

FEZANA



JOURNAL

Winter 1999, Zemestan 1368 YZ

Mah Dae-Bahman-Aspandarmad 1368 YZ (Fasli)
Mah Amardad-Shehrevan-Meher 1369 YZ (Shenshai)
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**FACING THE
MILLENNIA**

**Exploring
Socio-religious
Issues**

**Building the
Zarathushti
Community**

**Observations on
Demography**

Inter-faith Marriages

Unified Calendar

**Living in a
Non-Zarathushti
Environment**

**Social Structures
for the Aging**

Zarathushtrian Identity

ALSO INSIDE:

Avesta Conference in Calgary

Montreal Youth Congress

Zarathushti Enterprise

Books and Such

Lest We Forget

Events and Honors

FEZANA

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On socio-religious issues ...

Man and other species in nature have created organized communities for improving their odds for survival. The smallest social unit started with the family, and then grew to include relatives, tribe, village, town, region and nation.

In his analysis of the growth of civilizations, in *A Study of History*, Arnold Toynbee concludes: "The institution we call society consists in the common ground between the respective fields of action of a number of individual souls; that the source of action is never the society itself but always an individual; that the action which is an act of creation is always performed by a soul which is in some sense a superhuman genius; that the genius expresses himself, like every living soul, through action upon his fellows; that in any society the creative personalities are always a small minority."

Social issues are relevant to society as a whole, and to individual members of the social unit. When things go wrong, the accountability for mistakes or neglect lies with individuals, and not with some abstract 'society'. A person needs to have food in his stomach and other basic necessities satisfied before he/she can think about religion. That is part of the reason why many poor are converted to other religions.

It is, therefore, important for all members and leaders of Zarathushti communities around the world to become knowledgeable about the social issues affecting different segments of our communities, to understand them and to address them in an effective and timely manner.

Sometimes social issues are connected to religious issues. Although

core religious teachings focus primarily on Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds, institutionalized religion also touches upon aspects of social life, creating an overlap between the two. Failure to differentiate between personal, social and religious issues, or the inability to understand the subtle connection between them, can create confusion and errors in resolving such issues.

This issue of FEZANA Journal will give, albeit a very short, glimpse of some of the social problems we face today. Future issues may cover more in-depth and comprehensive explorations of this important subject.

What are some of the major issues and related questions that our community faces? It appears they mostly revolve around the *survival of our identity, our religion and our culture*. How can we reverse the alarming *demographic trends* that recent surveys continue to present? As a tiny minority today, in an overwhelmingly non-Zarathushti milieu (be it Christian, Hindu or Muslim) how can we avoid assimilation and preserve our identity? When we talk of identity, we sway between our ethnicity (Parsi-Irani-North American) and our religion (traditional-reformist). Why are we so driven to survive? Is it a question of self-esteem? Or faith? Or a sense of responsibility to perpetuate a heritage that has managed to survive over the millennia.

Our survival depends on the *survival of our priesthood, our rituals, and our religious institutions* such as our temples and our dokhmas.

Another ubiquitous concern is the issue of *intermarriages*. What is its impact on our children, our community and our religion? What is the impact of acceptance of these mar-

riages? Then there is the question of *conversion*. What are the ethics and the impact of formal conversions on the community? Does it matter if the convert is of Iranian descent or not?

Each age group has their unique issues. *Youth issues* include issues related to rituals, wearing sudreh-kushti, dating, intermarriage, depression and the need for understanding and guidance. *Adults* grapple with issues related to finding suitable marriage partners, marital problems, adoption, divorce, financial, health and legal difficulties. As the Zarathushti community in the West ages, *seniors* of our community face issues concerning their physical well-being, financial, social and religious needs.

We also face *issues that are unique to our geographical location*. While our communities in India and Pakistan are concerned with economic issues (such as housing and welfare), those in Iran are concerned more with their status as a tiny minority in a Muslim country. The communities in the West (USA, Canada, UK and Australia) are not as concerned with economic or political pressures, as they are with the threat of assimilation and loss of identity.

With the *continuing dispersion* of our communities across the globe, there is the concern of networking and bringing these diaspora communities together.

What is needed to address these issues? Some things that come to mind (not in any prioritized order) are: religious education for youth and adults; discussion forums for local communities; honesty and openness to listen and understand; short and long-term planning by the associations; setting objectives to reach consensus on basic things; prioritizing short and long-term goals; creating and maintaining a sense of urgency on planning and execution of projects; resource allocation (money, people and time) for different projects; peri-

FEZANA JOURNAL wishes readers

A prosperous NEW YEAR 2000

odically reviewing progress on action items and changing course if necessary; defining the role of leaders (among priests, youth, adults, seniors, professionals and businesspersons); defining the role of members; and choosing leaders who are dedicated and balanced in outlook.

What can we learn from others (from history, from other communities and from nature)? We should take some lessons from history. Did adaptation to Indian dress, customs, language and the restriction of intermarriages help us survive and grow in India? Did intermarriages in other places in Asia and Europe lead to loss of the community? Did extremism in religion and hypocrisy lead to divisions and eventual loss in Iran?

We can learn from the experiences of other communities. The Jewish people have prospered by being organized and tolerant of differing views on religion and customs. The Hindus, as well, accept members who have their own preferred deities different from others.

In nature, we know that members of different species of animals and birds tend to stick with their own kind; they do not try to impose their customs on others; and they do not destroy their

own kind. Are there some lessons to be learned from nature?

What has been done so far to address these social issues? These issues are being addressed at various levels. Discussions are held at most Zarathushti conferences and congresses that are held periodically around the world. At the institutional level, infrastructures are being developed, such as local associations, national federations and a world body to grapple with these issues. The Priests' Councils are also bringing issues, primarily those of a religious nature, to their forums for discussion. With proper planning for our community, as mentioned earlier, timely execution of plans and cooperation from members, our global Zarathushti community, that has survived the vicissitudes of the millennia can, and will prosper and grow.

But can we put our differences aside and work together towards our common goal? Our community is like a boat on the high seas. In order to direct the boat to its destination, all passengers and crew should work as a team and row together. ■

Maneck Bhujwala
Co-Guest Editor

A Beautiful Story

One night, a man had a dream. He dreamt he was walking along the beach with the Lord. Across the sky, flashed scenes from his life. In each scene, he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand. One belonged to him and the other to the Lord.

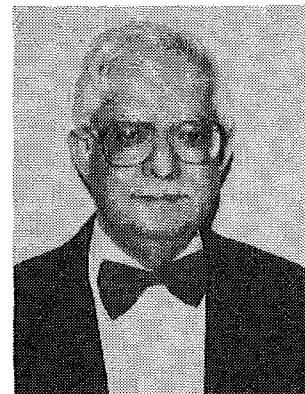
When the last scene of his life flashed before him, he looked back at the footprints in the sand. He noticed that many times along the path of life, there was only one set of footprints. He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in his life.

This really bothered him and he questioned the Lord about it. "Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you, you'd walk with me all the way. But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life, there is only one set of footprints. I don't understand why, when I needed you the most, you would leave me."

The Lord replied: "My precious, precious child. I love you and would never leave you. During your times of trial and suffering when you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you."

- From a posting by Nahid Irani on zoroastrians@listbot.com

FROM THE PRESIDENT



The need of our times

Let me briefly state the way I view our religion, the bountiful message of Prophet Zarathushtra, and also how we can implement this in our daily lives.

Knowledge and source of our faith.

The core message of the prophet is Asha. Asha is Truth and Righteousness, which is the only path to happiness. We know that Ahura Mazda envisaged an ideal creation according to the principles of perfection, Asha. We also know that within creation, there arose two *mainyus* (spirits), the good one, *Spenta Mainyu*, and the bad, *Angra Mainyu*.

In the world, the ideals of creation are represented by the six Amesha Spentas. The good mind, *Vohu Mana*, is an essential part of creation. *Vohu Mana* enables us to judge good and evil. The prophet's message to practice good thoughts, good words and good deeds is essential for a follower of the Zarathushti Din. The prophet teaches us to hear the message with a clear mind, to look upon alternatives in life with a clear mind, and asks each one to choose for himself. Each one of us is inalienably endowed with the privilege of choice, and bear the responsibility for our actions. This is the core of the message of the prophet.

Understanding of the Religion.

Knowledge of the religion and its meaning is essential, since that is the life we must lead: practicing and performing rituals is important. How-

ever, what is most crucial is to translate the ethical message of the prophet into action. In the Ashem Vohu prayer, we recognize that Asha (righteousness) is the best of all that is good. We should be leading a righteous life for the sake of righteousness alone. Expecting a reward for leading a righteous life is a concept inconsistent with our religion.

Service to community. The concept of helping others appeals to me most. Almost all religions concur on the subject of 'serving others', for example:

"The best of men are those who are useful to others."

- Judaism: Talmud, Sanhedrin 27b

"Rendering help to another is the function of all human beings."

- Jainism, Tattvarthasutra 5.21

"Without selfless service is no objective fulfilled. In service lies the purest action."

- Sikhism, Adi Granth,
Maru, M1 p. 992

"Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interest, but also to the interest of others."

- Christianity, Philippians 2.3-4.

"Strive constantly to serve the welfare of the world. With devotion to selfless work, one attains the supreme goal in life. Do your work with welfare of others in mind. It was by such work that Janaka attained perfection. Others, too, have followed this path."

- Hinduism, Bhagavad Gita
3.10-26.

How can we serve the community and still maintain our individual free-

dom to hold our own opinion? Who is going to decide whether your opinion is right or mine? If my opinion is right, is your opinion not right? In my opinion, what is right for the community is also right for you when you can:

- Put the interest of our community above personal or sectarian interest.
- Maintain unity, without pressure.
- Discover what we can agree upon.
- Permit diversity of each anjuman, and within each anjuman.
- Express honestly held views and do not denigrate differing views.
- Gradually disclose our unified religious commitment; present it to the youth of our community.

At FEZANA, let all our actions be made in accordance with the admonition of the prophet – with our hearts filled with the spirit of benevolence (*Spenta Armaiti*), with our thinking illumined by the good mind (*Vohu Mana*) and our vision fixed upon truth and righteousness (*Asha*).

Let me conclude with the words of the prophet:

*"So may we be like those making progress toward perfection;
May Mazda and Divine Spirits help us
and guide our efforts through Truth;
For a thinking man is where Wisdom
is at home."*

- Yasna 30.9 (D. J. Irani translation: *The Gathas, The Hymns of Zarathushtra*) ■

Framroze K. Patel
President, FEZANA



Jashan-e Mehergan "Unity Day" celebrations

The Society of Iranian Professionals (whose Board of Directors is chaired by Mehran Sepehri) and the Persian Center in California presented a Mehergan celebration on October 1 in Sunnyvale, California. Keynote speaker Dr. Farhang Mehr talked on "Iran's Contribution to World Civilization". A festival of classic Persian music and dance followed.

On October 2, over 400 Zarathushtis and friends celebrated Mehergan at the San Jose Dare-Mehr with a full program of prayers, speeches, Persian classic dance and music and a Persian dinner, all organized by the Persian Zoroastrian Organization (PZO) of Northern California. The music and dancing continued until late hours under a huge tent on the grounds of the Dare-Mehr.

Some years ago, FEZANA resolved to celebrate Mehergan as "Unity Day". Several Associations, including the Zoroastrian Association of Chicago follow this tradition.

On a much larger scale, 20,000 Iranians celebrated the 2-day "**Mehergan 99**" party, food fair, bazaar and cultural event at Irvine Meadows, in Orange County, California. Many came to remember the sights and sound, the smells and tastes of Iran, the land they left behind when the revolution changed their lives.

The roots of the Mehergan celebration go back many centuries to early Achaemenian times. Today, this historic festival is gaining popularity from year to year among Zarathushtis and non-Zarathushti Iranians. ■

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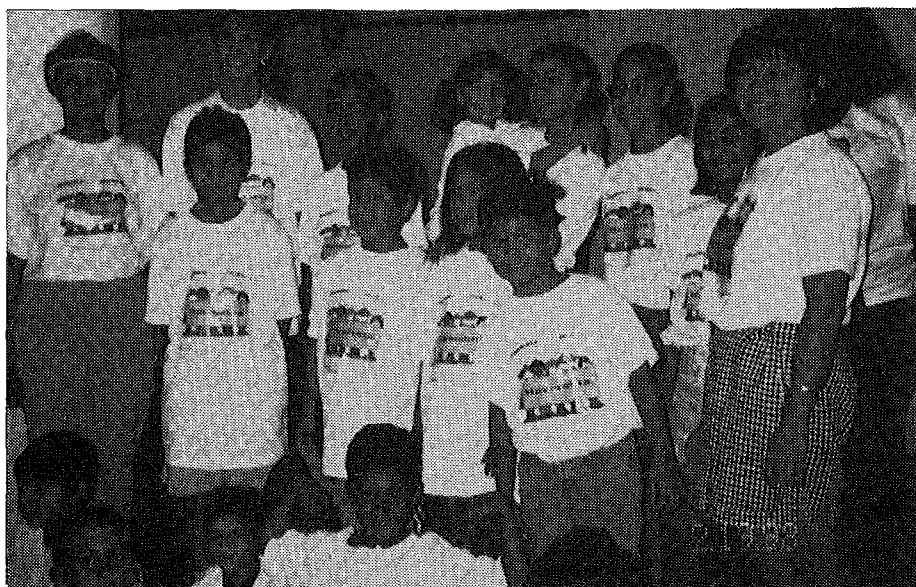


North Carolina Zarathushtis (38 adults and 10 children) celebrated Pateti/Nouruz on August 29th with a lunch at a beautiful neighborhood clubhouse in Durham, NC. The children had a great time at the swimming pool and then got together for a religious discussion led by Farida Divecha. The community hopes this will be the start of regular get togethers with the children involved in religious classes of some sort. Phiroze and Manjiri Sethna and Firoz and Firoza Mistry took care of the arrangements. Folks came from as far as 3 hours away – Charlotte, Wilmington, Pinehurst and Winston-Salem. Others, from South Carolina could not join us due to warnings about impending Hurricane Dennis which was threatening the NC coast (that was the one before Big Floyd which later totally devastated the eastern part of the State, though the Zarathushtis of the area did not suffer any major damage beyond some fallen trees). The total strength in the area is now about 27 families and growing. One of the earlier residents Tehmi Dalal is offering a warm, southern welcome to any Zarathushtis moving to the area. Call Tehmi in Raleigh, at (919) 848-9738.

Project Havarshtha - a success story.

Dallas area children, under Project Coordinator Shernaz Mohanty [*far right*] and with the support of Zoroastrian Association of North Texas president Mitra Valatabar [*far left*] are learning to put good thoughts, good words and good deeds to practice. They assisted children at "Captain Hope's Kids", an organization that strives to meet the critical needs of children at homeless shelters. During August, the group took gift bags of school supplies and treats, each individually decorated with drawings, to the Downtown Dallas Shelter, that helps about 300 homeless people each week. They collected and distributed 1,945 items, with a value of over \$2,750 to the shelter's needy kids.

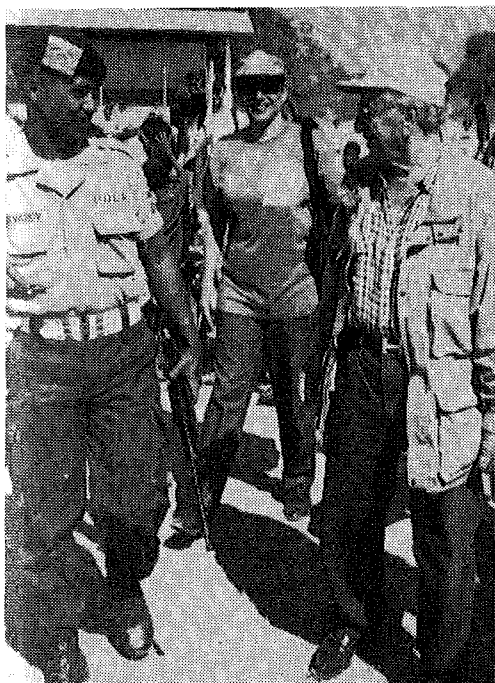
Project Havarshtha was successful because of the support and financial contributions of dozens of Dallas



area Zarathushtis as well as local stores. According to Mohanty, "In this way, Project Havarshtha was able to introduce Zarathushti children to their less fortunate peers, alike in every way but circumstance. It gave

them a chance to put their religious training to good use by helping in some small way to improve the lives of people in need." For more information or to make a donation, contact Shernaz at (972) 578-7599. ■

Jamsheed Marker hailed in the world press as architect of E. Timor accord



In May, Foreign Ministers of Indonesia and Portugal sat alongside the UN Secretary General, and world media recorded the signing of a historic accord which brought about a UN negotiated resolution to the long-running conflict in East Timor.

After the historic signing ceremony, a fourth chair was added to the dais, and Secretary General Annan invited Jamsheed Marker to take that seat, as his "chief negotiator" and architect of the agreement.

Marker was praised by all parties. According to the Portuguese diplomat: "His skills, patience and prudence kept the negotiations alive. In difficult moments his calm approach kept it going." The Indonesian minister also thanked Marker repeatedly during the press conference.

Fighting and famine have killed thousands in East Timor (the former Portuguese colony), since its occupation by Indonesia in 1975. It caught the attention of the world again when militia units armed by the Indonesian army killed hundreds of people in the wake of the UN sponsored vote for independence.

All the praise for Marker's handling of this human rights disaster was not new. Marker's diplomatic skills, pleasant manners and wide accept-



Top left, UN Special Envoy Jamsheed Marker with his wife Arnaz on a visit to E. Timor, to settle the long-running conflict there. Top, Marker (right) with UN Secretary General Kofi Annan at UN Headquarters in New York. Above, Marker speaking to E. Timori people at a polling place where the ballot was held, on August 30th, that led to the independence of 800,000 people of East Timor.

ability as a good negotiator have been long acclaimed at the UN.

Marker, served as ambassador of Pakistan for 30 years, in 11 different countries. He now lives in Ft. Lauderdale with his wife Arnaz. A daughter Niloufer, lives in Poughkeepsie, New York and another, Feroza, is an

occupational therapist at Mt. Sinai in New York City.

Though 77, he is far from retired. As of this writing, he was off to Islamabad to offer his consulting services, at the invitation of the new government in Pakistan. ■

- By Roshan Rivetna

By Jim Engineer
Naperville, Illinois

Montreal is a celebration of North American diversity. Steeped and rich in tradition and earthly culture, history, education and a progressive, trend-setting pop culture nightlife, Montreal was absorbed and embraced by more than 250 Zarathushti youth last August at the Eighth North American Zoroastrian Youth Congress.

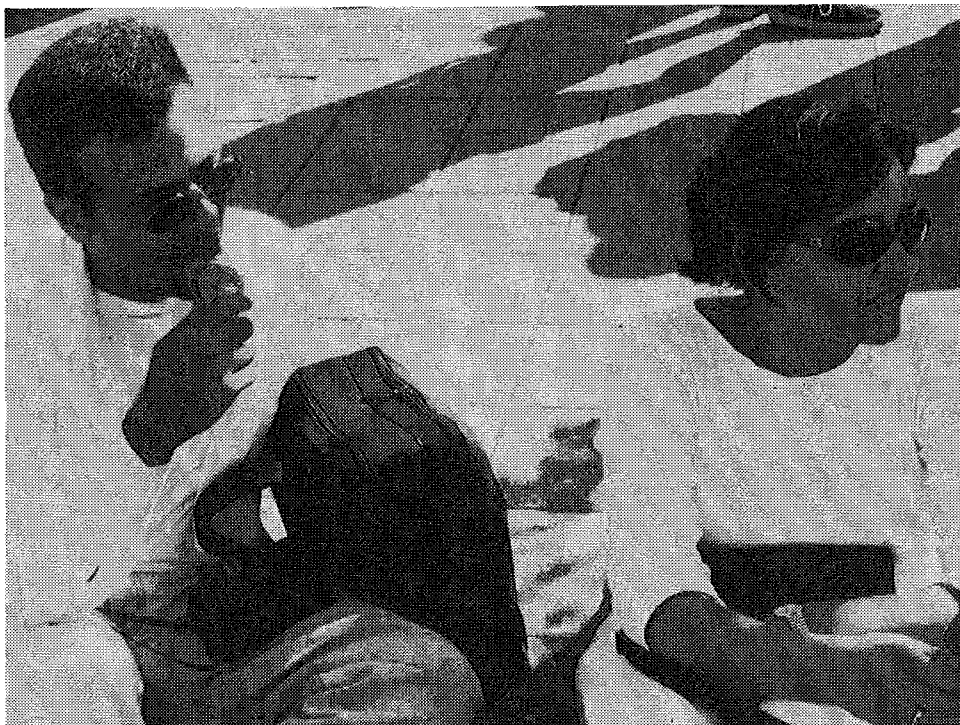
Appropriately, Montreal's McGill University, Canada's second oldest post-secondary institution, served as home base for the youth. Nestled steep atop Montreal's downtown shopping and nightclub district, McGill housed Zarathushti youth from Florida to British Columbia, all of whom experienced the last youth congress of the century.

Such a milestone requires some reflection and thought. Since the dawning of the first youth congress in Los Angeles in 1987, Zarathushti youth have matured and developed into a sophisticated, forward-thinking, progressive generation of North Americans.

Montreal was an affirmation and renewal of a spirit called 'youth'. What made this congress different from any of its sister congresses was its ability to push the boundaries of unconventional programming.

Traditionally, youth congresses had been organized by tapping the talents and cultivating leadership skills of youth living in the host city. However, Montreal represented a break in that tradition. A break that was refreshing, free of any adult interaction or intervention and a pure microcosm of the increasing global sense of community Zarathushti youth have formed through the years.

The advent of the Internet has torn down communal barriers, state lines, provincial differences and religious extremism, allowing Zarathushti youth to coalesce as one united community with a melting pot blend of thoughts, opinions and ideas.



By the Youth, Grassroots congress forges new direc

The glue holding that spirit together served as the primary organizing body of the Montreal congress, the Zoroastrian Youth of North America (ZYNA). ZYNA worked locally with the Zoroastrian Student Society of McGill University (ZSSMU) to form one of the most grassroots, innovative and progressive congresses of this generation.

ZYNA, a FEZANA committee, was formed more than five years ago to provide infrastructure and framework for youth programming and activities. Today, and for the last three years, ZYNA has been guided by the hard work and leadership of Arianne Teherani and Mehernosh Mody, with the energy, direction and leadership of ZYNA co-founder, Mazda Antia. The three leaders worked fluidly and vigorously with ZSSMU's Dilshad Marolia and Rookie Gheyara, who provided tireless on-site and logistical coordination.

Programming was arranged through the formation of small groups of approximately 10-15 participants, which served as a vehicle for the religious, sociological and cultural exchange of information.

The only speaker to formally address the united body during its opening ceremonies was Zane Dalal, an accomplished conductor educated in England (Oxford) and the United States (Indiana University). Dalal's eloquence was exceeded only by his sense of self and his ability to share his thoughts on spirituality and his personal relationship with God.

Dalal boldly addressed and challenged participants to think about the issues of acceptance and conversion of non-Zoroastrians. "Can you live with the burden of denying Zarathushtra's message?" he asked. The answer would set the tone and spirit for intra-group dialogue and debate.



For the Youth

tion at the brink of the next millennium

The congress theme: "Turning Belief into Action" served as the catalyst behind the programming, as small group discussions turned to large group exchanges of information, ideas and experiences.

A presentation by Armaity Homavazir on Camp Pardis, an innovative and enlightening summer camp she started and now runs for young Zarathushti children in the Toronto area, moved the crowd to a standing ovation. Homavazir's ingenuity, commitment to community and lead-by-example style, subtly encouraged participants to recognize the potential within themselves and impact positively the state of their communities.

The final lecture-hall event focused on the importance of professional networking and mentoring, and the introduction of a new ZYNA sub-committee: the Zoroastrian Young Professionals of North America (ZYPNA).

Led by ZYNA co-founder, Jim Engineer, ZYPNA was inaugurated by the formation of small groups based on professional affiliation. Participants at the high school level assimilated into professional groups for which they had a curiosity and quickly formed relationships with older youth who filled the role of mentors. Participating members exchanged numbers and created directories of phone and e-mail addresses that two months later were forwarded to all congress participants to maintain the flow of information between young professionals.

A formal evening of dinner, dance and cultural entertainment highlighted the social agenda. Co-ed dorm living, soccer and other games, along with the Montreal nightlife and limited sleep, resulted in the formation and strengthening of relationships, friendships and bonds to last a lifetime.

Excluding housekeeping annoyances, such as hot food that was cold and

cold drinks that were warm, the organizers of the Eighth North American Zoroastrian Youth Congress are to be commended for their energy, passion and innovative programming.

To a large extent, Montreal will be recorded as a common sense congress that was by the youth and for the youth. Unlike the programming of preceding congresses that tended to be marred by religious politics and adult involvement, Montreal was a refreshing wake-up and the kind of congress fit for a new millennium. ■

Jim Engineer, 28, is a partner at *Current Source, Inc.*, a professional services firm specializing in recruiting and public relations in west suburban Chicago. Earlier this year, Jim launched *Current Source Communications*, a division of *Current Source, Inc.*, a public relations practice dedicated to providing emerging growth technology companies with strategic media and industry analyst relations, crisis communications and reputation management. He can be reached via e-mail at jamshed007@earthlink.net.

STATISTICS FOR THE YOUTH CONGRESS, MONTREAL

Attendance

Canada	92
USA	159

Percentage having e-mail

Canada	74/92	80%
USA	128/159	81%

Age breakdown for US/Canada

14 - 18	21%
19 - 24	41%
25 - 30	21%
30 - 35	8%

International Attendees 9%

Careers

	Canada	USA
Business	5%	23%
Science	45%	35%
Liberal Arts	2%	3%
Law	4%	1%

Mazdayasnie Connection retreat in Ontario

The California-based Mazdayasnie Connection held its 9th religious retreat on "Asho Zarathushtra – the Universal Prophet" by Ervad K. N. Dastoor, October 9-16 in the beautiful surroundings of Freny and Keki Bulsara's Waterways Campground, near Ottawa, Canada. ■

The family that prays together, stays together

NAVJOTE & SUDREH KUSHTI

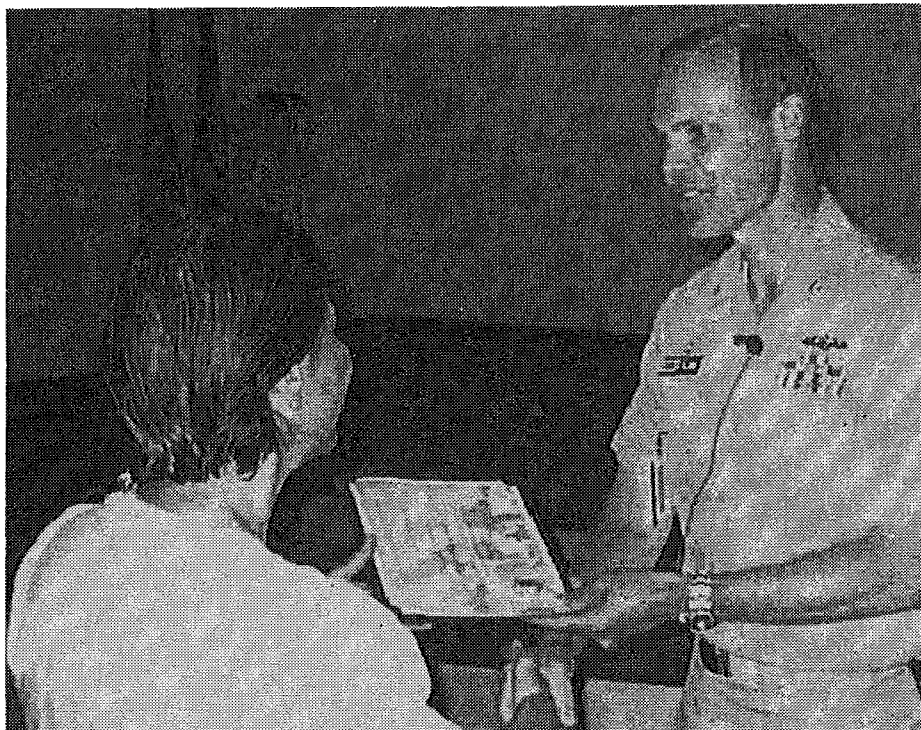
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Tel: (714) 995-8765



Dr. Aban Daruwalla, Weapons System Scientist at the Naval Warfare Assessment Station in Corona, California, was recognized for her voluntary community outreach work in coordinating a booth at the base, during the observance of Armed Forces Day, in May.

"All these activities get me so high – I do not understand why some people resort to the use of drugs"

Balkan lecture tour. Last August, Dr. Aban Daruwalla [photo above] took a lecture trip to the Balkans to promote the "Mission to Mars" program, when the Polar Lander, which left earth in January 1999 will be landing on Mars on December 3, 1999 [see FEZANA Journal, Fall 1999, p. 15]. To commemorate this momentous event, a 3-day "**Planet-fest**" has been planned at the Convention Center in Pasadena, when worldwide attention is expected.

Aban disseminated information, distributed popular items like the Planetfest 99 sticker and a scale model of the Polar Lander, and spoke to students, teachers, educators, Ministry of Education personnel and US Embassy consuls in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Belarus.

The overwhelming interest in the Balkan countries for the Program, sponsored jointly by the Planetary Society, the Jet Propulsion Lab,

Pasadena, and NASA was phenomenal. "In fact," says Aban, "after I completed my brief to the Consul at the US Embassy in Estonia, her first remark was that she was going to expedite obtaining her computer so that she and her family could watch the Polar Landing at home. Most public schools, as well, immediately launched programs to prepare their students with advance information in the classrooms, so that by the time of the landing, they would be able to fully comprehend the impact of the event."

Science Conference. Aban was also involved in promoting the Science and Technology Conference in November, for girls in the 6 - 9th grades. Here too, the interest was very high.

No wonder then, that Aban says "All these activities get me so high that I do not understand why some people resort to drugs." ■



AVESTALTA '99

Avesta scholars gather in Calgary, Alberta, for the 2nd International Avesta Conference

By Framroze K. Patel
Woodbridge, New Jersey

A three-day Second International Avesta Conference sponsored by the Zoroastrian Education and Research Society (ZERS) was held at Calgary, Alberta, during the weekend of September 24-26. The conference was co-sponsored by FEZANA and hosted by The Zoroastrian Association of Alberta (ZAA). The conference was a success, in large measure, due to the single-minded dedication of Dr. Pallan Ichaporia, chair of ZERS and dedicated volunteers of ZAA headed by Rashna and Firdosh Mehta.

About 60 participants attended, including international and North American scholars. Mr. Marazban J. A. Patrawala, a former member, National Commission for Minorities, Government of India was the keynote speaker, along with Mr. Jim Edwards, a noted journalist and former MP from the province of Alberta. Ervad Parvez Bajan, Dr. Jehan Bagli and Ervad Mehbod Dastur also participated as speakers at the conference.

The theme of the event was "*Avestan Literature from -Y2K to +Y2K*" and the purpose was to welcome world-renowned scholars and learn about the latest research in Avesta, Pahlavi and Zarathushti literature and new archaeological discoveries.

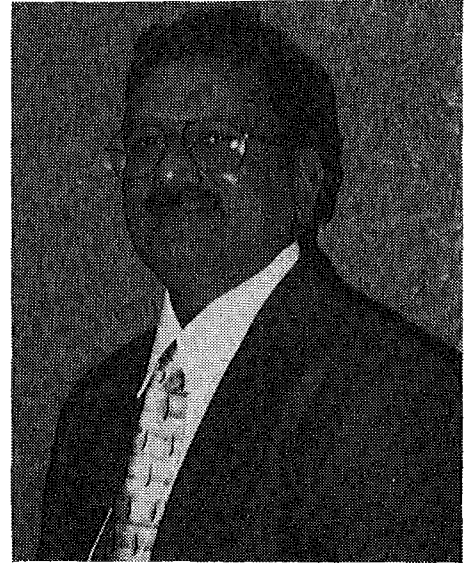
The conference opened with a benediction by Ervad Parvez Bajan, followed by brief addresses from Rashna Firdosh Mehta (President, ZAA), Dr. Pallan Ichaporia (Chair, ZERS) and Framroze K. Patel (President, FEZANA).



Firdosh and Rashna Mehta

The opening speaker was **Prof. Dr. Werner Sundermann** (Hon. Professor at Freie Universitat, Berlin). Dr. Sundermann's paper "*The Image of Zoroaster in the Manichaean Tradition*" was read by Prof. Nicholas Sims-Williams as Prof. Sundermann was unable to attend. Having discussed the history of transmission of Avestan texts, the paper narrated the history of Mani's birth and spread of his religion, and how it was preached in Iran under King Shahpur I and after Mani's death under King Behram I. The source of Manichaeanism could be utilized to learn about the Zarathushti religion and about Zarathushtra.

Prof. Dr. William Malandra, Professor of Indo-Iranian philosophy and chair of the Department of Classical and Near Eastern Studies at the University of Minnesota, in his paper "*Texture of the Fabric: Unravelling the Yashts*", expressed the view that the yashts are a complex compilation



Dr. Pallan Ichaporia

revealing historical and compositional layering. In the form as we have them, the yashts are the products of literate redactors whose purpose was to combine inherited material to form extended texts. He also discussed the principles of textual criticism for the study of yashts.

In his talk "*The Seminal Contribution of Zoroastrianism to the Upanishads*", **Mr. Keki Bhote**, noted speaker and scholar of the religion, drew the uncanny parallelism between the lofty theology of Zarathushtra in the Gathas and the religious philosophy of the Upanishads, as expounded in the Vedas. The Vedas have more in common with the Gathic language than they do with the later Sanskrit. According to Mr. Bhote, it is not surprising that the prophet's concept of creation, monotheism, the Law of Asha, Vohu Mana and service to mankind should find resonance in the philosophy of the Upanishads.

"The Achaemenids and the Zoroastrian Fire Altars" was the topic of paper by **Prof. Dr. Richard Frye**, a learned scholar of the Zarathushti religion and Prof. Emeritus of Iranian Studies at Harvard University. As Dr. Frye could not attend, his paper will be included in the proceedings of the conference. Since **Prof. Antonio Panaino** also could not attend, his student **Dr. Frederico Spinetti**, of the University of Bologna, Italy, talked about *"Apam-Napat"* and its 'enigmatic role'. An in-depth analysis was put forward, but it seems that further research is needed to fully understand this deity.

Prof. Dr. Gernot L. Windfuhr, professor of Iranian Studies at the University of Michigan, presented a paper: *"Yasna 32.10b: To see Cow and the Sun with His Eyes."* His numerous works focus on Persian and Iranian linguistics, Indo-European studies and Manichaeism. The paper discusses two difficult lines of Yasna 32. Line 32.8b mentions 'gav' (cow

or bull) and hints on a sin committed by the famed primordial Iranian hero Jamshed. Line 32.10b mentions 'gav' – together with the sun. He tried to elucidate it with a comparison with astronomical world ages.

"Aspects of the Gathas" was presented by **Prof. Dr. Martin Schwartz**, professor in the Department of Near Eastern Studies at the University of California at Berkeley. He discussed the sequential relationship of the Gathic Yasna, the continuous themes and poetic devices from Gathic Yasna to Gathic Yasna, as well as the internal and comparative evidence for Zarathushtra as the author of the Gathas. He made a scholarly attempt to show that the prophet is the only author of the Gathas.

"Two Avestan Words" was the paper presented by **Prof. Keigo Noda**, Associate Professor at Chubu University, Japan, and a visiting professor under Prof. Oktor Skjaervo at Harvard University. He presented the etymology, the linguistics and

grammar of two Avestan words 'avao' and 'karšta'. In Avan Yasht 10.46 (Geldner translation), avan should be an adverb instead of 'avar'; 'avo' is an Iranian equivalent of the Vedic 'avas'. He differs from scholars such as Bartholomae and Duchesne-Guillemin on the derivation of the word 'karšta', believing that the word should be connected not with 'kar' (to do, make) but with 'karsh' (to draw, sow). Though highly technical, the paper was well received by audience and the scholars.

Ervad Burzin Unwala from Houston, Texas was the last speaker of the day. His paper, on *numerological manipulations* and mathematical patterns in the Ashem Vohu prayer, was based on esoteric understanding. He questioned that scientists give answers to the "how", but never to the "why". The second day started with a benediction by Ervad Dr. Jehan Bagli. **Prof. Dr. Helmut Humbach**, professor Emeritus at the University of Mainz, Germany, presented *"Zara-*

From left, Keki Bhote, William Malandra, Gernot Windfuhr, Sara Circassia and Frederico Spinetti



thushtra and the Haoma". He authored scholarly titles such as *Die Gathas des Zarathushtra* (1959), *Western Approach to Zarathushtra*, *The Gathas of Zarathushtra and the Other Avestan Texts*. With Pallan Ichaporia, he co-authored *The Heritage of Zarathushtra – a New Translation of His Gathas*, and *Zamyad Yasht* [also see page 16].

Avestic 'Homa' (Phl. 'Hom') is a plant, the alkaloid juice of which has been used for ritual purposes by Zarathushtris as early as in the Younger Avesta. The Yasna ceremony consists of two successive preparations of the 'Parahaoma', its consecration, and its partaking by the officiating priest. Comparison of the Iranian Haoma with the Vedic Soma proves that the ritual use of the plant dates back to the Proto-Aryan period, but the prophet's attitude towards Haoma is open to discussion. Most authors hold the view that the consumption of Haoma was condemned by the prophet, however Prof. Humbach tried to show that the evidence

for this view is much weaker than generally assumed.

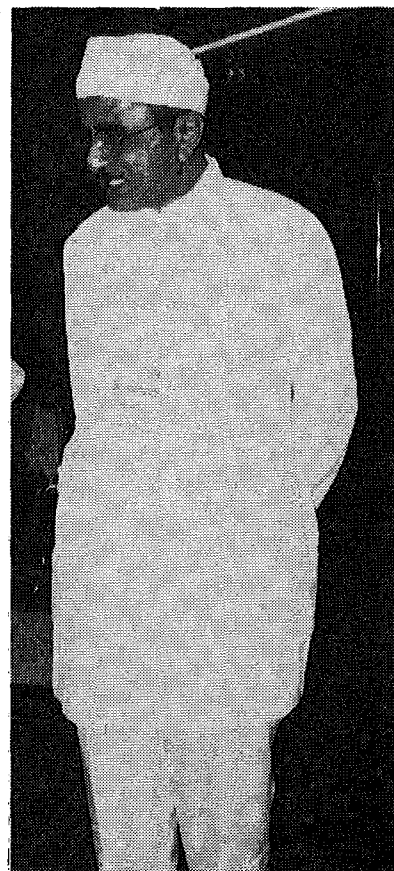
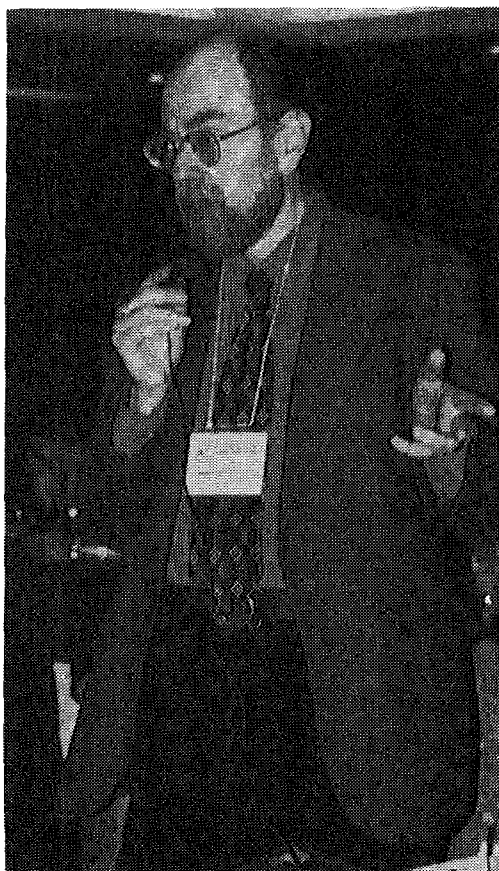
Dr. Pallan R. Ichaporia, Founder-Chairman of ZERS and Avesta-Pahlavi scholar, presented a paper "*The Gathas in the Pahlavi Tradition: Exemplified by Yasna 30*". He discussed the Pahlavi translation of the Gathic text of Yasna 30 including the passage on two spirits and the adaptation of a chapter found in Book 9 of the Pahlavi Dinkerd.

