdad		Immortality / ‘undyingness’	Bestows the triumph of ‘undyingness’ in order to maintain well-being and continuity of God’s creations.	Plants

Ahura Mazda (Ahura = Lord, and Mazda = wisdom; thus, the Lord of Wisdom, or the Wise Lord) as the Supreme Being. Ahura Mazda existed primevally and is the creator of all that is good, both in the spiritual and material world. By equating Ahura Mazda with wisdom, Zarathushtra was careful not to anthropomorphize his God, as did the ancient Greeks, nor did he equate Him with any physical phenomena, as did the ancient Hindus. It is probable that Mazda was already a recognized (albeit minor) deity in the Indo-Iranian pantheon, and that Zarathushtra selected and elevated Him, from amongst the many then known gods, to the supreme deity because of the unique simplicity, beauty and profundity of His attribute – wisdom.

From the Gathas it is evident that Zarathushtra had not fully formulated the compound term “Ahura Mazda”; for we find numerous references to Ahura alone as well as to Mazda alone, and in numerous other passages the two terms are separated by words or phrases. In the Younger Avesta the compound Ahura Mazda is fully developed and by the time of the Pahlavi literature we find that the compound term itself was joined to form the single term Hormuzd.

The Amesha Spentas and Other Spiritual Beings. The ‘Amesha Spentas’ are the attributes or emanations of Ahura Mazda [see Table 1]. In the Gathas, Zarathushtra refers to them as Ahura Mazda’s intrinsic attributes or the powers within Him. They are also His spiritual creations, which exist as independent divinities. Like the spectrum of light which consists of seven colors which together make up white light, the Amesha Spentas are both independent of and yet collectively an integral part of Ahura Mazda.

While the Amesha Spentas are divine attributes of Ahura Mazda and independent divinities in their own right, they are also the qualities that each

human being should strive to possess. It is through possessing these qualities that each Zoroastrian helps defeat the powers of evil and helps bring closer ‘Frashokereti’ (‘making wonderful’), the end of time when good will finally triumph and evil will be totally destroyed. It is, thus, essential for Zoroastrians to fully understand the concepts of the Ame-

“ In Zarathushtra’s philosophy not only was each individual, during his lifetime here on earth, responsible for the future destiny of his own soul, but he was also responsible for contributing towards the salvation of mankind and the future destiny of the world as a whole. ”

sha Spentas and the inter-relationship between them, Ahura Mazda, man and the physical creations. This understanding not only serves as a starting point of comprehending the message of Zarathushtra in the Gathas but, more importantly, serves to help each one of us to lead a “Zoroastrian” way of life.

The term ‘Amesha Spenta’ itself does not occur in the Gathas; it first occurs in the Yasna Haptanghaiti to collectively refer to the group of six; however, it is highly probable that Zarathushtra himself may have coined this term. It is interesting that in the Gathas themselves we find mentioned Ahura Mazda and seven Amesha Spentas together in one passage [Ys. 47.1]. But by the time the Yasna Haptanghaiti was composed by Zarathushtra’s immediate disciples, Spenta Mainyu (Ahura Mazda’s creative spirit) had already been wholly associated with Ahura Mazda Himself, and so in the subsequent literature we find them referred to as Ahura Mazda and the six Amesha Spentas. A practical example of this later grouping is found in the Zoroastrian calendar: the first seven days of the month are named for Ahura Mazda and the six Amesha Spentas.

Of the Amesha Spentas, by far the greatest number of references in the Gathas is to *Asha* (truth / righteousness) followed closely by *Vohu Manah* (good mind). We then find mentioned *Spenta Armaiti* (piety / devotion), *Khshathra Vairya* (divine kingdom) and the last two, *Haurvatat* (perfection) and *Ameretat* (immortality) are nearly always paired together.

In addition to the Amesha Spentas, reference is also made in the Gathas to *Sraosha* and to *Ashi*, two spiritual beings who are later termed ‘yazatas’ (worshipful beings). Also in two passages Zarathushtra mentions “the other ahuras” (in the plural), without elaborating on who specifically they refer to. Thus, we see that

the Gathas describe a hierarchy of spiritual beings, all created wholly good, by Ahura Mazda. Yet the existence of the Amesha Spentas and the Yazatas, in no way diminishes the supremacy of Ahura Mazda

The Material Creation. In the Gathas [Ys. 44.7] Zarathushtra states that Ahura Mazda is “the creator of all things through the holy spirit (Spenta Mainyu).” Accordingly, in the latter tradition, the epithet ‘*dadar*’ (creator) is given to Ahura Mazda. Ahura Mazda created the material world wholly good. Neither the creations nor the order of creation [see Table 2] as laid down in the Vendidad and the Bundahishn is mentioned in the Gathas; but Zarathushtra saw a wonderful way to link the spiritual creations to the physical creations. He did this by assigning an Amesha Spenta responsible for preserving and protecting a physical creation [see Table 1]. This link is alluded to in the Gathas themselves, and it is also interesting to note that, if we compare the order in which the Amesha Spentas are mentioned in Yasna 47.1, with the order of the physical creations listed in the Yasna Haptanghaiti [Ys. 37.1] we find an exact correspondence.

Evil. Just as Zarathushtra realized Ahura Mazda to be the source of all that was good, he realized that evil was the result of an equally primeval power which existed totally independent of Ahura Mazda. In the Gathas these two independent powers are referred to as the twin spirits: *Spenta Mainyu* (the beneficent spirit) and *Angra Mainyu* (the maleficent spirit) who are totally opposed to each other in every aspect of their beings. (In Pahlavi, the Avestan words *Angra Mainyu* becomes *Ahriman*, and it is by this latter name that the evil spirit is commonly known.) Since *Spenta Mainyu* is Ahura Mazda's creative spirit and is associated with Him, so *Angra Mainyu* is the destructive spirit associated with the evil being. It is interesting to note that in the extant Gathas, we have no mention by name of such an evil being. And it is this fact that has caused some to disavow the existence of evil in the cosmic world.

However, Zarathushtra does mention the existence of the 'daevas' (demons), the evil spirits who "chose the worst thought, then rushed into fury, with which they have afflicted the world and mankind." [Ys. 30.6]. This passage clearly shows that evil in the material world is caused by the evil, cosmic spirits. Also, as we saw a hierarchy of benevolent spiritual beings created by Ahura Mazda (*Amesha Spentas* and the *Yazatas*) so we see a hierarchy of evil spirits (*Angra Mainyu* and the *daevas*). This dichotomy between good and evil is much more pronounced in the later Avestan and Pahlavi works where the differences between the two are elaborated in great detail.

Zarathushtra thus clearly saw evil for what it was: as opposed to Ahura Mazda's '*asha*' (truth) and creativity, he saw *Angra Mainyu* as the cause of the '*druj*' (lie) and the destruction of

all Ahura Mazda's good creations. Throughout the Gathas, Zarathushtra entreats man to abjure the *druj* and to follow the Path of *Asha*, for it is only by doing more good than humanity, as a whole, can destroy evil.

Freedom of Choice. One of the more unique concepts that Zarathushtra introduced in the Gathas was that of 'free will' or the freedom of choice. Ahura Mazda has given each human being free will, that is, each person is totally free to choose to do what (s)he wishes. It is important to understand that this freedom is absolute, in that even Ahura Mazda Himself cannot control man's decision.

Thus, it is clear that the decision to either do good or evil is solely in the

our souls will be doomed to dwell forever in '*drujo demane*' (house of the lie – hell).

Along with this freedom of choice, however, goes a great responsibility. Mankind is urged by Zarathushtra to only choose the right path, the Path of *Asha*, for it is only by mankind doing more good than, eventually, *Frashokereti* will occur at which time evil will be forever destroyed. Thus, in Zarathushtra's philosophy not only was each individual, during his lifetime here on earth, responsible for the future destiny of his own soul, but he was also responsible for contributing towards the salvation of mankind, and the future destiny of the world as a whole.

In this concept of freedom of choice for all humans – men and women, rich and poor alike – Zarathushtra introduced a radical departure from the then traditional way of thinking. Until then it was the general belief that a place in paradise was earned by making offerings and sacrifices. This system placed a greater hardship on the poor, who were forced to make burdensome offerings that they could least afford, in order for them to assure themselves a place in heaven. Zarathushtra's concept, on the other hand, that heaven could be achieved only by doing good deeds, was in effect a great social equalizer. No longer did the rich have an advantage over the poor in going to heaven; it was now equally accessible to both the rich and poor, and to men and women.

Eschatology. In the Gathas, Zarathushtra states that after death, the soul separated from the physical body, makes its way to '*chinvato peretu*', '*chinvat pul*' (bridge of the separator). At this bridge the separation between the '*ashavan*' (followers of the truth) and the '*dregvant*' (follower of the lie) takes place. The souls of the former go on to *garo*

Order	Creation
First	The sky, in the form of a hollow sphere.
Second	Water, filling half the sphere.
Third	Earth, within the water.
Fourth	Plants, growing on the earth.
Fifth	Animals
Sixth	Man
Seventh	Fire

Table II. Ahura Mazda's material creations and the order in which they were created as laid down in the *Vendidad* and the *Bundahishn*.

hands of man – we have total freedom to choose as we may. However, Zarathushtra makes it very clear that the consequences of our decisions are predetermined and fixed. If we do more good than bad, then our souls shall continue to exist in '*garo demane*' (house of song – heaven) while, if we do more evil than good,

demane while the souls of the latter are doomed forever to drujo demane. In the Gathas [Ys. 32.6 and 32.7] Zarathushtra also mentions that while in this world sinners may appear to be successful, Ahura Mazda is well aware of the punishment that is in store for them in the next world, where they will be subjected to the 'fiery test' (that is, they will have to pass through a bath of molten metal). At that time the souls of the wicked will be purified of their evil.

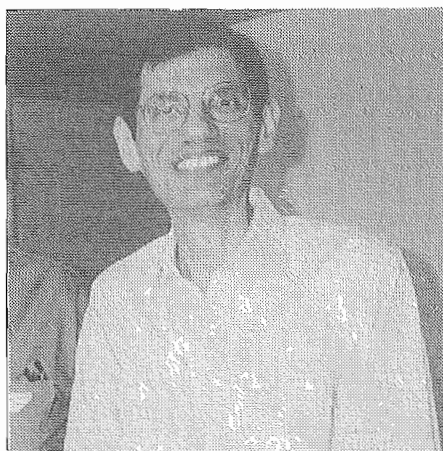
These Gathic concepts of Zoroastrian eschatology are more fully developed and described in the younger Avestan and Pahlavi literature. The most famous description of life after death is to be found in the Pahlavi text of the *Artay Viraz Namak*, the story of the righteous Viraz, who goes into a trance and visits both heaven and hell. Coming back to consciousness he relates in graphic detail descriptions of the beauty and serenity found in heaven, as well as the torment and pain that the wicked undergo in hell.

Conclusion. These very simple doctrines found in the Gathas serve as the nucleus for the development of Zoroastrian theology. The younger Avesta and the Pahlavi texts take these Gathic concepts and develop them more fully.

While the later texts elaborate on these doctrines and give detailed descriptions and explanations, the core themes found in the Gathas are always present: the worship of Ahura Mazda as the supreme being; the presence of evil in the cosmic and moral spheres, which is the intrinsic attribute of the evil spirit, Angra Mainyu or Ahriman; the concepts of the Amesha Spentas as emanations or attributes of Ahura Mazda as well as representing divine beings in their own right; Ahura Mazda as the creator of all that is good in the spiritual and material worlds, and Ahriman as the destroyer of all that is good; the relationship between the Amesha Spentas and the seven material creations, which enjoins us to preserve and care for all the elements (espe-

cially earth, water and fire); the freedom of choice given by Ahura Mazda to mankind which requires man to devote himself to good thoughts, good words and good deeds in order that his soul may go to heaven, as well as helping in the destruction of evil; and the final end of time, Frashokereti, when the souls of the good and evil will be separated at the Chinvat Bridge, with the righteous going to heaven and the wicked doomed to hell followed by the bath of molten metal when evil will be destroyed forever.

If we study the Gathas, the Yasnas, the Vendidad and the various Pahlavi texts, we find this thread of Gathic thought running unbroken through the entire corpus of Zoroastrian literature. It is this doctrinal consistency that binds the tradition together and gives it continuity. We also find that these doctrines are symbolically represented in the various rituals and ceremonies that are still practiced today. Further, despite the fact that Irani Zoroastrian and Parsi social customs have evolved differently, they share a common set of values which can be traced directly back to their common origins, based on these Gathic principles. ■



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The Holy Avesta

To separate out the Gathas alone as the words of Zarathushtra, and the rest of the Avesta as "younger" is to desecrate our most spiritual possession, our Holy Avesta.

By Pervin J. Mistry
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Western studies initiated in the late 18th century CE have divided the Holy Avesta into 'older' and 'younger' sections. The basis for this reasoning is that the language of the Gathas is 'older' and written in poetic meter, while the remaining Avesta is in a different dialect and in prose; therefore, except for the Gathas, the rest of the Avesta is categorized as 'younger'. This article shows why these artificial divisions of the Avesta, for the various reasons described below, are quite erroneous, and the entire corpus of Avestan literature is, in fact, the divine revelation of Asho Zarathushtra.

● **Age.** 'Older' and 'younger' denote time, and the age of the Avesta is decisively linked to the date of Asho Zarathushtra. Assigning a date to the Gathas/Avesta is therefore inconceivable since to date, there is no certainty regarding the birth-place of Asho Zarathushtra or the period in which he lived.

Zarathushtra lived during the Kyanian Dynasty, in such antiquity, that history is unable to chronicle its factual existence and therefore, considers this era to be “mythical”! In which case, ascribing a date is mere speculation. The Avestan language is so archaic that during the Achaemenian era, it was already a sacerdotal language, preserved orally only through memorizing and chanting the scriptures. Consequentially, until the date and birthplace of Asho Zarathushtra are established with certitude, it is a fallacy to divide the Avesta into older and younger sections.

It should be noted that only the Avestan script has undergone subsequent changes, not the text itself. What we know of our religion today is through the composition of Pahlavi texts written in Iran in the 9th century CE, Dinkerd being of prime importance. Deen Dasturs who wrote the Pahlavi commentaries did not exclude Vendidad as un-Zarathushti or non-Avestic; nor did they segregate the Avesta into older and younger sections. In fact, they declare the Holy Avesta to be a consolidation of 21 ‘nasks’ whose names and contents they have stated, and which they unequivocally affirm were the revelation of Asho Zarathushtra.

Unfortunately, an only-intellectual approach has divested the Avesta of its esoteric substance, subsequently creating doubt and ridicule for rituals and religious commandments. Western studies of the Avesta began only in the last two centuries. Until then, did our religion not survive through several millennia? Did we not follow our religion with more faith and conformity?

● **Dialect.** Reasons why dialect should not be the basis for separating the Gathas from the rest of the Avesta are:

(a) Haptan Yasht [Ys. 35-42], Hom Yasht [Ys. 9, 10, 11], Hadokht Yasht [Ys. 58] and Yasna 12, 13, 19, 20 and 21 are all composed in the Gathic

dialect. Yet, these are not referred to as the Gathas or older Avesta.

(b) Although the Gathas, Yasna and Visperad are derived from the same Staot Yasht nask, they are not all poetic. The extant Gathas belong to metrical verses while many ‘has’ (chapters) of the Yasna and Visperad contain the prose of this very same nask. It is established that prose and poetry are interwoven throughout the Avesta.

