

SPRING 1999, BAHAR 1368 YZ Mah Fravardin-Ardibehest-Khordad 1368 YZ (Fasli) Mah Avan-Adar-Daye 1368 YZ (Shenshai) Mah Adar-Daye-Bahman 1368 YZ (Kadmi)

THE MAKING OF A ZARATHUSHTI ACROSS TIMES AND ACROSS CLIMES

Mazdayasnis, followers of Zarathushtra are the ones who commit to perform with both hands, feet and sharp intelligence, the deeds which are lawful, moral, honest and timely.

[Visperad 15.1, translation by Dr. Pallan R. Ichaporia]

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Dolly, Phiroz, Farahad, Jean, Zubin, Jasmine, Natasha and Adel wish their friends and families around the world all the very best in health and happiness on NoRuz 1368.

Dolly Dastoor

May Ahura Mazda grant our Zarathushti community around the world much peace and prosperity in the coming year.

Capricorn Travels Homi, Nargish and Jenisteen Davier

NoRuz Greetings!

- Yasmin and Rustom Kevala

"Listen with your ears the highest truth. Consider it with an open mind carefully and decide each man and woman personally between the two paths, good and evil. Before ushering in of the great day, or the Day of Judgement, arise all of you and try to spread Ahura's words (Zarathushtra's message)."

The Zarathushti community of Dallas wishes Zarathushtis around the world a very prosperous year.

Mitra Valatabar, President Zoroastrian Association of North Texas



JOURNAL

wishes Zarathushtis around the world a happy and prosperous

NoRuz 1368

Mah Fravardin - Roz Hormazd

Jamshedi Navroze 1368

Mah Avan - Roz Bahman (Shenshai) Mah Adar - Roz Bahman (Kadmi)

NoRuz Mubarak!

May the coming year bring good health, happiness and prosperity to all Zarathushtis.

Prudential Jewelers, Chicago Rumi and Beverly Engineer, Kashmira and Rustom

Greetings!

May Ahura Mazda bless our community with goodwill, unity, growth and prosperity.

Maneck, Mahrukh and Shehnaz Bhujwala



Best wishes for a very happy NoRuz to all Zarathushtis with much happiness and joy, peace and prosperity. May Ahura Mazda shower us all with his countless choicest blessings.

Dolly Malva, President Zoroastrian Association of California The Zoroastrian Association of Quebec extends all good wishes for peace and prosperity to Zarathushtis around the world on NoRuz.

Gev Karkaria, President Zoroastrian Association of Quebec



Jamshedi NoRuz Mubarak!

May it bring peace, harmony, happiness and success to Zarathushtis throughout the world.

Firoze and Khorshed Jungalwala and family



Ushia! All Uzbekistan Zarathushtri Anjuman members congratulate you and wish you a nice holiday for NoRuz.

Rustam Abdukamilov Tashkent, Uzbekistan

NoRuz Mubarak! NoRuz Pirooz!

From all of us!

Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington, Inc.

Thoughts from a slightly confused Parsi-Indian-Iranian-North-American-Zarathushti

rowing up in Mumbai, the question of who I was or what I was, was pretty much cut and dried. In fact it was a moot point, to which I gave very little thought.

I was born a Parsi, in a hospital endowed by Parsis, lived in a nice

Parsi neighborhood, frequented the agiary down the lane to remember loved departed ones and ask for Ahura Mazda's blessings, most especially on exam days. On very special occasions such as Pateti and Navroze, I dressed up in my new clothes and went to the Atash Behram and then on to an Adi Marzban 'natak'

(comic play). The whole family – all the aunts, uncles and cousins then got together for a seam-splitting meal of pullav-dar, sali gos, patra-ni-machhi, falooda, kalingar, kulfi (from Parsi Dairy Farm of course) and more.

Most of my friends were much like me. After school every evening we hung out at Hanging Gardens, which was then also called Pherozshah Mehta Gardens or at the rocky oceanfront at Scandal Point.

The schools, hospitals, libraries, art galleries, museums and theaters I went to were endowed by our illustrious forefathers, Cowasjee Jehangir, Bhabhas, Petits, Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy. I enjoyed the fruits of the great industrial empires built by the Tatas, Wadias and Godrejs. I traveled in their railways and airplanes. I walked down streets named after them and passed by their statues. With their scholarships I came to America.

Here in America the question of my identity is not as clear cut as it was in

the little Parsi world I came from. My loyalties are being pulled between calling myself a Parsi and calling myself a Zarathushti or a Zoroastrian. With the turn of history that has brought Zarathushtis from Iran and India to this continent after centuries of separation, I am told

"We should not call ourselves Parsis or Iranis, we are all Zarathushtis."

While my mind tells me that this is the right approach and I must separate my ethnicity from my religion, my heart is very sad about the thought of giving up the Parsi appellation.

I find it very difficult to make the separation. In

fact I also throw my nationality into the pot - of India, the country of my birth, North America, my country of adoption, and sometimes also Iran, where my forefathers came from, the motherland of my religion. I really think of myself as a Parsi-Indian-Iranian-North-American-Zarathushti and have much difficulty deciding which comes first and what to drop, if any. Am I a Parsi first, or a Zarathushti? I know my passport says I am an American, but at heart am I not still an Indian? And do I not still have a strong attachment to Iran, the land of my ancestral heritage?

And what about my children? Having been born in America, are they Parsis, or are they yet another new breed of "North American Zarathushtis". Will their children be Parsis? For how many generations?

In the last few decades, Zarathushtis are spreading from the mother countries of Iran and India (and Pakistan) to the corners of the earth – to Britain, North America, Australia, New Zealand, the Far East and Africa.

Zarathushti groups are emerging in Russia, Tajikistan, Kurdistan and Ukraine. "Neo-Zarathushtis" are being initiated into the faith. The Zarathushti community will have to learn how to deal with these diverse ethnic groups, their different cultures, traditions and even beliefs.

Of course, as we all know, Zarathushtis are spread far and wide across ideological boundaries, from the extreme traditional to the ultrareformist, and a million stances in between. To date, we cannot even agree on our name. Should we call ourselves 'Zoroastrian' or 'Zarathushti' or one of the multitude of spelling variations in between?

Some FEZANA Associations are making efforts to define "Who is a Zarathushti?" and writing membership guidelines.

It is a monumental task for our small community to learn how to deal with this burgeoning diversity – ethnic and ideological. Is it really possible to come up with and agree on a common, unified profile of a 'Zarathushti'?

Instead of trying to unify, can we maybe spend our limited energies at understanding, respecting and celebrating our differences?

As for me and my family, can we go back to being simply Parsis – no ifs, ands or buts?

Roshan Rivetna Editor-in-Chief

> A PRAYER FOR FEZANA

Glorious and Blessed be the Ties that bind us all Through life's winter, spring, summer and fall.

United in Ahura Mazda and Asho Zarathushtra As was in the past and in every upcoming millennia.

> - By Dinaz Kutar Rogers Albany, Oregon

FEZANA Journal - Looking Ahead

he fundamental role of any news medium is to present facts, fiction and information without negative judgmental expressions or distortion of facts. My predecessor and good friend, Rustom Kevala, as Chairperson of the FEZANA Publication Committee for seven years, made a commitment to publish unbiased coverage achievements, hopes and religious vision of all Zarathushtis in North America. He increased the readership of our Journal manyfold, established a website, and put in a tremendous effort in bringing the Journal up to the prestigious position it holds today.

I was appointed by President of FEZANA, Framroze K. Patel, on October 5, 1998 to take over as Chairperson of the Publications (Information Receiving and Dissemination) Committee. I am verv excited about working on this Committee, which has an excellent team of dedicated and efficient individuals, spearheaded by Editor-in-Chief Roshan Rivetna, and including Adel Engineer, Jamshed Udvadia, Mehrdad Khosraviani, Rita Kapadia, Jamshed Gandhi, Aaron Rustom, Tanaz Billimoria, Mehran Sepehri, Mahrukh Motafram and numerous volunteers from the Chicago area who help with the mailing. We have augmented the editorial staff of Youthfully Speaking with the addition of Nenshad Bardoliwala, Zal Karkaria and Pervez Mistry.

The Journal's aim is to present educational and inspirational articles, as well as disseminate news and views about the Zarathushti religion, culture, and practices of Zarathushtis in North America and elsewhere. In the Journals to follow, we shall be augmenting the business section; and increase emphasis on sciences, arts, literature, poetry, dance and music and more. Youthfully Speaking will tackle thought-provoking issues. Stories from Firdowsi's Shah Nameh will be serialized. Information on the World Zoroastrian Congress - 2000 in Houston, will also be featured prominently.

The Journal, with a subscription base of more than 1500 households has done well to sustain itself through subscriptions and generous contributions of the readership. Our goal is to see that every Zarathushti household in North America receives the Journal, and also make it available to all educational institutions, religious organizations and libraries. We wish to promote an increase in the readership of the Journal throughout the world, particularly Iran and India. We encourage companies and individuals to come forward to sponsor issues of the Journal, and make gift subscriptions to any individuals or institutions they desire.

The webpage in charge of Rita Kapadia is another information disseminating vehicle. We will be bringing forth more material through this medium in the next few months.

NoRuz Mubarak to all our Zarathushti brethren in North America and throughout the world!

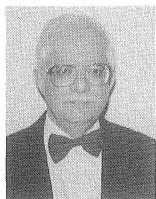
Khorshed Jungalwala, Chair FEZANA Publications Committee

FEZANA JOURNAL INVITES YOU TO "ADOPT-A-READER"

There are many interested anjumans and individuals, in Iran, India and other countries, who would like to read FEZANA JOURNAL but cannot make the payment. Can you adopt a reader? Please consider sending gift subscriptions to an anjuman or to your family or friends or individual of your choice, or donate to the "Journal Gift Subscription Fund". Please make your check payable to FEZANA and mail to FEZANA treasurer, Rustom Kevala [see back cover for address].

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Let me wish all Zarathushtis a happy and prosperous 1999 by quoting, in part, from the Pazend translation of



the Tandarosti
prayer
[from J. J.
Modi, The
Religious
Ceremonies
and Customs of the
Parsees"]:

May there be thousand blessings upon you. May the year be happy, the month auspicious and the day beneficial. Grant that for several days, months and years you may be found worthy and fit to perform religious rites and deeds of charity. May you perform righteous works. May health, virtue and righteousness be your share.

May it be so. May it be more so, as is the wish of Ahura Mazda and His archangels.

My mother, Goolbai, had taught us and I had also read somewhere, that you can inherit wealth but never wisdom. Wisdom, for most of us, is acquired in the brief encounter of experience. If we live long enough, wisdom usually meets us somewhere along the way. But, the trick is to get wisdom before you get old.

When I look around our community's most precious heritage, the young Zarathushtis of North America, I am very proud to admit, that most of them are much smarter and wiser than when I was their age.

One such young athravan (righteous individual) is Aysha Ghadiali, a sophomore at Boston University. I approached her to share her views relative to: (a) what you expect from the Zarathushti community; and (b) what we should be doing as a community. Noted on the next page, are her words of wisdom.

Framroze K. Patel President, FEZANA

On Religion and Identity -- A Youth Perspective

By Aysha Ghadiali Boston, Massachusetts

correspondence with a family friend of my age living in India.

The two of us have many similarities:

both born of two Parsi parents, both presently studying in Universities, both interested in extra-curricular our clubs and meetings, and more. Our greatest difference is the fact that I was born and raised as an American citizen and she as a citizen of India. This sole difference, however, dramatically changes our outlook on our common religion – the Zarathushti Din.

We have written about what we think this difference is – of course, this is not a rule for all Zarathushtis in North America or abroad – but we have agreed

that young Zarathushtis in North America are raised to be curious about their religion and have a hunger for explanation.

We, the young Zarathushtis of North America, are less apt to pray, wear our sudreh and kushti, cook traditional meals and know the traditions and customs, compared to our counterparts in Iran or India. However, if asked to explain what being a Zarathushti means, what our history is and what the religion preaches to lead a good life, we may prove overall to have a greater understanding of the religion. I have heard others, adults, agree with this observation.

This may be explained as a cultural difference. We don't live near agiaries or atash behrams, and though we are also a minority in India and Iran, here we have to constantly explain ourselves. We, in North America must know how to explain our religion because we are constantly asked

to by our peers, colleagues and elders at school or work. The next question is, then what is better? Can we survive as a religion in North America without the appreciation of customs and traditions, or do we want to sur-

vive on faith?

Successful religions must have both aspects of traditional and spiritual life. The intellectual understanding of our religion is not detrimental to our overall survival: if anything it is helpful. However, having the power of knowledge and understanding also means having the power to change. This is one of the fundamental differences between most Zarathushtis in North America and abroad - to fear or not to fear change.

The next issue then is what do we, the youth of North America, want from our parents in the next century? This is not an easy question, living in our super-information world, where many of

my age are turning back to religion to search for solace and for answers to life's complexities and problems.

I believe we want two things that are contradictory – guidance and acceptance. We want guidance to help us to grow into true Zarathushti adults raising our children to know where their grandparents came from and understanding who we are today. However, we also want acceptance, and this means complete acceptance of how we choose to practice our religion, and acceptance of whomever we choose to share the religion with in our married lives.

It may seem that these two concepts cannot go hand in hand, but perhaps there is a balance we must search for. It will take time and patience from both generations, and from Zarathushtis here and abroad.

[Aysha Ghadiali is a sophomore at Boston University, studying political science and history.]



From the Secretary

Time for Frashem Kerenaun (Renewal)

n behalf of the board of directors and committee chairpersons of FEZANA, I'd like to wish all Zarathushtis a NoRuz Mubarak and Happy Iranian New Year full of health, happiness and success. This is the time to cherish our heritage, to strengthen our commitment, and to be proud Zarathushtis in North America.

Frashem kerenaun ('renew, refresh') [Yasna 30.9] central to the Gathas, is best symbolized in the NoRuz celebration. As the world is renewed in springtime, we should also strive to renew our commitment and be among those who renew the world. The time may be right for renewing our associations and the federation.

FEZANA, by its constitution and its philosophy, is positioned for constant renewal and progress. New projects and ideas are constantly introduced. You may volunteer for a project or join the progressive minded committees in FEZANA to participate in renewing the Zarathushti cause and community in North America.

FEZANA officer nominations. According to the FEZANA constitution, positions of Vice President and Secretary are open for election this year. Nomination forms have been sent to the associations and ballots will follow shortly. Your active involvement in this process will assure healthy competition and eventual election of the best person for the jobs.

Next AGM. The next Annual General Meeting (AGM) of FEZANA is planned for mid June 1999 in Washington DC, along with several informative workshops. This meeting is devoted to policy-making for future

Mission 2000

Developing a strong financial base to serve the needs of the Zarathushti community in North America

by the combined efforts of Zarathushti associations across North America. We should keep in mind that the cornerstone of FEZANA is the 14,000 to 18,000 individual Zarathushtis of North America. Through their participation and efforts, the associations were organized, leading then to the federation, FEZANA.

FEZANA serves as an umbrella organization for all Zarathushti associations of North America. By that terminology, it should be able to act as protector during rainy days. It should, therefore, be well-equipped and prepared to act in times of need.

From the Secretary [contd.]

activities and to review work in progress by the committees. It is open to all Zarathushti observers and representatives.

Visits. In the past few months, I had occasions to visit various associations and take part in their functions. It is such a pleasure to see various Zarathushti associations growing and doing well - from Washington DC to New York and to Southern California.

Calculated change. The spirit of renewal and youth participation is phenomenal and most heartening. We welcome calculated change and measured diversity - as long as it is towards progress and renewal, and not in conflict with our traditional values and principles. Please contact your FEZANA representative or board of directors "to be among those who renew the world".

Thanks so much for your positive participation.

Mehran Sepehri Secretary, FEZANA Is FEZANA currently capable of performing its duty in a meaningful way? Namely, financially? Unfortunately, the answer is a clear "No". FEZANA lacks the monetary strength to be the organization we want it to be. With our best intentions, member associations created FEZANA. However, up to now, their only monetary support has consisted mostly of their annual dues.

An appeal. This committee would like to bring this important and somewhat neglected matter, not only to the attention of office bearers, but also each and directly to every Zarathushti. This is an appeal to each association and each Zarathushti who jointly created FEZANA to support this fund-raising effort by contributing generous sums of money, either on a regular monthly básis, or lump sum or any method that suits your situation. Also, remember FEZANA when you make your estate plans. We will recognize all contributions in FEZANA Journal.

The new millennium, the year 2000 is fast approaching. Let us set ourselves a mission to raise \$500,000 for FEZANA by the year 2000. Ahura Mazda willing, together we will accomplish this worthy and reachable goal to help accomplish the many urgent needs of our growing community in North America.

- **■** Education: FEZANA alone cannot be the single source of support, but it will aid Zarathushtis in achieving their goals in life. The funds could be earmarked for tuition, books and supplies for both academic and religious studies, seminars and conferences.
- Welfare: Aid will be given for medical treatment, catastrophic illnesses, business-related help and medical and food supplies. While this aid will be primarily for needy North American Zarathushtis, some

funds will be available to help the worldwide community.

- Senior citizens: To help and guide our senior citizens in all aspects of life, e.g. financial, medical, housing, meals and companionship.
- **■** Zarathushti student exchange: TO help poor Zarathushti children from any part of the world to spend time with Zarathushti families in North America and similarly encourage our children to go to Iran, India and Pakistan.
- * Public Relations: To enhance the knowledge of the Zarathushti faith in the world via books, videos, movies, lectures.
- Building and Real Estate: The ultimate dream is to have a FEZANA Center with a well-equipped library for Zarathushti studies and research.

Projects. Here are some of the fundraising projects that FEZANA plans to undertake.

- (1) We would like all associations to have a painting competition depicting a Zarathushti theme. The prizewinning painting will then be made into greeting cards to be sold at WZC 2000.
- (2) The FEZANA Fund Raising Committee will send articles for selling or a raffle, at least once a year.
- (3) All associations are being requested to hold one fund raising event a year with the proceeds to benefit any one of the causes mentioned earlier.

The Committee appeals to each Zarathushti to contribute \$20 a year for each of the above needs. Per the latest census there are at least 3,000 Zarathushti families in North America. It is our hope that each family will contribute to this noble endeavor. Imagine the impact of that small sacrifice on our community's financial health and ability to take care of the less fortunate ones among us.

Dr. Keikhosrow Harvesf Dr. Yasmin J. Ghadiali FEZANA Fund Raising Committee

Counting Zarathushtis

Planning for the next census of Zarathushtis in North America

n the last two years since my involvement with the FEZANA Census Committee, I have heard at least ten different estimates of the number of Zarathushtis in North America by various Zarathushti community leaders. The guesstimates range from a conservative 15,000 to an exaggerated 60,000. In order to

conduct a scientific census of our community on this continent. the FEZANA Census Committee is developing the following definitions and procedures overseen by the FEZANA President which can facilitate the undertaking of a census, survevs and database for vital statistics such as

deaths, births navjotes and weddings.

Definition of a Zarathushti. As in any scientific project, the operational definition of the unit of interest, in this case the Zarathushti individual, has to be concise and leave no room for misinterpretation. We need to be absolutely crystal clear as to whom we count.

Characteristics of interest. The basic questions asked in all censuses are: year of birth, sex/gender, country of birth, current residence, and religion. We plan to follow this trend.

Type of analyses. Initially we plan to tabulate data which can be used by FEZANA and member associations to facilitate planning various activities such as religious education classes for various age groups, estimating the needed space required at their respective Darbe Mehrs or their meeting places to hold various functions and forecast their community growth in the near future.

Vital statistics database. One of the building blocks in developing statistical records at an association, regional or continental level is to create databases for vital statistics for births and deaths which serve as a check for the accuracy of the census and survey numbers as well as measure fertility and mortality in the

Zarathushti community. We hope that with the cooperation of mobeds and dasturs, a database for navjotes and weddings can also be developed.

Resources.
Heretofore,
FEZANA has
solely depended on
volunteers for
design of computer
programs, data col-

lection, entry and analyses of the census project. It would be essential to employ at least one trained person part-time to oversee the data collection and data entry parts of the project to ensure accuracy, validity and reliability of the final numbers reported.

One of the most cumbersome and labor-intensive tasks which the previous FEZANA Census and Directory Committees had undertaken has resulted in two FEZANA directories. In the latest 1998 version about 9,000 names have been included and yet we know that it probably covers around half of the North American Zarathushti population.

The challenge. In previous censuses, Zarathushtis have been reluctant in providing information about their year of birth which contributes to errors in estimating our population distribution by age group. The main reason mentioned by the respondents has been a perceived lack of confi-

dentiality in the information provided. We hope that by using various cognitive methods and lists, in the next census we will have more complete information on the two most basic demographic characteristics, namely, year of birth and sex/gender. The challenge for the next FEZANA census will be to cover all the regions of North America accurately and provide useful information to the supporting associations for future planning. May Ahura Mazda guide

Rashna Ghadialy, Chairperson FEZANA Census Committee

our path.

Rashna Ghadialy [see photo, left] is a trained demographer from Georgetown University, Washington, DC. She has worked for a leading survey research organization, the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago as a Survey Methodologist since 1992.

A PRAYER

In every aspect of mortal life Be it small or full of strife Our struggle between the Forces of light and darkness Help us, only the good to harness. Given a free will to choose Each man for himself, win or lose. A special task to us is given Our lives, by these Commands are driven. Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds Much wisdom in these simple seeds. Grant us the courage to live Up to those creeds May it be for bigger or much smaller needs. And such is the central element of Zarathushtra's message To help us, as before, to get though life's passage. This tenet, simple but profound Be with us till we're heaven bound. For the Cosmic Battle of good erevil Within every Zarathushti is driven. AMEN, AMEN, AMEN

- Dinaz Kutar Rogers Albany, Oregon

Zarathushtra, his Religion and its Followers Standardization of Names and Spellings

By Jamshed R. Udvadia Lansing, Michigan

The need to standardize. A variety of spellings and forms of the name of the prophet, his religion and its followers have been used on the email and in articles submitted to FEZANA Journal. When Zarathushtis talk at inter-faith seminars or to the local newspapers, the same diverse forms and pronunciation are noticed.

It would be desirable to have one standard nomenclature and one standard set of spellings for the name of the prophet, his religion and the followers of the religion. This would:

- Eliminate any confusion in the minds of the readers and listeners, especially the younger Zarathushtis and the people of other religions, who are not conversant with the mental translation that Zarathushti elders go through, when they speak of Zoroastrianism as the religion of Zarathushtra, to reconcile two words with different roots.
- Give a proper respect to the prophet of our ancient religion, which has aroused considerable interest among the diverse communities of the world.

Existing Variations on the Name of the Prophet

(1) Zarathushtra has been used by various scholars, teachers and authors of religious books such as: Dastur Khurshed S. Dabu, Dastur Dr. Framroze A. Bode, Dr. Pallan R. Ichaporia, Ervad Jal R. Vimadalal, Framroze Rustomjee and others.

- (2) Zarthustra, occasionally preceded by the honorary title 'Asho' was used by FEZANA Journal (prior to 1997). It is almost identical to the above form, but was adopted to simplify the spelling.
- (3) Zarthost or Jarthost (usually suffixed by Saheb) is mostly used by Parsis in India. This is obviously a shortened form of No. 1, with a slight sloppiness of tongue in the variation where the J is used instead of the Z. This particular substitution is noticed in other names like Jarine instead of Zarine, Jal instead of Zal, etc.
- (4) Zardusht the use of this form by some Iranian Zarathushtis might be traced to the Shah Nameh. The author, Firdowsi compiled his information from various poets and authors, who had written about Persian history before his birth. It looks like a contraction of form No. 1 with the simplification of the middle 'th' by the 'd' sound.
- (5) Zoroaster is used mainly by Western authors and others with a Western education. While all the above forms relate to form No. 1, the last form, Zoroaster shows a considerable departure from it. Dastur Dabu explains that the three Avestan syllables Zara-thush-stra meant Golden Shining Star and that the Greeks simplified the name by dropping the middle syllable and translating the rest, which through further translation by Western authors became Zoro-aster (Golden or Shining Star).

Some Zarathushtis prefer the form Zoroaster, because of the claim of some non-Zarathushti scholars, that "ushtra" is related to "ushtor" which means 'camel' in Dari, a current language of Iran; hence the meaning 'owner of old camels' attached to the name Zarathushtra, which seems pejorative to them. Dr. Simmons. adds to this, that the Greeks had no knowledge of Avestan derivation and tried to make sense of the name by calling it 'shining star' or Zoro-aster. However Dr. Pallan Ichaporia says: "The above etymology from Dari is like putting the cart before the horse. Dari is a very late development – at least 3000 years after the Gathic Avesta where we find the name of our prophet as Zarathushtra."

What's in a name? There are those that would argue that "there is nothing inherently sacred in a name which exists primarily for the convenience of reference." This school of thought generally relies on the line made famous by Shakespeare: "That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet." Here we have to remember that the line was spoken by Juliet (in the play Romeo and Juliet) who is trying to induce her lover, Romeo, to change his name because his name, Montague, is what is causing the trouble between him and her family.

Besides, while the rose would "smell as sweet" even if one called it by another name like dahlia or pansy, it would be impossible for the listener to understand that what the speaker really meant was a rose.

Respect. Each person's name is important to him. This is more true when we talk about an important historical person; even more true, when we talk about a prophet who has founded a religion, that has been followed for over 3000 years.

FEZANA JOURNAL continues to grow in size and quality. To keep up with costs, subscription rates (in US\$) will increase as shown, effective October 1, 1999.

	US	Canada	Overseas-Sea	Overseas-Air
1 year	\$15	\$20	\$22	\$30
2 years	\$28	\$37	\$42	\$57
3 years	\$40	\$52	\$60	\$80

Chuck is a short form of Charles, but no one would address Prince Charles of England as Prince Chuck, as it would show a lack of respect. This is meant to answer those who might try to use form Nos. 2, 3 or 4 above.

Expediency. There are those who allow the Westerners to change their original name to a Westernized form, for example Jim instead of Jamshed, Phil instead of Phiroze. This results in a loss of identity and is possibly done to gain some temporary advantage with the Westerners. Sometimes it may be due to a mental laziness which prefers to permit the change in their name, rather than make the effort to correct and educate. There are others who steadfastly refuse to do that because they are proud of their identity as Zarathushtis. They have no difficulty in getting the Westerners to spell and pronounce their names as they should be.

Some Parsis who use Zarathushtra when speaking in Gujarati, switch to Zoroaster in English in the mistaken belief that that is the English translation of Zarathushtra. As we all know a proper noun such as a name, cannot be translated.

The religion and its followers. The rules of etymology and semantic derivation require that words related to the original word keep the same root and build upon it, to show the relationship. The words Zarathushti Din and Zarathushti designating the religion of Zarathushtra and its followers would satisfy the above rule.

There has been some argument that while Zarathushtra is the authentic name of the prophet, we should retain Zoroastrianism and Zoroastrian. This was suggested in the

interest of being understood by the Western world which is more familiar with those forms. It does not take long for people to adapt to a different form or even a totally different name, for example, everyone has adapted to Sri Lanka which was known as Ceylon a few years ago; and Beijing (Peking), Malawi (Nyasaland) and several others.

Another consideration against the term Zoroastrianism is the meaning of the suffix '-ism'. The American Heritage Dictionary gives this meaning among others: a distinctive doctrine, system or theory – generally used disparagingly. It should be noted that the disparaging use is only as applied to doctrines and not to practices or actions like patriotism, heroism, etc. It is of interest to note that all religions are referred to as '-isms' in the English language, except Christianity – which may be a point to ponder.

Conclusion. It is suggested that for all the reasons given above, we should adopt Zarathushtra, Zarathushti Din and Zarathushti as the standard forms and spellings henceforth.

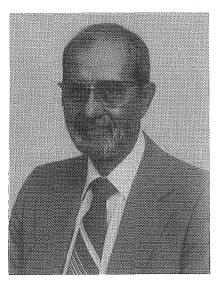
Some scholars pointed out that the authentic name of Jesus is Yeshua, but since all English language Bibles and other literature refer to him as Jesus, there would be tremendous resistance now to the idea of reverting to the original form of the name. Let us not fall into the same error and allow the Westerners to change the authentic name of our prophet, his religion or its followers. Let us exert a little effort to educate Western society, instead of falling in step with them. using the argument: "Zoroaster and its derivative forms are more recognizable in the West."

The time to do that is now, when the name is little known outside Zarathushti society. The adoption of these standards by FEZANA Journal now could be the first step to achieving this goal.

All change has always been started by a few far-sighted individuals and the rest of society has followed in time. That was how the US constitution was adopted by the representatives of thirteen states at the start, who then convinced the people of their state to accept it and later the people of other states followed one by one.

The effort needed to standardize these names would certainly be much less than that needed for the adoption of the US constitution. Let us all make a decision now and stand by it.

[The proposals in this paper were accepted by FEZANA at its 1997 AGM.]



Jamshed R. Udvadia retired from the Michigan Civil Service as a computer programming supervisor. For 3 years his commentaries on community matters were broadcast over WKAR (Michigan State University radio). He started the Zarathushti Din classes for Michigan Zarathushtis in 1985 and continues to be a guest teacher there. He has been an invited speaker at the Interfaith Dialog Association's World Religions Conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Things turn out best for people who make the best of the way things turn out.





Payk-e Mehr celebrates 12th anniversary

Dr. Mehraban Shahrvini [photo above] editor-in-chief and publisher Payk-e Mehr, the bi-lingual (English and Farsi) magazine of Zarathushti and Persian culture, was felicitated at a reception sponsored by the Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia and friends, in Vancouver on November 21st. His Worship Jack Loucks, Mayor of the City of North Vancouver gave the keynote address. In a congratulatory message, Prime Minister of Canada, Jean Chretien commended Payk-e mehr for serving as "a vital link among members of the community helping to sustain cultural ties from generation to generation."

Sports in Vancouver

The Zartoshty Basketball Group, sponsored by the Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia, had their first tournament of the season in September with 7 teams participating. The best player was coach Azadmehr Kaviani. Shahriar Khosraviani won a medal for the best achievement.



Spearheading the Dallas Zarathushti center building project: from left, ZANT president Mitra Valatabar, social director Nina DiLucci and long-time advocate Bakhtawar Roshanravan.

Dallas Zarathushtis raise funds for center

nder the dynamic leadership of ZANT (Zoroastrian Association of North Texas) president Mitra Valatabar, the Dallas community has rallied with great enthusiasm to raise funds for a Zarathushti center in that city.

Impetus for the project Building Fund (which had gathered about \$30,000 since its inception in 1995) came at the ZANT General Body Meeting last September, with two challenges: Behram and Fareida Irani pledged to contribute \$1000 if 10 others did the same; and Meheraban and Mehry Farzaneh pledged \$5000 if \$100,000 could be raised by NoRuz 1999. To the delight of ZANT treasurer Anita Patel, the community responded and both challenges were met by December.

The Mehergan function last October was a great day for the Building

Fund. On that day alone, forty families pledged a total of over \$20,000. A big boost came in December, with the donation of 70 acres of farmland (appraised at \$105,000) located in Lubbock, Texas, by Lubbock surgeon Rustam Mehdiabadi and his wife Roshan. This brings the total in the fund to \$162,000.

With a plethora of fund-raising activities — a food stall at the Carrolton County Fair, Grocery store cards, frequent flyer mileage donations, Dallas Passbooks, FEZANA Directory sales, Garage sales, Dhansakh Picnic in the Park, Anand Bazaar stalls, Raffles, Car Wash, cookbook, sale of Tshirts, mugs, NoRuz cards, and other creative ideas, the Dallas community's dreams are coming closer to reality.

- By Roshan Rivetna

DARE MIGHTY THINGS

Far better to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure, than to take rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much, nor suffer much, because they live in the grey twilight that knows not victory or defeat.

- Theodore Roosevelt

McDougal Acquitted

API, NOVEMBER 23. 1999

Whitewater figure Susan McDougal was acquitted of embezzling \$150,000 from conductor Zubin Mehta and his wife – a case she said was trumped up to pressure her to testify against President Clinton ...

The charges stemmed from her employment as a book keeper and aide to world famous conductor, Zubin Mehta and his longtime wife, a former actress. ... Mrs. Mehta claimed that she never gave her assistant permission to sign checks or credit card receipts. ...

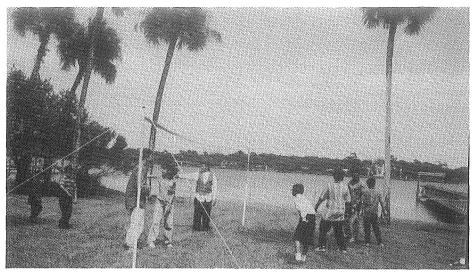
McDougal described Mrs. Mehta as a sister-like friend who showered her with gifts. She said they became inseparable, lunching together in fine restaurants and shopping nonstop at the best stores in Beverly Hills. Eventually she moved into the Mehta home. ... Her husband traveled abroad most of the year and left Mrs. Mehta to manage their finances.

In a climactic appearance, Mehta flew to Los Angeles from Munich, interrupting a concert schedule to testify that his wife was not a compulsive shopper and their spending habits should not be on trial.

SOUL in Dallas

Shahriar Shahriari and Meher Amalsad presented their innovative new program SOUL (Success Out of Understanding Love) on November 21st, in Dallas, Texas [see photo below]. "An educational, entertaining and most inspiring program," says ZANT president Mitra Valatabar, "SOUL was awesome, and thoroughly enjoyed by all. We recommend this program to all Associations in North America."

Meher Amalsad (left) and Shahriar Shahriari (right) presenting SOUL in Dallas. Photo shows the creation of the Magical Child Rising SOUL – a new innovation in their program.



Central Florida Zarathushtis celebrated NoRuz at Ormand Beach, in Orlando, complete with a Haft Seen table, a humbandagi, lunch and volleyball. A small group of about 21 families, they get together monthly for religious education and social functions. The children have been volunteering their efforts under the guidance of Sarvar Irani in activities such as raising funds for the Salvation Army and organizing garage sales for the needy.



Parsi ladies at the **Pateti function in Raleigh, North Carolina**, at Behram and Tehmi Dalal's house last August. About 35 Zarathushtis (possibly the largest such gathering in that town to date) from Charlotte, Durham, Greensboro, Goldsboro, Fayetteville, Concord, Wilmington and Pinehurst – gathered for the festivities, some travelling 2 - 3 hours. "With the gorgeous weather in the Carolinas year-round it's a great place to live," says Tehmi, "we would love to see more Parsi families settle here."



INTERFAITH ACTIVITIES

World Religions Conference, Michigan

Jamshed R. Udvadia and Dr. Meher M. Dastoor were invited to make the presentation on the Zarathushti Din at the Interfaith Dialogue Association's World Religions Conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan on November 7th. Seven religions were repre-Zarathushti Din, Islam, sented: Baha'i. Hinduism, Christianity, Native American and Buddhism, The Zarathushti presentation which included a 15 minute talk followed by a presentation on Zarathushti rituals, during which Meher showed a video tape of her sons' navjote, prompted the organizer, Russell Rhodes to write to Jamshed: thought that the Zarathushti Din presentation was one of the most interesting ... I thought you and Meher did a stellar job. Thank you for joining us."

Interfaith Workshop in Santa Cruz, California

Maneck Bhujwala represented the Zarathushti faith at the Interfaith Workshop conducted by the local Interfaith Seminary in Santa Cruz, California, on October 17th, under the leadership of interfaith personality, Father Mazimillian Mizzi, a pioneer in interreligious dialogue in Assisi, Italy, since 1960. Each faith representative recited a short prayer from their holy books with a translation in English...

Thanksgiving Square, Dallas

Charlotte Kharas represented Zarathushtis at the annual Thanksgiving Prayer Services at the Thanksgiving Square non-denominational chapel in downtown Dallas. She recited the Tandarosti prayer, and gave an explanation, blessing all participants with good health and happiness. The program ended with all the faiths singing America the Beautiful.



Rohinton Rivetna, founding trustee of the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions, greeting His Eminence Francis Cardinal George of Chicago, at the CPWR's annual banquet in Chicago, on December 15th.

UN Declarationof Human Rights

Zenobia Tantra, representing Zarathushti youth, shared reading of the articles of the UN Declaration of Human Rights, at a 50th anniversary commemoration on December 13th, in Chicago. Rohinton Rivetna spoke of the first Declaration of Human Rights by Cyrus the Great, a replica of which is now enshrined in the UN headquarters in New York.