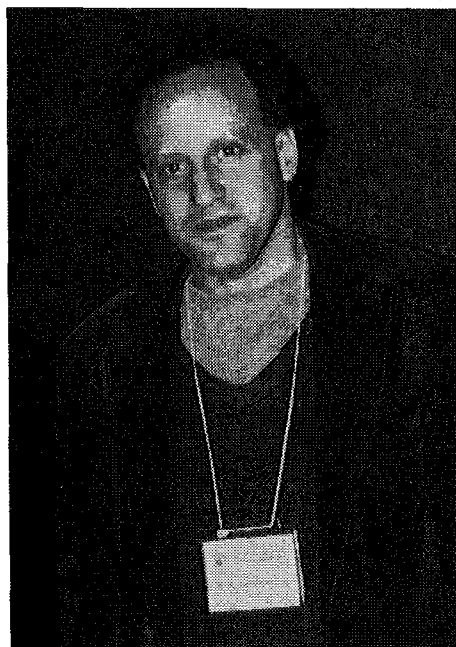
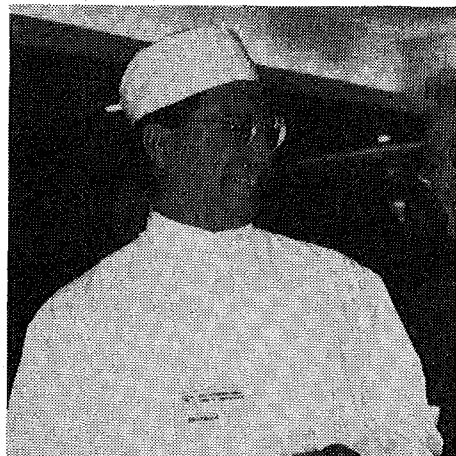
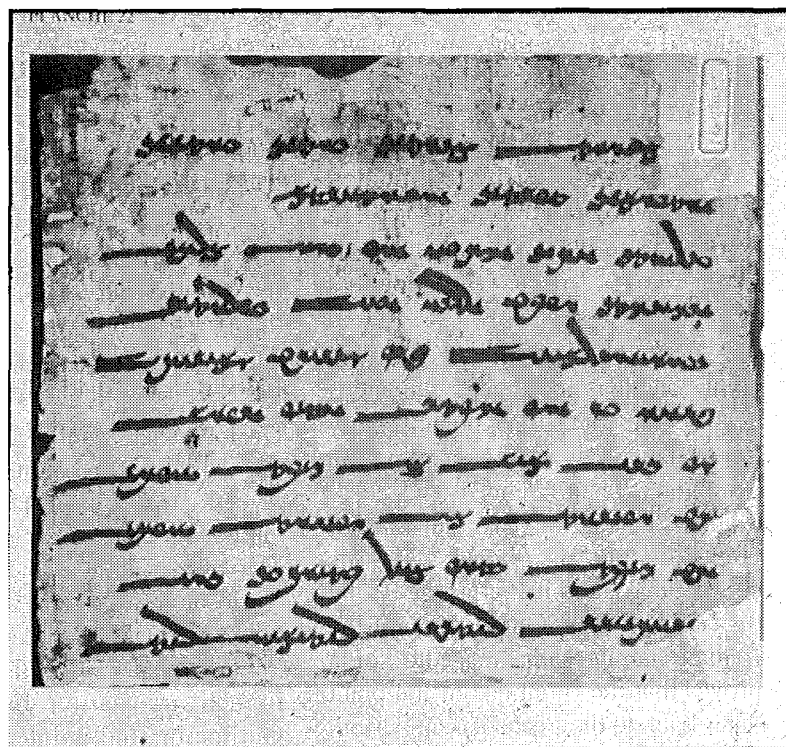
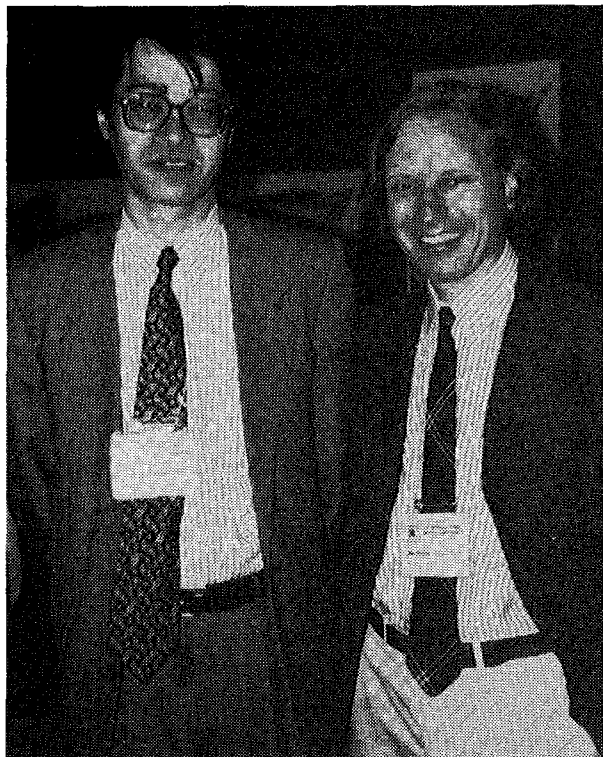
Dr. Ichaporia pointed out that unlike the Pahlavi translation of the Young Avestic text of Yasna, that of the Gathas is most problematic. The revival of Gathic studies started with Nériosangh's Sanskrit version, which was a great help in deciphering the Pahlavi script. He then compared the French translation by Duchesne-Guillemin, and pointed out the linguistic and philological mistakes in the interpretations of several Gathic words based on the Pahlavi translation which resulted in the wrong translation of the famous verse about the two spirits.

Dr. Sara Circassia of the University of Bologna, Italy, another student of Prof. Panaino, presented "*Avestan Hymn to Druvaspa*". She critically analyzed the text of Druvaspa (Gosht) Yasht, and discussed the various aspects of the deity Druvaspa. We need to know the importance of our yashts, and she, together with her fellow student Spenetti have done a good job of lucidly explaining the composition and structure of this yasht and of Apam Napat.

Dr. Arthur Ambartsumian, a researcher in Iranian Studies at the Ancient Near East Department of the Institute of Oriental Studies, St. Petersburg, Russia, presented a paper on "*Transmission of an Avestan Epic into the Parthian and Middle Persian Literature—Ayadgar-e-Zareran*". He discussed important traces of the Avestan tradition in a Pahlavi writing of the 6th century AD based on the lost Parthian original, concerning legendary pre-Achaemenid heroic history.

From left, Martin Schwartz, Khorshed Jungalwala, Helmut Humbach and Ervad Parvez Bajan





Clockwise from left, James Russell, Mehbod Dastur, Keigo Noda and Nicholas Sims-Williams. Avestan manuscript possibly 300 years older than any surviving fragment, dating to 8th century CE. Discovered by Sir Aurel Stein in Dunhuang, Western China. Ashem Vohu prayer in the fragment was recognized by Ilya Gerschevitch and published in the *Indo-Iranian Journal* 1976 in a paper by Prof. Sims-Williams.

Prof. Dr. James Russell, Mashtots Professor of Armenian Studies at Harvard University, presented "*Derveni Papyrus and Iran*". The oldest and one of the very few papyri found in Greece comes from a burial site in the village of Derveni. Its text, which may have been composed in the early 5th century BCE, describes funerary rituals and outlines a cosmological doctrine. Overall, it is likely that the document belongs to the mysteries of Orpheus; however, it mentions the Magi as well, and the ritual they performed. Some scholars have understood the term 'magos' to refer to a magician generally, or even to a Babylonian priest; but if one takes it at face value, to mean a Zoroastrian priest, then the rites described are seen to correspond closely to those of the funerary *satum* ritual practiced by the Parsis of the present day. If this explanation is correct, the Derveni papyrus is the oldest document of a Zarathushti ritual, according to Prof. Russell.

Prof. Nicholas Sims-Williams is currently head of the Department of Languages and Cultures of the Near and Middle East at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. He was a professor of Iranian and Central Asian Studies at the University of London. The topic of his paper was "*The Avestan and Zoroastrian Religion in Sogdiana and Bactria*". Bactria and Sogdiana are mentioned in the Avesta. In the Old Persian, they are listed amongst the provinces of the empire of Darius. Dr. Sims-Williams drew attention to recently discovered texts in these languages, such as Sogdian inscriptions of the Upper Indus region in Pakistan and a still unpublished archive of Bactrian documents from the ancient principedom of Rui in Northern Afghanistan. He stated that such materials shed light not only on the religious beliefs of the Bactrians and Sogdians in pre-Islamic times, but also on the history and meaning of parts of the Avesta.

The closing speaker of the second day was **Ervad Parvez M. Bajan**, assistant panthaki at the Mevawalla Fire Temple in Mumbai. He has an MA in Avesta-Pahlavi and a Masters degree in Law from Bombay University. He spoke on "*The Concept of Daena*" or Conscience and the role it plays in determining man's destiny hereafter, which is one of Zarathushtra's fundamental doctrines and forms the keynote of eschatological teachings in the Gathas. In its objective sense, Daena is used as 'religion' in numerous passages in the Gathas and in the Later Avesta. In its subjective sense, the Daena in the Gathas is 'conscience', 'self' or the 'inner ego' and 'religion'. The Gathas lay special stress on the doctrine that a man's conscience is the real determinant of his future destiny.

International keynote speaker at the banquet was **Mr. Marazban Patrawala**, until recently, Member of the National Commission for Minorities, Government of India and a former Minister of State for the Government of Maharashtra, currently recontesting in the elections for the Maharashtra State Legislature. The national keynote speaker was **Mr. Jim Edwards**, President and CEO of Economic Development in Edmonton.

Classical, garba and folk dances by the Calgary Gujarati Mandal followed the East Indian dinner buffet.

Deep-felt vote of thanks were given to

Dr. Pallan Ichaporla for being the driving force behind this conference and his wife Hutoxi [photo right] for her support; to Firdosh and Rashna Mehta and members of ZAA for the



excellent host arrangements; and to all the scholars and panelists for sharing their thoughts and their research. ■



At the banquet, seated: Mr. Marazban Patrawala, Mr. Jim Edwards and his wife. Standing, Firdosh and Rashna Mehta.



Panel discussions. [Photo shows moderator Firdosh Mehta with panelists Cyrus Mehta, Khorshed Jungalwala, Ervad Jehan Bagli and Dolly Dastoor]. A half-day panel discussion with leaders of the North American community followed on the 3rd day. Panelists and their topics included: **Khorshed Jungalwala** - "Dangers of Complacency within a Small World Community"; **Cyrus Mehta** - "Zarathushti Marriages and Immigration [see p. 40], **Ervad Dr. Jehan Bagli** - "The Spirit of Prayer"; **Dr. Dolly Dastoor** - "Social Structures for the Zarathushti Population" [see p. 53]; **Cyrus Fatakia** and **Ervad Mehbhad Dastur** - "Youth Perspective of Scriptures in Modern Times"; **Rohinton Rivetna** - "Establishment of Consecrated Fire Temples in North America"; **Parviz Varjavand** - "Zoroastrianism in the Future not the Past"; and **Sarosh Manekshaw** - "Do We need a Unified Calendar?"

As of going to press, FEZANA Journal learned of the sudden passing away of Mr. Marazban Patrawala. The memory of his active participation at the Avesta conference and his inspiring keynote address are still fresh. [More on p. 24].

Helmut Humbach was born in 1921 in Munich. His education was interrupted for five years by compulsory service in the German *Wehrmacht* followed by five months as a prisoner of war in a US open-air camp. He is one of six out of his 18 schoolmates who survived the war.

After the war, he did some jobs as an ordinary worker till he got the chance to enter the University of Munich, which had reopened in 1946. In 1951 he received his Dr. Phil. in Indo-European linguistics. Since then, he became Professor of Indo-European Studies at the University of Saarbrücken and later the University of Mainz, where he stayed except for visiting professorships in Hamburg and Tehran, until he retired in 1991. Though retired, he is still professionally very active.

Methodological Principles. In his work with the Gathas, Humbach adopted K. Hoffmann's strict methodological principles regarding phonetics, morphology, inflection, syntax and vocabulary of the Avesta language, while also following his own bent of mind. Whereas Hoffmann confined himself to the Indo-Iranian approach, adducing the lexicographical and grammatical information available from the 1028 hymns of the Rigveda to elucidate the 17 Gatha hymns, Humbach developed a combined method under historical and philological perspectives.

In his present view, Humbach admits that Vedology has rendered many important services to the decipherment of the Avesta texts and that comparison with the corresponding Vedic data still provides us with a critical standard in discussions on grammatical and lexicographical and other methodological problems such as formal poetry and stylistics, but, as he says, we have not to expect much new information from this kind of scholarship.

The works of Helmut Humbach outstanding Iranist of our time

The scholarly achievements of Prof. Helmut Humbach will make fellow Zoroastrians aware of the richness of their religion and its tremendous influence throughout the world, and bring to their knowledge new findings about their ancient religion and culture.



Helmut Humbach (left) with Pallan Ichaporia, at 1999 Avesta Conference

Even much less fruitful are, according to him, reiterated attempts to understand Zarathushtra by interpreting his Gatha poetry under the umbrella of Vedic religion. As a consequence, he has taken up a definite attitude against those to whom the Avesta is but an appendix to the Rigveda. In contrast, he tried to broaden the analysis of the Gathas by resorting to Pahlavi literature and occasionally also to Early New Persian (Firdowsi). He has revived the study of the Pahlavi translation of the Gathas by making critical use of it and has unearthed the almost forgotten Sanskrit version of the Pahlavi produced by the famous medieval Parsi scholar Nériosangh.

Iranian languages. In his publications, Humbach has dealt with all

Old and Middle Iranian languages (except Khotanese): Old Persian, Avestan, Middle Persian (Pahlavi), Parthian, Sogdian, Choresmian and Bactrian. He is the author of the first outline of Choresmian grammar.

In his articles, Humbach also makes occasional digressions into Aramaic and Chinese. Thus in order to elucidate a somewhat obscure passage of the Darius inscription of Behistun, he referred to its Aramaic version found on a papyrus from Egypt, and in order to resolve some problems offered by a well-known Buddhist Sogdian text, he adduced its Chinese original.

More interesting from the Zoroastrian point of view is his discovery that the Aramaic version of the trilingual inscriptions of Xanthos in Lykia (Minor Asia) renders the Greek word

Nympe (nymph) with Iranian Ahuranish ('female Ahuras'), thus giving an approximate explanation of an Avestic term found in the Yasna Haptanghaiti.

Pahlavi-Chinese. Interesting from the same point of view also is his treatment of the Pahlavi-Chinese bilingual tomb inscription from Xi'an (China) of the year 874 CE which was found on a tombstone erected by a Chinese official in memory of his wife who (obviously like himself) was of Iranian descent.

As Humbach ascertained, the Pahlavi and the Chinese are not as parallel as his predecessors had supposed. Whereas the Pahlavi shows the diction of a pious Zoroastrian, the Chinese follows the pattern appropriate to a Chinese State functionary. Being a rare trace of Iranian exiles (or their offspring) in China, the inscription is of historical relevance.

Bactrian coins and inscriptions.

Many of Humbach's articles are inspired by his work with Bactrian, the Middle Iranian language of Bactria (Balkh), the Central Asiatic country between the Amu Darya and the Hindukush (modern North Afghanistan). In this region, the Alexander tradition continued for a notable period of time, even after the rule had passed from the Graeco-Bactrian rulers to the Kushanas, a dynasty of Scythian invaders which eventually penetrated to the heart of India.

This continuity is most conspicuous in the Bactrian script. Unlike Pahlavi, Parthian, Sogdian and Choresmian, which are transmitted in alphabets of Aramaic origin, Bactrian is written in a regional development of the Greek alphabet. Coins of the Kushana rulers with Bactrian inscriptions have been known since long, attracting particular attention by the representations of Zoroastrian and other divinities on their reverse sides. A number of large stone inscriptions

have come to light since the early 1960s (not to speak of the bulk of manuscripts which have recently been discovered).

Some of Humbach's publications on the new inscriptions were of high historical relevance. He published two Bactrian epigraphical texts in a group of three bilingual inscriptions of the 9th century CE discovered in a lost valley of Waziristan not far from the Afghan border and kept in the Peshawar Museum. He could show that the two texts, which previously had been considered Mongolian, are dated according to the Zoroastrian calendar (one of them shows the name of the month Ohrmazd) in an era starting in 231/232 CE. This era was explained by him to be the era of the Sasanian Kushan Shahs, i.e. Sasanian princes who governed the country after the Sasanian conquest.

As evidenced by Humbach, the same era was still used by the Turkish

“ “ Interesting is Humbach's treatment of the Pahlavi-Chinese bilingual tomb inscription from Xi'an (China) of 874 CE which was found on a tombstone erected by a Chinese official in memory of his wife who was of Iranian descent ... being a rare trace of Iranian exiles in China, the inscription is of historical relevance. ” ”

Shahs of Afghanistan in the 8th century, whose resistance against the Muslim conquest and their support of the Zoroastrian religion is manifested by the Pahlavi inscription *Pad Nam i Yazdan* (In the name of God) found on one trilingual series of their coins.

With his restoration of an earlier version of the great inscription from Surkh Kotal, which consisted of 31 blocks reused at different places, and with the decipherment of the inscription of Dasht-e Nawur of which just a faint photograph is preserved, he succeeded to resolve epigraphical problems of not only philological and historical but also technical nature.

He delivered a preliminary publication of Sogdian inscriptions from the Upper Indus shortly after their discovery, and advanced the study of the Old Ossetic inscription from the River Zelenchuk in the Caucasus. As part of his epigraphical studies, he also dealt with Indian inscriptions, the majority of them originating from the Irano-Indian borderlands and written in Brahmi and Kharoshthi scripts. As a rule, such inscriptions bear upon a Buddhist context, but some of them have Iranian implications.

Inscriptions of Ashoka. The Aramaic, Greek and Prakrit inscriptions of the Indian emperor Ashoka discovered in Taxila, Pul-e Darunta, Kandahar and in Langhman valley appear to be just a Buddhological issue at first glance, but as Humbach ascertained, the Aramaic texts are of high Iranological relevance. Humbach was the first to offer a satisfying analysis of the Aramaic inscription from Taxila kept in the Karachi museum

which, according to him, is a version of the central tenets of the 4th moral edict of Ashoka, rendering some Buddhist terms with Iranian equivalents of Zoroastrian appearance.

Exploration in Iraq. Another exploration tour inspired by him was undertaken by his student V. Popp who visited the

site of Paikuli in Iraq which is not easily accessible as it is situated at the boundary between the Arabic and Kurdish territories. Popp took photographs of the ruins of the monument erected by the Sasanian Great King Narseh to commemorate his accession in 293 CE, and particularly of the remaining 63 of the original ca. 230-240 blocks. This was the starting point for the edition of the much more complete materials collected and only partially published by the famous archaeologist Ernst Herzfeld. These materials, which are kept in the Herzfeld archives in Chicago were made available thereupon by Richard N. Frye for the 3-volume project *The*

Sassanian Inscription of Paikuli. This project was successful owing to the tremendous contribution by P. O. Skjaervo, who was then Humbach's assistant at Mainz University.

K. R. Cama connection. In 1965 Humbach visited the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute in Mumbai where he became acquainted with Dasturji Jamasp Asa. Consequently a long-lasting cooperation developed during which Humbach could provide Jamasp Asa with the means that enabled him to visit Mainz for three extended stays and resulted in publications of (1) *Vaetha Nask*, a collection of Avesta fragments, (2) *Pursishniha*, an Avesta-Pahlavi text, (3) *Aogemadaecha*, and (4) Jamasp Asa's facsimile edition of the *Avesta manuscript F 1*, the very pillar of the yasht tradition, *Erbedstan*.

Papers and publications. Humbach has presented papers at a large number of conferences in India, Great Britain and North America including conferences sponsored by K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, WZO and Avesta and Gatha conferences sponsored by ZERS and FEZANA.

The major part of Humbach's earlier works have been published in German, but it is planned to republish in English those which are of lasting interest. Humbach never rested on his laurels, but continued to explore ever-new perspectives. Thus the English *The Gathas of Zarathushtra* [2 vols, 1991] is not simply a translation of its German predecessor *Die Gathas des Zarathustra* [2 vols, 1959], but is filled with of new insights.

An adequate rendering of the Avesta text remains difficult, all the more as it often refers to ritual details unknown to us and is conceived in a most artistic (but not at all irregular) syntax. A reader-friendly translation of the Gathas has been done in coauthorship with Pallan Ichaporia in *The Heritage of Zarathushtra* [1994].

Humbach's most recent work which again is published in coauthorship with Pallan Ichaporia is the re-edition of *Zamyad Yasht*, the very history of salvation of the ancient Iranians. In the commentary of this, the authors have discussed numerous philological problems not seen by their predecessors, thus showing that even on the field of the yashts of the Avesta, much has still to be done.

At present Humbach is preparing an edition with historical commentary of Book 6 of the 'Geography' of Ptolemy (mid 2nd century CE). This part of the geographical work of the famous Greek astronomer deals with the Middle East (without India). Apart from Arabia and Assyria, the regions described by Ptolemy were mainly inhabited by peoples and tribes speaking Iranian dialects. Thus also this work will be a contribution to the pre-Islamic history of Iran and its religion. He is also co-authoring with Pallan Ichaporia the forthcoming Concordance of the Gathas.

The services rendered by this eminent Iranist of our time to the religion of Zarathushtra are truly outstanding and exemplary. ■

This is to be my Symphony ...

To live content with small means, to seek elegance rather than luxury, and refinement rather than fashion. To be worthy, not respectable, and wealthy, not rich. To study hard, think quietly, talk gently, act frankly. To listen to stars and birds, babes and sages, with open heart. To bear all cheerfully, do all bravely, await occasions, hurry never. In a word, let the spiritual, unbidden and unconscious grow up through the common.

- a prayer by William Channing [from Informal Religious Meetings, Karachi]

COMING EVENTS

Celebrating the Life of Zarathushtra

The Zarathushti Religion and Heritage Education Program, sponsored by the Persian Zoroastrian Organization of Northern California, is sponsoring a four-day (December 24-28) conference-holiday in the beautiful Asilomar Conference Center in Pacific Grove, California. The conference, to be conducted mostly in Farsi, will celebrate the life of Prophet Zarathushtra in four days of education, discussion, fun and socialization for all ages. Speakers include Ardeshir Anoshiravani, Ali Akbar Jafarey, Mehraban Khodavandi, Khosro Mehrfar and Mehrborzin Soroushian. Contact Jamshid Varza at varza@ispchannel.com.

K. R. Cama Oriental Institute conference

The K. R. Cama Oriental Institute is convening the Third International Congress, at the Institute in Mumbai, on January 6 - 9, 2000, on the theme of "*Indo-Persian Cultures: Their Character and Impact on Civilization.*" Nearly 30 nationally and internationally reputed scholars from India as well as abroad are expected to attend and contribute research papers, covering the fields of: (1) historical, archaeological, cultural, numismatic surveys and studies; (2) comparative studies in mythology, religion and philosophy; (3) language and literature with special reference to Indo-Iranian languages; (4) art and architecture.

Enrollment is in the categories of Patron (Rs. 10,000), delegate (Rs. 600 or Rs. 1000 per couple) or Observer (Rs. 200). Contact Mrs. Homai N. Modi, K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, 136 Bombay Samachar Marg, Fort, Mumbai 400 023, tel: +91 22 284-3893, fax: 91-22 287-6593.

Calendar of Festivals

December 1999 to May 2000

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

Shab-e-Yalda

Mah Daye, Roz Daepadar Thu Dec 23 (F)

Death Anniversary of Zarathushtra

Mah Dae, Roj Khorshed Sun Dec 26 (F)

Maidhyarem Gahambar

Mah Dae, Roj Meher -Bahram Fri Dec 31 - Jan 4 (F)

Jashan-e-Daegan

Mah Dae, Roj Daepdin Fri Jan 7 (F)

Jashan-e-Bahmangan

Mah Bahman, Roj Bahman Sun Jan 16 (F)

Paitishahem Gahambar

Mah Sheherevar, Roz Ashtad - Aneran
Thu Jan 14 - Jan 18 (K)
Sun Feb 13 - Feb 17 (S)

Jashan-e-Sadeh

Mah Bahman, Roz Meher Sun Jan 30 (F)

Porseh Hamegani (Remembrance of the departed)

Mah Aspadarmad, Roz Hormazd Mon Feb 14 (F)

Meher nu Parab

Mah Meher, Roz Meher Sat Mar 4 (S)

Ayathrem Gahambar

Mah Meher, Roz Ashtad - Aneran Sun Feb 13 - Feb 17 (K)
Tue Mar 14 - Mar 18 (S)

Char-Shanbe-Soori (Heralding the New Year)

Tuesday prior to Noruz Tue Mar 14 (F)

Nouruz or Jamshedi Navroze (New Year)

Mah Fravardin, Roz Hormazd Tue Mar 21 (F)

Khordad Sal (Birthday of Zarathushtra)

Mah Fravardin, Roz Khordad Sun Mar 26 (F)

Ava Ardavisoor nu Parab

Mah Avan, Roz Avan Sun Feb 27 (K)
Tue Mar 28 (S)

Fravardegan (Remembrance of the departed)

Mah Fravardin, Roz Fravardin Sat Apr 8 (F)

Jashan-e-Ardibeheshtgan

Mah Ardibehesht, Roz Ardibehesht Sat Apr 22 (F)

Atash-nu-Parab

Mah Adar, Roz Adar Wed Apr 26 (S)

Maidyozarem Gahambar

Mah Ardibehesht, Roz Khorshed - Daepmeher
Sun Apr 30 - May 4 (F)

Zarathusht-no-Diso (Death anniversary of Zarathushtra)

Mah Daye, Roz Khorshed Sun May 28 (S)

World Body organizational meeting

A meeting of representatives of various regions of the world (Iran, India, North America, Europe, Pakistan, Far East, Australia-New Zealand) and WZO officials will be convened on January 10-12, 2000, in Mumbai. The agenda will include (a) discussion on the formulation of the Council of Federations and the proposal of a restructured WZO; and (b) compilation and discussion of items relevant to the world Zarathushti community. Contact Rohinton Rivetna at (630) 325-5383 or rivetna@aol.com.

Society for Indian Philosophy and Religion, call for papers

The Society for Indian Philosophy and Religion will hold an International Interdisciplinary Conference in Calcutta, India, August 1-4, 2000. The theme is "Language, Thought and Reality: Science, Religion and Philosophy". The theme can be addressed critically, reflectively and creatively by philosophical, religious and scientific traditions of the world's great civilizations. Those interested in presenting a paper may contact Dr. Chandana Chakrabarti in North Carolina at (336) 538-2705, fax (336) 538-2627.

Youth pilgrimage to historic Iran

Cyrus Cama of Washington, DC, Laila Contractor of Pittsburgh and Cyrus Fatakia of Los Angeles are planning a Pilgrimage to Iran for youth 18-36, from May 19th to June 4, 2000. Tour cost will be \$800 or less.

With a Zarathushti guide, the group will visit Tehran, Pasargadae, Shiraz, Esfahan, Kerman, Yazd, Hamadan, Mt. Demavand, explore incredible places like King Cyrus' Tomb, Persepolis, and old Zarathushti villages. Contact Cyrus Cama (cyman@gwu.edu), Laila (ahura3@hotmail.com) or Cyrus Fatakia (sliceofcy@aol.com).

"Facing the Millennium" with FEZANA Journal

Millennium fever. For the past months we have been barraged with millennium countdowns. Travel companies are selling over-priced travel packages to see the first sunrise of the new millennium. Salesmen are selling us millennium insurance, millennium airline tickets, millennium cars and more. Event promoters and hotels are offering millennium packages to places and events. No doubt, millennium fever is upon us as the world counts down to the millennium New Year's Eve parties on December 31st, 1999.

However, according to the experts, all this hoopla is a year too early and the next millennium does *not* begin on January 1, 2000.

When does the third millennium really begin? The US Naval Observatory, NASA, Royal Greenwich Observatory, Encyclopedia Britannica, the World Almanac – all agree that the third millennium starts on January 1, 2001. (It makes us proud to know that the organizers of our Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress knew that all along, when they set the date, 4 years ago, for our millennium

congress from December 28, 2000 to January 1, 2001.)

The explanation is simple. Years of the Gregorian calendar, which is currently in use today, are counted from 1 CE since there is no year zero. (The year before 1 CE is 1 BCE). Thus the first millennium comprised of the years 1 - 1000 CE. The 2nd millennium comprises the years 1001 - 2000 CE, and the 3rd millennium will begin with January 1, 2001 CE and continue through December 31, 3000 CE.

Similarly, the 1st century comprised the years 1-100 CE., and by extrapolation the 21st century will begin on January 1, 2001 and continue through December 31, 2100.

FEZANA Journal gears up to face the millennium. Be that as it may, FEZANA Journal is gearing up for a year of exciting issues on "Facing the Millennium", starting with this issue where we touch upon some of the social issues facing us. Upcoming issues in the series [see below], aim at learning from the past and looking to the future.

- Roshan Rivetna

"FACING THE MILLENNIUM"

Learning from the past, looking to the future, at the turn of the millennium

- Winter 1999:* **Socio-religious Issues Facing the Community**
Guest Editors Maneck Bhujwala and Rustom Kevala
- Spring 2000:* **The Dawn of the Next Generation (Focus on Youth)**
Guest Editors Shahriar Shahriari and Shervin Shahriari.
Contact shervin_shahriari@excite.com or shahriari@usa.net. *Deadline is January 1.*
- Summer 2000:* **A Historical Review of Ancient Iran**
Guest Editor Pallan Ichaporla
- Fall 2000:* **Evolution of the Religion in Iran**
- Winter 2000:* **Commemorative Issue: The Zarathushti Identity**
Guest Editors: the 3 FEZANA past and present Presidents Rohinton Rivetna, Dolly Dastoor and Framroze Patel
- Spring 2001:* **The Religion of Zarathushtra**
Guest Editor Dina McIntyre

Musicians invited for World Zarathushti Orchestra

Zarathushti musicians from all over the world are encouraged to be part of an orchestra that will perform at the WZC2000. Professionals as well as amateur musicians of all ages who have attained some level of proficiency are invited to apply. The pieces will be selected based on the response, and will be sent to the selected participants. Rehearsals will take place two days before the event, on December 26 and 27, 2000. For further information and the application form, contact Piroozi Cooper 253 Spring Water Lane, New Canaan, CT 06840, tel: (203) 966-3895 or Cyrus Mehta at (212) 662-0932 or cyrusmehta@aol.com.

Worldwide Trophy Design Competition

The WZC2000 Awards Committee is announcing a worldwide competition to design the award trophies to be presented at the Congress.

Entry criteria. Open to Zarathushtis worldwide. An artist may submit more than one design. Design should have a Zarathushti theme and incorporate the WZC2000 logo. Design should be the same for all award categories. Trophy size should be about 18 inches. Trophy material may be glass, crystal, bronze or other material. Design should include space for plaques bearing (a) "World Zoroastrian Congress-2000" and logo; (b) award category; (c) name of award sponsor, if any; and (d) name of winner. Designs shall become the property of WZC Awards Committee and shall not be returned.

Prize. The winner will be recognized at the WZC2000 Awards Lunch and awarded a prize of \$1000.

Submit artwork with details necessary for manufacture, by March 31, 2000, to: Dinshaw Joshi, Awards Committee, 4515 Willard Ave, Apt S-1609, Chevy Chase, MD 20815, fax: (301) 654-0001, email: dfjoshi@erols.com.



WZC 2000 CONGRESS CALLS

SEVENTH WORLD ZOROASTRIAN CONGRESS Houston, Texas, December 28, 2000 to January 1, 2001

Visit the WZC2000 web site at <http://www.fezana.org>

Registration. Registration fee includes two lunches and one dinner.

Registration	\$151 (\$201 after June 1)
Full time student	\$101 (\$125 after June 1)
After December 20, 2000, if space permits	\$251
Registration for Congress sports-Individual	\$25 (\$35 after June 1)
-Entire family	\$75 (\$90 after June 1)

A beautiful, color brochure with information about the five-day Congress is being distributed. For Congress information contact Congress Secretary:

Arnavaz Sethna, ahsethna@yahoo.com, (281) 499-1832, Fax: (281)499-2697

Program Tracks are "Religious" (chair Pallan R. Ichaporia); "Social and Cultural" (chair Kaemarz P. Dotiwalla); "Zarathushtia's Vision" (chair Mehrborzin Soroushian); "Youth/Future" (led by six youth: Arash Anoshiravani, Mazda Antia, Eric Engineer, Shanaya Godiwalla, Armaiti Homavazir and Aaron Rustom).

Adding to the global dimension. Team Congress has asked three vibrant leaders to join the Steering Committee as International Liaisons: Dr. Mahyar Ardeshtiri from Iran; Homai N. Modi from India; and Toxy Cowasjee from Pakistan. Those living abroad may call them for latest Congress information.

Youthful ambassadors. In a special message to the youth, co-chairs Dolly Dastoor and Homi Davier asked them to "be ambassadors, spread the word, invite your friends and join us in welcoming Zarathushtis from around the world to the shores of North America." Eric Engineer is compiling an email list to disseminate congress news to the youth. Contact him at erice@rice.edu.

A Festive Reunion. This is an opportunity for all associations to participate in the opening day program - "Zarathushti Get Together", and showcase their unique talents. A carnival (*mela*) atmosphere is planned. Contact Sarosh Manekshaw at manekshaw@worldnet.att.net.

Team Congress applauds ... The Zoroastrian Charity Funds of Hong Kong for the prize award money of US\$8,000 for the 1st and 2nd winners of the Global Scholastic Essay Competition. **Sorab Wadia**, a multi-talented professional music student [see FEZANA Journal, summer 1999] has offered to travel to any city and give a piano recital as a fundraiser for the Congress. **Rustom Khosravian** and the **Houston Sports Team** organized yet another bowling event to raise funds for the Congress. **Percy Dastur** of Karachi's Parsi Sansar for featuring Congress news on a regular basis. **Ketayun Kapadia** of Paris for promoting the Congress in London and Paris. **Toxy Cowasjee** for raising funds, facilitating art projects and the registration brochure design. Karachi artist **Homi Meherhomji** for designing the greeting cards (There are still 1000 left at \$10/pack of 10) and many, many more...

Mobed Council Plans Jashans. As a precursor to WZC 2000, North American Mobed Council and Council of Iranian Mobeds are encouraging Jashans on January 30, 1999. Contact Ervad Jal Birdy at jalnb@earthlink.net.

In Celebration of The Daughters of Mashyani

The "Zarathushti Women's Forum" segment of the Congress program, will include three components:

A workshop: "Zarathushti Women at the Crossroads: a Look at the Next Millennium". Women representatives from various regions of the world will be invited to present their strategies. A manifesto will be published. Interested persons may contact Coordinator Shehernaz Joshi (sjoshi@main.nlc.gwu.edu).

Hall of Fame for the "Daughters of Mashyani" aims to honor, in perpetuity, Zarathushti women whose contributions have been of greatest value to our community over the past 200 years. Their biographies will be printed in a special booklet to be distributed at the Luncheon Ceremony. Nominations are invited from the world Zarathushti community by February 1, 2000. Nomination forms may be requested from Coordinator Toxy Cowasjee at toxy@cyber.net.pk.

Lunch and Show. "On the Wings of Time" is a lunchtime extravaganza showcasing the evolution of Zarathushti apparel from early times in Iran to the present day around the world. Coordinator Hovi Shroff (HovesS@aol.com) is looking for volunteer models, loan of traditional saris, costumes and memorabilia.



"We, Zarathushti women, should embrace our sisters from around the world in celebrating and honoring our daughters, our mothers and our grandmothers. This is a historic moment - we look forward to adding your name to our distinguished list of donors and celebrating with you at the lunch honoring *The Daughters of Mashyani*".

Dolly Dastoor
Coordinator of the Women's Forum

Global Scholastic Competition

To stimulate the imagination of Zarathushti youth in the area of Zarathushtrian culture, history and religion, in the spirit of "Unity within Diversity", the Board of the WZC 2000 calls upon the youth of the community to participate in a Global Scholastic Competition. The event will tap the potential of the Zarathushti leadership at the dawn of the new millennium.

The competition entails writing an essay paper on the subject:

"A Blueprint for a Viable Zarathushti Community of the Future."

Entry criteria. Must be a Zarathushti youth of age 17 - 21 by Dec 31, 2000. The paper must be no more than 4000 words, in English, preferably in 12 point font, with 1 inch margins.

Judging. Papers will be judged for their innovative ideas, development of the concept, clarity of expression, linguistic skill; and their spiritual, cultural/historical input. A panel of Zarathushti judges, capable of rendering impartial and objective appraisal, and commanding high stature of communal respect, will judge the papers.

Prizes. Two entries will be selected as a winner and a runner-up. The prizes will strictly constitute an educational scholarship to be utilized for further education. The first prize will be a scholarship of US\$5000 and the second prize of \$3000. The two winning authors will be invited to the Congress and their registration fee, boarding and lodging will be borne by the Congress.

"Intent to Participate". Interested youth may send their signed "Intent to Participate", giving their name, date of birth, address, phone, fax and email address by February 29, 2000, to: Dr. Jehan Bagli, 292 Millwood Road, Toronto, ONT M4S 1J8, Tel: (416) 545-1812, email: ajehan@aol.com.

The Congress depends on your support ...

Ashaonam Program: The success of the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress depends on the moral and financial support of community leaders like you. We hope that you will join the ranks of philanthropist Zarathushtis of North America and around the world, by participating in the *Ashaonam Program*. Various levels of donor contributions have been established:

		(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	
Kerfegar	\$20,000	x	x	x	x	x	Single Gold Page
Adaro	\$15,000		x	x	x	x	Gold Page
Khoremand	\$10,000		x	x	x	x	Single Silver Page
Rayomand	\$5,000		x	x	x		Silver Page
Frashogar	\$2,000			x	x		Silver Page
Ashava	\$1,000			x			Silver Page
Vazishto	\$500						White Page

(a) Program Sponsor; (b) Free hotel room; (c) Special gift; (d) Airport transportation; (e) Free registration for family only.

Advertising: To commemorate this memorable occasion, we will publish a program/brochure that will reach a vast audience of 5,000 Zarathushtis all over the world. It will be an excellent vehicle to market your services and products to the community. Advertising rates are:

Back page: full cover	\$10,000
Inside front cover	\$7,500
Inside back cover	\$5,000
Full page in color	\$2,000
Full page in black & white	\$500
Half page	\$300
Quarter page	\$200
Business card	\$75

For information, contact me at (516) 378-4516 or ghad@aol.com. Mail checks payable to "ZAH-WZC2000" to Yasmin Ghadialy, 2686 Belcher Street, Baldwin, New York 11510-3937.

This is the first time the World Zoroastrian Congress is being held in North America. Our goal is to enter the next millennium feeling proud of the Zarathushti religion, culture and heritage and instill that same sense of pride and enthusiasm in our children - the future of our community.

Yasmin Ghadialy

Chair, WZC 2000 Fund-Raising Committee

The Zoroastrian Millennium Time Capsule

As a Legacy Project of WZC 2000, a 'Time Capsule' will be buried on the grounds of the Zarathushti Heritage and Cultural Center, Houston, Texas, during the Congress. The capsule will contain Zarathushti artifacts, articles and memorabilia of a contemporary nature. We invite your participation in the form of donation of items for inclusion, financial support and volunteer help towards the project. Please make checks payable to "ZAH-WZC2000" and mail to Yasmin Ghadialy, 2686 Belcher Street, Baldwin, New York 11510-3937. For information, contact coordinator Firdosh Mehta (780) 438-4371, Fax: (780) 436-0004, email: fmehta@RNG.com.

Please join us and be a part of Zarathushti history

Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress (WZC2000)

Houston, Texas, USA - December 28, 2000

World Zarathushti Community Awards - 2000

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

For the first time in the history of World Zoroastrian Congresses, *World Zarathushti Community Awards - 2000* will be presented during WZC2000. Awards will be presented in the following five categories to Zarathushtis selected internationally by independent panels of judges for their contribution to the promotion and advancement of the knowledge of Zarathushti history, theology, culture and heritage, those who have given of themselves through humanitarian service or philanthropy, those who have achieved excellence in their chosen profession, performing arts or literature and a youth who has shown outstanding leadership:

Category A. Outstanding World Zarathushti Award

Category B. Outstanding World Zarathushti Award for Humanitarian Services and/or Philanthropy

Category C. World Zarathushti Award for Excellence in Business or Profession

Category D. World Zarathushti Award for Excellence in Performing Arts or Literature

Category E. World Zarathushti Youth Award for Outstanding Leadership

WZC Awards Committee invites nominations of deserving Zarathushtis for consideration for one of the above award categories. Nominations proposed and seconded and signed by the nominee in acceptance of the nomination, must be submitted on the prescribed "Nomination Form". The nomination package with details of the five award categories, evaluation criteria that will be applied in judging the nominees, rules governing the awards and the Nomination Form will be available from mid-September 1999, from:

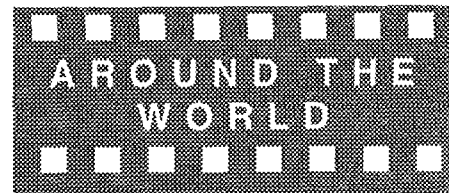
- Your local Zarathushti Association; or
- WZC Awards Committee, c/o Dinshaw Joshi, 4515 Willard Ave, Apt S-1609, Chevy Chase, MD 20815-3664, Tel: (301) 654-6259; Fax: (301) 654-0001; email: dfjoshi@erols.com.

Closing date for receipt of nominations by the WZC Awards Committee is **January 31, 2000**. Nominations received after that date or not submitted in the prescribed Nomination Form shall not be considered.

Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress (WZC2000)

Zarathushti Field Student Program

The Zarathushti Field Student Program will sponsor 30 financially deserving youths from India, Pakistan, Iran and other countries ages 15 - 23 to attend the Congress and will pay for air transportation, registration fee, lunch/banquet charges, sports fees and boarding and lodging with host families from around December 20, 2000 to January 15, 2001. The Committee is appealing to generous-hearted sponsors to make this dream come true for deserving youth. For further details and selection criteria, contact coordinators Purvez and Aban Rustomji, tel: (281) 493-1275; email: rustomji@tenet.edu.