(c) The style and exposition differ according to the nature of the subject. The Avesta deals with ‘datig’, ‘gasanig’ (Gathic) and ‘hadagmansarig’ issues and consequently, the text varies. Hence the dialect of the seemingly old and younger prose and poetry are hardly the reasons for segmentation of Avesta.

● **Nasks are inseparable.** As stated in Dinkerd, [Book III-VII and Book VIII-I] the entire Avesta (including Yasna, Vendidad, Yashts, Gathas etc.) has its origin in 21 ‘frashusho-manthra’ nasks revealed by Ahura Mazda to Asho Zarathushtra. Each of these 21 Nasks is based on a varied ‘staot’ (cosmic resonance) embodied in the sacred ‘Ahunavar’ manthra. Asho Zarathushtra subsequently transformed these into ‘manthra-spenta’ nasks to correspond with the terrestrial waves of energy of sound and light and divided them into 3 categories: datig, gathic and hadagmansarig.

Each of these 3 divisions had 7 volumes (nasks). Most of these 21 nasks are entirely or partly lost, except Vendidad which has survived in entirety. Ergo, the Holy Avesta is not just the Gathas. Undoubtedly, it is an aggregate of 21 nasks and it is heresy to divide these as older and younger when all 21 were composed by Asho Zarathushtra himself.

Dinkerd [Book VIII-I] states: “And the reason for the triple division of the reckoning of revelation is the exposition of all knowledge and duty ...” Dinkerd [Ibid, pp. 5-6, 7] further states: “Also in the Ahunavar,

which is the basis of the reckoning of revelation, are three ‘gas’ (metrical lines): the first chiefly indicates the gathic lore, the second the hadagmansarig lore, and the third the datig lore (or the Law).” The Law is identified with datig lore, specifically the Vendidad. This proves that even the Ahunavar manthra contains in its three lines gathic, datig and hadagmansarig portions, asserting the three divisions to be inseparable.

Justification for not segregating the three divisions is because worldly and spiritual existences are essentially inter-connected; therefore, Gathas, Yashts, Yasna and Vendidad are also correlated. Gathas cannot exist without Yasna or Vendidad as each is complementary to the other. Just as body, mind and soul are inter-connected, the physical, ultra-physical and spiritual worlds are also essentially correlated. Dinkerd [Book III-CLXII] confirms this very explicitly.

● **Gathas and Vendidad inter-connected.** Fundamentally, the Gathas contain all three divisions:

(a) Gathas are gathic because they are sung in poetic meter and reveal knowledge about the spiritual world.

(b) They are datig because they are correlated to the Vendidad. Gathas reveal the immutable laws (‘dat’) of nature (‘asha’) and coequality of the twin ‘mainyu’ resulting in ‘druj’ (pollution). However, the different druj are expounded not in the Gathas but only in the Vendidad. *Hence, the key to understanding the Gathas is through the teachings of Vendidad.* Asho Zarathushtra revealed the law (Vendidad) to defeat druj through purificatory formulas. Without Vendidad (vi=anti; ‘daev’=druj; ‘dat’=law) there can be no ‘yasna’ (divine union) or Frashogard. Vendidad is also a sacred ritual performed specifically at night to establish spiritual communion with the Divine in order to minimize adverse effects created by ‘daevas’ (druj) of darkness and ignorance. When purity is established through the Vendidad, Yasna is realized at daybreak. Hence Gathas

are datig because they divulge immutable laws and are interdependent on Vendidad and the rest of the Avesta inextricably.

(c) Gathas are hadag-mansarig as well because they are 'manthra' chanted as prayers/rituals. Although the most pre-eminent, they are only a fragment of the Avesta and are inseparable from its datig and hadag-mansarig portions. Most extant yashts are derived from the Bagan Nask (one of the seven hadag-mansarig nasks composed by Asho Zarathushtra), again verifying the Holy Avesta to be indivisible.

● **Scriptures interwoven.** Another prevailing misconception is to study Gathas as a separate portion of Yasna or the rest of the Avesta. Yasna contains 72 has which include the five Gathas, rendering them inextricable from the Yasna. Several has of the Yasna are contained within the verses of the Gathas, e.g. Yasna 27 is repeated in Yasna 33.11-14, 34.15 (Ahunavad Gatha); Yasna 55 is recited in Yasna 51.7/22 (Vohukshathra Gatha); Yasna 18 and 68 are in Yasna 47 (Spentomad Gatha) and so on. This is so because the Staot Yasht Nask contains Yasna, Visperad as well as the extant Gathas.

These scriptures are all interwoven and complementary to each other, proving conclusively that the Gathas are not separate from Yasna, or from other portions of the Avesta.

Kushti prayers also include several has from the Yasna. Yasna 33.12-14 (Ahunavaiti Gatha) and Yasna 62 are included in the Atash Niyaeshe; Yasna 65 in Avan Niyaeshe; Yasna 60 in Afrin e Dahman; portions of Yasna 71 are recited in the Geh prayers; Yasna 44.16 and 46.7 (Ushtavaiti Gatha) are included in Kemna Mazda.

Hence, the seemingly old and new portions are intricately interwoven throughout the Avesta. Extant Gathas mention the ameshaspands and some yazatas who each have a yasht dedicated to them. It is a logical progression that all yazatas may

have been mentioned in the Gathic portions which are now lost. Hence, the proper approach to the study of Avesta, written in prose and poetry, should be holistic.

● **Holy Avesta is 'manthric'**, therefore occult and mystic. Manthra are not just words written and recited in an archaic language. According to Fravardin Yasht, Manthra Spenta is the soul of Ahura Mazda, and much more than mere words or common utterances. Manthra is the embodiment of cosmic energy originating from Ahura Mazda who is the source of endless energy/light ('raevat khvarnavat'). Manthra is rooted in staot created by primordial sound of the divine word **Ahunavar** which set creation into manifestation. Bundahishn [ch. XIX] refers to Avesta as the language of bird. This is a mystic reference to manthra/staot being the language of spirit or 'farohar', represented with wings resembling a bird, linking the spiritual world to the physical.

When manthra is recited, the sound produced takes precedence over its meaning because sound has potency to induce spiritual insight by quieting the mind and thereby creating certain fields around the reciter:

ahunim vairim tanum paiti

Recitation of manthra protects the body.

Knowledge is important but manthra is revealed through communion and spiritual insight, and not through disclosures of intellectualism alone.

It is our own spirituality and faith in the divine revelation of Asho Zarathushtra as embodied in the Avesta which are the key to the spiritual world. Please, let us not denigrate our most spiritual possession, our Holy Avesta.

Atha zamyat, yatha afrinami. ■



Mrs. Pervin J. Mistry is an ardent follower of Ilm-e Khshnoom, an occult/mystical belief in Zoroastrianism. After receiving a Bachelor's degree in Philosophy and Literature in 1964 from Mumbai, Pervin continued her interest in philosophy through teachings of theosophy and esoteric teachings of the Zarathushti religion as taught by Ilm-e-Khshnoom. She has presented papers at North American congresses and at the Parliament of the World's Religions.

The Divine Spark

The ancient Zarathushti concept of the 'divinity within humanity' (the Fravashi) and moving one's self and others towards 'perfection' is applied today in the words of General Motors executive David A. Zimmerman:

Each one of us is a spark of divine being in whom we live and move and have our nature. Only when the God within is realized can we as human beings advance to our highest spiritual purpose ... True self esteem is the product of self realization. It is the birthright of every human being. As our self esteem grows, so does the self esteem of those around us ... we share, we teach, we cooperate instead of compete, we help others to see that there is purpose and meaning in their lives. What greater gift can there be to aid in raising self esteem than knowing you are truly a child of God. A soul in physical form. A divine spark whose growth and splendor has no limit ...

GODREJ – A HUNDRED YEARS 1897 - 1997

By B. K. Karanjia

Volumes I and II, Viking, Mumbai, 1997.

Hardcover, Vol I (265 pp, Rs. 295), Vol II (375 pp, Rs. 395)

By Kersey H. Antia
Orland Park, Illinois

These two volumes, written by a noted journalist, depict in detail the interesting saga of the hundred years of the famous Godrej industrial empire in India. The author worked as a publicity manager with Godrej for six years before joining *Filmfare* as its editor, much to the regret of his bosses at Godrej. To make up for it, he is now chronicling the story of Godrej in these volumes.

The founder, Ardeshir, son of a real estate businessman, was born in Bharuch in 1868. (I believe, like the Tatas, the Godrejs also hail from a priestly family.) Ardeshir became a lawyer, but found himself unable to twist the truth even in favor of his client, while in Zanzibar, East Africa, fully realizing that it meant the death knell of his legal career. He then tried his hand at making various things, including 'unpickable locks' and safes, soaps free of animal fat and canned foods. He even tried agriculture and planting vineyards on a mass scale.

He came into close contact with Tilak and Gandhiji, whose advice of using only Swadeshi (Indian-made) products he took very seriously for

the rest of his life, and tried his best to develop Indian industry – a commitment his family has faithfully carried out to this day. He was a dreamer and tried his hand at various things. He bought a 600-acre lot near Nasik for vineyards and production of canned foods. But he did not live long enough to develop it.

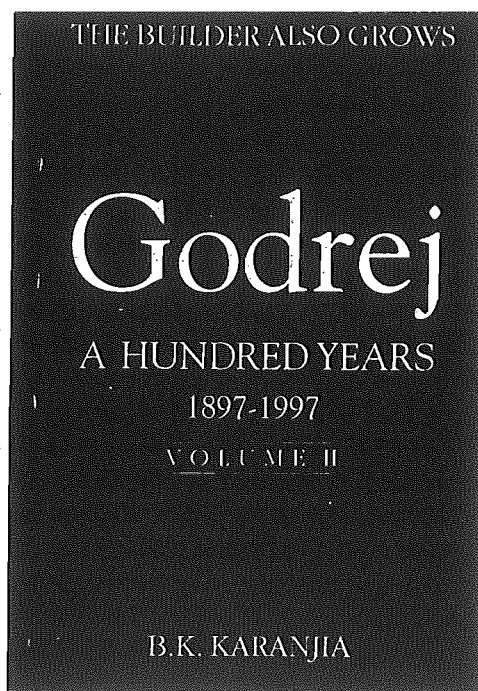
Most people recognize Merwanji Cama as the founder of Cama Athor-nan Institute, but few know that he was also the one who lent money to Ardeshir just for the asking. When Ardeshir tried to repay it, Cama refused to accept it, but suggested that his nephew Boyce, be employed in the company; hence the name *Godrej and Boyce Company* (though Boyce dropped out of it soon). One wonders if Cama had not helped Ardeshir, a fellow Bharuchi, would we ever have heard of Godrej?

Ardeshir died in 1936, leaving all his wealth to the Bombay Parsi Punchayet. His brother Pirojshah, 14 years younger, who had joined Ardeshir in his ventures, had to buy out Ardeshir's share of the company, albeit at a discounted price.

Ardeshir had also donated Rs. 300,000 to the Tilak Swaraj Fund in 1921, which led the British to secretly ban all Godrej products for their Government use, which Gandhiji rightly decried. Gandhiji added: "Not a day has passed without Parsi donations ... Parsi ladies and gentlemen are also making door to door collections."

Ardeshir was an idealist and did not believe in inheriting or bequeathing wealth. While he was a dreamer, Pirojshah was a practical man with vision and great organizational skill. He bought lots of useless marshland in the early 1940s, just outside Bombay and developed it into a well-planned, industrial town with gardens and residential buildings for his employees. In Bombay, no other large-scale employer offers residential facilities to even the lower level workers.

No wonder, therefore, that when President Carter, then a Senator in Georgia, approached the US Vice-President Hubert Humphrey and others for securing an appropriate placement for his mother, Lillian, as a Peace Corps volunteer nurse, the name of Godrej turned up as the best choice. Karanjia writes about her work at Godrej, which is very much what Lillian had described to me and other Indians in the USA when we supported her son Jimmy's candidacy for the Presidency. Soon afterwards, I happened to visit India and as I knew her friend, guide and neighbor at Godrej, Kersey Mowdawalla, having guided him at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences in 1959 as his senior, I tried to obtain a first hand view of her work at Godrej and spent a few days there, relying mostly on the kind and unfailing assistance provided by his wife, Aloo, as he had then passed away of cancer. The book mentions their contribution to Godrej, but few know that President Carter knew Kersey Mowdawalla's name by heart



because of his and Aloo's close friendship with Lillian and had even sent a gift for Kersey with a Bombay businessman he met at a Lion's Club meeting in the USA during his Presidency. Lillian loved Kersey and Aloo and doted on their only son, Percy, and talked about them and Godrej nostalgically. She enjoyed the dinner invitations to the Godrej homes, which she observed thoroughly, as was evident from her comments like: "Soonu likes modern furniture, but Jaiben prefers old pieces."

Perhaps even fewer know that because of Lillian's association with Godrej, Carter learned about Zarathushtis and was quite concerned about their safety during the Iranian revolution. I still have a letter from the US Defense Department in this regard in response to mine at the time. Godrej has thus benefitted their community in more ways than one. Lillian liked what I chronicled about her work at Godrej and we later met regularly on her visits to Chicago, mainly for attending receptions by the Indian community and for promoting the candidacy of democrats such as Alex Seith. When my wife could not join me on one of her visits because of morning sickness, alacritous as she was, the first thing she asked me was: "What will you name the child?" and I blurted out: "Jimmy". She wrote a nice letter to us when my son Jimmy was born.

Pirojshah and his sons and grandsons and even all the female members of the Godrej clan have over the years expanded their business to include a vast array of products. Their insistence on quality and good labor relations and welfare of their workers and their families, has earned them a reputation for integrity, philanthropy and high quality. Godrej is the largest privately-held company in India, with perhaps one of the largest charitable contributions towards causes such as environmental protection and conservation. They have also introduced professional and modern management at Godrej and

hired capable and self-motivated professionals irrespective of caste or creed, as can be seen from the details provided in Volume II. Shy of publicity for years, they have finally realized the Zeitgeist (the spirit of the time) and opened up a great deal now, these volumes bearing testimony to it.

The Godrej ladies religiously attend to the welfare of the workers' families at Pragati Kendra (Activity Center), and also attend attentively to the business. In the early 1960s I used to run a Pragati Kendra myself, along with all welfare activities for the Tatas, but the personal touch and genuine caring of all the Godrej ladies and men, make their welfare activities perhaps unique in the whole of India, as eye-witnessed by me.

They do not neglect their own families – even distant family members. I know it first-hand, because after summing up my research on Lillian at Godrej in 1977, my scheduled session with Soonuben Godrej had to be delayed as she was busy taking care of an aunt's final rites. As a matter of fact, the success of the company is due to the Godrej clan holding so well together, this also being the last wish of Naval Godrej.

Karanjia gives a detailed picture of all family members in addition to that of all the prominent Godrej executives. Some members have married out of the community but they seem to be very accepting of their spouse and children, setting a good model for their community.

The Godrej story dispels doubts about the community's ability to survive and prosper in the highly competitive Indian economy today. May the Godrej tribe prosper as the country will prosper along with them.

