

FEZANA

JOURNAL



SPRING 2001, BAHAR 1370 YZ

Mah Fravardin-Ardibehest-Khordad 1370 YZ (Fasli)

Mah Avan-Adar-Dae 1370 YZ (Shenshai)

Mah Adar-Dae-Bahman 1370 YZ (Kadmi)

A Grand Texan Welcome to the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress

Also inside:

Seventh Zarathushti Games

Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce

Book launchings

Mystery of the Princess

PUBLICATION OF THE FEDERATION OF ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA



Benediction by Mobeds Dadachanji (India), Bhada (Pakistan) & Khorshidian (Iran); Dr. Ardeshiri; Chicago Zarathushti Choir.



Tenaz Dubash & "Footsteps" video; Unity Quilt; Dinaz Mistry & Homai Mody; Minoo Shroff, Lt. Gen. Adi Sethna & Dinshaw Tamboly.



Iranian delegate; "Goodfellas" & "LA" basketball teams; Gordafriid Aresh; Congress co-chairs Dr. Dolly Dastoor & Homi Davier.

Closing jashan on January 1, 2001; Congress delegates in lobby of Marriott; Feraydoon Demehri & members of The Gatha Group.



FEZANA

Federation of Zoroastrian
Associations of North America
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FEZANA JOURNAL

PUBLICATION OF THE FEDERATION OF
ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATIONS OF
NORTH AMERICA

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Aban Vazifdar, Zarine Weil ...

ON THE COVER: Vispi and Pervin Sagar
in a 2-step solo at "Texan Nite" at the
World Zoroastrian Congress in Houston.
Photo: Noshir Medhora.

COVER DESIGN: **Zenobia Rivetna**

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My Dearest Dinsha and Behram:

It was important for you both to attend this Congress. You are the progeny of a wonderful American mother and a Zarathushti father from India and you have inherited a rich heritage from both. My hope is that you will live a Zarathushti life on this continent – a Zarathushti life that is rooted in scholarship that leads to wisdom and spiritual growth. I would like you both to be comfortable with the notion of being Zarathushti and be steadfast in your quest for Asha that is the bedrock for scholarship and happiness. Most importantly, when it becomes your turn to pass on our religion to the next generation I hope you will have attained the knowledge to pass on more than what I have been able to pass on to you.

I would like you both to understand what it means to be a Zarathushti and to feel comfortable with your American and Zarathushti heritage and cultural identities. For five days, at the largest Zarathushti event to date on this continent, you were exposed to our doctrine, culture, art and it is my hope that you ascertained your identity and your religious responsibilities to your family and community. I therefore thank you for coming.

There is one event that stands out in my mind that I would like you to remember and pass on to my grandchildren: On December 31, my brother and your uncle Khojeste Mistree advocated embracing Zarathushti pluralism and adopting a 'live and let live' philosophy that would allow our community to continue our Zarathushti Odyssey without acrimony:

"As religious pluralism continues to make in-roads into the psyche of the community, it is important that one moves away from the mode of a one community paradigm to a multi dimensional one, as there is very little in common, generally, between those born of traditional Zoroastrian parents and those who have sought to embrace the faith, in recent times. ... Like the Jews, Christians, Buddhists and Muslims one needs to work towards a multi dimensional paradigm of accepting religious pluralism within the faith."

Farhang Mehr, an Iranian Zarathushti in North America, endorsed Khojeste's comments and then amplified the 'live and let live' philosophy by advocating that our community accept three accords:

Accord 1: We need to agree to disagree without being disagreeable.

Accord 2: We need to develop the humanitarian aspects of our religion.

Accord 3: We need to unite against the attacking of each other publicly.

To me, these statements by two well-respected Zarathushtis with opposing views in many areas (including conversion) represents a major breakthrough towards continuing our Odyssey in harmony. How we respond to the call by Khojeste and Farhang will affect how you both will live your lives as Zarathushtis and how you will pass this great religion onto my grandchildren.

It is therefore my fervent hope that the leadership, clergy and laity of our community will reflect with a clear mind and appropriately act to promote the religion of Ahura Mazda.

With much love and many positive thoughts,

Papa

Farrokh Mistree is a professor of mechanical engineering at Georgia Tech in Atlanta. He started teaching Sunday School in 1974, first in Sydney Australia, then in Houston, Texas and now in Atlanta, Georgia.

wishes all
Zarathushtis
a happy and
prosperous
Nowruz 1370 Yz

May we see a flowering of
the religion of Zarathushtra
and growth, prosperity and
unity for the Zarathushti
community worldwide in the
new millennium

In Millennium Three Be What You Want To See

Mahatma Gandhi once said: "BE the CHANGE you want to SEE in this world." Likewise:

We can BE the LOVE we want to see
We can BE the LIGHT we want to see,
We can BE the LIFE we want to see
in our lives.

I believe that "It is not enough to SEE the possibility, we must BE the possibility." Let me demonstrate with a touching personal story. The other day my three-year-old nephew called me and said:

"Uncle Meher, I love you." And I said, "I love you too." And he said "I love you THREE."

Likewise, we can use the three – Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds to add more love in our lives.

I believe that: "Our words can make people stars or leave them with scars." Let us speak GOOD WORDS and use them to heal, not peel, humanity.

I believe that: "Life is a reflection of our action." Let us do GOOD DEEDS and use its power to empower, not overpower, others.

So, in Millennium Three, when someone says, "I love you too," we can say "I love you THREE" to add more love and light in humanity.

Happy New Millennium!

Katayoon, Anahita, Meher Amalsad
author of "Bread for the Head"

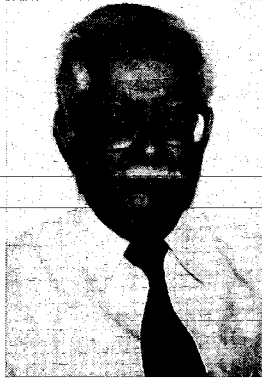
From the President ...

A tribute to Fezana Journal

For a long time I have wanted to thank the righteous individuals who make the miracle of *FEZANA JOURNAL* possible. These people have made it an art and a profession to make each issue of the Journal better than the previous issue. They crossed the journalistic limit by making the last issue – the Special Millennium Issue – among the best Zarathushti publications, at least in my opinion. Historians will record their contribution with tremendous enthusiasm, just as readers eagerly wait to receive it every quarter.

A non-political publication, *FEZANA Journal* owes its existence to the North American community's first publication called *Gavashni*, edited by Ervad Jehan Bagli and published by ZAQ. It was this publication which set the standard. Ervad Bagli published articles of critical importance to the community and set the standard for "journalistic independence". In a few pages, Ervad managed to publish the views of the readers who may not have agreed with the views of authors published in *Gavashni*. *FEZANA Journal* successfully followed and improved upon this.

My colleague, Dr. Rustom Kevala, as the chairperson of the Publications Committee, very ably continued that trend for more than eight years. During this period of Dr. Kevala's able leadership, the Journal expanded considerably. Journalistic independence became a standard, and the subscription increased many times. Dr. Kevala's leadership provided a much-needed impetus to make the Journal a self-sustaining journalistic endeavor.



As far back as I can remember, Roshan Rivetna has been the editor and publisher of the Journal in its current form. She designs and creates each issue and mails them out from their home every quarter. Her first [March 1991] issue had 24 pages in black and white. The most recent, Winter 2000 issue, had 136 pages, printed in two tones with a full color glossy cover. It was guest edited by the past three *FEZANA* presidents, Rohinton Rivetna, Dr. Dolly Dastoor and myself.