Chicago Zarathushtis in Thanksgiving Services

Bomi Damkevala represented the Zarathushti faith at the Interfaith Thanksgiving Service organized by the National Council of Community and Justice, at the United Methodist Church in downtown Chicago, on November 25th.

The "ZAC Choir" of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago, participated in the Interfaith Thanksgiving Service at Procopious Abbey with a rendition of Chhaiye Hame Zarathoshti and Khudavind O Khavind.

Faiths and Followers

Of over 5 billion people belonging to different faiths of the world, the numbers of followers are:

Christians: 1700 million 881 million Muslims: 665 million Hindus: **Buddhists:** 312 million Chinese folk: 180 million Tribal: 92 million Jews: 18 million 5 million Baha'is: 3.5 million Tains: Zarathushtis: 250 thousand

20% of the world's population, 1100 million are atheists or agnostics.

- Mumbai Samachar, March 23, 1998

Thanksgiving in Houston

Ervad Peshotan Unwalla's melodious voice reverberated through the hall of the Rothko Chapel, in Houston, at the Interfaith Thanksgiving Service on November 19th, as he recited the Doa Tandarosti. This was followed by a talk about the Jashan Ceremony by Vahishta Kaikobad.

Faith Traditions Urged to Address Critical Issues Facing Humanity

At a dinner for interfaith leaders at the home of Canadian Counsel Christopher Poole, in Chicago in January, attended by Rohinton Rivetna, religious traditions were urged to bring their weight to bear on critical issues facing humankind. One such issue is the deployment of landmines. Between 60 and 80 million landmines are currently deployed in 70 countries, in their wake leaving behind death and destruction. 26,000 people are killed or injured every year by landmines strewn around the landscape.

"Thus far faith traditions have ignored such issues," said Mr. Poole, "It is important that we mobilize this force of society to bring awareness and move humanity towards a better world." Zarathushtis with our mission of moving the world towards *Frasho-kereti* are uniquely qualified to take a lead in such matters. Interested persons, please contact Rohinton Rivetna at (630) 325-5383.

AROUND THE WORLD

Air-India anniversary

On June 8, 1948, the 'Malabar Princess', a constellation aircraft bearing India's tricolor left Mumbai's Santa Cruz airport, on a maiden journey to London under the banner of Air-India International.

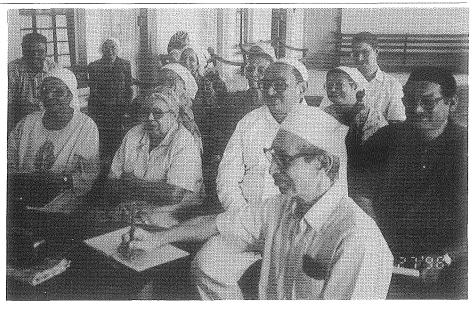
On its 50th anniversary, Captain Keki Guzder, the man who piloted the aircraft, declared at the commemorative celebrations in London: "It was a proud moment." The inaugural flight carried 35 passengers and 164 bags of mail. It took over 24 hours, with refuelling stops at Cairo and Geneva.

Today, Air-India has 10 flights a week from London to Delhi/Mumbai, a daily flight from London to New York, and 3 flights a week to Chicago.

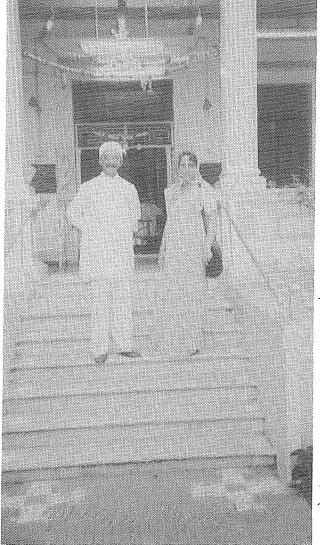


Udvada recognized

Through intensive efforts, Marazban J. Patrawala [photo, above] Zarathushti member on the Government of India Minorities Commission, has been able to persuade the Government of Gujarat State to declare Udvada, where the oldest and most sacred Iranshah fire temple is located, a "Pavitra Yatra Dham" (Holy Pilgrimage Place). Udvada will now be included in the purview of the Yatradham Board after completion of development projects for six Yatradhams declared earlier.



Participants at a 3-day camp/retreat conducted by Ervad K. N. Dastoor, at the Sir. J. J. Dharamshala in Udvada, organized by Silloo Mehta of the Mazdayasnie Connection of Los Angeles.



Lonavla Agiary

Dasturji Marazban Gonda and Jaloo [photo left] at an anniversary celebration of the agiary in Lonavla, a hillstation 65 miles from Mumbai. Beautifully situated in a compound of fruit trees, this agiary was built in 1899 by Cowasjee Dinshawjee Adenwalla. In 1976, the fire from the agiary in Aden was ceremoniously installed here. Parsis of Lonavla are full of praise for Dasturji Gonda, through whose devoted efforts and hard work the agiary has received a new life. "When he prays," says a resident, "his voice is beautiful, with each and every word recited clearly and meaningfully. He has given this agiary a new face-lift."



NoRuz

Celebration in Central Asia

TASHKENT, MARCH 21 (REUTERS)

atriotic banners flew, the sun shone and the streets of Tashkent filled with the smell of cooking on March 21st, as former Soviet Uzbekistan celebrated the recently revived spring holiday of NoRuz. Across Central Asia, the 'New Day' festival – New Year in ancient Zoroastrian religion that preceded Islam along the old Silk Road – has been taken up by leaders anxious to establish a sense of nationhood in the ethnically complex young states left by the Soviet collapse.

For most people, the spring equinox is now a chance to celebrate in public what under communism was a family affair, marked at home by special dishes like the rice specialty 'plov' or 'pilaf'. But some dissenters see political undertones and compare speeches and lavish entertainments laid on by the region's authoritarian rulers to Soviet holidays designed to foster consent and distract the public from economic hardship.

While the holiday is marked in other Islamic countries in the region, including Iran, Afghanistan and parts of Pakistan, Muslim clerics stress it is not a religious festival. Some see the emphasis on NoRuz in the ex-Soviet states as an attempt by secular governments to offset an Islamic revival.

In Tashkent, the biggest city in Central Asia with a population of two million, thousands of families strolled in the sunshine around Independence – formerly Lenin – Square.

Calendar of	Festivals					
Fravardegan/Panjeh/Hamaspathme Five Gatha days	edayem Gahambar Tue Mar 16 - Mar 20	(F)				
Char-Shanbe-Soori (Heralding the Tuesday prior to NoRuz	New Year) Tue Mar 16	(F)				
NoRuz or Jamshedi Navroze (New Mah Fravardin, Roz Hormazd	Year) Sun Mar 21	(F)				
Khordad Sal (Birthday of Zarathus Mah Fravardin, Roz Khordad		(F)				
Pir e Herisht Festival Mah Fravardin, Roz Amardad-Kh		, ,				
	orshed Sut Wall 27 Was					
Ava Ardavisoor nu Parab Mah Avan, Roz Avan	Sat Feb 27 Mon Mar 29	(K) (S)				
Fravardegan (Remembrance of the Mah Fravardin, Roz Fravardin	departed)	(F)				
	Thu Tipi o	(1)				
Jashan-e-Ardibeheshtgan Mah Ardibehesht, Roz Ardibehesh	at Thu Apr 22	(F)				
Atash-nu-Parab						
Mah Adar, Roz Adar	Sun Mar 28 Tue Apr 27	(K) (S)				
Maidyozarem Gahambar						
Mah Ardibehesht, Roz Khorshed	! - Daepmeher Fri Apr 30 - May 4	(F)				
Zarathusht-no-Diso (Death anniver	sarv of Zarathushtra)					
Mah Daye, Roz Khorshed	Thu Apr 29 Sat May 29	(K) (S)				
Maidhyarem Gahambar						
	Tue May 4 - May 8	(K)				
Mah Daye, Roz Meher-Behram	Thu Jun 3 - Jun 7	(S)				
Homaji Baj		>				
Mah Daye, Roz Govad	Wed Jun 9	(S)				
Pir e Sabz Festival Mah Khordad, Roz Ashtad-Anera	n Mon Jun 14 - Jun 18	(F)				
Pir e Banu Festival						
Mah Tir, Roz Meher-Behram	Sun Jul 4 - Jul 8	(F)				
Maidyoshem Gahambar Mah Tir, Roz Khorshed-Daepmel	her Tue Jun 29 - Jul 3	(F)				
Jashne Tirgan						
Mah Tir, Roz Tir	Thu Jul 1	(F)				
Fravardegan/Muktad/Hamaspathm	nedayem Gahambar					
Five Ğatha Days	Sun Jul 18 - Jul 22 Tue Aug 17 - Aug 21	(K) (S)				
Pateti-Navroze						
Mah Fravardin, Roz Hormazd	Fri Jul 23 Sun Aug 22	(K) (S)				
Khordad Sal (Birthday of Zarathushtra)						
Mah Fravardin, Roz Khordad	Wed Jul 28 Fri Aug 27	(K) (S)				
(F)=Fasli, (K)=Kadmi, (S)=Shenshai						

"It's our great national holiday. The food, seeing relatives, fun for the children," said one man with his two-year-old son as they watched Uzbek tumblers performing stunts to the accompaniment of traditional music. A young boy of no more than seven danced, turned acrobatic somersaults and threw himself, bare-chested, on to a pile of broken glass — all of it apparently without injury.

"We always marked the new year at home with a special meal. But, sure, it's nice now that we have a national holiday," said another man, wandering through the crowds with his young daughter.

Over in the rambling old city, next to the blue-domed bazaar where dozens of traders noisily hawked 'plov' from steaming open-air cauldrons, hundreds of men crowded into a park to bet on a day-long series of cockfights.

"For thousands of years, our forebears celebrated NoRuz as a day of joy and happiness," President Islam Karimov, who has ruled Uzbekistan virtually unchallenged since becoming its Soviet Communist Party chief in 1989, told invited dignitaries at a colorful open-air concert.

But not everyone was impressed by the official party. In Tashkent, where living standards have plummeted amid attempts to maintain tight state economic controls, Shamil, who supplements his meagre wages by using his car as an unofficial taxi, felt the entertainment was just a distraction. [From Karachi Banu Mandal Newsletter, What's On]

Parsis praying the Avan Yasht at Mumbai's oceanfront on Avan roz of Avan mah, celebrating Avan Ardvisoor nu Parab

An 1890s description of the Avan Ardvisoor nu Parab prayers at the oceanfront in Bombay

shrewd Scotch-American ironmaster, Andrew Carnegie ... gives the following description of the worship of the modern Parsees, as actually witnessed by him in Bombay:

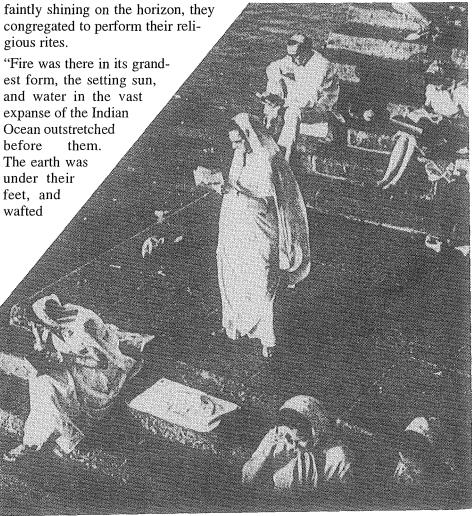
"This evening we were surprised to see, as we strolled along the beach, more Parsees than ever before, and more Parsee ladies, richly dressed, all wending their way towards the sea. It was the first of the new moon, a period sacred to those worshippers of the elements; and here on the shore of the ocean, as the sun was sinking in the sea, and the slender silver thread of the crescent moon was faintly shining on the horizon, they congregated to perform their religious rites.

across the sea the air came laden with the perfumes of 'Araby the blest'.

"Surely no time or place could be more fitly chosen than this for lifting up the soul to the realms beyond sense ... How inexpressibly sublime the scene appeared to me, and how insignificant and unworthy of the unknown seemed even our cathedrals 'made with human hands', when compared with this looking up through nature unto nature's God!

"I stood and drank in the serene happiness which seemed to fill the air. I have seen many modes and forms of worship ... but all poor in comparison with this. Nor do I ever expect in all my life to witness a religious ceremony which will so powerfully affect me as that of the Parsees on the beach at Bombay."

From Mary Boyce [Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism, 1987] quoting from Samuel Laing's A Modern Zoroastrian, 1890.





SEPTEMBER 24 - 26, 1999, CALGARY, ALBERTA, CANADA. AT RAMADA HOTEL, (DOWNTOWN) 708 - 8TH AVENUE, S.W., CALGARY

Welcome to Western Cana

This unique conference is arranged to follow up on the tremendous success of the First International Avesta Conference. The aim is to promote knowledge and understanding of all aspects of Zoroastrianism from the

Gathas, Younger Avesta, Pahlavi, Parsi/Zoroastrian Literature, Rituals and Traditions as they evolved in the last three thousand years. This Conference is designed for scholars, academicians, students and members of the Zoroastrian

community and all those who are interested in understanding the Zoroastrian religion. World renowned scholars are invited and will participate and share their research and knowledge. Panel discussions will include topics of general community interest. Please come and join us in this exceptional endeavor.





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FRIDAY	24 SEPT. '99	CONFERENCE	8:00 A.M 4:30 P.M.
SATURDAY	25 SEPT. '99	CONFERENCE	8:00 A.M 4:30 P.M.
SATURDAY	25 SEPT. '99	BANQUET	7:00 P.M 10:30 P.M.
SUNDAY	26 SEPT. '99	CONFERENCE	8:00 A.M 1:00 P.M.

FOLLOWING WORLD RENOWNED SCHOLARS WILL BE PRESENTING THE PAPERS:

FROM INDIA:

Ervad Pervez Bajan

FROM ISRAEL:

Prof. Shaul Shaked

FROM JAPAN:

To be announced later

FROM RUSSIA:

Dr. Arthur Ambartsumian

FROM U.S.A.:

Prof. Jamsheed Choksy Prof. Dr. Richard Frye Dr. Pallan R. Ichaporia

Prof. William Malandra

Prof. James Russell

Prof. Martin Schwartz Prof. Gernot Windfuhr

Mr. Keki Bhote

FROM U.K.:

Prof. Nicholas Sims-Williams

FROM GERMANY:

Prof. Helmut Humbach Prof. Werner Sundermann

FROM ITALY:

Prof. Antonio Panaino

Prof. Carlo Cereti

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Mr. Firdosh Mehta Tel: (780) 438-4371, Fax: (780) 436-0004, e-mail: FMEHTA@RNG.COM

/ESTALTA'

1999 FEZANA AGM

The 1999 annual general meeting of FEZANA is scheduled for mid-June 1999 in Washington DC, along with several informative workshops. It is open to all interested Zarathushti observers and representatives. Contact FEZANA Secretary at (408) 866-8633, email: Ron_Sepehri@ amat.com.

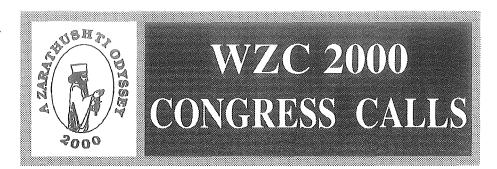
Zoroastrian Olympics



The Zoroastrian Sports Committee of FEZANA is pleased to announce the Sixth Zoroastrian Olympics, July 1-4, 1999, in Los Angeles. Zarathushti individuals and associations are invited to participate. Contact the ZSC at P. O. Box 66828, Los Angeles, CA 90066, tel: 1-888-855-0164.

North American Youth Congress in Montreal

"May we be among those who renew the World, Turning Belief into Action" is the theme of the 8th North American Youth Congress to be held at McGill University in Montreal, August 12-15, 1999. Mehernosh Mody, Mazda Antia, Rustom Appoo and Arianne Teherani of ZYNA (Zoroastrian Youth of North America) have put out a call for volunteers. Watch for further details. For information contact Mehernosh at (617) 928-0953, email: mmody@ media.mit.edu.



SEVENTH WORLD ZOROASTRIAN CONGRESS Houston, Texas, December 28, 2000 to January 1, 2001 http://www.fezana.org/WZC2000

From preparations to donations to quilts, we are weaving together a confederation of excitement. Creating something new for 2000 means making a mark today. We want everyone to contribute what they want, how they want. The call has been sounded – Attend the Congress in two years, be a part of the Congress today.

The program. The WZC2000 Executive Team decided to divide the program into numerous tracks that will comprise the Daily Theme. The tracks include topics such as cultural, sociological, religious, business, youth, community building, history, education, governance and parenting. Each track will be developed by a track leader and other Zarathushtis who may have a special interest in the subject.

The Operations Committee has finalized negotiations with the J. W. Marriott. The facilities available to us are a full service conference and exhibition center, a richly decorated ballroom and fifteen meeting and banquet rooms. Hotel rooms will cost \$79 for quad occupancy per night. WZC2000 is also arranging sight-seeing package tours for travellers.

The Sports Committees. The Houston Zoroastrian Sports Committee and Bijan Khosraviani of the Zoroastrian Sports Committee of FEZANA are planning sports events on December 26 and 27. This two-day sports spectacular is open to Zarathushtis of all ages, and we are expecting participation from all over the world. Look on the web at www.fezana.org/WZC2000.

The Awards Committee is soliciting comments on the proposed award categories (see next page).

The Fund Raising Committee has received over \$10,000 of seed money from eleven associations. Money has been coming in on a grass roots level. The successful \$2 for \$2000 campaign asks that each Zarathushti contribute \$2 per year until the Congress. Many thanks to: Toxy Cowasjee of Karachi for raising over \$3500; Dr. Anoshiravani for raising over \$1400 from friends and well-wishers in California; Dr. Farrokh Mistree for \$177 from Atlanta Zarathushtis plus another \$1026 of which \$1000 was donated by Burges and Freny Jokhi; Jamshed Udvadia who collected \$831 from the 151 Zarathushtis in Michigan (just 8% short of the 2 for 2000 goal); and Khorshed Jungalwala for \$130 from Boston. One of our donors is Ervad Soli Dastur of Florida sent us over \$606 of the 'ashodad' received for religious ceremonies performed in 1998.

Unity Quilt. Dolly Dastoor sent a letter to associations about the Unity Quilt. This quilt will be made up of all the logos of all the Zarathushti organizations in the world. Designed by master quilter Khurshid Bamboat, the Unity Quilt will hang in the Zarathushti Heritage and Cultural Center in Houston. Dolly's letter requested all associations to send their logo, year it

Congress Calls (continued) ...

was established and £10 to Khurshid Bamboat at 1, Ferrings, College Road, Dulwich, London, SE217LU, England.

WZC 2000 Raffle. Enter the WZC 2000 Raffle and win an exciting prize! Tickets are US\$5 and Cdn\$7, available from your local association. Thanks to Freny Ranji for coordinating the raffle. The Grand Prize is two tickets on Luftansa to Europe, India or Pakistan (donated by Luftansa and the Davier family); the 1st prize is registration for two at the WZC 2000; the 2nd prize is a VCR (donated by Jacob Easo of Jacob's Hi-Tech Graphics). The drawing will be held at Sunday School on April 11, 1999 at the Zoroastrian Heritage and Cultural Center in Houston.

Fund Raising Co-Chair. With much regret we have accepted the resignation of Rustom Kevala as co-chair of the Fund Raising Committee. We wish to thank him for his efforts to develop fund-raising strategies and his offer to help WZC 2000 in any other capacity. We are very pleased that Dr. Yasmin Ghadiali, a dynamic fund-raiser who has been involved in fundraising for Parsi General Hospital and the New York Congress, has accepted our invitation to be co-chair.

Thank you all!



WZC 2000 Committee members, in costume: seated, l. to r., Khorshed Jungalwala, Gordafried Aresh; standing Jimmy Mistry, Dolly Dastoor, Homi Davier and Houston's Mehru Dubash and Yasmin Medhora, join in the Halloween Party, organized by ZAH, which raised \$2300 for WZC 2000.

in coming issues of fezana journal

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.

Fall (September) 1999: A Guide to Prayers

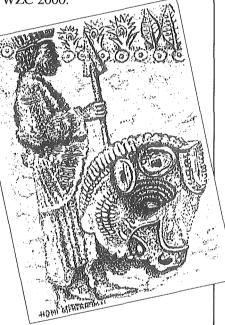
Readers are invited to submit articles and letters expressing their thoughts and feelings about prayer in the Zarathushti religion.

Submission deadline is July 1.

"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.

Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress Houston, Texas, December 28, 2000 - January 1, 2001

WORLD ZARATHUSHTI COMMUNITY AWARDS

For the first time in the history of World Zarathushti congresses, Zarathushtis selected internationally for their contribution to the faith, culture and heritage or who have won international recognition in their chosen profession will be recognized and honored. The awards will be presented at the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress. The categories of awards, their definitions and evaluation criteria are still to be finalized, but the awards currently under consideration by the WZC Awards Committee are as shown below:

- (1) Outstanding World Zarathushti Award: To recognize a Zarathushti who has made significant contribution in furthering the understanding of Zarathushti religion, culture and heritage among both Zarathushtis and non-Zarathushtis in his/her own country and internationally, and otherwise provided outstanding leadership and service to the community.
- (2) Outstanding World Professional Zarathushti Award: To recognize a Zarathushti who has excelled in his/her profession and whose achievements have been recognized by peers in his/her country and/or internationally.
- (3) Outstanding World Humanitarian Service and Philanthropy Award: To recognize a Zarathushti who has given selflessly of him/her self and/or his/her personal wealth to alleviate misfortunes, suffering and pain of other Zarathushtis in his/her own country and/or internationally.
- (4) Outstanding World Zarathushti Cultural Award: To recognize a Zarathushti who has excelled in his/her profession in the field of art and culture (music, dance, art, etc.) and whose achievements have been recognized by peers in his/her country and/or internationally.
- (5) Outstanding World Zarathushti Literary Award: To recognize a Zarathushti who has excelled in his/her profession in the field of literature and/or journalism and whose writings, particularly on subjects related to Zarathushti history, faith or culture, have been recognized by peers in his/her country and/or internationally.
- (6) Outstanding World Young Zarathushti Award: To recognize a young Zarathushti, no more than 35 years in age, who through his/her progressively increasing involvement in Zarathushti community affairs in the country where he/she resides and through his/her contributions to the advancement of the Zarathushti faith among Zarathushti youth is considered as an emerging future dynamic and outstanding Zarathushti leader.
- (7) **Posthumous Award**: To honor those Zarathushtis who have departed this world in the last decade or so who during their lifetime made significant contribution to the Zarathushti community through posthumous citation.
- (8) Non-Zarathushti Scholar Award; To recognize non-Zarathushti scholars who have made significant contributions to the knowledge of Zarathushti faith, scriptures, history and culture.

The Awards Committee of the Congress solicits your comments on the above proposed awards. Based on the comments received, the Awards Committee will finalize the categories, their definitions and evaluation criteria and issue an international Call for Nominations in mid-1999. Please address comments to Dinshaw F. D. Joshi, Chair, WZC Awards Committee, 4515 Willard Avenue, Aprat. S-1609, Chevy Chase, MD 20815-3619, USA, Fax: (301) 654-0001, email: dfjoshi@erols.com

Tours to Iran

- Mr. Mahyar Ardeshiri of Tehran is interested in arranging tours of Iran. He can be contacted through Mr. Farzad Ardeshiri in Toronto at (905) 858-3468, or Dr. Phiroz Dastoor in Toronto at (416) 242-7433.
- Silloo Mehta of the Los Angeles based Mazdayasnie Connection is planning another tour of Iran in Summer 1999. Her last tour, during October 1998 was enjoyed by all [see letter by Behroze Karanjia in Readers Forum this issue]. Contact Silloo at (714) 995-8765.

Canada-China Friendship Tour

The Federation of Canada-China Friendship Associations comprised of non-political, non-profit groups across Canada, are organizing a tour of China in May 1999. For information contact Dr. Phiroz Dastoor at (416) 242-7433.

Earthquake in Iran

A strong earthquake hit southern Iran on November 17th, and caused landslides in a mountainous area and heavily damaged six villages, Tehran radio reported. This quake, measuring 5.6 on the Richter scale, "caused destruction of 80 to 100%" in the villages in Kerman province.

An earthquake measuring 4.8 on the Richter scale hit near the northwestern city of Tabriz, hours after a quake in the same area measuring 4.6.

There was also a tremor in south-western Khuzestan province. Earth-quakes often hit Iran. On November 13th a quake measuring 5.7 on the Richter scale rocked southern Fars province, killing 5 people, injuring 80 others and destroying 850 houses.

Iran's worst earthquake, measuring 7.3 on the Richter scale, killed 35,000 people in 1990.

[From Zoroastrian Association of Chicago newsletter].

- Aristotle

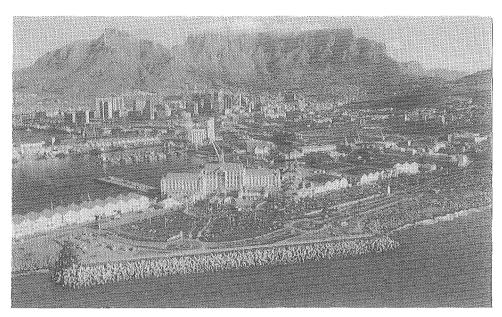
Capetown the 'Mother City' Beckons

Capetown, South Africa, known as 'the mother city' is the venue of the 3rd Parliament of the World's Religions. That country was chosen after much deliberation in 1995 when the wounds of apartheid were still fresh and they are not much less today.

South Africa and its people. I have no hesitation in promising all who participate a rich and most rewarding experience. I am speaking from first hand knowledge, as I and other Trustees of the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions took a trip to Capetown in November to witness first hand the charms of the venue we had chosen.

We called upon many of the religious leaders of Capetown: Archbishop Henry (Roman Catholic), Archbishop Ndungane (Anglican), Shaik Nazeem Mohammed (Muslim Judicial Council); and visited an ashram, a synagogue and other places of worship.

The highlight was a visit with Archbishop Bhozo of the African Independent Church in Guguletu Township. The clergy, although dressed in traditional Christian vestments, led a worship service that was quite untraditional: rapid circling around, kneeling with arms outstretched and 'speaking in tongues'. These churches played an important role in holding body and soul together for the black



South Africaans people during the dark days of apartheid. Settled by the Africaans, these 'townships' are a far cry from the oppression of the apartheid days. They now have opportunities and hope and the Africaans are making the best use of their new found freedom.

Tour planned. The scenic beauty of South Africa with a magnificent 3000 mile coastline with rugged mountains and rolling meadows; violent seas where the warm waters of the Indian Ocean meet the cold waters of the Atlantic, which have caused hundreds of shipwrecks which we saw; a plethora of wild life, including colonies of penguins, seals, ostriches and more; rich mineral deposits; all make it an outstanding tourist attraction. The plan is for Zarathushtis attending the Par-

liament to tour the country together by chartered coach and perhaps go up north to Victoria Falls and Krueger National Park.

Zarathushti community. Our community in South Africa has dwindled down to less than 100 Zarathushtis. mostly Parsis from India, most with roots in South Africa for over 100 years. Their bonding is social without any organizational ties. The visit of Zarathushtis for the Parliament in 1999 will be an interesting interlude Frene Ginwalla, in their lives. Speaker of the House in the South African Parliament, a well-known and well-respected figure in the politics of that country, can add Zarathushti luster to the Parliament.

- By Rohinton Rivetna

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, interreligious 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.

Tour of South Africa. A tour by chartered coach for Zarathushti participants is being planned.

Registration: Before March 30, 1999:

Individual - \$300, Family/Group - \$250

After March 30, 1999:

Individual - \$350, Family/Group - \$300

Rohinton Rivetna, a trustee of the CPWR, will coordinate the Zarathushti participation at the Parliament and the tour. For registration/information contact Rohinton at (630) 325-5383.

COVER STORY

ZARATHUSHTI

Exploring the making of a Zarathushti across time and across geographical and ideological boundaries

Compiled by Roshan Rivetna

n this issue of FEZANA Journal we explore the various 'flavors' of Zarathushtis starting with the Persian Achaemenian monarchs (549 - 330 BCE) [see article by Pallan Ichaporia] down to present-day Zarathushtis in the motherland of Iran [articles by Rabe'eh Mahooti, Bahman Noruziaan, Mehran Sepehri] and the Parsis of India and Pakistan [Rashna Writer, Bachi Karkaria, Cyrus Rivetna]. Dolly Dastoor's book review [page 69] gives a glimpse of eighteenth century Parsi merchants in China and the Far East.

In the last 50 years Zarathushtis have dispersed from the mother countries of Iran (mostly following the revolution in 1979) and India/Pakistan (mostly for economic reasons) to the 'West' – to Britain, North America, Australia-New Zealand and other places. The communities in this "second diaspora" are now developing their own unique identities, shaped by their political systems and local culture. [John Hinnells, Jamshed Engineer, Khursheed Bapasola, Hosi Mehta]. In "Across Times and Across Climes" we see glimpses of the communities in the Far East, South Africa [Dara Randeria], Myanma and the Mazdayasnan groups in Germany [Meher Master Moos] and America.

With the new open climate following the change in governments in Russia and Central Asia, a number of new groups are emerging in those countries, claiming their ancestral religion to be that of Zarathushtra We read about vestiges of the religion of Zarathushtra in Tajikistan and Badakshan [Shahin Bekhradnia] and among the Yazidi Kurds. Through the Internet, new groups in Uzbekistan, Ukraine and Russia have made contact; we present their stories.

Since 1991 the California-based Zarathushtrian Assembly has opened the doors of the religion to all who "choose the Good Religion on the basis of their knowledge and discretion" [see interview with Ali Jafarey]

while traditional Zarathushtis believe with the deepest conviction that "religion, being a dictate of the spiritual soul, is bestowed through birth" [Pervin Mistry]. Rohinton Rivetna gives his thoughts on this recent emergence of 'neo Zarathushtis'. In fact, as yet we cannot even agree on the name of the religion or the Prophet. Should we call ourselves 'Zoroastrian' or 'Zarathushti' or one of the multitude of spelling variations – Zarthusti, Zarthoshti, Zartoshti, Zarthosti, Jarthosti ... ? [see Jamshed Udvadia, page 8].

These various streams of Zarathushtis could conceivably suddenly swell the Zarathushti population many-fold. In "Global Zoroastrians, 2030 CE" Aspi Moddie takes a futuristic leap down the corridors of the twenty-first century and gives his predictions for the next 30 years.

Although dispersed, geographically and ideologically, these global communities are now discovering each other and are, in fact, closer to each other, through the wonders of telecommunication and modern-day travel, than at any other time in our history. Are we ready to deal with this unique phenomenon in our 3000-year-old history? Some FEZANA Associations are making efforts to define "Who is a Zoroastrian?". Nina DiLucci's article gives a compilation of such definitions.

It is very likely that we may never be able to agree on a definition of "Who is a Zarathushti". But can we pledge to respect our differences and support each other towards a Zarathushti renaissance? Or are we going to splinter into so many groups, that none of them has the critical mass to survive?

The views expressed in these articles are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of FEZANA or FEZANA Journal. Per its Editorial Policy, FEZANA Journal neither endorses nor espouses any specific perspective.

WHO ARE WE?

By Aspi D. Moddie

The first to see one God in a Good Creation,
A small candle in history's storms of 3000 years,
We are the stock of Cyrus, liberator of the Jews
From Babylonian captivity,
Provider for the temple in Jerusalem.

For a thousand years our empires were Cross-roads of the world, Aegean to Indus, Oxus to Nile. Then the seed of Zarathushtra Sprouted in Christianity and Islam in adoration Of that one God, dispelling idolatry and magic. We bequeathed a unity of spiritual vision, In the jungle of mind's fearful superstitions.

Then a storm rose from Arabian deserts,
That spawned seed of Ahura Mazda
Destroyed by the seed of Allah;
One God, yet two manifestations,
A spiritual son destroyed a spiritual father.
Empire and spirit shrunk to the caves of Yazd,
To the far shores of Sanjan.

Then a thousand years of silence and forgetting, Unrelieved by Rivayets; two forgotten tribes, Priests preserved sacred fires, remembered old texts. We survived like the cacti of Yazd, The date-palm of Gujarat, asking who are we? Preserving identity like old parchments, Like forgotten Dead Sea Scrolls, Clutching what could not die.

With the coming of the West, we traded cloth, We built ships for the world's prime sea power, We found new freedom, reason, enlightenment; And in the finding of the new, We divided on the old.

Old identities lost, new identities splintered. But a new pride in sugaring the milk of India, By so few among so many. Identity reaffirmed In versatile achievement, The first flowers in Hind's resurgence Miraculous 'Frasho-kereti' after a millennia of sleep.

Then a global diaspora of the 20th century, Another parting of roads, beyond old Asia, Isolates in El Dorado, sans 'baug' and temple, Discarding sudreh-kushti; Lost microbes in a new universe. Again the old seeking; Who are we? What do we few represent in a mixed world Of 178 nations, as no nation?

We are old microbes on new troubled shores, Seeking symbiosis in three chromosomes; The thrusting chromosome of the West, The dormant chromosomes of two old cultures, One in the turmoil of Islam, One in rising Hindudom.

Microbes seeking old identity in evolving chromosomes, In an age when God is called a chromosome. We congregate at Congresses. Young ask old, What do we bring to a seething world? The old falter, half knowing, half seeing, Disputing through mists of antiquity. Voices, voices, futile voices. Passion spent, Then the silence of years, another forgetting. Spirit languishes.

fter 150 years of the oyster's irritation, Between harsh Orthodoxy and unfeeling Reform,

That pearl of Zarathushtra shines, 'Frasho-kereti', Healing Renewal. Find Vohu Manah in the simple, In the spirit. The synthesizing chromosome is there, The protein of life. Hark back and listen To the long forgotten voice of Spitama, Lost in our disputing sounds.

Just recall that first sublime insight of One God In the Good Creation, original and fresh, After false sacrifices to many in fear and superstition. Remember that first democratic call in autocratic times, To listen with the ears, to choose with Vohu Manah, To be responsible, no intermediates between God and you. We, the people of Zarathushtra, our Constitution's first line, Recall the inheritance of the world's first Ecological Religion, The pious respect for Nature's elements, Creation's chemistry; Now a global cause in global defilement. Recall the old fires of pure divinity, centuries preserved; That Vohu Manah of the Three Goods, That World View of the Righteous, the Productive, the Benevolent. That simplicity and wisdom of the Golden Mean. Light the diva. Experience the simple, the good, Go and do it. Forget the rest. We will find Identity in a pure morning, Wherever we are, near or far, The spirit will reach the heart in silence.

We will sugar the milk once again, Our's and other's. Ushta-te.

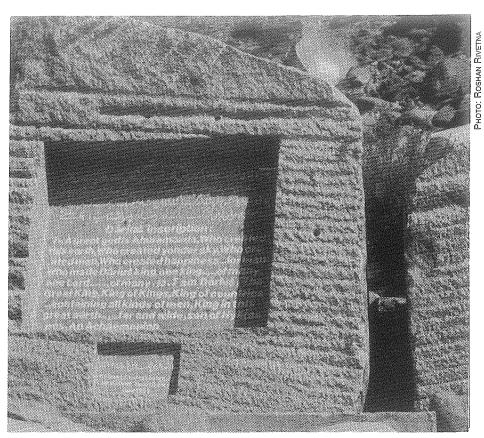
The inscriptions of Darius and Xerxes are carved in three languages — Old Persian, Elamite and Babylonian, on rock faces at Ganj Nameh near the Iranian city of Hamadan (ancient Ectabana on the Silk Road). As in most of Darius's inscriptions, this one begins with an invocation to the "Great God Ahura Mazda." Photo shows an English translation at the entrance to the site.

By Pallan R. Ichaporia Womelsdorf, Pennsylvania

robably between 1200 and 1000 BCE there arose in the northeast of the plateau, the great Iranian religious prophet Zarathushtra (although I am of the opinion that the 1080 BCE approximate date is in agreement with linguistic evidence [1, p. 11]. The history of his religion is complicated, even more than the history of pre-Zoroastrian, Iranian religion. Yet certain features of his religious reforms stand out.

Zarathushtra was an ethical prophet of uncommon genius and of the highest rank. He stressed constantly the need for man to act religiously and speak truth and abhor the lie. In his teachings the 'lie' was almost personified as the 'druj', and druj is the chief in the kingdom of the 'daevas' (demons). He relegated many of the earlier Indo-Iranian deities to the community of daevas. His God is Ahura Mazda, Lord Wise. He perceived Him as full of wisdom and not as vindictive, raw power like the Vedic God Indra or like the jealous God of Moses, or of mysterious wrath like the Hindu Varuna.