These volumes are a welcome addition to any library, but a must for all institutions where young minds are inspired to attain Ardeshir's arduous aims and Pirojshah's pragmatic, progressive and purposeful practices. The book is well-written, but some

repetition seems unavoidable because of its format. The author's familiarity with the Godrej family and employees has benefitted both him and the reader in obtaining a first-hand and reliable view of both, which can especially help those doing business with Godrej or aspiring to work with Godrej. These volumes could also come in handy for the orientation of new higher-level employees at Godrej. They are a product of a symbiotic relationship between the author and the Godrejs, but they do not lack in objectivity. One does not come across such authentic works too often.

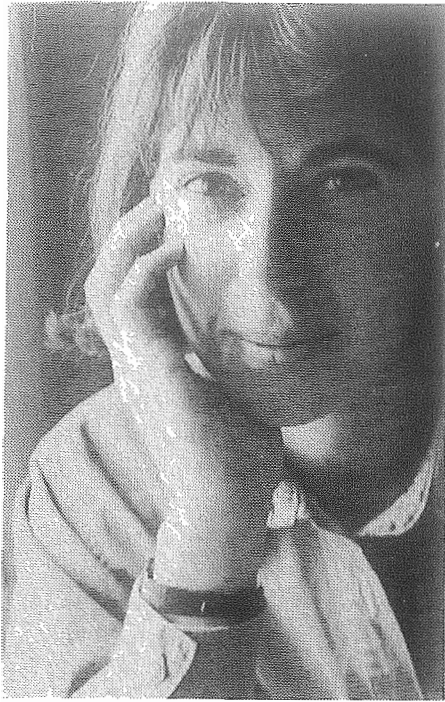
It has been a labor of love for Karanjia to write these volumes. For me, it provided an opportunity, not only to learn about the Godrej company from an author who has known it for decades, but also to get further evidence of my long-held thesis as both a psychologist and a life-long student of the Zarathushti Din, that work devoted to one's ideals that also promotes others' well being and happiness, when willingly and ceaselessly carried out, is the very essence of modern-day spirituality.

The Gathas exhort us [*Ys 30.9*]:

"Let us, therefore, be those who bring about the renovation of this world"

There is so much similarity between the emphasis on action (karma) in the Gathas and the Hindu Gita, The Godrej family have been true to the nation, their workers, their environment and their clients, because they have been true to their ancient religious heritage, having contributed willingly for its preservation as well. ■

Ervad Dr. Kersey H. Antia is high priest of the Zarathushti community in the Chicago area since 1977. A student and scholar of Avesta-Pahlavi, he has also written and lectured widely on religion. Dr. Antia is a licensed clinical and management psychologist in full-time private practice in illinois.



Jenny Rose

A Review

By Soozan Baxter
Manlius, New York

Little is known about the roles Zarathushti women played in historical times. Were they inferior to their husbands? What did they look like? Were they educated? A very sound attempt has been made to answer these questions by Jenny Rose in *Three Queens, Two Wives and a Goddess: Roles and Images of Women in Sasanian Iran*, which is a chapter in *Women in the Medieval Islamic World: Power, Patronage and Piety*.

Rose explores the roles of Iranian Women during the Sasanian dynasty, which ruled the second Persian Empire for 400 years (224 CE to 671 CE) using Zarathushti texts, pictorial illustrations and various art forms. During these times, the religion of Zarathustra prevailed in Iran, and as Rose explains in her chapter, documents reflect that the religion was (and still is) patriarchal. The roles of women, however, were not merely passive, and are reflected in their marriages, child rearing and inheritance rights, in addition to their roles as a divinity and royalty.

THREE QUEENS, TWO WIVES AND A GODDESS *Roles and Images of Women in Sasanian Iran*

By Jenny Rose

Chapter in "Women in the Medieval Islamic World: Power, Patronage and Piety" Ed. Gavin R. G. Hambly, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1998

Much of the information Rose presents about marriage is derived from the *Madayan i Hazar Dadestan*, the Book of 1,000 Legal Judgements. She explains that religion was founded on polygamy and that two types of marriages took place. In 'padikh-shay' marriages, women were given permission to enter into such a union by the head of their households, usually their father or brother. In 'cagar' marriages, women were relinquished to other men if their own husband had died or were impotent. These women were given an allowance and were properly clothed and fed but were subservient to the padikshay wives and had no inheritance. Only men could seek a divorce without approval from women, but had to prove certain failings, among them were prostitution, sorcery and not remaining ritually pure.

Women educated their children. When they turned five years old, boys received a formal education involving writing, food, wines, chess, music, women and perfumes. For instance, boys learned to associate certain scents of flowers with women: a violet was linked with a young girl while a white rose was linked with an old woman. While little is known about the education of young women, it is known that they studied music, scholarly reasoning and the law.

Rose also addresses inheritance in her article. The wife and sons of a deceased man would inherit the same amount of money. In the case where there were no sons to inherit money, a married daughter would receive the brother's portion with the intention

that she produce an heir who would be named for the deceased. The most interesting about this section on inheritance are the references to adoption. While the adoption of girls was rare, usually in the case of an impoverished girl looking for a place to live or a work opportunity, adopted daughters were only given an inheritance claim if their fathers had specifically allotted money for them in their estates.

Ardwisur Anahid (middle Persian form of the Avestan Aredvi Sura Anahita) was the most important female divinity when it came to prayers and devotion during the Sasanian monarchy. Her image is found on coins and she is portrayed in Sasanian art. She is always depicted beautifully in a long dress tied at the waist with a long ribbon tied in a bow and often with cascading curls. Rose neglects to say why Anahid overshadowed the other deities but does mention that her cult influence remained in Iran even during Islamic times. Preserved in the Avestan Yasht 5, she is known for being righteous, providing her worshippers with triumph over their enemies, and bringing fertility by purifying the wombs of women and the seeds of men.

Artwork from Sasanian times also reflects that there were three queens. Shapurhukhtag was the first Sasanian queen to be portrayed on a coin next to a king and in 1968 scholars first learned of her name. Information about another queen, Buran, has been quite rare. Coins depicting her image are sparse, although some have been found in far away regions like China. Buran is known for encouraging divine conduct and spreading justice. Her reign took place during the Arab

invasion of Iran. The last woman is depicted at Tang-I Qandil. She is known as the mystery lady because she is neither queen nor goddess, yet her image can be found on rock reliefs.

Rose's chapter concisely presents a lot of information about Zarathushti women in Sasanian times. While her text is scholarly, dense and not always clearly written, her research is thorough and enlightening. Her focus on the roles and appearances of certain Sasanian women is certain to delight those yearning to learn more about the historical place of women in the Zarathushti faith. ■

Soozan Baxter, a 1998 graduate with an MS from Columbia University School of Journalism, is an associate editor for writing book reviews for the Barnes and Noble website at barnesandnoble.com.

Soozan, whose parents are from the Mumbai area, has always loved to write and wanted to learn more about the religion. She has offered her help to FEZANA Journal as "a good way of teaching myself some things about Zarathushtis."

FEZANA Journal welcomes Soozan's offer, and looks forward to more pieces (book reviews, congress reports, personal profiles and more) from her.

A Commentary

By Kersey H. Antia
Orland Park, Illinois

It is surprising to find a chapter on Zarathushti women in a book describing the role of women in the Islamic world. The Sasanian empire preceded Islam by four centuries. The author, who seems to have been inspired by the loving memories of her Parsi grandmother who settled long ago in the USA, to study the religion of Zarathushtra and obtain a Ph.D. in Zoroastrian Studies, has based her findings on

Zarathushti texts, especially *Madayan i Hazar Dadestan [MHD]*, the Book of One Thousand Legal Pronouncements/Laws, as well as on Sasanian icons and art forms. MHD was compiled from the state decrees and records, case histories of Sasanian judges and legal counsels and various other sources.

The Sasanian society was patriarchal but unlike in other societies of this period, women did enjoy certain privileges. For instance, 'Kad-khuda', the male head of the household represented his family in legal matters, but if he had no adult son, 'Kad-banu', the female head of the household shared this duty after

his death with a legally-appointed male kad-khuda. The Pahlavi text, *King Khosrow and the Page* alludes to women and compares the scent of the violet to the scent of young girls, the scent of musk to that of a young bride and the scent of a white rose to that of an old woman. It tells us that the scent of noble women and that of courtesans was different, and the author concludes: "thus we learn that two distinct ranks of women existed at court." However, it is yet another illustration of the ubiquitous Zarathushti theme of good versus evil.

The text tells us that some women were excellent musicians and the best of them played 'Chang' in the royal harem. It does not begin with the most attractive physical qualities of women but asserts: "woman is the best who in her thoughts is a friend of man." Modern psychological research has shown us that the happiest of marriages come about only when husband and wife are each other's best friend. MHD even suggests that woman's education often went beyond the domestic domain and embraced scholarly reasoning and probably even the study of *Dadestan*, the law.

MHD shows how a woman outwitted a very learned and renowned lawyer by asking him questions he was too dumbfounded to answer, and then coolly consoling him: "Sir, don't burst your brains thinking of an answer. Just say 'I don't know.'"

More importantly, the founder of the Sasanian empire, Ardeshir Papakan was the head priest of the temple dedicated to Aredvisur Anahita, the water divinity, to whom the whole *Aredvisur Yasht* is dedicated and the later Sasanian kings continued to recognize her special status as a Yazata,

“ The Persepolis tablets make it abundantly clear that noblewomen could engage in trade, give orders to male officials, use their own seal and employ their own staff ... ”

one worthy of worship, which assured at least a fairly acceptable status for all women,

so unheard of in those times. The image of Anahita can also be found on some of the Sasanian coins. Moreover, a Sasanian king is depicted in the mountain reliefs at Naqsh-e-Rustom as receiving his royal crown from Anahita. What is rather strange, and very atypical of the Zarathushti tradition in Sasanian art is the depiction of the head uncovered and the hairdo being visible, drawn up above the head. But then art is art.

In another rock relief we find Anahita and Hormuzd standing on either side of the king, each investing the king with a royal crown, thus raising the status of this female yazata and therefore of women in general, unheard of in those ancient times. Throughout Sasanian reign, Anahita enjoyed a very special status, which should have augured well for the status of women on the whole, in Sasanian times, although the Zarathushti society to this day has remained rather patriarchal and the ideal of women's equality preached by Prophet Zarathushtra in the Gathas is yet to be realized fully.

The fact that Sasanian Iran was often ruled by queens speaks highly for the

status of Sasanian women, although it was far from being the ideal preached by the Prophet. The Sasanian queen Buran is even eulogized by a Muslim historian Al Tabari as "a queen who made her people happy," and "she treated her subjects well, spreading justice, minting coins and repairing stone and wooden bridges. She excused people from payment of outstanding taxes and wrote open letters to them in which she explained how she wished to do well by them" – a true representative of Anahita on this earth.

The author has done well to portray the role of Sasanian women from rather scant and disparate sources. She refrains from injecting her own subjective views on her findings or interpreting them from a modernistic or feminist point-of-view, so common lately in such research. She is neither too eulogistic nor too critical in her narration, but presents a very balanced view based on whatever scant evidence she is able to find on the subject.

It is surprising that the author has not taken into account what the Vendidad, a Sasanian scripture, has to say on the subject. But that is just as well, because the strictures on the purity laws in the Vendidad are mistakenly misinterpreted as unkind to the woman.

A brief review of the status of women in pre-Sasanian times could be helpful in setting the stage. For instance, Fortification texts from Persepolis tell us of Irdabama, a formidable woman landowner who controlled a huge workforce and ran her own wine and grain business and had more income and staff than the Achaemenian queen. They also tell us that women were often employed in the same profession as men and were paid equally and often had men working under them – something many nations do not practice even today.

Herodotus tells us Persian women acted in complete independence from their husbands, something that was unheard of in his own Greek society. The Greek writers even depict the royal women in the Achaemenian court as active protagonists who threatened the existing order thereby diminishing the king's power, though albeit they had a political motive in doing so.

The Persepolis tablets make it abundantly clear that noblewomen could freely engage in trade, give orders to male officials, use their own seal and employ their own staff to freely execute their affairs. The documents of the Babylonian firm of Murashu further confirm it.

If there is scant evidence for the Sasanians, the prevailing norm in earlier times could serve as a valuable background, since the Persians were known to keep their traditions over time. As the Bible says: "The Medes and the Persians never change." ■

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF RELIGION AND SOCIETY

Ed. William H. Swatos, Jr., Altra Mira Press, 608 pp, ~\$75.

Tel: (805) 499-9774, email: order@agepub.com, www.sagepub.com

By Rashna Ghadialy
Chicago, Illinois

This encyclopedia covers over 500 topics ranging from universal religions to 'little traditions', religious scholars, prophets and saints. A brief synopsis on Zoroastrianism, presented by Keith A. Roberts (p. 571) drawing on references from Mary Boyce's books, has also been included, which hardly does justice to the theology, history and traditions of the world's first monotheistic religion. Brief references to Zoroastrianism have been made by other authors under "Theodicy" and "Judaism".

Roberts dates the founding of the religion early in the first millennium BCE, a date which is much disputed by religious scholars. It is apparently not clear from reading the piece on Zoroastrianism whether the author considers Zarathushtis as believers of one God considering the statement: "Zoroastrianism is also sometimes called Mazdaism, after their god's name, Mazda." (Note the small 'g' for God.)

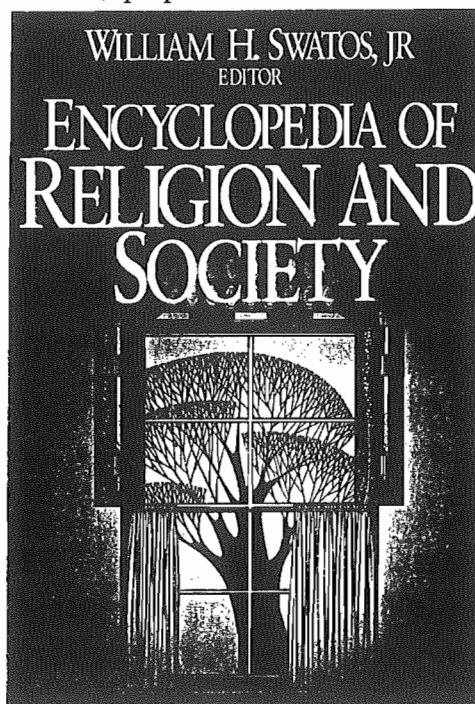
Furthermore, Roberts states: "European philosophers, from Voltaire to Nietzsche, have drawn on the works of Zarathushtra." One could only

wish that to be a true statement as often European scholars have misrepresented and made a mockery of Zarathushtra's teachings, the best example being Nietzsche's notorious work, *Thus Spake Zarathushtra*.

Roberts has also included a few sentences in which he exaggerates "doctrinal differences" between the North American Zoroastrian

associations and those in what he labels "orthodox" centers in India and Iran.

It is quite obvious from reading this piece, that Roberts has done very little research on the religion of Zarathushtra. In our continued commitment in North America, we Zarathushtis need to be vigilant, and ensure that accurate information about Zarathushtra, His religion and His followers, gets printed in books, presented in the media and portrayed in museums. ■



THE BOOK OF A THOUSAND JUDGEMENTS
(A Sasanian Law Book)

By Anahit Perikhanian, translated by Nina Garsoian

Persian Heritage Series, No. 39
ISBN 1-56859-061-X (cloth)
440 pp., 1997, \$69

Mazda Publishers, P.O.Box 2603,
Costa Mesa, CA 92626, email:
hello@mazdapub.com, Tel: (714)
751-5252, www.MazdaPub.com.