This issue would not have been possible without the supreme dedication, limitless devotion, unquestioned commitment, perseverance to com-

plete against all odds, and unparalleled enthusiasm of Roshan Rivetna and her team of dedicated volunteers, which by the way includes her husband and our founder-president Rohinton Rivetna. The Winter 2000 issue is already a collector's item.

I want to thank my friends: Khorshed Jungalwala, who, in her position as Publications Committee chairperson for the past three years has led the Journal to even greater heights, Roshan Rivetna, Mahrukh Motafram, Adel Engineer, Dolly Malva, Jamshed Udvadia. Nikan Khatabi, Nenshad Bardoliwalla, Jamshed Gandhi and Rustom Kevala, who have all made a habit of contributing beyond their call of duty to make the Journal par-excellence. I also want to thank Dolly Dastoor, who was involved in affairs of *Gavashni* and the Journal as far as I can remember.

Last, but not least, we must not forget the many Chicago area volunteers, who spend a weekend every quarter, labeling, stuffing envelopes, licking stamps, sorting and bagging the Journals into mailbags for bulk rate delivery to the Post Office.

It is my fervent hope that Khorshed and Roshan's team will ensure that the Journal continues to maintain its journalistic independence and integrity, and represent the views of the community impartially, justly and objectively. That is what the community hopes for.

Roshan, on behalf of a grateful community, let me hope that you and your righteous Zarathushtis coworkers will continue to reach an even higher journalistic plateau than what you all have achieved so far, and will continue to inform, educate and entertain the community as long as Mazda Ahura has wished. ■

Framroze K. Patel
President, *FEZANA*



FEZANA Journal "bagging crew"

Chicago-area volunteers gather once a quarter at the Rivetna's to label, stamp, tape, insert, bundle and bag the Journals, for delivery to the post office.

FEZANA Journal depends on you.

The Journal depends solely on your subscriptions, advertisements and donations to pay the high costs of printing and mailing. Please check your address label for your subscription status.

Role of FEZANA in the future

Panel Session at the World Congress, Houston

The Panel Session, chaired by Rustom Kevala, included Nikan Khatibi, Farrokh Mistree, Bella Tata and Jerry Kheradi. Bella Tata's presentation was read by Rustom Kevala. Dr. Kevala started by suggesting that the critical tasks that FEZANA needs to conclude are to provide religious education materials, inculcate pride among our youth, provide facilities and infrastructure for our religious practices as well as administration of FEZANA, and make the religion visible and better understood by the North American public in general.

A major problem that FEZANA is facing is the lack of time for unpaid volunteers to carry on the increasing activities that FEZANA needs to carry out. Mr. Khatibi discussed why youth need to be more involved in FEZANA, just as he does his part by being one of the youth editors of FEZANA Journal. Dr. Mistree stated that FEZANA lacks the infrastructure to rise to its full potential. FEZANA needs to develop a mode for creating a national agenda and to develop policies for resolving contentious issues. He suggested that a two-way communication web be developed as a tool to provide an opportunity for a wide spectrum of Zarathushtis to participate in FEZANA's future. Dr. Kheradi stated that some potential donors would like to see a Financial Advisory Board created with a 5 to 7 year term to provide continuity for investment decisions and fundraising. He described the FEZANA funds and stated that the Religious Education Fund needs to be built up.

Audience comments included the need for regular youth congresses on an annual or 2-year basis. There was general support that FEZANA's role should be to develop religious education material that is particularly suited for North American youth. Other suggestions included participation of FEZANA in United Way campaigns, hiring professional writers for preparing books, and need for FEZANA to take leadership in bringing the community (Iranis and Parsis) together. ■

- Rustom Kevala, Treasurer FEZANA

Housing and Retirement Survey

Are you interested in living in an affordable Zarathushti housing community, including a retirement community?

Dear Fellow Zarathushtis:

As the number of Zarathushtis in North America grows, we are interested in finding out how many of us would be interested to live in an affordable Zarathushti housing community, including a retirement community.

Currently a group of individuals in Houston, Texas have reserved land near the Zarathushti Heritage and Cultural Center for this purpose. Purvez Rustomji along with other Zarathushtis, has developed a model for a housing community in which Zarathushtis of all ages and their spouses (irrespective of religion) could reside. The housing community can include four types of units:

- Single family homes
- Townhouses
- Apartments, and
- Assisted living apartments.

The exact number of these units will be available once the plan is drawn and sufficient response from the community is received. Zarathushtis interested in living in such a community would pay a fix down payment at the beginning, ranging from \$75,000 to \$130,000 depending on the type of unit they choose for the initial construction of the unit. The units will be available for ownership.

For further information on this project, you can either download the Housing and Retirement Survey from the FEZANA webpage at www.FEZANA.org (under 'Messages'), check with your local Zoroastrian Association or write to me.

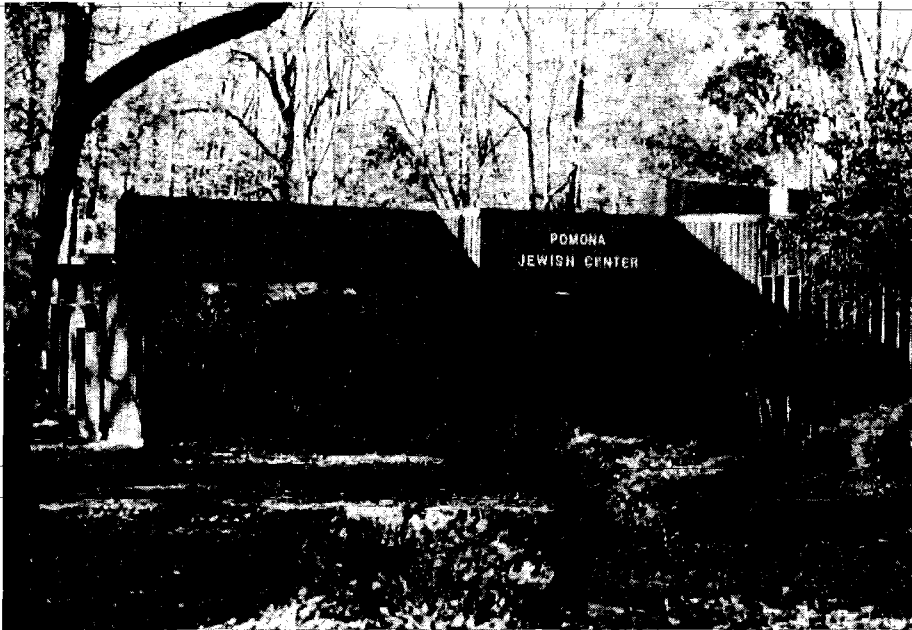
Rashna Ghadialy,
6007 N. Sheridan Road 39-D
Chicago, IL 60660

NORTH AMERICAN ZARATHUSHTI DIRECTORY - 3rd Edition

The third edition of the Directory, published by FEZANA in December 2000, is available. It includes 3,800 family entries, addresses of Darbe Mehrs and Zarathushti organizations in North America and overseas.