Yezidis plan conference

The First World Conference on Yezidism will take place in January 2000. There are at least 30,000 Yezidis in Germany and another 40,000 in Armenia, many of whom call themselves "Zerdushti". Many of the Yezidis who arrived in Armenia following the Ottoman Empire's 1915 massacres, emphasized their Yezidi religion and were thus marked as 'Yezidis' in their passports rather than Kurds.

The word Yezidi is derived from the Farsi word 'yazdan' (sun) attesting to the Yezidi's Zoroastrian connections. For more information, see the Yezidi web site at www.yezidi-ezia.com or www.freespeech.org/oneworld/yezidi/yezidi.htm. [From a posting on zoroastrians@listbot.com by G. Bhattacharyya, xrc437n@tninet.se.]

Skit competition in Karachi

The "Katrak Hall" team walked off with the trophy at the Second Annual Inter-Colony Skit Competition of the Karachi Zarthosti Banu Mandal, at Hotel Metropole in April. "Performing arts hold great charm for our community, and this event provided an opening," writes Sunnu Golwala, "Last year most skits were taken from portions of old-time popular natak of our playwright Sarosh Irani, but this year all five teams had written original scripts." The winning skit, "Flower of a Different Color" was a poignant story about a young, mentally handicapped woman's interactions with the neighborhood children,

The Karachi-ites are already looking forward to next year's competition to bring forth mellow performers, fresh scripts and more practiced performances.

World Zarathushti community mourns the loss of Marazban Patrawala

Possibly the highest ranking Zarathushti in the Government of India today, Marazban Patrawala's sudden death is an irreparable loss to the Congress Party, to the country and most of all, to the worldwide Zarathushti community.

It was with stunned disbelief and deep grief that the Zarathushti world learned of the sudden death, of one of its rising stars on the political scene in India.

Congress leader and party MLA Marazban J. A. Patrawala, 52, died at his home in Cusrow Baug, Mumbai, from a massive heart attack on October 20. According to Bombay Parsi Panchayet Trustee Dinshaw Tamboli: "...he was present at the BPP Boardroom at 11:00 am, to felicitate the outgoing Consul General of Iran. He excused himself from the meeting at 11:10. On reaching home, he complained of chest pains, and before the doctor could arrive he collapsed and passed away."

What is especially poignant is the fact that Mr. Patrawala was to take his oath of office as a Member of the Legislative Assembly (for the third time) that afternoon, and was slated to be selected as a minister in the next Cabinet. The news of his death overshadowed the maiden sitting of the newly constituted Maharashtra Legislative Assembly, and the House was adjourned after 73 members were administered the oath.

A large number of mourners, including the Governor and Chief Minister

called on his wife Dinaz and young son Karl, to offer their condolences.

Patrawala had contested the recently held elections of the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly and had won from the prestigious Colaba district.

Formerly, Patrawala, who studied law in England, practiced at the supreme court, and served as Minister of State twice, handling important portfolios like health, law and general administration. He also represented Zarathushtis on the National Commission for the Minorities.

"The Congress party has lost a young leader who had great potential", said party member Hegde, "Besides

he was a Parsi - of a community which has done so much for the country, but is still mostly unrepresented in politics."

Those of us who were with Marazban at the Avesta Conference just a few weeks earlier, in Calgary [see p. 11], recall his joie de vivre, his optimism about the future (the election results were not out yet), his oratory, and his deep caring and concern for the Zarathushti community.

It is indeed a day of deep sorrow for our small community to lose a man so vibrant and full of promise, at the prime of his life.

- Roshan Rivetna

Remembering Marazban ...

Marazban and I were very close friends, besides being first cousins, during our high school and college days; close enough to exchange a lot of our personal life values, desires, loves, career objectives, emotions, aspirations and goals. We participated for many years, in oratory and elocution competitions. Marazban was by far the most eloquent, as could be seen by his many first prizes in school, inter-school and interstate elocution competitions. During one year, he secured 95% of the possible trophies that were available to compete in, all over India.

He pursued arts and journalism at St. Xavier's College in Mumbai, and proceeded to England to do his law degree. He was the recipient of many awards and prizes in his career, which was no surprise to anyone who knew his calibre.

As a loving husband and father, he always had his family at the top of his list. He was also the pillar of the Patrawala family. He looked after his mother and father till their demise, was the father figure for other family members, helping promote their scholastic and working careers by assisting them with admissions and employment, and was always willing to share in supporting many elderly aunts and uncles. He was known to help those who approached him, Parsi or non-Parsi, in many difficult situations during his days in legal practice.

His work with the Minorities Commission reflected his love for the Parsi community, even though his views about Parsi traditions were not very rigid. Pragmatic in his approach toward religious issues, he was willing to make changes without jeopardizing the interests of the community or compromising the Parsi way. He would have been very influential and important in achieving results for our community from the political and protocol perspective.

He will be missed immensely.

- Firdosh Mehta



Marazban J. A. Patrawala at the recent Avesta Conference in Calgary, Alberta.

Preserving Parsi Zoroastrian heritage and culture a UNESCO assisted project



Dr. Shernaz Cama [right], consultant for the UNESCO project, being greeted by President of India K. R. Narayanan [left] at the release of "The Gathas of Zarathushtra" by Piloo Jungalwalla (Nanavutty) [lady at left], at Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi. Lt. Gen. A. M. Sethna, President of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman is at right.

Though less than 0.01% (1 in 10,000) of India's 1 billion people, the contribution of Zarathushtris to the Indian subcontinent has been totally out of proportion to their numbers. Pioneers in many fields, and well integrated into the Indian mainstream, they still retain a distinct ethnic identity and preserve the core beliefs of a religion which evolved during the Bronze Age in Iran. While they lead at national and international levels, their population according to the Indian census is declining at the rate of 10% per decennial census.

All these issues attracted the attention of UNESCO, and UNESCO-New Delhi has initiated Project 302 IND 70 – "The Preservation and Promotion of the Parsi-Zoroastrian Culture and Heritage".

UNESCO has appointed Dr. Shernaz Cama, M. Phil. PhD, of Delhi University as their Consultant. Patrons include Jamshed Guzder, Nani

Palkhivala, Sorabji Godrej and Dinshaw Tamboly. Armaity Desai, Piloo Jungalwalla (Nanavutty), Lt. Gen. A. M. Sethna and Dadi Pudumjee are among the core committee and advisors. Panels of High Priests, scholars and friends of the project are being created to help in the long-term objectives of this vast project.

This is the first time that a community is being surveyed in such depth. Parsi-Zoroastrians are small enough in number to enable such close study, but large enough in achievements to warrant such attention.

The Project, an open-ended endeavor with no time limit is divided into 10 modules:

- (1) The Oral Tradition (including the "Living Heritage (*Reet-Rivaj*)" and "Religion and the Priesthood")
- (2) Heritage Sites
- (3) Archival Materials
- (4) Parsis in Public Life
- (5) Professional Life

- (6) Industry, Agriculture, Trade and Science
- (7) Performing Arts
- (8) Arts and Crafts
- (9) Institutions and Charities
- (10) Medical.

The need of the hour is to record Living Oral Traditions, which in a rapidly changing world, are fast disappearing, preserve documentary archival materials and heritage sites, record and revive Parsi-Zoroastrian arts and crafts and capture these on multimedia format. The community's contribution to economic, scientific and social progress needs to be made available for research. Aspects of Parsi theater and musical contributions are other areas to be recorded on multimedia. Reprinting and translations of important material, and microfilming of rare documents to make them easily accessible, is another aspect. Ultimately the Project aims to create an International Museum of the Parsi-Zoroastrians under the aegis of

UNESCO, which could also include a Living Culture Component. This, along with an International Archive would provide a complete record of the community.

A tremendous surge of support has been found wherever the Project reaches people. The "Reet-Rivaj" questionnaire, originally intended for Gujarat, has aroused interest across India and abroad and generated valuable data. It is soon to be put on a website being created for the Project. Interest has also extended beyond the Indian subcontinent, to the global diaspora and Iran.

UNESCO, Paris has commented favorably on the work done. The Project was placed before the Apex Body of UNESCO in October as a pioneering model which "addresses a global phenomena of a multicultural minority seeking to preserve itself."

Tangible results of the Project will include a multimedia CD-ROM, containing an entire encyclopedia of the Parsi-Zoroastrians, and further down the line, six fully illustrated books, archives and a museum.

Funding. UNESCO, a non-profit organization, provides seed capital, its international expertise, communications and worldwide publicity. Funds for each module have to be raised within the community. All profits from the sale of books and materials will be put back into the Project. Funds are being collected and monitored by UNESCO, New Delhi in a special account. Checks should be made out to "UNESCO, New Delhi", and sent to: UNESCO-New Delhi, UNESCO House, 8 Poorvi Marg, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi 110 057.

The project, in addition to financial support, invites information, archival materials and volunteers from all members of the Zarathushti community. Contact Shernaz Cama at C-53 Anand Niketan, New Delhi 110 021, tel: 6114794, shernazcama@hotmail.com.

[Excerpted from a report by Dr. Shernaz Cama]

Isn't it remarkable?

For a community that comprises 0.01% (or 1 in 10,000) of India's population of 1 billion, isn't it quite remarkable that five of the top ten contenders for Mid-Day magazine's "Mumbaikar of the Century" poll (as of October) are Parsis? The web-based poll closes on December 31, 1999. All are invited to cast their ballot at www.mid-day.com/sponsors/vote/vote.asp. Shown here is the poll standing based on votes cast through October.

J R D Tata	23%
Dhirubhai Ambani	17%
Dadabhai Naoroji	16%
Bal Gangadhar Tilak	5%
Dr Homi Bhabha	4%
Sachin Tendulkar	4%
Lata Mangeshkar	3%
Bal Thackeray	2%
Nani Palkhiwala	2%
Pheroza Shah Mehta	1%

Khojeste Mistree enthalls Zarathushtis in Australia

During September-October, scholar-lecturer Khojeste Mistree of Zoroastrian Studies, Mumbai, enthralled audiences in Sydney, Auckland (New Zealand), Melbourne and Perth with his "oratorical brilliance." "The man, we discovered, is indefatigable," writes Zenobia Pavri of the Zoroastrian Association of Western Australia, "In Perth he started his talks at 10 am, and kept going through marathon sessions late into the night, for 3 days. His brilliant and intellectually stimulating discourses on our religion, all using arguments based on facts, figures and statistics, backed by examples and case-histories, kept us enthralled." After Australia, Mistree went on to more rapt audiences in Singapore and Malaysia.

Ancient city unearthed

The remnants of an Iranian city called the "Burnt City" (Shahr-e Sukhteh) has been unearthed in southeastern Iran, 57 Km southwest of Zabol in the southeastern province of Sistan/

Baluchistan, according to archaeologist Dr. Mansur Sajadi.

Speaking at a press conference, Sajadi said the city had been the center of civilization 3,000 years before Christ. It consisted of a residential area, working places (including carpentry, straw-plaiting and metal-working) and grave yards with about 25,000 to 40,000 graves. Some 60,000 human skeletons have been found.

It is believed the Burnt City was gripped by a social-political crisis and subsequently ruined because of a change in the course of the Hirmand River. [From a posting on the Zoroastrian network by P. Koupai]. ■

We goofed!

FEZANA Journal regrets the inaccurate account in regards to one of the Legacy Projects [Fall 1999, p. 13].

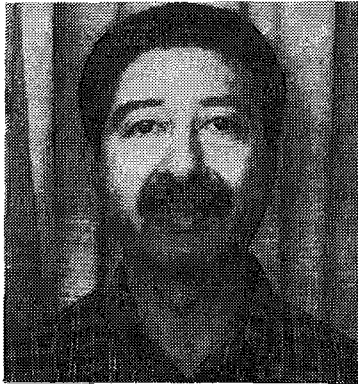
Feroza Punthakey has not authored a "Zoroastrian history of 3500 years". Rather, a book entitled *A Zoroastrian Tapestry – Art, Religion and Culture* has been co-edited by Pheroza Godrej and Feroza Punthakey-Mistree. The lavishly illustrated volume will be released at the World Congress in Houston and simultaneously in India. ■

Facing the Millennium: Exploring Socio- Religious Issues Facing the Zarathushti Community

Guest Editors: Maneck Bhujwala and Rustom Kevala

Maneck Bhujwala

[right] received his BE from the University of Baroda, came to the US in 1965, and got his MS (EE) from the University of New Mexico and an MBA from San Jose State University. He is currently a Software Manager, married to Mahrukh and has a daughter, Shehnaz.



In 1974, Maneck co-founded the Zoroastrian Association of California (in Los Angeles) and in 1980, the Zarthushti Anjuman of Northern California, receiving a pledge from Arbab Rustom Guiv for seed money for a Daremeher in San Jose, and served on the executive committees. He teaches religious classes at the Daremeher and at schools and colleges, and is on the board of Campus Ministries at Stanford. Maneck was trained by NAMC to become a Mobedyar and performs basic ritual ceremonies for the community.

Rustom Kevala [far right] came to the USA in 1963 after winning a Tata scholarship. After his doctorate in 1966, he and his family settled in Chicago, where he briefly served as president of the young Zoroastrian Association. This was his first taste of working with other Zarathushtis, and found the experience trying and unrewarding. For a number of years after that, he found himself increasingly absorbed in his work while his two children were growing up in Chicago, Boston and Washington, DC without any Zarathushti friends.



But in 1985, a chance meeting with some Zarathushtis at a McDonald's restaurant rekindled his desire to connect with his roots. He served as secretary, vice-president and then president of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington. He helped the association

to get the Rustom Guiv Foundation to donate a piece of land in Virginia that has today become the center of its activities. He began a bi-lingual newsletter that became a hit as the Iranian Zarathushtis came to Washington in increasing numbers after the revolution. From there, it was an easy step to take the challenge of FEZANA Journal and build up a team that has made the Journal what it is today. He also started the FEZANA Web site and an internet discussion group called Club-Zed for discussion of issues related to Zarathushti singles of all ages. He resigned from the

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

chairmanship of FEZANA Journal in 1998 and took on the responsibility of FEZANA treasurer.

He has two main passions today: to build up FEZANA into a viable, well-funded and well-respected organization to serve the Zarathushti community with the needed infrastructures and support mechanisms in North America; and to support the youth in every way possible. He says: for people to support FEZANA, FEZANA needs to provide the promised benefits to the community. And unless we support the youth when they are in need, how can we expect them to remain with the community when they are grown up and self-supporting and don't need us? Rustom and his wife, Yasmin, live in Potomac, Maryland, a suburb of Washington, DC. ■

THE EMERGING VISION

*By Rustom Kevala
Potomac, Maryland*

The Strategic Planning session at the FEZANA AGM in 1996 identified the most important collective goals for the community. Later, Dolly Dastoor (who was president of FEZANA at that time) summed up the goals in these words: "Zarathushtis want a community in North America that is well grounded in religious thought, values and ethics, but respectful of diversity; a community that is well-connected, well educated, economically prosperous and charitable; in short a community which will be recognized for its contributions in all aspects of religious and communal life."

The Strategic Planning vision requires action on three fronts:

(1) Learning to live a Zarathushti life. Instilling a sense of pride in being a Zarathushti through publication of educational materials on religion, ethics and history; study courses, seminars and discussion forums; and

promotion of public charities, social work, environmental purity, rituals and festivals that enhance Zarathushti ethos. These activities will require close liaison with the mobeds and their organizations.

(2) Developing internal structures. Creating a well-connected community with structures for welfare and support of the needy; retirement communities; business networking and promotion; support and empowerment of youth through scholarships and encouragement of entrepreneurial talent; community properties including religion schools, seminaries, hospitals and recreational facilities; and mechanisms for addressing divisive issues.

(3) Developing external structures. Strengthening linkages with worldwide Zarathushti and other religious organizations, scholarly community and institutions and with the secular world; and working towards a federation that represents Zarathushtis throughout the world.

The future is in our grasp! Much is being done today along all three fronts. During the past three years, FEZANA has taken the first steps in developing a curriculum for religious education, published *The Zarathushti Religion* – a Basic Text, published a Directory of Zoroastrians in North America, become affiliated with the United Nations as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), added the Zoroastrian Association of Florida to its membership, liaised with many unincorporated small groups in North America, and took on the task of organizing the next World Zoroastrian Congress in the year 2000. In addition, FEZANA has supported several congresses and seminars, sponsored youth sports events and donated funds to charities in North America and abroad. Of course, FEZANA Journal remains the most visible face of FEZANA to bring cohesiveness, understanding and progress within the North American community.

But FEZANA is not alone. Many associations, private groups and indi-

viduals sponsor annual youth camps, religious awareness camps and seminars for exploring major issues, the Gathas and our scriptures. The two Mobeds' Councils publish and distribute religious materials, hold annual meetings and take part in the religious affairs of the community. They are defining the future of Zarathushti priesthood in North America with their own provisions for retirement. Metropolitan Washington and several other associations have their own scholarship programs to help the youth studying in North America. The Houston community completed the first phase of its Zarathushti Heritage and Cultural Center and is embarking on its second phase. Chicago and New York are expanding their community facilities to meet the increasing needs for classrooms and larger halls. Dallas and Metropolitan Washington are planning their centers. Zarathushtis have written inspirational and popular books and novels, contributed to multi-media shows and spoken about their religion to innumerable inter-faith groups.

The pace of donations and sponsorships from private individuals and businesses is also increasing. Recently, FEZANA was able to set up a named Endowment Fund for scholarships for higher education; received a major donation in the form of appreciated securities and is in the process of setting up another endowment fund for Emergency Support. It is very heartening that the young organizers of the World Youth Congress in 1995 were able to donate back sizable sums to FEZANA and two other associations who had helped them earlier with seed money. Several Zarathushtis have named FEZANA and their local associations as beneficiaries in their insurance policies. ***Yes, the Zoroastrian ethic of giving is alive and well in North America!***

And let us not forget the tremendous joint effort (FEZANA, Houston and innumerable volunteers from the world) going on since early last year

in planning for the upcoming WZC-2000; and the significant leadership from Rohinton Rivetna in planning for the 1999 Parliament of the World's Religions in South Africa. The current FEZANA president, is also in the forefront of promoting communal harmony. The future looks bright indeed. We are working towards the fulfillment of our vision from many fronts and many resources. What is needed is for us to be able to put it all together to make our vision into a coherent and vibrant reality.

A Thousand Points of Light!

The strategic goals and the action plan were prepared with careful thought by a handful of individuals. But the ultimate structure and fabric of the community in America is up to all of us individually. In other words, we don't all have to approach the goals from the same direction or the same front or even the same path. Each one of us should be allowed to work in our own way to bring our individual visions into reality. Anyone who agrees with the collective goals can participate in this. This is called "*A Thousand Points of Light*." [a phrase suggested by Mehran Sepehri at the FEZANA Strategic Planning workshop in 1996].

Each one of us has an expertise or experience in one or more areas that would help us to move forward. In my experience as a participant in numerous formal and informal meetings and seminars, as the past chair of the FEZANA Information Receiving and Dissemination Committee, and as an officer of FEZANA during the past year, I have observed that there is such a pool of talent and experience in our community, that all we need to do is to dip our hands into the pool and find someone who is already working successfully in that area. Finally, the dynamic interchange of ideas on the internet has widened our reach and accelerated our accessibility to the rest of the world, attracting many with a thirst

for knowledge to explore the uniquely inspiring message of our prophet Zarathushtra. Are we ready to make use of these opportunities to fulfill Zarathushtra's vision for the renovation of the world? Are we ready at least to fulfill the limited vision for our community in North America?

“ For now, it is left up to each reader to assess what progress has been made towards reaching the collective vision of our community; and then take charge as the bearer of at least one of the Thousand Points of Light ”

Addressing the concerns. Most Zarathushtis will relate to the goals set forth in the Strategic Plan without the need for addressing thorny issues like acceptance of intermarried spouses, conversion into the religion, unifying the calendars, or building a new identity devoid of ethnic and cultural constraints. But many, including those who have formally or informally adopted the Zarathushti faith, feel that the conversion/acceptance issue should take precedence over everything else. There is no denying that there is strength in numbers. And the accelerating rates of inter-communal marriages and dropouts from the religion requires us to take proactive positions on acceptance and conversion before the community dwindles to an insignificant historic curiosity like the Shakers. [1] There are others who talk of apathy, lack of knowledge of the religion and the increasing trend toward worship and adoration of non-Zarathushti saints and deities, as the issues that need to be addressed urgently.

Some insights and approaches towards these concerns are articulated by the authors in this issue of the Journal. Noshir Langrana gives some observations on our demography in North America based on a FEZANA survey; Rashna Ghadialy talks about sociological values in contemporary American society.

Lovji Cama gives an excellent overview of the issue of interfaith marriages. Cyrus Mehta provides tips on successful marriages from an immigration attorney's vantage point, while Aspi Maneckjee explores the pitfalls of marriages and divorces for Canadian Zarathushtis. Roshan Rivetna showcases the shining example of a community that is defying the alarming statistics and also presents a Jewish analogy. Shehernaz Joshi provides the benefits of her experience as a career woman, mother, wife and daughter in the American milieu.

Ervad Jal Birdy and Jamshed Udvadia separately explore the issues related to unifying the Zarathushti religious calendars. Kay-omarsh Mehta describes the Chicago association's programs to keep the Zarathushti faith and traditions alive in a largely non-Zarathushti world. Dolly Dastoor points out the need for social structures for the aging baby-boomers in North America. The next article, by Parvez and Aban Rustomji indicates that people are already doing more than just thinking about it.

We also present overviews of the issues as seen from India, by Marzban Giara and Dinshaw Tamboly. Yezdi Rustomji gives his perspectives on the emerging Zarathushti identity. Finally, we close with a heart-warming appeal to the community from an Iranian youth, Neda Namiranian.

I hope that these articles will stimulate some thinking and positive comments, which may be published in future issues of the Journal. For now, it is left up to each reader to assess what progress has been made towards reaching the collective vision of our community; and then take charge as the bearer of at least one of the *Thousand Points of Light*. ■

[1] According to Dinshaw Tamboly [see p. 60] the Parsis in India will number around 23,000 in 2020; at which point "we would be labeled as a tribe, as any ethnic group under 30,000 is called."

ONE IN 24,000

On Tuesday, October 12th, 1999, the planet's 6 billionth person was born. Of the 370,000 babies that were born on that day, statisticians estimate a half will be Asian and a majority will be poor. Assuming a population of about 250,000 Zarathushtis in the world, we are 0.004% of the world's population; out of every 24,000 persons living in the world today, only one is a Zarathushti; and of all the 370,000 babies born in the world each day, just 15 are Zarathushtis.

"Most experts greet this 6 billion mark in the world's population with anxiety," notes writer Matt Crenson [*"World Population Reaches 6 Billion"*, API, New York, October 10, 1999], "In just 12 years, they note, humans have increased their number by 1 billion. During the 20th century, the world's population has tripled. And by 2100, 12 billion miserable humans will suffer a difficult life on Earth."

"To reach a comfortable, self-sustaining world population of 2 billion in the year 2100," they say, "people would have to reduce their fertility from the current level of 2.7 births per woman to 1.5." With our high education, westernized ways and late marriages, my gut feeling (with hardly any statistical basis) is that we're probably below that level already.

While population control advocacy groups warn that "if humanity can't clamp a lid on the population explosion it will spell serious trouble – war, famine and economic collapse", Zarathushti leaders on the other hand are offering incentives to have more children – such as the Bombay Parsi Panchayet's "third child" scheme of full financial support to couples having 3 or more children.

Of course we can always hide behind "It is the quality that counts – not the quantity."

- Roshan Rivetna

Observations on Demography of Zarathushtis in North America

Gathering a 1998 demographic profile of Zarathushtis in North America, to help FEZANA in its planning activities and provide Zarathushti business and youth with useful networking tools.



By Noshir A. Langrana
West Windsor, New Jersey

In 1992, a first attempt was made to obtain demographic data by the FEZANA Census committee. Following the 9th North American Zoroastrian Congress in 1994, the Directory/Demography Project was re-vitalized. In addition to the main focus on developing a Directory of Zarathushtis in North America, the major impetus behind this project was to collect and put together data which could provide demographic information to help FEZANA in its planning activities and provide Zarathushti business and youth with useful networking tools. A comprehensive attempt was made to obtain a good first-hand knowledge of the Zarathushti population in North America, irrespective of whether they were members of a Zoroastrian association or not.

The process. The Directory/Census form was first developed. The methodology of how to collect the data and how to maintain confidentiality was discussed for several months among the local Zoroastrian

associations. Once finalized, a questionnaire was circulated widely through newsletters of North American Zoroastrian associations, FEZANA and by posting on the Zarathushti e-mail network.

A procedure was then established to work with volunteer coordinators from all regions of North America. The coordinators were able to use the existing membership directory as a starting point to generate the newly formatted questionnaire. They then examined the information they had. Missing data were documented and a strong second attempt was made to complete the data. The newly generated information was also compared with the previous census data and the data from the other associations to avoid duplication.

Between 1996 and 1998, 8,815 names were compiled from 3,919 entries. Although a large number of committee members worked diligently, it is impossible to forecast the actual Zarathushti population from these data. One piece of data that continued to be difficult to obtain was the year of birth or the age. This was considered to be very confiden-

tial in the eyes of Zarathushti members. Age is an important piece of information for any census, as it indicates how the population is increasing, aging, etc. All the other data in the Directory/Census were totally under the control of the individual, who could inform us whether to include it or not.

Considering these constraints, the information described here on the current age profile of the community, professions, geographic distribution, number of Zarathushtis born in North America and the percentage of marriages with both Zarathushti spouses versus one Zarathushti spouse, was derived. The observations are summarized below.

Zarathushti households and age distribution. The total number of responses received was 3,919. Within that were identified 3,919 heads of household, 2,324 spouses, 1,441 dependent #1, 945 dependent #2, 193 dependent #3 and 29 dependent #4, making a total of 8,851 Zarathushtis.

The ratio of married vs. single Zarathushtis is 0.59, or four out of ten individuals are unmarried.

The nine oldest living Zarathushtis in North America, as identified in the survey were: a couple from Greater New York (ZAGNY) born in 1903 and 1914; a couple from San Francisco (PZO) born in 1904 and 1921; a lady from Alberta (ZAA) born in 1907; a couple from Quebec (ZAQ) born in 1909 and 1911; and a couple from British Columbia (ZSBC) born in 1910 and 1918. The oldest living Zarathushti in North America to date is ninety-seven years of age; Firoze Cama and his wife Piloo, were recognized at the Zoroastrian Congress in New York in 1998.

The age distribution in various categories is shown in Table 1. Only 3,917 individuals provided information on their age bracket. The average male and female population for all ages were very similar, with the overall male population being slightly higher. 12% of the population is in

the age group of 60 and higher, whereas about 25% is below the age of 18. Half (49%) of the population is between the ages of 30 and 60.

Number of children per family. A large majority of Zarathushti families (61%) have only one child, followed by close to 32% with a second child. We did not have a single family with more than four children. Only eight families had four children. Again, as in the previous distribution, the ratio of male to female children is close to one.

In those families where the dependents are under 18, there are a total of 605 families who have at least one child. The total number of children is 975. This implies that the birth

ratio in these families is 1.61. If we include families with no children and unmarried individuals, the ratio reduces dramatically to almost 1.0.

Place of birth. Not everyone provided information on place of birth. The distribution [see Table 2] is not surprising. We have a large number of first generation Zarathushtis in North America. At the same time, the number of individuals in the second generation is increasing steadily. The number of Zarathushtis born in North America is 1,164 (20.7%), which implies that over one-fifth of Zarathushtis were born and raised in North America, and they are the second-largest group after those born in India. Many of these are already married and raising their own families.

Table 1. Age distribution

Age	Male	Female	Total	% of Total
Under 5	102	105	207	5.30
6 to 18	448	320	768	19.61
19 to 30	229	306	535	13.66
31 to 40	323	322	645	16.47
41 to 50	346	328	674	17.20
51 to 60	324	276	600	15.32
61 and up	286	192	478	12.20
Total	2,068	1,849	3,917	100.00

Table 2. Place of Birth

	Head	Spouse	Child #1	Child #2	Child #3	Child #4	Total	%Total
India	1523	876	129	69	8	0	2605	46.4
Iran	529	275	82	43	10	2	941	16.7
Pakistan	311	163	34	22	3	0	533	9.5
USA	167	156	350	81	81	5	840	14.9
Canada	77	32	112	74	26	3	324	5.8
UK	21	19	18	6	1	0	65	1.2
Others	78	71	121	33	6	0	309	5.5
Total	2,706	1,592	846	328	135	10	5,617	100.0

Geographical distribution. Zarathushtis are spread all over North America [see Table 3]. Large concentrations are in Ontario, California, British Columbia and Texas. These four states make up close to 60% of the Zarathushti population. This is followed by New Jersey, New York, Delaware/Maryland and Quebec. There are also a good number in Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Virginia, Illinois and Alberta.

Table 3. Geographical distribution of Zarathushtis in North America

	% of Total
Ontario	18.2
California	18.2
British Columbia	12.2
Texas	11.1
New Jersey	5.0
New York	4.8
Delaware/Maryland	4.4
Quebec	4.0
Pennsylvania	3.5
Massachusetts	2.8
Virginia	2.4
Illinois	2.3
Alberta	2.2
Michigan	1.4
Florida	1.2
Connecticut	1.0
Others (US/Canada)	5.3

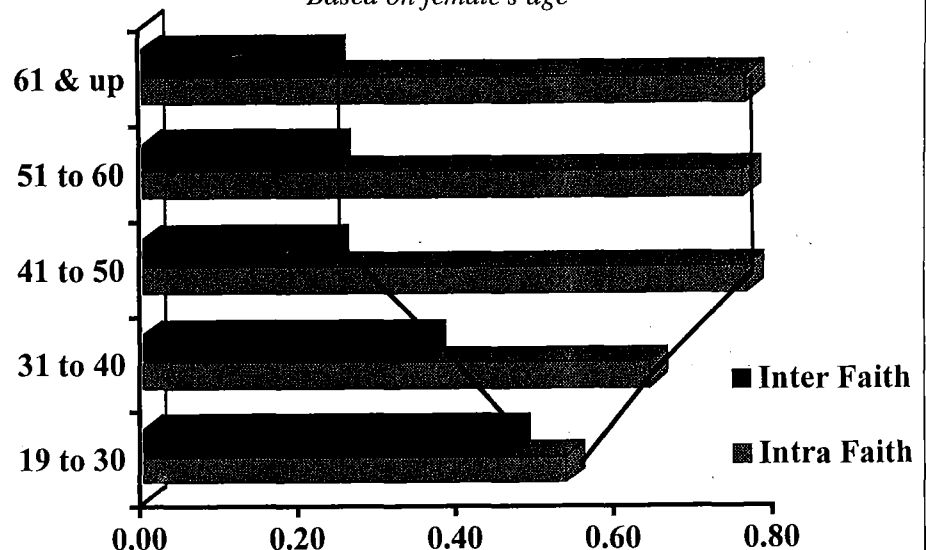
Interfaith marriages. No assumptions were made on the outcome of this survey before or during the processing of the data. Since the sample size is relatively small, and this is the first attempt at such an investigation, one should be extremely careful in arriving at any conclusions. It should be remembered that only those who voluntarily supplied the information are counted.

Table 4 presents the actual numbers and percentages of persons reporting, based on the female's age and male's age in interfaith (married outside) and intrafaith (married within) categories.

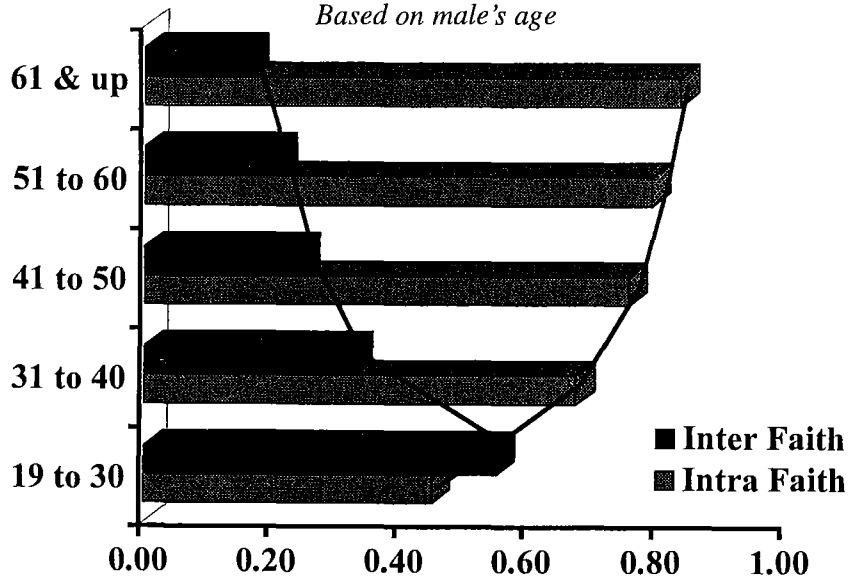
Table 4. Distribution of intra- and interfaith marriages in North America

Age	Based on female's age			Based on male's age		
	Intra-faith	Inter-faith	Inter-faith as % of total	Intra-faith	Inter-faith	Inter-faith as % of total
19 to 30	46	40	46%	27	33	55%
31 to 40	173	97	36%	158	76	32%
41 to 50	187	58	24%	209	67	24%
51 to 60	140	44	24%	165	43	21%
61 and up	85	26	23%	134	26	15%
Total	631	265	30%	693	245	26%

*Percentages of intra- and interfaith married couples in North America
Based on female's age*



*Percentages of intra- and interfaith married couples in North America
Based on male's age*



For ages 40 and up, three out of four of the reporting couples are married within the Zarathushti faith. In the age groups of 31 to 40 years and 19 to 30 years, the percent of intrafaith marriages begins to decrease and interfaith marriages begin to increase. In the age group of 31 to 40 years, about 66% are married within the faith, which reduces to about 50% in the age group of 19 to 30 years.

Concluding remarks. We believe this is a good start at understanding the demographics of our community. A lot more work will be needed to generate more complete and meaningful projections. It is expected that this information will generate interest in our community to come forward and provide more complete data to make the analysis in future more meaningful. ■

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project was developed under the leadership of Dolly Dastoor who assisted tremendously in all phases. I am very thankful to: Anahita Sidhwa for co-organization of the Directory-Census project; Rashna Ghadialy for developing the questionnaire; Viraf Commissariat for the development of Visual Basic program, formatting it to produce the data in a consistent manner from inconsistent entries and the final creation of the database.

Email and internet connections made the transport of data and editing relatively convenient and fast. Volunteer Directory users' group did an excellent collaborative data entry and editing. They include: Mez Birdie, Vahishta Canteenwalla, Furrokh Cooper, Orang Demehry, Neville Dastur, Meher Dastur, Parastu Dubash, Rashna Engineer, Rashna Gha-

dialy, Hinata Jambuserwala, Kurosh Kamkar, Pervaze Rabadi, Arnavaz Sethna, Anahita Sidhwa, Bella Tata, Arianne Teherani and Jamshed R. Udvadia. I am grateful to a continuous local (ZAGNY) support, specifically by Rohinton Cama and Sheroo Kanga who have assisted me tremendously in completing this project.



Noshir Langrana is a Professor of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. He was a co-chair of the 11th North American Zoroastrian Congress in Rye Town, New York in July 1998, and served as the technical program chair for that congress. Noshir served on the ZAGNY Board from 1982-1986 and 1990-1999. At present, Noshir serves as chair of the FEZANA Directory Project and a trustee of the Darbe Mehr Zoroastrian Temple, New Rochelle, New York.

Around the corner, yet miles away

In this great city that has no end, days go by and weeks rush on
Before I know it, a year is gone, and I never see my old friend's face,
For life is a swift and terrible race. He knows I like him just as well,
As in the days when I rang his bell, and often, he rang mine.
We were younger then, but now we are busy, tired men.

Tired of paying a foolish game, tired of trying to make a name.
"Tomorrow" I say, "I will call on Jim, just to show that I'm thinking of him."
But tomorrow comes and tomorrow goes. Around the corner, yet miles away,
"Here's a telegram sir, Jim died today."

So cherish your friends and keep them near. Suddenly it may be too late.

- From internet posting by Sheraz Bhesania

Americans and socio-religious values

Sociological attitudes, beliefs and values in contemporary American society.

By Rashna Ghadialy
Chicago, Illinois

In this issue of FEZANA Journal where the focus is on social issues in our community, let us also consider the larger society in which we dwell and by which we are highly influenced in our daily lives. One of the most reliable sources of data on sociological attitudes and behavior is the General Social Survey (GSS) conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago.

The GSS is the largest sociology project funded by the National Science Foundation and a national resource for obtaining data on current personal attitudes and behaviors. The basic purposes of the GSS are to gather data on contemporary American society in order to monitor and explain trends and constants in attitudes, behaviors and attributes; to examine the structure and functioning of society in general as well as the role played by relevant subgroups.

In 1991, the GSS added a module on religion where respondents who were 18 years or older at the time of the interview were asked a number of questions pertaining to their attitudes, beliefs and values.

● 48% of the respondents reported that in their childhood, their mothers attended religious services every week or nearly every week.



Survey methodologist Rashna Ghadialy

- 35% of the respondents reported that in their childhood, their fathers attended religious services every week or nearly every week.
- 56% of the respondents reported that when they were around 11 or 12 years of age, they attended religious services every week or nearly every week.
- 42% of the respondents reported that they currently prayed every day or several times a day. 23% of the respondents prayed several times a week, every week or nearly every week. 11% of the respondents currently never prayed or prayed less than once a year.
- 5% of the respondents described themselves extremely religious, 22% as very religious, 47% as somewhat religious, 6% as very non-religious or extremely non-religious.
- 67% of the respondents were in favor of daily prayer in public schools.
- 34% of the respondents believed that anti-religious material, such as books and films that attack religions, should be prohibited by law. 66% believed that anti-religious material should not be prohibited by law.
- 40% of the respondents thought that premarital sex was either always wrong or almost always wrong.

InterFaith Marriages among Zarathushtis in North America

A panel at the 11th North American Congress (in New York) discusses the consequences of interfaith marriages on the structure, cohesiveness, identity and even survival of the religion in North America.

By Lovji Cama
Tenafly, New Jersey

The overall rate of interfaith marriages for the Zarathushti community in North America is between 20 and 25 percent. Among Zarathushtis born in North America, it is close to 50%. If this trend continues, it will have major consequences on the structure, cohesiveness, identity and even survival of the religion in North America. Realizing this, a panel was convened at the 11th North American Zoroastrian Congress in July 1998 to discuss the issues of interfaith marriage. Each panelist came from a different marriage background, but they all had in common, a commitment to the Zarathushti religion and its survival in North America. It was our hope that what they had to say, combined with the contribution of the audience would first clarify the issues and then suggest changes that will result in a successful and thriving North American Zarathushti community.

The panelists were: Lovji Cama (chair), Zareen Karani Araoz, Spenta Cama, Jamshed Gandhi, Rustom Kevala, Anahaita N. Kotwal, James Lovelace, Mina Zand Seigal and Zarine Weil.

- 92% of the respondents thought that extramarital sex was wrong.
- 77% of the respondents thought that sexual relations between two adults of the same sex was wrong.

[For more information on the GSS, visit their website at www.norc.uchicago.edu/gss/homepage.htm.] ■

This article will present a compilation of the ideas presented by the panelists, with a reference to their statements where possible.

Advantages of intrafaith (within-the-faith) marriages. Historically, Zarathushtis have used marriage within the faith as a means of maintaining their identity and to pass on their faith to their children, along with their customs, rituals, festivals and their way of life. Marriage within the faith provides a common ground zero, a common ideology, common prayers, rituals and customs and a common identity and pride of our achievements. These commonalities make it easier to pass on the faith to the children. Other things being equal, they should make the marriage less stressful, more enjoyable and more fulfilling (J. Gandhi). It practically ensures that the children will grow up at least nominally as Zarathushtis.

Factors that lead to interfaith (outside-the-faith) marriages. Interfaith marriages among members of the Zarathushti community have become a fact of life on the North American continent. Few families remain unaffected by this phenomenon. What are the causes?

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The environment we live in is the prime cause of interfaith marriages. We live in a secular society, where the differences between religions and ethnic backgrounds are minimized. Religion itself is of secondary importance. It is easy for us to meet and know persons who have ideas, desires, values and attitudes that are common to us and the only difference is that they belong to a different faith. If religion or one's ethnicity is not a major part of our identity then it is easy to accept interfaith marriage as a possibility.

This is compounded by the fact that our numbers are small and finding the right person who is of the Zarathushti faith becomes a problem of inventory, i.e. there are not enough Zarathushtis around for young people to have a choice (A. Kotval, M. Segal). Added to this is the natural tendency of youth to be adventurous (R. Kevala). They are reluctant to avail of the old system where parents or family help find or arrange for a mate or to try the matrimonial column in our magazines.

What is a successful Zarathushti marriage? A successful Zarathushti marriage, whether it is intrafaith or interfaith, is one where there is priority of family, equality of spouses, mutual respect, support, love, harmony, kindness and generosity, where there is cleanliness of mind, heart and home (Z. Araoz) and where the children are brought up as practicing Zarathushtis. By this definition, an intrafaith marriage where the children may have their navjote done, but do not know what their religion teaches, who do not know Zarathushti traditions and do not follow a Zarathushti way of life and drift away from the Zarathushti community would be regarded as a Zarathushti marriage that has not fulfilled its potential. On the other hand, an interfaith or an intrafaith marriage where the children, having had their navjote performed, under-

stand what the religion teaches, follow the traditions and beliefs, and are part of the Zarathushti community, must be regarded as a fulfilled Zarathushti marriage.