Prior to being converted to Islam in the late seventh century, Zarathushti Iran (Persia) had developed a sophisticated legal system under Sasanian rule. It possessed no formal legal code, but rather, collections of decisions and precedents that could serve as a guide to judges and others. Book of a Thousand Judgements is a unique collection of this kind and practically the single source for our knowledge of the laws that prevailed in Iran in the Sasanian period.

Not only indispensable for a knowledge of Sasanian society and Zarathushti institutions, this volume is also essential for comparative studies of Judaic and Islamic law.

Dr. Perikhanian is a Senior Research Fellow at the St. Petersburg branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences. ■

Books in the Making

Prof. Dr. Helmut Humbach and Dr. Pallan R. Ichaporia have started working on the **Concordance of the Gathas** – an epoch-making work that is planned to be published in the year 2002 CE.

The **Complete Avesta and Gathic Dictionary** is under preparation by Prof. Dr. Helmut Humbach and Dr. Pallan R. Ichaporia. It is estimated to have over 1500 pages.

The **Text and Translation with Commentary of the Difficult Chapters of Vendidad** by Dr. Pallan R. Ichaporia is in the final stages. It will be published by University of Heidelberg in the year 2000.

Bapsi Sidhwa's Cracking India

About an acclaimed author and her auto-biographical novel of life and times during the partition of India in 1947.

Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India* [Milkweed Editions, ISBN: 09159-42565, 1992] first appeared as Ice-Candy-Man, in 1988.

Set against the tumultuous backdrop of the partition of India in 1947, it is a tragic, layered tale: at one level, a triangular saga of love and betrayal, and at another, a story about the lacerating coming-of-age of an 8-year-old Parsi girl Lenny, whose idyllic life in Lahore is turned up-side-down. An unwitting spectator of the rising tension between the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, Lenny watches bewilderedly as the savage communal maelstrom engulfs the people she cares for, erases boundaries and devastates innocent lives, as twelve million people are forced to change borders in the largest migration known to history.

A selection of the Quality Paperback Book Club and a *New York Times* Notable Book, *Cracking India* received excellent reviews in the world press:

"*Cracking India* is like foraging through a tableful of discounted Swatch watches, and finding a gold Rolex ..." - *USA Today*

"Much has been written about the holocaust that followed the Partition of India in 1947. But seldom has that story been told as touchingly, as convincingly, or as horrifyingly as it has been by novelist Bapsi Sidhwa ..." - *Philadelphia Inquirer*

"In reducing the Partition to the perceptions of a polio-ridden child ... Bapsi Sidhwa has given us a memorable book." - *New York Times*

"Cracking India is one of the finest responses made to the horror of the division of the subcontinent."

- *New Yorker*

"... a writer of enormous talent, capable of endowing small domestic occurrences with cosmic drama and rendering calamitous historical events with deeply felt, personal meaning ... *Cracking India* is a lively, compelling novel, ambitiously conceived, skillfully plotted and beautifully written."

- *New York Newsday*

Dinyar Godrej [*New Internationalist*, May 1998] writes:

CRACKING " INDIA "

A NOVEL

Bapsi Sidhwa

"For me Sidhwa's book precisely captured that decisive moment in history when 'one day everybody is themselves – and the next day they are Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian', when identities that existed side-by-side get sharpened like swords against each other. It is a story that has been repeated in various attempts at genocide and ethnic cleansing the world over, and

which, in the case of India and Pakistan uprooted seven million Muslims and five million Hindus and Sikhs as they fled from massacres to cross newly-created borders ...

"She is a superb storyteller, sprinkling the book with tersely-captured vignettes, which increasingly knit together into a story of passion and betrayal, 'the unscrupulous nature of desire' and 'the pitiless face of love'.

"Sidhwa's narrator is Lenny, a Parsi girl with a 'truth-infected tongue' who turns eight on the day partition is announced. Lame in one foot and indulged by her reasonably well-off parents, Lenny is ferried around



Bapsi Sidhwa with actor Aamir Khan, who stars as Ice-Candy-man in *Earth*, the film adaptation of *Cracking India*. [More about *Earth* on page 8]

Lahore by her beloved Hindu Ayah (nanny) whose 'spherical attractions' draw a varied group of suitors eager to dispense ice-lollies, silk doilies, massages and other gifts.

"With her throng of characters, Sidhwa paints a microcosm of Pakistan society, filtered through Lenny's irreverent and innocent eye which values people regardless of their social standing and rejoices in their lusts and longings. Born into the tiny Parsi community, Lenny is outside the communal frenzy that follows, but emotionally torn by the violence engulfing her friends.

"The vortex of violence that soon follows sucks up Ayah and her Muslim admirer Ice-Candy-Man just as it rips apart other lives ... As men lose their senses, raping, killing and looting, women reveal their strengths, building links across the divided communities, sheltering survivors, insisting on continuity."

About the author. Bapsi Sidhwa, who lives in Houston, Texas and travels frequently to her native Pakistan, is a distinguished international

writer whose works have been translated into French, German and Russian. She has published four novels: *An American Brat*, *Cracking India* (Ice-Candy-Man in England), *The Bride*, *The Crow Eaters*, and several short stories and essays.

In 1991, Sidhwa received the *Sitara-i-Imtiaz*, Pakistan's highest national honor in the arts and, in 1994, the prestigious \$105,000 Lila Wallace Reader's Digest Writer's Award. Among other awards she has received the *LiBeraturepreis* in Germany, a *Bunting Fellowship* at Radcliffe/Harvard, and a *National Endowment of the Arts Fellowship*.

Sidhwa was on the advisory committee to Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan on Women's Development and represented Pakistan at the Asian Women's Conference. She has taught at Columbia University, University of Houston and Mount Holyoke College, and currently holds the Fanny Hurst position in Creative Writing at Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts. ■

- Compiled by Roshan Rivetna

Destiny . . . is not a matter of chance, it is a matter of choice. It is not a thing to be waited for; it is a thing to be achieved.

- William Jennings Bryan

Videos Available

Proceedings of the 1998 North American Zoroastrian Congress, held in New York in July 1998, are available:

- Tape 1: Opening, Sessions I, II
- Tape 2: Awards Lunch, Session III
- Tape 3: Sessions IV, V
- Tape 4: Sessions VI, VII
- Tape 5: Sessions VIII, Closing

Cost: \$10 per tape or \$40 for the set of 5 plus \$3 mailing.

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New and Revised ZARATHUSHTIS IN NORTH AMERICA (Directory and Yellow Pages) PUBLISHED BY FEZANA

2nd Edition
1998

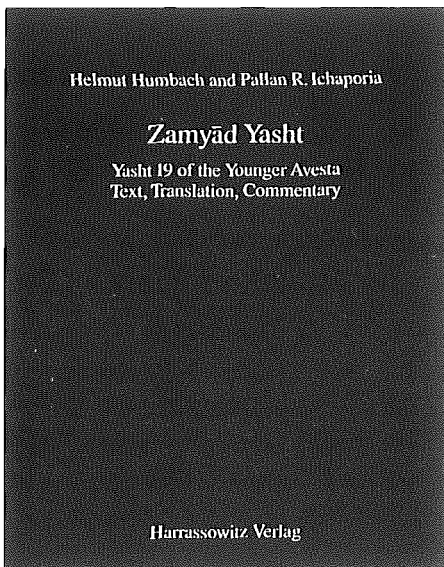
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This new, complete study of the Zamyad Yasht is the result of the now established collaboration of two scholars representing different traditions, the eminent German Iranist Professor Dr. Helmut Humbach and the learned Parsi scholar Dr. Pallan R. Ichaporia, both familiar names to the educated readership of FEZANA.

In 1994, together they published *The Heritage of Zarathushtra*, an English translation of a revision of Professor Humbach's *Die Gathas des Zarathushtra* [1959] with the addition of the Yasna Haptanghaiti. While this latter work contains some introductory material to serve as a guide to the reader, it is basically a text-and-translation book with only the tersest notes. In contrast their Zamyad Yasht contains an introduction, transliterated text, translation and very extensive notes which serve to lead the reader through the long and difficult Yasht. In addition there is a bibliography and a very useful glossary of the Avestan words occurring in the text.



Non-specialist readers may be slightly confused about the transliteration system used. This system is of Karl Hoffman which is a modification of Chr. Bartholomae, with which most are familiar, with some changes (in the middle of a word y = ii and v = uu, etc.) For example *masyaka*

ZAMYAD YASHT

YASHT 19 OF THE YOUNGER AVESTA TEXT, TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY

By Helmut Humbach and Pallan R. Ichaporia

Weisbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1998



Humbach and Ichaporia: working on their translations.

(‘man’) is spelled *masiika*. While it may take a little getting used to, the purpose is to represent more accurately the fine nuances of the sophisticated Avestan script.

In writing their study of the Zamyad Yasht the authors have been faithful to the service of two communities: one is the scholarly community for which the work conforms to the highest standards; and the other is the community of non-specialists, especially the informed and vitally interested readership among Zarathushtis. Thus the introduction and translation have been made as accessible as possible to the non-specialist, while the commentary has been written specially for scholars. However, I should encourage all readers not to ignore the commentary, for it contains a wealth of information.

Quite apart from the quality of the translation, the authors are to be commended for their attention to the Iranian traditions which can be traced in the Yasht. Whereas most Western

scholars have paid particular attention to comparative study of language and culture from the Indo-Iranian and Indo-European perspective, Humbach and Ichaporia have taken great pains to search out thoroughly all traditions of the Yasht recorded in the Pahlavi books which, in their present form, are ninth century reflections of late Sasanid learning. By taking this approach they are able to show how the Yasht itself represents but a fragment of far more extensive traditions long lost in the original Avestan, but preserved in Pahlavi. For example, there are short allusions to the Kerespaspa legend in the Yasht. If one takes the trouble to consult the commentary, one is rewarded by finding further citations (with text and translations) from other Avestan passages as well as from Pahlavi and the Sanskrit of Neriosangh.

It is inevitable that in respect to an ancient text of this size and complexity scholars will have reservations about particular readings or etymologies suggested by the authors. I, for

example, am not convinced that the name of the Yasht 'Zamyad' derives from the Avestan 'zemo hudhata', as the authors argue. But these are matters that would test the patience of most readers of this review. Suffice it to say that Zamyad Yasht is a book that should find its place on the shelves of all Zarathushtis who are serious enough to want to study the great textual legacy that is part of their heritage. ■

My Simple Book of Zoroastrianism

This colorful 65-page children's book by Lorraine N. Moos, has glossy illustrations with chapters on the story of creation, spiritual concepts, the life and teachings of Zarathushtra, history, the Navjote, sudreh and kushti, as well as basic prayers with translations and a section on songs. It makes an excellent course-book for children's religious classes. Order for \$10 from The Zoroastrian Shop, 7 Fox Hollow Road, Voorhees, NJ 08043, Tel: (609) 768-8351.

On the Web

Vohuman.Org – A Web Journal on Zarathushti Heritage

A page from the new web site. The goal of this quarterly web-journal is to provide well-researched information about the universal and ever-refreshing message of Prophet Zarathushtra.



The gold roundle features a common Persian motif: a lion, with wings and goats' horns, half turned.

A new web site dedicated to Zarathushti heritage is born at:

<http://www.vohuman.org>

At the dawn of the 21st century, the Good Religion is capturing the imagination of more and more people all over the world. The instant and ever-expanding communication capability that the Internet provides, now makes it possible to instantly reach even the remotest area of the globe, and gives us an opportunity to present our religion in an unbiased, objective and true form to anyone who is interested.

Vohuman.org will feature articles and slide shows on Zarathushti places, prominent Zarathushtis and book reviews, and keep track of events of interest to Zarathushtis of the world. We will also provide information/links to other Zarathushti journals. Shortly, we will have sound and video streaming, as well as discussion groups and Farsi text for the site. Send your comments and suggestions to Jamshid Varza: varza@rocksoftcorp.com or to K. Eddie Mehrfar: emehrfar@shl.com.

Arda Viraf Nameh and Dante's Inferno

According to Martin Haug, the Arda Viraf Nameh bears a striking resemblance to Dante's Inferno.

The 9th century Pahlavi book *Arda Viraf Nameh* (or *Artay Viraz Namek*) is regarded as a mythical account by many scholars, of a pious man's journey to heaven and hell. Notwithstanding that fact, it is held in very high esteem by Zarathushtis on account of the morality which it preaches. It gives a vivid and impressive account of what he saw in heaven and hell and how the heavenly tribunal dispenses justice, in keeping with the Gathic precept of good unto the doers of good and bad unto the doers of bad.

There is also an account of 'hamestagan' or purgatory for those whose bad and good deeds are in equal balance. The precise date of Arda Viraf is a matter of dispute, but it is gener-

ally accepted to be in the early Sasanian period.

The *Arda Viraf Nameh* is believed to be the source of many similar works in many other traditions including Islam. The Ascension of the Prophet Isaiah of the Old Testament contains an account of the heavenly regions, which corresponds to that given by Arda Viraf in Chapters XII-XV about the souls of pious Zarathushtis.

According to Dr. Martin Haug, the account of the infernal regions given by Arda Viraf bears a striking resemblance to that in Dante's Inferno. The Italian poet Dante Alighieri finished his epic poem around 1314 CE, giving an account of his imaginary journey through hell (il Inferno), purgatory (il Purgatorio) and heaven (il Paradiso).

He named the poem *La Commedia Divinia* – the Divine Comedy, because it ends happily in heaven.

Like the *Arda Viraf Nameh*, it is a sermon designed to show the rewards and penalties meted out after death as the result of one's behavior in life. A close comparison of the two works was presented in the form of a scholarly paper titled "Dante and Viraf" by Shams-ul-Ulama Jivanji J. Modi, read before the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, on February 26, 1892.

[From *Arda Viraf Nameh* by Kaikhushru Dastur Jamaspji, compiled by Keki B. Shroff for the Informal Study Group on Zoroastrian Religion and History, Toronto, Canada, September 1997].

On Dualism, Nirang and the Vendidad

This article is in response to certain articles in FEZANA Journal [Winter 1997 and Spring 1998] and to Cowsie Malva's letter entitled *God is Omnipotent, not Impotent* [Winter 1997].

The pre-Gathic religion of Iran is the compilation of the religious thought of many men and many ages, while Zarathushtra's religion is the creation of one man and one age. Zarathushtra lived nearly 3,700 years ago and is universally acknowledged to be the first to establish a strict 'monistic' [1] religion and philosophy of an ethical religion. The Zarathushti religion is characteristically the religion of justice. Zarathushtra was the first man who conceived that the creator had a holistic, divine plan. He was the first prophet who broke with the lawlessness of the past and intensely preached an ethical faith, for all mankind.

Zarathushtra rebelled against a formalistic and ritualistic pre-Gathic religion to which he belonged, and affirmed the value of inward religiosity as well as the right of the individual to resist previously established tradition. Zarathushtra was the greatest of all pioneer prophets who showed man the freedom of moral choice, freedom from blind obedience to unmeaning injunctions and freedom from multiplicity of shrines in contrast to the clear monism of the Gathas.