\$10 (US) or order from www.fezana.org and pay by credit card

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Tel: 609-275-9154, Email: langrana@caip.rutgers.edu



A new Darbe Mehr for New York. December 10, 2000 was a momentous day for ZAGNY, IZA and DMZT (Darbe Mehr Zoroastrian Trust) as tri-state (NY, NJ, CT) area Zarathushtis gave overwhelming support for the purchase of the Pomona Jewish Center property to replace the existing New York Darbe Mehr. One hundred and eighty two voting age Zarathushtis attended the special meeting at the new Center at 100 Pomona Road, Pomona, New York and heartily approved resolutions to (a) Sell the existing Darbe Mehr property in New Rochelle, for not less than \$350,000; (b) to use the proceeds of this sale to improve and maintain the new property; and (c) to purchase the Pomona property for \$1.2 million plus closing costs. Arbab Rustom Guiv's name would be transferred to the new DMZT in recognition of his seminal contribution to the community. The DMZT would own the property, and ZAGNY and IZA would use it and continue to finance its cost and upkeep.

In the last five years it had become apparent to the community that the existing New Rochelle Darbe Mehr (DMZT) was becoming of limited use. As much as the community loved the Darbe Mehr, and its history with the community since 1978, the realization had come that the building was too old (over 100 years), too small (the fire department had imposed a 99 person capacity limit) and required too much attention and expense.

The new Center is on a beautiful, wooded and landscaped, 3.87 acre property along with a caretaker's house and a 4-bedroom rabbi's house. The main hall can seat 250 for a sit-down dinner and up to 600 theater style, and has the potential for expansion. Around the central hall are classrooms, a prayer room, kitchen and serving area. The property already has all the necessary building and zoning permits for a house of worship.

With a massive fund-raising effort over the past months, including pledge drives, raffles, functions and the "loose change jar", the New Temple Committee raised donations and pledges to meet almost the full amount of the purchase price. Majority of Zarathushtis of the tri-state area responded generously, dug deep into their pockets and supported the project. Most heartening was the commitment as well as financial support from the youth.

A shining example indeed, that the ethic of collective giving is still very much alive among Zarathushtis in the new world.

- By Roshan Rivetna

Houston Darbe Mehr Phase II opened

About 550 Houstonians and out-of-towners celebrated the opening of Phase II of the Houston Darbe Mehr on December 24 with a jashan, entertainment and delicious dhandar dinner by Chef Kairasp Laskari.

Shahnaz and *Yazdi Sidhwa* were thanked for their generosity in donating the entire Phase II and "making the Houston community dream come true." Ribbon-cutting started with the main plaque in the beautiful new covered atrium, and proceeded to the Youth Room, the Library/Office and the Sunday School Room. The water fountain in front of the center was donated by Dr. Katie Irani and family, in memory of her husband, *Dr. Dinshaw Irani*.

Iranian diva Googoosh releases album 'Zartosht'



Beloved Iranian singer *Googoosh*, 50, considered a timeless icon by her fans, gave her first public performance since the Islamic revolution of 1979. Googoosh broke her silence of 22 years

with her album '*Zartosht*', recorded in Canada. She played to 12,000 joyous fans in Toronto in July, and then went on to enthrall overflow audiences in Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, Dallas, Houston and other cities. On Ebay, tickets for her concerts went for as much as \$400. Born Faegheh Atashin ('burning of sacred fire') in Azerbaijan, her re-emergence now reflects the more liberal climate of President Khatami.



Persia, Iowa

In the midst of cornfields as far as the eye can see, the little farming town of Persia (pop. 250) off Hwy. 80 in Iowa, is easy to miss. "There wasn't a soul around at 4 in the afternoon," says J. Javid, of Berkeley, California, who chanced upon it, on his cross-country ride, "I parked on Main Street – the only street with shops. The barber shop, the cafe, the gas station were all closed ... the only sign of life was at Ray's Country Tavern."

Why Persia? Well, the story is that back in 1882, they were building a railway station here, and one of the workers was from Persia. That, in short, was what the farmers at the tavern remembered.

Persian Gallery opens at Chicago's Oriental Institute

The Persian Gallery of the Oriental Institute Museum in Chicago, re-opened last year, following a four year renovation project. The 1500-sq. ft. gallery displays about 1,000 objects dating from the Archaic Susiana period (ca. 6,800 BCE) to the Islamic period (ca. 1,000 CE).

The Oriental Institute houses the nation's premier archaeological collection of artifacts from civilizations that once flourished in what is now Iran. Half of the artifacts are from Persepolis, including colossal sculptures including the head of a bull that guarded the entrance to the "Hundred Columns Hall" and fragments of plates smashed by Alexander's troops. The Persepolis artifacts were recovered by Oriental Institute archaeologists from excavations at Persepolis since the 1930s.



INTERFAITH



UN Millennium World Peace Summit

For the first time in history, religious and spiritual leaders from all the major religious traditions, met at the United Nations General Assembly Hall, August 28-31, to pledge themselves to work for peace join together to address the pressing problems of conflict, poverty and the environment. The Zarathushti delegation, coordinated by Rohinton Rivetna and Dorab Mistry, included Dastoor Dr. Firoze M. Kotwal of Mumbai and Ervad Godrej Sidhwa [photo above] of Pakistan. Zerbano Gifford, Dr. Meher Master Moos and Peshotan Mehta also participated in this momentous event.



ZAKOI (Zarathushti Association of Kentucky, Ohio and Indiana) celebrated its annual picnic at a park in Cincinnati, Ohio. About 50 people played games – kho-kho and volleyball, and enjoyed bhelpuri, samosa, tandoori chicken and jalebis. Kashmira Sadri (Ronnykash@aol.com, tel: 502-244-4806) secretary of ZAKOI, which was formed in 1998, welcomes new comers to the area.

COMING EVENTS

Next North American Congress is in Chicago

The North American FEZANA 2002 Congress will be in Chicago July 4-7, 2002. The theme of the conference will be "Passing the Torch to the Next Generation." Rashna Ghadialy, a board member of the Zoroastrian Association of Chicago, and a youth, will serve as chair of the Congress. ZAC is busy making big plans – all are invited.

Next Youth Congress

No date or place has yet been set for the next North American or World Youth Congress. There is a growing grass-roots interest from Iran. For further information contact ZYNA co-chair Sherazade Mehta at sherazadem@yahoo.com

Next World Congress

The venue or date for the next world congress have not yet been set. UK, India and Iran have all shown interest in hosting this event. Watch for an announcement shortly.

IN COMING ISSUES OF FEZANA JOURNAL

Summer 2001:

Zarathushtra's Vision and the Issues of our Times.

Guest editor: Dina McIntyre

Fall 2001:

The Dawn of a New Era: Reunion in the Western Diaspora. Guest editors: Ardeshir Anoshiravani and Mehrborzin Soroushian.

Calendar of Festivals

is shown at right for Fasli
(F), Kadmi (K) and Shenshai
(S) religious festivals for
March - September, 2001.