Adaptations within an interfaith marriage. An interfaith marriage

“ The most important step is to create in our young the desire to grow up as Zarathushtis and to want their children to also do so. ”

demands a great measure of understanding and giving, of compromise and adaptation on the part of the couple and the families and communities involved.

The adaptation and compromises start at the wedding ceremony itself – should the couple have two ceremonies (one in each faith) with some contrary demands, or one integrated ceremony requiring a fair amount of invention, compromise and adaptation on the part of all the participants (S. Cama). Sometimes the easy way is chosen of having no ceremony, just a civil marriage.

After the wedding, cultural adaptations are also required by the couple and the families involved. The close knit nature of Zarathushti society often tends to make the non-Zarathushti spouse feel like an outsider, though the problem is greater between the older and younger generations than within the generation of the spouses.

Perhaps the biggest problem is the decision as to the faith of the children. This should be discussed before marriage and not left to a later stage, when strong feelings may endanger the marriage or require a compromise on the part of either spouse, which will lead to unhappiness (Z. Weil). Often, due to differences that become evident as the children are growing up, both the marriage partners may decide to forgo religion altogether (R. Kevala). If the decision is made to have the children follow the Zarathushti faith, it is

usually up to the Zarathushti spouse to carry the burden of instruction of the children. Maintaining a Zarathushti milieu in the home becomes a difficult task. The non-Zarathushti spouse can help little in these matters (Z. Weil). Lucky is the Zarathushti in an interfaith marriage whose spouse wholeheartedly supports the decision to bring up the children as Zarathushti, from a belief that this is the best religion for the children. This certainly happens (J. Lovelace).

Children of interfaith marriage. On the basis of probability, one should only expect 50% of the children of interfaith marriages to grow up as Zarathushtis. However, the actual number is much less, especially if one counts only those who are active members of the Zarathushti community.

Here are some likely reasons why children of interfaith marriages do not grow up in the Zarathushti faith:

- Conflict between the two faiths and cultures, and a failure of the Zarathushti spouse to influence the child towards our faith. Given the choice, the children may prefer to belong to the majority community rather than to a unique minority.
- The negative attitude of some of our community members who often treat the children and spouses of interfaith marriages as outsiders, turning off both spouses and children from wanting to join the Zarathushti community and having the children grow up in the Zarathushti faith.
- The presence of a larger extended family from the non-Zarathushti side of the marriage with its non-Zarathushti influence.
- Lack of a solid Zarathushti identity in the interfaith household.

How can the community encourage intrafaith marriages? The most important step is to create in our young the desire to grow up as Zarathushtis and to want their children to also do so. This can be done

by proper religious education. First by teaching our history – both the glorious past and the sacrifices made by our forefathers in their years of hardship. They must know that their generation is not the first to belong to a small endangered community and previous generations have had to bear the same burden.

Secondly, we must teach our religion in a way that our children can see its relevance in their lives. We must stress its high demands of responsibility on each individual, the personal choice that each person must make between good and evil. We must stress its fundamental beliefs that ring true through all times. We must point out its contribution to western religious thinking and the contributions of Zarathushtis to society both ancient and modern. We must make our children proud to be Zarathushtis and not make them feel that they are part of some arcane, old-world, ancient religion that is just about to die out.

We must emphasize that marriage within the community is the easiest and surest way of bringing up children as Zarathushtis. We must point out the issues that an interfaith marriage could give rise to, such as choice between two faiths and two cultures. Above all, one must teach our children that marriage is not something one goes into without proper thought, hoping that things will work out. If they choose an interfaith marriage they should discuss and decide up-front the faith of their children.

Changing attitudes towards interfaith families. Interfaith marriages will happen because of the above-stated reasons. To lose the children of these marriages to another community is a disaster for us. So the Zarathushti community must change its own attitudes towards those Zarathushtis who have married per-

sons of other faiths. The origins of these attitudes are from a different time and place and a different society.

The only way not to lose them completely is to make the families of interfaith marriages feel welcome to take part in all our activities. We must welcome them to our religion classes, our religious ceremonies and to our social

“ To lose the children of these marriages is a disaster for us ... the only way not to lose them completely is to make the families of interfaith marriages feel welcome – to our religion classes, our religious ceremonies and our social functions ... Acceptance of those involved in interfaith marriages is imperative for our survival as a community. ”

functions. We must make it easy for their children to be initiated into our religion, if the family so decides. We must make them a part of our community if they so wish. Acceptance of those involved in interfaith marriages is imperative to our survival as a Zarathushti community.

As a community we must encourage those Zarathushtis that have interfaith marriages, to try their best to make sure that the children are brought up as Zarathushtis. Often, family pressure is used to discourage the child who marries out from becoming a part of our community. It should be the other way around. The family should make special efforts to integrate the non-Zarathushti spouse into the family and the community. If this is done, the interfaith couple will feel confident about bringing up their children as Zarathushtis.

Fortunately today, we are seeing a number of interfaith marriages where the children have been brought up as Zarathushtis and the families are very much a part of the community. The children have had their Navjote done, they have primarily Zarathushti friends and do not consider themselves as outsiders. The non-Zarathushti spouse is part of the

Zarathushti community and contributes towards it, sometimes more than many Zarathushti community members. We must make a study of the factors that have led to these success stories, so that we can profit from them. Once we know what works, we can use this knowledge to our advantage. These successful

interfaith marriages happen because the non-Zarathushti spouses have made the “unbelievable act of generosity of giving their children to our community” (Ardeshir Anoshiravani, audience comments). They have shown an enormous amount of love, trust,

respect, courage and sacrifice in their decision to have their children grow up in the Zarathushti faith (Z. Weil). Some of these individuals would like to become Zarathushtis formally, in mind and in spirit they already are. The community must find a way to make this possible.

Interfaith marriages among Iranian Zarathushtis. At the present time, the number of interfaith marriages among the Iranian Zarathushti community is less than among the Parsis. The reasons appear to be two-fold. The Parsi community, because of its history of living successfully in a foreign culture in India, has been quick to adopt the culture and language of North America. Young Parsis growing up in North America feel quite comfortable in North American society and assimilate readily into it. The price of this rapid assimilation is a higher proportion of interfaith marriages than our Iranian counterparts.

The Iranian Zarathushti community has a history of turning inwards for survival. The maintenance of their cultural and religious festivals is more important to them than to the Parsis. The Iranian language to which their cultural identity is bound is also far more important to them

than Gujarati is to the Parsis. The Iranian community appears to be taking great pains in maintaining their festivals and customs and getting the youth involved in them. To the extent that this encourages intrafaith marriages, this is a lesson that Parsis should learn to emulate.

Concluding remarks. Today Zarathushtis live in a far more cosmopolitan society whether it is in India or North America. Often we are the only Zarathushtis in a town. This isolation from the community makes our children vulnerable to interfaith marriage.

Encouragement of intrafaith marriages is imperative, but it calls for positive stimuli such as religious education which creates a pride in the religion and a desire to marry a Zarathushti spouse and to pass our faith on to their children. Negative stimuli, such as breaking ties with family members who marry persons of other faiths, is destructive to the family and the community. It destroys any chance that the interfaith married couple will bring up their children as Zarathushtis.

Every effort should be made by the community to continue ties with Zarathushtis who have decided to marry persons of a different faith and to welcome their spouses and children to the community. Their children should be treated no differently than children of intrafaith marriages. Inter-married Zarathushtis on their part should make great efforts to remain a part of the Zarathushti community and to bring their children into it.

It must be realized that there are no easy solutions. Emotions are involved, people are different and their responses and reactions are different. Among some Zarathushtis married interfaith, there are those whose desire to remain within the fold gives them the strength to work for and with the community, in spite of occasional slights or insults. Then there are those who presume they are unwelcome and will not even try, or worse, want to break their ties with the community. Similarly, there are

Zarathushtis at one extreme who regard interfaith marriage as a sin, and there are others who will go out of their way to be welcoming to the interfaith married family. There are priests who will not perform any ceremony for the interfaith married family and there are other priests who will accommodate and work with the interfaith married family to make them feel a part of Zarathushti society.

The generation which has grown up in North America faces the danger that if interfaith marriages become the norm and the non-Zarathushti family members cannot join the religion, if they so wish, the future Zarathushti society will consist of families with diverse religious backgrounds and it may no longer retain cohesiveness.

As with any endeavor, the future depends on the choices one makes, personal choices as well as community choices. May Ahura Mazda guide us all to create a successful, thriving Zarathushti community. ■



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Doing Something Right, in Detroit

The shining example of one Zarathushti community that appears to be doing something right, to defy the alarming statistics of declining numbers and interfaith marriages.



While the statistics of declining numbers and Zarathushtis marrying outside the faith in North America are grim and a cause for grave concern, there are some communities in North America that are happily defying the odds. One such shining example is the community of about 100 Zarathushtis living in the suburbs of Detroit, Michigan.

Of the dozen or so newly married young couples in the area, almost all have married within the faith and are raising Zarathushti children. A heartening majority of these newly marrieds are of the second generation, born and raised in North America or came here with their parents at an early age.

In just one year, last year, the community celebrated 9 separate 'agarni' ceremonies – all in proper Zarathushti tradition, for 9 expectant Zarathushti mothers, all married to Zarathushti husbands.



Baby boom in Detroit. *Two years ago Detroit Zarathushtis were getting together to celebrate a number of 'agarnis' (9 in all!) for their expectant mothers. This year, there was a spate of first birthday parties.*

How and why did all these young men and women look for and find Zarathushti spouses? According to Jeroo Chinoy, whose two sons have married Zarathushti girls and settled in the area: "It has a lot to do with the parents. It does not happen overnight – starting at birth, continue always to instill your philosophies, your values and your ideas in your children. You have to be there 100% of the time for your kids (especially during the school years) and always keep an open channel of communication.

"Kids are growing up in a different world today; discuss, listen and try to understand their thoughts and feelings and then strike a balance between the environment they are growing up in, and what you grew up with, a generation ago, in India, never compromising the values and principles your parents taught you. Keep re-enforcing and discussing the benefits of marriages within the faith, and then leave it up to their good judgement."

Burjor and Behroze Gandhi, whose two children are also married to Zarathushtis and living close by, said: "While they were growing up, we did not give them a choice – we just took them with us to all the Zarathushti parties and functions; we exposed them as much as possi-

ble to Zarathushti friends, had children come over to the house for 'overnights' and encouraged them to go to the Youth Congresses. It is very important for them to belong and be involved with a group or circle of Zarathushti friends."

According to Aban and Aspy Daboo of Chicago, whose son Behram is married to Roxanne from Mumbai, and daughter Shirin is married to the Gandhis' son, Firoze: "We always sat down and talked to our kids about the benefits of marrying a Zarathushti. We never threatened them about disowning or excluding them if they chose to marry a non-Zarathushti, but we did tell them very clearly what our values and expectations were.

"We have to keep re-enforcing our values, especially during their teenage years and guide them to select a spouse of similar background, values and religion." Aban also stresses the importance of Zarathushti families in the area to keep in touch socially and encourage their children to form friendships with each other."

Early arrivals in Detroit. Viloo and Rusi Tavadia's two children are also both married to Zarathushtis and raising children in the area. "The mothers stayed home and took great care of the kids," said Rusi, "We

taught them family values and guided them in the right direction."

The Tavadias were among the first Zarathushti couples to settle in the area in the 1960s, along with the Gandhis and Chinoys. They came from Africa, on the strength of an invitation from an American 'pen pal'. On arrival in the US as a young bride, Viloo was so homesick, she did not unpack her bags for six months, hoping her husband would decide to go back. After a few months she ran into another Parsi woman at the Indian grocery store in town. It was Jeroo Chinoy! Since then, the community has grown steadily and the second generation is now settling there.

And the number of little baby Zarathushtis in the area is growing month by month.

In summary then, while some statistics may portend doom and gloom, with a committed effort by the parents, by friends and family, by the community, connections made at Youth congresses, through responsible matrimonial columns, such as the one in FEZANA Journal and some Zarathushti groups on the Internet, and of course, a commitment by the youth themselves, we could very well have started to reverse the trend.

- By Roshan Rivetna ■

A Jewish Analogy

The Jewish community debates whether to condone and accept interfaith marriages or to consider an intermarried Jew as estranged from the community. Do Zarathushtis have something to learn from the Jewish experience with interfaith marriages?

DEBATING INTER-MARRIAGE AND JEWISH SURVIVAL

[Excerpted by Roshan Rivetna from an article, "Debating Intermarriage and Jewish Survival" by Peter Steinfelds, in *The New York Times*, October 18, 1992.]

In a synagogue in Denver, a YMHA in Manhattan, a community center on Long Island, couples are gathering these days for a kind of reconciliation. These couples – Jews and non-Jews in mixed marriages – are not estranged from one another. With the encouragement from rabbis and other leaders who would once have condemned such marriages, they are taking part in a nationwide effort to preserve America's Jewish population.

The goal is to welcome mixed families into Jewish life, to get non-Jewish spouses to convert, and especially to make sure that the children of mixed couples are raised as Jews. In an array of almost 600 programs that vary widely in form and content, the couples take courses aimed at introducing adults to Jewish life and culture, Jewish beliefs and holidays. They go to workshops on child rearing in interfaith families.

Internal struggle. Programs like these are proliferating, and their advocates say they are working. But they have provoked an intense, even angry debate within Judaism. At recent High Holy Days services, many rabbis made a point of praising

or denouncing these attempts to encompass mixed couples within the Jewish fold. At a convention of B'nai B'rith, one of the largest and oldest Jewish philanthropic and mutual-aid organizations, there were emotional exchanges about admitting non-Jewish spouses as members ...

And many temples in the Reform branch of Judaism, which has led the way in welcoming intermarried families, are struggling over questions like these: How much can they include non-Jewish spouses in rituals and decision-making; can non-Jewish parents recite blessings or honor the Torah during a child's bar or bat mitzvah; can non-Jews hold synagogue office or vote on important issues?

In the Bible, Jews are repeatedly warned that intermarriage endangers the survival of a distinct Jewish people. Reaching out to non-Jewish

“ We will wipe ourselves out, not by another holocaust, but by marrying outside the community. ”

spouses means casting off the remnants of Judaism's deeply rooted practice of considering an intermarried Jew estranged from the community. It means changing a centuries old wariness about actively encouraging conversion.

To many rabbis, especially from the more traditional Conservative and Orthodox branches, reaching out to non-Jews is futile and even dangerous. They not only doubt that such efforts can stop the decline of an

already small Jewish population (about 5.5 million in the United States); they argue that such efforts undermine the remaining inhibitions against marrying non-Jews and may ultimately dilute Judaism itself.

Population declining. Since the mid-1960's the Jewish population has been eroding from within. From 1970 to 1990, while the US population rose by 22%, the Jewish people grew just 2 %, a tiny increase that could easily turn into a shrinkage within a few decades. And the rate of intermarriage more than quintupled, from 9% to 52%. Once Jews intermarry, their children seldom grow up Jewish. The survey found that just 28% of the children of mixed marriages are raised as Jews, while 31% are raised in no religion and 41% are raised wholly in another faith.

As one Jewish leader put it: "We will wipe ourselves out, not by another holocaust, but by marrying outside the community."

Jewish leaders protest that the efforts to welcome intermarried Jews and their spouses may be sending a dangerous message: that intermarriage is inevitable and efforts to prevent it are futile or unnecessary.

For Jews who lost a third of their population to the Nazi holocaust, the question of survival is obviously painful. But it is also complicated; intermarriage is rooted in precisely

what many Jews most treasure about American society, its openness and an acceptance of Jews unprecedented in history. For many Jews, that openness is also safeguarded by strong secular values: intense religious feelings among the Christian majority have historically been linked to intolerance.

Yet many Jewish leaders feel that only a Judaism that is religious as well as ethnic can survive the American melting pot. ■

A Zarathushti in North America often desires to marry a person from his or her original country, or the parent's country. As the community is extremely small and the pressure to marry within is great, a Zarathushti is willing to travel the four corners of the globe to find a suitable partner. And when this rare occurrence takes place, an immigration-related obstacle could thwart it. If, despite the obstacles, the marriage takes place and the parties join up in North America, there are chances that the marriage could break down, causing another set of problems.

Although there are several ways to immigrate to the US or Canada, foreign spouses are normally able to come to North America through family-based immigration. Within this context, two groups generally need advice or help.

The first group comprises those who intend to get married to a person overseas and need to know how to quickly bring their spouses to North America. The second group comprises persons whose marriages have either broken or are on the verge of disintegrating, and wish to protect their permanent resident status, especially in the US, even though the sponsoring spouse has withdrawn support.

As US immigration law is far more complex and problematic, this article will emphasize more on the US but will also briefly compare and contrast it with Canada's immigration law [1].

Beware of pitfalls before marriage. A US citizen or a permanent resident (green card holder) can sponsor a foreign spouse for a green card. A spouse can also join a person who is on a temporary visa in the US on a dependent visa [2].

[1] I thank my colleague Zool Suleman, an eminent Canadian immigration attorney, for sharing his insights into Canadian immigration law. He may be contacted at (604) 685-8472 or zool@sulemanco.com.

Marriage, Marriage Breakdown and Immigration

Exploring immigration-related and other obstacles that could thwart a North American Zarathushti who has traveled to his/her original country to find a suitable marriage partner.

US citizens are at an advantage over green card holders because the relatives they sponsor are not subject to the quota system. The foreign spouse of an US citizen can immigrate to the US immediately, although it could still take 9 months to a year for the completion of all formalities. A US citizen could also sponsor a fiancé/fiancée, and undertake to marry him or her within 90 days of arrival into the US.

On the other hand, a green card holder is subject to a quota. Because this quota is oversubscribed, the foreign spouse of a green card holder has to wait for about five years before he or she can immigrate to the US. Green card holders are also incapable of sponsoring fiancés/ fiancées.

The question that comes to mind is whether there is an interim visa, which would enable the foreign spouse to come to the US? Although the filing of a spousal petition does not confer any interim benefits, the foreign spouse can enter the US by procuring an independent temporary visa such as a visitor visa, a student visa or a temporary work permit. If the spouse is already in the US prior to the marriage on such a visa, it is

easier to be in the US with the sponsoring spouse during this interminably long period. But not all are capable of getting such a visa. If they are able to apply for one, a US consular official is likely to turn down a visitor or student visa request because all non-immigrant visa applications are presumed to be intending immigrants.

Since most people are first in the US on a temporary visa such as the H-1B visa, it would be advisable if they marry while they are on that visa or other temporary work visas. Dependents of temporary visa holders can come to the US instantaneously. The dependent of an H-1B visa holder is issued an H-4 visa and the H-1B visa allows for "dual intent" – i.e. the H-1B visa applicant can maintain a temporary and permanent intent to reside in the US simultaneously. Therefore, a consular officer cannot refuse an applicant the H-1B or dependent H-4 visa on the ground that he or she is an intending immigrant. Once the individual obtains permanent residency, the foreign spouse too can also obtain it derivatively.

There are many Zarathushtis who are unable to marry because they are green card holders. It is also well known among prospective spouses in India, Pakistan and Iran that marrying a US green card holder is not a viable proposition, if there is no independent

[2] Unlike the green card, a spouse on a dependent visa generally cannot work and is bound to the terms and conditions of the other spouse's visa.

basis for that spouse of coming to the US. Many spouses/prospective spouses may not be able to obtain the H-1B visa as only very few can find employment in the US. The H-1B visa is also limited to specialized occupations, requiring the holder to demonstrate the equivalent of a US bachelor's degree in a specialized field.

The situation is even more difficult for people living in Iran. Due to the economic sanctions that the US has imposed on that country, a US employer is prohibited from sponsoring an individual living there on an H-1B. It would also be difficult for him or her to obtain a tourist or student visa as there is no American Embassy in Iran.

Immigration considerations after marriage. The foreign spouse of a US citizen is issued a “conditional green card” if the marriage took place within two years of its issuance. This is because the US is extremely concerned about ‘fraud’ or ‘sham’ marriages, where people enter into convenience marriages solely for the coveted green card.

At the end of the two-year period, both spouses have to file to remove the condition on the green card, and that petition must show that they were cohabiting together as husband and wife. The husband and wife must document that they have lived in the same place, co-mingled their financial assets, traveled together, and if applicable, had children together. Both parties must sign off on the petition to remove the conditions on the green card.

Marriage breakdown. Marriages often break down during the two year period. Although a thorough analysis for the reasons of marriage breakdown are beyond the scope of this article, I will briefly observe common patterns and trends that lead to marital crisis. Quickly entering into marriage with someone within the community to please the parents is a common theme. When foreign

spouses come to the US, they find that they do not know each other and sometimes discover ‘skeletons’ – such as an unfinished relationship – that was not revealed prior to the marriage. Another recurring issue is that the foreign spouse gives up a life and career in the original country, but now finds it extremely difficult to continue at the same level in the US. This leads to isolation and frustration, and the new spouse also has no one to talk to. Certain men still desire their wives to conform to the mores applicable to women in the country of origin. When this expectation is not met in North America, it too can lead to marital breakdown.

Marriages have also failed when one Zarathushti spouse has been brought up in the US while the other has lived

“ Although there are several ways to immigrate to the US or Canada, foreign spouses are normally able to come to North America through family-based immigration. ”

in India, Pakistan or Iran. Conversely, marriages have also broken down when a Zarathushti has married outside the community, based largely due to a lack of understanding of each other's culture and lifestyles.

If the marriage disintegrates within the two-year-period, the citizen spouse often will not cooperate in filing the joint petition. The foreign spouse nevertheless wishes to keep the green card. He/she may apply for a waiver of filing the joint petition requirement under the following conditions:

- The marriage was entered into in good faith and was terminated through divorce or annulment.

- If the marriage is not terminated, the foreign spouse can also establish that he or she [3] was battered or subject to extreme cruelty. Evidence of domestic violence – and any actions he or she takes to protect herself such as calling the police, going to an emergency room, entering a shelter or getting a protection order – will help

to prove that the spouse was battered or subject to extreme cruelty. It would be helpful if extreme mental cruelty could be supported by an evaluation of a mental health professional.

- Extreme hardship would result if the spouse were deported.

Once any of these conditions are met, the immigrant spouse can apply to remove the conditions of residency on his or her own, without the help or threats of the abuser.

Domestic violence. Since many marriages do not end in divorce within the two year period, but have broken down and the sponsoring spouse is unwilling to cooperate due to domestic violence or abuse, the battered spouse waiver is the only alternative for preserving permanent residence.

Domestic violence could involve blatant forms of physical cruelty or subtle forms of power and control over the other persons. For example, a glare could constitute abuse if one person uses

it as a means to control the other. Other forms of non-physical abuse constitute isolating the spouse from family and friends or economic abuse such as not allowing job training or schooling. Even threatening to have the spouse deported, calling her racist names or threats to take away children, could be abusive.

Most victims of domestic violence are unaware of their ability to retain the green card even if the sponsoring spouse has withdrawn support and there is no divorce. They remain in an abusive situation out of fear of losing permanent resident status and being deported.

Violence Against Women Act. Before 1994, US law only helped battered spouses once they received a conditional green card. Only immigrants who had already gone through the family sponsorship process could take advantage of the “battered spouse” provisions to remove the conditions on their green card.

The sponsoring spouse could nevertheless refuse to file the petition or withdraw the petition before the issuance of the green card. In 1994, the US Congress enacted the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) as part of a comprehensive crime bill, allowing spouses or child suffering abuse from a US citizen or resident spouse or parent to file an immigrant petition without the assistance or assent of the abuser. In that legislation, Congress also created a new form of suspension of deportation (or cancellation of removal) that would allow battered spouses in deportation to terminate such proceedings and obtain permanent residency in the US.

It is now possible for a battered spouse or child within the US to file for the green card on her own without the help of the citizen spouse. This person must demonstrate, among other things, that she married the abuser in good faith, has been battered or been subject to extreme mental cruelty, has good moral character and that her deportation to the home country would cause extreme hardship. The "extreme hardship" requirement is very difficult to prove. As Zarathushti women may be more emancipated than their counterparts in India, Pakistan or Iran, it would be difficult to conclusively establish that she will be ostracized or stigmatized back home. On the other hand, hardship could be shown if the battered spouse is receiving counseling in the US or her children are completely integrated in the school here.

The Canadian Perspective. There is no distinction with respect to sponsoring a spouse or fiancé/fiancée between a Canadian citizen and permanent resident (or landed immigrant). Unlike the US, a permanent resident can sponsor a foreign spouse in the same amount of time as a citizen. The entire process can be completed between 12 to 18 months.

It is easier for the foreign national spouse to visit Canada during the pendency of immigrant visa process. The chances of refusing a temporary visa by a Canadian consul are far

less, as Canadian law recognizes the "dual intent" doctrine for all non-immigrant visas. US law recognizes "dual intent" for fewer visas, one of them being the H-1B work visa.

Canadian immigration law also does not grant conditional permanent resident status. Once the foreign spouse arrives, it is inconsequential if the marriage breaks down soon after.

If the Canadian spouse has refused to sponsor the other spouse while in Canada, there is no specific provision for domestic violence victims. However, there exists a catchall "humanitarian and compassionate" application that allows victims of domestic violence who are unable or unwilling to leave to apply for permanent resident status in Canada. Canadian immigration authorities are generally sympathetic to such claims.

Strategies for intervention. It is not sufficient for the community to focus on ensuring that people get married without realizing the unintended negative consequence that can result. The incidence of marriage breakdown is generally high in North America and in other Western societies. We cannot be numbed by a false sense of security that our value systems would prevent breakdown or domestic violence. Domestic violence is also on the rise within immigrant communities due to adjustment problems, isolation and lack of 'safety valves'. The affected person, generally the immigrant, needs to turn somewhere for both legal help and emotional support. Removing immigration obstacles is only one solution to the problem. It is necessary to also provide emotional support and help in other legal areas, particularly in the matrimonial area.

In the short run, it is important to get the word out that victims of domestic violence can preserve or even acquire permanent resident status without the help of the abuser. There are several organizations in the US and Canada that can assist victims who are from South Asia or the Middle East. A roster of professionals

within the community can also be created that can provide support in the legal and emotional area, on both a paid or voluntary basis.

Over the long run, it is imperative that a study be commissioned to evaluate marriage trends in North America. The study should not just focus on whether people are marrying outside or within the community, but should also survey the number of people marrying spouses from overseas versus the number of people marrying spouses within the US, as well as the incidence and causes of marriage breakdown and domestic violence.

In conclusion, emphasizing marriage at all costs might lead to more harm than good for the community. Even if marriage is considered important for the community's survival, it is also necessary to think of the individual's survival by looking beyond the marriage. ■



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Marriage and Divorce in Canadian Zarathushti Families

A personal opinion

In the Zarathushti religion, marriage is a sacrament, with its roots in pre-cosmo genesis and unfolding of the soul in the spiritual world. It is a divine process in which two souls 'join' together by a sacrament (*Ashirwad ceremony*) for their spiritual progression. Marriage is the first step in the process of ensuring the perpetuation of the family; I see it as a link in a chain for the continuity of our community.

Love to me is many splendid things: love is work, discipline, commitment, self-sacrifice. When you love your partner/soul mate, you nurture, fulfill and cherish him/her emotionally, sexually and financially. You work at the relationship to make it beautiful. You communicate your needs and resolve your problems by talking about them openly and honestly. Dependency is not love. Love is when you and your partner can live without each other but choose to live together to make each other happy.

Unfortunately, nowadays in Canada, large numbers of marriages end up in divorce. Some 'new age' ideas have contributed to many desertions and divorces, with much resultant pain and suffering.

Marriage difficulties. Many Parsi and Irani Zarathushtis in North America have been influenced by the modern lifestyle and moral values of American society, which are very different from what I was brought up with in Karachi. I am now in Ottawa, the capital city of Canada, with all the best amenities in the world, but I am lonely and feel discarded by my wife and fellow Zarathushtis; however, I am managing my life as spiritually as possible.

In 1984, I went to India to marry a Parsi wife. What I didn't know was that Indians have an exaggerated view of the western world in terms of morals, and the affluent life as portrayed in Hollywood movies.

In India, many women, while they pursue careers, do not have to rely on their job for survival; many live in extended households where the house is already paid for, or subsidized by the community. In Canada, for the first generation of immigrant Parsi/Irani families, many couples are forced to work because of the high cost of living, purchasing a home, educating the children and saving up for old age. Many who come to Canada do not understand the realities of living within modest means.

One reason for the many divorces in the West is the lack of traditional support systems to deal with problems in marriages. This explanation is relevant to my separation. Perhaps with the buffers of other family members with Zarathushti values, I may have been able to salvage my marriage.

Marriage/divorce statistics in the Canadian population. Canada's 1995 marriage rate was the same as that of Australia at 5.4 marriages per 1,000 population; the US is higher at 8.9 per 1000. Canada's divorce rate of 2.7 per 1000 is comparable to rates of 2.7 in Australia, 3.0 in UK and 4.0 in the US. Over the last 30 years, in Canada, the trend has been for marriage rates to go down and divorce rates to increase. Of particular interest is the impact of the Divorce Act of 1985. With these amendments, it became easier to obtain a divorce as the necessity to prove fault was reduced. Marriage breakdowns (separation for at least one year) became the more prominent ground for divorce. Due to those waiting for the new divorce laws, the divorce rates

rose significantly during the two following years.

The above percentages are derived counting *all* individuals in the population, including children. Using only married couples as a basis, the rates are even higher, at 12 per 1000 married couples (or 1.2%) per year in 1995. Of course, the lifetime risk of divorcing for a couple is much higher, at around 31%.

I tried to get some information from the FEZANA demographic survey about separation and divorces, and was told that no such figures were available. In Ottawa, nine Zarathushti women (including my wife) have left their Zarathushti husbands out of approximately 25 to 30 married couples. Similar trends in Zarathushti women leaving their husbands has led to increased divorces amongst Zarathushti communities in California and Florida.

Consequences of divorce. The two most salient consequences of divorce are: poverty and increased risks for the development of problems among the children whose parents divorce.

Divorce is a direct cause of poverty for a large proportion of men, women and their children. Many will experience the consequences of poverty in the short term following divorce, and many will suffer its effects for an entire lifetime.

At all age levels, children of divorced parents have higher rates of emotional, behavioral, social and academic problems than children in two-parent families. In a nutshell, children whose parents are divorced (and even after they are remarried) are

far more likely than children whose parents remain together, to suffer from depression, anxiety and other emotional disorders.

Many divorced parents are so burdened emotionally and financially that they become depressed, at least temporarily, while others initiate a desperate search for a new mate that makes them far less available to their children.

In Ottawa, children of Parsi/Irani women who left their husbands have either married or are co-habiting with non-Zarathushtis. We have lost at least one third of this particular generation of Zarathushtis from this area to this unfortunate assimilation.

Conclusions. The phenomenon of divorce is a far more complex issue than generally believed. Furthermore, statistics pertaining to divorce are difficult to understand and frequently misinterpreted. Overall, between a third and a half of all marriages in Canada end in divorce and the rate is somewhat higher for remarriages.

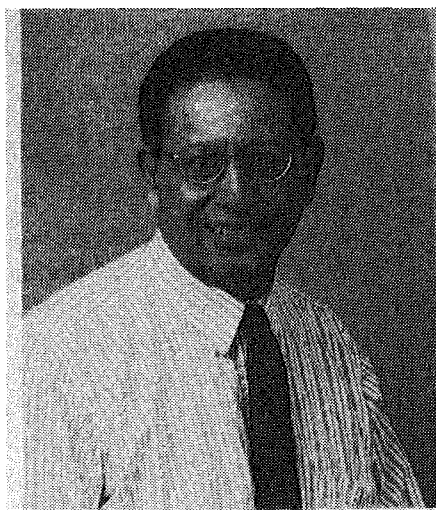
Divorce and remarriage are usually not in the best interest of the children. Divorce is an industry in North America – one that has branched out into virtually every aspect of American culture, and now employs thousands of individuals and professions with the exchange of huge sums of capital (estimated to be 36 billion dollars/year). These capital exchanges involve moneys extracted from divorcing spouses, usually the father/husband, by attorneys, family courts, child support collection agencies, federal bureaucracies that administer welfare, abortion services, children's protective services, crime and violence control, legal services and child care services.

There is a common sentiment among a majority of our community in North America: "In order to make a living, accept the changes and forget our old religious ways." When I ask

these liberal-minded members of our community what we have to show for adapting to the North American lifestyle, they have no answers except to say that they have accumulated material possessions, albeit at the expense of losing the family, the community and peace of mind.

What are we Zarathushtis doing now in North America? Should we continue to follow the western ways despite all the warning signs of being assimilated? Or should we go back to our Zarathushti religious ways and to our community values?

I think it is time to live and promote our spiritual ways of life, and be a model for our youth and for North Americans. ■



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The Juggling Act

A young Zarathushti – career woman, mother, wife and daughter – reflects on her life in North America.



By Shehernaz Joshi Verahrami
N. Potomac, Maryland

I was asked recently to label myself, i.e., am I a career woman, a mother, a wife or a daughter? I responded to that question in the affirmative, stating that I was all of the above. The person looked at me with sympathy and said: "So do you have an identity? You segment your life for others, but does it all come together for you?"

This enigmatic probing led me to question what it means to be a 'modern' woman, juggling career, motherhood and family life within the framework of our Zarathushti culture and religion. I juggled it all; I took an active role in our Zarathushti association, participated in many professional organizations, worked 12 hour days, and spent time with my family and friends. I was superwoman on the go!

My 'career' therefore, was never an issue, that is, until I became a mother. Then my different worlds collided. My daughter was born and I was confronted with raising a child in an environment far different than that of my own childhood. All of a sudden, everything else paled in comparison and I was faced with the issue of being a working mother.

The language of friendship is not words but meanings - Thoreau

How do I show my daughter what it means to be a Zarathushti especially when one is living in a non-Zarathushti society? How should my husband and I, being from technically two different cultural environments (he is from Iran, I am from India) amalgamate our different upbringing into a united front for our daughter?

Past generations of Zarathushti women had the luxury and support of extended families, of grandparents and aunts and uncles who would reinforce not only the concept of family unity, but of what it meant to be a Zarathushti, of our heritage, culture and religion. The luxury lay in the fact that the burden of raising a child was shared by many.

Society was now very different and because women have had to learn to be highly independent and aggressive in their work environments, sub-consciously we have transferred these same attributes to our home environment. For many as well, the extended family unit is non-existent and the burden of raising the child rests solely with the child's parents and/or its care-givers.

All the soul searching that my friends and I have undergone as we adjusted to motherhood has led us to believe, albeit very tentatively, that the juggling act can be successful. It can be done with verve, energy, tremendous help and encouragement from a supportive husband and family, and most of all by just being around our children. We have realized that our greatest strength lies in the presence of our children and in the belief of our faith.

The strength of our religion lies in the fact that Zarathushtra's message is really a way of life. Our religion teaches us to use our minds, encourages our innate ability to think freely and consciously and to make decisions using our free will. This is also what we pass to our children.

The practice of good thoughts, good words, good deeds, the creation of a

Zarathushti identity, the reinforcement of community spirit, are just some of the ways we can address the issue of raising a child in a North American Zarathushti environment. But as working mothers, how do we then reinforce the values so important to us? After all, morals and values are basic to all societies, all religions, so big deal, as some would say. How does one do it within the nuclear family especially when the mother works?

Working mothers only have the weekends with these children. Personally, by the time my daughter and I are home on week nights, neither of us are fit for anything apart from the daily routine of dinner, bathtime and reading. It is important to note that fathers also feel the same way. They also face the same dilemmas as mothers do. After all, the responsi-

“ “ Back home we were immersed in our religion because we lived it every day of our lives ... Will our children ever know this? Because even though they are being brought up in a Zarathushti household they are also Americans in a society where the religion of Zarathushtra for the most part is unheard of ... ” ”

bility of parenting lies both with the mother and father.

So back to the big question! How does one amalgamate it all? One does it by taking the children to community functions, having kiddie play groups with other Zarathushti children, by going to jashans and performing other rituals which reinforce the concept of being Zarathushti. One does it simply by keeping alive our rich traditions of rituals and beliefs, by surrounding the children with the knowledge of their culture and heritage, by getting them accustomed to hearing and understanding Gujarati and Farsi, not just English. By being united as one, without labeling fellow Zarathushtis either as Parsi or as Iranian, but simply as fellow Zarathushtis.

In North America we do not have the luxury of visually seeing representations of Zoroastrianism within our external society as it is in India, Iran or Pakistan. There are no agiaries that you can drive by, there are no Zoroastrian shops to patronize, no special places to visit on Avan roz, Avan mah, for example. As a result, all of a sudden many women have found that they started interacting more and more with the Zarathushtis in their midst after the birth of their children. In fact, the reinforcement of everything cultural and religious becomes an issue.

My generation has never doubted who we are, our religion or culture. But we doubt what it will be for our children. Those of us who spent our formative years "back home", were immersed in our religion because we lived it every-day of our lives. What we question is whether our children will ever know

this pervasiveness because even though they are being brought up in a Zarathushti household, they are also Americans in a society where the religion of Zarathushtra for the most part is unheard of.

Many say that rituals are not important, only ethics and morals are. I cannot subscribe to that school of thought. When one sacrifices the tangible components of our religion, do the children suffer the consequences? It is a personal dilemma and for many, I am sure, not important. So I continue to juggle. It is my dilemma and also my conscious decision. After all, I am the one who wants to be a working mother. ■

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A Unified Calendar for North America?

“There is no right or wrong calendar; only some calendars are more right or wrong than others. Is it worth causing resentment or polarization among community members in the interests of presenting a unified image?”

**By Ervad Jal N. Birdy
Corona, California**

With the forthcoming World Congress around the corner, the question of Zarathushtis following one calendar, instead of the three currently in use, has surfaced again. Earlier this year the Internet was buzzing with pros and cons on this issue. Opinions on the subject are quite often diametrically opposed and understandably so, because they involve matters of faith and tradition and also because of different interpretations of our ancient and scarce historical data. Of course, if we had a universally respected spiritual guide, a monarch or a dictator, things might be different.

Some fallacies and problems in our calendars. Our Afrin prayers that are recited at Gahambar Jashans clearly indicate that Zarathushti religious practices are linked to the seasons, with the New Year beginning in spring each year. This immediately creates some problems for us in modern times:

(1) Our religious year comprises of twelve months of 30 days each, plus five Gatha days at the end of the last month, making a total of exactly 365 days. The solar year, on the other hand, is the time taken by the sun to complete its cycle between vernal equinoxes and that takes 365.2422454 days, i.e. a quarter day longer. This requires the addition of one day every

four years, or 10 days every 40 years, or 30 days every 120 years, if we are to keep our calendar from drifting too far out of sync with the seasons. For one reason or another, as described below, not all required intercalations were performed by our ancestors and that is why we have different calendars (Shenshai and Kadmi), which are now grossly out of tune with the seasons.

(2) The seasons are not uniform in all parts of the world. While for the majority of Zarathushtis living in the Northern Hemisphere spring comes around March 21 and it is time to celebrate Nouruz, it comes six months later in the southern hemisphere where it is time to celebrate the autumnal festival of Mehrgan. Also, even within the same hemisphere, the seasons are not well defined. For instance, Zarathushtis residing in Alaska barely see the sun during certain times each year. So, the Fasli calendar, which professes to be the only correct calendar with respect to the seasons, is therefore only really meant for people inhabiting certain parts of the earth – a real paradox for a religion which professes to be universal. Proponents of the ‘status quo’, therefore, rightly question the wisdom of changing from one calendar to another.

(3) Some Zarathushtis who believe that the sun enters the Aries constellation on the vernal equinox (i.e. on March 21, Nouruz day), should know

that this was probably true around 200 BC, but is no longer true today. At present, the sun enters Aries about a month later, i.e. around April 23. This is due to the slight wobble in the earth’s axis caused by the lunar attraction to the earth’s tidal bulge. This phenomenon is known as the ‘Precession of the Equinoxes’ – another slight problem in reckoning the correct New Year day for keeping in tune with the seasons.

(4) There is also the problem of trying to link our calendar with the Gregorian calendar. The Fasli calendar follows the same four-year intercalation as the Gregorian calendar and fixes the New Year, Nouruz, on March 21 every year by the Gregorian calendar. The vernal equinox, which is the real New Year day, could occur anywhere between March 19 and March 22. This means that those Zarathushtis who devoutly follow the practice of remembering their departed during the Muktdad days face a conflict, because in some years the New Year would have already begun before the Muktdad rituals are really over. Of course, if one does not care about Muktdad rituals or the Zarathushti spirit of Fravardegan, this conflict would mean nothing to them.

Historical summary. The *Dinkerd* urges intercalation with regularity according to one of the above noted methods, i.e., 4-year, 40-years or 120-years. Intercalation of more than 120 years is not recommended since such a

long period is too disruptive for the rituals, which must be performed more or less according to the seasons. A specially earmarked intercalary day, called Avardad Sal Gah, with its appropriate Kshnooman (special prayer) is in existence today, indicating that at one time or another the practice of the four-year intercalation was in use for the religious calendar. This extra day was added every four years after the fifth Gatha (Vahish-toisht) and was also known by the same name, i.e. Gatha Vahishtoisht [*Frashogard*]. Incidentally, it should be stated here that there are opposing interpretations, even among traditional Zarathushtis and High Priests, regarding the true significance of Avardad Sal Gah [*Mirza, 444, Doctor, 10*].