Perhaps Zarathushtra had the prophetic vision of the powerful influences of pre-Zarathushtra nature-gods on the vedic oriented priests; of the destruction of his scriptures and of the Zarathushti empire in the millennia to follow; of the influence of powerful Christian,

Muslim and Hindu religions on his followers; of the misreading and misinterpretation of his own Gathas by priests and scholars, both Zarathushti and non-Zarathushti; and the conflicts and distress of a waning community in the 20th century. That is why he forewarned his followers to oppose the false prophets and evil preachers who would attempt to destroy his holy hymns and his objective of mankind acquiring a perfect and progress mentality, Vohu Manah [Ys. 32.9]. He, therefore, urged his followers to exercise good judgment, make right choices and not be misled by self-important preachers.

The source of our guidance is essentially the Gathas of Prophet Zarathushtra. The Gathas are the only element in the entire corpus of Zarathushti scriptures that both directly and authoritatively can be attributed as the impassioned outpourings of the prophet himself. All other Avestan writings were written after Zarathushtra's lifetime, some by thousands of years. Therefore, giving such writings equal status with the Gathas or counting them as scriptures is absurd. Thus, any later efforts discordant with the Gathas, should be most carefully weighed and if deemed contradictory or incongruous, rejected.

Regarding dualism in the Gathas, it is advisable to understand the meaning of certain terms used. 'Spenta' means progressive or incremental. 'Mainyu' is mentality (or spirit or mind). 'Spenta Mainyu', thus, is progressive mentality. 'Angra' is evil (or hostile or retarded). 'Angra Mainyu' is mentioned in the Gathas once. Spenta Mainyu is mentioned 16 times. There is no mention at all of any struggle or battle with Angra Mainyu. In the Gathas [Ys. 37.3, 45.15] Ahura Mazda actively is continuing, promoting and advancing

the universe's progress. Ahura Mazda is 'Spento Temo', i.e. most progressive. There is no indication of His being locked in battle with the so-called adversary Angra Mainyu as mythically and pictorially presented in the *Vendidad*.

The religion of Zarathushtra does not have duality of lordship. Angra Mainyu is not the opponent of Ahura Mazda but rather of Spenta Mainyu. The qualities of wisdom and intellect are strategic foundations of the religion of Zarathushtra. A reading of the Gathic chapters elucidates that Zarathushtra expounded in the most pure form (uncontaminated by later Avesta and Pahlavi thought) of an external battle, between good and evil to capture the mind of man. This battle is not cosmic between two elementary principles, rather, it is ethical and presently within both the human mind and society. It has been so from the time of Gayomard (the first human created).

It is most unfortunate that over two thousand years later, in the 9th century CE, the Bundahishn, a Pahlavi book mistakenly regarded as a work of Zarathushtra, referred to the two opposing twins as 'Ahura Mazda' and 'Ahriman' which led to an incorrect interpretation by Greek philosophers to regard the religion of Zarathushtra as a form of dualism. In the Avesta, Ahura Mazda combines with Spenta Mainyu to become 'Ohrmazd', thus creating the opposite to Ahriman, the personified evil spirit. From this time on, the supreme principal, the God standing above good and evil, was replaced by dualism. A reaction set in with Zurvanism (a corrupt and deviant/deviated form of the Zarathushti religion).

Zarathushti theology is centered around one God ('apaorim Mazdam'). In *Ahunavaiti Gatha* [Ys. 34.7] we read: "In truth, I don't know any other than you, so protect us." In *Zarathushtra's Gathas*, *Ahura Mazda is the one and only supreme God, the lord of wisdom, the creator of the universe and mankind, the law giver, the judge,*

[1] For the difference between 'monistic' and 'monotheistic', see *The Religion of Zarathushtra is not Monotheism* by Soonoo Engineer, FEZANA Journal, Spring 1998.

the omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. There are no other gods or angels. Zarathushtra's universal religion is for all mankind and for all time. The application of individual intelligence and choice has to be related to changing societies as best suited to the needs of the times.

It is sad to see, after 3,500 years, for one reason or another, a great deal of confusion prevailing over this misunderstanding (i.e. dualism). Some so-called scholars and priests, even in this decade and at the time of this writing, are publicly proclaiming that Ahura Mazda is not all powerful or all pure, otherwise how could he have tolerated an original spirit like Ahriman to prevail? One feels ashamed at the religious knowledge of these so-called scholars, since they have failed to absorb the true spirit of the original Gathas, by voluntarily and casually accepting as equally sacred, the later-day writings and using these to undo Zarathushtra's pure monism. If they would only open their minds to an in-depth reading of the Gathas, their misconceptions would vanish.

We should bear in mind that western scholars, versed in the science of comparative philology, have translated the Gathas in various ways. Reading different versions made by various scholars results in no two translations completely agreeing, because each scholar brings to his or her translation personal biases. In all these western translations, there are two common factors: (1) the European bias and (2) Christian preconceptions. Both clearly are present in greater or lesser degree in every version by western scholars.

Our religion was pure and simple as conceived by Zarathushtra, but we have failed to sustain its pristine purity. Ravages of time, rape of the scriptures, foreign-influenced recombinations (e.g. Greek, Vedic), new concepts and ideas added by successor high priests (in the name of Zarathushtra), re-adaptation of pre-Zarathushti deities, heavy commercialization and ritualization of

religion by theocracy of Sasanians and later by Dasturs under Sanskrit influences, have all combined to hand down to us a very diluted form of the original religion.

For example, the use of 'nirang' (consecrated bull's urine) and the Bareshnum ceremony, though absolutely repugnant to Zarathushtra along with other such ideas and condemned by Mobed e Mobed Zatspram in the 9th century CE, unfortunately still continues. According to the Gathas, Yasna and later in the Avesta, water is the only consecrating and purifying agent. Even the *Vendidad* deems urine as impious excretion.

Herzfeld [as quoted by J. E. Sanjana in *Zoroaster and His World*, Bombay, and delivered at a lecture at the J. N. Petit Institute in 1947] has correctly stated that the basic teachings of Zarathushtra were unlike the Magianism of the *Vendidad*. The *Vendidad*, written by Magians, had been forced on Iran by the semi-barbarous Parthian Empire. Thus, the *Vendidad* had taken the place of a noble and simple religion and it is in no part a scripture of the Zarathushti religion.

Herzfeld conclusively showed that the gross and barbarous teachings of the *Vendidad* have nothing to do with Zarathushtra's religion of truth, light, physical and spiritual purity. The filth of bull's urine or the savagery of exposure of the dead, were unknown to the religion as practiced by the great Achaemenid Iranians.

I acknowledge and am gratefully indebted to the following authors: Dr. Irach J. S. Taraporewala, *The Divine Songs of Zarathushtra*; H. B. M. Homji, *Zoroastrianism: Contemporary Perception of Ancient Wisdom*; Maneckji Nusservanji Dhalla, *History of Zoroastrianism*; Mobed P. Azargoshasb, *Gathas of Zarathushtra*; Mobed Rostam Shahzadi, *Gathas of Zarathushtra*; Mohandes Jalal Ashtiani, *Zarthusht, Mazdayasna and Government*; Ali A. Jafarey, *Stot Yasn: The Gathic Part of the Avesta*.

B. Nadjmi, M.D., F.A.C.S.
Lincoln, Rhode Island

Recognizing an Old Scout

I happened to chance upon an issue of FEZANA Journal on Coming to North America [Spring 1997] and found it very informative.

I recognized one of the "unidentified" persons in the photo of a group of Parsi students in New York in 1947 [page 33] as one of our oldest scouts in the 100th Bombay Scout Group, Dinshaw Mehta. His elder brother Minoo, a cub master, migrated to UK years ago, but met with an accident. His brother Farokh used to play the harmonica in our concerts. Another brother Rohinton lives in Bombay. Dinshaw lives in New York but visits India every couple of years, and I had the occasion to meet him earlier this year.

Bahadur Palkhiwalla
Dadar, Mumbai

[Another "old scout" from the 100th Bombay Scout Group, Rohinton Rivetna, recalls with gratitude, the leadership provided by Scoutmaster Bahadur Palkhiwalla as well as by Cubmaster Jal Khan. Under their dedicated leadership, for about half a century, and the guidance provided by its founder, Ardeshir Homavazir, Dadar Parsi Colony's 100th Bombay Group became a hallmark in scouting. Many of their alumnus have since, migrated to the USA, Canada, UK and elsewhere, each serving their communities well, with the values and work ethics imbibed during the early scouting days. - Ed]

Resolution by State of California

You have made the community, and the great legacy of Asho Zarathushtra, very proud by printing the New Year Resolution passed by US Senator John Lewis of the State of California, in FEZANA Journal [Summer 1998].

As you can see, the proof and events in history are there – convincing, immutable and so remarkable that even the highest office in this country

has no hesitation in recognizing the great and pervasive influence of the Zarathushti emperors with Zarathushti values. This is our identity, our contribution, which cannot be dwarfed by the ever alarming cries of "diminishing numbers." The contribution to all religions, cultures and philosophies is truly gigantic.

The pursuit of this resolution was two-fold: (a) To evolve a sense of identity, particularly for the younger generation, so that they are able to find a connection, a common thread to the western world; and (b) to quell the insults perpetuated by the horror film Wishmaster.

May Ahura Mazda grant strength and light to other Zarathushtis in other US and Canadian states, to bring attention to this sense of identity to senators and law makers. This will enable us to get recognition on a national scale.

Sam Billimoria
Irvine, California

On the Need for a World Body

Dr. Rashna Writer [*FEZANA Journal Summer 1998*] writes about giving testimony in a UK court that helped avert the deportation of an Iranian co-religionist. She must be complimented greatly for doing so. She is also right when she concludes that our Zarathushti global community needs a world body to communicate and deal with national governments and world organizations to represent and protect Zarathushti interests and rights in a changing world.

It is my understanding that our world body, the WZO, has been doing that ever since our global community created it some 18 years ago. Dr. Writer advocates a new world body of associations and federations to do the same work, because "WZO remains to prove itself in this regard, arguably, because it does not have the requisite mandate."

The first activity which WZO undertook on its creation, was indeed to

prevent the deportation to Iran of our co-religionists fleeing from the excesses of the Khomeini revolution. As hundreds of them can testify, it was WZO's concerted intervention across national boundaries with governments such as Canada, UK, USA, France, Germany and Scandinavian countries and with the UN High Commission for Refugees in Geneva, that led to the issue of visas and permits which allowed them to make new lives for themselves in such western countries.

Any research into WZO's activities should lead one to discover its subsequent intervention with other governments. Rights, property, safety and even wrongful imprisonment of Zarathushtis have been successfully dealt with time and again, by intervening with governments in India, Japan, Malta, Pakistan and UK. These actions were obviously taken quietly and without publicity by WZO, as they should be. I commend Dr. Writer for what she did in UK, but I strongly believe that had she approached WZO they would have been more than willing to provide a similar testimony to the UK Home Office on behalf of the young Zarathushti refugee. I do not feel that this isolated case warrants the plea for the creation of a second world body of Zarathushti associations and federations.

WZO's effectiveness in working with governments has recently saved a Zarathushti, who was charged by the Iranian secret police with being a spy, from even possible execution. In this case, a strategy to deal effectively with the Iranian government was forged right here in the US by key WZO trustees, who undertook quiet discussions at the highest levels in Iran. President Rafsanjani sent a signal indicating that the case be reviewed, and in September 1997, this Pakistani-Zarathushti was returned to his family.

WZO is clearly serving our global community very well in its dealings with governments, as in many other areas of its mandate. When our

existing world body is doing so, let us coalesce together – associations, federations like FEZANA and FPZAI, and individuals – to strengthen it in all possible ways, not undercut it by trying to create yet another one to do a part of its work. As Dr. Writer herself concludes, that "cannot bode well for our future."

Jimmy Dholoo
Gaithersburg, Maryland

[WZO's excellent achievements in the global socio-economic and welfare arena have been amply recognized and continue to be supported by all. There is, however, general recognition that WZO is not a representative body and does not have the mandate to make policy and strategy decisions on behalf of the world community – hence the proposal for a Council of Federations (WCZF), to complement and not supplement WZO.]

But this WZO-WCZF debate has now turned into a dialog. For the past year WZO (Rumi Sethna) and proponents of WCZF (Rohinton Rivetna) have been working together, to accommodate the Council of Federations within a re-structured WZO - Ed]

A clarification

Please accept my compliments for publishing such an informative journal. I always find it interesting to read about Zarathushtis spread all over the world.

In the account of the Eleventh North American Zoroastrian Congress [*FEZANA Journal, Fall 1998*] a sentence caused me some concern and I would like to clarify some facts. The article mentions that Kersey Antia "... received death threats for trying to perform an interfaith marriage." Two clarifications are needed – one is factual and the other is implied.

Firstly, the marriage Dr. Antia performed was not "interfaith" since both the bride and groom are Zarathushtis and both of them had their navjotes performed according to our rituals. The father of the groom, however, is a non-Zarathushti.

Secondly, Kersey Antia performed the wedding according to Zarathushti rites and did not accede to a request from the groom's family to perform a second non-Zarathushti wedding ceremony. Eventually the couple had only a Zarathushti wedding. I applaud Dr. Antia for the courage of his convictions.

*Aban Aspy Daboo
Woodridge, Illinois*

President of India – a Tata Scholar

I am enclosing a cutting from the Calcutta Gavashni [August 1997]. Being a Tata Scholar myself, I got a kick out of it, and your other readers might too.

"About sixty years ago a Kerala village family had difficulty in scraping together the school fees for their son. He was, however, an exceptionally brilliant boy who won a Tata scholarship on merit. The Parsi lady in charge of the educational section, not only arranged his passage but even outfitted him for the alien milieu at the London School of Economics. The great philanthropic family of Bombay could not have foreseen that this underprivileged villager to whom they were extending their helping hand would one day become President of India, none other than K. R. Narayanan."

*Sorab K. Ghandhi
Escondido, California*

Wizards and Sorcerers

On performing a search on the Internet bookstore amazon.com with the keyword 'Zoroaster', the second "top match" result which came up was the book: *Wizards and Sorcerers: From Abracadabra to Zoroaster* by Tom Ogden.

A review of the book indicates that it is a reference volume on "witchcraft and the occult", "an encyclopedia of the strange". The reviewer goes on: "Tom provides an eclectic mix of magic references from literature, art, music, theater, television and movies ... And besides, any book that includes references to both Mr.

Mxztptlk and the Mighty Morphin Power Rangers can't be bad ..."

I suggest, as followers of Asho Zarathushtra, we register our outrage in large numbers at the author and publishers for defiling the name of our Prophet so flippantly.

We must do everything we can to improve the knowledge base about our religion and the image of our prophet which exists in the outside world.

*Kourosh Soroushian
ksh@c-cube.com*

Researching architecture of Yazd and Bastak

Enclosed is a request from a researcher at the University of California. If anyone can provide the information he is looking for, please contact me.

"I am a researcher, mainly studying the architecture of Yazd and Bastak, in Iran. I am particularly interested in finding out where the Bastaki Zarathushtis settled in India after they fled their native land to escape Muslim persecution.

"I read a book published in Bastak which states that when the Bastaki Zarathushtis left, they settled in some village in India. They named the mountains, the rivers, the same names as they had used in Bastak. It is possible that they took some of the architectural techniques with them as well.

"Bastak is my main area of interest, but I would also like to know where the groups of Zarathushtis who fled from Yazd, Mubalakeh, Kerman and Astaneh, settled in India. I believe that each group settled in a certain region and maintained their own cultures, at least for some time.