Though technically and transparently monotheistic, early Zoroastrianism viewed the world in dualistic terms [op. cit., p. 12]. The beneficial Spirit under Ahura Mazda and the Deceitful One were deeply involved in a struggle for the soul of man [op. cit.,



Were Achaemenid Kings **Zoroastrian?**

p. 31 and Ys. 30.41. As noted, Zarathushtra did bring radical reforms in earlier religious practices and beliefs, but no one can say for certain that he rejected any major rituals [2] and he did elevate to central importance in the ritual, a reverence for fire. However, 'fire worship' is a misnomer since the Zoroastrians have never worshiped fire, but rather have revered it as a symbol par excellence of truth (Av. Asha Vahishta, Ph. Ardwahisht, NP. Urdibihist, PGj. Ardibehest = Best Truth, later on as the second Ameshaspand, guardian of fire, and also as the synonym for

Now the crucial question is: Were the Achaemenids Zoroastrians or at least followers of Zarathushtra in terms of understanding his message? Possibly Cyrus the Great was, and there is evidence that points out that Darius was, and almost certainly Xerxes and his successors were.

Such a simplistic answer to this question is possible, however, only if we understand that Zoroastrianism as a religion had already undergone condevelopment siderable Zarathushtra's lifetime, influenced by beliefs and practices and by the religions of the people of the Near East with whom the expanding Iranians with their ever-growing empire, had intimate contact. To say that Zoroastrianism has influenced the major world religions and beliefs without itself being influenced by them, is untenable.

The God of the Achaemenids was the great 'Lord Wise', Ahura Mazda,

from whom they understood that they had revived their empire, and with whose aid they accomplished all good deeds. Xerxes and his successors mention other deities by name, but Ahura Mazda remains supreme.

Darius names not only Ahura Mazda, but other gods as well in all his inscriptions. Moreover, what is significant is Darius' tone, which is entirely compatible with the moral tone of Zarathushtra, and even more compatible with details of Zarathushtra's theology.

During the reigns of Darius and Xerxes archaeological records reveal that religious rituals were in force and these too were compatible with an evolved and evolving Zoroastrianism. The ''Haoma' ceremony was practiced at Persepolis [3] but not animal sacrifices.

More important, fire played a central role in the Achaemenid religion.

It can be postulated that there may have been religious overtones in the quarrel between Cambysis and Darius on the one hand, and the false Bardiya, the Magus (Magian priest) on the other. But certainly there were religious motivations behind Xerxes'

6 Possibly Cyrus the

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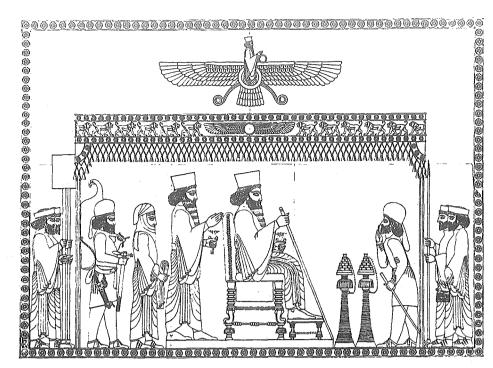
out that Darius was, and

his successors were.

suppression of daeva worshippers and the destruction of their temple. It is also possible that there was some conflict among the royal Achaemenids who were the followers of

Zarathushtra and the others who were supporters of some other form or different version of Zoroastrianism or some sort of cult, heavily mixed with a foreign religion, calling it Zoroastrianism.

Though the Zoroastrian calendar was adopted as the official calendar of the empire in the reign of Artaxerxes I, by the time of Artaxerxes II, the formidable challenge of Mithraism was successfully averted by Zoroastrianizing the ancient, Iranian god,



Drawing of the bas-relief of The Treasury at Persepolis, showing Xerxes, enthroned. As in many of Darius and Xerxes' reliefs and inscriptions, the winged symbol or figure of Ahura Mazda is shown prominently above the ruler.

From "Persepolis" by Donald N. Wilber

Mithra. The same may be true of the goddess Anahita, both being then accepted into the royal religion, along with Ahura Mazda.

Thus in a sense, the Achaemenid

kings were Zoroastrians.

What the religion of the people beyond the court circles may have been, is almost impossible to say. One suspects that a variety of

ancient Iranian cults and beliefs were prevalent and their popular beliefs and practices may have been more deeply influenced by contact with other people and other religions.

Only in the later classical Zoroastrianism, as it was known in the Sasanian period, the teachings of the Prophet in their true form, seems to have been preserved by buffering the Gathas in the great Zoroastrian ritual of Ijeshne (Yasna). Without this

strategy, the Gathas would not have survived and come down to us in the present form.

For a thorough understanding of the Achaemenid culture, one must examine the collective societies of many subject peoples of the vast empire, but this is an entirely different subject and can perhaps be addressed later.

- [1] Humbach-Ichaporia, The Heritage of Zarathushtra, A New Translation of His Gathas, Heidelberg, 1994.
- [2] Insler, Abstract Levels of Rituals in the Gathas of Zarathushtra, 1993.
- [3] Cameron, Aramic Rituals Texts from Persepolis, 1982.

Peace within Becomes

Harmony without.
- Author unknown

ZARATHISHTS MOTHERLAND IRAN

History and background that shaped the Zarathushtis of Iran

History and Background that shaped the Iranian Zarathushti

By Rabe'eh Mahooti San Francisco, California

ach of us may have his or her own personal view of what it means to be a Zarathushti – culturally and in a religious sense. That is one of the nice things about our religion. It calls for a great deal of freedom of thought. Perhaps this is one of the things that has kept the Zarathushti religion alive for more than 3000 years. A glimpse into history should help to understand the Iranian Zarathushti identity.

Arab invasion. It is a well-known fact that fourteen hundred years ago, certain developments changed the course of Zarathushti history. Under the banner of Islam, Arabs

invaded Iranian lands from Iraq to the Chinese borders and succeeded in imposing their religion on the Iranian people who, up to that time, were almost all Zarathushtis. Jews, Christians and Buddhists formed small minority communities. It was a catastrophic disaster from which the Iranian people have not recovered yet.

The clear majority who lived on the Iranian Plateau were subjected to either forced conversion to Islam or served as serfs under Muslim domination. A small number could leave the country and take refuge outside

Muslim territories. Many perished, but a band survived in western India. They are the Parsis. Those who remained lost their religion but they put up a stiff resistance, preserved their culture and land, and although the majority were converted to Islam, they never forgot their Zarathushti heritage. Another small minority of Iranians accepted continuous hardships and preserved their religion and culture in Iran. All three belong to the same stock, Iranian. All three are proud of their glorious past – the Zarathushti heritage.

When the arabs invaded Iran, in spite of the collapse of the imperial forces, the occupation was not an easy takeover. Islam became the state religion, but for centuries many remained Zarathushtis. There were regional resistances and revolts all

The equality of Iranians under the Pahlavi regime provided Iranian Zarathushtis with a good opportunity to take an increasing role in the life of the nation.

over Iran. Because they were never united general uprisings, they were ruthlessly put down by the ruling powers. However these resistances weakened the Arabs to such an extent that sovereign Iranian states sprang up all over the country. The Caliph was ruler in name only.

Cultural resistance. There was also another form of resistance. It was cultural. The Iranians were far superior in culture than the desert Arabs. There was no retreat in cultural matters. Iranian science, medicine, music, scholarship, administration, agriculture, architecture and other ways of civil life were maintained and promoted. Iranian Zarathushtis were treated as second class citizens and kept out of administrative posts and other high positions. But Iranian converts to Islam began their ascension in all fields.

The Iranian calendar was maintained for administrative purposes because it was seasonal. Many festivals, such as NavRuz, Mehergan and Sadeh were celebrated by all. The Muslim calendar, a lunar one, was used for religious purposes.

What is termed as Arabic or Islamic civilization for the last 1400 years is, in fact, Iranian. Iranian scholars and scientists, relying on past records, wrote in Arabic, the official language of the Muslim empire. Muslim architecture is Iranian in every shape,

be it the dome mosque, the minaret, royal palace, caravanserai or residential houses. They are all based on the Sasanian pattern. One therefore feels happy to see the Taj Mahal in India, the Friday

Mosque in Cairo or the Alhambra Palace in Spain, and clearly observe Iranian influence in all of them. The same is true of medicine and other fields of knowledge. Iran was not defeated in culture. In fact, Iranians promoted their culture all over the Muslim world.

The Zarathushti religion suffered as the numbers dwindled through conversion to Islam. But pockets in large numbers remained all over the land – from Baghdad in Iraq to Seistan in Eastern Iran to Samarkand in Central Asia.

Turk and Mongol invasions and Qajar period. Then came another disaster. The Iranian states were conquered by the Turks. They even overthrew the Arab Caliphate. The Turks, when converted to Islam, became fanatics. They started oppressing non-Muslims. This was repeated when the Mongols invaded and occupied Iran. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with deteriorating conditions Zarathushtis during the Qajar period, some Iranian Zarathushtis made their way to India, where they took up occupations mostly in restaurants.

Pahlavi regime – return to the ancestral religion. The situation continued to deteriorate until the time of Reza Shah in 1925. The nationalistic spirit, only expressed on sporadic occasions, now took a new turn. Iranians felt free to express their pride in their Zarathushti past. That brought all Iranians – Zarathushtis, Jews, Christians, Muslims and Baha'is – closer. Muslims particularly felt a stronger desire to get closer to and learn more about their ancestral religion.

Avesta, Pahlavi and Zarathushti studies were established in every university in Iran. Muslim scholars lead in writing on the Zarathushti religion, so much so that today Iran as a single country, even under the Islamic Republic rule, boasts the largest number of scholars on Zarathushti studies in the world. Books on Zarathushtis are among the best-sellers in modern Iran.

The equality of Iranians under the Pahlavi regime provided Iranian Zarathushtis with a good opportunity to take an increasing role in the life of the nation. They became leaders in business, industry, administration and other fields. They were not only on a par with other Iranians in these fields but in some instances a little ahead too.

Westernization. The Pahlavi regime also brought another change. It accelerated westernization. It was not imposed by an alien power but by

a very national government. In fact, Iranians feel that the western civilization has its roots in Achaemenian civilization. The return to nationalism and westernization has brought Iranian communities so close in culture that an outsider cannot easily differentiate between a Zarathushti, Muslim, Jew, Christian or Bahai.

Immigration to the West. In the late 1970s the Islamic fundamentalist revolution forced Iranian migration to the USA and Canada and other Western countries. Most immigrants were financially well-off and skilled. Some had held high positions in their homeland. It was an Iranian who donated large sums of money to establish Darbe Mehrs in North America. In donations towards Zarathushti causes, Iranians lead in North America, Europe and Australia.

The first generation of Iranians born and brought up in North America is slowly but surely replacing their Persian with English and are culturally quite American – the Irano-Americans.

It is this background that has shaped the Iranian Zarathushti now living in North America. With a deeper understanding of this, we Parsis and Iranians can accommodate one another with an open mind and a loving heart. The two belong to one religion, one culture and one land. Once understood, things could very well change for the better.

[Excerpted from a paper "Understanding Iranian and Parsi Misconceptions" by Rabe'eh Mahooti, presented at the Interactive Seminar on Issues Facing Contemporary Zoroastrians in North America, Washington, DC, 1996, Ms. Mahooti, a Circuit Designer by profession is an active participant at Congresses and Seminars. strongly believes that ways can and must be found by Zarathushtis from different parts of the world to understand and accept each other's differing culture and live cohesively as fellow Zarathushtis.]

Iranian Culture and the Zarathushti Religion

By Bahman Noruziaan Ottawa, Ontario

ver 99% of Iranians are Muslims. However the 'cultural baggage' that all Iranians carry is filled with a mixture of pre-Islamic as well as Islamic origins. It can be shown as a point on a line segment connecting the two extremes – pure pre-Islamic and pure Islamic-Arabic. We Zarathushtis are supposedly standing on the extreme left. However this is not completely true. 1400 years of mixture with Muslims has affected us, more or less.

Language. The simplest example is the words we use in our daily conversation, e.g. salam (greetings), In-Sha-Allah (as Allah wishes) Ma-Sha-Allah (again as Allah wishes) and others.

Go to your Khordeh Avesta and recite the Kushti prayer or the Nam-Setayeh for an Iranian. Large sections of these common prayers are in Pazand, and amazingly, Iranians understand them fully. Recite the Tandarosti prayer and they will understand it. It is in Persian, the official language of Iranians even after 1400 years of hardship that the Iranian culture has gone through after the Arab conquest of Iran.

Note that if you could bring to life an Iranian from the time of the Sasanians and speak to them in the Farsi language of today, they will not understand more than 30% of it. Because present-day Farsi is filled with a large number of alien Arabic words.

Names. Many have adopted Arabic family names, e.g. Allah-dad, Allah-yar, Zyaafat, Hakim etc. We have two dominant groups of names in Iran: Iranian and Arabic. Usually

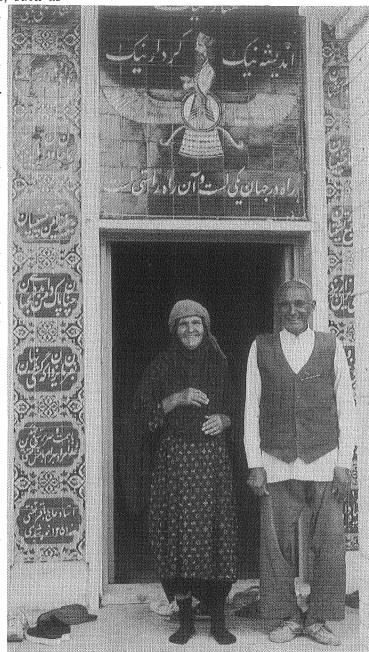
Iranian women have Iranian names, since the beautiful Arabic women's names are not well known among Iranians. Whereas there are a large number of pretty Iranian women's names known to Iranians, such as

Pooran, Parvin, Mehrnaz, Golnar, Soosan and so on. For men the situation is different. Iranians, due to their respect and belief in Islam accept the names of their religious figures, such as Mohammed, Ali, Reza, Kazem and many more. However, there are a large number of Iranian men who have pure Iranian names, such as Koorosh, Jamshid, Farhad, Bahram, Manoocher and so on. Many have dual names - an official name, which is most of the time Arabic, and an un-official named used among family and friends, which is most of the time Iranian.

History. There are many, many Iranians who are proud of the glorious times of their homeland prior to the Muslim-Arab conquests and will proudly talk about it. However, there are many who believe that what was before Islam was *jaaheliat* (ignorance) and there was nothing to be proud of.

One of the most beloved books among Iranians is the Shah Nameh of Firdowsi of Tus. This epic, which covers in poetry the history of the Iranian peoples from the dawn of creation to the end of the Sasanian Dynasty at the

hands of the Arab invaders, has roots among all groups of Iranians. The Arabs called it the Koran of Ajams (Iranians). I have seen paintings showing the battle between Iranians, with Rostam-Pahlavan as their commander, fighting with the Turanians led by Afrasiab, where the Iranian banner has a quotation from the Koran: "With the help of Allah, the victory is close". So inter-woven



history of the Iranian peoples from the dawn of creation to the end of the in Zarathushti caretakers at the Pir Banu shrine outside Yazd., in Iran. Islamic influence is closely interwoven in Zarathushti dress, language and architecture.

and so beloved are the two cultures in the Iranian conscience.

For many Iranians, the ruins of Takht-e-Jamshid (Persepolis) in Shiraz and other such sites are symbols of the glorious times of their country. It gives them confidence that they

can again create a great civilization with contributions to the world.

Calendar. The official Iranian calendar is solar, whereas Muslims follow the lunar calendar when

observing their religious festivals. The names of the months in Iran, even today, are Farvardin, Ardibehest, Khordad, Amardad ... which are the names of Zarathushti yazatas and Ameshaspands, though many Iranians do not realize it.

NavRuz. The great festival of NavRuz (New Year) on March 21st, is celebrated by almost every Iranian, with more or less the same ceremonies. Nothing can ever separate Iranians from this beautiful pre-Islamic heritage. NavRuz Bastani (the ancient NavRuz) as is said among millions of Iranians, is their connection with their beloved land, history and identity.

Poetry and Literature. To find traces of pre-Islamic culture of the Iranians, go to their literature. Look at the poems of Hafez, Attaar, Nezami and many more. There you will find beautiful points reflecting the pure Iranian mentality and ideology. Here again, one should be aware that these writings are also a mixture of two pre- and post-Islamic) cultures.

Respect for Fire. Although the invading Arabs came and destroyed our fire temples, the respect for fire as a source of purity and truth is

still alive in the subconscience of the Iranians, and we are the guardians of the holy fires!

One of the most joyful celebrations of the Iranians before NavRuz is Chehar-Shanbeh-Soori, in which Iranians make small fires and jump over it. Some say there is a connection between this widespread Iranian celebration and the custom of the Zarathushtis who make fires on their roof-tops on the last day of the year as a farewell to the *Fravashis* as they return to the *Minog* world.

Sadeh, another celebration in remembrance of the discovery of fire by Hooshang the Peshdadian ruler of the Iranian people, is celebrated by the Zarathushtis, but is attended by a large number of non-Zarathushtis in Kerman.

Music and Folk Dance. Today's Iranian music has deep roots in the ancient music of Persia and the music of the two great Iranian musicians of the Sasanian era, Baarbad and Nakisa.

Iranian folk dances by the Kurds, Gilaks, Lors and others, are filled with happiness and joy, movement and action of the Iranian culture.

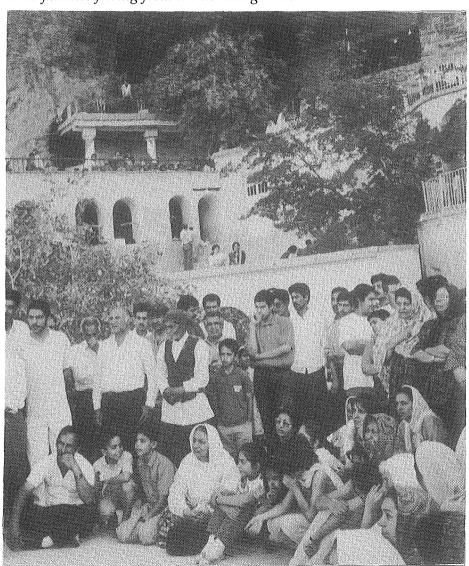
Clothing. The colorful clothing of the ethnic Iranian people – the Zarathushtis, Kurds, Lors, Bakhtiaris, Gilakis and others – carry spring and all its beauty in them, reflecting the very same spirit of Iranian culture towards nature and its beauty, admiring, respecting and loving it.

So, if an Iranian approaches you, a Zarathushti, before you make any swift judgements, spend some time with them to find out on which point of the cultural line the person is standing. Maybe they are very close to you or even closer than you to the pure pre-Islamic culture of Iran and the land of noble ones and the holy fire, or maybe very, very far.

Closer to the left, the person will show more respect, admiration, friendship and inclination towards the Good Religion of Mazda and those who have kept traces of the pure heritage of their beloved motherland alive with love, devotion and sacrifice, since ancient times, despite years of hardships, massacres, humiliation and discrimination – Zarathushtis, members of a unique family.

Keep up the unity and brotherhood, Zarathushtis and all those who have love and respect for this ancient heritage of human civilization. We can offer a lot to the world as we have done before. Let's make a constructive relationship and work together to do something wonderful. That is what counts and will be remembered in the end.

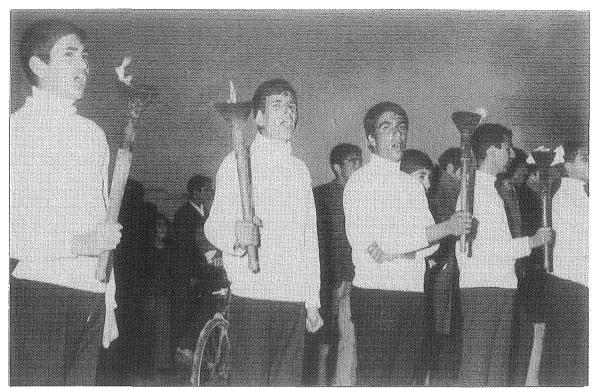
Zarathushti men, women and children gather in the hundreds at the annual pilgrimage to the mountainside shrine of Pir e Sabz, outside Yazd, for 5 days in June. Pir e Sabz, along with other shrines, Pir e Herisht, Narestane, Pir Banu and Nareky, all in the desert areas surrounding Yazd, are little islands of refuge for Zarathushtis to gather, to pray, celebrate, sing and dance and enjoy their ancestral traditions. Each shrine has a legend built around it, mostly about Sasanid princes and their families fleeing from the invading Arabs.



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Zarathushti youth in Kerman (Mehran Sepehri at far left) in 1969, singing before the ceremonial lighting of the Jashan Sadeh fire. Usually over 5.000 people (with the majority being non-Zarathushtis) participated in this annual ceremony, held outside the town of Kerman.

The Best Place To Grow Up In: The Motherland

By Mehran Sepehri Mountain View, California

Zarathushti, homeland areas, Zarathushti culture may be a concept and a heritage and not as much a part of their every-day life. But for those living in the main Zarathushti-populated areas, it is a matter of being a Zarathushti every day and everywhere, growing with it, seeing and feeling it, and living the Zarathushti heritage as an integral part of their close and homogeneous community.

The pace of change was almost non-existent in small cities of Kerman, Yazd, Shiraz and Isfahan for many decades, where Zarathushtis found a peaceful way of co-existing with the majority Muslims. Families lived together and maintained their traditional way of life very dearly. The strict Muslim environment. in a way, brought Zarathushtis even closer. The younger generation easily accepted the old ways and felt a sense of duty to safeguard the heritage.

The school. It was 12 noon again, at Iranshahr Male Elementary School in Kerman. Mehrban, the school administrator, standing at the classroom door, lined up the students, except for the few non-Zarathushti ones, who were excused. The line was heading across the street to the Atash-kadeh (Fire Temple) where the students said their daily prayers before they were allowed to eat lunch.

The young boys took turns every day to read from the Avesta aloud, while the others whispered along. This daily ritual was a part of every Zarathushti elementary student life for six years. The late principal, Mirza Borzoo, took personal interest in checking this daily event and giving a short speech on Zarathushti values. Almost all male Zarathushtis in town have gone at one point through this over 40-year-old tradition.

Zarathushti schools were recognized as the best in the country. Many non-Zarathushti families took pride in taking their children there, as did many teachers to teach in these progressive schools. Most of the

school properties were donated by Zarathushtis. Life long, dedicated teachers and staff here, had a reputation for devotion, hard work and discipline. Their products went on to successful careers.

The town. I was born in Kerman, in southern Iran, at a period when Zarathushtis enjoyed relative freedom. From my high-priest grandfather and teacher parents, my family was steeped in education and community work. Most Zarathushtis made their living from either farming or commerce. The prevalence of Zarathushtis in these professions and occupations is partly due to restrictions imposed on minorities in government and military jobs, but mostly due to their successes and reputation for honesty and dedication.

It was very common for a son to work with and to take over the father's business. Many larger trades had all Zarathushti workers, who started as young clerks and assistants and later earned partnership status. Several Zarathushti families owned large farmlands and

enjoyed wealth and influence in the community. The informal system of charity, elders as mentors, and regular religious, ritual functions helped keep the community well together.

In addition to the main Atash-Kadeh (fire temple), there were many other dedicated, sacred properties named after Zarathushti 'angels' (Varahram Izad, Oshtad Izad, etc). On the day of the month whose name matched the location, Zarathushtis crowded the property with religious functions and rituals. It was a combination of a social gathering and religious beliefs that brought scores of Zarathushtis to an Atash Kadeh on a certain day each month.

In a town of reportedly 10,000 Zarathushtis, this minority group was closely knit and enjoyed strong ties. Most Zarathushtis knew each other. While this helped to foster a feeling of belonging and support, its downside included some undue gossip.

The Environment. There were horror stories from a generation earlier, about discrimination and severe

hardship for Zarathushtis. They were required to pay a tax for not being Muslim and their food and belongings were considered unclean. While the community lived in peace and harmony with the majority Muslims, the feeling of separation and discomfort helped keep the community even closer together.

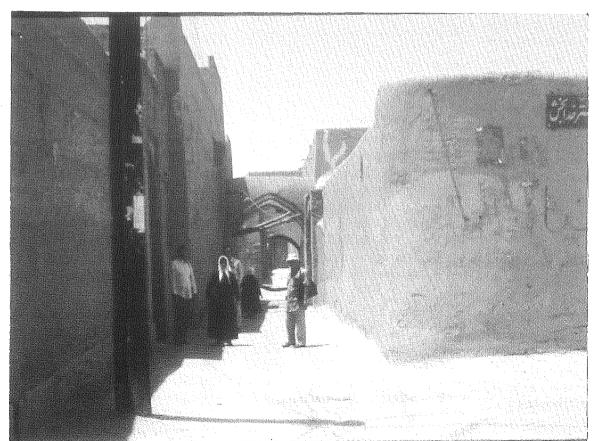
Zarathushtis were better educated, employed and involved in the community than other minority groups. Zarathushti doctors, teachers, and tradesmen were highly respected and trusted. Many Zarathushtis were either in the middle or upper class.

In the later years of the Shah's regime, as Iran was being modernized, many younger Zarathushtis migrated from the villages to the main towns and from the towns to the capital. Tehran was known as the land of opportunity, and the Zarathushti community there began to flourish. Zarathushtis, as a main minority, gained the right to one congressman in Parliament. They

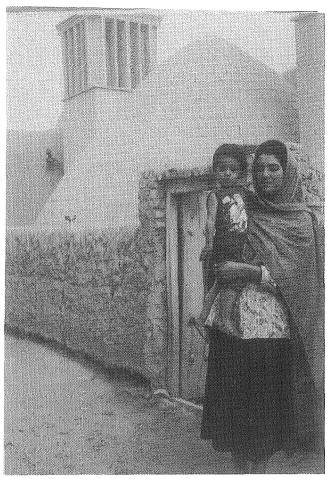
were mentioned with respect in the media and in publications.

Memories. Life may never be the same for immigrants who left Iran for the West. Most of them left in a hurry shortly after the revolution, adapted to the Western way of life, and established careers and life in North America. They could no longer practice the same religious-cultural functions as frequently, belong to a homogeneous community or relate to their heritage as fellow Zarathushtis did back home, but they kept up the ties and pride in their ancestral heritage.

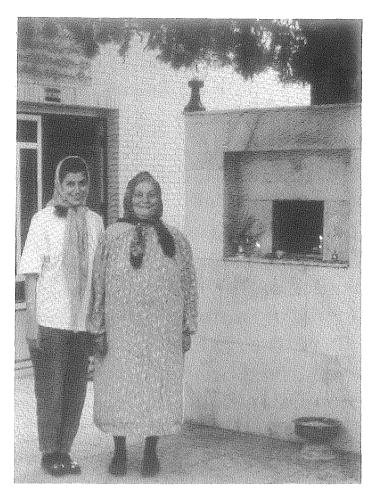
As much as the newer Zarathushti generation here persists in questioning the old ways and assimilates into the Western lifestyle and mentality, the older generation has remained faithful to their early upbringing and not forgotten the relatives left behind. It is always a joy to hear news from back home, have a personal contact or a visit, or even just talk about the good old days in the motherland.



Many Zarathushti homes, schools and the Atash Kadeh are located in the "Zarathushti Mohalla" area of the village of Yazd, Iran. The simple, mud-brick exteriors often belie the comfortable, wellfurnished quarters inside.



Zarathushti woman and child in the village of Cham.



At the shrine under the old Cypress in Cham

I Lost My Heart in ... Mobarake, Iran

By Michael Wood

wo little Zoroastrian villages near Yazd on the fringe of the Great Salt Desert in Iran left their mark on me. I was going on a sort of pre-reconnaissance trip for the Alexander the Great journey, on a pilgrimage with Zoroastrians. When I told an elderly, who used to mend my TV in London, that I was interested in the Zoroastrians, he suggested he come with me. He said he'd take me to his native village, Mobarake, which is very close to another village, Cham, where the Zoroastrian temple is.

Cham has a sacred Cypress tree, which is loved and known by all Zoroastrians and also Parsis from India and Pakistan. Mobarake is a classic desert village with mud-brick houses and undulating roofs. You enter via a little gate into a courtyard of fruit trees with an arched space where everyone sleeps in summer.

The old Iranian word for one of these walled gardens is a paradisa, and you can see why when you visit one of these villages. You are on a high, austere plateau in the desert with blue-grey mountainstrip of intense green and honey-colored brick of the village primal colors.

The village has no wells but is fed by an underground water system, called a *karez* (or *ghanat*) through which water comes down from the mountains. My friend told me that, as a kid, he used to play down in the tunnels of the karez in hot weather and the water was still icy cold.

Both Mobarake and Cham are divine. When you stand on the roof of a little house with domes on top, and look across in between you and the mountains, there is this vivid green strip, the tops of fruit trees on the outskirts of the village. Above that are the two trees the Zoroastrians worship, with a tiny shrine beside them. Further across, you see the sacred tree of Cham, which is a huge, ancient tree more than 1,000 years old.

You have a sense of the great expanse of the desert and the wonderful purple desert light, and you get a sense of the Iranian spiritual universe – that there is a connection with the ancient spiritual beliefs of the Zoroastrians and Iranian Islam.

[Excerpted from The Guardian, Travel Page, July 18, 1998. Michael Wood is the producer of the TV series "In the Footsteps of Alexander the Great".]

Seeking refuge from the invading Arahs that offered them Islam or the sword, thirteen hundred years ago, a small hand of Zarathushtis fled from Iran. and landed on the shores of India. There, the Parsis established their temples and followed the tenets of their religion as a miniscule minority in a predominantly Hindu India. Over the centuries they blazed the trail in developing India's trade, commerce, hisiness and industry, and their wealth became as fabled as their philanthropy. What shaped this shining millennium in Zarathushti history and what lies ahead?

A shining millennium in

Parsi Migration and Acclimatization in India

By Rashna Writer Buckinghamshire, UK

he founding fathers left their native Khorasan in north-east-ern Iran in 917 CE and arrived in Gujarat in the town of Sanjan, in 936. The safeguarding of their Zoroastrian religion had initially motivated them in their flight from Iran and the religious dimension was the chief feature of the group. In the early centuries of their residence in Gujarat the Parsis were in the main agriculturists and artisans, grateful for the refuge granted to them to continue the practice of their faith.

Indianization. In accepting the protection of the Hindu *rajah*, the Parsis were, by degrees, to acquire a certain level of Indianization. Total assimilation into India has never convincingly been acquired, despite long residence in the country. However, such outward manifestations of Indian influence – those in keeping with the rajah's mandatory stipulations – are in evidence to the present day.

The Parsis acquired the Gujarati language and in due course relinquished their original native Persian; the Parsi women wore the sari in the particular style of the women of Gujarat, and Parsi marriage ceremonies are conducted in the main after sunset. Other cultural adaptations, such as staining the forehead with vermillion on auspicious occasions, the wearing of red bangles by married women are, without question, their adoption of Hindu customs.

The list of borrowings are in fact legion. The congenial environment of Hindu India, as opposed to their collective memory of Islamic persecution suffered in Iran, doubtless encouraged the Parsis to accommodate themselves to the culture surrounding them. The acceptance, therefore, of social practices in the early centuries of residence, such as child marriage and separate dining of men and women, were among some of the concessions made to the host society. Concessions made by the Parsis, originally to conciliate the prejudices of their Hindu hosts, and gradually as a product of acclimatization to their adopted country, did not, however, dilute their intrinsic Zoroastrian-ness in terms of 'national' identity.

Muslim rule. Political events were reshaping India, and this was to affect the Parsis as much as their Hindu compatriots. A Muslim sultanate was established in Delhi in 1206, and in 1297, its army set out to conquer Gujarat. The wealthy port of Cambay was ravaged and its tiny Parsi population suffered severe losses.

It must have appeared to the Parsis that their tranquil existence had come to an abrupt end and their difficulties, similar to those experience in the mother country, were once again being visited upon them. Gujarat was thenceforth ruled from Delhi, and a period of religious intolerance was inaugurated. The Parsis, together with the Hindus, were subject to payment of the *jizya*, and this tax served the more zealous sultans as an instrument for conversion to Islam.

Muslim incursions into India continued apace, and in 1398, the Tatar Timur-i-lang occupied Delhi. The Muslim governor of Gujarat declared

the history of the Zarathushtis

his independence in 1401, and a period of turmoil in the province ensued. The carnage at Variav, a village where the local Parsis were mercilessly put to death by the Hindu rajah for refusing to pay the extortionate taxes, occurred during this time.

The politically unsettled climate which now gripped parts of India had repercussions on the Parsis. In 1465 Sultan Mahmud Begada's army attacked Sanjan, and the *Kisseh-i-Sanjan* relates the Sanjan Parsis' valiant stance in the battle, fighting beside their Hindu benefactors against the Muslim army.

When the Mughals came to India and had consolidated their power over a substantial part of the sub-continent, the Parsis were to gain a modest prosperity, despite Muslim dominance. An important event for the community during this period was the invitation to the Court of the Mughal emperor Akbar, in 1578, of a learned priest from Navsari, Meherji Rana. The event, recorded by a Muslim historian, alludes to the presence of the Zoroastrian priest thus:

"... (they) impressed the Emperor so favourably that he learned from them the religious terms and rites of the Parsis, and ordered ... that the sacred fire should be kept burning at court by day and night, according to the custom of the ancient Persian kings."

The Parsis remained a marginal group in India and were subject to the vicis-situdes which affected the land. A reversal of Akbar's policy of tolerance and a reintroduction of the jizya by his successors meant that Muslims were once again given precedence over other Indians.

What marked the Parsis as distinct from other Indians was the Zoroastrian religion they had brought with them in their initial migration from Iran. Indeed this was frequently remarked upon by foreign travelers who encountered this small group. Ovington, one of the Europeans that began to arrive in India for trade in the 17th century, remarks of the Parsis:

- "... very industrious, and diligent, and careful to train up their children to arts and labour. They are principal men at the loom in all the country, and most of the silks and stuffs at Surat are made by their hands.
- "... They shew a firm Affection to all of their own Sentiments in Religion, assist the Poor, and are very ready to provide for the Sustenance and Comfort of such as want it. Their universal kindness, either in employing such as are Needy and able to work, or bestowing a seasonable bounteous Charity to such as are Infirm and Miserable, leave no Man destitute of Relief, nor suffer a Beggar in all their Tribe."

An Englishman, Henry Briggs was perceptive of some prominent aspects of Parsi identity, namely their convivial nature and their high respect for education:

"In disposition, the Parsi is inclined to be sprightly – nay, even jocose; he is benevolent ... fond of entertaining his friends, however indigent in means, or humble in position; a gourmand in point of living, and an undoubted bon vivant ... the Parsis are notoriously given to good living.

He also notes that "Many of the Parsis speak and write English with a facility scarcely credible for foreigners."

British rule. Bombay became a British possession in 1661, administered by the East India Company; in their attempt to make it a thriving port, they declared complete religious freedom for those who chose to live and work there. Hindus and Parsis began to settle in the new port city, initially to escape harassment by the Mughals and Portuguese (who had

earlier acquired some possessions in western India). Communal assemblies or *panchayats* were created, the Bombay Parsi Panchayat being constituted in 1728.

As Bombay's importance grew under British rule, and the Parsi population of the metropolis increased, the Bombay Parsi Panchayet played a central role in community affairs, its *de facto* limit extending beyond the city's limits.

Bombay came to play a major role in the evolving story of the Parsis. It was from this port city and their growing contacts with the British that the Parsis were, in due course, to move from their former position of rural artisans and agriculturists, to become the mercantile elite of India. In 1794, the British Lieutenant Moore observed:

"The Parsees ... are the principal native inhabitants of the island of Bombay, in regard to wealth and numbers; not only the most valuable estates, but a very considerable part of the shipping of the port belongs to them ...

"... the favourites of fortune; let us add, they are deservedly so, for we find them doing very extensive acts of charity and benevolence ..."

The elevation in stature of the Parsis by the British was arguably the main causative factor in the small community's growing fortunes. Certainly, the community's ethos assisted this process, their Zoroastrian religion being no impediment, but rather a spur to develop contacts with the new masters of India. Zoroastrianism does not advocate ascetism, and in theological and practical terms is a life affirming religion. As Herodotus had observed millennia ago of the Persians, that there were no people more amenable to foreign ideas, so

the modern Parsis were continuing a long tradition of adaptability.