Meher nu Parab <i>Mah Meher, Roz Meher</i>	Sun Mar 4	(S)
Ayathrem Gahambar <i>Mah Meher, Roz Ashtad - Aneran</i>	Mon Feb 12 - Feb 16 Wed Mar 14 - Mar 18	(K) (S)
Fravardegan/Panjeh/Hamaspathmedayem Gahambar <i>Five Gatha days</i>	Fri Mar 16 - Mar 20	(F)
Char-Shanbe-Soori (Heralding the New Year) <i>Tuesday prior to Nouruz</i>	Tue Mar 20	(F)
Nouruz or Jamshedi Navroz (New Year) <i>Mah Fravardin, Roz Hormazd</i>	Wed Mar 21	(F)
Khordad Sal (Birthday of Zarathushtra) <i>Mah Fravardin, Roz Khordad</i>	Mon Mar 26	(F)
Pir e Herisht Festival <i>Mah Fravardin, Roz Amardad-Khorshed</i>	Tue Mar 27 - 31	(F)
Ava Ardavisoor nu Parab <i>Mah Avan, Roz Avan</i>	Mon Feb 26 Wed Mar 28	(K) (S)
Fravardegan (Remembrance of the departed) <i>Mah Fravardin, Roz Fravardin</i>	Sun Apr 8	(F)
Jashan-e-Ardibeheshtgan <i>Mah Ardibehesht, Roz Ardibehesht</i>	Sun Apr 22	(F)
Atash-nu-Parab <i>Mah Adar, Roz Adar</i>	Tue Mar 27 Thu Apr 26	(K) (S)
Maidyozarem Gahambar <i>Mah Ardibehesht, Roz Khorshed - Daepmeher</i>	Mon Apr 30 - May 4	(F)
Zarathusht-no-Diso (Death anniversary of Zarathushtra) <i>Mah Daye, Roz Khorshed</i>	Sat Apr 28 Mon May 28	(K) (S)
Maidhyarem Gahambar <i>Mah Daye, Roz Meher-Behram</i>	Tue May 3 - May 7 Sat Jun 2 - Jun 6	(K) (S)
Homaji Baj <i>Mah Daye, Roz Govad</i>	Fri Jun 8	(S)
Pir e Sabz Festival <i>Mah Khordad, Roz Ashtad-Aneran</i>	Thu Jun 14 - Jun 18	(F)
Pir e Banu Festival <i>Mah Tir, Roz Meher-Behram</i>	Wed Jul 4 - Jul 8	(F)
Maidyoshem Gahambar <i>Mah Tir, Roz Khorshed-Daepmeher</i>	Fri Jun 29 - Jul 3	(F)
Jashne Tirgan <i>Mah Tir, Roz Tir</i>	Sun Jul 1	(F)
Fravardegan/Mukhtad/Hamaspathmedayem Gahambar <i>Five Gatha Days</i>	Tue Jul 17 - Jul 21 Thu Aug 16 - Aug 20	(K) (S)
Pateti-Nouruz <i>Mah Fravardin, Roz Hormazd</i>	Sun Jul 22 Tue Aug 21	(K) (S)
Khordad Sal (Birthday of Zarathushtra) <i>Mah Fravardin, Roz Khordad</i>	Fri Jul 27 Sun Aug 26	(K) (S)
Fravardian Jashan <i>Mah Fravardin, Roz Fravardin</i>	Thu Aug 9 Sat Sep 8	(K) (S)

Chair in Zoroastrian studies at SOAS, London

Prof. John Hinnells writes that a post in Zoroastrian studies has started at the SOAS (School for African and Oriental Studies) in London, made possible by generous donations by *Mehraban* and *Faridoon Zartoshty*. *Dr. Almut Hintze*, "a brilliant and charming Avesta specialist, working especially on the Gathas" has been appointed to this permanent, full time position.

"This is the only post that has been wholly – and solely – committed to Zoroastrianism," writes Prof. Hinnells, "Thus, the call made by Prof. Frye over 2 decades ago at the North American Congress in Chicago, has now been realized." SOAS is now seeking sponsors of scholarships specifically for Zarathushtis to come to SOAS for post graduate or undergraduate studies in Zoroastrianism [Also see page 108].

Population of Zarathushtis in Iran

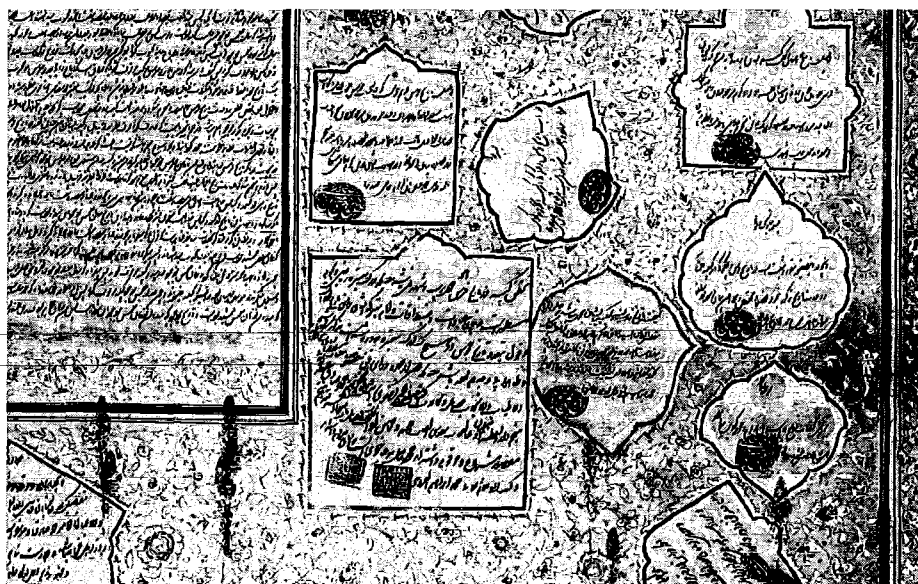
The figure of 157,000 quoted for the population of Zarathushtis in Iran [FEZANA Journal, Winter 2000, p. 10] has elicited some comments. The figure of 157,000 was obtained from Dr. Mahyar Ardeshiri: "In 1996, as reported by the Iranian government," he wrote, "the census of Zoroastrian population was 134,000. Now, the population is over 157,000."

An IRNA (Iranian news agency) report of January 2001, quotes Dr. Rostam Goharizadeh, head of the Tehran Anjuman as saying: "The Zoroastrian community in Iran now numbers around 97,000 people ... the latest census shows the figure of 97,000." IRNA further quotes the Shiraz anjuman: "... 30,000 live in the various provinces, namely Yazd, Fars, Isfahan, Kerman and Tehran."

Discussion on the internet [on the zoroastrians@listbot.com newsgroup] varies the number from 24,000 to 97,000 in Iran today.

Historic document on calendars

This historic 18th century document in a British museum reflecting the views of astronomers at Isfahan, probably led to the division between the Shenshai and Kadmi calendars.



Segment of the document, in Persian, showing the astronomers' calculations.

Afsaneh Khalat-Bari, a researcher at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, writes: "I hope by publishing this brief report your readers become aware of this historic document. If enough interest is raised, we hope to find a sponsor to carry this research further and publish a book ... to bring to light this crucial but sadly neglected part of our history."

The document (which was originally mistaken by the museum to be a wedding contract) records, in Persian, a petition by the Governor of Bombay around 1820, at the request of the Parsis of Mumbai, to the authorities in Isfahan. It seeks the skills and science of astronomers in Isfahan, to put an end to the bitter fights about differences in time-keeping between the Kadmis and Shenshais in Bombay, and to choose one or the other.

The petition is flanked by the answers and calculations of the two eminent scientists endorsing the accuracy of the Yazdegardi calendar, including the problem of the 'lost' intercalary days. The rest of the manuscript is filled with the seals of

officers of the Persian government, and clergy of high learning, endorsing the calculations.

It took me 9 months to decipher the document, in 1988, at the Victoria and Albert Museum, because of the difficult style of the inscription – in old fashioned Farsi. This document is significant for Zoroastrian researchers and scholars interested in the calculation methods and in the social structure of the times.

Afsaneh Khalat-Bari worked for 13 years as a museum officer and



researcher at the Iran Bastan Museum in Tehran, accompanying foreign archaeological expeditions. She married Patrick Wogan, a British diplomat and student of

Persian at SOAS, and moved to London in 1986, where she is associated with the Victoria and Albert Museum. Contact Afsaneh at tonek-abon@awogan.fsnet.co.uk.