"My main areas of research are 'bad-girs' (air catchers), 'ab-ambar' (cisterns), 'yakhchal' (ice houses) and four-seasonal housing in Yazd, Bastak, Kashan and Kerman ... I have photographs of some tablets on top of cisterns in Yazd. The people who created these tablets used the Persian

alphabet. The only word I can decipher is Ahura Mazda – the rest of the words are unfamiliar to me.

"I would like to contact someone who can help in translating these writings, or who may have any old photographs, old texts or any other information to share."

*Maneck Bhujwala
San Jose, California*

On recent Issues

It is wonderful to see that the recent issues of FEZANA Journal are dedicated to one topic per issue and the topics are covered in depth and from so many different writers' angles.

The Navjote issue, I think most mothers will enjoy keeping for a long while. The issue on the Gathas (with Guest Editor Yezdi Rustomji) was very informative as also the one on Zarathushti Spirituality (with Guest Editor Jehan Bagli). We in Karachi, heard Dr. Bagli some years ago when he was invited by our dynamic Toxy Cowasjee to enlighten the community about the unified calendar. His scholarly discourse was a treat for my husband Farrokh and me.

Your achievements in producing FEZANA Journal are remarkable and also a great service to the community.

*Sunnu Golwalla
Karachi, Pakistan*

Congratulations to Guest Editor Jehan Bagli, Editor-in-Chief Roshan Rivetna and Publications Chair Rustom Kevala for the splendid production of the Summer 1998 issue of FEZANA Journal (on Zarathushti Spirituality) ...

*Jal N. Birdy
Corona, California*

I just read the latest FEZANA magazine you put together. As usual you have done an outstanding job. Just a short note to convey my thanks for the fine editing job you did in regards to the article on my recent work ...

*Rusi Taleyarkhan
Knoxville, Tennessee*

On the Mobeds Issue

The Fall 1998 issue of the Journal gave a very insightful overview of the depth of services provided by the volunteer mobeds of North America. The community owes these dedicated gentlemen tremendous gratitude for fulfilling their spiritual needs ...

These senior mobeds are now being supported by a new cadre of junior mobeds who have trained in North America and undergone their navar ceremonies in India. These young mobeds who will be serving the community independently very soon, need to be singled out and their dedication acknowledged. Guest Editor Ervad Jal Birdy did feature some of the new generation mobeds, however I would like to mention four more.

Ervad Dr. Zubin Jal Panthaki, a talented plastic surgeon in Montreal, Ervad Zubin Phiroz Dastoor, a mechanical engineer in Virginia, Ervad Mazda Antia, a law student at Northwestern University, who recently underwent his martab ceremony in India, and Ervad Farzad Faredoon Mirza, a young high school student in Toronto. In fact, to the best of my knowledge, Ervad Dastoor is the first generation mobed who got married last year in Canada, wearing his prestigious priestly 'paghdi'. Both the Zubins trained together in Montreal under Ervad Kersi Bhedwar and Ervad Jehan Bagli, and underwent the navar ceremony at the Rustomfaramna Agiary in Dadar, so did young Ervad Farzad. I'm sure there must be other young mobeds hidden in different parts of North America whom we also need to acknowledge and appreciate.

*Dolly Dastoor
Brossard, Quebec*

Ervad Jal Birdy has done an excellent job of highlighting the lives of our North American mobeds. However, the individuals featured in your Fall 1998 issue are but a sample, as there are many other well-qualified and respected mobeds serving our community.

I would like to recognize the services of two very active and extremely respected mobeds serving us in Northern California. We are fortunate to have Ervad Jimmy Makujina in San Jose, who despite his illness, continues to serve selflessly. Ervad Kobad Jamshed, who is also a trustee of ZANC, is the main mobed performing religious ceremonies in the area.

*Mehran Sepehri
Mountain View, California*

At the outset, editor Roshan Rivetna and I had estimated that we should limit the profiles to about 30 mobeds to provide a proper balance of articles. Knowing that many worthy mobeds would be left out, we acknowledged this fact in the preamble to the profiles [p. 29], saluting *all* mobeds, whether their profiles were published or not. If, despite this, we have hurt anyone's feelings, we most humbly apologize. In fact, we finally ended up publishing 51 profiles, selected based on the following criteria that I, as guest editor, had defined:

- (1) Current NAMC mobeds (29 profiles, 2 declined recognition)
 - (2) All Iranian mobeds. (Four replied – one later withdrew.)
 - (3) Young and second generation mobeds whom I could identify (14 profiles).
 - (4) Mobeds who have been NAMC members in the past (9 profiles).
 - (5) Cross-section of mobeds across the continent.
 - (6) My own personal contacts.
- Mobeds who have chosen to marry outside the community have not been considered. This is because I consider practicing mobeds to serve as role models and their decision to marry out portrays an ultimate betrayal of our community ...

*Jal N. Birdy
Guest Editor, Fall 1998*

Pocha Family

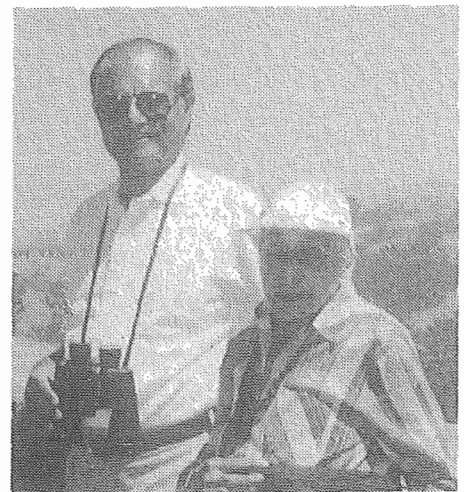
I am writing because I would very much like to get in touch with the writer of the article about "Genetics or Religion" [FEZANA Journal

Spring 1998], Jehangir Pocha. He has the same name as my eldest son who lives in Colorado, and it is possible that we may be distantly related.

The last name Pocha is not very common among the Parsis of Mumbai; and I am interested in finding out where Mr. Pocha's family comes from. My late husband Dhun Maneck Pocha had only three or four first cousins, who are now deceased. I am wondering if Mr. Pocha could be from another branch of the family.

*Mrs. Gerty D. Pocha
Livermore, California*

[We were sorry to hear that shortly after Mrs. Pocha wrote this letter to FEZANA Journal, her son, Jehangir, aged 63, passed away, in Denver, of complications from diabetes. Photo below shows 91-year-old Gerty Pocha with Jehangir - Ed.]



Message from Tehran Kankash-e Mobedan

We write to thank you for having us on the mailing list of your esteemed Journal and to express our appreciation for all that you are doing for the community. It is a great pleasure to note that you have introduced a Farsi language section and we are looking forward to seeing its contents become as diversified as your main Journal.

The Tehran Kankash-e Mobedan supervises the other Anjumans of Iran. Some of our activities are:

- Instruction, guidance and help to practicing mobeds and mobedyars in

the performance and authorization of different religious ceremonies.

● Attending to religious queries from Zarathushtis and others.

● Heralding each and every Gahambar by recitation of Yasna and Vaj Yashte Gahambars.

The present Board of Directors, elected by mobed families consists of the following mobeds: *President and Chairman*: Mobed Rostam Shahzadi; *Vice-president*: Mobed K. Mazdayasni; *Treasurer*: Mobed B. Behikish; *Secretary*: Miss Mahin Shid; *Inspector*: Mobed M. Khorshidian; *Consultant*: Mobed J. Oshidary.

We pray to Ahura Mazda to bless you with success in the great work that you have undertaken in enhancing Zarathushti harmony and unity.

*Mobed Rostam Shahzadi, Chairman
Tehran Kankash-e Mobedan*

From Uzbekistan

Greetings. We are members of Zarathushtrian Mazdayasni Anjuman of Uzbekistan. You sent us your wonderful and beautiful FEZANA Journal, and we like it very much and take a great interest in it ...

Thanks very much!

*Rustom Abdukamilov
Tashkent, Uzbekistan*

Recognizing our Responsibilities

I have been contemplating writing to FEZANA Journal for some time now. What I want to express needs some time (which I have little of) to explain my worries and thoughts without coming across as just another complainer.

The reflections of the sun in raindrops are rare but so beautiful that when seen they are remembered for a long time if not forever. To me, we few Zarathushtis left on this earth, are such rarities. We can reflect our precious heritage, extensive history and rich culture, or lose it all in the mud.

Just as the songs of our ancestors call upon us to be true and honorable, this

pressure to be, if not perfect, at least faultless, intensifies. Also intensified are our demands of our few and limited publications and public speakers, a task that might seem to be impossible.

We feel the pressure and sometimes wonder if it is better just to be quiet and leave it all to others. But then there is the option of communicating clearly and being understanding of the points of view of other Zarathushtis.

Our religion and culture is so rich that we can write and talk about various aspects of it for years and years. Such topics can include papers and popular writings by scholars, their round table discussions on various topics, the scientific and philosophical outcomes of various religious meetings such as the Gatha series.

Further writings may include the impact of Zarathushtra and the religion through different geographical regions and on other languages and traditions of the present and past (extinct cultures), the importance of such changes and their impacts on various events through history. Further, we can all gain by learning about the contributions of fellow Zarathushtis to science and philosophy and other subjects.

Such discussions bring us together and bring self-esteem to the younger generation and strengthen the value of keeping alive the traditions, the language and the culture. But to see even one article like "Charles, King of Zoroastrians" or "Agassi the Tennis Player is Zoroastrian" is too much. To read such Inquirer tabloid-type articles is so demoralizing, so insulting and so distasteful, one would wish the publication did not exist.

A publication that takes on such an important task (as publication of the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America), of being the voice of Zarathushtis, must recognize the immense responsibility it is taking on. The responsibilities of being useful, positive, motivating and thought-provoking for the community, in appreciation of the religion and its depths, the culture and its

strengths and the existing community and its needs.

The duties of such publications are not just to the present generation but they are also responsible in keeping the honor of past generations and their sacrifices, that which is handed down to us, and constantly re-examining what is being passed on to the next generation through such writings and communication.

I hope I have not offended anyone and furthermore, I hope to hear what other readers and writers of FEZANA Journal think.

*Mehrnaz Jamzadeh
Sunnyvale, California*

The Last Blow

Zarathushtis have gone through centuries of hardship and persecution, not only by foreign invaders, but also by proxy governments who were not of Iranian stock or were puppets of the Arabs. Their history is fragmented like pieces of a huge jigsaw puzzle. Bits and pieces put together carries a different meaning and interpretation by different scholars and the faithful alike.

During the Achaemenian dynasty the kings were practicing Zarathushtis. So were most of the Persians. Until the first blow was inflicted by Alexander of Macedonia in 331 BCE. His army ravaged the country, killed civilians, burned all the libraries and looted their treasures. The priests and intellectuals had to rewrite what they remembered. It took almost 500 years to gain its influence back and become, once again, the official state religion, by Ardeshir Papakan, founder of the Sasanian dynasty. The Zarathushti religion reached its pinnacle during the next four hundred years of the Sasanian period.

Then the devastating and everlasting second blow came, in 634 CE, when the neighboring Arabs invaded Persia and brought their new religion, Islam. The people were forced to accept Islam. The Zarathushti fire temples, libraries, palaces, national monuments, and religious books

were all burned, to be replaced by the Koran. The new converts were to adopt Arabic names and the Arabic language was to replace Pahlavi as the official language. That is why Aveceena, Razi, Al-Kharazmi (the Father of Algebra) to name a few, are known as Arabian scientists, though they were all Iranian.

By the time the Persians woke up from this humiliating defeat, it was too late to do anything. The Arabs had control of every establishment. Not too long after that, many Persians converted back to their Zarathushti religion. However, the Arabs seeing Islam being threatened, carried out a massive massacre against Iranians and proclaimed a ban on any conversion by a Zarathushti priest.

Thus at that time, the seed of no proselytization was sown. During the 200 years of brutal Arab domination, they were closely watching that no rules were being broken. They would even punish the Iranian Muslims who were sympathetic to Zarathushtis. Ever worse, during the Ommayyed period they declared that Arabs were the superior race and the Aryan Persians were of inferior race, and had to work under them like slaves.

It was during the period from 800 to 900 CE that many Behdins fled to India, and came later to be known as the Parsis. These Zarathushtis had paid a huge price. They had been taught not to proselytize in Persia; this was reinforced by the Hindu Rajah of India as one of the several conditions under which they were given sanctuary in the country.

This dogma was so rigidly followed that even when their children married non-Zarathushtis, they were disowned by the family and the community. It was bitter medicine and a harsh punishment, which did not cure the source of the illness, for these marriages became a common occurrence. The Iranians living in India and Pakistan soon faced the same dilemma. Their children married outsiders without the blessings of their parents. The families were broken up, which in turn affected the community.

The Parsis realized, though late, that their numbers were dwindling and agreed to accept the offspring of mixed marriages in which the father was Zarathushti. So much for gender equality among the Zarathushtis! Are a woman's genes different from that of the male counterpart? What a paradox!

Iranian Zarathushtis, meanwhile, were facing different problems. Their numbers were declining fast, either by conversion to Islam or to a new religion, Bahai, claiming to be Shah Bahram Varjavand, the Messiah prophesied by Asho Zarathushtra.

Due to socio-economic reasons, in recent times many Zarathushtis have migrated to various countries and are scattered around the world. They are now facing an even greater challenge to keep their numbers from dwindling. Children growing up in these countries are constantly among non-Zarathushtis. They learn their music, culture and customs. They do not believe in arranged or proxy marriages. Brief meetings in Congresses every couple of years has not produced overwhelming results either.

Mixed marriages have become a common occurrence. It is of great concern to the religion of Zarathushtra as a whole. Families who thought this could not happen to them, while living in India, Pakistan or Iran, are now asking for a solution while their religious leaders look the other way. This phenomenon has created a division amongst us all. What a tragedy! We are still implementing the 1300-year-old decree imposed upon us by the Arab rulers.

If we do not accept these social events as the norm, and welcome the spouses and children of mixed marriages, regardless of gender, into our community, this will be *the last blow* that we will have inflicted upon ourselves. We will then only be remembered through the history books.

Is that how our Prophet Asho Zarathushtra wanted us to spread his message? ■

Rostam J. Mehdiabadi
Lubbock, Texas

ZARATHUSHTI ENTERPRISE PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

JOBS AVAILABLE

- US-based company looking for **Quality Controller** to inspect pre-shipment goods, near Delhi, India. Contact J. Sarosh, at 101471.413 @compuserve.com
- **Family Practice Physician** to join practice in rural Pennsylvania. Excellent compensation package. [See details in ad on page 58].
- **Business analyst, QA analyst** openings in Atlanta area. Contact Aspy Taraporewalla at aspy@compuzone-inc.com, tel: (770) 751-7919.
- **Skilled programmers** with experience in SAP, C++, Visual, SQL, Oracle. Contact Current Source at CSI11@aol.com, tel: (630) 357-4122.
- **Elderly Parsi lady** in relatively good health, living in her apartment, looking for a live-in **housekeeper /companion**. Call (416) 751-9949.



Parsi Restaurant in New York

Have you checked out "The Parsi Restaurant" in New York? Their menu features dhanshak, patra ni macchi, sali boti, farcha, lagan nu custard and other specialty Parsi dishes. They are at 181 West 4th Street, New York, NY 10014, tel: (212) 242-8415.