By the beginning of the 19th century, the Parsis had become the foremost economic figures in Bombay. Parsis

became in due course pioneers in the textile trade, and their trade was facilitated by the flotation of banks. By the 1840s almost all

As Herodotus had observed millennia ago of the Persians, that there were no people more amenable to foreign ideas, so the modern Parsis were continuing a long tradition of adaptability.

the private trade entering Bombay passed through Parsi hands so that when in 1836 the Bombay Chamber of Commerce was started, all ten of the Indian members were Parsis.

Proximity to the English, their language, customs, education, form of government, resulted in the eager acceptance by the Parsis of the opportunity to study the English language, imitate certain English mannerisms, and fully avail themselves of educational opportunities which opened up for them in careers in the sciences, law and government amongst others, while imbuing them with a respect for, and oftentimes deep attachment to the British system of governance.

Indian independence. On the chess-board of 20th century Independence politics, the Parsis' numerical inferiority meant that they were no longer a major determinant in the complex format that modern India and the newly created Pakistan were assuming. The reality of their minority status thus came to be emphasized. According to Kulke: "The root of the identity crisis lies in the consciousness of most of the Parsis of being first of all Parsis and only secondly Indians."

The making of a Parsi. Just as the Parsi borrowed from his Hindu compatriots without becoming Hindu, so he modeled himself after the English

without turning himself into an Englishman.

The special character of the Parsi community is indeed composed of three essential ingredients: their Ira-

nian
Zoroastrian
stock;
their
HinduIndian
socio-cultural
dimension,
and their
voluntary
acceptance

of Western (specifically British) educational and secular value systems. The Parsis, who constitute a mere 0.016% of India's massive population, are therefore an immensely complex community. The size of the community, the exclusivity it felt it possessed as a result of its unique religious heritage, together with its demonstrable ability to adjust to the dominant cultural values without becoming absorbed, became the dynamic of Parsi group persona.

Excerpted by Roshan Rivetna from Chapter 1: Historical Background, in Rashna Writer's excellent study of Zoroastrians [Contemporary Zoroastrians: An Unstructured Nation, by Rashna Writer, University Press of America, Maryland, 1994, ISBN 0-8191-9142-61 reviewed in FEZANA Journal, Fall 1994. Dr. Writer is a Research Fellow at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London University, where she is working on her forth-coming book on Zoroastrians in Iran. Dr. Writer has published and lectured widely on Zoroastrianism, including Memoirs of Keikhosrow Shahrokh [edited and translated by S. Shahrokh and R. Writer, Edwin Mellen Press, Lampeter, 1994] reviewed in FEZANA Journal, Spring 1996.







Twilight on the Towers of Silence

By Bachi Karkaria Mumbai, India

n Bombay's Malabar Hill, where land prices outstrip those of Manhattan, India's most futuristic penthouses scrape the sky. But the crest is shrouded in mystery. Here, masked by woods, stand the Towers of Silence, where the Parsi community disposes of its dead in a ceremony that predates history.

Four thousand years ago, the priestprophet Zoroaster preached that man as the seventh creation must protect the other six and keep the earth fertile and unsullied. Which is why his followers, the Parsis, expose their dead to the vultures rather than pollute the soil with burial, or cremate them in the fire, potent symbol of their faith.

Numbers in India. Today, the Parsi community in India may be facing its own demise. It 'achieved' zero population growth some 40 years ago and has become an ageing group. Its annual growth rate is minus 17 per 1,000, when the rest of India struggles to control its plus 19. At this rate, the Parsis could provide sociologists with their first case-study of a community extinguished, because it was a backward tribe succumbing to the contagion of civilization, but because it was too advanced for its own good.

The community is marked by a highly evolved social conscience, and Parsi philanthropy became as fabled as its wealth. It was the Parsis who made Bombay into a city of learning and culture. Their trusts financed schools, libraries, hospitals, housing blocks and entrepreneurship, and even today these help draw a genteel veil over their poverty.

The Parsis themselves seem to shrug off extinction as an existential prob-

lem, split between those who think it's too late to do anything, so "why ruin our Sunday lunch of dhansak worrying about it?", and those who dismiss it as "the usual exaggeration of sociologists and journalists".

Perhaps never having totalled more than 150,000 in India (they accept no converts or even the children of non-

Zoroastrian fathers), their numbers have declined precipitously. The 1981 Indian census stood at 71,630, down by

20,000 since the previous count 10 years before.

But, as with many of their western counterparts, marrying and raising children no longer fits in with their material aspirations. While Indian women remain prisoners of their sex thanks to 70% illiteracy, every Parsi girl is educated, and usually earning. And while other Indian daughters are often "married off" before the legal

lower limit of 18, Parsi girls seldom marry before 27, if at all. At one in every five, the percentage of nevermarrieds in the community is twice that of America.

The traditional Indian system of families all living together does not appeal to young Parsis, and many refuse to consider marriage until they

Parsi philanthropy became as fabled as its wealth. It was the Parsis who made Bombay into a city of learning and culture ...

can live independently. In Bombay, suitable accommodation is hard to find, let alone afford. Parsi inbreeding has cannibalized on itself and the community's proud individuality resists intermarriage. Parsi identity has been further diluted by large emigration to the West. At present trends, by the year 2021 there will be more Zoroastrians outside India than in it.

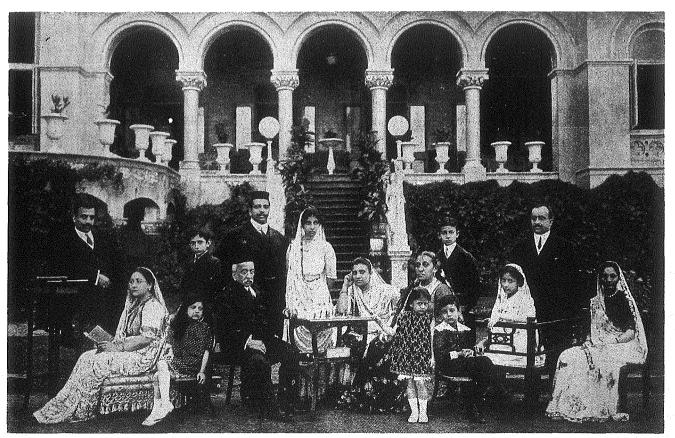
British raj. The seeds of destruction were sown in their capitalization of the British rule in India. Commercially and socially, Parsis were the creation of the British Raj and their decline is the flotsam left behind by the tide of the Empire.

In no other chapter in Indian history has their name figured in letters so

> bold. No wonder that the older Parsis still mourn the passing of the British Empire as they sip afternoon tea from their heirloom

Wedgwood and gaze fondly upon the portrait of George V, framed along with other dear-departed on the living-room wall.

English is virtually their mother tongue, they wear English-style frocks, head Shakespeare societies, conduct Philharmonic orchestras – Zubin Mehta, music director of the New York Philharmonic since 1978 and music director for life of the



Parsi family group at Chateau Petit, the Petit family mansion, at Malabar Hill, Bombay, 1917. Parsi philanthropy became as fabled as its wealth. It was the Parsis who made Bombay into a city of learning and culture. Their trusts financed schools, libraries, hospitals, housing blocks and entrepreneurship.

Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, is a Parsi – and play cricket with a straight bat; the first Indian team to tour England, in 1886, was all-Parsi.

The blandishments of the new British powerbrokers urbanized them and propelled them up front in the emergent Indian bourgeoisie. Cashing in on their production-oriented peasantartisan background and their religious work-ethic, unencumbered by the strictures of caste, they were able to establish an easier rapport with the new powerbrokers than did the traditional Hindu and Muslim traders and financiers.

The China card was their trump. When the 'sleeping giant' awoke to the roar of Britain's Industrial Revolution, the Parsi scurried in with his imperial master to minister to its needs – and his own. For decades the Parsis had been master shipbuilders in the East India Company's docks at Surat and Bombay. The Chinese fortune cookie was made up of cotton and, less legitimately, opium. In the

seventeenth century, Parsis had been expert silk and textile makers and they found it easy to make the reverse journey from finished product to the trade in raw material, especially since Britain had cynically destroyed India's rich handloom industry.

Modern India. Even those who denounce the Parsis as 'toadies' of the Raj will not deny their contribution to the making of modern India. Dadabhai Naoroji was the 'Grand Old Man' of the Indian National Congress and the first Indian elected to the British Parliament, on the Liberal ticket for Finsbury in 1892. The other two Parsi Members of the British Parliament were a Conserva-Mancherjee Bhownaggree tive, (north-east Bethnal Green, 1895-1906) and a Communist, Shapurji Saklatvala, elected for North Battersea 1922-23 and 1924-29.

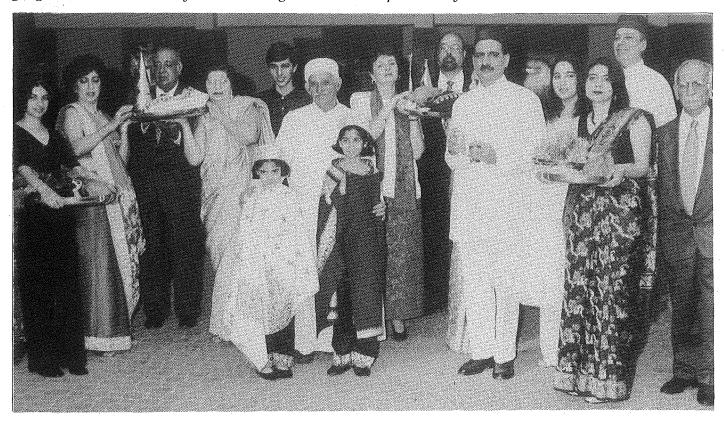
But the ambivalence of the Parsis towards their own culture often showed even in their most nationalistic gestures. Sir Pherozeshah Mehta founded a club to cock a snoot at exclusively British ones, but he named it after Lord Ripon. Jamshedjee Tata christened one of his textile mills Swadeshi ('indigenous') but he called the other Empress.

In the Gymkhana attached to Bombay's Parsi Colony, a tree-lined sprawl of middle-class housing, the Sunday card-players think extinction is no big deal. "We've never been a large community, and as long as we remain economically viable numbers won't matter," says Ratan Dubash.

His friend, Sohrab, feels that even if the community dies out in India, from its ashes a regenerated one will arise in Phoenix, Arizona. "The cream of Parsi youth has made its home in North America." he says, "They'll preserve the faith."

Bachi Karkaria is a senior editor with The Times of India. This article is excerpted from an article by Bachi Karkaria in The Times of India, 1992.

Parsi family celebrating the (initiation) ceremony of two girls (center) in Karachi, Pakistan. Having lived on the Indian subcontinent for a millennium, Parsis have adopted Hindu, Muslim and English dress, language and customs, while yet maintaining their own, unique identity.





My Parsi Heritage, Revisited

By Cyrus Rivetna Chicago, Illinois

've been in India now for 4 months. Yesterday the receptionist at the office informed me that I had a phone call from Chicago. "Hi mom. Hi dad. Yes, I'm fine. Yes, I'm eating well. Yes. No. OK. I will. No. Yes. What? An article!? Why me? An American's impressions of Parsis in India? You want it when? OK. Yes. Yes, I will fax and email it to you by Monday. Yes. No. Not yet. I won't. OK, bye, see you in 8 months."

An American Parsi's impression of Indian Parsis ... I think I will write a narrative of my trip, highlighting my 'Parsi Experiences'. I'll start with an introduction of how and why I've come to Ahmedabad, then I will talk about how this visit has increased my pride in being a Zarathushti, and finally I will end with a conclusion summarizing my feelings about the Parsi community. OK, here goes.

My name is Cyrus Rivetna I was born and raised in Chicago, Illinois. I studied architecture at the University of Illinois. After working in Chicago for 4 years, I decided to take a year off to travel, visit architectural sites in Spain and then gain some experience with architects in India. So, here I am in Ahmedabad, working for ...

Hmmm, that's a dull start; sounds more like a matrimonial ad.

Warm welcome. Maybe I could write about my arrival at Mumbai airport. It was quite a change from the slick airports in Europe with their luggage carts that go up escalators and moving walkways. Here there were dusty ceiling fans, exposed fluorescent lighting, chipped plastic laminate wall panels and luggage carts with squeaky wheels. But somehow it didn't bother me. In fact it was all very heart-warming and comforting.

I could write about how my relatives made the long trip to the airport to pick me up, at 2 am. Then going home and sitting around the kitchen table laid out with a a big Parsi breakfast of 'poro-pau' (spicy omelets with crusty rolls of 'broon' bread), homemade 'malai' and the ubiquitous 'chai' (tea), with my 94-year old grandfather and assorted aunts, cousins, servants and neighbors.

Dadar Parsi Colony. I could write about Dadar Parsi Colony. How I felt so comfortable and so welcome in my grandfather/aunt's house, although my only contacts with them had been 2-week visits every few years, occa-

sional phonecalls and lately some email. How strange, and how good it felt to know an entire building of people within one week. In

I felt instantly comfortable and safe with them. I felt that all of us there had some sort of bond ...

Chicago I lived in the same building for over a year and the only contact I had with my neighbor was when she came over to inform me that my hammering on a Sunday afternoon was against the condominium's by-laws.

I could write about Mrs. Shroff from the flat upstairs, who became a widow two months ago, and how all the other neighbors made sure that she was kept busy all day by asking her to do little things for them, and of course, always being there to help.

I could write about spending a typical Saturday evening with my cousins at the Parsi Gymkhana where friends came and went. And, then, after dinner, going to the 'Five Gardens' to hang out on their favorite 'railing' until 2:00 am. Probably the same railing where my father used to hang out with his friends 40 years ago.

I could mention how, although I did not go to the agiary everyday, it was always there, around the corner, a constant reminder of the beliefs and practices of our religion.

I could write about the peacefulness of the tree-lined streets and the peo-

ple who walked through them and how that continuously reminded me of the good nature of our religion.

Parsee dharamshala. Maybe I could write about my stay in the Parsi dharamshala in Ahmedabad. Just like in Dadar, it never failed to amaze me that although I had just met these people, I felt instantly comfortable and safe with them. I felt that all of us there had some sort of bond. Whether it was just a perception or if there really was some kind of an 'energy field' I will never know.

I will have to include 19-year-old Dastoor Homyar who was shocked that I didn't wear my sudreh and

> kushti every day, and then proceeded to give me lessons on how to appreciate our sacred garments.

> Which, now that I've been wear-

ing them all the time, I realize aren't uncomfortable as I had previously thought, and that it was actually quite comforting to feel them next to your skin and to meditate for a few minutes while tying the kushti.

I could write about the caring host family, delicious non-vegetarian home-cooked meals, fun evenings of cricket in the dormitory and playing silly card games until 3 am, and then being woken up at 7:00 by the servant who came to fill the water vessel. I would probably also have to include being introduced, for the first time, to the less fortunate members of the Parsi community. Here I also met the truck drivers, and jobless, homeless and dreamless members of the Parsi community.

Prominent Parsis. Maybe I should write about my realization that Zubin Mehta, Freddie Mercury and Persis Khambatta are not the only prominent contemporary Parsis. Last night, when I watched the Miss India contest, it not only had a Parsi contestant, but was also hosted by a Parsi. I'd write about Cyrus Brooch

(Bharucha) a host on MTV Asia (I wonder why he changed his name). I could mention opening the national newspaper, the Times of India, and reading an article about inter-marriages in the Parsi community. I would also have to include Nari Gandhi, Hafeez Contractor and Rusi Patel, three of the many Parsi architects that have had a major influence on contemporary Indian architecture. Seeing these Parsi names and faces in my daily life made me feel good and proud and confident about our community.

Or maybe I should write about ...

There are so many people I have met and experiences to talk about, that all make me, not just proud, but even prouder, of being a Zarathushti.

I wonder why I had to come to India to realize these things? Is the community different here? Are the people different here? Maybe it's not possible to understand these feelings unless you actually experience them. I wonder if it will ever be possible for the new generation of American Parsis to build a similar strong and close community as the Parsis of India have created?



THE HOUSE OF TATAS

Just before the recent Calcutta test match, the Australian cricketeers played the India A team at Jamshedpur, the home of Jamshedji Tata Steel works. The Aussies stayed at the Tata guesthouse, traveled in a Tata Sumo bus, woke up to a Tata tea, sprinkled Tata salt on their food, made calls on a Tata phone and wore clothes made by Tatas Textiles.

Earlier they had flown to Jamshedpur by Indian Airlines founded by J. R. D. Tata, and passed over the town of Tatanagar

But after the Calcutta thrashing by the Indian team, they said "Ta Ta" to their Test Champ title!

ZARATUSHTIS SECOND DIASPORA

In the last 50 years, Zarathushtis have migrated from the mother countries of Iran and IndialPakistan in what has been called "the second diaspora" to the UK, Canada, USA and lately Australia and New Zealand. How are their identities emerging?

Zoroastrians in the diaspora approaching the third millennium

By John Hinnells London, United Kingdom

[Observations based on exhaustive research of Zoroastrians in Britain, including results from a survey questionnaire, in depth interviews and personal contacts, for the Ratanbai Katrak Lectures at Oxford in 1985]

t the approach of the third millennium, Zoroastrians are more dispersed around the globe than at any other time in their history. In the 'old countries' (India, Pakistan, East Africa and Hong Kong) the Parsi population is

declining. This gives the diaspora communities (Britain, USA, Canada and Australia) all the more importance in the history of the religion, for it is here that the numbers are growing.

How different is the religion in these various countries? The broad pattern is that the older established centers in Hong Kong, East Africa and especially Pakistan are more traditional than the centers in the USA, Britain and Canada. The most recent settlements, those in Australia, still show the features noted among the most recent arrivals within Britain, namely the retention of close ties with the old country and a higher level of religious practice.

The observations in this article focus on the Zoroastrians in Britain. The 'typical' British Zoroastrian has his or her roots in India, is young-mid-dle-aged, belongs to a nuclear family which has settled here for over fifteen years, is well educated, and has a successful career.

Religion and identity. The overwhelming majority of interviewees described themselves as practicing Zoroastrians. Even the youth who did not describe themselves as practicing mostly believed that religion was a part of their identity.

Many of the elders expressed the conviction that they became more religious after migration than they were before. The great majority of

Zoroastrians consider that their religion is fundamental to their sense of identity and it would be natural to reassert that identity in an 'alien' environment.

In broad terms it would seem that the most religiously active groups are retired people; housewives; those who completed their education on leaving school rather than go on to university, especially those who had their schooling in the old country; those who continue to think in their Asian mother tongue (be that Gujarati or Persian); those who attend Zoroastrian House frequently; those who visit the old country more often and for longer; those who have fewer British friends; those who have migrated most recently; people from East Africa or from rural Gujarat (as opposed to Bombay); and those who have children.

The obverse is also generally true. Those who express less commitment to the religion are the youth; those who do not have children; those who were born in Britain; those with a high level of education, especially those who studied in the West; those who think in English; those who do not attend Zoroastrian House; and individuals who do not intend to return to the old country.

In short, the religion tends to be practiced mostly by specific sections of the community and is less strong among those whose community ties are weak. However, these generalizations merit further reflection. In this list of broad correspondences it is not evident which is cause and

which is effect. Is it, for example, lack of contact with the old country and its language which is the cause or the consequence of weakened religious commitment?

There appears to be a general pattern that young people are religious after the manner, and to the level of their parents, until they leave home. When they leave home for work, and especially for university, then they



John Hinnells: student, historian and friend of the Parsis.

also commonly leave their religion until the time of marriage approaches, particularly if marrying a Zoroastrian. At that point, and in particular when they have children, many return to their religion.

Religion is not, for Zoroastrians, simply a question of a set of beliefs. It is much more fundamental to their sense of identity. Although the majority of respondents and interviewees did link belief and religion, approximately two-thirds believed that there is a link between race and religion and their identity was tied up with their history, in particular with their deep sense of being a tiny, persecuted minority.

There is a strong pride not only in having survived oppression but also in having influenced major religions and contributed a great deal to the history of different nations.

For many interviewees their identity was not expressed in terms of being British, or Indian or Parsi, but in being ultimately the true Persians – whichever continent they may have been born in. Even more respondents wanted to identify themselves as Zoroastrians, but this inevitably

causes some problems because the term is so rarely understood by the outside world. How do you identify yourself if others do not recognize what you are?

Zoroastrians themselves differ over what constitutes 'Zoroastrianness'. Science postgraduates tend to understand it in an ethnic sense of food, language and music rather than in religious terms, whereas those who migrated in the 1960s tend to emphasize the belief dimension. The majority of all groups considered that a knowledge of the religion was important to them and to the preservation of their identity, but very few considered that they had a sufficient level of knowledge.

In the survey, respondents were asked whether they identified themselves in terms of the old country (i.e. as Indian/Pakistan/Iranian) or in terms of race (i.e. Parsi) or religion (i.e. as Zoroastrian)

or as British or as a mixture. More described themselves in terms of the old country than as British. The answers break down, however: the elders tended to describe themselves in terms of the old country and the youth born here as British, though the majority in both cases still preferred the identification 'Zoroastrian'.

Caught between cultures. The question of the sense of identity leads naturally on to the question of whether Zoroastrians feel 'caught between cultures.' Less than half of those interviewed considered they were caught. Those who said they were not caught between cultures

tended to be the regular attenders at Zoroastrian House, those who describe themselves as Parsi not British, those who assert strongly that religion is part of their identity, those who interpret Zoroastrianness in terms of race, those who say they

do not want to change religious beliefs, practices and traditions. So, on the one hand people do not feel caught between cultures because they feel closely identified with one culture —

their Zoroastrian heritage. On the other hand, those who assert strongly that they are British; those who have had a postgraduate education, do not feel caught either, because they too have identified with one culture – the British.

Those feeling caught are those without a clear base in either community. A teenage girl expressed succinctly a theme several elaborated:

"I was frightened. I thought I was losing grip on what I was. So I studied my religion and culture. Now I have no hesitancy at all in saying what I am. I am comfortable being a Zoroastrian in Britain. I would be

comfortable being a Zoroastrian anywhere, even in Outer Mongolia."

Country of birth. Which groups tend to retain their Zoroastrian identity? The place of origin affects to some extent, how Zoroastrians settle in Britain. My personal impression

Two-thirds believed that there is a link between race and religion and their identity was tied up with their history.

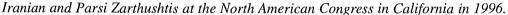
is that typically Iranians preserve their mother tongue more, observe their own festivals more vigorously, intermarry less often and are less likely to consider themselves British. Many have a sense of grief at the loss of the homeland and a deeper sense of 'the myth of the return' than do Parsis partly because they migrated more recently, and in particular because they felt compelled to migrate as a result of political pressures. A further factor is that Iranian Zoroastrians have an unequivocal sense of their Persian ancestry, whereas the Parsis can move between Indian, British and Persian identities. There is, therefore, a greater resistance to the loss of identifying characteristics. Further, there is less of a sense of identity with Britain as there is nothing corresponding to the generally positive

Parsi experience of British India.

Among the Parsis, the Zoroastrians from Karachi tend to be more traditional than those from Bombay, who have generally become

more cosmopolitan, or westernized, as a result of the nature of that city and their high levels of education. It is not only the level of practice which is distinctive of Zoroastrians from Pakistan. The survey undertaken in Karachi suggests that in that city there is a stronger commitment to some of the traditional teachings, or myths, than in westernized Bombay. Some of this religious commitment has traveled with Karachi Zoroastrians into the diaspora.

The social context. In the survey respondents were asked which features of the heritage they thought it





most important to preserve - religion, music, language, dress and so on. The majority of all ages listed food as a priority (overall 96% identified food as important, 94% religion). In the classical (Pahlavi) texts enjoyment of alcohol is considered a virtue, though anything to excess is sinful. Modern Zoroastrians may not know these texts, but they happily preserve the principle. accepting a Parsi 'peg' of whisky should first appreciate that this is measured by stretching the index and little fingers far apart! The happy, noisy chatter engendered at such occasions overwhelms any non-Zoroastrian newcomer.

Practice of the religion. It is inevitable that Zoroastrianism will be different in some ways in Britain from how it is in the old countries. The obvious difference for British Zoroastrians is the lack of material provision - no full-time professional priesthood, no fully pure and consecrated temple, and no Tower of Silence. Despite the devotion of many, and the generosity of donors, worshippers feel something of a personal and spiritual loss without a pure temple whose sanctity has been hallowed by the devotions of generations and without a permanently burning sacred fire and its aura of holiness.

I close with the simple words of one of the interviewees:

"It is necessary for every human being to have an identity. This is my identity. I was born into it and I am most comfortable with it ..."

Excerpted by Roshan Rivetna from Zoroastrians in Britain by John Hinnells [Ratanbai Katrak Lectures, Volume I, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1996]. Professor Hinnells, a faculty member of London University's prestigious SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies) has been a longtime student, historian and friend of the Parsi community. His exhaustive 15-year research study of the world Zoroastrian community, will shortly be published as Volume II of the Katrak Lectures.



Changing Places, Changing Faces

A 1999 snapshot of the Zarathushti identity in the new millennium

By Jim Engineer Naperville, Illinois

wenty-five years from now and beyond, new generations of Zarathushtis will turn to history in search of answers to the challenging questions of their time. They will likely turn to the groundwork laid by their forefathers to see how the infrastructure we are build-

ing today was woven into the fabric

of our Zarathushti identity. How will they judge us? What lessons will they have learned from the past to help guide them to think and act

responsibly?

As Zarathushtis, the number one challenge to our changing and cosmopolitan identity is to better define who we are.

Our identity. It's about time we started asking ourselves these questions. While we build and grow from infancy into a structured and active North American religious community, we are faced with some incredible challenges. Sustaining our identity, spirituality and community in the new millennium requires a thoughtful introspection of how we as a people will grow and compete with the rest of the world.

Our identity at present can best be described as fluid. We are a community of changing places and faces. We migrate, we grow and we disagree. We celebrate together. We fight together. Yet are we moving forward?

In analyzing our North American identity in 1999 we can turn to many

parallels. Take for example, the recent political quandary of the United States. A president scarred by partisan impeachment faced the ultimate rebuke of removal from office. The right and left remained sharply divided. Morals and ethics of the nation's highest elected official were called into question. Yet the country's

economy booms thanks to a budget surplus, very low unemployment and a sustained bullish stock market.

Impact of the Internet. In

many ways, our North American Zarathushti identity is a microcosm of the population at large. Differences of opinion and controversy are open to discussion 24 hours a day. The Internet, cable television and an aura of confidence create an environment for the extremists of our time to congregate, attack, provoke and push to the limit their freedom of speech in an age of technological wonder.

Never before has Zarathushti expression been so on display than through the Zarathushti e-mail alias, and sister aliases and web sites that provide a forum for the thought and feeling of the day. Email after email travel through cyberspace and into our homes and offices, where extremists from the right and left do battle almost daily.

We are not unlike the North American population as a whole, which carries on its business as usual, unfazed by in-fighting and controversy incited by minuscule segments of society.

Our Zarathushti identity is very much dormant, undefined and constantly changing. As with the general population we choose to ride the wave of prosperity, not realizing that the same economic forces contributing to growth also trigger recession and times of hardship. It would seem that only in times of adversity do we wake up and truly attempt to define who we are as a people.

The challenge. As Zarathushtis, the number one challenge to our changing and cosmopolitan identity is to better define it. We live and let live, accept the outrage and hate exchanged by our conservative and liberal brethren.

We will pave the road for peace and prosperity only by taking ownership of our identity and confronting the issues of our time responsibly, spiritually and most importantly, with an open mind. Until then, our identity on the road to the new millennium will remain foggy and our vision clouded by the hot air of extremism.

Jim Engineer is a working partner at Current Source, Inc., a Zarathushti-owned career placement, staffing and consulting firm serving corporations in the Greater Chicago region. Jim, a five-year professional public relations specialist, this year launched Current Source Communications, a division of Current Source, Inc., offering corporations crisis communications and employee relations services. He resides in Naperville, Ill., and can be reached via email at:

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Who am I? What am I?

Maintaining a Zarathushti home in a Christian World

By Khursheed Bapasola Voorhees, Pennsylvania

Noshir Palia Bapasola. I am a Zarathushti. I prefer to describe myself as a Zarathushti first, then as a Parsi and and Indian. If I think a little further, then I am a Mazdayasni, Zarathushti, Parsi, Indian, Citizen of the the United States of America. This describes my spiritual as well as geographic makeup. I feel pretty good about my ancestry. My thoroughbred American friend describes herself as a "mutt".

Being a Parsi in India. I was born in India. My ancestors lived there for about 1,300 years and were called Parsis, as they came from Pars, in Persia. I dream of visiting the land of my ancestors one day. The land where God - Ahura Mazda sent his messenger Zarathushtra to show his people how to live on this earth and make spiritual progress by using "Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds," always searching for the Truth and living in perfect harmony with all of God's creatures. That is the way I can be a good soldier in Ahura Mazda's army doing good and fighting evil to bring back perfect happiness on earth - Frashokereti.

When I read the story of creation from the Bundahishn, as written beautifully in Lorraine Moos' My Simple Book of Zoroastrianism, I realized the purpose and philosophy of my life. I pray daily and ask Ahura Mazda to show me the way and help me find it. My religion dic-

tates my values, ethics and principles, making up my personality and way of life and the choices I make, good or bad, wherever I may live.

In India I felt very comfortable amongst my own people being a Parsi and a Zarathushti. I lived in a Parsi colony, went to a Parsi elementary school and was surrounded by Parsi/Zarathushti family and friends. Being a Parsi automatically earned me respect and recognition from the larger community, as an honest and charitable person,

Christian world. Here in the new world, in America, I am surrounded by Christianity. I have to prove myself. I have to explain who I am. I have to take an easier American name (Kay). I have to say that I have a God I believe in and don't need to convert to any other religion. My God-given religion is the one meant for me, just as He chose my parents.

My reply to my 8-year-old daughter Sherry (Sherazad) when she asked me who she would marry, since no one in her school was a Zarathushti, was: "Just do what your father did when he lived in the USA. When he was old enough and mature enough to take a life-partner and start a family, he looked and searched around the world for a Zarathushti woman who would be the right life partner for him. Mom was also looking at the same time for the right Zarathushti partner. So there was a match. You too will find a suitable Zarathushti husband when the time is right.

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Great marriages are made in heaven – so is thunder and lightening. We have to work at making a happy marriage with our joint love and devotion."

My community. The members of my Zarathushti community in the South Jersey area have been a tremendous source of comfort in good times and bad. Believe me the road has been very rough at times. When my family were too far away to be a part of my life, my Zarathushti community accepted me for who I am, nurtured and protected me and have been invaluable to my existence and happiness in this New Land. For that I am eternally grateful to them. Without their support, I might have succumbed to the 'Melting Pot' syndrome, done what was convenient, and not followed the Zarathushti principle of "Righteousness for the sake of being righteous". It would have been convenient to do what others around me do, to get a sense of belonging, to be accepted in society - I too am an American!

Traditions – new and old. In 1994, I started researching the traditions followed in the land of my ancestors. Thus came about the annual 21st March, Jamshedi Navruz New Year

celebration in our home, along with the monthly religious class. Thanks to FEZANA Journal of February 1993, we studied and copied "The Traditions of Navruz" by Dr. Jahanian and set up the Haft Seen table with the seven items starting with the letter "S" in Persian, to observe the spring equinox and welcome spring after a long winter.

We gave the children wheat to sprout and Oovi, an Iranian friend from Delaware, recited stories that her mother had told her on Navruz about the bull tossing the egg (earth) from one horn to the other on the day of the spring equinox. We have now made it a tradition to celebrate with food, falooda, watermelon and we sing the 21st March song and other songs from an audio tape by Khojeste Mistree. Last year we even had an Egg Hunt for the kids in the basement after the monthly religion class. I feel happy about passing on this tradition to my children.

Christmas traditions. Last December my daughter and I went to see Dickens' Christmas Carol. Another 8-year-old sitting next to us asked what we celebrated at this time. Kwanza, Hannukah or Christmas? My daugh-

ter looked at me and I answered: "We celebrate Christmas, but it is not a religious holiday for us."

I felt very uncomfortable with this answer. What do we celebrate at this time as Zarathushtis? We have to survive in this country. Once again the timely articles "Do Zarathushtis Celebrate December 25th" "Yalda Celebration in Washington" in FEZANA Journal [Winter 1998] and a little bit of research on the Internet gave birth to the idea of celebrating the 'winter solstice'. This fits into the Zarathushti idea of light over darkness, triumph of good over evil, and makes sense as we respect nature and follow the seasons. Zarathushtis in Iran celebrate the Festival of Yalda on December 21st by sharing stories of their ancestors and drinking tea and eating fruits and nuts and watermelon.

So a new tradition was started this year on December 21st. Our family exchanged gifts from under the "Winter Solstice Tree" which was topped with the angel Asho Farohar and trimmed with atesh and gopatshah symbols as ornaments as well as momentos of special memories. We had a fun party where we shared stories of our ancestors and then we

'Haft Seen' table set up for the first time at the Bapasola house for NoRuz. This and other Iranian traditions and festivals such as Mehergan and Jashne Sadeh are now being celebrated by Zarathushtis in North America.



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danced to the instruction of a belly-dancer - good exercise! We asked our guests to bring food and blankets for the homeless instead of bringing wine or a gift for us. Our children who were a bit apprehensive about the fate of their gifts said they enjoyed the Winter Solstice celebration. The Three Wise Men took gifts to baby Jesus but then turned around and went back to the East where they came from.

Legacy in stone. Having realized how important a part our religion and the fellowship of Zarathushtis has played in giving us a sense of "Who we are" and "Where do we come from", we owe it to the future generations to leave them a lasting legacy in stone and mortar. A place where the youth can meet every Friday, have religion classes once a month, where we can celebrate gahambars, Navruz and Pateti. A place that we and our children can be proud of – something we build with our own individual commitment. To give back wholeheartedly to our religion whatever we can, for its preservation, because it has been the principles of our Good Religion that have guided us to be prosperous in this New Land.

Hindus and Jains from India have built their community centers and temples. Christians donate up to 20% of their income to their church. The Jewish centers look impressive. Surely us illustrious Parsis and Irani Zarathushtis can build a magnificent Zarathushti center to be proud of, dedicated to the glory of Zarathushtra and Ahura Mazda.

If you decide to pledge just \$5 per person per week. A family of 4 could put \$1000 per year towards this lasting legacy for your children. Can you sacrifice one meal at Pizza Hut or McDonalds? Our ancestors who sailed with Naryosang Dhaval put up with a lot of hardships and made untold sacrifices to preserve their Holy Atash, religion and ethnicity.

Their own center will give our children *roots* to come back to and a good education will give them *wings*.

When my 14-year-old son Sam and I drive by a sign in our town reading "Future Home of Hope Methodist Church", he says "When will we have a sign that reads Future Zarathushti Center?" I say to him: "We can do it Sam, we just have to try harder and we will see it soon."

Maybe the center could be built on a vision, in stages, over the years. We could think of a plot of land, a hall, a separate prayer structure, an old people's home, a school teaching Persian, Avestan, Gujarati and religion. Maybe we can even dream of a dokhma where it is allowed, like the good Dastoorji suggested in the Winter issue of FEZANA Journal.

If there are any like-minded individuals who would like to support this dream, the Tri-State area of South Jersey, Philadelphia and Delaware would most deeply appreciate it.

Folks at FEZANA, thanks for asking those questions. It set me thinking. This is what makes a Zarathushti. This is my religion and ethnicity. This is who I am. A Mazdayasni-Zarathushti-Parsi-Indian-North-

American. A Zarathushti center dedicated to the glory of Zarathushtra and Ahura Mazda would certainly help me and my fellow immigrant Zarathushtis establish their Zarathushti identity in North America and make sure that our children and theirs feel "Proud to be a Zarathushti" for generations to come.

Committed to helping Zarathushtis practice their religion, customs and traditions in North America, Khursheed Bapasola started The Zoroastrian Shop in 1996, from her home. "The idea is to give back to the Zarathushti community who have been an invaluable support to me and my family," she says. She sells basic supplies such as sudrehs, kushtis, topis, sukhar, lobban, tacho and veher packaged in a jashan kit, books on the religion and much more. The shop can be reached on the web at J. Peterson's site at www.avesta.org/zsupply.html.

By Hosi Wehta Elmhurst, Illinois

THE PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Zarathushti is a person who believes in and follows the steps laid down by Zarathushtra – a code of qualities to imbibe and conduct to follow in our daily life.