PHOTO: AFSANEH KHALAT-BARI WOGAN

Archeological finds in Hamadan and Siestan

Achaemenian Palaces. Iranian archeologists have discovered the first cuneiform relic proving the existence of palaces that belonged to the Achaemenian kings who ruled ancient Persia 2,500 years ago ... The find was made in the western city of Hamadan after 11 years of excavation.

They said it was the first discovery proving that the Achaemenid dynasty, which ruled from 553 to 330 BCE, had constructed palaces in the area and would provide information on the identity of the ancient kings.

[IRNA, September 18]

Ashkanid era coffin. A coffin, belonging to an Ashkanid era woman, dating back to 200 BCE, was unearthed in Hamadan, in August, while digging a street to lay a pipeline ... The undecayed skeleton has remained intact due to the very well-sealed black stone cover of the clay coffin, which totally prevented the ventilation of air, or penetration of moisture that cause decay.

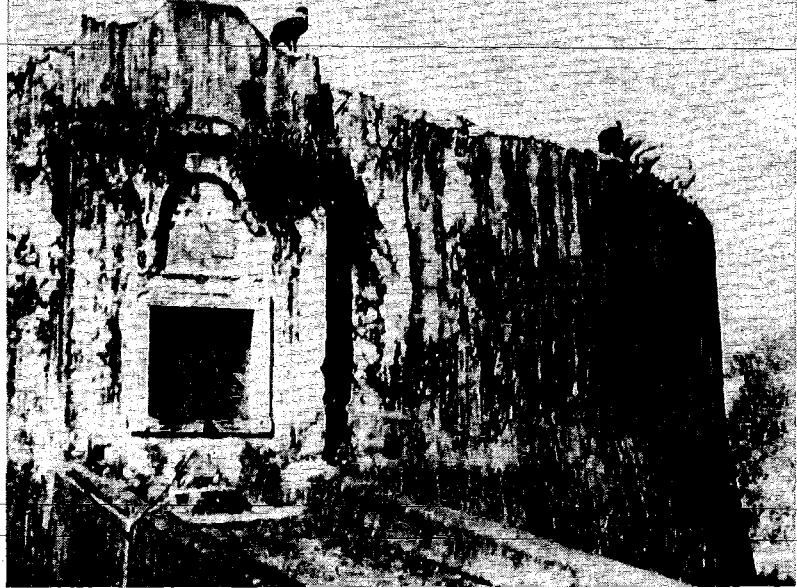
"The ancient Iranians used clay coffins in order to prevent the soil from getting polluted," explained an official, "and also to provide a comfortable vessel for the departed one's journey to their final abode."

[IRNA, November 15]

Burnt City. The fourth stage of archeological excavations began on the 'Burnt City' in Seistan-Baluchistan province of southeast Iran. With a history of 5,000 years, the Burnt City is among the largest ancient sites in the Middle East. Archeologists last year found evidences in a span of about 1000 square meters, and the discovery of hundreds of small clay human and animal statues lends further proof that the place was once a temple. A large number of seals and calculation devices were also found. Signs of civilization, first laid down in the Burnt City in 3200 BCE, remained intact during successive periods in history. ■

[IRNA, December 2]

Where have all the vultures gone?



A dokhma (Tower of Silence) circa 1960.

An aviary to breed vultures and solar panel concentrators are among the projects discussed to help preserve the traditional dokhmenashini method of disposal of the dead.

Bombay Parsi Punchayet trustees and senior executives faced the approximately 1,000 persons at a 'samast anjuman' meeting at Rustom Baug, in Byculla, on December 15 ... Though BPP chairman Jamshed Guzder stressed the need for "dignity and decorum" in a discussion of such a sensitive issue, the 'pro-vulture breeders' mercilessly heckled the 'solar-panelists' in what BPP trustee and solicitor Dadi Engineer euphemistically called a "doctrinal crossfire."

The simultaneous demographic decline of the Zoroastrian community and the vulture population in India has put the BPP in a fix. With more and more deaths and few, if any, scavenging birds, to dispose of the bodies, a miasma of worrisome realities hovers over *Doongerwadi* [the Towers of Silence in Mumbai].

Two of the four probable solutions to the problem are relatively free of controversy. One is the use of herbal cum chemical powders to help curtail the odor and speed up decomposition of the bodies. The other is the pumping of gases like ozone to absorb the offensive smell of decay.

The two controversial projects are the building of an aviary to breed vultures and the installation of reflectors to concentrate solar heat on the dead bodies.

The aviary project, whose main proponent is Khojeste Mistree, anticipates the construction of a massive mesh dome over the dokhma along with a smaller one where juvenile birds, trapped from the wild, would be nurtured on a diet of special foods before being introduced to the contents of the dokhma. The project, currently being evaluated by five international experts on the subject, will cost Rs. 1.55 crores (\$400,000) to build and Rs. 25 lakhs (\$63,000) per year to maintain.

The solar energy project, advocated by Dr. Homi Dhalla, envisages the installation of parabolic reflectors to aim concentrated heat on the corpse to hasten dehydration. The panels would cost about Rs. 12 lakhs per dokhma (\$30,000). The decision will be made by the BPP trustees after further feasibility studies.

[Excerpted by Roshan Rivetna from "A doctrinal Crossfire" by Arnava Mama, Parsiana, January 2001.]

[More on this topic on page 13]



The mystery surrounding the mummified body of a supposedly 2600-year-old Achaemenian princess, bearing the symbol of a farohar, found in Pakistan, deepens, with the attention of international archaeologists

mystery of the princess

shan Rivetna

The story of the Persian princess, found by police in Quetta, Pakistan, last October, and lying since then, under the watchful eye of armed guards, in Pakistan's National Museum in Karachi, has taken some strange twists and turns, since it came to public attention last October.

The mummified body, in full royal burial regalia, lying in a wooden sarcophagus bearing an engraving of the farohar and two fire altars [photo right], was recovered by Quetta police from the house of Sardar Reeki, who was demanding \$11 million for it from a foreign buyer. He is now in custody for violating Pakistan's Antiquity Act. Reeki said he received it from an Iranian national, who allegedly found it in a house after an earthquake in the Iranian Baluchistan town of Kharan.

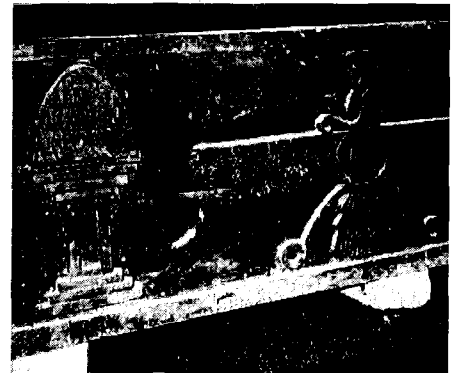
2600-year-old princess. Based on preliminary examinations of the mummy wearing a gold crown, a gold plaque on her chest inscribed in Makhî-cuneiform, and full regalia of a royal family, Pakistani archaeologists identified her as the 18-year-old daughter of a Persian dynasty dating back to 600 BCE, perhaps a daughter

of king Xerxes, and a follower of Zarathushtra. Alternatively, said lead archeologist Dani, she could be an Egyptian princess, married to a Persian prince during the reign of Cyrus I (640 - 590 BCE).