Looking for Export Business Contacts

Mumbai-based Export business of garments, leather goods, cutlery and other such consumer products is looking for contacts in foreign countries. Contact croesus@bom3.vsnl.net.in.

It's that time of year: Tax Planning Time

Some possible strategies to lower taxes

By Framroze K. Patel
Woodbridge, New Jersey

By the time you read this article you should have some time left for tax planning for 1998. You cannot do tax planning after December 31; the time to plan and act is before December 31. We will discuss some possible strategies to lower taxes legitimately.

Accelerate Income. If you anticipate that taxable income and marginal income-tax rate will be higher in 1999, it will be beneficial to receive income in 1998, rather than 1999. You can also save taxes by deferring income if estimated income and tax rate during 1999 is expected to be lower than in 1998. Examples of deferring income:

- Ask your employer to pay the year-end bonus after January 1st.

- Increase tax deferred contribution to a retirement plan.

For a limited time only, the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997 gives you a tax break if you convert an existing IRA to a Roth IRA during 1998. Instead of including all of your previously deducted contributions and IRA earnings as income on 1998's return, you can choose to report the income over four years. After 1998, all taxable income on a Roth IRA conversion has to be reported in the year you make the switch.

Watch out for Taxes on Retirement Benefits. As up to 85% of annual retirement benefits may be subject to tax:

- Watch the amount of interest you receive on tax-exempt securities. While the income per se is not tax-

able, it is included in the modified AGI to calculate taxability of social security benefits.

- Accelerate above line deductions, such as IRA contribution, alimony payments, student loan interest and pension plan contributions.

- Delay retirement plan distributions.

Maximize Retirement Contributions. Try to contribute more to your employer financed 401(k) plans. If you are self-employed, make contributions to SEP (Simplified Employee Pension) IRA. Under SEP rules, a self-employed person can contribute up to 15% of self-employment income to a maximum of \$22,500. These are time-sensitive planning techniques. If the contributions are not made within a specified time period, no deductions are allowed.

"Bunch" Deductions. Some itemized deductions such as medical expenses, unreimbursed employee

Restaurant Job Opportunity

- Restaurant Manager
- Beverage/Bar Manager
- Kitchen Manager/Chef
- Assistant Chef

New family dining casual service restaurant 250 seats to open soon in Old Bridge area of New Jersey. F&B management qualification and two years experience with American chains (TGIF/Houstons/Bennigans, etc.) preferred. May sponsor, insurance, benefits. Mail resume with salary history and expected salary (must) to:

Restaurant Management
1925 Seventh Street, North Brunswick, NJ 08902
or fax to: (732) 422-7296

Free Service

Network with Zarathushti businesses and professionals on the Internet at
www.zbnet.com

APARTMENTS FOR SALE

- Well-planned ● Quality construction ●

In Mumbai:

In Cama Park, Parsi ownership complex, 1/2 mile from Andheri West station. One bedroom. Self-contained apartment condominium having a cottage effect.

In Poona:

Two bedroom condominium in a building with 6 apartments. Special car parking area. 24-hour security.

Contact owner in US at (301) 765-0793.

business expense and charitable contributions are deductible only if they exceed the 'floor' amount. You can "bunch" the expenses into 1998, e.g.:

- Schedule elective surgery, dental work, etc. late in 1998.
- Pay miscellaneous business expenses such as professional dues, investment management fees, professional fees, in 1998.
- Make long-term and medical insurance payments in 1998.

Claim all Available Deductions. Remember "above line deductions" reduce AGI, hence they are generally more valuable than "itemized deductions". These include alimony, deductible IRA contributions, self-employment taxes, medical insurance for self-employment taxes, etc.

Do not neglect to deduct personal property taxes, foreign income taxes paid, foreign real estate taxes.

New for 1998: You can deduct up to \$1,000 of qualified student loan interest in computing AGI. Note that married persons filing separately cannot claim the deduction. No deduction is allowed on reaching \$55,000 for single and \$75,000 for joint filers.

Charitable Contributions. Consider giving appreciated personal property by year end. You can claim a charitable deduction equal to the full, fair market value of the property. The standard mileage deduction for computing charitable contribution is 14 cents per mile for 1998.

Consider all Credits. While the deductions lower taxes, credits actually offset income tax dollar for dollar. These are:

- Child tax credit: \$400 for each qualifying child.
- Dependent child credit: Maximum credit per child is \$2,400 or 20% of child or dependent care expenses.

- \$5,000 adoption credit per child.
- Education related credits: Hope Scholarship credit and Lifetime Learning credit.

If you are Self-employed. claim all deductible business losses and deductions:

- Business bad debt: you must substantiate your efforts to collect the debt has failed.
- Inventory losses.
- Casualty and theft losses.
- Capital losses.
- Loss of sale of business assets.
- Cost of new assets.

These losses are deducted on your personal income tax returns. ■

[Framroze K. Patel, CPA, MBA, CVA has an accounting practice in New Jersey, tel: (732) 634-8585, fax: (732) 636-5957, email: fkp1@idt.net.]

Centrally located flat in Mumbai up for grabs.

If you or your family back in Mumbai have been looking for a residential property in the heart of Mumbai, look no further.

- Flat located in Dadar, in the heart of Mumbai.
- 500 sq. ft., one bedroom, hall, kitchen, well-ventilated, two balconies.
- In airy compound, can have only Zarathushti owners/tenants.

Golden opportunity. Owner keen to sell.

Contact: Dinsha Palkhiwala, 170 Pennant Street, North Parramatta, NSW 2151, Sydney, Australia, tel: (02) 9890 5250, email: dinsha.palkhiwala@apac.dmr.com.au. From December 6, 1998 to January 1, 1999, contact in Mumbai at 91 22 651-1777.

Current Source Inc.

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

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
**PLEASE
 GIVE FROM
 YOUR YOUR
 HEART**
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Donation checks, payable to "FEZANA", may be sent to the address in the appeal, or to Dinshaw Joshi, FEZANA Appeals Coordinator, 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].

Mancherji Joshi Education Fund

Last year the Mancherji Joshi Memorial Education Fund received 711 applications for educational aid. The trustees sanctioned aid totalling Rs. 5,05,950/- to 665 students mostly from Surat and Navsari with grants from Rs. 260 to Rs. 8,000 per student, in a variety of fields ranging from kindergarten to Ph.D studies.

The fund received donations totaling Rs. 6,02,600 with about 50% for the corpus and 50% to be utilized during the year. Remarkably, to their credit, only Rs. 1,903 was utilized for inevitable expenses.

In his appeal for donations, Jal Khan, Trustee and Hon. Treasurer writes: "We look forward to your support, as we continue our service to the ever-increasing base of needy and deserving students of our community." Checks made out to FEZANA, marked "M. Joshi Fund" may be sent to FEZANA Appeals Coordinator [see address above].

Bus accident at Pir-e Nareki

Every year the Zarathushti Youth Association (Kanoon-e Javanan-e Zarathushti) makes a trip to the Pir-e Nareki shrine near Yazd, to recognize award-winning students. This year, one of the buses carrying 25 students, the wealth of our commu-

nity, collided head-on with an oncoming truck. The driver and a 14-year-old girl were killed and many injured, the most critical being a girl with head and eye injuries.

The Iranian Zoroastrian Association of New York is collecting funds to help towards the high medical and surgical expenses of the victims. Checks made out to FEZANA, marked "Accident" may be sent to the FEZANA Appeals Coordinator [see address above].

Assistance for newly-arrived students

A list of volunteers to help newly arrived students get settled (not including financial aid) is available at <http://www.geocities.com/colosseum/9893/volpage1.html>. For information please contact Jennifer Mohta at viraf@mohta.com.

Doongerwadi (Towers of Silence) Properties

The 50-acre Doongerwadi (Towers of Silence) complex in Mumbai, India, which are the single most valuable asset of the community, are badly in need of repairs. Last year there was a Rs. 220,000 deficit, causing a major drain on the resources of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet.

The BPP has issued a world-wide appeal for funds. Companies, institutions and individuals are encouraged to undertake the renovation of a 'bungli' (building) or pavilion or donate towards general upkeep. BPP Trustee Mr. Dinshaw Tamboli writes: "Doongerwadi is a legacy that our generation has inherited. It is incumbent upon us to not only use the splendid facilities but also to preserve the estate in pristine condition for our future generations." Checks made out to FEZANA, marked "Doongerwadi" may be sent to the FEZANA Appeals Coordinator [see address above].

Heavy Repair Costs

Parsi family (father is a security guard, and son is studying at Cama Athornan Institute) temporarily staying at Petit Sanatorium are appealing

for help to pay for heavy repair bills of over Rs. 1 lakh, for their one-room flat in Fort area, Mumbai, that has been demolished for repairs. Send checks, marked "flat repair" to FEZANA Welfare Committee [see address above].

Acknowledgements

FEZANA gratefully acknowledges donations received this quarter through June 1998.

For Welfare Fund:

Anonymous, CA (\$25); Cyrus Austin, AZ (\$300); Rumi Engineer, CO (\$50); Homi Patel, FL (\$51); Rohinton Rivetna, IL (\$201 + \$20); Hoshedar Tamboli, FL (\$202); Zoroastrian Association of Florida (\$51); Dick Vazir, FL (\$50).

For Various Appeals:

Behram Irani, TX (\$300); Aspi Kootar, ONT (\$50); Noshir Lakdawalla, CA (\$51); Pesi Sagar, NY (\$25); Hoshang Unvala, CA (\$11).

For FEZANA Journal: Anonymous, IL (\$139.60 + \$104.70 + 269.90 + \$260.59 + \$69.80); Darius Antia, NY (\$30); Edul Bamji, NJ (\$20); Cyrus Boga, TX (\$10); Chisti Dadachanji, CA (\$20); Tammy Dalal, NC (\$15); Khushro Irani, MD (\$30); Percy Master, TX (\$20); Silloo Mehta, CA (\$10); Daisy Mehta, CA (\$10); Homi Minocherhomji, ON (\$40); Zareer Pavri, ON (\$50); Dara Rivetna, IL (\$11); Yasmin Shroff, MO (\$21); Lyla Sam Todywala, FL (\$51); Dick Vazir, FL (\$25); Parviz Yeganegi, BC (\$105). ■

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MATRIMONIALS
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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).

Male, editorial analyst, 34, 5' 11", enjoys tennis, outdoors, music, brought up in USA and seeking same. Call (203) 846-9320. [M98-33]

Male, civil engineer, 32, 5' 8", well-educated, working in Connecticut, interests include music, movies, travel. Would like to meet home loving, caring woman. Call (203) 469-2721. [M98-21]

Male, 32, Information Technology professional, seeks understanding and dynamic life partner, preferably tall and slim. Willing to settle anywhere in the world. Contact via email: hmody@hotmail.com, tel: Mumbai +91 22 307-7143. [M98-34].

Male, 34, Ph.D. Computer Science, SAP consultant, interests include reading, movies, swimming, traveling. Call friend at (650) 712-9711, or email: e4k@iname.com. [M98-35].

Female, 47, slim, fair, 5' 6", widowed with 2 grown boys, loving personality, Western views, seeking well-settled, educated gentleman. Call sister in Alberta (403) 461-5729. [F98-38]

Female, B.Com, 31, working in Bombay. Contact brother in California at (714) 996-3411. [F98-36]

Female, 33, working for trading company in Hong Kong. Religious,

good-looking, slim 5' 2". Willing to settle abroad. Call aunt in Maryland at (301) 990-8887. [F98-39]

Female, 19, looking for medical professional upto 30 years old who is willing to settle in USA. Call (813) 839-5828. [F98-40]

Female, 46, slim, fair, very attractive, 5' 5", divorced, Ph.D. in Business Administration, settled in USA, from very well-placed Mumbai family, Call (301) 864-0092. [F98-41]

Male, 32, working as systems analyst, well-settled in the USA, Call (732) 441-9095. [M98-42]

Alliance invited for fair, goodlooking girl, 30, 5' 2", MS in Biochemistry, working in US, from qualified, decent, sober boys, prefer non-smoker, non-drinker. Visiting India in Dec-Jan. Email: rhk69@hotmail.com or call (512) 448-2574 (US) or 22-407-6845 (Mumbai). [F98-43]

Female, 27, slim, fair, pretty, working in bank in Toronto, BA (psychology), AITA (Travel and Tourism), photography courses, would like to meet good-looking professional. Call parents at (416) 598-4770. [F98-44]

PERSONALS

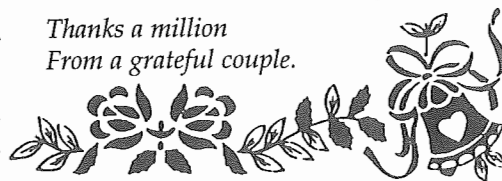
If anyone has old silk clothing to give away, please send them to Freny Munshi, 600 S. Valley View Road, Ashland, Oregon 97520. ■



Cupid Strikes Again

We wish to express our sincere and genuine appreciation to FEZANA Journal for your kind act of introducing and bringing us together. Had it not been for your gracious efforts, Parsis like us, in two different continents, probably would not have met. We are so happy to share with you that our newfound friendship will soon blossom into matrimony.

*Thanks a million
From a grateful couple.*



Thanks FEZANA!

In the Spring 1997 issue of FEZANA Journal I placed an ad in the Matrimonials column. Although my intent was to meet and eventually marry a Parsi boy, I was not entirely sure that I would meet the right person for me. Well, I guess I was lucky. On July 4, 1998 I married Sharukh Alamshaw at the California Zoroastrian Center, in what I believe was the most beautiful wedding ever.

Not only did FEZANA bring together two people who believe they were truly meant for each other; it also brought together two wonderful families who easily meshed as one.

I often wonder if it was fate, luck or chance that allowed two people from so far away (myself living in Ontario and Sharukh then living in New Mexico) to meet. I am certain of one thing, though. Without the help of FEZANA, we would never have met.

And so, to everyone involved in FEZANA, I say "Thank You!"

*Mrs. Pearl Alamshaw
Austin, Texas*



Pearl Shroff, daughter of Vera and Pesi Shroff of Ottawa, Ontario was married to Sharukh Alamshaw, son of Burjor and Dhun Alamshaw of Costa Mesa, California, at the California Zoroastrian Center in Los Angeles, on July 4. Mobeds Zarir Bhandara and Khushroo Unwalla officiated [see letter, right].

MILESTONES

Births

Neeku Amanat, a girl, to Jamshid and Monick Amanat on April 28, in North Vancouver, BC.

Mehra June Balsara, a daughter to Navroze and Andrea Balsara, granddaughter to Moti and Russi Balsara of Toronto and Norma and Don Torrey on September 1.

Zahra Bharucha, a girl, to Tazeen and Kersasp Bharucha, on June 25, in Coquitlam, B.C.

Arman Billimoria, a boy, to Mehnaz and Kurush Billimoria, of Melbourne, Australia; grandson to Meherbanoo of Long Island and nephew to Mani and Ardeshir of Melbourne, on July 2, in Victoria, Australia.

Monaz Irani, a girl, to Porus and Shahnaz Irani, on July 26, in North Vancouver, BC.

Kaizad Joshi, a boy, to Neena and Cyrus Joshi of Kentucky, on July 29.

Neusha Kaviani, a girl, to Azadmehr and Armita Kaviani, on May 29, in North Vancouver, BC.

Zubin Roozbeh Hoshang Shroff-Mehrabadi, a boy, to Roozbeh Mehrabadi, on June 16, in Vancouver, BC.