"Who is a Zarathushti?" and "What makes one a Zarathushti?" are two very distinct and different questions. Just because you fit the definition of #1 does not automatically place you into the category of #2.

- (1) Who is a Zarathushti? Traditionally if your parents are Zarathushti and you have gone through the Navjote ceremony, you are a Zarathushti.
- (2) What makes one a Zarathushti? A conscious effort by an individual to constantly think good (righteous) thoughts, speak good, encouraging, positive words, and do good, helpful, life-enhancing deeds makes one a Zarathushti. By good (righteous) what I mean is life-promoting, life-enhancing, in tune with nature's laws, for the betterment of the whole, with frasho-kereti in mind as the ultimate goal.

The human brain goes though approximately 50,000 thoughts a day, some are repetitive and some are new. We have to educate ourselves and learn to control our thoughts, to make them positive and life-promoting. This sounds difficult, but each one of us has the capacity to do it. It is a matter of discipline and working on it, one thought at a time. Before we know it, it becomes a habit, it becomes natural. You then start doing it subconsciously. Your good thoughts, words and deeds are like a pebble in a lake - though small, it causes ripples which are far-reaching.

Nature has shown us over millions of years that the basic truths are the same and that they always prevail in the end – they are simple. Let us accept the simple, universal laws that our Zarathushti religion has given us



ZAC President
Hosi Mehta [standing far left] and
Religion Education
teacher Kayomarsh
Mehta [kneeling,
left] with ZAC
youth at the Darbe
Mehr in Chicago.

As the Chicago Youth See it

The president and youth of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago voice their views on "Who is a Zarathushti?" and "What makes one a Zarathushti?".

and practice them and not argue about their interpretation.

There can be nothing more simple than Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds; yet we make nothing more difficult.

Hosi Mehta, President Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago

THE YOUTH PERSPECTIVE

Chicago youth express their thoughts on what makes a Zarathushti?

It means to do good things, deeds, words and good thoughts. It means to have faith and be loyal to everybody around you. If somebody is in need you can help them for example, because all Zarathushtis should be good. If you are a Zarathushti you should treat others the way you want to be treated. Zarathushtis are fair.

Carl Darukhanawalla Age 9

It means you have to be truthful and caring. That is probably what all Zarathushtis are. Mostly all Zarathushtis make all of the right

decisions. That is why I like to be a Zarathushti.

Kevin Elavia, Age 12

To always or basically tell the truth. Think good thoughts. To do the right thing. To never talk behind someone's back. To be truthful to yourself and others and never try to hurt somebody's feelings. To always go down the right path of good thoughts, good words and good deeds.

Katie Weber, Age 13

It means to be honest to yourself. It means to help others, do good deeds and to think good ideas. You should also respect others and their religion as well. You should be kind to others and not hate anyone. You should make the correct decision. You should also tell when you are wrong and not brag.

Jennifer Darukhanawalla, Age 13

In order to achieve an honorable Zarathushti identity, one must always make the right decisions. Thus, if one is given any choice in life, no matter how significant, this person must always give an effort to make a choice that would most benefit others and occasionally themselves. In addition, one must always be filled with good thoughts, instead of those thoughts which may corrupt one's mind.

> Neville Vazifdar Age 16

... to make a difference in people's lives, so they could look at me and say: "If everyone on earth were more like Shazad Mehta, there would be no need for a heaven, because we would already be there."

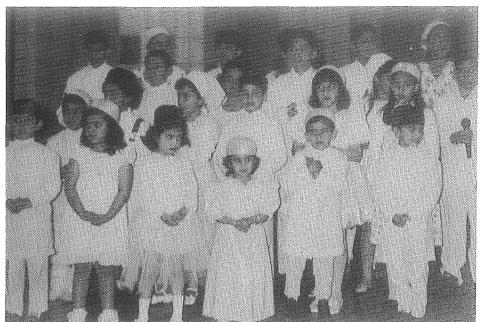
Shazad Mehta Age 17

... Selflessness and charity, while at the same time enjoying life and its pleasures; helping others while helping yourself; doing good just for the sake of doing good; reciting prayers regularly; striving for the ultimate goal of perfection of the soul and achieving immortality; seeing something wrong and then doing something about it; respecting those with more experience than you; teaching others these beliefs and hoping they will practice them.

Hoshi Vazifdar Age 17

To be a good person – think good thoughts, good words, good deeds. To be truthful to yourself and others on a daily basis. To make your own decisions, not follow, or lead others. Believe in what you think is right.

Michelle Weber Age 17



New Zealand and Australia. Photo left: Children of the Zarathushti Associations (Zoroastrian Association of New Zealand and the Traditional Mazdayasni Zarathushtrian Anjuman of New Zealand) at an inter-faith gathering in Auckland. Along with the Zoroastrian Association of Victoria and the Zoroastrian Association of New South Wales, these New Zealand communities are among the most recent of the diaspora, with major immigration, mostly from India and Pakistan, occurring in the 1980s.

Across Climes Across

Glimpses and stories of Zarathushtis in Africa, Australia, Europe and



Singapore Photo left: Parsi ladies at an occasion at the home of Hoshi and Sunny Deboo in Singapore. The early Parsi settlers in Singapore came in the mid 19th century for trade and business. Among the notable ones were a member of the Grand Jury, a founder-master of the Masonic Lodge, founder of a Chinese newspaper, and an editor of a local daily. Two luminaries on the Singapore scene of the 1940s were Pirojsha Framroz and Navroji Mistri, both self-made businessmen and philanthropists, who made their fortunes in soft-drinks. With the influx of professionals during the 1960s and 1970s, the population is now over 100 and represents a cross-section of every profession and business in the region. Charity and philanthropy are words that often come up when one documents the contributions of the Singapore Parsis. "Parsi Road" and "Mistri" Road, names familiar to most Singaporeans, are tributes to the achievements of this small community.

Japan. A Japanese friend of mine told me that there are a few thousand people in Japan referred to as the 'Haika Kyoo' (loosely translated as 'Prayer of Fire') with ceremonies and traditions similar to Zarathushtis. They wear white shirts and a white belt; make a big fire, particularly in mid-summer; and pray and sing in front of the fire.

My friend's knowledge about these people is very limited. I know there was continuous migration from Iran to the East, to China and Japan, for probably hundreds of years. Could these Haika Kyoo people possibly have roots in the Zarathushti religion?

Daryoush Mehrshahi Sheffield, UK

Thes

the Far East

Hong Kong. Though the number of Zarathushtis in Hong Kong has rarely exceeded 200, their contributions to the development of Hong Kong have been significant, ever since the arrival of the pioneer traders in eighteenth century. Parsis had begun to settle in Macao in the 1820s, in Hong Kong in the 1840s after the establishment of the British administration, and in Shanghai in the 1850s. In the first 25 years of Hong Kong's history as a British colony, as many as a quarter of all foreign firms in that city belonged to Parsis. The HK\$200 million Zoroastrian Building in downtown Hong Kong is possibly the most valuable Zarathushti asset in the world today. With income from this commercial property, the Hong Kong Zarathushtis are now foremost among donors of charity funds, giving freely to local causes as well as Zarathushti projects worldwide.











South Africa. This letter written by Dr. Dara Randeria, longtime resident of Durban, South Africa, to Archbishop Tutu, gives a glimpse into the life of the Zarathushtis in that troubled land. Numbering about 200 in the 1930s, the Zarathushti population in South Africa is now less than 70 persons, with the majority being senior citizens. The third generation youth are less than 15% and many amongst them are overseas. Parsi emigration from 1915 onwards was mainly towards the Middle East (Aden), Seychelles, Africa (East Africa), Kenya, East Coast, Beira, Dar-e-Salaam, Mozambique, and South Africa. They came mainly for trade or business.

To:

Archbishop Desmond Tutu Cape Town, South Africa

The Act passed in 1948 prohibiting Bride Entry from India was a nail in the coffin for the minority of minorities, the Zoroastrian community in South Africa, as the legislation singled out one section of the population whereas there was no restriction for members of the other race groups to bring their brides who obtained

residential rights in the country. The eligible youths/adults emigrated as there was a paucity of eligible, compatible Zoroastrian women. This resulted in emotional trauma of not only the emigrants but also of their families who were deprived of potential bread-winners.

The following brief resume will illuminate the role and contribution of the Zoroastrian community in South Africa ... Parsi pioneers came to South Africa in 1890. During the 1930s the Parsis numbered around 200. Subsequent to the Act, the numbers diminished and now we are less than 75. There has been 100% literacy and the Parsis have contributed in the spheres of education, medicine including specialists, law, commerce, industry, politics amongst others. Incidentally, the Speaker of the House of Assembly is Dr. Frene Ginwalla, a Zoroastrian.

Members of the community had set up Charitable Trusts for all members of the population in the building of schools, hospitals, health centers, old age homes and the granting of bursaries to the under-privileged.

On a more personal note, upon qualifying in medicine and then in the speciality of ophthalmology, I pioneered protest against this heinous legislation by presenting memoranda to successive prime ministers, ministers of the Interior from 1960 to 1970. In 1970, a special dispensation was granted to me for permission by the then Minister of the Interior, for the

entry of my late wife, Dr (Mrs) Jer D. Randeria, née Dr. (Miss) Jer K. Mody, a senior cancer research pathologist of International status.

The emotional trauma suffered during the abortive correspondence to the Government of the day, professing Christian justice was incalculable. Subsequently

the Act was repealed in 1978.

The purpose of the aforementioned memo is to record for posterity the implications of this inhuman legislation passed by a minority government that resulted in emotional trauma sustained by a section of a minority community that had contributed so much to the majority.

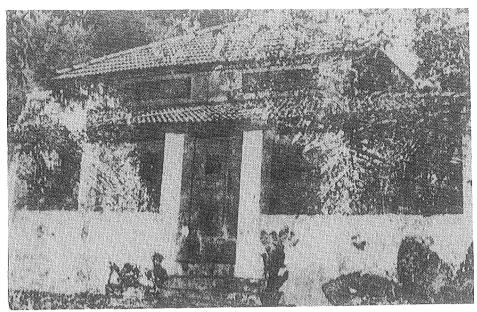
Yours truly
Now a liberated citizen
of the New South Africa,

Dr. Dara N. Randeria 28 August 1998

[This document falls into the category of Human Rights Violation of Faith Communities and has been filed in the Truth and Reconciliation Archive in Pretoria.]

Dr. Dara Randeria

Yangon, Myanma, formerly Rangoon, Burma. These excerpts from letters to FEZANA in 1996 and 1998 in regards to the Parsi Burial Ground and Fire Temple in Yangon give a glimpse of vestiges of Zarathushti practice in that country.

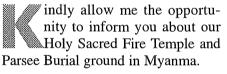


Home adjoining the Fire Temple in Yangon, Myanma.



မြန်မာရှိုင်ငံ ပါရစ်သာသာနာခဌာနချုပ် မြန်မာရှိုင်ငံ ပါရစ်သာသာနာခဌာနချုပ်





Being the legal custodians, the managing trustees of the Myanma Parsee Religious Head Quarter are regularly carrying out our traditional and religious rites at the Fire Temple throughout the year.

In 1996, the Government of Myanma laid down plans to build a well developed, modern State. As such, all cemeteries that are located within the city were to be removed or demolished. The local authority had taken away our Holy Fire Temple and had issued a notice to stop all religious performances. We have been engaged in a legal battle to regain back our Fire Temple. Now the Law is in our favor and so we are bound to get back our Holy Fire Temple.

While the Temple was under the control of the local authority, it was neglected for months without proper maintenance. The situation is deteriorating day by day and its condition has now become so bad that it is about to collapse.

The members of our Headquarters are endeavoring to launch a major repairing as part of our plan for all-round renovation of the Temple. In order to accomplish our mission we need help financially as well as materially. The financial position of our Headquarters is very weak. So we earnestly request you to find some ways and means to get financial help from other Parsee associations throughout the world.

We are carrying out our good work with concerted efforts. We assure you that we will safeguard and preserve our Parsee religious and traditional heritage in Myanma under any circumstances.

With due regards,

Daw Nyunt Nyunt Hormujee, President Ismail Khen Parsi. Vice President

Mazdasnans in Germany/Austria.

Excerpts from an account of a European Tour in May 1998, by (Dr) Meher Master Moos, President of Mazdayesnie Monasterie in Mumbai and Zoroastrian College in Sanjan.

t the Mazdasnan Headquarters in Bringhausen, staunch old-time followers of Dr. Otto Zaradusht Hannish, Zoroastrian College friends Margrit Kuster, Herr Tello Sandoz and others had gathered, with Frau Kokh playing the piano accompanying the singing of Avesta prayers. They conducted the Zoroastrian Fire Ceremony using the afarganyu and lalo and havanim from agiaries in Mumbai.

The Zoroastrian College flag with its Asho Farohar symbol flying around the earth and the Parsi flag designed by Jehangir Medora of Canada, were draped on the walls of the hall. The Headquarter building, in the serene countryside, had expanded considerably since Dame Meher's first visit there in 1985.

Mazdasnans are strict vegetarians, following the Fasli calendar gahambars, devoutly singing Avestan hymns and putting into practice the teaching of Asho Spitaman Zarathushtra of Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds.

Zarathushti Community in Ukraine

Letter received by FEZANA Journal, with a subscription request.

We have a little community in Ukraine. It is not yet registered officially like the one in St. Petersburg, Russia.

We would like to know more about the life of modern Zarathushtis of FEZANA.

Hiya Usta!

Viacheslav Fedorenko Zarathushti community of Ukraine Y. Kolasa, 21/21, Str. Kiev, Ukraine 252146 Tel: (380) 044-476 7284



The Farohar - in St. Petersburg, Russia

Exploring the emerging interest in their ancestral religion among groups in Tajikistan, Badakshan, Kurdistan, Uzbekistan and Russia.

The **Tajik** Case for a Zoroastrian Identity

By Shahin Bekhradnia Oxon, United Kingdom

n 1991, a number of Tajiks visiting California and Canada gave lectures on the revival of Zoroastrianism in their republic. The phenomenon they described was familiar, recalling the cases of other groups

who have reclaimed Zoroastrianism: Azarbaijani intellectuals, Yazidi Kurds and Iranian Muslims who are now members of the California-based *Zarathushtrian Assembly*. In these groups we have examples of people who have decided to subsume a specific religious identity to a superordinate Iranian cultural irredentism.

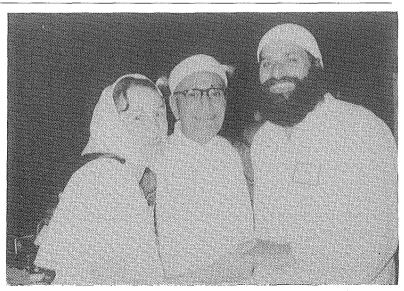
For such people their national identity is expressed not in Islam but in the context of the Iranian cultural heritage. They see all that they are most proud of as deriving from a moral and spiritual order inspired by the religion of pre-Arabic and pre-Islamic Iran.

These disparate groups have intriguingly surfaced at more or less the same time, though through quite different political circumstances: the Yazidi Kurds found their voice during the Iran-Iraq war and the Gulf War; the Iranian Muslims of California created the Zarathushtrian Assembly after three million Iranians had fled the Islamic Revolution; and groups of Azarbaijanis and Tajiks declared themselves after the breakup of the Soviet Union.

It is important to stress that these neo-Zoroastrian groups still represent a minority within their areas. In none of them, moreover, is there a



Mazdayasnan Center, Oregon. Photo right: Dr. Behesht Najad (right) and Asha, with Dastur Bode, at the North American Congress in Chicago in 1977. Dr. Najad is from the International Mazdayasnan Order, that has been operating in Springfield, Oregon, for some decades.



living and continuous tradition that is indisputably Zoroastrian in the conventional sense. However, it would be arrogant to say that they are not therefore 'Zoroastrians', since this is how they define themselves.

Tajikistan. In Tajikistan a considerable proportion of the population, both young and old, remains deeply aware of the heritage of a pre-Islamic past, of which they are intensely proud, with which they identify and about which they are well informed. Even before the collapse of Soviet authority in 1991, various opposition groups had organized themselves and were using media outlets to express their aspirations. The champions of 'democracy' shared an attachment to their ancient past and an antipathy to Islamicization.

Over an eight-day period in the summer of 1991 over a dozen articles appeared in various newspapers, women's magazines and literary journals dealing with the subject Zoroastrianism, its principles and morality, and the pre-Islamic historical framework. A prominent author of many of these articles was a poet from Badakshan, SalimShah e HalimShah (affectionately known Zartosht by his friends and admirers). He had been invited to give lessons on Zoroastrianism and its scriptures (the Avesta) to university students, a number of whom then enthusiastically declared themselves Zoroastrians.

The autumn festival of Mehrgan was declared an official state holiday alongside Persian New Year, Nowruz, and there was some talk of reintroducing the fire festival, Sadeh. A leaflet explaining the history of the celebration of Mehrgan was distributed, and apparently scattered by helicopter to inform the public in remote areas about the new festival. In the autumn of 1992 an international cong-

ress on the Avesta was convened in the capital, but was poorly attended because of civil unrest.

The ancient towns of Bokhara, Samarkand and Panjikent, located in the Zarafshan river valley, are home to people with a sophisticated pre-Islamic culture. This culture was one in which Zoroastrianism of a more or less conventional type was the major spiritual and moral influence. The archeological evidence for this is abundant in this area and the local people are aware and proud of their traditions, many of which, they point out, have clearly been maintained from pre-Islamic times.

Panjikent, in the northern region, is today a modern town, but its international importance lies in its cultural past dating back before the Arab con-

TURKMENISTAN

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the public in remote areas about *Three Tajiks visitors* [photo above] to Karachi gave a the new festival. In the autumn talk, with a video, photos and artifacts, to a gathering of 1992 an international cong-of the Karachi Parsi Banu Mandal, last year.

quest of Iran and Central Asia. That pre-Islamic culture was sophisticated and tolerant in this area is amply demonstrated by rich and varied examples of wall paintings, statues and silver bowls as well as evidence suggesting the presence of Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism alongside local cults and fire temples which are thought to have been of Zoroastrian origin.

These have been discovered by Russian archeologists over a number of decades, the most recent team being led by Professor Marshak, who has been excavating there with his colleagues each summer for the past 40 years. He holds the view that the former religion of the area was a free form of old Zoroastrianism. The increasingly accepted view is that Zoroastrianism has been a dynamic

religion, undergoing change and adaptation according to the social conditions of area and time.

Given the geographical location of Panjikent and the other towns mentioned, all positioned on the main Silk Route, it was obvious that travellers from the Far East and the western world would carry their culture with them when travelling or settling there. This resulted in the syncretic local variant of Zoroastrianism, depicted so richly with statues and wall paintings of god-like figures, reminiscent of Buddhist and Hindu iconography, which has not been found in other Zoroastrian areas. One Tajik archeologist believes that many of the wall paintings are depictions of the Zoroastrian angels, the Amesha Spentas, and of those who give their names to the months and to each day of the month.

It should be pointed out that the word 'Zoroastrian' is not found in any of the historical references to this region, just as it is absent from the inscriptions at Persepolis. Nevertheless, just as most scholars accept that the

Achaemenids were Zoroastrians, so it is reasonable to accept that references to 'fireworshippers' implies Zoroastrians by means of a deliberate misnomer. Indeed, the frequent use of the word *mogh*, to mean Zoroastrian priest or *majus*, supports this view.

Fieldwork in Badakshan

Badakshan is located among the remote Pamir mountains. The Badakshanis are proudly aware of their own distinctive culture, different, they claim, from that of the rest of the Tajiks. One most obvious difference is a visual one: the Badakshani population is significantly fairer than the rest of the Tajik population. Any individual in Doshanbe (capital of Tajikistan) with blue, green or hazel eyes and fairer hair or skin than the rest is very probably a Badakshani. They are physically very similar to the Kurds.

In addition to standard Tajiki/Persian, the Badakshanis speak any one of eight Pamiri languages. Of particular interest to Zoroastrians is the fact that these languages are all from the Eastern Iranian linguistic group, as is the language of the Zoroastrian Avesta. SalimShah, in whose company I conducted most of my fieldwork among the Badakshanis, has been able to identify many words in the Avesta still in use in his own Pamiri language. He has identified several toponyms or place names in the Avesta, sometimes accompanied by descriptions of the geographical and physical features of these places, which correspond to similarly named places in Badakshan. In Baghiv village, for example, there were two fire temples and a fortress high up on a mountainside overlooking the present-day village. The village name is undoubtedly connected with the word for 'god' in the Avesta and Old Persian, baga. Other fire temples have been excavated and documented by Russian archaeologists throughout Badakshan. Linguistic similarities and the abundance of

There are thus many parallels between Zoroastrianism and the customs and way of life of the people of Badakshan in particular and the Zarafshan valley in general.

what have been identified as fire temples have given rise to a growing body of opinion which is prepared to consider the possibility that Badakshan was in fact the home of Zoroaster.

My fieldwork revealed abundant aspects of Badakshani culture which resemble aspects of the culture of the Iranian Zoroastrians. Women, for example, are highly respected and enjoy an independence unknown in any other part of Tajikistan. Badakshanis also make much of the fact that they do not lie or cheat. One man of over 80 made it very clear, stressing over and over again that lying and cheating were regarded as the worst of all crimes.

Weddings were an occasion for a number of interesting observations. When the groom is about to set off to bring his bride home, he first goes to the hearth fire, which is located in the main family room of the traditional Badakshani house, and there he pays his respect by kissing the hearth and

then touching his lips and chest with his fingers. Then, as on several other occasions when good luck is being invoked, a local dried herb is ignited in a fire vessel not unlike the Zoroastrian afarganyu.

Other traditions associated with fire and light are embodied in the structure of the Badakshani home. They say that as sunlight on NoRuz day shines through the roof skylight known as ruz, which means 'day' or simply 'light', it falls on the central supporting column of the They follow a ritual that house. closely corresponds to that used in Iran when leaping over a bonfire on Char Shanbeh Soori, the Wednesday before NoRuz. At NoRuz the beams in the houses are decorated with patterns using a flour and water mix, as was the practice in Yazd, the stronghold of Zoroastrianism in Iran. In several homes I saw a circular engraving on the threshold beam which I was told represented the sun. It was also noticeable that the Badakshanis sweep and sprinkle water in front of their homes at dawn, as the Iranian Zoroastrians used to do.

Conclusion. There are thus many parallels between Zoroastrianism

Dr. Parvona Djamshedov (Jamshedi), a native of Badakshan, and resident of Doshanbe, the capital city of Tajikistan, visited Zoroastrian Associations in USA and Canada in 1991 [See "Remnants of Zoroastrianism in Soviet Badakshan" By Parvona Djamshedov, FEZANA Journal, May 1991] and gave accounts of Zarathushti practices. "It is only since 1985 that they are openly saying that their forefathers were Zoroastrians," said Dr. Djamshedov, "About 80 years ago conversion to Islam took place, and religion was forbidden during the



Communist regime; however many remained Zoroastrian in the Pamirs, remembering it and cherishing it, and following the customs and traditions of their forefathers.

and the customs and way of life of the people of Badakshan in particular and the Zarafshan valley in general. These examples are circumstantial but like pieces in a mosaic give a hint of what the whole picture might once have looked like. There is undoubtedly substance to Tajik claims to a Zoroastrian heritage.

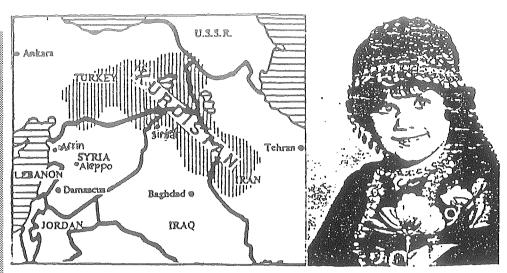
It is obvious that the Tajiks are going through an unstable period in search of their identity and that a number of different interests are at work. However, if in the near future they are able to put aside the arms with which they seem to be sorting out their differences at present, some may yet again choose to express their national identity and sense of unity through the symbols and religion inspired by the Zoroastrian era of their own indigenous culture.

Excerpted by Roshan Rivetna from "The Tajik Case for a Zoroastrian Identity" by Shahin Bekhradnia [Religion, State and Society, Vol. 22, No. 1, 1994].



Shahin Bekhradnia studied Anthropology at Oxford and has done extensive research and field work among the people of the Central Asian republics. She has published and presented papers at international Zarathushti congresses and conferences.

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The Yazidi Kurds

A Yazidi perspective. "The mantlepiece in the main reception room in our house was adorned with a single framed painting. This was the portrait of a man, sporting a long beard and wearing a headgear that looked like a cross between royal crowns and priestly turbans of the Orient.

"His eyes gazed at us constantly, keeping a watch on all we said and did. And, at times, I even felt that he saw what we were thinking as well. In the room no one paid any special attention to the 'man' in the wooden frame. There was no ritual veneration of him. At the same time, however, it was evident that everyone, including my father, was aware of the presence.

"The man in the wooden frame was Zarathushtra, or Zartosht as we called him, or Zoroaster. Zarathushtra's teachings could be resuméd in what, at first glance, appears a facile slogan: Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds.

"And yet, in them is hidden all the mysteries that encompass man and his unique experience. In these simple admonitions one finds the entire spectrum of ethical and philosophical questions that have occupied the minds of generations and shall continue to do so for ever ...

"The Kurdish community of people as a whole could be considered Azda'ee, at least in a broad cultural sense. For the Kurds have never abandoned their basic ancestral values which have their roots in the faith of Zarathushtra ... we want all Kurdish Zarathushtrians to unite in order to preserve their personality and defend their identity ..."

These excerpts are from the book *To Us Spoke Zarathushtra*, by Prince Emir Muawiyyah ben Esma'il Yazidi, recording the practice of the religion of Zarathushtra by the Yazidi (or Azda'ee) Kurds. It goes on to say:

"In the 12th century, at the start of the Ottoman ascendancy in the region, an estimated 80% of the Kurds were either secretly or avowedly Zarathushtrians still. Today, the same percentage describe themselves as Muslims ..."

Using religious records, the book gives estimated figures of Yazidis: 1.5 million in Turkey, over 1 million in Iraq, 0.5 million in Iran, 200,000 in Syria, 25,000 in Armenia, 10,000 in Yemen, and smaller pockets in Europe, the Americas and the Middle East ... We are all the people of Yazdan or Izad or Azda, all being appellations of the One God."

A Kurdish Perspective. Meanwhile, a two-page handout from the New York based Kurdistan Cultural Center refers to "more than 25 million Kurds, with a distinct cultural identity of their own ... living in an area called Kurdistan which was divided by colonial powers after the

First World War, between Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Syria."

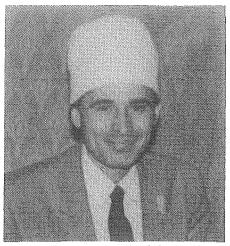
"Religious belief plays no part in Kurdish distinctiveness," states the handout, "Most of the Kurds are Muslims but there are also Christian, Jewish, Yezid and Zoroastrian Kurds. Zoroastrianism was the original ancient religion of the Kurds and Persians..."

Some of them still pray from the Avesta, without making it public knowledge. Their mannerisms and outlook towards life is predominantly like ours ...

Of late, political conditions have propelled these little-known people of Zarathushti heritage to the consciousness of the world. In a letter to Jam-e-Jamshed in 1990, Rustom Amaria, an officer with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, based in Quetta narrated harrowing tales, and wrote: " ... I am led to believe that most of these Kurd-Iraqi refugees have converted from Zoroastrianism to Islam, due to excessive pressure ... Nearly all the present younger generation refugees that I have come across, claim to be Muslim converts, with grandparents still Zoroastrian. Some of them still pray from the Avesta, without making it public knowledge. Their mannerisms and outlook towards life is predominantly like ours."

Excerpted by Roshan Rivetna from "Are the Kurds Zoroastrians?" by Arnavaz Mama [Parsiana, March 1992].

Zoroastrian symbols are now displayed on the new 100 sums and 200 sums currency notes of Uzbekistan



Avestologist Rustam Abdukamilov

Through the wonders of the Internet, FEZANA Journal has received this article and photos from Rustam Abdukamilov, chairman of the Zarathushtrian Mazdayasni Anjuman of Uzbekistan.

The Anjuman. Our Zarathushtrian Anjuman of Uzbekistan has about 150 members, ten of whom are active. The include scientists, lecturers, doctors, journalists, students and others. Nearly 300 listen to our lectures and we have many more sympathizers and interested persons. It is difficult to say how many Zarathushtis are there in Uzbekistan. Our Anjuman is 29 years old. We have been meeting since 1969, discussing the Avesta and the beauty and perfection of the Aryan culture and wisdom, and performing the rituals.

My name is taken from my grandfather's name, Kamil, but members of the Anjuman call me "Spenta-Armaiti". I am an Avestologist at the Academy of Sciences and a lecturer

Zarathushti Anjuman in Uzbekistan

of Avestology and Avestan language at several universities.

Most people here speak Russian because it is the language of the intellectuals of the former USSR. Some can speak other languages also: English, Parsi or Uzbeki. I am trying my best to speak Avestan also.

Now we are trying to spread Zarathushtrian knowledge through the media. We publish articles in newspapers and speak on TV, and spread information about ancient Zoroastrian art and symbols. The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, I. Karimov, wrote in a recent pamphlet: "The Avesta is our most holy and most ancient scripture." This may be the first such declaration from a Head of State in the last 20 years.

The country. Uzbekistan is the southern part of the former USSR and includes Khorazm, Sogdiana, Surkhandaryan, Bactria and other regions which are named Aryan in the Avesta. It has more than 25 million



inhabitants. Now NoRuz has been declared as the principal State holiday of Uzbekistan. There has been a decision of the Government to organize Avesta department at republic schools and educational institutions.

Practices. Most people of Uzbekistan do Zoroastrian rituals unconsciously as their old ancestral heritage. Almost all the people practice Zarathushti ceremonies at NoRuz and Fire Festivals, but they do it unconsciously. They have forgotten the manthras because of the Arab Muslim conquest. We do recite Zarathushti prayers. I wear my kushti which Mrs. Shahin Bekhradnia from England gifted to me. This kushti was made in Yazd. I do not have a sudreh yet. I hope I will have it soon.

Mobeds. As yet, we do not have any mobeds, because we await our ordaining. For now Rustam Spenta-

Armaiti fulfills the duties. We hope that in 1999 the government will send him to America as it promised, to be ordained.

Fire temples. There are many beautiful, ancient fire temples in Uzbekistan. This country has her Avestan name which is Aryo-shayana, as well as Aryanam Khshathram and Aryo-khshuta. Accordingly, each region has an Avestan name.

You know, of course Khorazm is named in the Mehr Yasht. Here are Zarafshanian Sogdiana which consists of the Samarkandian Sogdiana, Bukharian Sogdiana and Kashkadaryan Sogdiana; Surkhandaryan Bactria; Avestan Kangha which is the contemporary Tashkent region; the valleys of Oxus (Amudarya), Yaxart (Sirdarya), the Farghana valley, the regions of Jizak, Andizhan, Namangan and others. Archeologists

have unearthed many ancient fire temples in these regions.

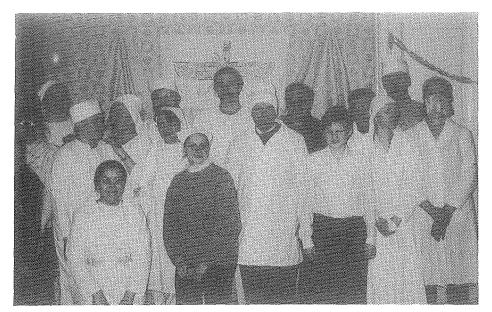
Nearly 30 ancient fire temples of Tashkent are described in archeologist Margarita Filanovich's research [Tashkent: Origin and Development of the City, Academy of Sciences of USSR, Institute of Archaeology, Tashkent, 1983].

Khshnaothra Ahurahe Mazdao! Ushta!

Rustam Abdukamilov on behalf of Uzbekistan Zarathushtri Anjuman 5 Ab. Box 96 Tashkent 700005 email: spanta@hal.UFN.net

Photo, below, Avesta students in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, with their teacher, Rustam Abdukamilov. Friends call him Spenta-Armaiti.





Left, weekly service of the Zarathushti anjuman in St. Petersburg, Russia

With Greetings From **Russia**

Greetings from Russia!

t is very difficult to believe that in a country such as Russia, with its strong Orthodox Christian tradition, followed by 72 years of complete atheism, there could now appear a Zoroastrian community but there is one. It was registered in St. Petersburg City Council in 1994 and united a few Zoroastrian groups that existed in the city since about 1989.

Pavel P. Globa. People in these groups learned about the Zoroastrian religion from Pavel P. Globa, who inherited the knowledge from his grandfather, whose ancestors came from Iran. Being initiated by Zervanits of Badakhshan, he started teaching people in Moscow, St. Petersburg and other cities of the USSR. At that time he was already well known as an astrologer and head of a very large astrological school. Pavel Globa used his astrological popularity as a means to teach people about Zoroastrianism, Ahura Mazda, the fight of Good and Evil, about. Time - Zervan as the beginning of everything. He has also published books on the Zoroastrian calendar, Zoroastrian outlook upon the world, Zoroastrian values and way of life.

The community. Now in our community there are about 60 people. They are common Russians of different ages and professions. Most of

them joined the community in the beginning of Perestroyka, when everyone in the country faced the issue of Choice.

Beliefs. We profess Ahura Mazda, the Creator, Amesha Spenta, Atar and all Yazata. We also profess the teachings about Zervan as the absolute and the beginning of beginnings. Our

attitude to life can be expressed in three words, the same for all Zoroastrians: Hukhta, Humata, Huvareshta, and we always try to keep to these three. As part of the teaching about time (Zervan) we use the ancient science of astrology, that helps us orient ourselves in life.

Avestan texts. Every week we meet for religious services and classes in the Avestan language and traditions. We say our

prayers and read texts from the Avesta. We have in Russian, Videvdat, some Yashts and some Pahlavi texts: the small Bundahishn, Menog i Khrad, Saddar and Arda Viraf Nameh. Most of these texts were translated from English and not from Avestan. We do not have texts pub-

lished in Avestan yet but now we are studying Avestan and preparing to publish Niaishn in Avestan with parallel Russian translation.

Practices. Members of our community try to keep to traditional Zoroastrian rituals as close as possible. We hold to the Zoroastrian calendar and try to follow its recommendations, as

it is described in the texts. We celebrate NoRuz on March 21st. As for the other festivals, we celebrate them different slightly dates, because we take into account real spatial rhythms. We do not have a Fire Temple yet, so we light a fire every time we meet, in a flat we rent for the community or in someone's home.



Pavel Globa's book entitled "Zhivoy Ogon" (Living Fire).

Publications. We published a quarterly newsletter "Mithra",

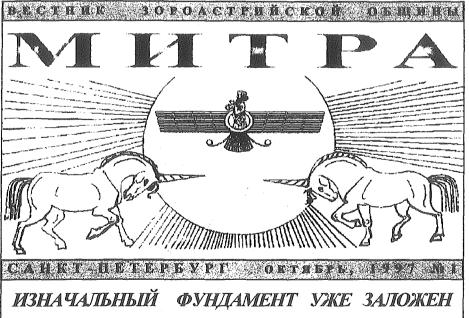
but now, due to new laws regulating the religious life in this country, we have to postpone all publishing activities for some time. Yet, we will look for other opportunities to tell people about our religion.

We are aware that our knowledge of the rituals is yet insufficient, because we do not have enough books or contacts with Zoroastrians of the world, but we are constantly learning. We would like to know about the life of other Zoroastrians and will be very thankful for any books and periodicals you could send us in Avestan or European languages.

Let the blessings of Ahura Mazda be upon you,

Elena Sachkovskaya for Michael V. Chistiakov Jr. Dean of the St. Petersburg Zoroastrian Community Scherbakov Street, 14/2 #2 St. Petersburg, Russia 197 349





Above, members of the Zarathushti community in St. Petersburg. Below, the newsletter "Mithra" of the St. Petersburg community contains articles on: Zoroastrianism in Russia; Zervanism and Zoroastrianism; Avestan language lesson and commonality with some Russian words; The Urals - Place of Origin of the Aryans; Chapter from Menog i Khrad; Cosmic Rhythms; information about weekly services; Sasanid Clothing; poems and recipes.