Claims to ownership. Meanwhile Iran, claiming the mummy was a Persian prince, said it would take legal action for its return. Sources said the sarcophagus belongs to a set of five, excavated in Hamadan, and possibly stolen and smuggled to Pakistan. One of them reportedly is of Mandanes, mother of Cyrus the Great. The Taliban of Afghanistan and the Awan tribe of Baluchistan, also laid claim to the find as a part of their cultural and historic heritage.

The Iranian news agency quoted Italian archeologist Constantini as deciphering the words "I am the sister of Cyrus the Great ..." on the coffin, leaving no room for doubt that the mummy belongs to Iran. Constantini later angrily denied ever having said this.

In November, amidst disturbing reports of mishandling and onset of microbes, the mummy was removed from public display. Carbon dating results were pending as of this writing.



Mummy is a fraud. While this tussle continued, *Archaeology* magazine published a special report [*'Saga of the Persian Princess'*, January 2001], stating that the mummy was a fraud. It turns out that Oscar Muscarella of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, had received photos of this same mummy, from a dealer back in March 2000. Based on linguistic inconsistencies in the inscriptions, he had concluded that the inscription dated no earlier than the 1930s. A carbon-dating lab placed the coffin at 250 years old. *Archaeology* suggests that the princess may be a genuine Egyptian mummy with forged Persian additions.

In January, a delegation of Iranian experts sent to Pakistan, pronounced it a fake stating it did not conform with Iranian culture, costumes and

tradition: the wooden box, the engraved designs of the farohar and altars, all confirm that the work is not genuine."

Ongoing research. Results of Carbon dating and CT scan tests by the Institute of Archaeology, Berlin are awaited, to put a definitive verdict on the dating of the mummy.

A future issue of FEZANA Journal will contain a sequel to the story of the 'Quetta Mummy'. The author, **Dr. Vera S. Katrak** writes:

"Over four months have elapsed since the National Museum, Karachi, took custody of the 'mummy princess'. It is rather remiss of the Museum not to have produced any official report regarding this mummy's provenance or dating; one still hopefully awaits the promised results of radiocarbon dating!

"My researches in the field of Achaemenian art history lead me to believe that this mummified body, placed in the carved wooden sarcophagus, is *not* Achaemenian Persian in date. In my opinion, the key to this hypothesis lies in the study of the art motifs, which ornament the four outer sides of the sarcophagus, and their comparison with early dated Persian examples."

Meanwhile, amidst doubts on her status and authenticity, and pending further research results, the Princess, for the time being, lies in wait at the Karachi museum. ■

Tours of Iran

Californian **Silloo Mehta** conducts tours of "our motherland Iran – history, culture and religion." Her tours are special, with: quality 4-star hotels; full meals; comprehensive sight-seeing; deluxe A/C coach; exclusive cultural connections; detailed 14,500 years history of Iran narrated throughout the trip; comprehensive pre-departure information, including a 54-page booklet of bas-reliefs and carvings. Contact Silloo at (714) 995-8765, email: mazcon@myemailstation-com.

A decision on Doongerwadi ...

Excerpts from a letter to the community by the Trustees of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, dated February 15. For a background on this issue which has been the subject of much debate within the community, see page 11.

The Trustees having considered all issues, doctrinal as well as legal and having arrived at their conclusions have taken the following decisions.

(1) It has been decided that the system of sprinkling herbal/chemical composition over the dead bodies would continue.

(2) The air-freshening plant is nearly ready for operation and will commence in the near future.

(3) It has been decided to proceed with the project to raise vultures in captivity. Should it not be possible to procure the juvenile vultures or obtain the necessary permissions this option may have to be reconsidered.

(4) An order has been placed for one solar panel which will be installed and trials conducted on animal carcasses. Should the trials be successful one tower of silence will be fitted with the required number of solar panels and the system introduced. Should the trials not be successful, this option will have to be reconsidered.

(5) A group of prominent Zoroastrians, comprising of persons from the legal, medical and other fields have formed a body called 'Disposal of the Dead with Dignity - Action Group' (DDD-AG). Members of the group have been having a dialogue with the Trustees for some time now and they have expressed distress that due to absence of vultures, the bodies of the dead are only exposed to the elements and hence lie undisposed. They have therefore been advocating the need for setting up a crematorium on Doongerwadi land.

This suggestion was not found acceptable to the Trustees. They further highlighted their anguish at not being allowed the use of *bunglis* at Doongerwadi for the performance of the four days obsequies of their departed family members (for those who opt for a crematorium or alternate mode of disposal for their dear departed dead).

The Trustees being appreciative of their concerns as also the legal position have decided to allow the use of *bunglis* at Doongerwadi for the performance of the four days obsequies for those who opt for modes of disposal other than the traditional system of *dokhmenashini*.

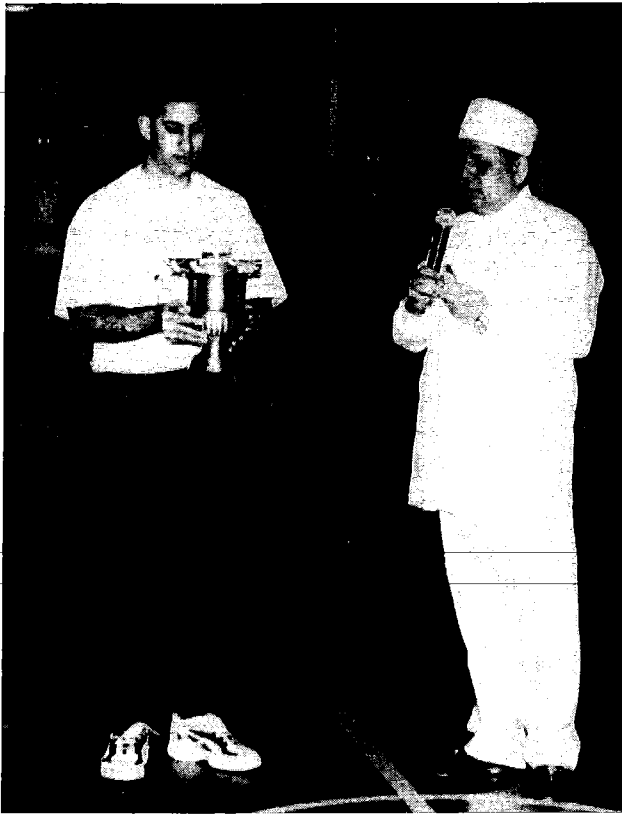
Those who opt for alternate modes of disposal will have to make arrangements for the priests to perform the ceremonies. After the ceremony is performed, the relatives of the deceased would be free to take the body from the doongerwadi and have it cremated or buried elsewhere.

It is further clarified that the proposal for constructing a crematorium at Doongerwadi has been rejected.

The above are the unanimous decisions of all the trustees (Jamshed Guzder, Minoo Shroff, Silloo Kavarana, Dinshaw Mehta, Dadi Engineer, Rustom Tirandaz, Dinshaw Tamboly) save and except that Rustom Tirandaz does not agree with the decision to permit the use of *bunglis* for those who opt for the system of cremation or other alternative system of disposal of the dead, for which he has recorded his dissent by a separate note. ■

Heritage Tours to Iran

Sohrab Pourmandgarian conducts tours of heritage sites of Iran. A 15-day tour costs \$850, including meals, comfortable hotels, A/C coach, entrance fees, and more. Past experience includes conducting the World Congress tour for North American and Indian delegates and the Youth tour of Iran in 2000 [see FEZANA Journal, Fall 1996 and Fall 2000]. Call (416) 892-3191, sohrab777@yahoo.com.



zarathushti games fulfill their purpose

Over 400 Zarathushti sports enthusiasts gather for the Seventh World Zarathushti Games in Houston December 26-27.