Dina Mehta, a girl to Meher and Khushro Mehta [From ZAGNY Newsletter].

Darius Sarkari, a son, to Jerilyn and Xerses Sarkari. Gul and Homi Sarkari are the proud grand-parents. [From ZAGNY newsletter].

Zachary Useche, a boy, to Leena and Aurelio Useche, on July 18. [From ZAQ newsletter].

Roksana Verahrami, a girl, to Shehernaz and Farhad Verahrami of North Potomac, MD, sister to Anahita, grand-daughter to Dinshaw and Goolcher Joshi of Chevy Chase, MD and Katayoon Verahrami of Gaithersburg, MD, on September 3.



Sherry Bapasola, daughter of Noshir and Khursheed Bapasola of Voorhees, NJ, at her navjote ceremony, at Breach Candy House, in Mumbai, on August 6. Dasturji Dadachanji officiated, along with four other mobeds.

Jamshed Hormuzshaw Wania, a boy, to Hormuzshah and Shireen Wania, in Lebanon, Pennsylvania on May 22, grandson to Shireen and (late) Jamshed H. Wania of Karachi, Pakistan and Freny and Bomi Cawasji of Karachi, Pakistan.

Navjote, Sudreh Pushi

Nattier Eisenhardt, daughter of Daisy and Peter Eisenhardt, on July 19. [from ZSO newsletter].

Cyrus Panthakee, son of Katy and Dara Panthakee on July 18, [From ZSO newsletter].

Zane and Tanya Patel, son and daughter of Percy and Dinci Patel on August 2. [From ZSO newsletter].

Zanoishta and Khorezar Vania, daughter and son of Rohinton and Jasmine Vania, on August 9, in London, Ontario.

Kia and Aria Zohrabi, sons of Rostom and Mojgan Zohrabi, on July 11, in Oliver, BC.

Weddings

Soona Kothawala, daughter of Aban and Noshir Kothawala, to **Christopher Cardin**, on May 17 [From ZSO newsletter].

Mehroo Sattha to **Rohinton Chothia** on July 5 [From ZSO newsletter].

Zubin Hakim and **Chris White** were married recently [From ZAGNY newsletter].

Katayoun Shahbandari to **Zaryab Hamavand** on August 7, in San Jose California.

Adil Heeramaneck of Long Beach, NY, to **Kamal Kapadia**, sister of Dinaz Bengali of New Jersey, in Paramus, New Jersey, on October 17.

Jal Irani, son of Dr. Behman and Dolly Irani of London, UK, to **Shiraz Daruwalla**, daughter of Hoshi and Arnavaz Daruwalla of Manchester, UK, on June 21, in Tampa, Florida.

Parviz Javanmardi to Armaity Namiranian, a reception to celebrate the marriage at the Darbe Meher on June 27 [From ZSBC newsletter].

Farnaaz Irani, daughter of Farida and Noshir Irani, to Craig Maurice on August 8 [From ZSO newsletter].

Maki Elavia, daughter of Putlan and Phiroze Elavia to Khurshid Mehta, son of Putlamai and Kekhushru Mehta, in Mumbai, on December 8.

Kurush Morris and Lori were married recently. [ZAGNY newsletter]

Below, Farahad Dastoor, son of Dolly and Phiroz Dastoor, was married to Jean MacRae by civil ceremony on February 7, in Robert's Creek, BC. The groom wore a Scottish kilt and the bride wore a sari. Zarathushti blessings were done on August 1, in Burnet, Quebec.



Deenah Byramjee, daughter of Kermin and Merzee Byramjee, to Daniel Patel, son of Gulrukh and Cawas Patel on August 2 [From ZSO newsletter].

Hutoxi Batliwala, daughter of Kety and Dinshaw Batliwala, to Jamshed Pithawala, son of Mehroo and Dara Pithawala, on July 25, in Ottawa.

Mandana Keykhosravani, daughter of Parvaneh and Rostam Keykhosravani and Shahriyar Shirani, on August 22, in Toronto.

Rashna Khariwalla, daughter of Armaity and Romy Khariwalla, to Paul Staid, on August 1, in Boston.

Freny Wadiwalla, daughter of Zarin and Nariman Wadiwalla, to Dr. Meheroz Rabadi, son of Roda and Hoshang Rabadi, of Indiana, on June 17, in Karachi, Pakistan.

Deaths

Pilamai Jemi Adenwalla, mother of Dinshaw of Mumbai, Viloo (Rusi) Tavadia of Troy, MI and Zinobia of Mumbai, on July 31, in Mumbai.

Kanchanlal Alleck, husband of Pudmawatee, father of five sons (including Antish of Chicago) and three daughters, on August 6, in Mauritius.

Khodayar Ashoojahanian, 77, father of Homa (Bouzarhomehr) Bidabadi and Daruish, grand-father of Babak and Kaywan, in San Jose, CA on September 8. Porseh was held on September 19, at the Darbe Mehr. Mr. Ashoojahanian was born in Yazd, and lived in Tehran up to the revolution. He came to San Jose in 1980.

Pirozsha Manekji Asundaria, husband of Nargis, mother of Villie, Minoo and Firdosh on July 31, 1998 in Navsari, India.

Hilla Kaikhushroo Bhedwar, 88, mother of Ervad Kersi (Roshan) Bhedwar, Ervad Rusi (Amy) of London, UK, Hutoxi of Mumbai and late Furrokh (Hutoxi), on July 17, in Mumbai.

Freni Sam Dinshaw, 79, mother of Ketayun (Kersi) Kapadia of Pennsylvania (now living in Paris) and Rustom Kapadia of Mumbai, in Mumbai, on October 20.

Maneck Dastur, father of Zarine Dumasia, on July 12, in Boston. [From Manashni newsletter].

Goshtasp Espantma, 83, father of Abtin and Azin, husband of Nakhostin (sister of Dr. Farhang Mehr of Boston), in Madison, Wisconsin, on September 27.

Banoo Dinshaw Irani, survived by Jerbanoo of Montreal, Behram (Gool) of Geneva, Switzerland, Dilnavaz of Toronto and Dara (Niloofer) of Vancouver, BC, in Mumbai, on October 18.

Persis Khambatta, 49, in Mumbai, on August 18. [see story page 18].

Khurshed Khory, wife of Firoze, mother of Noshir (Roshni) Khory, in Glenview, IL, on October 16.

Firoz Hormusji Lala, husband of Soona, father of Sharookh (Zenobia) Lala, of Michigan, and Maharukh Bejan Irani, of Peoria, IL, on July 19, in Mumbai.

Banoo Sohrab Mahwa, mother of Aspi (Katia) Mahwa and Khurshid (Hosi) Battiwala, in Mumbai, on July 14.

Keki Medhora, father of Noshir Medhora, on August 20, in Mumbai.

Nawaz Mehta, after a brave battle with cancer, on July 18, in Mumbai. Nawaz visited New York for cancer treatment last year, when numerous families opened up their hearts and homes to Nawaz.

Bejan Phirozshah Moos, father of Phiroz Moos of Montreal, Canada on June 28, in Pune, India.

Mother of Parvez Patel, of New York area, in India.

Thrity Patel, wife of Firoze, mother of Rayomand and Parizad, on August 31, in Toronto. [see Obituary].

Banoo Poulad-Noshirvan (Rokhwa), 82, mother of Parvin Zartoshty, Rostam and Poulad Poulad-Noshirvani, on August 18 in North Vancouver, B.C.

Jehangir Pocha, 63, son of Gerty and late Dhun Maneck Pocha of Livermore, CA, brother of Mike Pocha, in Denver, on August 4, of complications due to diabetes.

Simidokt Siabakshi Torky, 62, mother of Mehry Farzaneh, on March 31, in Tehran.

Amy Nadirshah Vakili, sister of Nargis Dhunjeebhoy, on July 14, in Karachi Pakistan. [From Manashni].

Obituaries

Zommorrod Kasravi "Mother of the Year"

Declared "Mother of the year" by Persian radio station this past Mother's Day, Zommorrod Kasravi passed away on Thursday, August 15, 1998 in Huntington Beach, California. She is survived by her 9 sons and many grandchildren who have contributed a lot to our community. She assumed all Zarathushtis as her children and always invited everyone to her house with open arms, a warm heart and a beautiful smile. She was indeed a fine Zarathushti mother and will be missed deeply by all of us who came to know her.

- Farrokh Mehr

Dr. Jehangir P. Vazifdar Eminent Parsi Cardiologist

Dr. Jehangir P. Vazifdar, eminent Parsi cardiologist died at his home in Mumbai on October 26th, the victim of a burglary homicide.

Vazifdar came to the US on a Rockefeller Fellowship in 1948, specializing in cardiology. For over three years he worked with some of the giants in the field: Irving Wright in New York, Samuel Levine and Paul White in Boston, and others in Cleveland and Minnesota. He brought from India the roots of the plant *Rawoulfia Serpentina*, the extract from which became the widely used anti-hypertensive drug, Reserpine.

He visited USA and Canada frequently, and annually in the last two decades, to keep abreast of the advances in his field, and also to see his two children, Camilla and Phiroze, who reside in New York and Massachusetts. He also leaves

behind a nephew, Dr. Dinshaw Patel, in New York.

A physician of extraordinary acumen, skill and kindness, he had a large practice, mainly in India, but also in the USA and Europe.

In his passing, the world has lost an able and compassionate healer, the community has lost a dedicated, considerate and charitable member, and those of us who were privileged to be his friends must now live with the memory of his presence, his intellect, affection and kindness.

I end with a verse from Tennyson which Jehangir told me years ago he enjoyed:

For though from out our bourne
of time and place,
The flood may bear me far,
I want to see my pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar.

- K. D. Irani

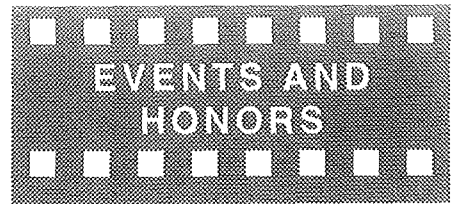
Thrity Firoze Patel 1961 - 1998

If courage had a name, I would call it "Thrity". Thrity through her two and a half years battle with cancer, never once gave up on life. She was there at every occasion and function participating, laughing, singing and dancing. It was with great admiration that I saw her struggle to provide as normal a life as she could for her two beloved children and her husband. Not once was there self pity or a question "Why me?" Never was there a glimpse of her loss of faith in our religion or in Ahura Mazda.

For all of us she was an inspiration and the community rallied around her with moral, emotional and financial support. Thrity brought out the best in us. Through her we all experienced generosity and giving. She taught us all about dignity, courage, kindness and wisdom. Her's was a short life, but a meaningful one, and because of her life we all cherish ours a whole lot more.

We thank Ahura Mazda for her life. May her soul find eternal peace.

- Putli Mirza



KHORSHEED BHARUCHA, Principal of the J. B. Vachha High School in Dadar, Mumbai, was felicitated at a function held in her honor on September 12. Under her stewardship, the school has "risen to higher heights and made remarkable progress." In 1997, she had been awarded the prestigious "Best Teacher for 1997" award by the Government of India Rashtrapati.

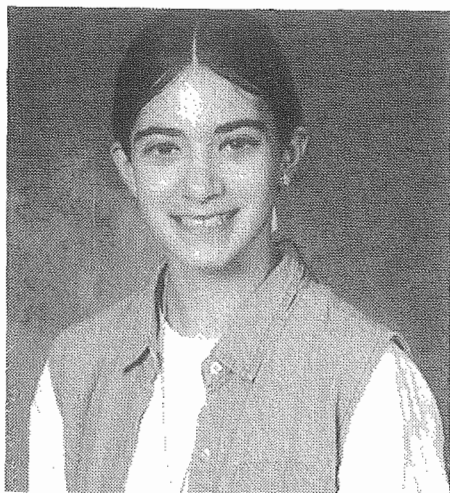


PORUS DADABHOY [above] of Downer's Grove, Illinois, was among nine recipients of the 1998 Citizen Initiative Award presented by the Citizen Advocacy Center. The recipients were selected for "demonstrating significant and informed civic participation in their communities, and by their example inspiring others to build democracy." The citation reads:

"Mr. Dadabhoi is a tireless civic contributor on a number of issues including violence prevention, voter registration, airport reform, clean elections and campaign finance reform, and the promotion of whistleblower laws and the rights of immigrants ... through his dedication to democratic principles, Mr. Dadabhoi

has made participation and the attendant processes more accessible to thousands of immigrants and citizens."

SHERNAZ DAVER is mentioned in *Wall Street Journal* [June 11, 1998] as vice president for corporate marketing for *Inktomi*, an internet-related company (started in 1995 by two young Berkeley professors who are now millionaires) that provides 'search engine technology' used by customers such as Microsoft's Yahoo. The company also makes software that eases Internet traffic.



KATE KOOKA [above] daughter of Dara and Norma Kooka of Sydney, Nova Scotia, was one of two Canadians selected to participate in the 10th annual International Children's Groundwater Summit in Grand Island, Nebraska in March 1998. 7th grader Kate was selected after submitting an essay about groundwater in her area. At the Summit, Kate participated in activities related to children's health, global climate change, wildlife and water.

JASMINE MISTRY graduated summa cum laude from the University of Houston with a Bachelor of Business Administration in Computer Information Systems. She was designated outstanding graduate of the year 1997-98 and was initiated to the Beta Gamma Sigma Honor Society and the National Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi. Jasmine was nominated also for the Texas Business Hall of Fame Scholarship Foundation. She will pursue a Master's degree in software engineering.

Toronto's own cricketer **ZUBIN SARKARI**, along with fellow cricketers represented the Canada Under-19 Youth Cricket Squad in the West Indian Islands of Trinidad and Tobago. Despite the torrential rains which prevented the teams from playing the scheduled three-day matches, Canada fared reasonably well. Zubin scored 30 runs in one of the five one-day matches that they were able to play and took 5 wickets in another, and was named "Man of the Match."



Jamshed R. Udvardia won the Barney Award for Best Featured Actor for the 1997-98 season from the Riverwalk Theater in Lansing, Michigan. His award-winning role was that of the father [shown in photo above with his stage 'wife' and 'daughter'] in "Beau Jest", a Jewish family comedy written by James Sherman, Playwright-in-Residence at the Victory Gardens Theater in Chicago.

Last August, he re-enacted the role in "Jest a Second", a sequel to Beau Jest. Jamshed is currently in rehearsal for the part of Soothsayer in *The Emperor's New Clothes*, a Christmas production for children, offered by the Riverwalk Theater.

ZENOBIA TANTRA of Bloomington, Illinois, finished first in the State of Illinois Physical Therapy licensing examination. Zenobia is a great role model for all the youth. Not only does she excel in academics and her career, she is also an active member of the Board of the Zoroastrian Association of Chicago.

We goofed!

● FEZANA Secretaries regret the inadvertent omission of the report of the FEZANA Research and Preservation Committee (chair Pallan Ichaporia) presented by Khorshed Jungalwala at the AGM, from the committee reports in the article "FEZANA AGM 1998" [Fall 1998, page 5].

● We regret most sincerely the inadvertent mention of Mr. Faridoon Zartoshty as "late" [Fall 1998, page 82]. We wish him continued good health for many years to come. The author sincerely apologizes to Mr. Faridoon Zartoshty and his family. ■

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