By Roshan Rivetna

Zarathushti by choice, Dr. Ali A. Jafarey, was born a Muslim, in Kerman, Iran, 78 years ago, and brought up in Karachi, An erudite man, Dr. Pakistan. Jafarey's early years were shaped by the likes of Dr. Maneck Pithawalla, principal of the B.V.S. Parsi High School in Karachi, whom he calls his first mentor, Dasturji Dhalla of Karachi, his second mentor, and Dasturji Dr. Framroz Bode, his third. He served as Director General of the Iranian Center for Anthropology and as Advisor to the Minister of Culture and Art in Tehran until 1980. He now resides in California.

In 1991, along with 7 others, Dr. Jafarey, co-founded the Zarathushtrian Assembly, in Los Angeles. The Assembly has since drawn a large (figures are not divulged) following into the practice of the Zarathushti faith, to the consternation of the non-proselytizing, mainstream 'born' Zarathushtis.

Mission and activities. Dr. Jafarey gives the motivations for the founding of the Assembly to be: "(1) The ever-freshness and self-renovating doctrine which a modern, scientific world wishes and wants; (2) The historic fact that the Good Religion is the first missionary religion and yet has never been a forcing and pushing movement to spread itself. It spread among many races and nations during the Iranian supremacy only because of its merits - sublime teachings accompanied by tolerance; and (3) The absence of missionary zeal among Iranian and Parsi Zarathushtis to undertake the task." The Assembly's mission is: "To learn, practice, teach and propagate the pristine, divine message of Asho Zarathushtra as given in the Gathas; and to spread the universal message all over the earth. It is for all humanity."

With headquarters in rental premises near Los Angeles (at 1814 Bayless Street, Anaheim, California, tel: 714-520-9577, email: assembly@ zoroas-

The New Zarathushtis By Choice

Amidst vitriolic protests from the right, acclamation from the left and silence from the majority in between, the Zarathushtrian Assembly, headed by Muslim-born scholar Ali A. Jafarey, continues on its mission to open the doors of the Zarathushti faith to all who wish to enter.

How will these 'new' or 'neo' or 'nouveaux' or 'reborn' or 'converted' or 'reverted' or 'by choice' Zarathushtis relate with the traditionally non-proselytizing 'born' or 'original' or 'mainstream' Zarathushtis? In an interview with FEZANA Journal, Dr. Jafarey explains the stance of the Zarathushtrian Assembly.

trian.org; web: www.zoroastrian.org), the Assembly has branches and affiliated associations in many North American, European and Central Asian cities.

Funded by donations from members and friends, the Assembly engages in multifarious activities, including: research, comparative religious studies and teaching "the pristine, pure message of the Gathas and the rich culture promoted by the Good Religion" through religious classes and the media, publication of religious books and the periodical Spenta, in English and Persian; holding religious conferences and attending international conferences "to establish closer relations and to introduce the Good Religion to those who want it". The Assembly also operates Spenta University, as a subsidiary of the Assembly, for higher education.

The Assembly celebrates and performs all religious and cultural ceremonies "which are in tune with the Gathic teachings" such as Gahambars, NoRuz and Jashne Sadeh, and birth, initiation, marriage, honoring and memorial rites.

Initiation ceremony. According to Jafarey, the initiation ceremony is performed "exactly according to the Yasna Chapters 11-13. The entire

procedure resembles the navjote performed by Parsis with the difference that non-Gathic parts in the Avesta and Pazand, irrelevant to the occasion. absent. Also there are no non-Gathic rites before or the cereafter mony. The candidate is always a knowledgeable both in Avesta and in the first language of the candidate, so

didate, so that he/she fully understands the Declaration of the Choice of the Good Religion he/she makes. It is both meaningful in the text and context, and colorful in presentation and performance."

"Depending on the situation," says Jafarey, "the ceremony could be private or public. We had an initiation which was attended by six persons only and on another occasion, there were more than 400 to witness it."

Requirements of the convert. Asked about requirements of the prospective convert, Jafarey states: "Keeping the Freedom of Choice fully in view, a person is required to study not only the Good Religion but have a fair knowledge of other religions, creeds and beliefs to be in a good position to make the choice. It is he/she who converts him/herself. The Assembly does not convert. It only accepts those who choose the Good Religion on the basis of their knowledge and discretion."

Relating with other Zarathushtis. When asked about his relations with other, 'mainstream' Zarathushtis, Jafarey retorted: "Who are the 'mainstream Zartoshtis? Iranians, 'Reformist' Parsis, Ilm-e-Khshnoomists, the Pundol group or those

who call themselves 'traditionalists' and yet do not belong to any of the above and are not recognized as such by others? (Jafarey says he uses the spelling Persian Zartoshti', the 'Zara-Avestan thushtri', Anglicized 'Zara- thushtrian', **English** 'Zoroastrian', and even 'Jarthosti', but not 'Zarathushti' which considers a without consideration of linguistics).



knowledgeable Jafarey: "It is he/she who coneven Parsi adult and never a verts him/herself. The Assembly 'Jarthosti', but not minor. The entire does not convert. It only accepts 'Zarathushti' which those who choose the Good Reliboth in Avesta and in the first language of the cape and discretion."

Representation of linguistics of the cape of linguistics of the cape of linguistics of the cape of linguistics.

"The Assembly has cordial relations with all the so-called 'born' Zartoshtis – Iranians and Reformist Parsis. It extends its hand of friend-

ship to all those who wish so. And it has no quarrel with any whatsoever."

As far as his expectations about being accepted by other Zarathushtis and Zarathushti associations, Jafarey comments: "Nothing. The Assembly is an independent registered religious organization. That is its de facto status. Its members are Zartoshtis in its full meaning. That is also their de facto status. Many 'other Zartoshtis are kind to accept the Assembly and its members as Zartoshtis. The same holds true about certain Zartoshti associations."

Asked about membership into Zoroastrian Associations in North America, he says: "The Assembly, a world organization, has never approached any local 'Zoroastrian Association' for membership. should be the other way. Any Zoroastrian Association agrees with the pristine purity of the Gathic Doctrine would be welcome to join the Assembly. The same holds true about FEZANA. It is a North American federation. invited, registered local branches are free to join it."

About entering Fire Temples in India, he says: "We would never think to enter until the day their doors are willingly opened for all Zartoshtis -'born' or 'by choice'. At Darbe Mehrs in USA and Canada, he says "Assembly members have never been stopped to enter any of the North American Dar-e-Mehrs or those in other Western places. Legally, Assembly members cannot be barred from entering North American Dar-e-Mehrs built by the Guiv Trust. They are not closed-door temples with a sign of "Only for the Parsis'. In Iran, the question does not arise."

According to Jafarey, his experience so far has been "Silent recognition and cordial acceptance by many and roaring rejection and cool disdain by a few. There are, however, signs of a thaw in the outright rejection and a move towards a mutual co-existence."

Thoughts on the Recent Emergence of 'NeoZarathushtis'

By Rohinton M. Rivetna Hinsdale, Illinois

nother identity that has arisen in recent times, often bewildering to Zarathushtis and not at all understood, is what is termed the 'Neo-Zarathushtis' ('neo' means 'new' in Greek, e.g. the dictionary defines 'neo-Hellenism' as 'reversion to Greek ideas' and 'neo-classic' as a revival or adaptation of the classic style) who declare themselves Zarathushtis by choice.

Mainstream identities. Of course, within the mainstream Zarathushtis there are many identities on the basis of ethnicity and ideology. However, miraculously, much to the envy and often times admiration of other faith traditions, Zarathushtis, in their profound wisdom, have remained one, enjoying the instant worldwide fraternity it brings.

Thus far, in our history, we have had two ethnic identities: the Iranian Zarathushtis from Iran, and the Parsi Zarathushtis from the Indian subcontinent. A third is very rapidly emerging – the Zarathushtis of the "second diaspora" in North America, including perhaps Britain and Australia – not yet well-defined, hardly discernable, but nevertheless there, and evolving.

This third identity is a meltdown of the Iranian and Parsi identities, of course with a strong flavor of their new environment; with both pre-disposed to their ways and beliefs and both committed to stay the course together and bring about a renaissance in the New World together. With both making sacrifices, both infinitely respectful of each other and determined to evolve a glorious common destiny, this 'New World' identity has unfathomable potential, defying the imagination, and, as is the rule, itself completely oblivious of its own potential.

To an introspective observer, it is clear that the mainstreamer's strengths are rooted in the *family and ancestry*. Development of spirituality, inculcating values, priestly training, all have relied on a firm grounding within the family, with extensions into the close circle of relatives, friends and the immediate community.

The new identity. There has now arisen an identity which is outside the comfort zone of the mainstreamers, and difficult for them to grasp and accept, which is rooted in individual choice based on knowledge and learning. These are the sincere seekers who, after study and introspection, declare themselves to be Zarathushtis. I dare say that such seekers must have arisen in the past, only their evidence is clearer today, particularly in North America and by extension, in the West, where freedom of belief and worship is zealously guarded. The distinction between the practice of the Zarathushti faith and a belief in its ethical concepts is yet to be understood; one, the preserve of a few, the other, to be embraced by humanity to help move creation forward towards Frasho-kereti.

Needless to say, mainstream Zarathushtis, rooted in a completely different structure of inter-dependence and family bonds are bewildered by this development. Not knowing how to react, they have engaged in endless debates, hoping to find solutions, or a method of coping, or, as some may wish, to banish the phenomenon out of existence.

Devout Zarathushtis of the traditional persuasion anguish deeply (and feel powerless to react) over the rationalization of their faith by the neo-Zarathushtis, founded in the

intellect and not in heritage; a faith preserved by their ancestors, in exclusion, with untold sacrifices.

The reality. The reality is that these 'neo-Zarathushtis', at least within the foreseeable future, have made their appearance on the Zarathushti scene, and their bewilderment is no less when they do not find welcoming, open arms to receive them, as they had learned to expect from their experiences of the missionary faiths they might have known.

To the mainstream Zarathushti, missionary zeal is anathema, as is the pursuit of faiths other than the one bestowed at birth. They are content to let evolutionary changes take their course. They dispense of the enthusiasm of the neo-Zarathushtis as of only momentary certitude. Mindful of eternal justice and natural laws, and wishing to preserve the dignity of all seekers, they continue on with their appointed tasks, knowing that all things come to pass.

Only recently, the two larger streams of Zarathushtis – the Iranians and the Parsis have embarked on the journey of coming together.

As for the neo-Zarathushti stream, only time will tell whether it will fizzle and die, or flourish and survive. Only time will tell, whether it will evolve in its own, unique direction, or will, in the end, find a meaningful place along with the mainstream.

He worked by day
And toiled by night.
He gave up play
And some delight.
Dry books he read,
New things to learn.
And forged ahead
Success to earn.
He plodded on
With faith and pluck.
And when he won
They called it luck.
- Author unknown

Global Zoroastrians, 2030 CE

Rivers of Remembering and Forgetting

"The symbolic words of five thousand years, The gazing eyes of generations to come."

- Bel Dao, a contemporary Chinese poet

By Aspi Moddie Mumbai, India

et us look forward. Not down the long corridors of the twentyfirst century in an age when the world becomes unpredictable every decade. That is a futuristic leap. Let the gaze be confined to one generation, the guessable demographic and sociological future, from the present seed time of perceptions and trends. Behind us "the symbolic words" of the great teacher, Zarathushtra, seemingly so relevant today, with individual, democratic, ethical choices, and with an eco-ethic for the earth. Ahead of us, "the glazing eyes of generations to come."

In 2030 CE, will the global Zarathushtis be, like those who landed in India from Iran over a millennium ago, little spoons of sugar in the large vessels of milk of the three disparate societies in which they will live? Or will they be like one of the last vanishing tribes, fading away in biological and social sterility? The answers will lie with the present and future leadership of these far-flung microscopic communities, unable to coalesce yet with sufficient force and vision for vigorous community survival.

Three universes. By 2030, there are likely to be three small 'universes' of Zarathushtis. The first, in the land of their refuge this last millennium (the Indian sub-continent), the springboard of modernization in the last two centuries, the home of the mak-

ers of 'The City of Gold' (Mumbai) – by 2030, a shrunken back-water, a third of its former population.

The second 'universe' will be the resurgent ethnic communities of the Islamic world, the old Iran Shah, remembering their Zarathushti and imperial past in pre-Islamic centuries. Suddenly, they may burst in large numbers, like wild poppies on Damavand, in unpredictable numbers from over 400,000 to a half million or more.

Perhaps the most virile Zarathushti universe will be in the third far-flung

Western societies ...

No one knows the subtle ways of ethnic and cultural resurgence even in the modern world. They may emerge like fields of poppies when Islamic fundamentalism has abated by 2030, and when Islam begins its long delayed tryst with modernity, as the Aga Khan Shias have been doing and when the oil age declines, bringing more reality to Islamic aspirations. This, the largest potential Zarathushti group is likely to be the most unpredictable of the three universes; because it is in a volatile melting pot of humanity when old empires once met, and where jostling new regimes have yet to emerge with relative stability. Religion and ethnic politics here will be a powerful combustion.

The third universe will be that of the Asian diaspora in Western societies, stretching from the UK to North America to Australia, growing from the present 15,000 to about 40,000 by 2030. They will be the result of the recent diaspora from India to Iran to free, English-speaking, democratic, modern societies; though separated from their roots by oceans. New opportunities may bring new vigor in growing numbers, bet-

ter education, more wealth; and the first ever global Zarathushti horizons.

Minority cultures. Though all these universes will be different, they will all know the throes of minority cultures in changing times in over-whelming host soci-

eties of other faiths and cultures — Hindu, Islamic and Christian. They will be marginal communities in their national mainstreams. There lies the heart of their challenges and their survival. In their different ways, they will all know the crossing and recrossing of the Rivers of Remembering and Forgetting. They will be seeking answers of what it means to be a Zarathushti at that time in their different worlds,

In both quest and condition, they will know, at least the most sensitive and intelligent of them, the existential problems of the next generation. It will be "Such a Long Journey" into that uncertain future with the Gathic words and Zarathushti symbolism of three thousand years. Upon which let us speculate with such perceptions as we can muster. Let us try and forecast the problems and questions of future leadership in the three distinct universes.

The Indian Universe would have shrunk from 114,000 in 1941 to about 35,000 in 2030. It would have shrunk too in education, in competitive capabilities and in self-esteem; no longer the makers of 'The City of Gold', lingering like stray straws in a tempestuous host society of over a billion bustling, ungovernable people.

There would be abandoned stately properties of the old oligarchic families, trespassed lands, fire temples with lost clientele in the demographic decline. Parsi schools with only a sprinkling of Zarathushtis. The virile and enterprising would have migrated.

The memory of the glorious days of secular modernization with the Zarathushti spirit at heart would have

They will all know the crossing and recrossing of the Rivers of Remembering and Forgetting. They will be seeking answers of what it means to be a Zarathushti at that time in their different worlds.

been forgotten, as would be the names of those on whose shoulders this small community of a hundred thousand rose to leadership and excellence: the Jeejeebhoys, the Wadias, the Tatas, the Godrejs, Dadabhai Naoroji, Firozshah Mehta et. al. The intellectual vigor of Jivanji Modi, of K. R. Cama, of Dastur Dhalla, of A. D. Golwalla, of Homi Bhabha would have sunk like the sun on that Mumbai horizon of the Arabian Sea.

Yes, a new generation of painters, poets, novelists and professionals would have arisen, like a Farrokh Dhondhy on BBC, poets like Keki Daruwalla and Gieve Patel, writers like Firdaus Kanga and Boman Desai. But they would have their being in a world outside the community. Their works would be unknown and unread by 99 percent of the community, including its trustee leaders. Their voices have not been heard at Zarathushti congresses. Talent and community are already on separate courses.

So, the Parsi problems of the Indian Zarathushti leadership will be: resolution of the conflict between Parsi exclusivity and Zarathushti universality; a revival of community vigor to cope with internal problems; and modernization of the community in

all respects. The leadership itself needs a high vision. Only then will the sugar remain in the milk, as was promised in Sanjan over a millennium ago.

Second Universe – Iran. The second universe, in the volatile region between Afghanistan and the Caucasus, centered in Iran has the most uncertain future of all. In a non-Arab Islamic ethos, at once a nostalgia for

its pre-Islamic past, in which the religion of Zarathushtra and an imperial Iran went together and with modernizing aspirations, the results are unforeseeable. But there have been signs since the Shah's 2500th anniversary of the Imperial Persian empire, of a stirring of pride in that the

Rivers of Remembrance of a once great civilized power, within the names of *Shah Nameh* in legend, and of Cyrus, Darius and Xerxes in history.

The future Zarathushti leadership here will need to play the kind of role Indian Zarathushti leadership played in India, 1850 - 1950; a strengthening, modernizing leadership role in various walks of life from education to industry; restraining itself from being a political threat to the Islamic majority. It could, with its roots in pre-Islamic Iranian glory, turn nostalgia into contemporary pride and strength from a common glorious past to a progressive post-oil age future by 2030.

Through links with educated, rich migrants in the third Western universe, it could help build such progressive, modernizing links, and be sugar in the local milk. If such a goal is fulfilled, this second Zarathushti universe could play a pivotal and significant role between the two others in India and the West. Its dominant numbers, with greater prospects of demographic survival than in India or the West, would be most significant in the long run.

Then this second universe in the original homelands of the religion of Zarathushtra, would have crossed

both the Rivers of Forgetting and of Remembering their past. But the leadership needs to give itself such a clear, healthy, pragmatic vision from now on or else the crossing of the River of Remembering may be more painful than it should be in a turbulent region.

Third universe - the West. Perhaps the most virile Zarathushti universe will be in the third far-flung Western societies, the most advanced in the world. With the clan of rising members, higher education and wealth and the intellectual stimulus of Western scholars. This third universe will face the stimulus of emigration in the context of Arnold Toynbee's challenge and response theory. They will inevitably, be mixing and marrying in their host societies, yet be faced with the problems of meaningful identities. They will need to take pragmatic cultural choices as individuals and families. Living in open and free societies, they are likely to be, at once, ethnic, national, and global in their consciousness.

Some may have crossed the River of Forgetting their past. For such from India, they would have forgotten their ancestors who made the 'City of Gold' (now a dense slum), the legacy of Jamshedji Tata, the learning of Jivanji Mody, the science of Homi Bhabha - forgotten history. The most sensitive will be crossing the River of Remembering the Gathic springs of their inner lives, and of their ancestors who once built that 'City of Gold'. They will be building new fire temples of worship, with minds enlarged by science, democracy, human rights and a Zarathushti tradition in the process of crossing the River of Remembrance, in the process of asking themselves what it means to be a Zarathushti in a Western milieu, traditionally Christian, increasingly secular and open to other ancient religions.

But this may not be an easy task, for all emigrants have to go through the throes of five types of identity problems. There is the mentality of the uprooted, of the sojourner, of the accommodator, of the assimilator and of the ethnically proud. These will mix in varying degrees between Indian and Iranian emigrants, compounded by the facts that they both come from different cultures with different languages.

What will be the problems of leadership in this third universe? Perhaps the first will be internal cohesion and institution-building, with the conservation of essential roots and a firm identity in the process of assimilation and reculturing.

The second will be the growth of the sinews of Western Zarathushti societies with rising assets and education and organization. The third will be the problem of milk in the sugar of both their local communities, and in those of their less fortunate Zarathushti brethren left behind in the two homelands. The fourth is the synthesis of Indian and Iranian Zarathushti emigrants around what they share, rather than what divides.

What is the Center? That leaves the central questions of all three universes: what remains global? What is center? And what periphery? Yesterday's center was apparently India and Mumbai. What will it be by 2030? The biggest problem has been, and will be, the politicization of these questions by local 'political' leaders of the community.

If they are to rise above this heart problem, let me offer the contributions of an American intellectual. In his classic essay "Center and Periphery", Edward Shils has defined the center not as a geographic location, but as a central zone of symbols, values and beliefs which govern a society; these intangibles which are larger than individuals and beyond the routine of daily life. They are collective human needs. Joseph Skorrecky, a self-exiled Czech writer in Canada wrote: "I love her soul (Bohemia) which is in her culture. And that is in exile with me. That is my loyalty ...that has always been the loyalty of exiles."

Will the regional leaders aspiring to global influence give heed to that "central zone of symbols, values, beliefs," and to the pluralism of contemporary Zarathushti communities everywhere? Will they seek and respect these two central aspects of contemporary Vohu Manah for a better Zarathushti world by 2030?



Aspi Moddie, now retired, was on the Board of Unilever, India and has served as a consultant to the German Government on projects in developing countries. Moddie has written and lectured widely on issues relating to the Zarathushti community worldwide. Among his books are: The Brahamanical Cultures and Modernity; The Himalaya Faces of Change; India in Search of Values; and Frasho-kereti, Renewal in Our Time.

If you were paid a penny for every time you smile

It may be worth considering amassing quite a pile.

Your face could be your fortune, in this positive display,

So forget about the money – and try it anyway.

- J. M. Robertson

What Makes a Zarathushti Religion or Ethnicity

Religion, being a dictate of the spiritual soul, is therefore bestowed through birth and not acquired through books or choice.

Bv Pervin Mistry Mississauga, Ontario

"Mazdayasno ahmi, mazdayasno Zarthushtrish" is the sacred pledge taken at the navjote, affirming definite identification (hamazor) with Asho Zarathushtra. Being embedded in the sacred prayers, these words assert that the definition of a Zarathushti is rooted in religion. The ritual of navjote is valid if performed only of children born of both Mazdayasni Zarathushti parents because the pledge affirms that the initiate is a Mazdayasni Zarathushti by birth and obeying the tenets of the religion, will propagate the faith, through unbroken lineage, till Farshogard.

Juddin navjotes are a mockery of one of our most sacred and fundamental rituals because children born of both Mazdayasni Zarathushti parents are entitled to all religious institutions (agiaries,dakhma,etc.) even prior to navjote because they are already born as Zarthushtis. Navjote is not a magic door to make a juddin 'Zarathushti'.

Does one become a Zarathushti by "studying" the religion? No. One may study medicine or law to become a physician or lawyer; these are professions studied and acquired through books in schools and universities. Religion is not "studied"; it is revealed. None of the Prophets acquired a university degree or studied religion. In search of spirituality, they left the buildings of stone and mortar and observed solitude in order to hear the voice of silence through their spiritual ears and see the workings of Nature through their inner spiritual vision.

Their spiritual soul communed with the Divine; not the mind which is subcelestial and becomes a hindrance to spiritual communion. Therefore, religion being spiritual, cannot be acquired through intellect or books. By studying religion, one certainly gains better understanding of one's own religion as well as other religions, but, by studying, one does not become a 'Zarathushti'.

Can religion be chosen? No. Freedom of choice, as mentioned in Yasna 30, is indicative of ethical choice between right and wrong; it does not indicate license to do as one pleases. Freedom of choice is dual:

needed as different medications

to heal the diversity of spiritually

suffering humanity.

the mind's choice between good and evil; however, the soul, being immortal, is omniscient and

chooses before birth, where, when, to whom and in which religion it will be born. Religion cannot be subjected to choice as one would select a meal or dress. Asho Zarathushtra cautions that all ethical choices exerted through 'mind' are full of grave consequences because the mind is the outcome of two opposing mentalities, and prone to err.

Religion, being a dictate of the spiritual soul, is therefore bestowed through birth and not acquired through books or choice, neither is it



subjected to political democracy wherein individuals choose and express personal rights to alter, interpret and forge changes. Based on the immutable Laws of Asha, or nature's truth, religion or divine revelation is eternal and unchangeable because truth does not change. If it does, it is not truth to begin with.

It is an insult to spirituality to maintain that because an individual studies a religion through books, that individual has a right to become a Zarathushti. It is also an insult to sheer mundane intelligence to accept the notion that religion can be chosen. Changing religion, through the so-called choice, does not promote spirituality. Unless a person be con-

> verted from within, unless person leaves evil and chooses good, how will it help that individual

change the name of the religion bestowed at birth? There are saints and seers in every religion because every religion teaches spirituality.

Does one become a Zarathushti by practicing good thoughts, words and deeds? Are good thoughts, words and deeds a Zarathushti monopoly? Which Prophet has taught anything different or less? In fact, every Prophet has followed this essential trinity to perfection; therefore, shall we maintain that all prophets were Zarthushtis and consequently, there cannot exist any other religion but the religion of Zarathushtra? This is in contradiction to what Asho Zarathushtra himself has taught in Yasna 19 while revealing the Ahunavar. He teaches that according to the divine plan of Ahunavar, there exist 'pancha takaesha' and 'pancha ratu' (five main religions and their five founders). Other religions besides Zarathushti din, Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism and Islam are considered mixtures of two or more of these prime religions. Has universal goodness anything to do with proselytism?

Different religions are needed as different medications to heal the diver-

sity of spiritually suffering humanity. If only Zarthushtis have the monopoly on righteousness, what about those erring Zarthushtis who fall short on these virtues? Good and evil exist in all communities because these

qualities are within us. It is not the name of a religion which makes an individual good or bad, it is in the degree of putting into practice the virtues and disciplines of any revealed religion which makes the individual spiritually advanced.

Is it ethnicity which makes a Zarathushti? In Greek, 'ethos' means nation, and 'ethnic' means a group of people having common national or cultural traditions. If our ancestors wanted to preserve this national or cultural identity alone, they would have converted to Islam (which would have been so easy in the days of persecution) and would have remained Iranian as a national or ethnic group.

Obviously, ethnic identity is **not** what they wanted to preserve. It was their religion and religious identity they wanted to perpetuate.

Assimilation leads to Annihilation. Please, let us all remember and appreciate the fact that our ancestors did not give up their lives, and some, their native homeland of Iran, in

order to preserve just the ethnic or racial identity. We are not just any ethnic community. Our ancestors sealed their fate in blood and some gave up their beloved Iran to seek sanctity elsewhere for their religion and the survival of their religious identity.

As a religious group, in order to preserve our distinct identity, rituals and traditions, our ancestors in Iran and India, continued to practice the most important spiritual discipline which is boonyad-paspaani, or preservation of the seed – 'tokham'. It is because they practiced the closed-door policy, we survived in Iran and India as practicing Zarthushtis.

Lt is not the name of the religion which makes an individual good or bad, it is in the degree of putting into practice the virtues and disciplines of any revealed religion which makes the individual spiritually advanced.

We are not unique in practicing the closed-door policy; many other communities prohibit intermarriage to ensure survival. In order to survive as a religious community in North America, it is essential to follow the proven example of our ancestors in India and maintain the definition of a Zarathushti as "one who is born of both Mazdayasni Zarathushti parents, initiated traditionally by duly ordained priests".

Historically, assimilation has led to annihilation. Harold Fleming, anthropologist at Boston university, writes about the tribe of Birale in Africa [National Geographic, July 1991]: "The men tend to marry outside the group and raise children who, though they may see themselves as Birale, speak the outsider's language. Thus, the language, and perhaps the tribe itself, may be doomed." This observation is only of the first generation. After the next, will any Birale remain, or, they will just remain a name in history?

Will and Ariel Durant write [The Lessons of History, p. 26] that people degenerate due to falling away from the genus, meaning as a consequence of assimilation. The recent excavation of the "red-haired mummy people" of China establishes the fact that the group of Caucasian (perhaps Sasanian immigrants) settled in north-west China, disappeared through assimilation in the host community. It may be plausible that a few exceptions in remote areas, where intermarriage and proselytism did not take place, may still be found, but, the community of Caucasians, in China, has disappeared.

The last 'raainidar' (one to receive

spiritual revelation) Adarbad Maraspand, to safeguard our existence as a religious community, in *Patet Pashemani*, declares intermarriage as "gunah-eravani" (spiritual sin) which destroys the religion from its very foundation ("akho

paye gunah"), by cutting off the seed. This was written in 4th century CE, as a warning as well as affirming the spiritual injunction against intermarriage, after the assimilation of many Zarathushti communities into other cultures and religions, in and around Iran, after the downfall of Achaemenids.

The ninth century text, *Dinkard* likewise, condemns intermarriage. *Gatha Vahishtoishti* discloses Asho Zarathushtra's conviction in selecting Jamasp from the same 'brotherhood' for his daughter Pouruchisti, warning them and other would-be couples that calamity follows if brotherhood (religion) is abandoned.

The examples of history are for us to heed. We, as Zarthushtis, cannot accept, rationalize and justify that which leads to our own spiritual and cultural dilution and extinction. Zarthushtis in India survived over 1300 years because they accepted a Zarathushti by virtue of birth alone, being born of both parents who are Mazdayasni Zarthushtis.

WHO IS A ZARATHUSHTI?

A compilation of definitions (or non-definition) of the word 'Zarathushti' or 'Zoroastrian' in the constitution and bylaws of Zarathushti associations of USA and Canada.

By Nina DiLucci Irving, Texas

hat follows is a listing (in alphabetical order by name of State) of the section in the Constitution and Bylaws of each association, that pertains to the definition of a 'Zoroastrian'. This compilation was undertaking with the hope that it will be a useful guide for new organizations and those who wish to make future amendments and not an attempt to offer any judgments. I would like to express my deep gratitude to all the individuals from the various associations for sending me the relevant information.

Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA)

[Article III.1]: Membership to the Federation shall be open to any North American Zoroastrian Organization/Association/Society that fulfills the following requirements:

B. Has been formed exclusively for the purpose of representing and serving the religious and charitable needs of a group of Zoroastrians resident in a geographic area in Canada or the USA.

[Definition of a Zoroastrian - undefined]

Zoroastrian Association of Alberta (ZAA)

- 4.1 Membership in the Association shall consist of one category:
 - Regular Membership.
- 4.2 Regular Membership shall be open to any person who is of the full age of 18 years and over and a resident of Alberta, who shall undertake to fully abide by the objects, rules and regulations of the Association as herein set out in the Association's By-Laws.

[The objectives of the association require its members to "maintain, promote and disseminate the knowledge of the fundamentals, doctrines, traditions and cultural heritage of the ZOROASTRIAN faith as propounded by the Prophet ZOROASTER, His teachings, prayers and interpretations thereof, as laid down in the Khordeh-Avesta and other Zoroastrian Scriptures." etc.]

[Definition of a Zoroastrian - undefined]

Zoroastrian Association of Arizona (ZAA)

[Not available]

Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia (ZSBC)

[Section 1.1.21]: "Zoroastrian" means an individual who attests to be a true believer and follower of the religion as propounded by Asho Zarathushtra in the Gathas, and who subscribes to established Zoroastrian habitual or customary practices.

- 4.0 Classes of Membership
- 4.2 Member

A Zoroastrian, his spouse or his child resident in British Columbia shall be eligible to become a Member of the Society if he is:

- 4.2.1 born of two Zoroastrian parents and initiated into the Zoroastrian religion;
- 4.2.2 born of two Zoroastrian parents but not initiated into the religion due to circumstances; or
- 4.2.3 born of one Zoroastrian parent but not initiated into the Zoroastrian religion; provided that he is not practicing another religion and he declared his willingness to be initiated into the Zoroastrian religion; or
- 4.2.4 not born of at least one Zoroastrian parent but initiated into the Zoroastrian religion.

California Zoroastrian Center (CZC)

Any Zoroastrian person 18 years of age or older of good character dedicated to the purposes of this corporation shall be eligible for regular membership.

[Definition of a Zoroastrian - undefined]

Zoroastrian Association of California (ZAC)

Article VII Section I: The membership of the Association shall be open to all Zoroastrians, their spouses and children, subject to their payment of the annual membership fee.

A Zoroastrian is a person who has been initiated into the Zoroastrian faith by a Navjote ceremony and who descends from Zoroastrian parent/s.

Persian Zoroastrian Organization, California (PZO)

[Membership requirements - none formulated]

Zarthoshti Anjuman of Northern California (ZANC)

Article 3, Section 1: The membership of ZANC shall be open to all Zoroastrians and all other persons who express interest in the objectives of the Organization and agree to abide by the constitution and its bylaws.

[The primary objective is "to promote the study, understanding and practice of the Zoroastrian faith ..."]

[Definition of a Zoroastrian - undefined]

Traditional Mazdayasni Zoroastrian Anjuman, California (TMZA)

Membership Requirements: The membership is open to all Mazdayasni Zoroastrians who practice the Zoroastrian faith, who have not renounced this faith and who have not married outside the Zoroastrian fold.

Definition of a Zoroastrian: A Mazdayasni Zoroastrian is a person who has descended from both Mazdayasni Zoroastrian parents and who has been traditionally initiated (by a Navjote or Sudreh Pushi ceremony recognized by TMZA) into the Mazdayasni Zoroastrian religion by Mazdayasni Zoroastrian Mobeds.

Zoroastrian Association of Florida (ZAF)

Membership is open to all Zoroastrians and their spouses.

[Definition of a Zoroastrian - undefined]

Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago (ZAC)

Article VI, Section 1: The membership of the Association shall be open to all Zoroastrians, their spouses and children and all other persons who express deep interest in the objectives of the Association and agree to abide by its Constitution and By-laws.

2.a Ordinary Membership shall comprise of all Zoroastrian individuals and family units ...

(Only Ordinary Members have the right to vote and hold office.)

Article IV, Section 1: A Zoroastrian, for purposes of the Constitution and By-laws of the ZAC is defined as a person who is a believer or follower of the religion as propounded by Prophet Zoroaster, and one who has not only signified his willingness to be initiated into the Zoroastrian religion, but has been so initiated in accordance with the practices followed by Zoroastrians.

He who knows others is learned

He who knows himself is wise.

- Chinese proverb by Tao Te Ching

Zoroastrian Association of Kansas (ZAK)

Article III, Section 1: Membership shall be open to all Zoroastrians, their spouses and children and to all other persons who express deep interest in the objects of the Association ...

[Definition of a Zoroastrian - undefined]

Zoroastrian Association of the Greater Boston Area (ZAGBA)

Article 4, Section 1: The membership of the Association shall be open to all Zoroastrians, their spouses and children and all other persons who express deep interest in the objectives of the Association and agree to abide by its Constitution and By-laws.

2a. Ordinary membership will be open to all persons who have been formally initiated into the Zoroatrian religion and their spouses and children, whether natural or adopted.

(Only Ordinary Members have the right to vote and hold office.)

[Definition of a Zoroastrian - undefined]

Iranian Zoroastrian Association, New York (IZA)

Article II, Section 1: Classes of members.

- (a) Class "Z" members: Iranian Zoroastrians and only Iranian Zoroastrians are eligible for class "Z" membership as class "Z" members.
- (b) Class "O" members: All persons including Iranian Zoroastrians are eligible for class "O" membership.

Only class "Z" members shall be entitled to vote ...

[Definition of a Zoroastrian - undefined]

Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York (ZAGNY)

Article III, A: All Zoroastrians and their immediate family members are eligible upon payment of the stipulated membership fee to become members (immediate family being defined as spouse and children).

All non-Zoroastrians who have demonstrated an interest in Zoroastrians are eligible upon payment of the stipulated membership fee to become Associate Members. (An Associate Member is not eligible to vote or hold office).

[Definition of a Zoroastrian - undefined]

Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO)

Constitution, Section 4: Zoroastrians, their spouses and their children shall be admitted to membership in the Society ...

Definitions, Section 1: For the purposes of the Constitution and By-laws, 'Zoroastrian' is a person who is a follower of the religion as propounded by the prophet Zoroaster and who has been initiated into the Zoroastrian faith.

Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania (ZAPA)

Article III, Section 1: Any Zoroastrian, and his or her spouse, widow or widower, and children, may become members of the Association.

Article 1, Section 3: No Zoroastrian may be excluded from membership ... because his or her views differ from the views of the majority on matters of principle, interpretation or application of the Zoroastrian faith. Holders of a minority view shall be treated with the same consideration, and shall be eligible for all the same rights and privileges in the Association, as holders of a majority view.

[Definition of a Zoroastrian - undefined]

Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania and New Jersey (ZAPANJ)

Article III, Section A: Any person desirous of promoting Zoroastrian cultural, educational, social and religious activities and their immediate family members are eligible upon payment of the stipulated membership fee to become members. (Immediate family shall be defined as spouse, children under 18 years of age, and retired and/or dependent parents.)

[Definition of a Zoroastrian - undefined]

Zoroastrian Association of Quebec (ZAQ)

Section 5.05: An Ordinary Member must be a Zoroastrian resident of good standing ...

Section 4.01: A Zoroastrian for purposes of these Bylaws is defined as "a person who is a believer or a follower of the religion as propounded by our prophet Zoroaster, who has not only signified his willingness to be initiated into the Zoroastrian religion, but has been so initiated in accordance with the practice(s) followed by the Zoroastrians and whose parents and/or grandparents have been initiated into the Zoroastrian religion.

Zoroastrian Association of Rocky Mountains (ZARM)

Article III, Section 1: Membership of ZARM shall be open to anyone who subscribes to its objectives, pays its dues and abides by its constitution.