“ The practice of intercalation was abandoned because of the complexities involved in consecrating the alats. ”

The Sasanian system. We are told that the four-year practice fell into disuse at some time during the Sasanian rule since it was found to be extremely difficult and laborious to reconsecrate the *alats* (implements) used in the rituals every four years. So before the last 150 years of Sasanian rule, the four-year rule was dropped and the 120-year intercalation rule was implemented to ease this burden [*Doctor, 10*].

Post-Sasanian events. With the Arab overthrow of the Sasanian Empire in 641 CE, the practice of intercalation was more or less forgotten until the year 1006 AD, when Roj Hormuzd and Mah Fravardin coincided with the vernal equinox and four 120-year intercalations were made. At that time, the Gatha days, which were at the end of Mah Avan, were shifted to the end of Mah Asfandarmad [*Mirza, 443*]. It was again realized that because of the ritual complexities in consecrating the *alats* and the prevailing political climates in both Iran and India, it would be virtually

impossible for future generations to continue the stringent religious rituals.

For this reason, a special ceremony, the *sandad* was performed to ‘seal’ the then seasonally correct calendar. The *sandad* ritual lasted for one whole month, after which the seasonal calendar ceased to exist and became the Shenshai calendar, which continues to this day [*Doctor, 8*]. The Shenshai calendar starts with the ascension of the last Shenshah Yazdeggar Sheriar to the Sasanian throne in 632 CE. In spite of the above decision to seal the seasonal calendar, the Parsis in India managed to perform one more 120-year intercalation, around 1125-1131 CE, while the Iranians did not, thus throwing their calendar off by one month. Apparently, this intercalation used two Fravardin months in succession, so that the Gatha days remained at the end of Asfandarmad, as it continues today.

The difference of a month was noticed, almost by accident, when an Iranian priest, Mobed Vilayati, visited India six centuries later. Some Parsis chose to follow the Iranian, or Kadmi (‘the ancient one’) calendar, thinking that it was the true calendar of the ancient Iranians. That is how the split between the Shenshai and Kadmi came about in India. Regrettably, emotions ran very high at that time and neighbor fought against neighbor in the streets.

The Fasli calendar, which was K. R. Cama’s compromise for bringing the two factions of Kadmi and Shenshai together, resulted instead in the creation of a third faction – Fasli [*Shroff*].

It should be mentioned that Shenshai and Kadmi mobeds can perform rituals according to the seasonal Fasli calendar dates, as the rituals performed in tune with the seasons have a much greater effect. However, they are required to say the prayers in their own Roj-Mah, i.e. the same calendrical system in which their navjote was performed and in which they were ordained *navar* – and not in the Fasli Roj-Mah. Otherwise,

A FEW WORDS ABOUT ‘ALAT’

The practice of intercalation was abandoned because of complexities involved in consecrating the ‘*alats*’. What does this mean and what has alat got to do with intercalation?

First, we must remember that our ancestors placed great emphasis on performing rituals in a very strict and exacting manner. Rituals are important in creating beneficial effects in nature, both in this world and in the spiritual realm and must be performed with great precision. The *alats* are the instruments used in the rituals, which cause the beneficial Yazatic currents from the heavens to be gathered and used for noble purposes. To be effective, *alats* must be consecrated through elaborate rituals before they can be used in the main ceremony. The mobed performing the ritual is an alat himself, since he has gone through a special nine-night *bareshtnum* or special *nahan*. An example of consecration of other implements is the *paragna* ritual, which precedes the *yazeshne* ceremony performed in our agiaries and atash behrams to this day.

Apparently, the four-year intercalation was used only for religious purposes. The *alats* had to be consecrated by priests of high order and discipline, who had undergone the nine-night *bareshtnum*. For four years their rituals proceeded smoothly. But when the time came to add the extra day at the end of the fourth year, the *alats* had to be re-charged by seldom-used special ceremonies, which not any ordinary mobed could perform routinely. It is because of this stringent demand on mobeds that it was felt that the times were not going to be conducive in the future for performing these ceremonies and therefore, the practice was discontinued causing the calendar to drift. Later High Priests have admitted that “Intercalation is there in our religion, but we are unable to do it.”

they stand the risk of creating disorder in nature, since the traditional days and months presided over by the specific *yazatas* are thrown out of gear [Doctor].

Iranian calendars. In Iran the Kadmi calendar, which also drifted back due to lack of intercalation, was followed by the Zarathushtis. In 1079, the Muslim Sultan Jalaluddin Malikshah, on the advice of his Grand

Vazir and astronomer, Omar Khayyam, reinstated the seasonal calendar (also called Jalali or Fasli) and fixed the New Year to begin on March 21 of the Gregorian calendar. This calendar was initiated more for ease of tax collection, rather than for any religious significance and was followed by the Muslim population of Iran as a social calendar.

Since 1926 the Zarathushtis of both Tehran and Kerman also started using the Fasli (or Jalali) calendar, probably to escape ridicule and appease their Muslim rulers, or because it seemed to coincide with the seasons. The Zarathushtis of Yazd, however, used this calendar for about a year and reverted back to using the old Kadmi calendar [Mirza, 448]. Since that time, these Zarathushtis suffered badly, not only at the hands of the ruling Muslims, but also at the hands of fellow Zarathushtis, who wanted to force the Fasli calendar on them. Varzavand states: "... they killed Ostad Master Khodabakhsh in the streets of Yazd where today Pir-e-Master stands ... In Yazd and in the villages there were outright beatings and chastisements going on."

Questions and priorities. We certainly cannot afford to repeat the atrocities in India and Iran generated by the calendar issue. Also, at a time in North America when due to various pressures our very survival is threatened, the question of calendars should fade into the background. "Dissipating our time and energy in

non-essential issues like the calendar controversy at this crucial juncture in our history, is like rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic and perhaps missing what may be the last wake-up call for our community" [Shroff, 15].

The day-to-day priorities of our community here are different from those of our Parsi ancestors when they landed in India. Most of us are

“Dissipating our time and energy in non-essential issues like the calendar controversy at this crucial juncture in our history, is like rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic and perhaps missing what may be the last wake-up call for our community.”

unaware of the Roj and Mah of our own calendar, leave alone arguing about what should or should not be the correct day. The question of performing elaborate rituals, whether they be every four years or 120 years, does not even arise as we cannot perform them. The only driving force for this debate seems to be the presentation of a unified Zarathushti image to our upcoming generations, to Iranian Zarathushtis and to the rest of the world.

As can be seen from the discussion above, there is no right or wrong calendar; only some are more right or wrong than others. Is it worth causing resentment or polarization among community members in the interests of presenting a unified image to the country? Do our North American hosts really care if we had three calendars or thirty? There are many other communities that have more than one calendar, including the most populous Islam.

There are staunch adherents of the Shenshai and Kadmi calendars in this country and it will not be possible for FEZANA, the World Congress or any other body to make them change by decree. Their resistance to change could only harden when they perceive that some of those Zarathushtis who are shouting the loudest about chang-

ing the calendar are the same ones who are trying to push through other changes like conversion, acceptance and discrediting our scriptures and rituals.

Depending on the intensity of religious fervor that our future generations are able to cultivate, the move towards one or the other calendar will occur gradually, which I think is the best course for us at present. All we

can do is present the facts and fallacies to enable people to come to their own decision. If we decide to dictate to the individual associations or start a campaign of ridicule, then there is a real risk of fragment-

ing the community.

Preserving our faith and identity.

"The preservation of community fellowship should be of primary importance. The basic point about the calendars is a religious one and that we remember with devotion all seasons and watches of the day. The seasons are not uniform across the world, nor are the days and nights. What is important is not that we all observe the same ceremony at the same time everywhere in the world, but that we share the same religious convictions and commemorate the spiritual significance of each season, month and hour" [Kotwal, 158]. Let us not forget that the vast majority of our community members both on the Indian subcontinent and here are devout followers of the Shenshai and Kadmi calendars, who do not want to change. In the same vein, there are devout mobeds who are duty bound to say their prayers in their own Roj-Mah. Let us not appear to be driving a wedge between our various community members.

In North America, some local associations, sensibly observe festivals like Tirgan, Mehrgan, Sadeh, some Gahambars etc. in the Iranian tradition and Pateti, Muktaad and other Gahambars in the Indian (mostly Shenshai) tradition. The March 21

Nouruz celebration is common to all. Therefore, what duplication that exists is minimal.

When people are getting along well respecting the diversity, attempts to "unify" them may indeed cause more "disunity". Sometimes, "A status quo is the best way to go". ■

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God,
Grant me the serenity
to accept the people
I cannot change,
The courage
to change the person
I can,
And the wisdom
to know,
that person is me.

- Mary Manin Morrissey

Calendar Reform

"I would strongly recommend that this presentation be made at the World Congress, with a view to educate the public on the benefits of calendar reform, and hope that we will have started the movement to install a corrected Solar Calendar that all of us can follow together, at the start of the new millennium."

By Jamshed R. Udvadia
Lansing, Michigan

Start of Calendars. Thousands of years ago, some say as far back as 25,000 BCE, man decided to record the passage of time. The waxing and waning of the moon was the most obviously perceived cycle, so marks were made on animal bone to record how many moons had passed since the assumption of power of each new tribal chief, the number of moons since his heir took birth, etc.

Later, man became aware of the lengthening and shortening of light and darkness coinciding with the warm and cold seasons and the appearance of leaves on the trees and their fall later on. He observed that the period of lengthening of daylight was preceded by a day of equal hours of light and darkness (day and night) which we now know as the vernal equinox. He decided to adopt the time between two such equinoxes as the first solar year. Since the lengthening of daylight was considered auspicious, as in escaping from the powers of darkness, the vernal equinox was adopted as the natural start of the solar year.

Jamshedi Nouruz. King Jamsheed of Pars (which Westerners mistakenly call Persia) was an astronomer and he was one of the first (possibly the first) to declare the vernal equinox as the start of the New Year. He ascended the throne [1] on this

auspicious day, which is why it is still known as Jamshedi Nouruz. At the time the calendar consisted of 12 months of 30 days each, with 5 festival days at the end, which were later named after the 5 Gathas of Zarathushtra.

The celebration of Jamshedi Nouruz then began to be followed by other causes for celebration which resulted in the various festivals, some of which were seasonal such as the harvest festival. When it was noticed that, according to the then-existing calendar, Nouruz and the seasonal festivals were slipping against the seasons, it was decided that an extra month be added every 120 years (*kabiseh*) to bring the calendar [2] back in line. This had the drawback that the calendar remained incorrect for 119 years, before being brought back in line for one year out of 120.

[1] As is recorded in the Shah Nameh of Firdowsi, Jamsheed ruled wisely and beneficially for many years, before he became arrogant by virtue of his achievements. He ordered a jeweled throne to be built for him in the latter part of his reign, which he occupied for the first time on the day of the vernal equinox, which he proclaimed to be Nouruz.

[2] This *kabiseh* corrected calendar (known as *Vihejakik*) is believed to have been initiated around 441 BCE and was exclusively used by the Zarathushti clergy [see Dr. Jehan Bagli, "Unified Calendar – Pros and Cons", *Humata Journal*, 1999]

Kabiseh correction. There was another problem. When Iran was conquered by the Muslims in the 7th century CE, many of the knowledgeable high priests were put to death and every attempt was made to obliterate the religion, since the conquerors considered any religion other than Islam to be heresy. The Iranis, who went into hiding, neglected to add the kabiseh month. The Parsis in India, remembered to add the intercalary month only once, around the 10th century CE and then the practice was neglected. The result was that the Irani Kadmi and Parsi Shenshai calendar were apart by one month and both began to slip against the seasons and the equinoxes. This resulted in two separate sets of festival days (including the New Year day), and both of them out of sync with the seasons.

Fasli calendar. An attempt was made to correct this situation, when Khurshedji Cama of India founded the Zarathushti Fasli Sal Mandal (Seasonal Year Society) in 1906 and advocated a calendar which would observe the leap year convention of the Gregorian calendar and whose New Year would always be on the vernal equinox, i.e. March 21 (ignoring the few minutes variation that sometimes causes the astronomical equinox to fall a few minutes before midnight of March 20/21). The 'leap' day was added after the Vahishtoisht Gatha as the last day of the year and was named Avar-dad Sal Gah. This found its adherents, but did not catch the attention of the entire community, partly because of a misconception that it was Muslim in origin. Anything connected with the Muslims was taboo, because of the forced exodus from Iran 1,000 years ago. This created the third division among the Zarathushtis, solely on the basis of calendar.

Julian Correction. We are not the only ones with calendar problems.

The Zarathushti solar calendar was adopted by the Egyptians and thence by the Romans [3], who distributed the five festival days among the other months of the year making some of them 31 days instead of 30. The months of July and August being named after Julius Caesar and Augustus Caesar were each given 31 days to emphasize their importance, which days were borrowed from February which therefore had only 28 days left (except 29 in the leap year which was added later).

By this time astronomers had observed that the year was not 365 days but 365 and a quarter days (as close as they could measure then). In 46 BCE, Julius Caesar, by advice of his astronomer Sosigenes, declared that an extra day would be added to

“ Various nations have continually applied corrections to the solar calendar so that it would not shift against the seasons. It is ironical that the Zarathushtis, who gave an early start to the world in the measurement of the solar year, have been slow to accept the astronomically accurate correction to their own calendar. ”

the calendar every four years, to keep it in sync with the sun and seasons. This year took a leap of one day; hence it was called the 'leap year'. He also added 80 extra days to 46 BCE which made that the longest year in history, with a total of 445 days. This correction was done to bring the calendar in line with the seasons again, and became known as the Julian calendar. Because of the great influence of the Roman Empire in those days, the Julian calendar became the calendar of the Western nations.

Gregorian correction. As astronomical observations became more accurate, it was found that the year was shorter than the 365 1/4 days which it had been presumed to be. In 1582, Pope Gregory XIII who was

then the religious head of the Catholic (read Western) world, taking the advice of astronomer Christoph Clavius, instituted a calendar reform by proclaiming that the day following October 4 would be October 15, dropping 10 days from that year, to compensate for the days gained in prior years. Further, the calendar would be kept in line from then on, by omitting the leap day in century years unless they were exactly divisible by 400. This is what we now know as the Gregorian calendar.

Most Roman Catholic countries adopted this reformed calendar, but England demurred because they had broken from the Papacy and formed their own Church of England a few decades before this. Eventually England and its colonies adopted the Gregorian calendar in 1752 and dropped 11 days in that year to fit common Western practice. At this time, the New Year's day in England and the colonies was shifted from March 25 to January 1.

Zarathushti correction needed. Various nations of the world have continually applied corrections to the solar

calendar so it would not shift against the seasons. It is ironical that the Zarathushtis, who gave an early start to the world in the measurement of the solar year, have been so slow to accept the astronomically accurate correction to their own calendar. We know that both the Shenshai and Kadmi calendars have shifted since the conquest of Iran over a 1,000 years ago, which is why our Nouruz falls in July or August instead of March. Knowing that we are wrong, it behooves us as Zarathushtis, who are always for the Truth, to correct our error and bring Nouruz back to March 21.

Suggested solution. Let us adopt a Reformed Zarathushti Calendar with

[3] The year, in those days, began in March as that was the month of the vernal equinox which was generally accepted as the start of the solar year. This is borne out by the fact that September, October, November and December were so named because they were the 7th ('sept'), 8th ('oct'), 9th ('nov') and 10th ('dec') months of the year at that time.

the same months and days as at present, but starting on the vernal equinox (March 21). This calendar will make allowances for a leap year every four years, following the rules established by the Universal (Gregorian) calendar. The leap day should be added between Mah Asfandarmad, Roj Aneran and Gatha Ahunavad, and may be called the Second Aneran. If we decide to start this calendar on March 21, 2001 the year would be 1371 YZ by just the same reckoning we use today.

There are several advantages to installing the Reformed Calendar:

- New Year's day returns to its natural position at the vernal equinox, as recognized by King Jamsheed in ancient times.

- The calendar will not drift any more against the equinox and the seasons, so the seasonal festivals can be observed at the proper time. In 3 years out of 4, the calendar will be incorrect, but only by a few hours rather than days and months, as at present.

- All three divisions of the Zarathushti community will be united in the observance of the various religious functions.

- There may be an economic advantage in pooling our resources to have one function instead of three at different times of the year.

Frequently asked questions.

FAQ-1: Sometimes the exact time of the equinox is a few minutes before midnight of March 20/21. Should we keep on staggering the Nouruz from year to year?

No, just proclaim March 21 to be New Year's day. We may sometimes be off by a few minutes. This is better than being off by 7 or 8 months as at present.

FAQ-2: Is this similar to one of the Muslim calendars?

No, the Muslim calendar is lunar whereas ours is solar. Some denominations of Muslims (mainly Khojas) reckon their New Year to be March 20 or 21 depending on the exact time

when the sun crosses the celestial equator. However the rest of their festivals remain set on lunar reckoning.

FAQ-3: For the Kadmis and Shen-shais who have already performed some of the festivals for the first 7 or 8 months, will there be a repetition of the festivals and death anniversary ceremonies?

The repetitions will only be in the first year, thereafter everything will be normal. I would suggest that the public ceremonies like jashans and gahambars be duplicated. The death ceremonies and Muktdad may or may not be repeated, according to the wishes of the family.

FAQ-4: How will Zarathushtis in the southern hemisphere (Australia, New Zealand, South Africa) adjust their gahambars, since their seasons are six months off from the northern hemisphere?

They may need to review their celebrations and decide if they want to adjust them to the seasons. They may decide not to adjust, so as to celebrate festivals at the same time as the rest of the community, as was done by their ancestors in Iran. In any case they will have a stable non-drifting calendar to adjust against, instead of the current drifting one, which does not synchronize with the seasons anyway.

FAQ-5: Will this be acceptable to Iranian Zarathushtis?

This should be most acceptable to Iranian Zarathushtis, because they already follow a calendar that begins on Jamshedi Nouruz, uses the same names of the days and months, and allows for an extra day every 4 years. There may be a difference in the reckoning of the year which some of them count from the date of birth of Zarathushtra, which they place at 3737 years ago. While scholars differ on that date, they are agreed on the year 1369 YZ, which is reckoned from the ascension of Yazdegard III.

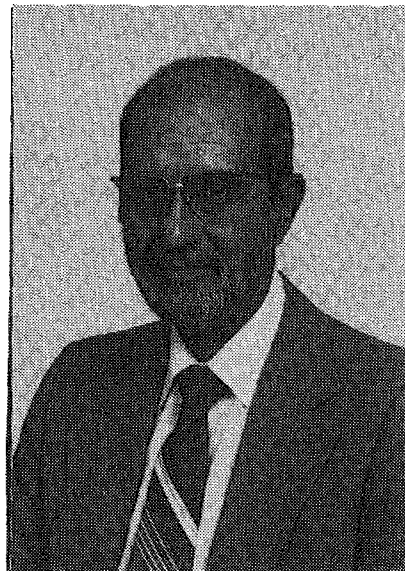
FAQ-6: Will the mobeds and dasturs accept this new calendar?

According to the idea of service expressed in the Ahunavar (Yatha

Ahu Vairyo), the gift of Vohu Mana is for those servants of Ahura Mazda who are of help to the needy. I am sure that the priest class recognizes that the priesthood was instituted to be of service to the community, and not the community to serve the priesthood. It is to be hoped, therefore, that they will cheerfully carry out the wishes of the community, while recognizing the need to return the calendar to our 'asli' Irani roots.

Finally, to the staunchly orthodox, who might say that we have been using the old calendars for a thousand years, so we should not change it now, I would ask: "**Was the calendar made for Man, or Man for the calendar?**" ■

[The author wished to acknowledge the assistance rendered by Ervad Dr. Jehan Bagli in providing some of the facts mentioned herein.]



Jamshed R. Udvardia 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.

With a host of social, cultural and religious programs and services for the young, for students, adults and seniors, Zarathushti associations and Darbe Mehrs across North America are succeeding in keeping the Zarathushti faith and traditions alive and well in a largely non-Zarathushti world. Presented here is a flavor of the activities of one of the older and more established associations – The Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago.

Creating a Zarathushti Environment in a non-Zarathushti World

By Kayomارش Mehta
Palos Hills, Illinois

The Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago (ZAC) has been serving the spiritual, cultural and social needs of the Chicago Zarathushti community for over 24 years. ZAC offers a myriad of services for the community. The Arbab Rustom Guiv Darbe Mehr, Zoroastrian Center of Chicago, in Hinsdale is the vibrant hub of Zarathushtis in the Midwest. Services include:

- The ZAC monthly newsletter is the official mouthpiece of the association and is sent at no charge to all Zarathushtis in the metropolitan Chicago area as well as to all Zarathushti associations.
- The Darbe Mehr is open to all every Sunday afternoon, when prayers are offered by a mobed.
- Monthly meetings are held on the second Sunday of each month with humbandagi, Atash Nyaesh and Tandarosti prayers, a traditional Parsi/Irani lunch by host families and a program. In addition to discussion of religious subjects, topics have varied from financial planning, drug/alcohol awareness, home safety and college preparations to healthcare and Western line-dancing.
- Observance of religious holidays and festivals, such as gahambars and

jashans. On Avan Ardivisoor nu Parab, members gather at the Darbe Mehr to make several hundred dar-ni-poris. Full Mukta prayers are offered for the five Gatha days.

- Large numbers of private functions, navjotes, weddings, birthday parties and other celebrations are held.
- Children and Youth Sleepovers are held regularly, to foster friendship among Zarathushti youth.
- Religion Education Classes are held regularly for children, youth and adults.
- Religion Education camps are organized at the Darbe Mehr.
- Financial support is provided to local young adult priests to undergo the *Navar* ordainment ceremony.
- ZAC sponsors one young priest at the Dadar Athornan Madressa in Mumbai by paying the Madressa fees for his boarding and lodging. ZAC encourages others to also support this very worthwhile cause.
- Every few years, ZAC sponsors and supports an ordained priest to settle in Chicago, thereby promoting the number of mobeds serving the community, while at the same time providing the mobed an opportunity to immigrate to the USA.
- Financial assistance is provided to all youth who attend Youth congresses. The amount of assistance is dependent on the youth's participation at ZAC.

- Financial loan scholarships are provided to needy Zarathushtis.
- Debt Elimination and Financial Independence education is provided when needed.
- The Library and Learning Center is well stocked with books, tapes and videos, in English, Persian and Gujarati, with subscriptions to Zarathushti journals and newspapers.
- The Weekend Tutoring program by the youth for the youth is popular. The Darbe Mehr stays open on Sundays for youth to congregate to do homework and get guidance and tutoring from other older youth – truly making it an extended Learning Center.
- ZAC has periodically invited scholars and priests (Dasturji Kotwal, Ervad Ramiyar Karanjia, Dasturji Minocherhomji, Khojeste Mistree, etc.) for an extended stay with member families to conduct a series of religion education talks.
- ZAC members have been generous in responding with financial assistance to those in need due to medical calamities, locally as well as internationally.
- There is a "Welcome Wagon" service for those who are new to the Chicago area.
- A "calling tree" has been established to disseminate urgent information (such as deaths, funerals) to all members.

● In case of death, complete four-days of traditional prayer ceremonies are offered by our mobeds.

● Navjote preparation training is offered and navjote ceremonies are performed by our mobeds.

● Wedding and baby showers are held for old and new families. Wedding ceremonies are performed by our mobeds.

● Senior citizen outings and all-day get-togethers at the home of a host family, are organized each month to enable the seniors to socialize and enjoy each other's companionship.

● The Zarathushti Choir is available to sing Gujarati and Persian songs (such as Chhaiye Hame Zarathushti, Kon Ashem Vohu, festive navjote and wedding songs) for various occasions.

● A Speakers Forum has been established, which is a pool of knowledgeable persons available to represent and present our religion to Interfaith and other groups.

● ZAC members are actively involved with local and national interfaith bodies, such as the Parliament of World's Religions and United Religions, and take an active part in interfaith dialog and services.

● The Darbe Mehr is host, quite often, to visiting groups of school/college students, interfaith, and other groups. A series of posters on the religion aids in making the presentation for such visits.

● Ministerial services. ZAC pays a priest to visit and serve the needy and sick elders of the community at their residence, hospital or nursing home. He prays with them, assists them in transportation and routine chores such as purchasing groceries, banking, collecting mail, taking home cooked meals, and acts as a liaison between them and the community. This program is supported by a \$30 per month (a dollar a day) donation to the ZAC Mobed Employment Fund from patrons and well-wishers. Other ministerial services are in the planning stages.

Social Structures for the Aging Zarathushti Community in North America

On the need to prepare a holistic vision for the community and plan for our future, our aging future.

**By Dolly Dastoor
Montreal, Quebec**

The survival of a community requires not only a religious vision but also a strong socio-political vision and will. Religiosity and spirituality cannot be enhanced and strengthened in the abstract. Religion has to be practiced and experienced in an environment where there is commonality of purpose, thought, word and deed.

To integrate this religious and socio-political vision, the North American community, in 1997 under the auspices of FEZANA, developed a Strategic Plan for the future growth and direction of the community. It was a collective effort to define how we envision our future.

Many issues, social, economic and political were identified in the development of the plan for which infrastructures were needed at the local and national level to help our community achieve this vision. We need infrastructures for our human resources – our youth, our single-parent families, our economically deprived, our ill, our handicapped, our shut-ins, our frail and our elderly. It is in the con-

text of the plan that this article will focus on one issue and one group of people and discuss the social infrastructures needed for the elderly.

Statistical background. It is a well-known fact that the world population is aging, and people are living longer. By 2030, 20% of the world population will be over 65. The Parsi population in India is also aging, more dramatically than the Indian population. According to the survey extrapolated from the Indian census of 1971, the percentage of Parsis over 65 in India is 19.16%, which is far above the national percentage of 4%. The dependency ratio in the Parsi population has also shown consistent increase over the years. In 1971 it was 43.25% whereas the 1982 ratio was 45.56%.

In an 11 month period between April 1998 and March 1999, the age profile of the recorded deaths of Parsis in Mumbai, as prepared by the chief executive officer of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet, Mr. Dastur, is shown in Table 1.

According to the 1995 census in Pakistan, undertaken by the Karachi Zarathushti Banu Mandal, 37.60% of

● The Darbe Mehr building and facilities are bursting at the seams. ZAC is currently undergoing a phased building expansion program. Funds are collected from donations and fund-raising events. All planning, architectural and general contracting services are provided gratis by ZAC members.

● ZAC is very committed to keeping Parsi and Irani members together, and celebrates both Iranian festivals and ceremonies. ■

Kayomars Mehta is past president of the Zoroastrian Association of Metr. Chicago and past chair of the FEZANA Education Committee.

No. of deaths	Age
159	61- 70
326	71- 80
310	81- 90
84	91-100

Table 1.

the Zarathushti population is over the age of 60. This is even higher than that of Mumbai.

In North America, based on the limited survey FEZANA did while compiling the North American Directory, our population structure does not fall in the traditional pyramid. Our population peaks for age group 6-18 at 19.61%, with 15.32% between 50-60 and 12.20% over 61 years. This would mean that in North America 1 in every 4 persons is over the age of 50. In Mumbai, 1 in 5 persons is over the age of 65. This is a very, very high proportion. One wonders if the community has planned for this burgeoning group of people.

We grew up in an environment where traditionally the care of the elderly was regarded a filial duty and responsibility. Families were supposed to do the caring themselves with very little help by the government or welfare agencies. Care-giving burden for these elderly people fell on the children, who themselves may be approaching the 65+ age group, with their own physical and emotional ailments and the problems of their aging spouses and grown up children.

But this is changing. There has been a general paradigm shift in the provision of care for the elderly. With the growing number of two income families, rapid urbanization, migration of children to the West, even in India, Pakistan and Iran, good and adequate family care is becoming increasingly difficult. More and more of our loved ones are being looked after by paid help with long distance supervision from family and friends.

Mental health problems. In addition to care giving problems there are both physical and mental health

problems related to aging. The most devastating of the age related illnesses is Dementia, more specifically of the Alzheimer type. According to International statistics, 20% of people over 80 suffer from it. In the most severe cases the person eventually gets into a vegetative state where all bodily needs are to be met by others. Because Zarathushtis live well into their 80s, the chances of their developing Alzheimer's dementia are very high. Moreover 20% of the cases are familial, i.e. inherited. For Parsis as an aging community that is encouraged to marry within itself and often within the family, the forecast can be quite bleak and devastating.

Moral and ethical dilemma. When many of us migrated to Canada and the US, we were in our productive and reproductive years, with parents whom we left behind, also gainfully employed. With the passage of time, this has changed, our parents have aged, needing some sort of supervision and care. Half our hearts are constantly in our countries of origin.

What choices do we have to ease this situation? We can (a) bring our parents to North America, (b) make provisions for their care in their own environment through financial support, paid help, and arrangements with relatives for general supervision, or (c) do nothing and hope for the best.

When we begin to realize that our parents are beginning to have problems managing on their own, due to failing health, we start thinking of bringing them to our homes to live with us. Thoughts cross our mind whether we would be doing the right thing to uproot them from their social milieu, from the language they are familiar with, the food, the faces, and bring them to a country where they would have to make a major lifestyle adjustment. This dilemma becomes compounded if there is only 1 surviving parent and you are the only child.

Assuming that the immigration process works, there are no health problems and parents arrive. We know

we have assumed their financial responsibility but are we prepared to accept their social responsibility? Or will we be the cause of their social death? Against this dilemma, we need to balance the possibility of spending several thousand dollars every year to visit your parents, and go through the emotional turmoil of guilt at not fulfilling your filial duty.

Social infrastructures. We will deal with the issue from two perspectives, in two different environments: (a) in our country of origin, and (b) in the North American context.

At present there are no satisfactory structures in either place. Many of the issues are different yet interrelated in the two environments.

Before any infrastructures are developed, we first need to study what is it that the elderly cherish most in their later years. They cherish independence and respect; a safe and secure environment to live in; adequate health to maintain their social functioning; and adequate financial resources to maintain a comfortable life style.

The infrastructures needed can be at two levels: (a) to provide for material welfare and security; and (b) to insulate the elderly from the social insults of age, to ease their loss of status, their isolation.

In their country of origin. At the present time, are we able to provide a safe environment where they are not in constant fear of their lives? The answer is "No!" The recent spate of murders in Mumbai of affluent Zarathushtis staying alone is of major concern to all.

We would be much relieved if there were *supervised residences* available, which would provide security, medical supervision on a needs basis, opportunity to socialize with their peers, access to some recreational activities and most important, maintain their independence.

These residences can either be subsidized by the community or operated as commercial ventures for higher income families. The Venture Capi-

The demoralizing pressures of old age might ease if the elderly in these day centers had ready access to other people of similar backgrounds and age, as similarity of life experiences and common fate are a firm basis for communication, mutual understanding and group formation and good health. The families too, need support by way of counseling and education, and this should be provided by organizing self-help support groups.

The Zoroastrian Association of Quebec has set up a "CARE" (Community

- By Will Allen Dromgoole

The realities of the times have to be impressed on members of the community with a lot of open discussions on this subject.

Summary. To recapitulate, as a community we need to organize ourselves to provide optimal living conditions for all segments of our community. We need to develop infrastructures for assisted living, psycho-social support, either through volunteer help or through paid funding to look after our elderly. We need to set up a Zarathushti Family and Welfare Agency, to help with the growing problems in our community.

In conclusion, as we prepare to enter the 21st century, we need to look critically at the present global demographic situation and in the context of the Strategic Plan, the blue print for a holistic vision for the community, plan for our future, our aging future. ■



Dr. Dolly Dastoor is a clinical psychologist, an assistant professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Department of Psychology at McGill University, Concordia University and the University of Montreal. She is the Founding President of Alzheimer's Society of Montreal, active in Zonta International and International Chair of the Status of Women Committee. Dolly has served as President of the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec and President of FEZANA. She is presently co-chair of the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress in Houston in 2000.

A Tribute to the Roshans of our Community

Proposal for a retirement community in North America.

By Aban and Purvez Rustomji
Houston, Texas

Aban writes:

My mother-in-law Gool Rustomji lives in Parsee Colony, Quetta, Pakistan. She is 84 and resides in a large house, which was once a center of all activities in Quetta. The house is quiet now, and her daily companions are the paid help – an *ayah*, a cook and a driver. Her two sons have migrated and left for North America.

My mother-in-law is not alone. My father Temton Hodiwala is 87. He too lives all alone and fends for himself with his limited vision and age related pains. And my father is not alone. There is our Minoo Bharucha in his 80's, Mobed Sorabji Makujina who is in his 90's, Mani Irani in her 80's, Noshir Romer in his 90's, Makka Rana in her 80's and Mehra Marker, 98. In fact, the young kids on the block are Sera Bharucha and Diana Kaikobad, both in their 70's. All of these people have two things in common. They are single now, and their children have immigrated which means that no one can care for them on a day-to-day basis. All except Minoo Bharucha's son Khurshid and daughter-in-law Roshan, who along with Nilufer Abadan, assume the role of caretakers for all these wonderful old people.

Who helps them out when one day, after 20 years of paying the gas bill, the gas company tells my father he is no longer registered on the computer? Who does my mother-in-law call for when in the middle of the

night she falls ill? Who listens when the only remedy is someone with a caring ear?

I am sure all of us in North America who have left our beloved parents behind are faced with this agonizing dilemma.

Why am I dwelling on this? I guess time flies, and you and I will be in a similar position, and we may not have the Roshans of our community to look after us. So, living in Houston, Texas, what do I need to do so that thirty years down the road I have an opportunity to maintain my dignity, my vibrancy and my independence? Read on ...

Purvez writes:

To continue living a self-satisfying life requires retirement planning. Good retirement communities are located near all major cities, but they cost a lot, and may not suit our needs. Certainly the desire of being among *bhai bawas* relishing *dhansakh* or *korma sabzi* sounds more attractive than living in the typical retirement community in North America.

A Declaration of Independence. There is a need for such a Zarathushti retirement home in North America. A place where one can be active, secure; a stimulating home that provides ease of living without compromising one's independence.

We need a 'colony' that can attract Zarathushtis who would like to live in small, private cottages, independent living apartments, or limited assisted living quarters. All of these



Quetta residents: brothers Mehla and Minoo Bharucha and the author's father Temton Hodiwala, all in their 80s. The young girl is Roshan's daughter.

would be within walking distances of each other, surrounded by a walled fence with a secured entry. A community center would be in the adjoining area. The retirees would have an opportunity to attend events, mingle with different generations and volunteer to help out at the center. The community will be all the more richer by involving the retirees to live a meaningful life. Additionally, this arrangement brings peace of mind, because one will know from the start that when they are incapacitated or unable to deal with day-to-day living, they will be safe.

Where is this place? I would like to offer my adopted hometown – Houston, Texas. Houston is home to a vibrant Zarathushti population, has an inviting warm climate, and would be an ideal location for a Zarathushti Retirement Community. In 1993, a group of Zarathushtis acquired 20 acres of land and donated 4.3 acres to the Zoroastrian Association to build the Zoroastrian Heritage and Cultural Center (ZHCC). The remaining 15.7 acres are available.

Proposal for retirement community in Houston: A Zarathushti retirement is envisioned to support the needs of various levels of retirement. A non-profit entity of the

Zoroastrian Association of Houston can structure the organization to reflect the following:

- For a couple 65 and over, a small free-standing cottage (1600 sq. ft.) on a small lot, located in a gated community. The homeowner pays an entrance fee and is entitled to live in

“... We may not have the Roshans of our community to look after us ... so, what do I need to do now, so that thirty years down the road I have an opportunity to maintain my dignity, my vibrancy and my independence?”

a cottage as long as he wants. There is a monthly fee for the security and grounds. The occupant takes care of utilities and upkeep of the cottage. This requires an entrance fee of \$125,000 to \$175,000. The entity builds the home and the amount is prorated over a number of years.

- Town homes (1200 sq. ft.) would be available for an entrance fee of \$90,000 - \$135,000 to be prorated over a number of years. The occupant pays the utilities and a monthly fee for security, grounds and maintenance. The occupant can live there as long as they want to.

- Apartments (900 sq. ft.) would be available for an entrance fee of

\$50,000 - \$90,000 to be prorated over a number of years. The occupant pays the utilities and a monthly fee. They continue to live there until they cannot take care of themselves and need help. They have the option of cooking their meals or eating in the dining room.

- An assisted living facility will comprise of a small one-bedroom apartment and a kitchenette. This area is for those who need daily assistance of an aide. They have to be mobile; individuals with a walker or wheelchair are acceptable. Food is prepared in a common kitchen and served in the dining room. The entrance fee is \$90,000 - \$135,000. The prorating is over a number of years. The monthly fee is \$2,000.

Skilled nursing care is beyond the scope of the Zarathushti community at the present time. In the case of Houston, we have a hospital less than 15 minutes away. Those needing care beyond what is available at the assisted living center will be transferred at the cost of the individual. They can return to the facility as long as the assistance required is limited to what is provided at the center.

The fees can be reduced, services can be curtailed, number of homes can be increased, green spaces can be minimized – all this will make the facility cheaper,

but will make the area less inviting. If there is sufficient interest, the next step is to draw up a business plan and see how the economics works. I am sure there are many individuals who can share their experience. With suggestions, please contact Purvez Rustomji at purvez@coatingengineers.com or (281) 493-1275. ■

[The authors thank Soonamai Rustomji Desai of Santa Rosa, who works at a Quaker Retirement Center, for providing information.]

Aban and Purvez Rustomji reside in Houston, Texas and are active members of the Zoroastrian Association of Houston.

Social Problems Facing the Community

An Indian Parsi perspective on the maladies facing our community today



By Marzban Jamshedji Giara
Mumbai, India

Identity. For centuries, ever since we came to India, we have been known as Parsis. Achaemenian Emperor Darius Hystaspes took pride in declaring himself as a Parsi as can be noted on his inscriptions at Behistun in Iran: "I am a Parsi, the son of a Parsi"; most of our trusts, religious, cultural, educational and welfare institutions are founded by Parsi Zoroastrians for Parsi Zoroastrians.

Unfortunately, today in the west, the word 'Parsi' has been dropped and individuals and organizations prefer to call themselves simply Zoroastrians or Zarathushtis. This may partly be in deference to the Iranian Zoroastrians – but they forget that the word Parsi also includes Iranian Zoroastrians.

It is important to remember that we are the descendants of the Parsi Zoroastrians. We have survived because our noble ancestors preserved both their ethnic identity and their religion in India despite having lived in the midst of a vast cosmopolitan population for centuries. It would be foolhardy to sacrifice our identity in the name of secularism, nationalism or humanism.

Declining numbers. There are indications that our community is in danger of dying out; our numbers are declining at an alarming rate. There are more deaths than births. The community is aging. The young do not marry or marry at a late age, past the reproductive age. According to

Sapur F. Desai [*A Community at the Crossroads, 1950*] those that do, produce only one or two children. Since the 1950s, a sizable number of Parsis have migrated to Canada, USA and Australia.

The decline in numbers is also due to fewer marriages between Zoroastrian boys and Zoroastrian girls, and the increasing trend to marry non-Zoroastrians. The breakdown of the joint family system makes it worse; where husband and wife both go to work, they postpone having children or have to leave them in the care of servants.

Some feel that this talk about our declining population is a canard spread by those prophets of doom who wish to open the doors of the community for conversion of their intermarried relations and for their children to be accepted as Zoroastrians.

Some organizations in the West have amended their constitutions to allow non-Zoroastrian spouses to be members. This is surely a suicidal step – for every membership carries a right to vote, which also means a right to amend the rules as well.

Maladies. Parsis were, at one time, adventurous and enterprising. Present-day Parsis, pampered by our charities, want a comfortable life and are averse to taking risks. They lack ambition, perseverance and the will to excel.

There is a lack of healthy intermingling of people of similar interests from different age groups – children,



PHOTO: TIMES OF INDIA

youth, adults and the aged. To succeed, a community must have greater interactions among groups in their respective fields of interest.

A lot of time, effort and money is lavishly spent in organizing social feasts for navjotes and weddings. Far greater attention is paid to dress, decoration, music and food, than to the importance and religious significance of the ceremonies. Time was when gahambars were religious feasts where the rich and poor partook together of the same simple meal and did a humbandagi prayer together. Today's gahambars are ostentatious affairs shorn of any religious fervor.

While we are quick to ape the western culture and strive to be 'modern', we have lost touch with our roots. We have all but forgotten our Parsi dress (*dagli, pagree, pheta*), the Parsi greeting ("Sahebji" or better still "Yazdan Panahbad") and the Parsi values of simplicity, humility, truthfulness and tolerance. Time was when the word of a Parsi was a bond. Now, trying to be tactful and smart, we do not hesitate to conceal the truth.

Our ancestors practiced simple living and high thinking. Now we have a high standard of living and little thinking. Our ancestors lived a religious life. Now in a secular, so-called liberal environment, we seem to have abandoned living by our religious tenets and run headlong after material success.

We seem to have abandoned our spiritual weapons to fight against evil –

the sudreh and kushti. Modern Parsis, more so our ladies, becoming slaves of fashion, wear a mockery of a sudreh without sleeves, without *gireban* or *girdo*. No wonder we are without the divine protection our religious uniform could provide us.