By Darius Khosravian

From every nook and corner of the globe over 400 Zarathushti sports enthusiasts flocked to Houston, Texas and its unexpected low temperatures for the Seventh World Zarathushti Games, a two-day event preceding the World Congress in Houston. Relatives and friends met each other on December 25th at the JW Marriott hotel where they collected their registration package. Warm greetings and laughter filled the room as well as frustrations from registration glitches. Though many of them stayed at the prestigious five-star hotel, the glut of Zarathushtis staying at the hotel all at one time was more than the hotel's heating system could manage. Nevertheless, disregarding the cold and frustration, at 7 o'clock in the morning, young and old followers of the faith piled into the buses and headed for Klein School, the venue for the games.

This was an assembly of people as well as an assembly of emotions. The arrogant and the humble were there with hearts burning with national pride as they were given the flag of their nation to proudly sing a

national tune or anthem. The ultimate privilege was the athletes' triumphant walk around the Klein basketball gym before a cheering crowd of family and friends. Adding to this scene, the Houston cheerleaders entertained and rallied the crowd. The Olympic torch followed, carried proudly by Houstonian **Justin Mody** who circled the gym so that all may be inspired by its glow. The torch was then passed to Ervad Boman-shah Sanjana to light the 'diva' and recite a short benediction. The US and Canadian national anthems were sung proudly and with gusto by Sonia Behrana and Vista Pourbahrami. The Westbury School Brigade dancers next dazzled the crowd with their show. A few short welcome speeches were given by the Sports co-chairs **Rustom Khosravian** of Houston and **Artemis Javanshir** of California (**Bijan Khosraviani** spoke in her absence), and also by the Congress co-chairs **Homi Davier** and **Dolly Dastoor**.

To enhance the olympic spirit and to everyone's surprise, a celebrity speaker was introduced to the crowd.

He was Houstonian **Steven Lopez**, Tae Kwon Do gold medallist at the Sydney Olympics. Steven shared his olympic experience and said a few words to encourage the athletes even further. Then the games began.

Over land, water, and air Zarathushtis used wit and muscle to conquer competition.

Swimming. Houstonian **Tanya Noble** stole gold in the 25 yd freestyle, backstroke and breaststroke, dominating the under thirteen age bracket for boys and girls. The 14 – 20 year old males' bracket presented an exciting rivalry between Pakistani **Narius Shekdar** and Californian **Bahram Parineh**. Each battling for gold but both came up even with two golds and two silver medals in the 50 yd freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke and individual medley events. Indian swimming sensation **Zeba Wadia** gained much wealth as she earned four gold medals in 50 yd freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke and individual medley. Though the 20 years and above events were commanded by men with **Farshad Bakhtyari** winning the gold in 50 yd

Clockwise, Jal Sethna holding afargan, Ervad Sanjana giving Benediction; swimming champs, Deena Guzder (3rd), Zeba Wadia (1st), Shirin Irani (2nd); below, Houstonian Justin Mody carrying the torch in the Opening Ceremonies.



Narius Shekdar, Farzain Malbari and Karmin Guzder. The race for the silver was gruelingly close but **Farshad Bakhtyari, Bahman Yazdani, Ramesch Izedian, and Wistasb Kushesh** must have had longer fingers as they won silver by four milliseconds.

Track and field undoubtedly tested the tolerance of the participants as they competed in nearly freezing temperatures of 34 degrees Fahrenheit. **Mitra Mehta and Vandad Pourbahrami** took gold in the under 13 age bracket. In the adult

bracket the 100 meter and 400 meter dash were won by **Mehrnosh Bamboat** and **Feroza Engineer** won the women's race. Both of these victors are national track stars from India. **Lala Yazad** won the men's 1500 meter final while **Zeenia Challa** won gold for the women's 1500 meter final.

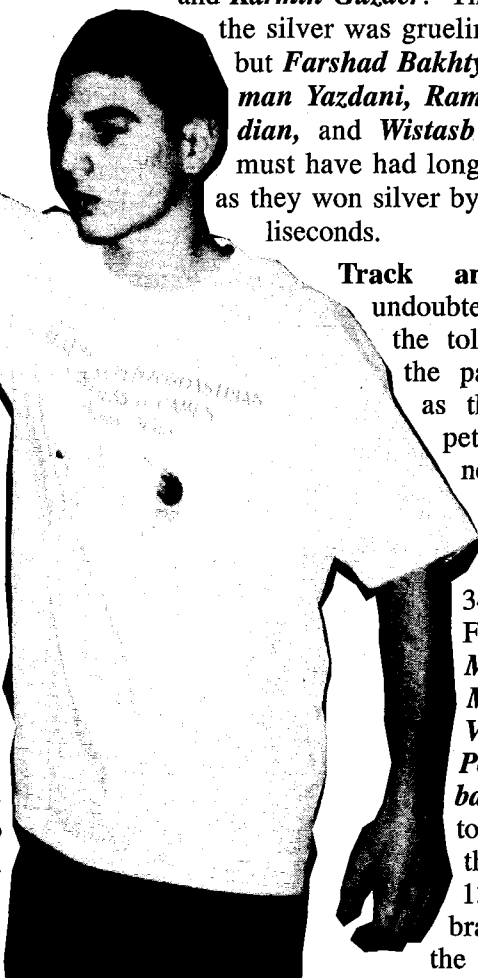
The United States was successful in the 100 meter men's relay as its team '**Wings**' consisting of **Justin Mody, Berzin Bhandara, Neville Sorab, and Yazad Lala** claimed gold. The women's 100 meter relay was won by the team '**Speed Racers**' consisting of **Zeenia Challa** and the three **Behramsha sisters, Zarin, Kashmira and Jasmine.**

Shotput, Discus Throw. The shot put men's final produced gold medalist **Zubin Irani** while the women's resulted in Indian **Feroza Engineer** being the winner. In the discus throw, Houstonian **Justin Mody** stole the gold by beating the closest competition by five meters. New Yorker **Vista Kushesh** received gold in the women's discus throw.

Basketball was one of the most intensive sports as the referees were lenient on the fouls proving to be rough

freestyle and **Xerxes Commissariat** winning the gold in 50 yd breaststroke, an elated victory came when Houstonian **Anita Wolfe** let the gold rest on a more feminine neck as she won the 50 yd backstroke by more than three seconds from her closest male rival. Joyful screams filled the natatorium as the women showed their appreciation for their champion.

Another exhilarating race was the 50 yd freestyle relay except that the two teams were striving for a silver medal. The gold was comfortably won by **Xerxes Commissariat,**



games. But team '*Good Fellas*' from Boston disregarded this as they won the gold medal with players *Cyrus Commissariat, Arjang Kasravi, Shahram Khosraviani, Shahn timer Khosraviani, Farshad Bakhtyari, Sam Bastani, Hooman Shad, and Arman Teherani*. The junior basketball events under 13 had the '*Misfits*' as the champions – *Kaivan and Faridun Dadachanji, Shirelle and Tanya Noble, Malcolm Irani, Ryan Namiri and Roxanne Mody*.

Volleyball drew the largest, and sometimes the loudest crowds. More Houstonians became richer as the home team '*Rubber Duckies*' took gold medals thanks to *Zarin Behramsha, Faredun Bhader, Shaki Commissariat, Khodi Irani, Erik Kelawala, Jal Sethna, Veera Sidhwa and Darius Wania*. To get those medals the Houston team had to face Texan rival ZANT from Dallas. It was a hard fought victory and Houston came out triumphant.