(The main objective is to spread and foster knowledge about Zoroastrian culture and religion).

[Definition of a Zoroastrian - undefined]

Zoroastrian Association of Houston (ZAH)

Article 3.01: Membership is open to all individuals, regardless of Race, Sex, Creed or Color subject to the membership requirements.

Article 3.02: Regular Members: All Zoroastrians and their spouses and children are eligible for regular membership, subject to the payment of the appropriate dues.

[Definition of a Zoroastrian - undefined]

Zoroastrian Association of North Texas (ZANT)

Article 3.01.1: For purposes of membership in this Association a Zoroastrian shall be defined as: A person who is a believer and a follower of the religion as propounded by Zarathushtra and one who has been initiated in the religion in accordance with the customs and religious practices followed in the community in which he or she currently or previously resided.

Article 4.03: Only Zoroastrian members are eligible to serve on the Board of Directors.

Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington, Inc. (ZAMWI)

Article 4, Section 1: The Ordinary Membership of the Association shall be open to all persons who have been formally initiated into the Zoroastrian religion and their spouses and children whether natural or adopted.

[Definition of a Zoroastrian - undefined]

Zoroastrian Society of Washington State (ZSWS)

Article IV, Section 1: A person who is born of Zoroastrian parent(s) and who is initiated into the Zoroastrian faith, is a Zoroastrian.

A person who is born of Zoroastrian parent(s) but is not initiated due to the prevailing social and political conditions, is also a Zoroastrian, provided he/she has practiced the Zoroastrian faith since his/her birth.

A person who is not born of Zoroastrian parent(s), but who is a believer or a follower of the religion as propounded by Zarathushtra, has studied our scriptures, has learned the Navjote (sudreh/kushti and Sudreh Pushi) prayers and has been initiated into the Zoroastrian faith in accordance with the Article III of the Articles of Incorporation, is a Zoroastrian member of the Society ...



Nina I. DiLucci was born in Mumbai. India and immigrated to the USA in 1983. She is a CPA with a Master's degree in Taxation. Nina lives in Irving, Texas, with her husband John DiLucci and 6 1/2 year old daughter, Jasmine. After actively working in the accounting profession for seven years, Nina is now a full-time housewife,

and an active member of the Zoroastrian Association of North Texas (ZANT) in Dallas.

A Behind the Scenes View of the ZSBC Constitutional Amendments

[See page 64]

By Trity Pourbahrami Vancouver, British Columbia

am sitting in the back row looking at the semi-full room of Zarathushtis my parents' age or older. They have come together to discuss the only remaining part of the ZSBC (Zoroastrian Association of British Columbia) Constitution. The section regarding Who is a Zoroastrian qualified to be a member of this community.

The room is alive with their mutual passion for the subject. One by one they stand to voice their thoughts and I listen. I am listening yet that is not all I am doing. I have come here with the goal of giving everyone's thoughts a sincere and equal chance. Therefore, as each speaker gets up I find myself in a powerful inner challenge to clear my mind, so I can listen with an open mind.

When the speakers share points in accordance with my thoughts and beliefs, it is natural and passive for me to listen. What is difficult is to listen to all the points with the same openness. I find my heart racing as I strive to find why it is that I am mentally and physically objecting so strongly to some of the statements.

A few hours and several speakers later, I find myself losing concentration and withdrawing from the scene before me. I am focusing on the passion that fills the room. A passion stemming from caring Zarathushtis. Zarathushtis who are proud of who they are but are overwhelmed with the fear that in the rapidly approaching future, all that they cherish, all that had made them who they are, will fade into history.

It is this common fear for the future that is fueling the passion in this room!

Thoughts on the "Who is a Zarathushti" Survey

[See page 64]

By Nina DiLucci Irving, Texas

the threshold of yet another redefining moment in the history of its struggle for survival. Zarathushti Americans are facing new challenges of assimilation into the American mainstream and a loss of our identity. However, instead of focusing on our problems of survival, many of us are lost in arguments among ourselves over the differences in the practice of rituals by Zoroastrians from India/Pakistan and Iran.

In these times, it is important that we put aside our differences and stand united in our effort to redefine ourselves and keep the torch burning. The actions we take today will determine whether our religion will continue to thrive or become a relic of the past.

I am married to a catholic American and our 6 1/2 year-old-daughter, Jasmine, is growing up with mixed religion parents. It is important to my husband and me that Jasmine grows up knowing her roots on both sides. As parents we would like to teach our daughter the culture and religion of both sides of her parentage. When she is an adult (does not have to be 18) she would then choose to practice the religion of her preference.

However, as a community, we take away this choice when we start eliminating children like her because they do not fall under their narrow definition of a Zarathushti (Zoroastrian).

Major challenges. Zarathushti Americans are facing two major challenges today. The first challenge is to understand and accept the differences between our Zarathushti brothers and sisters from Iran and India/Pakistan. They have lived apart for centuries in very different political and cultural environments. Therefore, the practice of our religion, especially the rituals, have evolved differently.

Our second challenge is to arrest the exodus of future generations born to mixed religion parents. Our small numbers, the lack of a fire temple around the corner, not growing up in a neighborhood/colony where one is surrounded by Zarathushtis — are some of the many reasons why interreligion marriages are inevitable, if not in this generation, certainly in future generations.

One way to keep our community together and growing, would be to allow for the diversity to exist happily under one umbrella. Eventually, American Zarathushtis will evolve a culture of their own. As I worked on gathering the data for the article on "Who is a Zarathushti?" [page 64], I felt that a good place to start to overcome these challenges, would be to broaden the definition of the term Zarathushti (Zoroastrian) or, possibly not define it at all.

GOD'S GREATEST GIFT

Time sifts our friendships and our friends, For Time alone can be the test, And with the passing of the years, We lose the false and keep the best.

And when beyond the distant hills, The sinking sun of life descends, We find God's greatest gift has been, The love of true and faithful friends.

- Fed Newsletter

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xcerpts from the magnificent epic poetry of Firdowsi's Shah Nameh, translated in English prose, will be published as a regular feature starting from the next issue of FEZANA Journal.

Firdowsi's historic undertaking consists of seven volumes of sixty-thousand couplets. Encompassing six thousand years of Iranian national his-

tory, it begins with the creation of the world and the first King Gayomard and ends with the Sasanian dynasty's fiftieth ruler of Iran, Yazdegard III. It is indeed a worthy monument not only to Iranian nationalism, but also to the world of his-

tory, poetry and philosophy! In this first issue of the series, we read about the life of this great poet of Iran.

Firdowsi is one of Iran's all-time greatly revered poets. Much has been written about his life and the epic work he has produced in Persian. His prismastertine work - Shah Nameh considered one of the world's greatest epic sagas.

Early years. There have been varying accounts of the life of Abul Kasem Mansur whose penname was Firdowsi. He was born (according to the Yazdegardi calendar) on January 3, 940 CE. in Tus, a district of the province of Khorasan. He came from a class of landed nobility (dehqanan), and his family followed the Shiite Islamic faith. He was very well

In 984 CE he had the good fortune to get recognition from Mahmud of Gazna who had become king of Iran, who viewed the learned poet with much respect and encouraged him to continue composing the History of Ancient Iran. As the poet's work progressed his problems increased. When he turned sixty-five tragedy struck - his only son, thirty-seven years old,

died. Finally, in his sixty-fifth year, in 1004 CE, twenty-five years after he began his epic saga, he presented his *Shah Nameh* to the sovereign.

The comfort of the king's patronage did not last long. Firdowsi fell into dis-

favor with the ruler. There was envy among other court poets. Firdowsi promoted Iranian nationalism, thereby weakening Sultan Mahmuds Islamic support. The Sultan himself was a Sunni Turk, who took offense at the poet's belittling of the Turks.

Legend has it that Sultan Mahmud, upon the advice of his envious courtiers, rewarded Firdowsi with a mere twenty thousand dirams (silver coins). Contemptuously, Firdowsi gave the reward away. He returned to Tus and spent the rest of his life in poverty and fear of Sultan Mahmud about whom, it is believed by some, he composed a satire in retaliation.

Sixteen years later, however, in 1020 CE, the king felt repentant and sent sixty-thousand dinars (gold coins) to Firdowsi with a suitable apology. Firdowsi had just passed away at the age of eighty-one. Sadly, as the caravan carrying the reward entered Taberan from the Rudbar Gate, Firdowsi's body was being carried for burial out of the Razan Gate. Indignantly, his daughter refused the reward. Muslim fanatics did not allow him to be buried in the Muslim cemetery due to his alleged pro-Zarathushti writings. He was buried in his own garden inside the town of Taberan.



versed in Persian literature and Iranian history. By the age of thirty he had become a versatile poet, married, with a two-year old son. A daughter was born some years later.

Firdowsi's poetry. One of his first poetic ventures was Bezan and Maneze. Several poetic sagas followed which later became part of the Shah Nameh. Efforts were made in the ninth and tenth centuries CE by Iranian nationalists to transmit their ancient history through powerful versed epic versions which could easily be memorized. In Firdowsi's earlier years The Book of Kings - (Nama ye Kosrowan) of Abu Mansur-e Abdal-Razzaq became popular in patriotic circles and received acclaim as the history of ancient Iran. The Zarathushti poet Daqiqi saw the urgency of revitalizing the story of his beloved prophet Zarathushtra through poetry, but was murdered just before finishing the composition of the story. Firdowsi, who had already started his own compositions acknowledged Daqiqi as his own precursor. Firdowsi set about using Abdal-Razzaq's prose History and other oral and written sources, to write the epic poetry of the Shah Nameh. He spent many years writing without the benefit of patronage to help ease his financial burden.



By Dolly Dastoor

Montreal, Quebec

uangzhou and the overseas civilization contains 8 chapters on the history of foreign merchants on the shores of China during the Tong, Sung, Ming, and the Ching Dynasty. In the 8th chapter the author deals with the Parsi Merchants at the Port of Guangzhou, which is the actual Mandarian phonetic translation of Canton, the capital of the province of Guangdong. Canton was the name given by the British to that city. Chapter 8 gives us not only an insight into the trading relations Parsis had with the Chinese since 1756 and the impact they made on the economy of the country, but it also informs us that the Parsis made up one third of the foreign merchants in Canton.

Heerjee Jeevanjee Readymoney was the first Parsi merchant to come to China. Then between the end of the 18th century and the middle of the 19th century a significant number of Parsi merchants appeared at the Port of Canton. Their flourishing trade with China gave a push to the economic development of the Parsi community in Western India as well.

GUANGZHOU AND THE OVERSEAS CIVILIZATION

By Deyan Guo

Department of History, Zhangshan University, Guangzhou, China Sun Yat Sang University Press November 1997, First Edition, 1000 copies.

Ch 8 (p. 356-412): Parsi Merchants at the Port of Guangzhou (Canton) Before and After the Opium War.

Translated by Wilfred Liao Wha Head Nurse, Douglas Hospital, Montreal

Religion and practices. The religion of Zarathushtra was introduced to China around the 6th century CE. The author does not elaborate on this further. There were no written records of religious activities until several hundred years later, in the Ching Dynasty, when a group of Parsi merchants appeared at the port of Canton to establish trade.

The author writes that the Tower of Silence is the trade mark of the footprints the Parsis left behind in all parts of the world and mentions that there is a cemetery in Canton. It is not very clear whether he is using the term tower of silence and cemetery interchangeably. He continues to mention that the "foreign cult" followers entering China many centuries ago in the Tong dynasty probably shared the same ancestors as those in the Ching dynasty, entering because of similarities of the burial There were documents customs. about their history of establishing their burial ground and renting the cemetery from the local Chinese. There were cemeteries in Canton and Macau, as well as a 'Parsi Church' in Shanghai and Hongkong.

Parsi Merchants. At this time the Parsis in India had gained the trust of The East India Company (EIC) and had helped them build warships. In

return the EIC sent them to China as their representatives. Through this connection they familiarized themselves both with the British style of business and the Chinese market. When the EIC encountered cash flow difficulty, the individual merchant was permitted to use his own cargo ship to send the merchants to China.

The author then gives us glimpses of Parsi families settled in Canton, Mention has already been made of *Heerjee Jeevanjee Readymoney*, one of the three most important founders of the Readymoney clan which traded with the Chinese for over 100 years. His nephew Sorabji became rich and famous. He made such enormous profits from trade with the Chinese, that he was able to supply two free meals daily to several thousand refugees from Gujarat.

Cama is another name associated with trade in China. Till the end of the 19th century there were a number of the famous Cama Clan merchants active in China e.g. Mancherji Framji, Pestonji Hormusji, Kharshedji Nasarwanji and Mancherji Hormusji. They became the pride of Bombay as well, because of their business success in China and because of their sincere, honest nature.

Lovji Nasarwanji Wadia started the first ship building factory in Bombay for the East India Company, and this industry stayed within the family. His sons built 29 ships for the company and his grandson Jamshedji Bamanji, gained his famous silver trophy from the British Naval Minister J. Johnstone after building the warship Minden. His other grandson Pestonji Bamanji was involved in large scale trade with China and owned several cargo ships.

Dadabhai Nasarwanji Dadiseth also amassed great wealth in trading with China. During the great famine from 1805 to 1806 his son Ardeshir was able to give alms to five to six thousand poor people daily.

Jamshedji Jeejeebhoy (1783-1859) was known as the 'Prince of Commerce' in China. He came there at the age of 16; he later entered into partnership with Jardine Matheson and Co. a well-known British trading company, to sell Malwa opium to the Chinese. His wealth grew and his trade limit in China exceeded one million pounds sterling. Every year he paid tax of one hundred and fifty thousand pounds sterling to the British. However, true to his religious beliefs, he shared his wealth. From 1822 to 1847, he donated 221,981 pounds sterling to various schools and public charities.

Social structure. The author then spends some time explaining the composition of Parsi names for both men and women and the origin of family names based on the type of commerce in which they were involved. In 1851 there were 75 Parsis living in Canton and Whampoa and the reader is given some insight into the social structure of the society at that time.

The author has not been able to unearth any records of their schools, women, children and families. It appears that the Parsis did not preach their religion to outsiders and did not allow outsiders to look into their ceremonies. Hence there are no Chinese records available of their religious activities.

Opium trade. There is a fascinating section on the involvement of the Parsis in the opium trade. Three grades of opium were traded: Patna (highest grade), Malwa and Turkey (lowest grade). In 1800 a unit of opium traded for the equivalent of \$560; in 1817, the same unit traded for \$1300.

In 1770 China had a major famine, at which time the Chinese government asked the farmers to grow food on the fields where they previously had grown cotton and opium. caused an acute shortage of cotton and opium and the Parsis stepped in to satisfy the demand. Gradually the Parsis became quite wealthy and showed off their wealth to the British. It is said to their credit that they did not behave as if they came from the British Colonies; rather they behaved as equals if not superior to the British, by donating monies to the Chinese, unlike the British.

In 1800 the Ching emperor stopped the import and local production of opium and the EIC cooperated. The trade went underground and the Parsis filled the vacuum. The income of the company of Jardine Matheson of England from opium, when Cowasji Framjee joined it in 1818, soon grew to over 2 million dollars. Rustomji Cowasji was the first to sail the ship Agnes right up to North China to open new markets. The Jamshedji Co. was supposed to be the best run commercial enterprise east of the Cape of Good Hope.

Between 1810 and 1838 there were three major financial crises in Canton and all were blamed on the Parsis. The local Chinese merchants could not sell the goods they had purchased from the Parsis as the market for those goods had collapsed. They owed the Parsis hundreds of thousands of dollars, and all went bankrupt. During this period, the Parsis were viewed as greedy, cunning and unethical "loan sharks", and were nick-named "Big Ear Hole" after their physical features.

After the British won the Opium War, they intended to colonize China

like India and did not need the Parsis as before, with the result that Parsis began to withdraw from the Chinese business circle. They became active in the territories of Guangzhou, Hongkong and Macau eventually arriving at Amoy and Shanghai.

The Parsi traders also sold cotton, and other daily goods. The trade between India and China was termed 'Port Foot Trading' and the main traders were the Parsis.

Sources. According to the author there was a lack of systematic archival research on the historical details of the Parsis in China. It was only in 1985 when Yui Kwang Huang of the Guangzhou City Museum published The Tower of Silence in Guangzhou that an interest resurfaced from the national scholars of China for the Parsis in Guangzhou. The book *The Parsi Fire Worshippers* and Ancient China written by Wu-Shu Lim, helped Chinese scholars understand the background of the Parsis and their customs and traditions. In Dosabhai Framji Karaka's History of the Parsis, in 1884, only forty years after the opium war there is very brief mention of the activities of the Parsis in China.

The most reliable and largest source of research data for this book was provided by the detailed historical records kept by Jardine Matheson and Co., the British Parliamentary Papers, British Foreign Office Records, the East India Company, the Chinese Trade office and the Chinese repository on the Parsis in Documentation from all China. these sources was compiled by Michael Greenberg [British Trade and the Opening of China 1800 -1842, Cambridge 1951]. In this there is a reference to the Parsis as 'Port Foot' merchants at the Port of Canton. N. Benjamin became the first person to take a personal interest in this subject and published essay "Bombay's country trade with China (1765-1865)" [India Historical Review, 1974, Vol 1, No 1, pp. 295-303]. [Continued on page 72].

The Zarathushti Religion A Basic Text Adapted and Collated by Mobed Fariborz Sohrab Shahzadi Published by The Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America

By Sarosh J. H. Manekshaw Houston, Texas

both am often asked, by Zarathushtis and non-Zarathushtis. to recommend books on basic Zoroastrianism. This has been a difficult question to answer because there has been a dearth of quality books. Khojeste Mistree's Zoroastrianism - An Ethnic Perspective [Zoroastrian Studies, Mumbai, Reprinted 19981 and Mary Boyce's Zoroastrians: Their Beliefs and Practices [Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1979] are my two Fortunately, Mistree's favorites. book, which had been out of print for so many years, is now available again; but regrettably, Boyce's book, for long a standard text on Zoroastrianism, is still out of print.

To add to these two, now comes another excellent primer on Zoroastrianism. The Zarathushti Religion: A Basic Text [FEZANA, Hinsdale, Illinois, 1998] is a collaborative effort between Mobed Fariborz Shahzadi and Khojeste Mistree. Mobed Shahzadi has long been known in North America for his efforts to educate the youth. He regularly holds educational camps and tours throughout North America speaking primarily to the youth and o adults as well. Khojeste Mistree, founder of Zoroastrian Studies, has been renowned for his efforts to edu-

THE ZARATHUSHTI RELIGION: A BASIC TEXT

By Mobed Fariborz Shahzadi and Khojeste Mistree 200 pages, hard-cover, 1998, ISBN 0-9666985-0-9. Published by FEZANA and distributed free. Any donation welcome (suggested \$30). Order from Farrokh Mistree, 2846 Greenbrook Way, Atlanta, GA 30345, tel: (404) 325-3300, fax: (404) 325-1227, email: farrokh.mistree@me.gatech.edu.

cate the Parsis in Mumbai and around the world. Thus, both authors are not only totally committed to Zoroastrian education, but have excellent credentials in the educational field as well.

Mobed Shahzadi had in his past teaching lessons drawn extensively from Mistree's book. When he felt it was time to develop a standard text for educating the youth, Mobed Shahzadi suggested to Mistree that they work together on the new book. Extracting from Mistree's book and adding to it Shahzadi's own contributions became a Herculean task. Considerable editing skill was required to seamlessly integrate two different styles and approaches. This job was ably taken on by Farrokh Mistree, Khojeste's brother, in Atlanta.

What makes the book most enjoyable to read is the way the material is presented. Much of the technical style of the more scholarly texts is replaced with a simple format which can readily be understood, making it suitable for even middle school-aged kids. In fact, I recommend that Zarathushti parents make a concerted effort to get their middle and high school children to read this book — and not to forget that they (the parents) themselves will find much that they will learn from reading it too!

The book itself is divided into eight chapters: Zarathushtra the Prophet; Zarathushti Doctrines and Ethics; The Ritual Spiral: A Link with Divinity; Iranian Languages and Texts; Some Basic Prayers; Zarathushti Religious Calendars; Sacred Fires and the Priests; and Some Dates in History.

As can be seen from the contents this 200-page book covers a vast amount of material. Within each chapter the topics and sub-topics are short and concise. Most of them do not exceed one page in length, making it easy to start and stop reading at any point.

The chapter that I found most interesting is the one on Zarathushti doctrines and ethics. Knowledge of the fundamental doctrines is the key to understanding the religion Zarathushtra. It is essential that one comprehend the message Zarathushtra preached before one can start living by those tenets. The Zarathushtrian concepts of Good and Evil, Truth, Good Thinking, Choice, Creation and the Hereafter must all be clear in our minds if we are to understand why it is essential to follow these principles. Once we have understood these basic precepts it becomes simpler for us to put them into practice, and so to assist Ahura Mazda in furthering His goal of destroying all evil.

The chapter that I think will prove to be the most useful is the one on the basic prayers. Here are given all the prayers that should be recited by every Zarathushti on a daily basis. These prayers are transliterated into English and a translation of each prayer is also given. This could be used by parents to teach their pre-Navjote-aged children their kushti prayers, as well as to ensure that the children also understand the meaning of the prayers that they are reciting. Unfortunately, most of us brought up in India and Pakistan simply learned our kushti prayers by rote without understanding their meanings. For those of us in this situation, reading this chapter will help rectify that problem.

The book itself presents a balanced, moderate and middle-of-the-road approach to Zoroastrianism. In this, I believe, lies its greatest advantage. It neither represents the extreme liberal or reformist positions, nor does it exclusively represent the ultra conservative or orthodox views.

However, early on in the collaborative process, it soon became apparent that these ideological and theological differences would need to be addressed. How was this issue to be handled? Which opinions should be included and which excluded? If this book was to be a basic text, should only one view point be expressed (which could be considered a de facto standard), or should all the counter views also be expressed? After much soul-searching and discussion between the authors and the editor a compromise was reached: the text would state one point of view, but counter arguments were to be presented in appendices. Accordingly, Ervad Jal Birdy, the President of the North American Mobed Council and Mobed Fariborz Shahzadi, each prepared an addendum which is included in the appendices to the book. Printed in a different font, they stand out as additions to rather than as an integral part of the text.

While I personally feel that these appendices detract rather than add to

the value of the book, I recognize that in the interest of inclusiveness, all points of view must be represented. Here, again, the editor did a marvelous job by cross referencing the more controversial issues in the basic text to the alternate views expressed in the appendices. Thus, one can readily and easily, examine all sides of an issue.

The table of contents is fairly detailed and could serve in lieu of an index. Later editions will have an index. Also, it has been suggested to the Editor that a glossary of foreign (Avesta, Pahlavi, Farsi and Gujarati) terms be included.

I conclude this review by stating categorically that this is a book that every Zarathushti household must own and every Zarathushti must read. It will be equally useful to our youth as well as to the adults. Further, after reading this book one will be well equipped to describe our religion to non-Zarathushtis in terms that go beyond saying that our religion consists of "good thoughts, good words and good deeds."

The book is published by FEZANA. Initial efforts were underwritten by a generous donation from an anonymous Zarathushti family, by the North American Mobed Council and the Zoroastrian Association of British Columbia.

Parsi Merchants ...

[Continued from page 70]

I thank my friend Wilfred, originally from Hongkong, for painstakingly translating this chapter and providing me with the materials for this review. The author writes with great feelings and reverence for the Parsis and reading the book in Chinese would have provided the depth and warmth for the activities of the Parsi 'Port Foot' merchants at the Port of Canton.







Books from The Zoroastrian Shop

Available from The Zoroastrian Shop. Call (609) 768-8351.

Atash by Silloo Mehta
Faridoon Conquers Zohak
by Silloo Mehta

Having Fun with Parsi Surnames by G. Coyaji & Phiroz Dastoor

Shahnameh

retold by Ramiyar Karanjia

Ahura Mazda, Unto Thee I Pray
by Shernaz Talati

Divine Science of Navjote/Sudreh-Kushti
by K. N. Dastoor

THE PETALS PROUD TRADITIONS OF OUR ANCESTORS

FIRST PETAL GAHANBAR TRANSLATED BY: SH. SHAHZADI

SECOND PETAL SHRINES
TRANSLATED BY:
ROSTAM POOLADI DARVISH

WRITTEN BY: JAMSHID PISHDADI

OCTOBER 1997

THE PETALS PROUD TRADITIONS OF OUR ANCESTORS

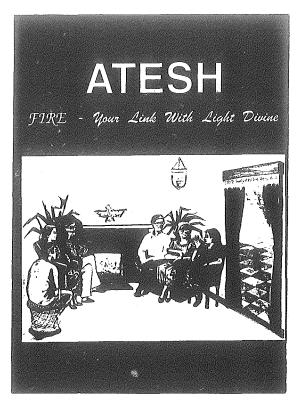
By Jamshid Pishdadi

Published by Manoocher Mobedshahi, soft cover, 57 pages, 1997, in English and Persian.

This small book includes English and Persian versions; only the English version is reviewed here. The book addresses two main themes: gahambars and Zarathushti shrines (*pirs*) in Iran, two main traditions left us by our forefathers.

Pishdadi explains the significance of the gahambar as a means of thanking Ahura Mazda for the blessings bestowed upon us. Gahambar is the practice of the true meaning of selfless generosity. The six gahambars are then discussed, followed by a detailed account of a gahambar celebration.

The remaining 12 pages are devoted to shrines and pilgrimages, both seasonal (which last longer and are away from the city) and daily ones (which are nearby and are just for a day). Described, with photos, are Pir Sabz, Pir Herisht, Narestaneh, Pir Banou and Naraky.



ATESH, FIRE - YOUR LINK WITH LIGHT DIVINE By Silloo Mehta

44 pages, soft-cover. Published by The Mazdayasnie Connection, 9528 Walker Street #5, Cypress, California 90630, tel: (714) 995-8765. \$5 plus postage.

n a handsome, glossy little book, with illustrations and photographs, Silloo Mehta explains the significance and rituals surrounding the Atesh (Fire) that is central to Zarathushti doctrine and practice. Mehta presents the material in simple language as a dialog between a well-informed and devout couple and their children. One question leads to another and as layer after layer of ignorance is removed, the glory of the religion begins to unfold. The narrative takes the reader through: the divine status of fire and its significance in the Zarathushti religion; its role in the cosmos; why we worship fire; how Atesh Behrams are consecrated; history of Iranshah; about rakhiya, bui and machi; and guidelines for visiting a Fire Temple.

An informative and inspirational book, for adults and children alike, *Atesh* is the first in a series of books on religious topics, that we can look forward to from the Mazdayasnie Connection.

- By Roshan Rivetna

Fasli Shehenshahi Kadmi 1999 Calendar

(in English)

This unique, informative wall calendar is available to all interested Zarathostis through voluntary efforts of Phil Avari.

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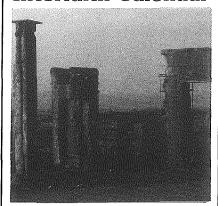
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This handy, red, white and blue wall calendar gives Shenshai, Kadmi and Fasli roj/mah along with festivals (gahambars, jashans and other special days) according to all three calendars. Brief meanings of the 30 roj are also given. This is a voluntary, non-profit effort in the service of the community, by graphic designer Phil Avari. Donations to cover costs will be welcome.

Interfaith Calendar



This handsome, glossy, full color calendar published by NCCJ, show-cases one religious community each month, including American Indian, Anglican Christianity, Baha'i, Buddhism, Catholic Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Latter-day Saints, Orthodox Christianity, Protestant Christianity, Sikhism and Zoroastrianism. For each, its history, basic tenets and religious observances are given.

\$ 7 plus postage

To order, send check payable to FEZANA to Rohinton Rivetna, 5750 S. Jackson Str., Hinsdale, Illinois 60521, tel: (630) 325-5383.

ZARATHUSHTRA'S "FRASHO-KERETI": A RENEWAL IN OUR TIME

By Aspi D. Moddie

217 pages, soft-cover. Published by Aspi D. Moddie, Revills, 45 Cuffe Parade, Mumbai 400 005

Zarathushtra's

"Frasho-Kereti":

Renewal in our Time

Aspi D. Moddie

By Kersey H. Antia Orland Park, Illinois

The author is a retired management consultant who has, unlike most in his generation, found it worthwhile to study his roots

and his religion and also found it rewarding to write what he discovered for the benefit of others.

Unlike most books on the religion of Zarathushtra, this book represents his views largely from a contemporary window, looking way back into history as well as peering into what Lord Tennyson described as "some far-off purpose divine, to which the whole creation moves" and which

Lord Zarathushtra calls frashokereti (making fresh, renovation, restoring the world to its original condition sans all evil).

Moddie makes it his main theme in this book. He regards it as central to the global community's main concerns - its identity, its self-management, its renewal in spirit and its survival in numbers.

The topics range from King Cyrus to 1990 World Zoroastrian Congress. It also contains his review of Professor Nigosian's book [The Zoroastrian Faith, 1993] which he finds very useful in learning more about our history and traditions (although Dr. James Russell found Nigosian's book not worth felling a single tree for printing it)!

King Cyrus came close to establishing the Good Rule and bringing about frashokereti because he derived his values from Zarathushtra's teachings,

according to the author.

Moddie sees his various tracts written He finds 3,000 years ago, but whether

over a period of a decade as symbolic of the times, though they are too disparate to be woven into one coherent topic. He dedicates the book to our youth. Zarathushtra's teachings as relevant today as they were wonders Zarathushtra would think he was on

another planet if he were to come alive today. He wants to jolt us into thinking and following our Jiminy Cricket, our conscience, our daena.

Since the author merely offers his views in this book and claims no scholarship, those who agree with him will find the book worthwhile. As his views, however, are very liberal and futuristic, others may not find it so. But he directs his attention not to our, but to the future generation by asking such questions as:

Is it good to pray what we mean, and not good to pray mechanically what we do not understand? Is resonance of sound in prayer enough? How far are we mechanically ritualist? What are the options of a parent when children marry outside the fold? If one

of the parents is non-Zarathushti, is it right to exclude them from navjotes and fire-temples? If we cannot adopt a Zarathushti child, can we adopt a non-Zarathushti one? How far are we racist or caste-ist behind the word 'parjat'?

And the myriad such questions that he poses certainly should lead our youth on a long journey to find the truth for themselves, for the author wisely refrains from imposing his own views, his aim being the same as our Prophet's - think things through on your own.

One only hopes they will do as good a job of thinking things through as this layman has done.

The Rubaiyat of **Omar Khayyam**

This new web site, created by Shahriar Shahriari, features the original poetry of Omar Khayyam in Farsi, with a literal and general translation of each quatrain, miniature arts, and links to other Khayyam pages, as well as Khayyam's biography and philosophy of life. All are invited to visit the site at:

www.promotionalguide.com/ok

From Zoroaster to Borbad

Dr. Iran Bashiri has posted his book From Zoroaster to Borbad on his web site. It is a cultural history of Iran, including detailed symbolism of the sudreh and kushti:

www.ilasll.umn.edu/bashiri/Iraj.html

I studied Farsi with Dr. Bashiri at the University of Minnesota, and have found him (although a non-Zarathushti) to be very knowledgeable about the Zarathushti Din.

- By Joseph Peterson

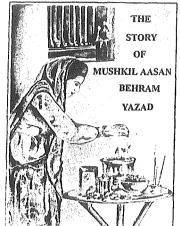
www.avesta.org

A large number of Zarathushti religious books and prayers, in Avesta, Farsi and English, with translations can be found at the website maintained by Joseph Peterson, at:

www.avesta.org

THE STORY OF MUSHKIL AASAN BEHRAM YAZAD By Kaizad Bhabha

48 pages, published by Zoroastrian Studies, Mumbai. Order from the Secretary, Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago, 8615 Meadowbrook Drive, Hinsdale, Illinois 60521, tel: 630-789-1983 for a donation (to ZAC) of \$3 plus shipping.



Helmut Humbach and Pallan R. Ichaporta

Zamyād Yasht

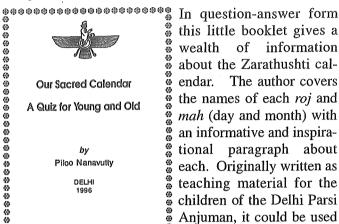
Yashi 19 of the Younger Avesta Text, Translation, Commentary

This little booklet (in English) tells the story of the woodcutter, woven around the holy spirit of Mushkil Aasan Behram Yazad and associated prayers and ritual traditions. Behram Yazad (Av. Verethragna) is the Yazata of Victory who is invoked by Zarathushtis for protection and safe travel. To the believer, this simple tale and the prayers, are a powerful link when asking

for Ahura Mazda's help, at times of deep despair.

OUR SACRED CALENDAR A QUIZ FOR YOUNG AND OLD By Piloo Nanavutty

16 pages, available for free distribution from Brig. A. S. Sahukar, Jt. Secry, Delhi Parsi Anjuman, Bahadurshah Zafar Marg, Delhi Gate, New Delhi 110 002, India.



DEI HI

this little booklet gives a wealth of information about the Zarathushti calendar. The author covers the names of each roj and mah (day and month) with an informative and inspirational paragraph about each. Originally written as teaching material for the children of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman, it could be used

mans elsewhere for their children's education.

ZAMYAD YASHT, YASHT 19 OF THE YOUNGER AVESTA TEXT, TRANSLATION, COMMENTARY AND GLOSSARY By Helmut Humbach and Pallan Ichaporia 1998, Harrassowitz, Germany

ZAMYAD YASHT is a history of salvation of the Iranians. It starts with a description of Ahura Mazda's creation of what is good and it ends in Frashokereti, the 'brilliant making of the world', i.e. its perfection and renovation by Saoshyant, the eschatological savior. The main theme is the Kavyan Glory which in the strict sense of the term denotes the glory of the legendary Kavi dynasty up to Vistaspa, the patron of Zarathushtra, but which has a much wider meaning here. Humbach and Ichaporia endeavor to intensify the study of Zamyad Yasht from the historical and philologic points of view, drawing attention to the many actual problems of the text not seen by their predecessors, and emphasizing its intrinsic value as a document of the mythical and legendary history of the Iranians, as well as its place in the eschatological conception of the Zoroastrians. The work is a contribution to the project "Source de l'historie de l'Asie centrale

preislamique" founded by Janos Harmata (Budapest) and directed by Phillippe Gignoux (Paris) on behalf of the Union Academique Internationale.

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- Prof. William Malandra, Professor of Indo-Iranian Philology, University of Minnesota

"… the masterpiece of scholarly work. Zamyad Yasht is highly recommended for laity and scholars."

- Prof. Jamsheed Choksy, Professor of Near Eastern Study, Indiana University.

ZAMYAD YASHT is available at \$82.00 per copy on a first come first serve basis. Please make the check in the name of Dr. Pallan R. Ichaporia, and send it to 243 Adams Drive, Womelsdorf, PA 19567.

Z-Kidz Korner

Children of all ages as well as adults are invited to visit the new web site at:

www.zarathushtra.com/zkidz

Here you will find children's stories illustrating the teachings of Zarathushtra. The site was created by Shahriar Shahriari with the help of Mazda Antia and Trity Pourbahrami.

Proceedings of Tehran World Congress, 1996

Proceedings of the 6th World Zoroastrian Congress, in Tehran, in June 1996, will be available shortly. In both Farsi and English, it has 160 color photos, 1600 pages of excellent quality paper and printing. Order now at a pre-sale price of \$75 from Mr. Jamshid Jam at (905) 470-7383.

Proceedings of 1993 Gatha Colloquium

A unique record of the Proceedings of the WZO 1993 Gatha Colloquium are put together in a new book launched in January. Visit the WZO web site at *www.w-z-o.org* or contact Darayus Motivala at Fax: 01844 354 264.

Global Essay Competition on Indo-Iranian Relations

K. R. Cama Oriental Institute and the Culture House of the Islamic Republic of Iran have awarded a prize of Rs. 5000 to Dr. Kersey A. Antia, Head Priest of Chicago, to be shared with a co-winner, in the Global Essay Competition on Indo-Iranian Relations. He is the only Zarathushti among the 8 international winners. Dr. Antia is doing further research on this (Influence of Zoroastrianism on Eastern Religious Thought) and other topics.

Help needed in typing manuscript

Dr. Antia (see above) will deeply appreciate any volunteer help in typing the manuscript for his forth-coming publication. Please contact him at (708) 460-6585.

BEADERS FORUM

This column is a forum to present information and opinions. Letters (under 600 words) may be submitted to the Editor. The Journal reserves the right to edit all materials for clarity and space.