Decline in values. What is even more dangerous than the decline in numbers is the decline in values. Dr. Eckehard Kulke [*The Parsis in India*] analyzed how Parsis are increasingly relying on charities. Our trusts were set up to assist the poor in housing, education, welfare, health. Sadly now, able-bodied youth think it is their birthright to be provided education, medical care, a job, a house, etc. by the community. They do not hesitate to submit false data in applications for financial aid or housing, because "everybody does it."

“ For our community to prosper in the new millennium, we need to hark back to our roots. We must live a righteous life and not seek shortcuts or adopt what is convenient or expeditious for the moment. ”

Trustees of the charities claim to provide welfare and care from "womb to tomb". While their objectives are noble, the administration and implementation leaves much to be desired.

Lack of housing is claimed to be the main reason for young people not marrying. Is it not ironical that, if the Parsi population is declining, why is there a shortage of housing in Mumbai? Housing is the hoax that tempts people to sell rental flats in trust properties and make money quickly or to sell their ownership flats and move into rented flats of trust buildings.

We are our own enemies. We are falling because of our own laziness, indifference and apathy towards our religion, culture and history. The average youth spends nearly 20 years and thousands of dollars on school and college education. Do we spend even 20 months or 20 days or even 20 hours to learn about our religion, our history and our culture?

Suggested remedies. It is time that we realized that "self-help is the best

help." If we want not only to survive, but prosper in this world, we have to tackle our problems ourselves. We need to awaken from our slumber and face the challenges of life. Our ancestors came to India to preserve our religion. They left their homeland and their worldly possessions and accepted the challenges of starting a new life in India. It is our sacred duty to see that their sacrifice was not in vain.

We need to revitalize the community and arouse in our people the latent fire and the zeal to excel, to be self-reliant, to persevere. In the past we have produced leaders, men and women of excellence, in every field of human endeavor. We must rekindle that divine spark within us. Let us work for our nation. But let us not forget our roots. Let us not wipe ourselves out of existence by talking and

practicing integration in the sense of marrying non-Zoroastrian spouses, thereby neglecting our religious duty.

The Zarathushti Din is an optimistic religion. A religion that has its motto "Happiness unto Others", cannot and will not die. There are many ups and downs in any life; so also with the Parsis. We may be *down*, but we are certainly *not out*.

Let us emphasize that marriage, childbearing and the perpetuation of our ethnic identity is our religious duty. Ahura Mazda tells Zarathushtra in the Vendidad that He prefers a married person to an unmarried one, and one with more children rather than one who has none.

Our religion has been the unifying force that has preserved us over the millennia. In the words of Samuel Laing: "Parsi has no reason to tremble for his faith if a Galileo invents the telescope or a Newton discovers the law of gravity – the laws of Zarathushtra are eternal and based on scientific principles that have stood the test of time."

There are predictions that in the future a savior will come to rescue the world from misery. While it is good to hope for a savior, let us be our own saviors by doing our duties and not merely demanding our rights.

For our community to prosper in the new millennium, we need to hark back to our roots. We must live a religious life according to the tenets of our religion. We must live morally, live righteously and not seek to take shortcuts or adopt what is convenient or expeditious for the moment. As a wise man said:

**It is religion that must give
Sweetest pleasures while we live;
It is religion that must supply
Solid comfort when we die.**

We pray for wise leaders who will guide the community into the next millennium. May our community flourish and serve as a beacon to mankind; that here was a people that prospered because of their adherence to their religion, the guiding light of the world. I end with a prayer:

**God give us men,
a time like this demands
Strong minds, brave hearts,
true faith, ready hands
Men whom the lust of office
does not kill,
Men whom the spoils of office
cannot buy
Men who have opinions and a will
Men who love honor
men who cannot lie.** ■

Marzban Jamshedji Giara is author, publisher and distributor of books and audio-cassettes on Zarathushti religion. What started as a hobby has now become a full-time obsession. An independent writer, thinker, public speaker and researcher, Giara has produced over a dozen books including the first ever illustrated *Global Directory of Zoroastrian Fire Temples* and *The Zoroastrian Pilgrim's Guide*, all with his own resources. A computer marketing professional for 14 years with IBM, Giara is now committed with a passion to bringing out books on the religion, in the service of the community.

We, the Parsis, of whom Mahatma Gandhi said: "In numbers, Parsis are beneath contempt, but in contribution, beyond compare" – where are we heading? I am taking this opportunity to share a few thoughts that have been occupying my mind, concerning our community.

The numbers game. When the Parsi pilgrims landed at Sanjan, 1368 years ago, their main thought would have been – will we survive? We have not only survived, but have, by our thoughts, words and deeds, evolved into a highly respected community. It is a source of great pride for us all that we have contributed in such immense measure to the development of India in all areas of human endeavor.

But how many of us are aware of the numbers game? How many of us know that when India achieved independence in 1947, the population of the country was 300 million, out of which 125,000 were Parsis. In 1998, when the population of India grew to 900 million, we dwindled down to approximately 70,000.

Demographic trends project that by the year 2020, India will have achieved the dubious distinction of being the most populated country on Planet Earth with a population of 1200 million. At that point in time, Parsis in India will be around 23,000 in number. We would then have ceased to be termed a community, and would be labeled as a tribe; as any ethnic group under 30,000 is called. As a percentage we would have whittled down to 0.002% of the population of India, not even a drop in the ocean.

In Mumbai alone, in one year (1998) 903 deaths were recorded at our towers of silence. In comparison, births recorded during the same period were less than 500.

Think of this numbers game and then try to see if there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

PHOTO: JAM-E-JAMSHED WEEKLY



PARSIS

Where are We heading ?

A trustee of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet shares his thoughts on the Zarathushti community.

As a community we have a plethora of trusts to look after our diverse needs. Our forefathers established these trusts with the intention that our community would benefit and emerge strong. Unfortunately, the opposite appears to be happening. Many have taken advantage of the funds and become dependent rather than strong, using the funds as a means of subsistence, resulting in communal sloth and loss of initiative. Our competitiveness has been compromised and our cutting edge blunted. Is this the vision that our forefathers had for our community?

Parsis in the West. Whilst in India, Parsis are diminishing in numbers, our community in the West is proliferating, albeit at a very modest rate. The increase is on account of various factors; apart from a moderately higher rate of birth compared to India, the other elements are migration and acceptance.

Parsis settling in the West are currently in their first or second generation. As they adapt to a different lifestyle, it is very essential for us in India to realize that as new generations evolve, the ties between us and our community in the West will continue to get diluted. It is, therefore, very consequential to ensure that the bridge between the West and us remains intact. To achieve this objective, various strategies will need to be thought of. One idea is to establish a Zarathushti International

Chamber of Commerce, as a platform, not only to bridge us with the West, but also as a means to trade with one another.

In spite of the demographic devastation, I do believe that all is not lost. There appears to be visible, very far away, at the end of the tunnel, a very faint light.

Light at the end of the tunnel. To emerge from the tunnel into the sunshine, we as a community will need to combine and *work as a team*. Our differences, whatever they may be, have to be forgotten and a conscious effort made to work with unity of purpose for the greater good.

The greatest asset of a nation or a community is its people, especially the youth. Rather than indulging ourselves in non-productive issues, we must keep an eye on the future, and jointly address ourselves to encouraging and *motivating our youth*. We are fortunate that our youth have the potential to face challenges that will come their way, to overcome them, and excel. All that they require is proper grooming, which the leaders and elders of the community must provide.

Education is the foundation upon which a nation is built. Without sound education, no country or community can progress. In a country such as India, education is of prime importance. History bears testimony to the fact that every country in the

world that achieves a high level of literacy, also achieves high levels of incomes and high levels of aspirations, which in turn leads to a sharp decline in the growth of its population. While the population of India needs to be drastically curtailed, in the case of Parsis, we as a fully literate and intelligent community need to put our education to use, to increase our population.

The immortal words of Lord Brougham, a Scottish statesman, come to mind: "Education makes a people easy to lead, but difficult to drive; easy to govern but impossible to enslave."

Sound leadership can only emanate from sound education. Leadership cannot be thrust upon any individual; it can only sit lightly on the shoulders of individuals who can think rationally, analyze objectively and execute decisively. A leader's hardest task is not to do what is right, but to know what is right. A leader is one who must have the capacity to dream and the courage to transform dream into reality.

There is no point in thinking that our numbers will increase merely by appealing to our youth, or creating awareness of our falling numbers. A **realistic socio-economic environment** will need to be created for our youth to live and flourish. Zarathushti leadership must form a 'think tank' to find a solution.

Our youth have demonstrated that they possess the all-important quality of having open minds. Whilst they are receptive to what is taught, they are also objective enough to analyze all issues and absorb only that which satisfies their intelligence. It is very essential that the youth of our community, having manoeuvred themselves firmly into the right positions, with their own sweat, toil and effort, receive the full backing and support of all individuals and institutions. It is only then that they will emerge as leaders of the community and country. If our youth are to become economically self-sufficient and flourish, the

thrust of the community trusts and other institutions will need to redefine their priorities. A shift will have to be made from dispensation of doles to providing support, which would encourage the latent spark to grow into a flame. The youth must be encouraged to shed the attitude of being seekers of humble employment, and redevelop into professionals, merchants, entrepreneurs and industrialists.

The strengths and weaknesses of a nation, community or institution are entirely dependent on the quality of the human beings that lead. Success or failure is either a crown to wear or a cross to carry, depending on the quality of leadership provided. Extremism in the defense of what is right is no vice; moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue. This is the very essence of leadership.

Let each and every Parsi realize that the people and the people alone are the motive force in the making of world history. Complacency will only result in our being consigned to the dustbin of history. A keen awareness of the various issues facing us and following up on them with action can only ensure a place on the pinnacle.

As a natural optimist, I can only conclude my views on the future of the Parsis, by paraphrasing, in the form of a prayer, the famous words of Sir Winston Churchill, after the battle for Egypt:

*"(I pray that) this is not the end;
not even the beginning of the end.
(I pray that) this is only the end of
the beginning."* ■

Dinshaw K. Tamboly is Vice President of the WZO, London; Chairman of The WZO Trust Funds, India and Zarathushti Youth Foundation, India; Trustee of the Bombay Parsee Punchayet and a number of other trusts. Through the WZO Trust, Mr. Tamboly has successfully engineered the rehabilitation of 340 families in 141 villages of Gujarat, and extended support to 206 individuals to enable them to be self-employed.

Problems Facing Our Community

"Problems" as documented by B. T. Dastur, Chief Executive, following the two-day meeting of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India (FPZAI) in June 1999:

● **Dwindling population** of Indian Parsis and need for practicable measures to reverse the trend.

● **Poverty.** Major maladies flow from the grip of poverty, congested living and poor education: sickness, disease and infant mortality.

● **Interfaith marriages** and the assimilation of their offspring.

● **Paucity of mobeds** and its impact on the survival of fire-temples, dokhmas and continuity of rituals and ceremonies.

● Need for professional management of the idle assets of **defunct Anjumans** and their efficient sale.

● **Non-participation** by member anjumans and aloofness of non-federated anjumans.

● Need to perpetuate the centuries-old and environmentally-friendly practice for the disposal of our dead in our **dokhmas**. The system has become inefficient. Problem is common to India and Pakistan.

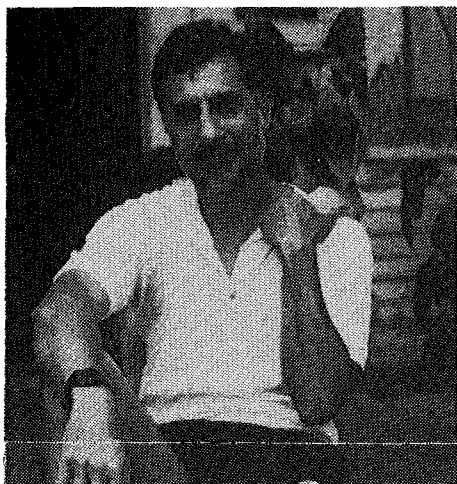
● Rising **cost of firewood** for our fire temples. The Nargol and Mhow anjumans have done pioneering work by having **Bawal** plantations on their dokhma grounds.

● **Absence of Parsis in the Central Services** (other than the 3 wings of defense). There is no Parsi officer in the IAS/IPS/IFS/IRS cadres today.

● **Lack of knowledge of Gujarati language**, especially among the émigré Parsis. This is a default of one of the five pledges our forefathers gave to Jadiv Rana.

The FPZAI plans to make a collective effort to take action on these "problems" and discuss progress at subsequent meetings. ■

- From Fed Newsletter, Aug 1999



By Yezdi M. Rustomji
Houston, Texas

Prologue. A dilemma that Zarathushtis face today is how best to preserve their historical identity. While in diaspora – going on now for some fourteen hundred years – the effectual way has been to lead an entirely communally segregated life. But now in North America, segregation is no longer essential to retaining Zarathushtrian singleness. Yet, there is call by followers of a creed to continue segregating and excluding others – for religious reason – so they claim. But it is a false claim, and such call is from a prejudicial standpoint.

Thus, in North America, all 'born' Zarathushtis are usually perceived as obstructionists by Islamic Iranians wishing to embrace their native religion. Moreover, the stance is prejudicial, for the segregationist-exclusionist core belief is that "race variations" reflect varying levels of spiritual and physical purity. In regards to the latter, Zarathushtrians should worry that the creed appends itself to the religion of Zarathushtra. It is the singular problematic issue facing Zarathushtrians.

Matters of discrimination and religio-ethnic superiority are of much wider societal concern in an egalitarian society: and Zarathushtrians are to be perceived, then, as the tentative *émigrés*, with various repercussions ensuing for the whole Zarathushtrian community.

Zarathushtrian Identity and Societal Concern

The cultural and religious resurgence in North America augers a steady growth in numbers of adherents, but it will continue only if a progressive Zarathushti mentality prevails.

Ancient and new intersections. Once Islamic suzerainty was established in Iran, Zarathushtrians in diaspora were always a "minority of minorities" wherever they settled. And through such exigency they retained their identity over millennia, because they practiced social segregation and religious exclusion. But in North America they are not refugees, scrabbling to survive. Moreover, Zarathushtrian identity is not to be given up involuntarily, for as a nation, the United States is committed to maintaining a pluralistic society. Even though Zarathushtrians do live within a western milieu, the fact is, that there is a resurgence among Zarathushtrians to study ancient Iranian history and culture, and closely embrace the religion of Zarathushtra.

Furthermore, in some parts of the world, as democratic realignments are occurring, formerly oppressed ancient Zarathushtrians numbering several million, are reclaiming their Zarathushti Daena, including many in Islamic Iran. Yet, even as worldwide developments auger a Zarathushtrian renaissance, a segment in the community aggressively maintains a segregationist and exclusionist stance.

For Zarathushtrians, North America has turned out to be the best home yet in several fortuitous respects. It is most significant that it is democratic. Moreover, its ethical, theological and political philosophy is consistent with ancient Zarathushtrian ethos – such

compatibility being evident in comparing the Preamble to the US constitution with Gatha Spenta Mainyu:

Preamble to the US Constitution:

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity ...

Yasna 48.5:

Let those who know how to rule well, and not the evil rulers, rule us! Let them rule us with wisdom – rule us with skill O Piety! O Thou, bring Humanity to perfection, and give hallowed blessings for its future life! Let man be active, zealously caring for his land and creatures so that they may flourish ...

So it was, some four millennia ago on the Iranian plateau, that the cornerstone of a progressive religion and civil society was set. The **Gathic Word** proclaimed then, was seminal to the development of a progressive social-religious worldview in the Western world.

Zarathushtra was the one who gave insight as to a democratic way of life when he chastised [Ys 30.2]:

Hear with your ears and ponder with a bright mind. Then each for himself or herself, seek the way of either of the two, the progressive or the regressive mentality.

It stands to reason then, that Zarathushtrians, from a historical

standpoint, may function naturally as a people of a progressive mentality.

With such determination, Zarathushtra established that in The Creation, the way of life is to be the choice of the individual. But if that determination was to be a dooming proposition for autocrats and zealots, with so many uninformed Zarathushtis about, the injunction seems to be of little consequence. So today, in North America, a new creed chips away at Zarathushtra's cornerstone reform, without much resistance. This new creed appeals to many Parsis particularly, because it plays well to that Zarathushtrian community's ever-enduring sense of racial ambiguousness. It also feeds their superstitious tendency and syncretic sensibility acquired living in India.

Fortunately, some Zarathushtis do conscientiously refute the creed. Nevertheless, this creed augers the worst for Zarathushtrians, for the resultant disputations approach internecine conflict, as relations are severed and established along dogmatic lines; and also, Zarathushtrian institutional collapse is imminent, for the creed requires division of Zarathushtrian communal assets, a dogmatic segregation of religious spaces, and control of dispensation of the sacramental.

Excursus. Zarathushtra meditated throughout his life earnestly seeking a greater God than the people contemplated, and he searched for better authorities than the *kavis*, *karpans*, princes and priests of those days. Both, his greater God and his greater ruler were to be of progressive mentality – to well-govern soul and mind. This holistic formulation was fundamental to the success of Zarathushtra's Reformation; and thus, *the Gathic* was not only a transcendental concept, but also social theory. The latter is evident in the *Gatha of the Reform of Existence* wherein Zarathushtra makes the singular observation; "The evil ruler by his

commands destroys the doctrines of the will of life: he prevents the acquiring of the Good Mind, its sacred possession."

Thus the Prophet Zarathushtra attributed all *good* to Ahura Mazda; and Zarathushtra the social philosopher, attributing all that ends up being *bad* in The Creation to lapses of humankind. An apt sociological observation could be made that *The walls of our imprisonment were there before we appeared on the scene, but they are ever rebuilt by ourselves. We are betrayed into captivity with our own cooperation.* Similarly, the late Dastur M. N. Dhalla, Ph.D, Litt.D., High Priest of the Parsis of Karachi and India, speaking to the Zarathushtrian condition, declared: "Orthodoxy is obstinacy to forget anything old and learn anything new."

Furthermore, in his work *The History of Zoroastrianism*, Dastur Dhalla, speaking to the raging battles among

“... formerly oppressed ancient Zarathushtrians numbering several million, are reclaiming their Zarathushtrian Daena ... yet, even as worldwide developments auger a Zarathushtrian renaissance, a segment of the community aggressively maintains a segregationist - exclusionist stance ...”

Zarathushtrians over 'Modernism versus Traditionalism' declared:

"Orthodoxy has always numbers on its side for the average man ... unwilling to be disturbed in the thought and views he has inherited ... he is content to live secure in the dead past ...

"Orthodoxy is jealous of the views it holds and resents all opposition. It aims at making people religious in its own way. It moves about with prying eyes and spies on its neighbor's conscience and struggles to read his thoughts. Whenever it is powerful enough it clips the wings of thought, gags speech, and cripples action.

"The collective orthodox mind controls the thinking of the individual and

drives dissenters to secret their thoughts in the lowest depths of their souls. Orthodoxy makes free thinking taboo and fails to see that high thinking is impossible without free thinking."

Like Zarathushtra, the scholar-High Priest, Dastur Dhalla felt the wrath of the creed driven Zarathushtis, suffering abuse and violence. Both Dastur Dhalla and Zarathushtra did inform humanity of mindless conformity; and notwithstanding the claim that sociological thought is a "modern form of consciousness," Zarathushtra analyzed, articulated and questioned socially detrimental forces, and thus, challenged regressive mentalities some four millennia ago. Zarathushtis in North America ought to be doing the same today.

A society at 30 paces, today? In North America, a creed originating in India, attempting to imbed itself in the religion of Zarathushtra twists and distorts Zarathushti doctrine. For example, the creed's followers claim that they – the select – are "born with the purest religious and racial gene" and therefore, all other humans are varyingly "impure". They feel that others, thus, defile them and their religious artifacts. But when others are kept 30 paces distant, they remain uncontaminated.

Moreover, Zarathushtis marrying "out" are considered permanently degraded; and are declared "adulterers" and the children "illegitimate".

The creed's believers also claim that the various human "races" represent thus, their varying levels of "purity" in soul and body. And so, the creed's followers at various times, wanting to keep the "impure" at 30 paces, demand to attain *separate, but equal* status in North America! But as stated earlier, such attitude and expectation is unreasonable in an egalitarian society.

A societal concern. Professor Kaikhosrov D. Irani has explained

that in Gathic view: "...each human being possesses, perhaps cultivated to different degrees, the quality of the Good Mind, Vohu Mana, in itself a divine creation. The Good Mind enables us to grasp Asha, the Ideal Truth; it also enables us to see any aspect of the world and recognize it for what it is, the way and the extent it is flawed."

Many Zarathushtrians understand that the Gathas are to be deeply contemplated for their wisdom, articulated for their truth and acted upon, to benefit humanity. Meditating upon the Gathas one can only conclude that anyone's prejudicial creed is flawed. Studying the Gathic discourses, one sees they are lamentations about such *druj*. Whereas regressive mentalities had prevailed in his time; Zarathushtra had despaired that the kavis, karpans, princes and priests inhibited acquiring of the Good Mind; and perforce, the deities people contemplated were essentially oppressive representations. To paraphrase the observation of the sociologist Emile Durkheim, the people's perception of God was constituted by the experience of the forms of authorities in their actual society.

In his work, *The Zoroastrian Tradition: An Introduction to the Ancient Wisdom of Zarathushtra*, Dr. Farhang Mehr states that even after reforms are made, as is the case with Zarathushtra's reform, "in the course of time, man in turn manipulates religion to serve his immediate interests. The history of religion is replete with examples of doctrinal misinterpretation, ideological adulteration and factual misinformation ..."

So now, Zarathushtrians have to worry about revivifying the authentic religion of Zarathushtra. This calls for Zarathushtrians forthrightly challenging doctrinal misinterpretation,

ideological adulteration, and factual misinformation promoted by members of a creed who wish to separate themselves from the "less pure".

Having lived nearly half a century in North America as a viable community, Zarathushtrians can now, confidently welcome others who wish to adopt the religion of Zarathushtra. They can begin by welcoming the whole intermarried family. But foremost, Zarathushtrians must refute any claim that the religion of Zarathushtra is a tribal religion; for the revered Dastur Dhalla has made it clear that *Zarathushtra, the chosen of Ahura Mazda, does not belong to any single period and particular people, but to all ages and to all people.*

The knowledge of ancient Iranian history and love of the religion of Zarathushtra has been growing steadily for nearly half a century in North America. This cultural and religious resurgence augers a steady growth in numbers of adherents, but it will continue only if a progressive Zarathushti mentality prevails. Therefore, authentic Zarathushtrian doctrine must be disseminated widely. But more so, inauthentic and prejudicial creeds being appended to the religion of Zarathushtra must be debunked conscientiously.

Zarathushtrians must always strive to preserve their historical identity, bearing in mind that progressive religious consciousness and progressive civic consciousness must prevail simultaneously.

And only then, as promised by Zarathushtra - This world and the other world will meld as *Khshathra Vairya* - "the wished-for Kingdom."

Yezdi M. Rustomji and his wife, *Magdalena*, live in Houston. Yezdi teaches Sociology at the University of Houston.

United We Stand

I pray that instead of fighting over issues, the members of our communities will find it in their hearts to forgive and unite for their youth

By Neda Namiranian
Berkeley, California

Throughout time, great philosophers have proposed that we never see anything so clearly as we do when we are children. In the blessed naiveté of our youth, every issue is black and white, each problem has a right and wrong answer which has definite negative and positive repercussions. However, as we mature, our judgement becomes clouded with prejudice, and we often see more gray than we do black and white. I do not profess to be a child, nor can I say that I have not become affected by the biases that maturity imposes. However, I feel that the time I have spent away from my community at college, has given me an increased clarity on some of the issues we now face.

I am deeply troubled by the bitter battle that is being waged within so many of our communities across the nation. It is a battle of pride, which uses harsh words as its ultimate weapons. I have always been under the notion, however antiquated and naïve as it may be, that a religious community was established for the sole purpose of furthering the fundamental tenets of religion, those being in our case, good thoughts, good words and good deeds. However, more and more, communities are

The search for modernity led us to discover our antiquity, the hidden face of the nation. I am not sure whether this unexpected lesson has been learned by all: that between tradition and modernity there is a bridge. When they are mutually isolated, tradition stagnates and modernity vaporizes; when joined, modernity breathes life into tradition, and tradition responds by providing depth and gravity. - from "In Search of the Present" by Octavio Paz

being torn apart because adults choose to act like petty children, with backstabbing and name calling being regarded as issues, to be dealt with by the community as a whole.

Our communities are beginning to look more and more like battlefields, with ally and enemy lines being forged through a network of phone calls and letters. Oftentimes, battles are fought within our communities over trivial issues, but can have lasting and damaging effects. When we are angry, we become vehicles of our hostility, and are often blinded by our passion. These are times when we need to turn to Ahura Mazda for direction, but instead we listen to an angry heart, and use our fury to incense others.

We forget the lessons taught throughout our childhood, and resort to calculated hypocrisy to create a mire of culpability, so that we have an outlet for our hatred. This often leads to an uncomfortable community environment, where everyone is forced to choose friends and enemies.

One of the sole objectives of our communities is to cultivate and promote goodwill and friendship among Zarathushtris and their families. Are we keeping these words in mind at every meeting and function? Instead of analyzing and dissecting the words of bylaws and constitutions to place blame, we should seek advice from words and spirit of Zarathushtra to guide us along the correct path.

I have cherished the friendships and bonds that my community and my faith have given me, and hope that it will maintain its prosperity and integrity for generations to come. I pray that instead of fighting over issues, our communities find it in their hearts to forgive and unite for their youth. May Ahura Mazda give us the wisdom and the strength to see beyond our prejudices and learn the most difficult lesson of all, forgiveness.■

Neda Namiranian is a Law student at U.C. Berkeley. In 1998, she won a position on the US National Extemp debating team at the Gateway Nationals.

READERS' 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 ...

It was Roshan Rivetna's "Thoughts from a Slightly Confused Parsi ..." [*Spring 1999*], which I have been reading aloud to my work colleagues and non-Zarathushti friends, that inspired me to write this letter, about a surprising encounter I had during my last visit to England.

After a lapse of five years, I returned to my home in Eastbourne on the Sussex coast. A day after my arrival, the doorbell rang, and I found myself staring at a rather elderly gentleman, who introduced himself as my neighbor, Roger. What followed was a minute's silence, and then a loud, "Oh My God, you are a Parsi! That is *dadaji* around your neck! You are a *bawaji*! How delightful! I never thought I would meet a Parsi, not in this part of England!

If he was surprised, I was shocked. To meet so knowledgeable a Britisher, who had the nerve to tell me on his first visit: "Bring out the *dhandal-patio*, and those *bhakras* and *batasas*! I love them all."

As it turned out, Roger had in the past been the neighbor in London, of Dr. and Mrs. Kutar and were familiar with every little detail of our customs and beliefs. For the next month I heard all about the philanthropic deeds of the Kutars, the immense help, kindness and moral support Mrs. Kutar constantly provided to those in need, of their compassion and good deeds. Roger spoke endlessly about them and about the London Parsis ...

My heart swells up with pride to know that even in this little corner of England, there are some Britishers (many of whom had lived in India during the good old days of the British Raj) with endearing memories of the Parsis they have met and taken to their hearts, both in India and in England.

I end with extreme gratitude from a Parsi reader, who thoroughly enjoys your magazine. Thank you FEZANA, for bringing happiness into the lives of so many!

*Pervin Paterasp Nirumvala
Vancouver, British Columbia*

On Music and Musicians

We thank you for your kindness and thoughtfulness in recognizing the whole Mehta family in your Summer 1999 issue. You have presented a very true picture of each one of us.

We are very proud to be Zoroastrians and I think, given the right time, place and opportunity, our community will do well in any walk of life. Innately, we are music-minded. Now, with Mrs. Meheroo Jeejeebhoy and Time and Talents Club (in Mumbai) helping gifted young music students with scholarships, holding music festivals and eventually hoping to establish a music school, seems like we are moving in the right direction.

We are great admirers of the Journal, enjoy the articles and marvel at your research time and capacity. It is an enormous task and undertaking. God give strength and reward you in His own mysterious way. Amen.

*Tehmi M. Mehta
Los Angeles, California*

The Summer 1999 issue was truly a grand one. It showed your work is from the heart. Your dedication is truly appreciated ... May our small but dynamic community experience peace and friendship. Our young generation is fed up of arguments, fights and name-calling. They want guidance, education and cohesiveness.

*Mehernaz Irani
Chandler, Arizona*



On the Farrokh Balsara - Freddie Mercury Story

Thank you very much for the copy of FEZANA Journal [Summer 1999]. We found it very interesting to read.

With our compliments,

Jer and Bomi Balsara
Nottingham, UK

The Balsaras, parents of Freddie Mercury, enclosed a "Mercury's Magic" commemorative postage stamp [right] issued by the UK Royal Mail, as part of the Millennium Series on Entertainers in June 1999.



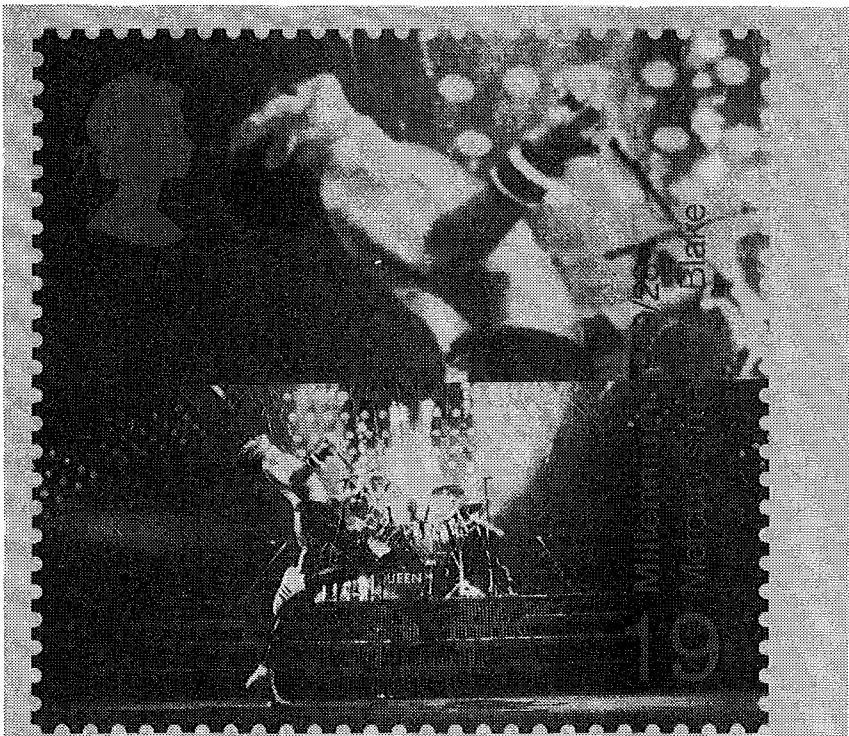
Music memories

Congratulations for the wonderful compilation of musicians [Summer 1999]. I must admit that I could not put the magazine down until I had read every line of this issue. It brought me nostalgic memories of yesteryear. It was like going back in time – most of the names mentioned came right in front of me.

Boy! Were they great times! Jamming up at the Bistro and Volga's, Venice, Skyline, La Bella, Little Hut, Gaylord's, Bombelli's, Berry's near Churchgate and Bertorellis at Worli. Nightlife in Bombay and Calcutta was just wonderful, and if the boys knew you, there was always a nod by the bandleader to come and jam with them, which I inevitably did.

The golden years of music faded after the 1960s with the mass migration of musicians to greener pastures overseas, or to the Indian film industry for their survival.

The last live nightclub I remember was the Blowup disco at the Taj Mahal hotel. It was here that the late **Goody Seervai** gave his final performance, before becoming a victim of the Hepatitis epidemic which hit Bombay in the late 1970s. A man so young at heart that we could never see his age, always smiling and performing like a teenager. I know this is true because I was there with him on the stage for his final perfor-



mance. Thanks a lot FEZANA Journal for those wonderful memories.

There was one Zarathushti musician of exceptional quality to whom FEZANA Journal forgot to pay tribute. I was lucky to be associated with him. I met him in Delhi.

I was dining at the Imperial Hotel, when I heard the sensuous, mellow, husky sound of a Tenor Sax blowing cool notes to the tune of *Smoke Gets in Your Eyes*. The dining hall was dim and the band stage was just a dark blur a distance away. I stopped eating and was just paralyzed, and so were a group of young American tourists on the adjoining tables.

For the next few minutes, time just stood still while the saxophonist sounded out the most astonishing notes. Music flowed out in tiny rivulets and with amazing grace. There were tears flowing down my cheeks of which I was almost unaware, and the next thing I saw, the tourists stand up and give that 'cool cat' a standing ovation.

When the music was over, I walked up to the stage and shook hands with this old man crouching over his sax, breathless. Having introduced myself, he had a silly grin on his face and he laughed out loud and started conversing with me like a true Parsi.

I was equally flabbergasted, as we both did not look like Parsis and yet we both were.

That was my first introduction to the late **Rudy Cotton**, alias Mr. Khatau of the famous Khatau Brothers of Balaram Street. One was the noted boxer, the other a renowned musician, one of the greatest Tenor Saxophonists I have ever met.

Over the course of time Rudy and I became good friends. Rudy was riddled with tuberculosis and not very financially sound. But people had a great soft corner for him.

Rudy died after a few years – unsung, unheard and almost unwept – old and frail, but with always a touch of humor.

So Rudy, old boy, the least I can do for you is to let our people know that you have not gone forgotten. So cheers and here's to you:

As I type this letter,
My eyes start flowing,
Can almost hear
your 'Cool Sax' blowing,
And the angels cheer,
As you blow in the skies,
I salute you and that
"Smoke Gets in Your Eyes".

Dr. Behram T. Badhniwalla
Pune, India

On the Prayer Issue

Congratulations once again for another excellent Journal [Fall 1999]. I particularly liked your layout of the *Prayer Guide*. It was very well organized and presented. You are doing a magnificent job, which deserves not only North American but world Zarathushti community's commendation.

My only (constructive) criticism is regarding the fuzzy photographs. The Journal would be considerably enhanced if the photos were sharp and clear.

Dinshaw Joshi

Chevy Chase, Maryland

FEZANA Journal projects such a refreshing image of the community in North America and its vitality; and I am often greatly impressed by its scholarship. This is a Journal full of riches, and each issue seems to be a triumph of editorial organization and creativity. Dedication such as yours is rare and awesome.

Thank you very much.

Mithoo Coorlawala

Mumbai, India

We truly enjoy reading FEZANA Journal. Keep up the good work and please keep the print large and readable for people with bad eyesight.

Jeroo Chinoy

Flint, Michigan

We just wanted to thank you and all members of the FEZANA Committee for all the hard work you put in for the Journal and for FEZANA. Thank you and God Bless.

Farshid and Farzaneh Sohrabi

Los Angeles, California

On Nirang

I am quite perplexed about the claim ["Nirang, *Water of Life*", by Late Dastur Sohrabji Kutar, Fall 1999] about the efficacy of nirang even when transported all the way to London, when as far as I know, its efficacy is lost and vitiated as soon as it is placed in a plane, taxi, car or any

place occupied by non-Zarathushtis or Zarathushtis who are not in a ritually pure state. By doing so, the priest also has to undergo his nahan (baresnum) again for 9 days.

This rule is so strictly followed, that as a young child, I personally witnessed it. Circa 1950, whenever the Mhow priest wanted to transport nirang from Bombay for his use, he requested my family to follow him in our car, but would refuse to sit in the car. Instead he requested a Zarathushti friend to drive him hundreds of miles on his motorbike, always keeping the nirang on his own person.

When state inspectors suspected us of drug trafficking, the priest refused to let them touch the nirang, even at the peril of going to jail, resisting in his broken English: "Sacred bull's urine – don't touch", until the inspector relented, respecting the priests strong convictions. This incident has become enshrined in my memory to this day.

How the priests and even the laity of only one generation ago would react to the London legend is left to the readers to judge.

Dilshad K. Antia

Orland Park, Illinois

Zoroastrian, Zarathushti or Zartushti?

I regard 'Zarathushti' as an attempt at political correctness that is inappropriate. We write and speak in English and use terms that are commonly used in that vernacular. The term 'Zoroastrian' has been used for decades by those expressing themselves in English. Furthermore, the English language was widely adopted by the Parsis and as far as I can recall, none of my Parsi acquaintances ever referred to themselves or others as Zarathushti, until relatively recently.

'Zartushti' is how we Iranians describe ourselves when we are speaking Persian (note we use the term 'Persian' when speaking/writing in English) and we certainly haven't suddenly inserted an extra syllable 'a' (as in Zar-a), nor have we

changed the sound of the 't' to a 'th' (which doesn't exist in Persian).

I can see no reason to use a form of appellation which is not part of the vernacular of our own community and is being reinvented at the end of the 20th century. Maybe those who insist on the term are manifesting a zeal which exceeds their rational considerations.

The bottom line is, if you speak Persian, then you say 'Zartushti' just as you would 'Mosulmun'. If you speak English then you say Zoroastrian, just as you would say 'Muslim.'

There is no need to go for political correctness or uniformity and I can see no case for introducing it as a more desirable label than any other we have used in the past or are using today.

Shahin Bekhradnia

Oxford, UK

Calling Senior Citizens

This is an invitation for all Zarathushtis over the age of 60, residing anywhere in the world, to contact each other through letters, email, the Web and writing to national and international Zarathushti newspapers and magazines and news media.

We can help forge links and build bridges by sharing our experiences, interests, dreams, plans and projects.

"Grow old along with me

The best of life is yet to be."

- Browning

Behram Sohrab Rustomji

*c/o Armaiti Desai, Mino Meher,
22 Union Park, Mumbai 400 052*

Correct the Calendar

What are our mobeds and leaders doing? Why do they not determine which calendar is correct and order every Zarathushti to use it?

Asho Zarathushtra's birthday ceremony is on Khordad Roz and Fravardin Mah, 26th March. Why do some celebrate it on July 28th (Kadmi) and August 27th (Shenshai)?

Rostam Rostami-Asrabadi

Centerville, Ohio



Lest We Forget

By Dinaz Kutar Rogers
Albany, Oregon



Regale me with tales of faraway and near
That to my heart they may add much cheer.

Those legends of old
Over time have been told
From generation to generation
With joy and veneration.

Legends and lore gaining strength over time
Never losing their luster – always sublime.
Oh tell me the tales, those stories of old:
Of Rustom, Sohrab, knights noble and bold.
Tales from Shah Namehs, madar vattan Iran
Kisseh-e Sanjan, and generous Mother Hindustan.
Histories, allegories and hyperbole
Fables, epics, everyone has a story.
Over time and distance our people did strive
Now we must keep these legendary flames alive.
Of legend and lore
I yearn to know more.

So shout out to the world, before memories fade
Give us your all – of which legends are made.

- Dinaz Kutar Rogers

Do you remember any stories or sayings?

For FEZANA Journal's new regular feature "Lest We Forget", hosted by Dinaz Kutar Rogers, readers are invited to contribute their stories, lores, legends and memories related to our faith, community, Iran, India, that we grew up with as young children. Jot down those sayings your mother used to say, and send them in, with your version of the meanings. Please send to Dinaz at 1240 Takena SW, Albany, Oregon 97321, Tel: (541) 967-1911; drogers@proaxis.com.

ORIGINS

"Such is the stock I spring from"

- Titus Maccius Platus c254-184 bce

We Parsi-Zoroastrians are one of the most unique people that inhabit this earth. Or so we were told and this I believed. And I still do.

Parsi – I remember as a little girl transposing the letters of that beloved word, so it became Paris to me. For a brief time I believed that my ancestors had run away from France, till one day the story-telling began. Those wonderful stories came to us from all directions: grandmothers, grandfathers, father, mother, aunts, uncles and neighbors. Twice-told tales that one never tired of – most of which came from the *Shah Nameh* (*Shah*: King, *Nameh*: Stories/book). But then, our heritage is twice blessed – the proud Indo-Iranian legacy.

My uncle, the story-teller. "You see, we *had* to run away, mind you, not as cowards but as descendants of the brave soldiers, citizens and of course, the priests of the last Zarathushti king, Yazdegard III, the last ruler of the Sasanian dynasty of Iran," my uncle stated with pride evident in his voice and eyes. Oh what a marvelous orator he was. But I am digressing – back to the origins of the Parsis.

Conquests and conversion. "Between 640 and 649 CE, our Iran was overtaken and conquered by the invading armies of Khalif Omar in the conclusive battles of Qadisiya and Nihavand." The little ones and the not so little ones around him gasped. With his sharp wit and self-assured manner, my uncle was an imposing man. We were deeply in awe of him and his M.A. in Philosophy. He had written a few books and had translated books from Farsi into English and Gujarati. More about Gujarati later.

The baritone voice continued its dramatic narration. "But before Iran's fall, Syria was squashed by the Arabs

and, like dominos, they fell to the sword – Jerusalem, Caesarea, Palestine, Iraq and Egypt. Spain would have to wait another hundred years to be reached, through North Africa.” My uncle cleared his throat and gulped down a glass of water.

“But you know” dropping his voice to a whisper, he looked around, satisfied that we were his eager listeners, “Our ancestors, the Persians, put up a great fight against the invaders. The conquest of our *madar vattan* (mother country) Iran, took such a long time because we were solidly united, a non-Semitic nation and steadfastly Zarathushti. After a time, realizing things would never be ‘normal’, that this too shall *not* pass, our ancestors fled to the mountains of Kohistan in Khorasan in Iran.”

Scanning his captive audience, my uncle looked over his glasses that were half-way down his nose and stated: “As a matter of fact, that was the region called Parthia in ancient times.” And he added, “Don’t forget that most refugees, our ancestors, came from a region called Pars.”

The story continued. “After a century of hardships, they fled to the port of Hormuz, Islamic religious persecution nipping away at their heels. Thence they set sail for the west coast of India.”

Much later, through independent studies, I learned that Iran unfortunately, was ripe for such a heart-wrenching conquest and conversion. The once-glorious House of Sasan was in its later years, in a state of decay from within, as evidenced by its weak kings, haughty and disloyal generals, the devastating wars with Rome to the west and the cruel marauders from the east.

Geography has indeed shaped the histories of Iran and India. Avarice, famines, plagues and dissatisfaction were eroding the nation’s vigor, but the unkindest and mortal blow was dealt when the pure and simple teachings of Zarathushtra were replaced by intolerance and unbend-

ing fundamentalism. The country was like a fragile house of cards. The gates opened and a gust of wind in the form of the Arab armies blew in, collapsing the glory that was the Zarathushti Iran!

The milk and sugar story. “After a brief stay on the island of Div, off Kathiawar on the western coast of India, we landed in Sanjan, 70 miles north of Bombay.”

“Tell us about Jadiv Rana and the milk and sugar story.” I was anxious, not just to hear the tale beloved to all Parsis, but to hear the way my uncle told the tale. His marvelous voice alone captured one’s attention, not to mention his clean white flowing priestly robes and headgear and the jet black French beard and neatly trimmed moustache.

“Just imagine the shock of the inhabitants of coastal Sanjan when these tall, differently-garbed people came ashore. But remember, India in those days was not India as it is today. India was in reality made up of small and large kingdoms ruled by kings and maharajas, each kingdom an independent nation unto itself and at war among themselves. So the

request for refuge went to the then king of the kingdom, Jadiv Rana, the Hindu king of Gujarat.”

At this point the narratives diverge slightly, depending upon the storyteller, but my favorite was my uncle’s version. “The king of Sanjan was war weary. He did not need any strangers camping on his land. To indicate that his own overpopulated land could not absorb any more, he sent a cup filled to the brim with milk. One of the wise priests on the ship, understanding the polite refusal but at the same time realizing the gravity of the denial, put sugar in the milk.”

Tears were threatening to spill over from some of our eyes. “Just as sugar mixes with milk and sweetens it,” the priest explained, “so shall we. We will be the sugar to your milk. We will sweeten your lands with our words, deeds and allegiance, if only we are allowed to practice our faith in peace.”

Iran had by that time, been converted to Islam, and oh, how I can imagine the pain those brave souls must have felt! Beginnings, ones in far-off lands and especially so in those days, were always risky, but the fact that during all those intervening centuries the Par-

Persian priests at the court of the Hindu rajah Jadiv Rana. [From “In Search of My God”, published by the Zoroastrian Foundation, Los Angeles, 1978, painting by V. S. Waghulkar].



sis of India have survived is a testimonial to the spirit of those pioneers.

"Instinctive behavior to survive is a biological imperative handed down to the human race from our primeval ancestors," Uncle continued, "Added to that was the very human passion for continuity and the wonderfully fierce Persian pride to preserve what was the greatest."

"Wonder if they celebrated?" His son, Faredoon, my cousin, was curious, running ahead of the narrative.

"They must have, with a *jashan*," replied Uncle, "but I'm sure that some, still haunted by thoughts of their motherland, were not ready to cheer out loud."

The other popular version of the story is that the priests went to the royal court to make their request for refuge. "Conditions were laid out by the king." My uncle's voice went out into the beautiful Sunday morning as all of us, with heads covered with black *topis* (caps) sat on the porch of the Madressa (religious institute). We had gathered for our weekly religious classes where we were taught prayers in the ancient language of the Avesta, received an explanation of our religious rituals, and heard stories from the Shah Nameh.

"The conditions our ancestors had to agree to in exchange for some lands and religious freedom were that: (1) we provide an explanation and description of the faith; (2) we adopt the Gujarati language as our mother tongue; (3) our women wear the sari; (4) we surrender all weapons; and (5) we hold our marriage ceremonies after sunset." There was a dramatic pause. "And so the small amount of sugar stayed in the milk of human kindness – Mother India – continuing to sweeten the milk, as we have indeed done and will continue to do, forever; giving much to the country but never asking for much in return – the most ideal refugees any country could ever wish for!"

I was sobbing, moved by the drama of it all, much to the amusement of some of the older boys.

Yes, today we speak Gujarati, wear saris, still hold marriage ceremonies after the sun goes down, are pacifists and perform our religious ceremonies faithful to those that were performed in ancient Iran. If Mother India is a dramatic word, no one understands or feels that word more than we Parsis of India do – or as our ancestors must have felt.

More flights and migrations. When, about five centuries or so after our ancestors arrived in this new motherland (you see, India was *our* Israel), the armies of Mahmud Baghda, or according to another source, the Muslim general Alaf Khan, attacked Sanjan, the Parsis fought alongside their Hindu compatriots. They lost to the invading armies and the Parsis fled once more, taking their holy fire with them.

From readings later in life I was able to glean that the Parsis prospered and lived through a few massacres in the tenth and eleventh centuries. A threatened massacre was averted in 1425 when the Portuguese governor of Thana, 20 miles north of Bombay demanded that the Parsis convert to Catholicism or be killed. The Parsis, pretending to acquiesce, asked for one last time to celebrate their religious rituals, and as the celebrations continued with the entire town present, the Parsis, with their holy fire, fled the town.

"Thus in their flights and peaceful migrations, the sacred fire moved from place to place too, because the fire is a very sacred symbol to the Parsis, just as the cross is to the Christians. The fire went wherever the Parsis went, and a new fire temple (agiary) would be built," Uncle concluded. ■

Dinaz Kutar Rogers is a high-school biology teacher and lives in Albany, Oregon, with her husband Dan and two daughters Diane Armaity and Zenobia. She is also a writer, has published some of her works and is currently working on a book about Zarathushti heritage.

My mother used to say ...

"The old forget. The young don't know." - Japanese proverb

"Pelhe pate-nu, pachee sethnu"

First it's the stomach's, then it's the master's. Let's look after our own before we go running around, looking after others. Charity begins at home.

"Pug turay jaw".

Look under your feet. When someone talks about your good fortunes, say your beautiful baby or a great job or possessions, one is compelled to say this to avert any evil eye or bad luck.

"Ma-ray-ray, koynee najar lagee ga-ee"

Oh dear! Some one must have cast an evil eye upon us.

"Bol-you chal-you maaf karjo"

Walking, talking forgive. This is usually uttered to the host when one leaves a party or an extended stay or a visit. Whatever was said and done, there was no malicious intent – please forgive and forget. (There is a *garba* dance starting with this phrase – I still remember the tune, but not the rest of the words).

"Hamara khoon khoon, doosrow ka khoon pani"

Our blood blood, other's blood water. You express your displeasure towards someone for condemning others for their transgressions, but overlooking the transgressions of their own family or friends.

"Dar dodhi ma jeev"

Your soul is in lentils and gourds. Your heart and soul are in two very different foods (lentils as in *dhansakh ni dar* and *dodhi* a long, green gourd). An expression indicating that you are involved/interested in many different projects, something like "a finger in every pie". ■

THE VENGEANCE OF MANOUCHEHR

The fratricidal murder of Irach at the hands of his own brothers left their father Feraydun in a state of immense sorrow. Irach had a daughter who was raised by Feraydun. She grew up and married a courageous Persian prince named Pashang. In time, a son was born to the couple whom they named Manouchehr.

Feraydun's joy knew no bounds. He gave orders that special pains be taken to educate the young prince in the art of being a warrior and king. Years passed and Feraydun, with pomp and circumstance declared his great-grandson Manouchehr's right to the throne of Iran, on which sat his grandfather Irach, before his life was cut short by his own brothers.

Irach's two brothers Salm and Tur had their own kingdoms – west and east of Iran. News reached them about Manouchehr's immense popularity and his desire to avenge his grandfather Irach's murder at their hands. Both the brothers were filled with fear. They sent an envoy with treasures – ivory thrones, golden crowns, jewels, brocade, silk and fur to Feraydun's court, begging for forgiveness for their past misdeeds from their father Feraydun who responded with emotion, "I shall not sell the blood of my son Irach for gold and jewels. Manouchehr will come to you, but not like Irach, careless of his safety, unarmed and alone. He will come with the Kaviani banner and a mighty army to seek revenge and I shall not rest until I see you punished."

The envoy returned to Salm and Tur to inform them of Feraydun's

response and the glory of his court and royal 'farr'. The salacious brothers were gripped with fear. They decided to attack by crossing the Oxus and bearing down upon Iran. News reached Feraydun of their approach. He summoned

of him. Ask him what claim he has to a throne and a crown, grandson of a serving girl that he is." When this message was repeated to Manouchehr, he responded, "Let the fool say what he will. All praise be to Ohrmazd, Irach was my grandfather."

STORIES

FROM THE

SHAH NAMEH

Part 3 Manouchehr and Sam

By Khorshed Jungalwala



Defeat of Tur by Manouchehr

Painting by unknown artist in Isfahan style c. 1604.

By permission: of the British Library]

Manouchehr and said, "My son, the time has come for war and vengeance. Equip your army and prepare for battle."

The armies of Iran were ably led by Manouchehr and his noblemen Kobad, Garshasp, Qaren and Sam. The two armies were poised to advance towards each other, when Tur rode out before his men and called his defiance to Manouchehr. "Tell young Manouchehr that I have no fear

Manouchehr himself annihilated both Tur and Salm and sent their severed heads to Feraydun. He also righteously forgave the armies of Tur and Salm and sent them back to their own lands without further bloodshed. The mission of avenging his grandfather Irach's murder was accomplished. Upon returning to his kingdom, Manouchehr and his armies were feted. Feraydun entrusted the well being of Manouchehr to Sam, the ruler of the small kingdom of Zabulistan and a renowned champion of Iran.

*Having done this,
he bowed to Fate's decree
The leaf was withered
on the royal tree.
He lived his life in mourn-
ing; ceaseless tears
And constant grief con-
sumed his final years.*

He placed Manouchehr on the imperial throne, where he himself once sat, and with his own hands he set the Kayanid crown on Manouchehr's head. Manouchehr reigned for a glorious one hundred and twenty

years with justice, fairplay, generosity and righteousness.

[Here Firdowsi comments upon the ephemerality of the world, where nothing is forever. He alone lives well who leaves behind a good name.]

SAM AND THE SIMORGH

Sam, the son of Nariman, was the lord of Zabulistan and the preeminent champion of Iran. For a long time Sam had no sons. Finally, one of the

women of his entourage bore him a handsome son, with rosy cheeks and beautiful black eyes. However, the baby's hair was white as snow. No one dared to go to Sam with this information. When the baby's wet nurse brought him the news, Sam was grief-stricken.

Turning his face to the heavens he said, "O Ohrmazd, what sin have I committed that you have given me a white-haired son? How can I lift my head up with such shame in my family? How can I stay in my own country with such a son?" He ordered the baby be taken from its grieving mother immediately and carried to the foothills of the Alburz Mountains, to be left there bereft of clothes, food or comfort.

[Firdowsi here deplores the callousness of Sam, giving examples of even wild animals loving their offspring more intensely than human beings].

The Simorgh (a huge bird) had a nest on Mount Demavand on the summit of the Alburz Mountains. She heard sounds of a crying baby and instead of treating the child as prey, her maternal love prompted her to swoop down and pick up the abandoned baby and take him to her own fledglings. A voice came from God to the Simorgh, saying, "O king of birds, nourish and look after this splendid child." The Simorgh gave the child nourishment appropriate for a human child and brought him up with her own young.

Many years passed. The child grew up to become a brave and noble youth. Caravans passed by snatching occasional glimpses of the fair, white-haired youth. Rumors of the sightings of the youth reached Sam (his father).

[Firdowsi remarks that neither good nor bad ever remains a secret in this world.]

One night Sam dreamed that a man from India came galloping on his steed and gave him pleasant tidings of his son. He immediately consulted with his court of advisers who unanimously exhorted him not to run away from his parental obligation, but to follow the path of remorse and seek out his son.

Sam saw a second dream of a young man carrying a banner at the head of an army in the mountains of India and accompanied by two learned priests. One of the priests admonished Sam harshly, "O presumptuous, heartless man, had you no shame before Ohrmazd that you exposed on a mountainside, the son for whom you had begged Ohrmazd? You despised him for his white hair, but look, your own hair has turned as white as milk. What kind of a father do you call yourself, that a bird has had to bring up your child?"

Immediate preparations were underway for Sam to make the journey to Alburz Mountains. On top of the peak rose Simorgh's nest near which walked the nimble bodied noble youth. Scattering dust on his own

head, Sam bowed before Ohrmazd, repenting his former actions and asked him to place a path before him to reach his son high up in the mountains. The Simorgh realizing that Sam had come in search of his son, said to the youth, "O brave young man, until today, I have brought you up as if I were your nurse, and I have taught you speech and the ways of virtue. Now it is time for you to return to your own birthplace. Your father has come searching for you. (The Simorgh had named the youth Dastan-e Zal).

Dastan's eyes filled with tears and showed reluctance to leave Simorgh. The Simorgh said, "I have not lost my love for you. You must return to Zabulistan and be a brave warrior. I give you this feather from my own wing. Whenever you are in trouble, fling the feather in the fire and without delay I shall come to your aid."

The Simorgh lifted Dastan up from the mountain peak and placed him on the ground next to his father. Sam wept copiously upon seeing his son. Bowing his head before the Simorgh, he addressed him as the Leader of the Birds and said that Ohrmazd had given him strength and grace so that he may, always, come to the rescue of the oppressed. Sam embraced his son Dastan and returned with him and his warriors to Zabulistan. From that day forth, because of his white hair, Dastan was called Zal-e Zar (The Golden Graybeard). ■

God Are You Real?

"God are you real?" the little child whispered, "God speak to me!" And a meadowlark sang, but the child did not hear.

So the child yelled, "God, speak to me!" And the thunder rolled across the sky, but the child did not listen.

The child looked around and said, "God, let me see you!" And a star shone brightly, but the child did not notice.

And the child shouted, "God, show me a miracle!" And a life was born, but the child did not know.

So the child cried out in despair, "Touch me God, let me know you are there!" Whereupon God reached down and touched the child.

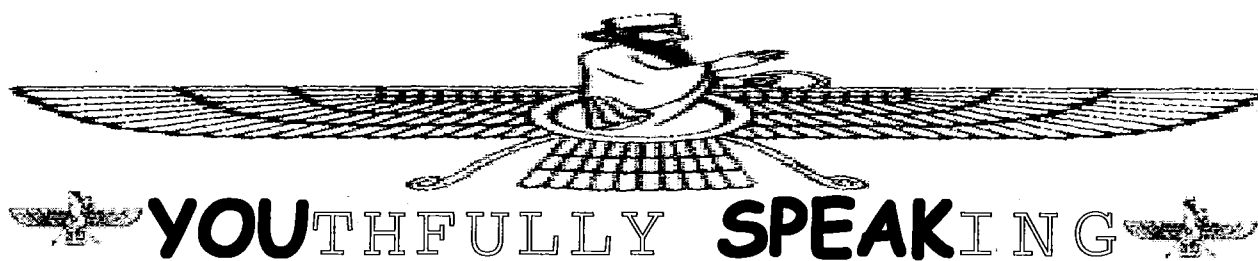
But the child brushed the butterfly away, and walked away unknowingly.

- From a posting by Kaykhosrow Samiya on zoroastrians@listbot.com

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"THE STAFF OF YOUTHFULLY SPEAKING IS ALWAYS ON THE LOOKOUT FOR IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE ISSUES. WE LOOK TO THE YOUTH IN THE COMMUNITY TO SUPPLY US WITH THEIR THOUGHTS ON OUR RELIGION AND COMMUNITY. ALL TOO OFTEN WE FORSAKE OUR RIGHT TO BE HEARD. TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO LET OTHERS KNOW WHAT IS ON YOUR MIND. USE THIS JOURNAL AS A TOOL FOR ACTION. WRITE TO US.... WE'RE WAITING TO HEAR FROM YA'LL!"

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**Please feel free to submit an
articles, pictures, comments,
to any one of the co-editors.**

"Youth Talk"

By:Nikan Khatibi

"In every issue of the FEZANA Journal, in the Youthfully Speaking section, a question will be asked to the Zarathushti youth. The question will concern topics and issues in our community"

We Zarathusthis are a declining religion, and yet we still find time to see the difference in Parsees and Iranians, instead of learning and sharing the postivie similarities that each culture has to offer. So my question to my fellow youth is:

What is the difference between an Iranian Zarathushti and a Parsi Zarathushti?

It is impossible to define what an Iranian Zarathushti is and what a Parsi Zarathushti is. Every person is an individual and the differences between individuals can only be determind by getting to know those individuals. If members of our community would spend more time getting to know each other and less time trying to put people in groups and categories, we would find that we will get along much better. It often happens that we judge people because of the group they belong to but upon getting to know them we realize that they are humans just like us and we begin to like them.

Tamuchin McCreless
Dallas, Texas

In my belief Iranians aren't as Zarathushti as Parsis, Parsis aren't as Zarathushti as Iranians, he is Parsi so I won't listen to him, she is Irani so I won't listen to her. In the same way that there is no difference between a boy and a girl, there is no difference between an Iranian and a Parsi; that is that, beyond the obvious differences between the sexes, they are essentially the same. In my firm belief, the youth will skip over the two middle stages, ending on a note where Parsis and Iranians can easily sit down at a table and discuss matters without yelling at each other, without ridiculing each other, and without staring blankly at each other while not listening out of spite. There are 100,000 of us left, my friends; we can neither afford nor could we survive a Protestant Reformation of our own.

Feroze Yazdi Sidhwa
Sugarland, Texas



"Youth Talk" [Continued]

The truth is, an Iranian and a Parsi just have different traditions, but truly we are the same when it comes to religion. Come on Zarathushtis. We must stop disputing our differences and think about our future. I want to be able to have a future with Zarathushtis being one of the major religions. We can become big once again, if we only stop and think. There is no Parsi Zarathushti or there is no Iranian Zarathushti, but I have heard of a Zarathushti, haven't you?

Yasmin J. Patel
Miami, Florida

The difference between an Iranian and a Parsi Zarathushti is only their personal customs. Yes they both have different clothes, languages and different traditions, but they both believe in Ahura Mazda, and that's what counts the most. As long as we both believe in one God, why should we look at the differences that our two different groups of Zarathushtis have. Also, I see that Iranians and Parsis always are at different ends of the party, and I wonder why, because we are not different.

Zareen Mehta
Albany, New York

Nikan's View

What is the difference between an Iranian Zarathushti and a Parsi Zarathushti? To many of us, this seems to be a difficult question to answer, but to me it's probably the easiest. In my eyes, I do not see a Parsee and I do not see an Iranian. I only see a person who truly loves the faith of Zarathushtra and wishes to follow it. What makes our religion so unique, so great, is that we have a great blend of traditions and customs that we may teach to one another. Unfortunately, the majority of today's Zarathushti population does not see that. They only see two groups of Zarathushtis who are followers of the same religion but with different customs and language. Instead of rejecting the ideas of one another, we must learn to adjust and accept these differences and truly, does it hurt to learn a little more? My only wish is to see the future and pray I will see the youth of tomorrow looking through my glasses and see no difference.

The question for the next issue...

What are some ways that we Zarathushtis can bring greater unity between one another?

Please email responses to:

nikan2@aol.com or nenshad@netscape.net



Dear Youth of Tomorrow,

Welcome to Fezana's Youthfully Speaking section!!! For those who may not know me my name is Nikan Khatibi. I have the great privilege to be the new co-editor for the Youthfully Speaking section. Now allow me to tell you a little bit about myself. I am originally from Houston, Texas. I have lived in this city for the majority of my life; therefore, I do have a slight Texan accent. In Houston, I was able to interact with many Zarathushtis and take an active role in the society. The Zarathushti Association of Houston was a place where I was privileged to be brought up in and proud to represent. I have learned a great deal of knowledge about our religion through the society and only wish to share my knowledge with others. I do my very best to travel to Zarathushti events around the world to get a better understanding and further enhance my knowledge of the religion of Zarathushtra. Now, I have recently moved to Southern California, where I hope to continue with my involvement in the Zarathushti community. Outside of my religious activities, I am always studying for an exam or spending time with my parents, Houshang & Fereshteh Yazdani-Khatibi, and two sisters, Artimis & Parmis. I am currently studying to accomplish my life long dream of becoming a surgeon. Now, allow me to tell you little bit more about my goals for the section.

The Youthfully Speaking section has always been the first page I would turn to as soon as I received my copy of the Fezana Journal. Of course I would read the whole journal, but it was something in particular about the Youthfully Speaking section that grasped me first. Yet through my interaction with other youth, I have grown somewhat wondrousome. I am slightly worried about my generation of youth, wondering whether or not they understand the true definition of being a Zarathushti. We have the capability to learn, and the means of which to learn, but do we have the interest to truly go out and learn. Hence, my goal in the Youthfully Speaking section will be to make each and every youth reading this section, understand the true meaning of being a Zarathushti, and help them learn, practice, and teach the religion of Zarathushtra. Zoroastrianism is one unique, beautiful, and indescribable religion, and we must all learn about it, or it will soon only exist in history books.

I only ask of you, the youth of tomorrow, to use this section as a way to learn and express any concerns, comments, or any questions that you might have. I am doing this for you, so please use this opportunity to get a better understanding of any questions or problems you may have. My first proposition to the youth of tomorrow is to recite the Ashem Vohu prayer at least seven times a day. I promise you that you will live everyday happier if you only recite these prayers and understand what they mean. What is





Meet Your New Editors



Continue Nikan Khatibi introduction...

five minutes of your time anyways? On your way to school, driving to work, or during free time, just take five minutes a day to recite these prayers. Last but not least, this is for those Zarathushti's that are looking to help but do not know where to get started. Nenshad and I are always looking for volunteers to assist us with writing these articles. And if you don't have a taste for writing, feel free to submit pictures of Zarathushti events that have taken place. If you would like to help, or just want to ask a question or simply have a comment, please feel free to email me at: Nikan2@aol.com.

Sincerely,

Nikan Khatibi, Co-Editor

Nenshad Bardoliwalla on Nenshad Bardoliwalla

By Nenshad D. Bardoliwalla

A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away, a child was born upon this Earth whose capacity for mischief knew no bounds. From his earliest days, it was clear to his parents that raising him would be a most formidable task. It is particularly ironic, then, that Hutoxi and Dinshaw Bardoliwalla made the mistake of naming their son Nenshad, Nen (or Nain) for "eyes" and Shad for "happiness". By the age of two, he had already shunned milk as a source of nourishment and replaced it with the healthiest of beverages, Coca-Cola. By the age of three, his fluidity with words unspeakable by most upstanding members of society earned him numerous rants from his playmates, their parents, and of course, his own. By most accounts, he has grown up very little since those early days...

I'm Nenshad Bardoliwalla, the new co-editor of the Youthfully Speaking section of FEZANA Journal. Given my lifelong involvement with the Zarathushti community, I am very honored to have been appointed to this position. I've been a member of ZAGNY almost since birth and have been privileged to be a part of the vibrant Zarathushti community in the New York Tri-State Area. I was a frequent attendee (and irritant) during religious classes at our Darbe Mehr, and could occasionally be caught shaking my booty on the dance floor during Nouruz functions. Most recently, I was somehow hoodwinked into being the Master of Ceremonies for the Eleventh North American Zoroastrian Congress, held in New York in July 1998. And that, of course, brings us to the present.

I am deeply concerned with a number of the issues that surround our Zarathushti community as we conclude our wild ride through the Twentieth Century and begin the next. I think that one of the primary strengths that this forum can provide is to be an outlet for Zarathushti youth to exchange their views and debate them in an attempt to reach a common understanding of what is at stake for everyone involved. And while my co-editor, Nikan Khatibi and myself will frequently make our own contributions to Youthfully Speaking, I think our most productive contribution will be to take on the role of facilitators, who can generate ideas for topics for discussion and provide the forum in which they can be articulated. That means that our success, by and large, is dependent on YOU. Send us your ideas, feelings, rants, raves, e-mails, attachments, Gatha translations, checks, money orders, CODs, ANYTHING that you would like to contribute and share with your fellow Zarathushti youth. We would love to hear from as many of you as possible. If you would like to get in touch with me, you are welcome to e-mail me at my profoundly creative e-mail address, nenshad@netscape.net. Or if you are in the mood, call me at my sister's place at 716-292-5693. I don't live with her, but she'll get extremely annoyed if people keep calling and asking for me there, and that would be funny.





Editorial Issues



By: Nenshad Bardiowalla

It seems to be particularly fitting that the last issue of FEZANA Journal before the Year 2000 should concern itself with "social issues", for we stand at the crossroads of what will be the deciding chapter in the fate of our religion. For centuries, Zarathushtis have been content to sequester themselves in their xenophobic ethnic enclaves, with hardly a thought as to how interacting with the rest of the world around them might impact upon their religion. But with the exceptional patterns of emigration characteristic of the last two centuries, combined with the increasingly smaller world we find ourselves inhabiting thanks to the wonders of technology, particularly the Internet, Zarathushtis are losing places to hide in their attempts to resist the inevitable forces of social change. But while change may be inevitable, progress is not...

Those of us in the younger generations of Zarathushtis are beginning to observe and participate in the shift in balance of social influence in our community spheres. Many of us are now well-established, fully contributing members of our communities, teaching religious classes, participating in congresses, and heaven-forbid, becoming editors of this journal. We are no longer content to bury ourselves in the minutiae of our daily lives and watch as the chaotic social forces that surround us exert their influence in defining our communities. We must now begin to shoulder the responsibility of charting the course that our religious community should take. We must educate ourselves and become active participants in the lively, even fierce dialogues that surround the important social issues of people who practice in the Religion of Zarathushtra.

For this, my first editorial, I think it would be constructive to identify what the major "social issues" pervading our religious community are, what the opinions of various groups of individuals are towards them, why we might want to question those opinions, and finally, discuss where we might look for some possible resolutions to these issues. As you are reading this, try to figure out what your own answers to these questions might be, or at the very least, begin to think about what some of your answers might be under a variety of circumstances.

1. Who can be called a Zarathushti?
2. Are Zoroastrians prohibited from marrying non-Zarathushtis?
3. Who is eligible to have their navjotes performed?
4. How should we view the prospect of conversion?
5. How should our present cultural contexts influence the practice of our religion?

Some people undoubtedly feel that change in their religious is blasphemous and disrespectful. Others feel that a religion that is founded on such progressive intellectual principles must also lend itself to a natural tendency towards evolution. If we, as a community, are committed to survival (and whether we are or not is itself a crucial question), I am not sure for how much longer we will have a choice regarding our collective willingness to change.

What I am certain of is that we will not accomplish anything if we do not bring all of these issues to the forefront of our community efforts. We all have the tendency to consider the deepest issues that surround us for the briefest of durations, treating them as ephemeral attacks on our otherwise peaceful consciousness, only to be re-usherred into the routines of our daily lives. But I do believe the issues that I have identified and briefly discussed will remain paramount for a long time to come, in spite of our efforts to neglect them. If we can not at least begin to think about and discuss them now, at the dawn of the 21st century, then we can rest assured knowing that there will be no future Zarathusthis to do so either. The choice is ours.



By Roshan Rivetna

Since the film *Earth* [see *FEZANA Journal*, Winter 1998] directed by Canadian Deepa Mehta, and adapted from Bapsi Sidhwa's [cover photo] semi-autobiographical novel *Cracking India* opened in September, in India, UK, Australia and the USA, it has been drawing accolades.

Earth recently won the Grand Prize at the Deauville Film Festival in France, and the London magazine *Timeout* mentions *Earth* as one of the top ten films of 1999.

The plum came in October, when Mehta called up Sidhwa one morning to relay the exciting news that India had chosen *Earth* as its nominee for an Oscar award in the Best Foreign Film category. Of course, there are some bridges to cross before Bapsi Sidhwa walks up the steps of Dorothy Chandler Pavilion to make her acceptance speech, but it is no mean achievement to get even this far. Bapsi, we're all certainly very proud of you, and will root for you on Oscar night!

The New York Times film reviewer likened the \$3.2 million celluloid epic *Earth* to *Gone with the Wind*:

"It is bathed in a deep golden light that at moments recalls the orange sky silhouetting the sweaty faces of Vivien Leigh and Clark Gable in *Gone with the Wind* during the burning of Atlanta. This amber glow gives the film, which remembers the tragic events surrounding the partition of India in 1947, a ruddy twilit sensuality along with a sense of nocturnal foreboding.

"As the Hindus and Muslims who have lived together peacefully in the (now Pakistan) city of Lahore, begin butchering one another and setting fires, you have a sinking feeling of helplessness ..."

The tragic breakup of a nation, when 12 million Hindus, Muslims and



Eight-year old Parsi girl Lenny (played by Maia Sethna, daughter of Jamshyd and the late theater actress Farida Pedder of Mumbai) carried away by her mother (Kitu Kidwani) in a mob scene during Hindu-Muslim riots in "Earth".

Earth is acclaimed

The film "Earth" adapted from Bapsi Sidhwa's award-winning novel "Cracking India" about ethnic hatred and violence during the 1947 partition of India, as seen through the eyes of a Parsi girl, is winning international accolades.

Sikhs migrated across the hurriedly drawn borders defined by the departing British, and more than one million died or were maimed in the inter-ethnic violence, forms the backdrop of the film.

Yet, as Sidhwa points out in her interview with the Boston Globe [October 13, 1999], "This film is not about the politics of partition; this is a

story about what happened to the common people dislocated because of religious violence". It explores ways in which the political dynamics of the monumental historical event permeated human relationships, from the perspective of an 8-year-old Parsi girl, Lenny.

As described in a lovely review in The New Yorker [September 27,

1999], "The story centers on Lenny's excursions about the city with her *ayah* (nanny), a beautiful young Hindu woman (Nandita Das) with a diverse group of friends which includes Sikhs and Muslims ... (The Muslim friend, Ice-Candy-Man is played by Indian super-star Aamir Khan). History intrudes on them, as history will, but in this sumptuous, disturbing film, director Deepa Mehta handles her material convincingly, and the cast is so likable that they wear the Larger Themes like beautiful garments. *Earth* has an urgency and a narrative economy like *Casablanca's*.

From book to film. In an article "Watching My Novel Become Her Film", spread across a generous half-page of the New York Times [September 5, 1999], Sidhwa

candidly reflects on the transition from "my novel" to "her film":

"The book is knit of many strands, covering a sprawl of time. The film is a two-hour event. Deepa jettisoned episodes, amalgamated characters and wove the story around one strand. Although Deepa invites my suggestions, I soon realize that it is her cinematic vision of the book that matters; it is like handing over one's child to the care of someone you trust."

Sidhwa's books. Sidhwa's award-winning 1991 novel *Cracking India* (aka *Ice-Candy-Man*) was declared a New York Times "Notable Book of the Year" for 1991, received the LiBerature Prize in Germany and was nomi-

nated by the American Library Association as a Notable Book. "Bapsi Sidhwa has given us a memorable book," the NY Times review read, "one that confirms her reputation as Pakistan's finest English language novelist." USA Today wrote: "Bapsi Sidhwa's Ice-Candy-Man is like foraging through a tableful of discounted Swatch watches, and finding a gold Rolex ... it illustrates the power of

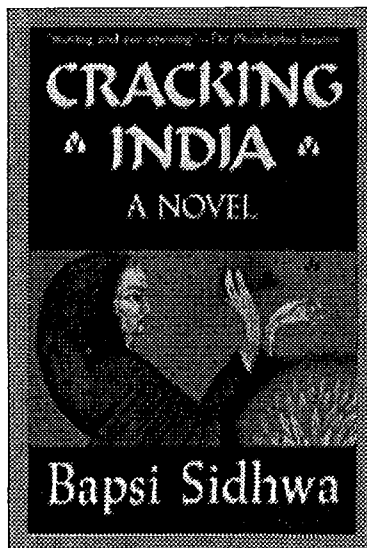
good fiction: a historical tragedy comes alive, yielding insight into both the past and the subcontinent's turbulent present."

The author. Born in Karachi, Pakistan, Sidhwa was raised in Lahore, and began writing in her twenties. Since 1984, she lives in Houston with her businessman husband, Noshir. Her two grown daughters Mohur and Parizad

live in Tucson, Arizona and Houston. Son Khodadad (Koko) lives with his family in Houston.

Sidhwa is the author of four internationally acclaimed novels: *The Crow Eaters* (1978) and *The Bride*, shortly thereafter; *Cracking India* in 1991; and her latest book *An American Brat* in 1993.

Sidhwa held a Bunting Fellowship at Radcliffe/Harvard in 1986 and was a visiting scholar at the Rockefeller Foundation Center, Bellagio, Italy, in 1991. She received the Sitara-i-Imtiaz, Pakistan's highest national honor in the arts, in 1991, and the \$105,000 Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Award in 1994. ■



BOOKS AVAILABLE

JOURNAL OF THE K. R. CAMA ORIENTAL INSTITUTE, No. 62, features papers from 4 scholars: "Achaemenid Girding in Zoroastrian and Iranian Contexts" by Parivash Jamzadeh; "Origin and Development of Numericals 1 to 9" by Perin Dara Driver; "The Kazran Inscription" by Cheragh-Ali Azami; and "Yima/Yama and the Deluge" by Sam N. Doctor. Order at Rs. 60 from K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, 136 Bombay Samachar Marg, Mumbai 400 023.

OUR ZARATHUSHTI RELIGION – SOME RELEVANT POINTS by Dr. Goolcheher D. Coyaji. Available (\$4) from Dr. Phiroz Dastoor of Toronto, tel: (416) 242-7433.

ZARATHUSHTRIANS IN OLDE IRAN AND WORLD AVESTA CONFERENCES IN TAJIKISTAN. A collection of Conference Papers of the World Avesta Conferences held in Tajikistan and other research papers. Read about the history of Olde Iran and about the excavations of thousands of years old Fire Temples by archaeologists of the former USSR, in the lands that formed part of the original 'Ariyana Vaeja' of the Avestan texts. Available for a donation of Rs. 501 to Rs. 50,001 from Mazdayasnie Monasterie, Mustafa Building, Sir P. M. Road, Mumbai 400 001, tel: 266-0214.

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Don Dilworth, a composer living in Maine, has written an opera about the Persian hero Rostam and needs to make a recording of some excerpts in order to attract investors required to produce the opera. Anyone connected with a university orchestra or who knows a pianist and singers who would be willing to work on a single movement, please contact the composer at dilworth@ghi.net. The libretto and samples of the music are at www.ghi.net/dilworth.



Interfaith Calendar

This handsome, glossy, full color calendar published by NCCJ, show-cases one religious community for each month. Zoroastrianism is featured with photos, a short history, basic tenets and religious observances. \$7 plus postage. Contact Rohinton Rivetna (630) 325-5383, or fax (630) 734-1579.

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Explosive growth at Bardel Animation Ltd.



*Contracts from Dreamworks (a studio founded by Walt Disney Co, Steven Spielberg and others) have ignited explosive growth in **Delna Bhesania** and husband **Barry Edwards**' company, Bardel Animation, Ltd. Started in 1987 in modest digs with a \$2000 investment, Bardel today has two floors of a posh downtown Vancouver office building with a view of the harbor, and a staff of over 200 animators, artists and production staff [see next page].*

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Bardel Animation, Ltd. (Continued from previous page)

A proud mother says ...

You had carried a story about my daughter Delna Bhesania and her animation company, Bardel Ltd., in FEZANA Journal [Spring 1995]. Since then a lot has happened.

Delna, her husband Barry Edwards and their studio went through many ups and downs, and as Barry put it, they were so close many a time to grabbing that 'golden ring', but it always seemed to slip by.

But 1997-1998 turned out to be their lucky year, and today, they are getting worldwide recognition in their field. Their first daughter, Zoe, got them started (in 1992-93) and Zara, their second daughter, born in 1997 has brought them more good fortune.

Of course, we believe it has been our prayers and Ahura Mazda's blessings that has brought them where they are

today. At every studio they started, they always had a *jashan*. In March, they had a *jashan* in their latest studio, named "Joseph". They occupy two floors in a downtown office building with a harbor view, right next to the Pan Pacific where we hosted the Zoroastrian Congress some years ago.

Of course, nobody can be prouder than parents, when their children achieve their dreams. From barely nothing, financially and professionally, to have reached where they are today, is something that my husband Behram and I are very proud of.

Last December, before their film *Prince of Egypt* hit the theaters, Delna rented a theater and invited 500 guests to the premier. It was a gala event and thereafter, we were invited to a grand party, where the

waiters and waitresses were dressed as Pharaohs and Egyptian Queens. Let us now see what *Joseph* brings.

Because of the grand year they had, and to thank us for always being there for them, they treated the whole family to a holiday in Hawaii, and for 10 days, we knew what it felt like to live the life of "the rich and famous".

*Sheraz Bhesania
Vancouver, British Columbia*

Founded in 1987, **Bardel Animation, Ltd.** provides animation services, layouts and computer generated special effects to clients such as DreamWorks of Los Angeles, and develops independent animation projects with partners around the world. Following a contract for the animated feature *The Prince of Egypt* in 1997, Bardel won a contract for two other features, *Joseph* and *The Road to El Dorado*. Bardel now employs over 200 artists and production staff in 2 Vancouver locations. ■

APARTMENTS FOR SALE

IN CAMA PARK, MUMBAI. Parsi ownership complex, 1/2 mile from Andheri West station. One bdrm, self-contained apartment condo with a cottage effect. 24-hr security, enclosed colony gates, recreational facilities, safety, cleanliness and Parsi comradeship. Also safe to keep locked up for future use. All this for US \$58,000.

IN POONA. Two bdrm, split level condo in exclusive bldg with only 6 apartments. Enclosed parking area. 24-hr security. All this for US \$55,000.

● Well-planned ● Quality construction ●

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Email: yaskeval@aol.com

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Contact: Dr. Jhanbux Afkam,
McWellness AG, Gartenstrasse 103,
CH-4052 Basel, Switzerland, Tel: +41 (61) 206-9350,
Fax: +41 (61) 206-9355
email: jafkham@mcwellness.com.

NEW BUSINESSES

FEZANA Journal is happy to announce new businesses/enterprises in this column. Please send your announcement to the Editor.

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR NEW ENTERPRISES

ParsiChef is a new Catering and Food Service by **Aban Daboo** of Chicago area, supplying a large variety of tasty, home-cooked Parsi, American, Chinese, Mexican, Indian and 'lite' dishes. "Let me take away your cooking headaches," she writes, "I will cook tasty dishes for your family and friends – all you do is heat and serve." Shipping available. (630) 836-9548, email: Parsee@aol.com.

AISHWARIA TRAVELS is a new travel agency opened in June in Los Angeles. It is managed by **Vispy Umranwalla**, recently arrived from India. For all your travel needs, call (213) 488-6120.

AHURA EXPORTS, owned by **Sohrab Irani** of India, is in the process of installing a prototype anaerobic digester in Pennsylvania – the first ever in the USA. This technology, is based on 'gobar-gas', as used by horticulturists in the Palghar-Dahanu region of India. Irani is researching farm-based anaerobic digestion as alternative energy, curtailing energy costs, waste management and farm odors. "Ahura Mazda willing," he writes, "we intend to re-write the manure management and bio-gas energy programs." Email: pourporri@hotmail.com.

Zoroastrian Bank - Big on Tradition and Trust

The Zoroastrian Co-operative Bank Ltd. of Mumbai, which started its expansion in 1993 is nearing deposits of Rs. 10,000 crores and advances of Rs. 50,000 crore.

The main objective of the Bank is to render effective banking facilities to shareholders and clients of all communities. What distinguishes it from competitors is the high level of personalized services, need-based requirements, innovative banking products and the best available banking facilities.

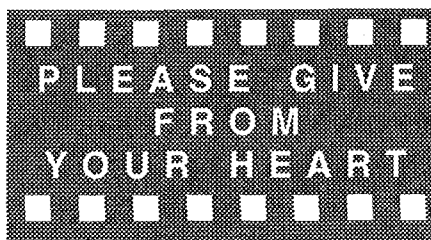
During the last 5 years, the bank has opened 4 new branches, revamped its Fort Main branch, and plans to open 5 more shortly. All of its six branches are fully computerized and offer fast and efficient service, with extended business hours.

In view of good results, the Reserve Bank of India has granted permission for the bank to open NRE/NRO accounts.

According to Dispatch and Courier: "This is one bank in the cooperative sector to watch, one that truly lives up to its motto, 'The Bank that is Big on Tradition and Trust'."

For NRE/NRO accounts, contact Noshir Paghdwalla, Zoroastrian Co-operative Bank, Kushesh Mansion, Janma Bhoomi Marg, Fort, Mumbai 400 001, tel: 202-7501, fax: 282-9362, zcblco@bom3.vsnl.net.in. A web-site will be available shortly.

[From Fed Newsletter, April 1999]



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].

Thanks from little Jennifer's family

Readers will recall baby Jennifer Daruwalla who was born with a congenital hearing loss. Through a world-wide appeal, the family (with the help of WZO Trust) was able to raise funds for surgery in Australia. Her father, Manchershaw Daruwala of Mumbai, writes: "Thanks for your generous donation for the treatment of my daughter ... she is now doing quite well and has started repeating 3-word sentences ... Thanks for helping our daughter with the precious gift of sound and speech."