On recent issues ...

I Thank you so much for the "Treasure of Knowledge" – FEZANA Journal. The articles are getting better and better. I read it cover to cover with my children. My husband, Nosh also finds it very, very interesting. Keep up the good work.

Talented writers, young and old, with different philosophies, all deserve my heartfelt "Thank You". My favorites are Pervin Mistry, Silloo Mehta, Er. Hoshang Bhada, Er. Jal Birdy, Er. Yezdi Antia and talented young authors like B. Unwalla.

Mehernaz Irani Chandler, Arizona

Thank you for FEZANA Journal. Believe us, we find it very informative, interesting and entertaining. That is why we sent gift subscriptions to 4 or 5 people last year.

Jai and Noshir Panthaky Iqaluit, N.W.T.

[Living in Iqaluit, on Baffin Island, in the North West Territories of Canada, at an altitude of 64 degrees north, Jai and Noshir Panthaky [featured in FEZANA Journal, Spring 1995] are our northern-most readers, and possibly the northern-most Zarathushtis in the world.]

I want to congratulate Dr. Pallan Ichaporia on the excellent job of editing this very difficult subject of the Avesta [FEZANA Journal, Winter 1998]. I especially enjoyed reading the informative article "Journey of the Avesta". The design and layout by Roshan Rivetna made it particularly appealing to the eye.

Dolly Dastoor Montreal, Quebec

It is an enormous task to put together a quarterly of the quality and depth you produce. Does everyone appreciate the effort that goes into assigning articles, writing and putting the whole thing together. It has to be a labor of love ...

Bapsi Sidhwa Houston, Texas

Congratulations on your editorship and contributions to the Winter 1998 issue of FEZANA Journal. Expertly done and very readable!

Gernot Windfuhr Ann Arbor, Michigan

This is to officially recognize the hard work by Roshan Rivetna to regularly publish the Journal. While working with her as Guest Editor of the Winter 1998 issue, I found her editing work to be of the highest order, not to speak of working with me until the early morning hours past 1 am. This trait is rarely seen. May the Journal prosper and grow under her dedicated and able leadership.

Dr. Pallan R. Ichaporia Womelsdorf, PA

The Winter 1998 issue has certainly aroused my interest! It is nice that certain religio-cultural practices are explained to the reader ...

I do have a modest suggestion which may be useful for the avid (Zarathushtrian) reader. Is it possible to publish an annual comprehensive survey of books or articles on certain relevant topics that have appeared in that year. It would, further, help to group them as technical-scholarly, laymen's and children's books.

John Cheung Lecturer in Indo-Iranian Studies Leiden University, The Hague, Netherlands

[A project is under way to develop a bibliography at our website at www.fezana.org - Ed]

Lealing Relationship

Anger is an appropriate reaction to the suffering of good people. It can all seem unfair and unjust. In terms of faith, it poses unanswerable questions about the relationship of Ahura Mazda (a God of love) to the suffering of the world. Has Ahura Mazda forgotten to be merciful? He in anger withheld his compassion? These are cries from the heart indeed. "I cried out to Ahura Mazda for help. I cried out to Ahura Mazda to hear me." And, so the heart-rending cry ultimately comes. "Has his unfailing love vanished for ever?"

There seems no intellectual argument that will answer such distress. Those who are "too troubled to speak" will also be too troubled to hear. The only comfort must lie in the conviction that the "unfailing love" will never cease but will be felt in assurance of the divine presence in every situation and above all in the depths of agony. This is a matter of faith, not proof; of experience, not theory. Within the standpoint of Zarathushtrian faith, it is the only hope.

Those who seek to care for others pastorally must have the ability not only to sympathize with them, but also to empathize with them, to understand their situation and share their pain. This is especially so in times of loss and bereavement. To go on to identify with them may, however, be going a step too far. Every grief is unique, and no one else can fully enter into that suffering. The danger of over-identification or being, as it were, taken over by others' problems, is a matter for constant attention in the supervision of counselors and care professionals. That danger acknowledged, there is however, the need to do everything possible to "sit where they sit". identify as closely as possible with other's pain is to demonstrate true empathy.

If sensitivity is ever needed, it surely is in times of bereavement. One cannot assure people that they will "get over it". They never will. One cannot even assume that parents will "come to terms with it"; most never do. One can only speak and act in such a way that, in the darkest hour and the long, dark days that follow it, one feels for them and with sensitive empathy try to say or do something that will comfort, encourage and sustain them; in other words, to offer a healing relationship.

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

Fire Temples in Uzbekistan

I have recently returned from a dig at Kazakliyatcan in Uzbekistan with the University of Sydney. This is considered by some to be the capital of ancient Chorasmia, the burial site of their kings and the area where Zarathushtra spent much of his time.

I worked on the excavation of a large fire temple and would like to prepare a map of the locations of other known sites of ancient fire temples.

I would like to contact others who are working in this area, and would appreciate any information on this subject.

Lyle Radford University of Sydney, Australia elradfor@mail.usyd.edu.au

Tour of Iran

During October, I took a 14-day tour of Iran with a small group of Zarathushtis from the US, conducted by Sohrab Pourmandigarian of Tehran. I thought I'd write about my wonderful experiences, which might allay the fears of those who are wary of traveling in Iran.

The trip turned out to be much nicer and even more wonderful than we had expected. We saw many, many wonderful sights and visited fire temples and 'house atashes' to fill our hearts up to the brim. We met many Zarathushti families in Yazd and Shiraz, all of whom made us feel so very welcome. We spent several evenings with our tour guide Sohrab's cousins

in Kerman and Tehran. His brothers and mother and cousins were with us off and on. They are all very caring and wonderful people.

Starting from Tehran, we visited Shiraz, Yazd, Isfahan, Hamadan, Ali Sadar Caves, Kermanshah, the Caspian Sea where we spent two nights, Damavand and then back to Tehran. Following the tour a separate trip to Kerman turned out to be very worthwhile.

The crown jewels in Tehran were superb, and could far outshine the noted British crown jewels. The Pir e Sabz experience was out of this world. We were the only group there, up on the open mountainside. We have never seen so many stars in the sky as we did in the desert that night. The weather, in October, was mild and very pleasant.

The food on the trip got to be rather boring, day after day, and we looked forward to the home-cooked meals with Sohrab's family, which were great. The fruit trees were in abundance, especially pomegranates, watermelon, honeydew and melons, and of course pistachios.

I would advise anyone to make this trip without hesitation, notwithstanding the TV and CNN coverage of the situation in Iran. There were soldiers with guns standing at street corners and in buildings in Tehran, looking bored, and otherwise, nothing else was going on.

People came and talked to us on the street. We met groups from Germany, Holland, France, Russia and America, and they were happy to know we were Zarathushtis. Some knew that we were the original people of Iran. We also met the Dasturs in Tehran, Isfahan and Kerman, who prayed a Tandarosti for us.

We were really blessed to have this opportunity to visit our ancestral homeland of Iran.

Behroze Karanjia Indiana, Pennsylvania











Increasing Our Connectedness

As a member of such a very small community dispersed around the world, I feel that inter-communication between members is an extremely important avenue for expanding our sense of connectedness. Certainly, many articles in FEZANA Journal emphasize this point. However, I rarely see a byline to articles giving the author's email or postal address to facilitate contact.

Would it be possible to request this information from your authors and correspondents?

The website www.zbnet.com which provides a listing of Zarathushti businesses and professionals, is a wonderful idea. Perhaps it can be expanded to include a listing of Zarathushtis who have email addresses.

Sohrab K. Gandhi Escondido, California

What Herodotus said about Iranians 2,500 years ago

They consider telling lies more disgraceful than anything else, and, next to that, owing money. There are many reasons for their horror of debt, but the chief is their conviction that a man who owes money is bound to tell lies. The period of a boy's education is between the ages of five and twenty, and they are taught three things: to ride, to use the bow, and to speak the truth.

They have a profound reverence for rivers; they will never pollute a river with urine or spittle or even wash their hands in one ...

Themselves they consider in every way superior to everyone else in the world. After their own nation they hold their nearest neighbors most in honor, then the nearest but one and so on, their respect decreasing as the distance grows.

No race is so read to adopt foreign ways as the Persian. Pleasures, too, of all sorts they are quick to indulge in when they get to know about them. They are very fond of wine.

I admire also the custom which forbids even the king himself to put a man to death for a single offense, and any Persian under similar circumstances to punish a servant by an irreparable injury. Their way is to balance faults against services, and then, if the faults are greater, anger may take its course.

The worshipper is not permitted to pray for any personal or private blessing, but only for the king and for the general good of the community, of which he is himself a part.

The Greeks, at the battle of Marathon, were the first who dared to look without flinching at Persian dress and the men who wore it; for until that day came, no Greek could hear even the word Persian without terror.

- Submitted by Farokh Mehrshahi, from www.netlink.co.uk/users/impact/namir/namirm.html

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Kekoo Irani, CEO

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Current Source, Inc furnishes skilled personnel assistance and professional staffing services.

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Network with Zarathushti professionals and businesses on the Internet at

www.zbnet.com

Dreamers Dreams Coming True

1998 Zarathushti Business Conference

Zarathushti

Business

We described the November 1997 Zarathushti Business Conference in Las Vegas as "A Gathering of Dreamers" [FEZANA Journal, Winter 19971 and indeed we dreamt dreams of a strong network of Zarathushti businesses each working in its own sphere of specialty but coming together to communicate with each other. to exchange information of mutual interest, forming bonds of support and friendship.

Forming bonds. Building upon the success of the 1997 Conference, the 1998 Conference, again in Las

Vegas, November 13 - 15, was organized in the same free-flowing, self-managed format; businesses making presentations and others soaking in the information and

experiences of fellow business persons, trying to see how they could use the services and experiences offered for their

And we did see those bonds forming. We saw businesses networking. Each one of us gained useful information applicable to

own benefit.

our own individual business. In fact we saw our dreams taking shape. We saw the first signs of their realization. The highlight of the conference was an impassioned keynote address by Manou Mobedshahi, noted hotelier and businessman with the inspiring message: "We can all be the best you want to be".

Chamber of Commerce. After considerable discussion, we took the first steps towards forming a Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce. Thus far the Conference has been operating rather informally, maintaining close ties with the North American Associations, as the Business Committee of FEZANA, but keeping accounts separate under an LLC (Limited Liability Corporation), in order not to affect FEZANA's tax exempt status.

We have formed teams to work on: organizing each conference; mentoring; venture capital; Zarathushti Business Network; and a team to work on the charter for a Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber of Commerce will formalize much of what we are already doing, ensuring strong

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ties with FEZANA, recognizing that we derive our strength only from FEZANA and the Associations. The community is our base. Without the community, we are nothing.

Next conference. The next conference will be held in Toronto in Fall 1999. At that time, we hope we will be able to bring to the community a well-defined charter with a distinct Zarathushti flavor.

Sincere thanks to Adil Irani, Keshvar Buhariwalla, Kali Patel and Mehrdad Banki for taking a leading role in organizing the 1998 Conference; and to Kobad Zarolia for volunteering to organize the 1999 Conference in Toronto.

- Rohinton Rivetna

Business Venture Loan

Young Parsi, self-employed professional, 25 year of age, intending to start a business venture in 2-D Graphics in Advancing Print Technology, is looking for a soft loan to finance his venture. Contact noshirwannm@yahoo.com.

PLEASE CIVE BROW VOUR BEART

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].

New Dar-e-Mehr at Valiv

A plot of land was donated by the Sachinwalla Trust for a Dar-e-Meher at the village of Valiv, near Vasai, to serve the 250-plus Zarathushtis in the area. Construction, estimated to cost Rs. 2 million, is under way. Managing trustee Mr. Sachinwalla appeals to Zarathushtis around the world for donations, noting: "... all acts to help and promote this worthy mission shall certainly be rewarded in the Holy Court of the one and only Master of the Universe." Please send checks made out to FEZANA Welfare Fund to the above address.

Oldest Agiary in Mumbai

The Banaji Limji Agiary near Flora Fountain is the oldest Parsi agiary in Mumbai. The original structure was built in 1709. Age has taken its toll on the structure and repair costs are prohibitive from the meagre funds of the agiary trust. Trustee D. K. Banaji appeals to the world Zarathushti community for donations to "help us repair this agiary building which has been declared a national monument by the Government of India. Please send checks made out to FEZANA Welfare Fund to the above address.



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On Modernizing the

Oldest Agiary in Mumbai

There are many things that can be modernized and improved, but you cannot modernize sentiments, feelings, respects which you have developed over the years towards something you have come to adore. Like a religious place which you visit regularly and where you manage to have peace and quiet communion with the Lord.

I am speaking of the Banaji Limji Dar-e-Meher at Fort. [see appeal on previous page]. The fire temple was established in 1709, a century before Iranshah was consecrated at Udvada, and much before the 1857 Indian Mutiny. At that time, Flora Fountain was not there and the Arabian Sea was lapping at the corner. The fire temple still shows evidence of the hostile times when it was consecrated, with the high wall with turrets which enclose it.

Now there is a movement to re-do and modernize the whole building, with the result that it will look like all the other modern commercial establishments around it.

The smell of the goat in the shed at the entrance arouses rustic sentiments in the worshippers. The rough stone floor reminds one of the hard times the Parsis endured. The hook in the corner reminds one of the 'varasiaji' (white bull) tied there (which has sadly now all but vanished from the agiaries of Mumbai).

I request the trustees not to stamp on the feelings of the worshippers. People are donating generously because they love the place as is, with its rustic charm. The roof can be waterproofed, the building restored, the wells cleaned and boundary walls repaired. In short, please repair and maintain, but do not change the hallowed, holy ambiance of this sacred place. It is a heritage structure and should remain so.

Zend Zend, proprietor Yazdani Restaurant and Bakery, Fort, Mumbai

Acknowledgements

FEZANA gratefully acknowledges donations received this quarter through December 1998.

For General Fund: Bella Tata, BC (\$51);

For Welfare Fund:

Cyrus Austin, AZ (\$300); Behram & Fareida Irani, TX (\$100); Homi & Villie Minocher Homji, ONT (\$50).

In memory of Roda Avari, Tampa, Florida:
Freny Cooper, FL (\$200);
Silvio Gaggi, FL (\$25);
Meena Jain FL (\$101);
Fraternal Order of Police, FL (\$60);
Sue Gordon McCord, FL (\$50);
Aline Wilson, FL (\$10).

For Various Appeals:

Anonymous, FL (\$40); Anonymous, TX (\$21+\$21+\$21+\$21); Maneck and Mahrukh Bhujwala, CA (\$101); Cyrus Daboo, IN (\$25); Behram & Fareida Irani, TX (\$100+\$100); Noshir & Nergish Karanjia, NJ (\$100); Rohinton & Pervin Ogra, IL (\$18+\$9).

For FEZANA Journal:

Farida Bam, NC (\$10); Edul Bamji, NJ (\$20); Adi Dutia, AL (\$10); Freddy Engineer, CO (\$10); Faridoon Goshtasbi, CA (\$20); Parvez Guzdar, MD (\$25); Jim and Poppy Jagus, PA (\$470); Dr. Khushrow Jamshedi, CA (\$20); Firoze & Khorshed Jungalwala, MA (\$50); Minoo Italia, TX (\$11); Homsy Irani, NY (\$30); Viraf Kanga, IL (\$21); Morad Kaviani, WA (\$10); Farangis & Bahman Maneshni, AZ (\$40); Dr. Rustom Mehdiabadi, TX (\$50); Rashid Mehin, CA (\$10); Shapour Meherabani,

BC (\$20); Drs. Khushroo & Rhoda Patel, IL (\$90); Kate Pavri, ONT (\$15); Zareer N. Pavri, ONT (\$50); Dara Rivetna, IL (\$11); Dinaz Rogers, OR (\$31); Diniar & Yasmin Shroff, MO (\$21); Ardeshir Sidhwa, AZ (\$15); Feroze Sidhwa, TX (\$21); Dinyar Sukhia, NJ (\$10); Erich Tavadia, MI (\$10); Dick Vazir, FL (\$51); Zoroastrian Association of Houston (\$51).

A FOOL

A fool may be known by six things:

Anger, without cause;
Speech, without profit;
Change, without progress;
Inquiry without object;
Putting trust in a stranger;
& mistaking foes
for friends.

- Arabian Proverb

Mazda Dumasia Appeal

Mazda Kaizad Dumasia, aged 3 years, has been afflicted with the rare and crippling disease of Chronic Inflammatory Demyelinaing Polyneuropathy for which he has been under pediatric intensive care at the Hinduja hospital in Mumbai. The cost of the treatment (monthly immunoglobulin injections plus regular physiotherapy, which are expected to continue for another 18 months at least) is estimated at Rs. 300,000. An urgent appeal for financial help has been received from little Mazda's parents, who cannot afford these high costs. Please send checks made out to FEZANA Welfare Fund to the FEZANA appeals coordinator [see address previous page].

OWNERSHIP FLAT FOR SALE

Beautiful view of Mumbai skyline from all rooms and balcony

2-bedroom, 2-bathroom flat with large living room, separate dining area and large kitchen (1,040 sq. foot), located on the 11th floor of an exclusively Parsi building by Khareghat Colony. Modern construction with 2 elevators. Call (408) 270-7318 after 6 pm Pacific time.

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).

BENDONIALS BENDONIALS BEND

The Zarathushti View on Marriage

ccording to Zarathushti books, marriage is an institution that is favored by Almighty God. In the Vendidad [iv,47] Ahura Mazda says: "O Spitama Zarathushtra! Indeed I thus recommend hereunto thee: a man with a wife above a magava (an unmarried man) who grows up (unmarried); a man with children above one who is without children."

The very ground upon which a married man lives is represented as being happy. Zarathushtra asks: "O Creator of the physical world! Which is the second (the first being the house of worship) place on the earth that feels happy? Ahura Mazda replies: "That place is happy over which a holy man builds a house with fire, cattle, wife, children and good followers" [Vendidad iii, 1].

The reason why marriage is recommended in Zarathushti books is that there is a greater likelihood for a married person than for an unmarried one to be able to withstand physical and mental afflictions and to lead a religious and virtuous life [Vendidad iv, 48,49].

Marriage being thus considered a good institution and a religious duty, recommended by religious scriptures, a Zarathushti considers it a meritorious act to help his co-religionists to marry. Vendidad [iv. 44] says: "If a co-religionist, be he brother or friend, come to thee with a desire for a wife, get him married to a wife." To bring about the marriage of a maiden who has reached her puberty, with a good, righteous man, is considered to be very meritorious and an act of atonement for a sin [Vendidad xiv, 15].

[Submitted on the Internet by Rohinton G. Panthaky, Mumbai, citing "The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees" by Sir J. J. Modi.]

Female, Australian citizen, 23, attractive, kind-hearted, educated, currently with grand-parents in Mumbai. Interested in professional, kind, caring and independent male. Contact aunt (Veera) in Jakarta, fax: +62-21-769 2586, email: ishwar@indo.net.id. [F99-1]

Female, medical lab technologist, 42, 5' 2", good-natured, enjoys traveling, reading, music, has US and Canadian citizenship. Call (416) 225-6283. [F99-2]

Male physician, 28, 5'7", handsome, pleasing personality, looking for Parsi/Irani, well-educated, good natured girl with strong family values, preferably with US citizenship. Call friend (301) 654-6250. [M99-3]

Male, medical doctor, 30, 5' 3", intern at reputable hospital, enjoys travel, music, concerts; wishes to correspond with North American

Parsi Zarathushti girl, petite, preferably university graduate. Contact friend at (780) 438-4371. [M99-4] Female, in 30s, well-qualified professional, widely traveled, enjoys reading, eating out and going to theater. Looking for suitable match in North America or India. Call brother at (604) 669-7144, email: MSPYVR @hotmail.com. [F99-5]

Woman in 40s, contact friend (Nergis) at nbhim@usa.net. [F99-6]

Male, B. Com, 29, fair, good looking, well settled in the US in a unique and challenging profession. Interests include travel, music, nature and romance. Would like to meet caring, loving, understanding woman. Call (609) 242-9033. [M99-7]

Looking for Pervez. Help me find the husband of a friend, Sumitra Penwong, a Thai, 49 years old, who died last October in Thailand. Her husband was a Zarathushti named Pervez, and may be working in New York. Her family would like to contact him. Call Nui at +66-2-573-5384 or email: miyasita@loxinfo.co.th

Law firm in Mumbai is trying to contact a Parsi gentleman in North America, Malcolm Merwanjee Dalal, in connection with the distribution of the estate of one of his distant relatives. With information call (781) 721-7546.



Births

Justin Wyatt Aga, a boy, to Neville and Shelli Aga, grandson to Hoshi and Nergish Aga of Birmingham Alabama, on October 9th.

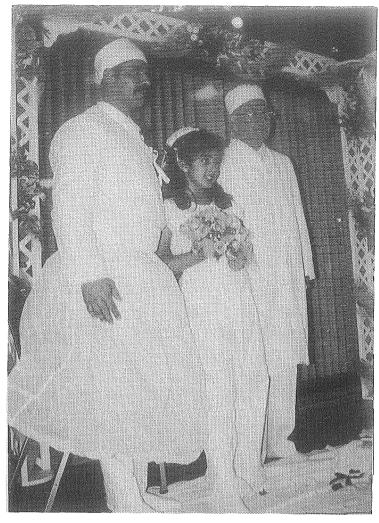
Menaka Atree, a girl, to Behnaz (Dastur) and Susheel Atree of Southbridge, MA.

Darian Bhathena, a boy, to Jasmin and Firdaus Bhathena, on August 25. [from ZAGBA newsletter].

Complimentary Subscriptions to FEZANA JOURNAL

FEZANA JOURNAL will be happy to donate one year's subscription to each North American Zarathushti who has his/her navjote/sudreh-pushi performed and to each couple announcing their wedding in the Journal. This is an effort to introduce young initiates and couples to the Journal and to FEZANA and hopefully develop a life-long bond. Your donations to "The Journal Subscription Fund" to help support this initiative will be deeply appreciated.

To redeem this offer or to make a donation, please contact FEZANA treasurer Rustom Kevala at (301) 765-0792, email: rustom@aol.com [see back cover for address].



Navjote of Anahita Meher Amalsad, daughter of Katayoon and Meher Amalsad, at the California Zoroastrian Center, in Westminster, CA, on December 19. Mobed Zarir Bhandara and Mobed Bahram Shahzadi officiated.

Asad Mahmood Khan, a boy, to Farid and Rubina Khan of Bellaire, TX, brother to Tanya and Sarah, grandson to Khorshed Khan, on September 9.

Justin Kianipour, a son, first child to Gurpreet and Farrokh Kianipour, grandson to Irandokht and Keki, nephew to Farida and Houshmand Sharyari, all of Chicago area, on January 10.

Olivia Zarine Rivetna, a girl, to Tami and Jamshed Rivetna, of Dallas, TX, granddaughter to Roshan and Rohinton Rivetna of Chicago, niece to Zenobia and Cyrus, on November 19.

Ava Diane Sanjana, a girl, to Amy and Shahrukh Sanjana, of Houston, TX, on September 1.

Alyssa Mir Tamboli, a girl, to Sanober and Aderbad Tamboli, of Sugarland, TX, on October 11.

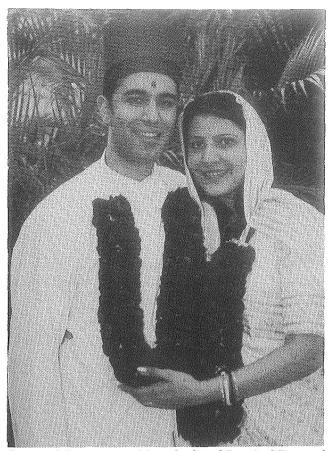
Shawna Yazdani, a girl, to Shahrokh and Seema, in North Vancouver, on November 1.

Navjote, Sudreh Pushi

Jamsheer and Fiona Anklesaria, children of Gaive and Meher Anklesaria of Houston, TX, on December 13, in Karachi, Pakistan.

Darius Byramji, son of Kershaw and Bakhtavar Byramji, of Houston, TX, on December 27, in Karachi, Pakistan.

Neville Divecha, son of Villy and Aspi Divecha, of Ontario area, on October 11.



Pervez Mistry son of Jamshed and Pervin Mistry of Mississauga, Ontario, was married to Zenobia Panthaky, daughter of Katy and Dara Panthakee of Ontario, at the Banaji Atash Bahram in Mumbai, on December 25th.



Zubin and **Zaran Engineer**, children of Thrity and Kersi Engineer of Houston, TX, on December 25.

Bezan and Kayras Irani, sons of Darayush and Nilufer, in Vancouver, on September 26.

Sehra Poland, daughter of Fram and Peri, sister of Sam, in Houston, TX on December 26.

Jimmy and Danny Sethna, sons of Fauzia and Pesi Sethna, of Ontario area, on September 26.

Tushar and Taila, son and daughter of Armaity and Anandsagar of Ontario area, on October 10.

Weddings

Adil Balsara, son of Zarin and Fali Balsara of Houston, to Diana Medhora, daughter of Cooverbai and Keki Medhora of Karachi, Pakistan, in Houston, on January 1, 1999.

Sherry Cama, daughter of Nelly and Cawas Cama of New York area, was married to Steven Bunt.

Dariush Khosravi, son of Shahrokh and Parvin Khosravi, and Farima, daughter of Esphandiar, in Atlanta, on November 8. Mobed Keikhosrow Mobed of Chicago, officiated.

Shiraz Patel, son of Roda and Khushroo Patel of Northbrook, Illinois, and Melanie Bacon, daughter of Jean and Richard Bacon, in St. Louis, MO, on January 2.

Aspy Taraporewalla of Alpharetta, Georgia, son of Daulat and late Jamshed Taraporewalla of Dahanu, India, to Dilkhush Irani, daughter of Dogdo and Lt. Col. Jehangir Irani, in Mumbai, on January 26th.

Deaths

Hilla Keikashroo Bhedwar, mother of Kersi Bhedwar, on July 17, in Mumbai, India.

Aloo Byramji, mother of Kershaw and Feroze Byramji, of Houston, on October 12, in Karachi, Pakistan.

Tehmina Kaikhushru Daruwalla, sister of Sheroo Daruwalla of Chicago and Perviz Patil of Mumbai, in Mumbai, on January 11.

Ardaviraf Daruwala, husband of Nergesh, father of Nilofer Sethna, Gulshan Irani and Percy Daruwala of Ontario area.

Roshen Daruwala, 59, wife of Jimmy, mother of Neville in Florida, Carl in London, UK, and Zubin in Dublin, Ireland, daughter of Naju Kuka, in Singapore, on January 7.

Kersi Dinshawji Doodha, husband of Coomi, father of Amie and Dolsie, of Ontario area, on December 29.

Badri Hendi, mother of Soheila Samiya, of Dallas area, on October 4.

Keki Khambatta, 59, husband of Coomi, in Victoria, BC, on September 9.

Pilloo Khambatta, 84, wife of the late Behram, mother of Homi, Bomy and Yezdi Khambatta and Thrity Bhatena, in Vancouver, BC, on September 20.

Firoz Noshirwan Khory, husband of late Khurshed, father of Noshir

(Roshni) Khory, in Chicago area, on January 7.

Shahriar Malganji, father of Afsaneh Samiya of Dallas area, in December.

Shirin Madon, mother of Hutoxi (Dinshaw) Bardoliwalla of New Jersey, grandmother of Nenshad and Shanaz, in Mumbai.

Erachshah Fakirji Master, husband of Jer, father of Katy (Mike) Engineer, grandfather of Eric, in Chicago, on December 29th. Originally from Bardoli, educated at the Surat Parsi Orphanage, Erachshah retired in 1975, after a long and productive life of service with the Central Bank in Mumbai, and later

settled with his family in Chicago. A generous, noble soul, he is remembered by family and friends with respect and prayers.

Jamshed Patel, 75, husband of Nergish, father of Cashmira Holt, in Surrey, BC, on October 9.

Hillamai Pestonji Pochkhana walla, 93, mother of Jimmy (Mahzabeen) Eduljee and Arnavaz (Darayus) Elavia of Chicago area, in Mumbai on January 10.

Perviz Tickoo, 67, sister of Adel (Feroza) Engineer of Chicago area, Gulestan Mehta of Mumbai, Amy Singh of London and Arnavaz Dastur of Texas, in Mumbai, on January 14.

Roda Jamshed Pavri, 1921 - 1999"Pioneering the Zarathushti Cause in Canada"

Early years. Roda was born in Mumbai, to Shirinbai and Framroz on April 22, 1921. Her family was resi-

dent in Deolali near Nasik where she grew up with her sisters Sheroo and Diana and attended Barnes High School. After graduation from Wadia College in Poona, Roda went to Singapore to assist her uncle Phirozsha Framroz in his Framroz Aerated Waters & Ice Company.

While in Singapore, Roda met a dashing, vibrant young man Jam-

shed Pavri, who was running a cotton business in India with business interests in Hong Kong and Japan. A man of many talents and interests, he was involved in the Gandhian movement and other social causes. They were married in 1955 and lived in Mumbai.

Coming to Canada. In July 1958, with their 18-month-old son, Yezdi, Jamshed and Roda Pavri left India on

the P&O liner *Strathnaver*, via Singapore to Sydney, and thence on the *Orcades*, to Vancouver. Jamshed set

an importup export business (of T-shirts, shoes, plastic flowers and gift items) at Water Street in Gastown. After "working like coolie" recalled by Roda ["Coming to North America, FEZANA Journal, Spring 19971 "packing and delivering the items himself from store to store." After trying for 2 1/2 years they folded the business, and Jamshed went to work



Roda Pavri, with son Yezdi Vancouver, 1959.

for Sealy Mattress Company.

Roda worked in teaching positions in various schools in the Greater Vancouver area and at the UBC library, even going back to Poona for 2 years with 6-year old Yezdi to get a Bachelor of Education degree. Roda was well-loved both by her students and her colleagues, and brought much happiness to many young lives.

An active and dynamic social worker, Roda served on various committees including founding the Indian Mahila Association. Her numerous volunteer efforts included the Gujarat Society, the Immigrant Reception Society, Folk-Fest Canada and most recently the Brock House Society.

Pioneering the Zarathushti cause. Ardent Zarathushtis at heart, both Roda and Jamshed pioneered the cause of the religion and the Zarathushti community in Canada. The third Zarathushti family to arrive in Vancouver, Roda was a strong supporter of her husband, in founding the Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia, in 1967, from their home at 5693 Heather Street. Together, they worked zealously to lay the foundation of the Society, and were active in its functioning for many years.

Roda and Jamshed were great philanthropists and charity was their middle name. Many, many families, now settled in Canada, will gratefully remember Roda and Jamshed as their mentors and friends; they hosted newly arrived families in their home and assisted them in many ways.

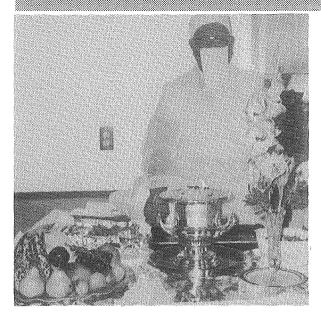
Roda will always remain in our memories as a dynamic and intellectual woman who did so much in her lifetime. She loved life and lived it to the utmost. Despite so many health issues she fought against in her recent years, she continued to live a healthy and useful life until the end.

[Roda Pavri passed away peacefully in the Kensington Nursing Home, in Vancouver, on January 19. Predeceased by her husband Jamshed, who passed away in 1989, she is survived by her loving son Yezdi, niece Roxana and sisters Sheroo and Diana. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Jamshed K. Pavri Memorial Fund, c/o Vancouver Foundation, 1200-555 West Hastings, Box 12132, Vancouver, BC V6B 4N6.]

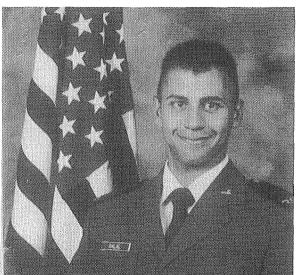
The essence of happiness is

within you, not without.

EVENTS AND HONORS III



MOBED JEHANGIRJI NOSHIRWAN SIDHWA, father of Ardeshir Sidhwa of Scottsdale, AZ, has been appointed Panthaki of the Hirjinnah Behrana Sadar Agiary in Karachi. He is seen here performing a jashan in California. Ardeshir is married to Rushna, daughter of Godrej and Ruby Kera-walla of the San Francisco Bay area.



SHIRAZ DALAL, 20, son of Behram and Tehmi Dalal of Raleigh, NC, has been admitted into the US Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Shiraz plans to pursue studies and a career in space exploration.

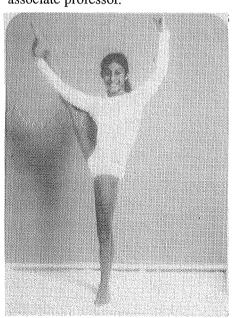
DR. MEHER MASTER-MOOS

was awarded the International Golden Star Merit for Humanism Award by the Polish Academy of Medicine, at a glittering ceremony attended by the Indian Ambassador, in Warsaw, Poland, on May 29th. Dr. Moos was the only Asian among 16 distinguished persons, including 8 Nobel Prize winners, to be so honored. Dr. Moos was honored for her humanitarian, spiritual and health upliftment work through the Zoroastrian College in sanjan, for the past over twenty years.

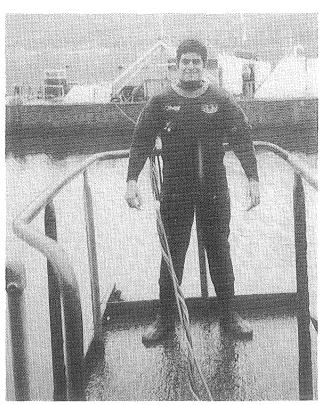


ERVAD KERSI ANTIA of Chicago, Illinois, was awarded a prize of \$5,000 by the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute and the Culture House of the Islamic Republic of Iran, to be shared with a co-winner in the Global Essay Competition on Indo-Iran Relations. He is the only zarathushti selected for an award out of eight international winners.

Cytel Software Corporation of Cambridge, DR. CYRUS MEHTA cofounder and CEO, was one of four companies to win the 1998 Massachusetts Small Business Innovation Research awards. The awards program recognizes Massachusetts companies that have registered notable achievements through research supported by the federal Small Business Innovation research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs. Cyrus Mehta, started the company as a spin-off from the Department of Biostatistics at Harvard University where he still serves as an adjunct associate professor.



VEERA MOTASHAW, 12, daughter of Neville and Dilber Motashaw of Cary, North Carolina, is one of the foremost gymnasts in the state of North Carolina. Veera started when she was 3 years old and is now competing at State and Regional levels where she has consistently placed among the top three.



DELZAD KARANI,

24, son of Aspy and Gooloo Karani of Dadar, Mumbai, is a commercial air diver, specializing in laying of undersea oil and natural gas pipelines. He trained in Glasgow and has worked at sites in Iakarta and Abu Dhabi. He dives up to 150 feet, breathing through an umbilical cord attached to fully equipped barges overhead. Explorations below that depth are made in a special 'diving bell' chamber housing 2 - 4 persons.

FEZANA JOURNAL is the official publication of the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America

FEZANA JOURNAL is published four times a year, for the purpose of disseminating news and views, as well as educational and inspirational articles about the Zarathushti religion, culture and practices as they pertain to Zarathushtis in North America. The views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of FEZANA.

EDITORIAL POLICY

FEZANA JOURNAL encourages its readers to submit relevant information, news and views for publication. Articles in the Journal are intended for the general reader, and should not be highly technical in content. All unsolicited submissions should be limited to 600 words. Articles or letters that attempt to conduct ongoing public dialogue with other letter-writers, revile any religious doctrines or practices, or attack or slander individuals will be rejected. All submissions must have the author's name and address. Anonymous letters will not be published. The editors reserve the right to accept or reject articles, letters, announcements and advertisements, hold them for future use, and edit them for clarity or to meet space constraints. The editors further reserve the right to publish any materials sent to them, with due acknowledgment, unless specifically requested otherwise. The official language of FEZANA, and that of the Journal is English.

DR. FARUK PRESSWALLA has been appointed State Medical Examiner for the State of New Jersey by Governor Christine Whitman. In her letter, she mentions: "... I am confident that you will fulfill the duties and responsibilities of this position with competence and integrity ... working to achieve the best New Jersey for all

our citizens ...". Prior to his appointment, Dr. Presswalla has served as Acting State Medical Examiner since February 1997 and has taken numerous steps to improve the quality of services throughout the State.