Khushchehr's successes

"Khushchehr had a very successful summer in national tournaments in US and India. She won the doubles title at the 1999 Krishnan National Tennis Championships at Chennai, India" writes her father Cyrus Italia of California. Rising young tennis star Khushchehr Italia's story was featured in FEZANA Journal [Fall 1999]. Donations to help defray high costs for training and competing, will be gratefully accepted. Make checks payable to "TMZA", 11 Crestwood Drive, Newport Beach, CA 92660.

Brain surgery

Savak Bharucha, 63, of Mumbai was forced to retire when his company closed down. Soon after, he had to undergo major brain surgery followed by 3 other follow-up surgeries, which exhausted his savings and left

IS YOUR SUBSCRIPTION DUE?

Please check your address label. FEZANA Journal depends solely on your subscriptions, ads, donations and sponsorships to meet the high cost of printing and mailing. To avoid book-keeping please subscribe for 3 years.

Complimentary Subscriptions to FEZANA JOURNAL

FEZANA JOURNAL will donate one year's subscription to each North American Zarathushti who has his/her navjote/sudreh-pushhi performed and to each couple announcing their wedding in the Journal. 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.

Strategies for donating to FEZANA Funds

PRINCIPAL BENEFITS

- Donor can witness FEZANA's use of donation.
- Current income tax deduction based on fair market value of donation.
- Asset will be removed from donor's estate for Federal estate tax purposes.

FEZANA is a non-profit religious corporation, **Tax ID 36-3521343**, registered in the State of Illinois. All donations to FEZANA are fully tax-deductible for US federal tax purposes. Canadian taxpayers may send donations to FEZANA through their local societies.

FUNDS

Donations may be allocated to:

- **FEZANA General Fund:** for operation of FEZANA, its committees.
- **FEZANA Welfare Fund:** to provide assistance to needy individuals and Zarathushti institutions.
- **FEZANA Scholarship Fund:** for providing scholarships and loans for higher education.
- **FEZANA Religious Education Fund:** to promote religious education, publish religious literature, and arrange religious seminars and lectures.
- **FEZANA Properties Fund:** for purchase of real estate, establishment of old-age homes, meeting and training facilities and related investments.

Donations of over \$25,000 into any of these Funds will qualify for an Endowment named after the donor or a loved one. Only the income from an endowment will be utilized for the designated purpose.

STRATEGIES

Designate FEZANA as a beneficiary in your office donation program. Most large corporations will match your donation to your designated charity. Many organizations such as "Combined Appeal" will allow you to designate FEZANA as your choice of the charity.

Donate appreciated stocks, securities and real estate to FEZANA. The entire value of the asset on the date of the donation is tax-deductible. Furthermore, the donated asset will be removed from the donor's estate for Federal estate tax purposes.

Donate a life insurance policy to FEZANA. Leverage your donation by buying a life insurance policy with FEZANA as a beneficiary. Or include FEZANA as a co-beneficiary to reduce estate taxes to your heirs. Consult an insurance or tax professional for details.

Charitable Trusts. Trusts can provide an income stream during the donor's lifetime while also providing benefits for heirs and minimizing transfer taxes. Consult a tax attorney for forming a Charitable Remainder or Lead Trust, depending on your particular financial needs and estate situation.

Please include FEZANA in your plans for charitable donations. FEZANA has opened an Endowment Management Account with the Merrill Lynch Private Client Group. Merrill Lynch financial consultants and estate planners are available to guide you in preparing estate plans and trusts; and maximizing the tax and other benefits of your donations. Please contact Rustom Kevala, FEZANA treasurer at (301) 765-0792 or email at rustom@aol.com for information.

Checks should be made out to "FEZANA" and sent (with instructions) to:

Dr. Rustom Kevala, Treasurer, FEZANA
8812 Tuckerman Lane, Potomac, MD 20854.

him physically paralyzed on his left side. His only succor is his poor, widowed sister. Zarathushtis wishing to help, please send checks to FEZANA [see above].

Hateria Medical Appeal

Shapoor Hateria has been suffering from ulcerative colitis for 20 years. Recently, he suffered ventricular tachycardia, followed by cardiac arrest and a neurological complication, all of which necessitate his being on a respirator for long periods. He and his wife, a schoolteacher have exhausted their savings. Zarathushtis wishing to help, please send checks to FEZANA [see above].

Bandra Parsee Assn.

The Bandra Parsee Association, which celebrates its Golden Jubilee this year, has set a target to raise Rs. 10 lakhs for the corpus of their trust. The Association gives monthly financial help to needy Zarathushtis, scholarships for school, college and professional studies, and arranges social get-togethers and fund-raisers. Secry. Sam Choksey writes: "We look to the Zarathushti community abroad to help us to help the needy." Please send checks to FEZANA [see above].

Karate champion

Nine year old Khoremand Daruwalla has been selected as part of the Youth Team to represent India at the Third Asian Pacific Karate Do Gojukai championship and technical seminar in Perth, Australia. Total expenses will be Rs. 75,000, which the family cannot afford. Khoremand writes: "I will be most thankful if the Zarathushtis in North America, especially the youth, can cover some of my expenses. Please send checks to Mazdayasnie Monasterie, Mustafa Bldg., Sir P. M. Road, Mumbai 400 001, tel: 266 0214, fax: 266 2735.

Salsette Parsis Association

Trustees of the Salsette Parsis Association, Andheri have sent a fervent appeal for donations towards "a momentous project". Construction of

a Dadgah, community hall and housing for 2,000 Zarathushtis, in Andheri East, Mumbai was completed in 1992. Funds are now being sought for the Dadgah Corpus Fund, for general maintenance, rent subsidies for needy Zarathushtis, kathi and mobed salaries. Please send checks to FEZANA [see above].

Sanjan Day

About 3,000 devout pilgrims are expected to congregate for the annual Sanjan Day celebration (with a Jashan and free community lunch) to commemorate the historic landing of our forefathers at Sanjan. The Sanjan Memorial Column Committee is appealing for funds towards costs of the celebration as well as landscaping and maintenance of the Memorial Sanjan Column. Please send checks to FEZANA [see above].

Acknowledgments

FEZANA gratefully acknowledges donations received this quarter through October 1999.

For General Fund:

Najoo & Maneck Daroowalla, NY (\$101); Dr. & Mrs. Maneck Rustom Kakalia, Karachi (\$300); Rohinton & Roshan Rivetna, IL (\$1001).

FEZANA acknowledges with deep gratitude, a donation of \$28,026 in securities for the General Fund, by Yasmin H. Cumming of Santa Rosa, CA, in memory of her father Hormazdiar F. Damkevala of Barrie, Ontario.

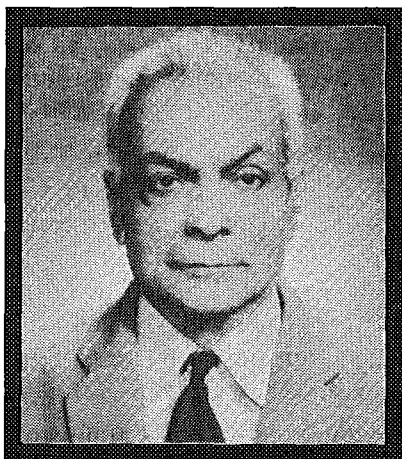


Most remarkable about **Hormazdiar F. Damkevala** was his energy and interest in life, until the day he died, in 1992, at age 76, preparing for his 15-mile morn-

ing bicycle ride. His retirement in 1982 from accounting and teaching, was more a shift in focus than in activity. He was active in the Canadian Federal Business Development Bank, Red Cross, Civil Rights and other local causes, as well as in the Zoroastrian community that was rapidly growing in nearby Toronto. Publications such as Parsiana and FEZANA Journal were very important to him and led him to consider how he might make ongoing commitments to meet the needs of Zarathushtis.

For Scholarship Fund:

FEZANA is deeply grateful to Dr. and Mrs. Jerry Kheradi of North Providence, RI, for an additional donation of \$30,000 in securities in memory of his father, for the Merwan Dorab Kheradi Scholarship Fund.



Born in Yazd, Iran, **Merwan Dorab Kheradi** had business interests in Bombay, India. Presently his wife Morvorid Kheradi and his children Rostam, Sohrab, Jehangir, Farangis Izedian and Manijeh Nadjmi reside in the United States.

For Welfare Fund: Burjor & Navaz Choksey, CO (\$25); Hoshang & Kashmiri Daruwalla, MD (\$250); Noshir & Rhoda Lakdawalla, CA (\$51+\$51+\$31); Farhad Narielvala, TN (\$25); Kety J. Patel, FL (\$250); Rohin & Arnavaz Talati, CA (\$51); Dick R. Vazir, FL (\$50+\$30); Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago (\$231).

For FEZANA Journal: Firozi Alerica, NC (\$10); Anonymous, IL (\$235); Rashna Baetz, ON (\$10); Mr. & Mrs. Kali Buhariwalla, TX (\$11); Mr. & Mrs. Fram Dalal, PA (\$10); Mr. & Mrs. Minoo Daruwalla, NJ (\$21); Nariman Dastur, CA (\$20); Manchi Engineer, NY (\$10); Dinaz Irani, PA (\$23); Bijan Khosraviani, CA (\$37); Kaizad Mehta, CA (\$25); Noshir & Rhoda Lakdawalla, CA (\$10); Pervin F. Narielvala, TN

(\$11); Yasmin Pavri, TX (\$23); Dr. Minocher Reporter, OR (\$30); Riasp & Shernaz Medora, OH (\$41); Mehroo Pithawala, ON, in memory of Dara Pithawala, (\$25); Dinaz Kutar Rogers, OR (\$10); Gustad & Avan Sagar, ON (\$21); Mr. & Mrs. Fali F. Sidhva, OR (\$11); Mehernosh P. Sodawaterwalla, TX (\$21); Nazneen Spliedt, CA (\$10); Hoshang Subawalla, FL (\$25); Jamshed Sam Turel, IN (\$10); Perry Unwalla, FL (\$30); Dick R. Vazir, FL (\$30); Toeruna Widge, PA (\$100).

For Journal Overseas Subscription Fund: Marzban Marzbani, NY (\$50); Dinaz Kutar Rogers, OR (\$30). ■

Scholarships Available

● **The Iranian Professional Society of Oregon (IPSO)**, established in 1991, offers two scholarships annually to high school graduates of Iranian heritage, based on scholastic achievement and need. \$4000. Get application from www.teleport.com/~ipso.

● Research Fellowships for 2000-2001, from **Social Science Research Council** on the study of Religion and Immigration.

(a) Pre- and post-doctoral fellowships for research on religion and immigration to US.

(b) Pre- and post-doctoral fellowships for research on international migration to the US.

(c) Fellowships for Minority Summer Dissertation Workshop (3 weeks) on topics related to international migration to the US.

Call Sue Mark, Social Science Research Council, at (212) 377-2700, fax: (212) 377-2727, email: mark@ssrc.org.

● **The Society of Iranian Professionals (SIP)** has announced their Student Scholarship Program for the year 1999-2000. Awards are based on academic performance, future potential and financial need. All Iranian students at undergraduate and graduate levels in the USA may apply. Application form is available by email from mehran@stanfordalumni.org. ■

■ ■ ■ MATRIMONIALS ■ ■ ■

FEZANA will coordinate initial contacts between interested parties. FEZANA does not assume any responsibility for verifying credentials. Contact Roshan Rivetna.

Fair, good-looking male 30, business graduate, well-settled in exciting profession, interested in travel, music, nature and romance. Would like to meet caring, understanding woman. Call (609) 242-9033 or email eric1704@aol.com. [M99-7]

Fair, slim woman, 29, working in family business in US. [F99-33]

Woman 32, B.A., widowed, kind-hearted, good-natured, working as sales manager in Mumbai. [F99-34]

Male, 5' 9", well-settled. Interests include classical music, traveling, outdoors and reading. Would like to meet slim girl, 28-34, with good values and pleasant, sociable personality. Send photograph (very important) and details to Mrs. Irani, 440 W. 27th Street, Hialeah, FL 33010. [M99-35]

Parents of **tall, slim, girl, 31**, music-teacher in Mumbai seek matrimonial alliance with boy from respectable family. Send bio-data and family details to peshotanchowna@hotmail.com. [F99-36]

Male, Iranian, electrical engineer, 5' 9", well-settled, strong family values, caring nature. Interests include tennis, art, music. Invites email from women 25-33, at chance150@hotmail.com. [M99-37]

Male, 30, 5' 11", engineer, well-settled in US, interests include sports, outdoors, travel. Call (810) 268-4146. [M99-38]

Female, 36, B.Sc. with airlines in Sydney, Australia. Seeks well-qualified gentleman (not a divorcee), willing to settle in Sydney, the second best city of the world, though not mandatory. Call Capt. Rustumjee at 61-2-9789 3875, email gilw@bigpond.com.au. [F99-38]

Slim, fair girl, 25, pursuing Masters in Occupational Therapy, New York University, holding green card, interested in travel, music, reading, movies. Seeking professional with loving, kind nature. Contact jamshed.cooper@csfp.co.uk. [F99-39]

North American born female, 26, double graduate, good Zarathushti upbringing, active in community, well-settled with good job in teaching profession. Invites inquiries from professional 25-31, preferably with N. American background. (407) 348-6160. [F99-40]

Female 27, 5' 3", completed high-school-special education, very sweet natured. Interested in meeting Zarathushti male of similar educational level. (818) 223-8972. [F99-41]

Computer professional male, 46, 5' 7", fair, slim, never married, B.Com, L.L.B, seeking simple, good-natured woman. (416) 698-1449. [M99-42]

Male, software engineer, 36, 5' 10", M.S. degree, well-settled in Colorado, good natured, likes traveling, tennis, racquetball, hiking, biking, skiing and other sports activities. Seeking alliance with slim, attractive woman with similar interests. Email searchison@hotmail.com. [M99-43]

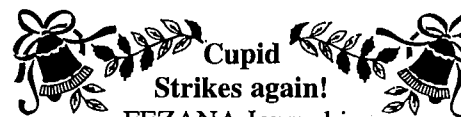
Athletic, good-looking male, commercial pilot, studying in US, 5' 7", seeking correspondence from women 22-26 years. Call uncle at (281) 647-0235. [M99-44]

Articulate, bright woman, 35, MBA, enjoys travel and outdoor sports, seeks well-settled gentleman with good sense of humor, for life partner. Call (416) 421-6324. [F99-46]

Male, 30, B.Com, 5' 8", manager in travel agency. Call (562) 404-3567. [M99-47]

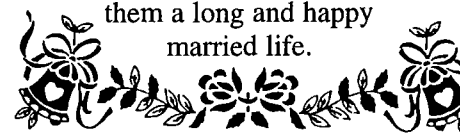
Slim, pretty girl, 31, professional, strong family values, varied interests. [F99-48]

Good looking male, 33, 5' 10", professor at US health science center, seeks female who is career-minded, fun-loving and family-oriented, 25-35, currently residing in North America only. Email: ThreeH@netscape or call (405) 752-9896. [M99-49]



FEZANA Journal is

delighted to hear of wedding bells for M96-17 of California and F98-5 of India. We wish them a long and happy married life.



MILESTONES

Births

Zal Daboo, a boy, to Roxana and Behram of Chicago. grandson to Aban and Aspi Daboo and Roshan and Sam Buhariwalla, nephew to Aryamesh and Benaifer Buhariwala and Shireen Firoz Gandhi, on August 30.

Zarius Dubash, a boy, to Parastu and Jamshed of Shrewsbury, MA, great grandson to Nargish Vania, grandson to Gool and Shahrukh Mehta, and Aloo Dubash, all of Syracuse, NY, nephew to Farida and Neville Divecha, Tenaz Dubash and Kershaw Mehta, and cousin to Ashraf and Phiroze Divecha, on July 28.

Behram Dossabhoy, a boy, to Neville and Gulshan, of Houston, on August 10.

Jehan Irani, a boy, to Benaaz and Rayomand Irani, of Ontario, on August 25.

Asha, Parisa and Arya Namiranian, triplets, to Yazdani and Dariush of California, on October 16.

Jehan Narielwala, a boy, to Perin and Farhad of Chattanooga, TN, grandson to Minoo and Roshan, and Dara and (Late) Freny Panthaki, on July 1.

Madison Kate Olson, a girl, to Maynaz and Matthew, grand-daughter to Drs. Dinshaw and Katie Irani of Houston, on June 25.

Zaal Panthaki, a boy, to Farhad and Firoza of Boston, MA, grandson to Perin and Sheriar Talavia and Dadi and Nergish Panthaki, on May 1.

Rustin Bahram Soroushi, a boy, to Babak and Mitra, in Dallas, on August 4.

Niki Shahrivini, a girl, to Mahyar and Minoo, in North Vancouver, on December 12, 1998.

Navjote, Sedreh Pushi

Cyrus and Ashley Amaria, children of Marzban and Karen, of Los Angeles area, on October 9.

Farahnaz Bulsara, daughter of Jehangir and Rukshan, of Ontario, on August 7.

Jamie Chesson, son of Kersi and Jasmine of Ontario, on July 10.

Daraius Dastoor, son of Cyrus and Mehrin, in Burnaby, NC, on July 11.

Arish Irani, son of Khodu and Gulrukh Irani, of California.

Kevan and Jaime Karanjia, sons of Coombi and Darius, of Ontario, on July 17.

Farokh and Rustom Patel, sons of Hosi and Benifer, of Ontario, in July.

Azin Yazdani, daughter of Rostam and Behin, in Burnaby, BC, on August 14.

Weddings

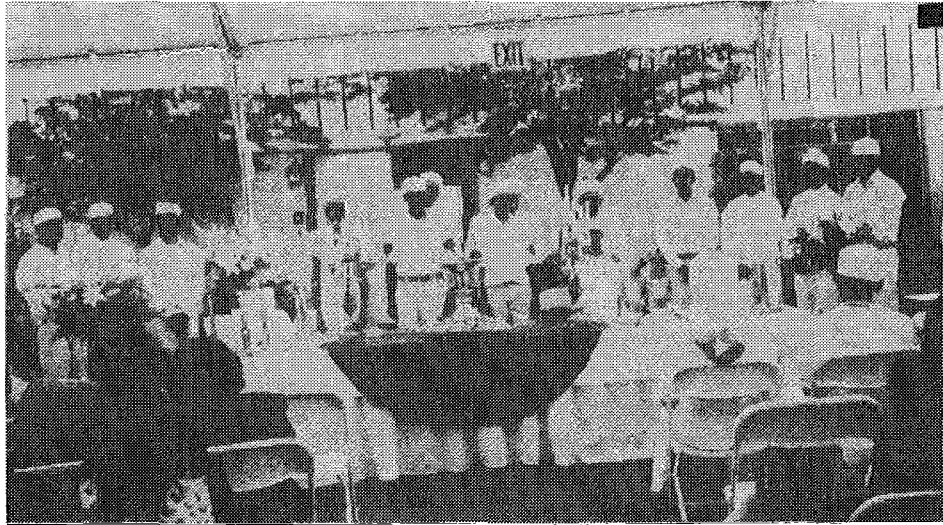
Binaifer Irani, daughter of Shireen and Dinyar Irani of Irvine, CA, to **Travis Bird**, son of Donna and (Late) Danny Bird, in Huntington Beach, CA, on August 7.

Sean Khushroo Dastur, son of Khushroo and Margaret Dastur of Chicago, to **Jodi Erin Shields**, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Shields, in Elgin, IL, on September 11.

Niloufer Poulad, daughter of Rostam and Mitra of North Vancouver, to **Kaymar Mahinsa**, in Vancouver, on August 28.

Dinaz Italia, daughter of Homi Italia of Vancouver, to **Vijay Marwaha**, son of Dr and Dr. (Mrs) Ajit Rai Marwaha, New Delhi, in Vancouver, on June 12.

Nina Wadia, daughter of Minoo and Homi of UK, to **Raiomand Mirza**, son of Minnie and Khushroo, in Pointe-Claire, Quebec, on July 3.



Group Sedreh Pushi of 16 youths performed by mobeds and mobedyars, during the Kankash-e-Mobedan camp at the Dar-e-Mehr in San Jose, CA, on August 7. Mr. Jamshid Varza was acknowledged for his dedication in educating the youth, for the last two years, in preparation for the event. Initiated were: Farshad Fallah, Mondonna and Anita Hemati, Nickon and Katayoon Hemati, Maziar and Kaveh Hemati, Sina and Sum Iranpour, Ardeshir and Ardavan Jahanian, Amittis Sarvian, Babak and Shirin Soroushian and Roxanna and Cyrus Varza.

Fram Petit, son of late Sir Dinshaw Petit, to **Shirin Palkhiwala**, daughter of John and Catherine Palkhiwala, in Town-of-Mount Royal, Quebec, on June 26.

Anahita Dutia, daughter of Ardeshar and Gool, of Huntsville, AL, to **Clint Peinhardt**, son of William and Carolyn, in Huntsville, AL, on August 7.

Viraf Phiroze Reporter, son of Phiroze and Gool Reporter of Merritt, BC to **Trudy Piscia**, in Vancouver, on July 31.

Arman Sassani, son of Dr. and Mrs. S. Sassani of California, to **Shilan Om**, daughter of Taj Om and (Late) Mr. Om of Vancouver, in Orange County, CA, on May 28.

Nariman Vatcha, son of Shireen and Cawas, to **Rinawaz Shroff**, daughter of Mehr and Murzban, of Ontario, on July 2.

Recovering

Mobed Rostam Shahzadi, High Priest of Iran, is out of Critical Care Unit and resting at home in Tehran, Iran. We pray to Ahura Mazda for his quick recovery.

Deaths

Ervad Faramroze Jamshedji Andhjarujina, 74, of kidney failure, husband of Perviz, brother of Jehangir, Jal and Pesi, father of Hormuzd, Havovi Faredoon Minwalla of Georgia and Darayus, grandfather to Narcius, Farishtae and Nasha, in Karachi, on September 19.

Dina Arjani, mother of Teshtar (Noshir) Irani of New York area, in Mumbai.

Rointan F. Bunshah, 72, after a battle with leukemia, brother of Keki (Kuku) Bunshah, uncle of Freney and Dina, in Los Angeles, on October 24. Prof. Bunshah was an internationally respected materials scientist with over 280 research publications and a large number of International honors and awards. He retired as a Distinguished Senior Faculty from UCLA after 30 years of service. He was also a gifted violinist and member of the Santa Monica Symphony Orchestra.

Noshir Buhariwalla, visiting from London, UK, brother of Dr. Faram Buhariwalla of San Francisco, father of Zal of London, UK, in California, on October 22. Uthamna was held at Zoroastrian House, London, on November 7.

Peshotan Jehangir Darukhanawala, husband of Aimai, father of Jehangir (Peoria, IL) and Pheroze (Chicago), in Mumbai, on August 15.

Minocher Phirozsha Engineer, husband of late Mehroo, father of Rumi (Beverly) Engineer of Berwin, IL, and Tehmtan (Binaifer) Engineer of Mumbai, grandfather of Kashmira, Rustom, Monaz and Piran, in Mumbai, on November 10.

Cavas Jehangir Fatakia, husband of Tehmi, father of Navaz Percy Driver (Mumbai), Zarin Hoshang Havewala (Mumbai), Hormuz (Australia) and Bakhtavar Cyrus Press (Chicago), in Mumbai, on August 8.

Goola Fitter, 90, mother of Hormuz Fitter of North Vancouver, BC, in Mumbai, on July 18.

Baji Gagrath, brother of Khorshed (Keki) Mistry of New York area, in Pune, India.

Sohrab (Soli) Dhunjishaw Ghandhi, husband of Katy, father of Veera, Beenaifer and Zubin, brother of Burjor of Michigan and Meher, Kamel Hoshi Nanji and Behram of Mumbai, in Mumbai, on August 10.

Jeroo Viraf Haveliwala, mother of Dolly and Kaity Patel, Piloo, Navroze and Sheriar Haveliwala, on August 3.

Morvarid Ardeshir Harvesf, mother of Dr. Keikhosrow Harvesf (since deceased) and Dr. Hooshang Harvesf, both of Jacksonville, FL, Katayoun Farahmand of Tehran, and Tabandeh Harvesf of Vancouver, on July 23, in Jacksonville, Florida.

Dr. Keikhosrow Harvesf, 62, following a 3-year battle with cancer, son of (Late) Morvarid and (Late) Mehraban Harvesf, father of Mojdeh and Cyrus Mehraban, brother of Dr. Hooshang Harvesf of Jacksonville, FL, Katayoun Farahmand of Tehran and Tabandeh Harvesf of Vancouver, in Jacksonville, FL, on October 14. [see Obituary].

Homai Irani, wife of late Sohrab Irani, mother of Darius (Los Angeles), Cyrus (Chicago) and Dr. Godafriid (London), California on October 16. [Contd. p. 87]

KEIKHOSROW HARVESF (1937 - 1999)

Stalwart of the Zarathushti Community in North America

The untimely demise of Dr. Keikhosrow Harvesf, loving father, acclaimed pediatrician and highly respected leader of the Zarathushti community in North America, is mourned by all.

Born in Kerman, Iran, in 1937, to the late Morvarid and the late Mehraban Khodamorad

Harvesf, Keikhosrow Harvesf received his medical degree from the University of Tehran, served his term of duty as a physician in the military from 1964-1966, and came to the US

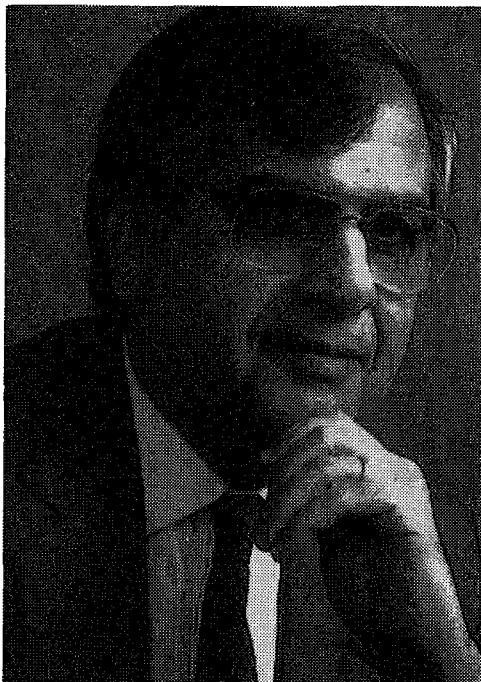
in 1968 for an internship at the Albany Medical Center in New York.

He completed residency in Pediatrics at the University of Florida College of Medicine and obtained a post-doctorate degree in Pediatric Gastroenterology from Temple University, Philadelphia. In 1973, he established a private practice in Jacksonville, FL, where he practiced to the end.

For the last three years, Dr. Harvesf fought a valiant battle with cancer, always optimistic about his future. His daughter Mojdeh, who has a master's degree from the University of Florida, hopes to continue in medical school, and son Cyrus Mehraban is in high school.

Deeply committed to his family, community and religion, Dr. Harvesf championed many causes, and was never afraid to fight for what he believed in. At the top of his priorities was a deep commitment to bring unity among Parsis and Ira-

nis. "We share one prophet", he was known to say, "Diversity is fine, but there should be no divisions. We all have just one base, which is the religion of Zarathushtra."



He chaired a committee, (other members being the Late Dr. Rustom Sarfeh and Dr. Mehraban Shahrvini) to publish a translation of the Gathas in Persian by Mobed Rustom Shahzadi of Tehran. This publication was distributed to universities and libraries around the world.

Dr. Harvesf loved his Zarathushti community and knew the value of building and maintaining relationships. He was a lifelong supporter of our cause, and worked diligently for it, to the end.

As chairperson for many years, of the FEZANA Funds and Finance Committee, Dr. Harvesf knew the value of a sound financial foundation for our organizations, Believing in the goodness and generosity of our people, and the value of collective giving, he was a strong advocate for encouraging each and every Zarathushti in North America to give their share towards building a strong financial base for our community.

It would be a fitting tribute to a man whose religion and community meant so much to him, to commemorate his memory with a fund in his name, for one of the Zarathushti causes he so strongly believed in. ■

- By Rohinton M. Rivetna

Illinois Family Physician of the Year



DR. MEHROO M. PATEL, MD, was among five outstanding family physicians from Illinois nominated for the Illinois Academy of Family Physicians' "Illinois Family Physician of

the Year" award for 1999. Dr. Patel, an MBBS from Bombay University and FRCS from Edinburgh, has practiced Family Medicine in the Chicago area for over 30 years. The nomination was supported by her patients, colleagues and organizations that she served during her medical career spanning five decades.

One of the many glowing letters from her patients reads: "Our entire family, includes Mother's nine children, grand-children and great-grandchildren, as well as Mother's many friends, will always be indebted to Dr. Patel for her long, faithful and continuous service in our darkest days and most arduous times. Nor will any of us ever forget the loving kindness Dr. Patel lavished upon us each time she saw us."



After working with the City of Los Angeles for 25 years, **PARVEZ COMMISSARIAT**, Senior Architect, has been appointed acting *City Architect for the City of Los Angeles* and head of the Architectural Division. He will be responsible for design and construction of all city buildings and contracts. Recent bond projects approved by voters are an \$180 million Library Bond Program and a \$110 million Zoo Bond Program. His past projects include the Los Angeles Airport expansion and the \$280 million Los Angeles Convention Center.

Deaths [Contd from page 86]

Banoo Kaviani, in California. Burial ceremony was in Whittier, CA, on September 2.

Khorshed Mehta, mother of Godrej (Feroza) Mehta of New York area.

Marazban J. Patrawala, 52, of heart failure, husband of Dinaz, father of Karl, both of Mumbai, cousin of Firdosh (Rashna) Mehta of Edmonton, Alberta, in Mumbai, on October 20. [also see page 24].

Sorab Sharyari, 68, son of Tirandaz Sharyari, uncle of Houshmand

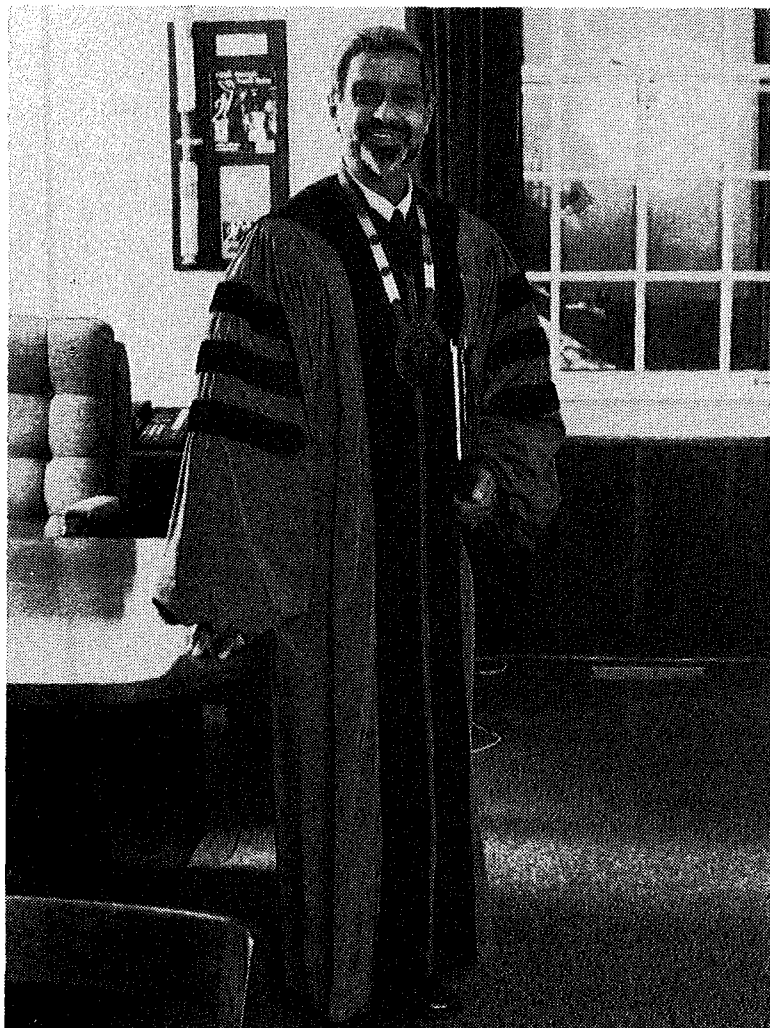
(Farida) Sharyari of Chicago, in Mumbai, on October 7.

Vancouver Tragedy.

Zarathushtis of the Vancouver, BC area are in a state of shock and deeply grieving the tragedy in their midst. Fariborz Kianipour, 45, took the life of his beautiful wife **Mitra Kianipour**, 35, and her parents, **Jamshid** and **Irاندokht Felfeli Mobarakeh** of Iran, on September 5, in Coquitlan, BC. Their 2 children, Johngir, 12, and Nima, 10, were taken care of immediately by a family friend, and have since moved to a Zarathushti home.

ERVAD MEHERNOSH BHADA, 11, of Karachi, was initiated as navar, making him the youngest mobed in Pakistan. This is a cause for celebration for the Zarathushtis in Pakistan, where the number of young practising priests is dwindling. Mehernosh underwent a month-long intense, spiritual purification, after which he was awarded the title of "Ervad" (teacher) and can now wear the traditional priest's white turban and *jama pichori* (robe), carries a shawl, an insignia of his position, and a *gurz* (bull-headed mace), signifying that the young priest is now prepared for war against all evil.





DR. BEHERUZ SETHNA, President of the State University of West Georgia, in Carrollton, GA, has been named as the *Interim Senior Vice chancellor of Academic Affairs for the University System of Georgia*. In this role, Sethna will be responsible for meeting the academic needs of more than 106,000 students and over 8,000 faculty in all 34 public colleges and universities in Georgia, plus the rather substantial technology operations of the University System. This includes four Research Universities (including the nationally highly ranked Georgia Tech and UGA), the Medical College and Georgia State, 15 Regional and State Universities, and 15 two-year institutions. "It is a daunting task," says Sethna, "I am eager to learn."

Sethna has served as president of the State University of West Georgia since 1994, received numerous national and international awards and honors, and has been recognized for his teaching innovations in marketing, product management, MIS, computer-integrated manufacturing and communications. He brings extensive academic training in engineering, information systems and business to his new appointment.

Sethna, originally from Mumbai, came to the US in 1973 to get his Ph.D. in Business. He is married to Madhavi and has two children Anita and Shaun, both at Georgia Institute of Technology.

On completion of his new assignments, Sethna hopes to return to the faculty, for he says: "I am happiest on the campus, teaching, and interacting with students and faculty." ■

LOOKING BACK

D. Ardaseer – a Dutch Parsi

A Dutch woman is researching her family history going back to her Parsi great great-grandfather, a trader, settled in the Dutch East Indies in the nineteenth century



Thea Porcu-Visser writes:

"My name is Thea Porcu-Visser and I live in The Netherlands. I am married to an Iranian, Anton Porcu [photo above]. I used to work for KLM, Royal Dutch Airlines as a stewardess, nowadays I work part-time as a secretary.

"A few years ago, I started researching my family history, spending many hours in libraries and archives, going back in time, trying to find more facts about my ancestors.

"Unfortunately I am hitting a stone wall – I am not able to find any more information about my great great-grandfather, D. Ardaseer, in the Dutch archives.

"I know he lived in Bencoolen, Sumatra, the former Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) and I also know he was a Parsi, but there are still many questions left to be answered.

"My greatest wish is to gather all the records I can find, and write a book about my ancestors. I hope to find answers from your readers. I would like to know how the Parsis recorded birth, marriages and deaths? Is there a special records office? Is there still a family called Ardaseer or Ardashir living in Mumbai? Are their books about the Parsis and their history? Are their books about Parsi family names?"

From information on a photograph of his tombstone which reads "Here lies our beloved father Ardaseer. Died 26 October 1883 (or 1885?), age 66 years," Ms. Visser is able to gather that he was born in 1817 or 1819 and died in Benkoelen, Sumatra, but there are no records of his place of birth, or the name of his wife or parents.

"There runs a story in our family," says Thea, "that Ardaseer survived a shipwreck and thus settled in Bencoolen." He was a private trader or perhaps his father worked for the British East-India Company.

Benkoelen was considered to be an outpost during the colonial period of the Dutch, and not much information is available in the Dutch archives. Moreover, during World War II, the public records of Benkoelen were destroyed, but Thea is still trying to get information ("with great difficulty") from the National Archive of Jakarta.

No. 162. ARDASEER. *Gelijkstelling van den persiaan Ardaseer en zijne drie minderjarige zonen met Europeanen.*

IN NAAM DES KONINGS!

DE GOUVERNEUR-GENERAAL VAN NEDERLANDSCH-INDIE

Den Raad van *Nederlandsch-Indie* gehoord;
Allen, die deze zullen zien of hooren lezen, Salut!

doet te weten:

Dat Hij, naar aanleiding van het daartoe strekkend verzoek, gedagteekend *Benkoelen*, 18 April 1876, van den Persiaan *Ardaseer*, gebruik willende maken van de bevoegdheid, Hem verleend bij de laatste alinea van artikel 109 van het reglement op het beleid der Regering van *Nederlandsch-Indie*;

Uitzondering makende op den regel, vervat in de vierde alinea van artikel 109 van het reglement op het beleid der Regering van *Nederlandsch-Indie*, te verklaren, dat voornoemde *Ardaseer*, benevens zijne nog minderjarige zonen, genaamd *Donjeboy Ardaseer*, *Jumsetje Ardaseer* en *Pestonje Ardaseer*, wat regten, lasten en verplichtingen betreft, geheel en al met Europeanen worden gelijk gesteld.

En opdat niemand hiervan onwetendheid voorwende, zal deze in het staatsblad van *Nederlandsch-Indie* geplaatst en, voor zooveel noodig, in de *Inlandsche* en *Chinesche* talen aangeplakt worden.

Page from history. *A page from the official Dutch Statute Book, recording "the Persiaan Ardaseer" and his three sons Donjeboy, Jumsetje and Pestonje becoming Dutch subjects on April 18, 1876. In the Dutch Government Almanac for the Dutch East-Indies during the period 1846-1886, he is mentioned as a trader, with the surname Ardasier or Ardaseer. His first name is mentioned as Doessabhoij, Dossobhoij or Dunjobhoij. In the same Almanac, his name appears also a owner of several schooners: the Benkoelen, Marijan Sophia, Good Success and Mohamed Sah.*

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Edwina Ardaseer was born in Batavia, Java and died in 1971 in Den Haag, at 83; and Lizzie Carolina Ardaseer was born in 1893 in Batavia and died in 1985 in Eindhoven, The Netherlands at age 91. No further information is available about this branch of the family. Ardaseer's third son, Jumsetjee was born in 1865 in Benkoelen, married Eveliene Spier, and died at the age of 41 in Batavia, Java.

Ardaseer has three sons. Pestonje was born on February 13, 1869 in Benkoelen, Sumatra and died in 1935 in Batavia, Java. He was married to Henriëtte Sophia Kizitaff of Padang, Sumatra. There were no children from this marriage.

His second son Donjebhoy was born in 1863 in Benkoelen, married Johanna Abke. From this marriage,

From this marriage there were 7 daughters and 3 sons. The sons were Eduard (died at 51, in Java in 1945), Louis (died at 50, in Java in 1945) and Herman (died in 1958 in The Netherlands at age 55. Daughters were Jeanne (born in Batavia in 1887, married Johannes Visser [see photo above] and died in The Netherlands in 1960), Eugenie (died in less than a

year), Pauline (died at 54, in 1944 in Java), Constance (died in The Netherlands in 1959), Sophie (died at 67, in 1941 in Java), Louisa (died at 56, in 1955 in The Hague) and Margaretha (died in The Hague at age 82, in 1983). Jeanne Ardaseer's son Hilbert Visser, born in Tandjong, married Marianne Sebek of Batavia. Thea is their daughter.

Many family members died in World War II, family photographs and papers were lost and the rest of the family has no new information for Thea. Recently, on the Internet, she came across the name of a Dinshaw Ardaseer, listed as a forwarding agent of mail, Bombay 1850-61 [Source: The Postal History and Markings of the Forwarding Agens, 1996, Ed. Kenneth Rowe]. "If there is any relation between this man and my great great-grandfather remains an unanswered question," writes Thea, "As you see, I am stuck with a lot of questions, but I don't want to give up my search."

- By Roshan Rivetna

[With information contact Thea Porcu-Visser, Elandplein 423, 2513 HZ The Hague, The Netherlands, email: synchron@xs4all.nl.] ■

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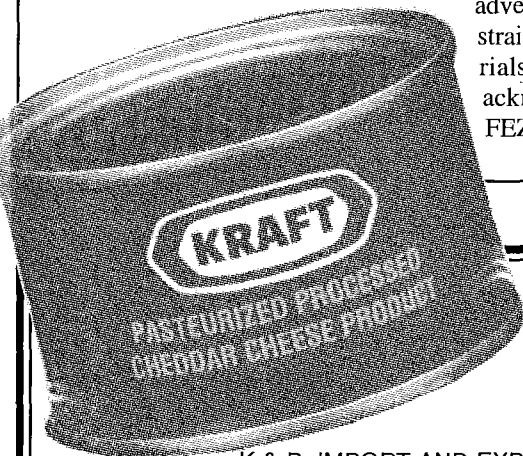
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