Table tennis. Last but not the least table tennis had its moment in the spot light. Men's singles champion *Farzaan Pudumjee* of India and women's singles champion *Villi Bhappu* of Houston proved they had the finesse needed to excel in this

sport. Men's doubles champion was *Behramjee Ghadially* while the Mixed Doubles was won by *Villi Bhappu and Rustom Challa*, showing viewers the concentration needed to stay organized in this fast-paced game.

Kudos. The masterminds behind this great sport tournament – the Houston Zarathushti Sports Committee had their work cut out for them once they accepted such a task. One must not forget the sacrifice they took when they donated their time and hard work so that the games would be superior to all others and for that the Zoroastrian athletes around the world are forever grateful.

Awards. USA dominated in medal standings with a total of 57, 19 of them being gold. India and Canada gained 13 medals each. However, India dominated the swimming and track and field events bagging 10 golds out of 13, a remarkable feat. Pakistan had 4 to its credit and UK picked up 1 silver.

Zoroastrian cheerleaders received a standing ovation for their opening dance number at the Award Ceremonies on December 30th. *Feraydoon Demehri's Gatha Group* entertained the crowd with melodious Gatha songs. It was heart warming to listen to the Gathas sung in

Dari to the beat of the '*araboon*' so dexterously performed by *Feraydoon*. There were loud cheers as they finished their act.

The athletes braced themselves in anticipation, as their names were called out by *Rustom Kanga, Ken Bhappu, and Rustom Khosravian*. As athletes, young and more mature, came up to shake hands with the major sports donors: *Happy Minwalla* of *Tradewinds* (Ken Bhappu represented him in his absence), FEZANA president *Framroze Patel*, and *Tahamtan Aresh*, mothers and fathers burst with pride as they watched their son or daughter receive their medal and stand on the gold, silver or bronze podium. Confidence in the athletes was at an all time high and photographers lighted the room with flashes, all eager to capture that moment.

As the lights dimmed so did the flame and reality set in. Possibly the last organized sports event of the century, the competition of the games has united Zarathushtis around the world, truly serving its purpose. ■

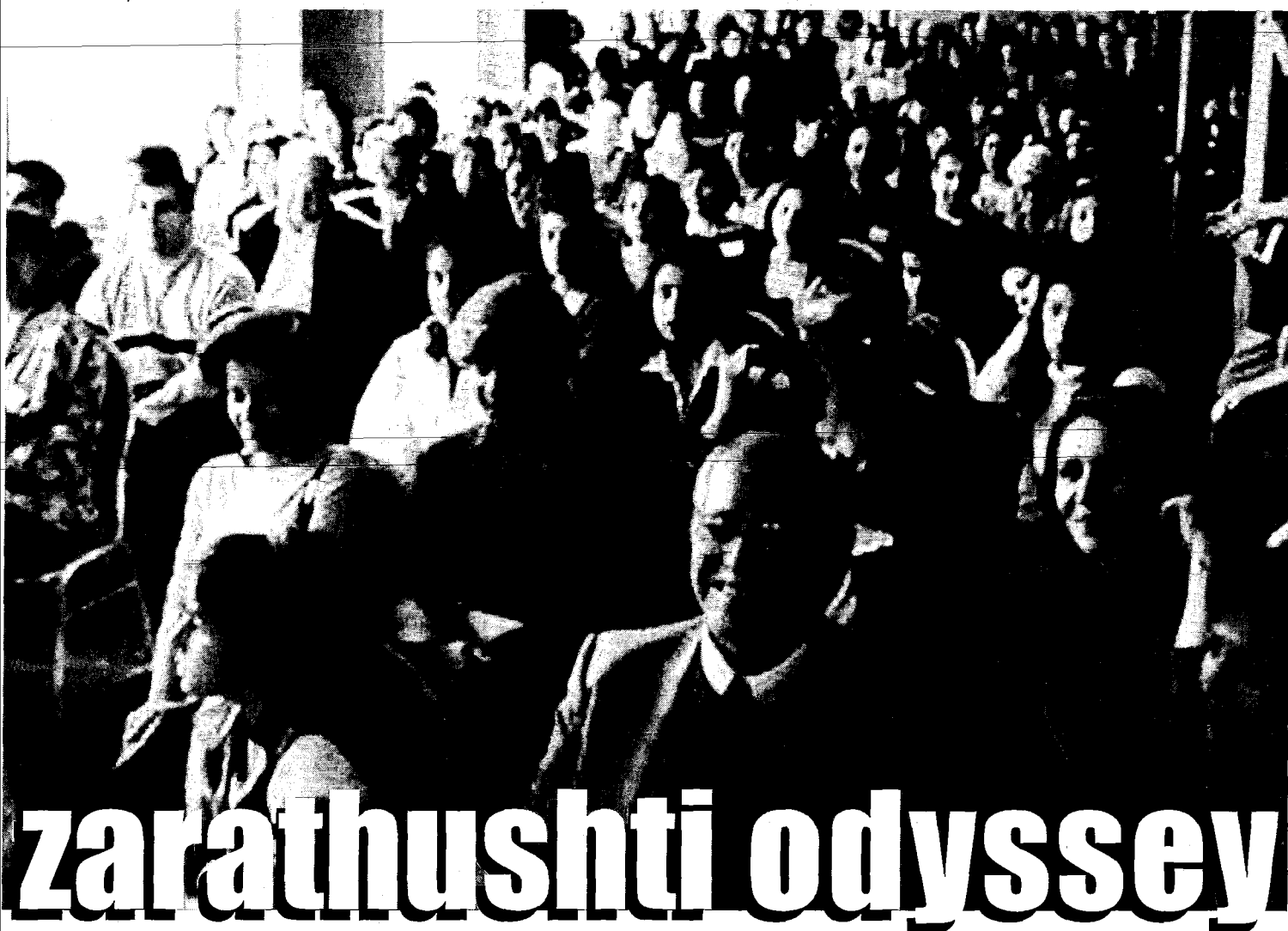
Darius Khosravian 15, is a reporter for Kempner High School in Houston, interested in journalism.

[Photos courtesy of Noshir Medhora and Feraydoon Demehri from www.oshihan.org].



Left, men's track and field; right, Houstonian volleyball team '*Rubber Duckies*'.





Zarathushtis convene at the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress to pause on their Zarathushti Odyssey – to celebrate their heritage, reflect on their present and chart their future.

By Roshan Rivetna

For five days last December, across the turn of the millennium, the 23-storey JW Marriott hotel in Houston, Texas, was alive with Zarathushtis, of all ages, all persuasions and all nationalities. With 2340 registrants plus countless more who hung out in the halls, just to “be there”, the gathering of Zarathushtis – from motherland Iran, the ‘first diaspora’ in India and Pakistan, and the more recent ‘western diaspora’ in UK, North America, Australia and around the world – was certainly the largest ever in the west, and possibly in the world.

Orchestrated by a host of committees from FEZANA and ZAH, led by co-chairs Dr. Dolly Das-toor and Homi Davier, the Congress sought to celebrate our Zarathushti heritage and tackle some weighty issues of our times. With hundreds of presentations, panel discussions, special legacy projects, a time capsule, launching of the Chamber of Commerce, a book fair, art, film and photo exhibits, the orchestra, galas, awards and recognitions, plus the Zarathushti Games preceding the Congress, participants, were no doubt amply inspired, educated and entertained.

zarathushti odyssey

showcases modern day frailties and renewal of purpose

By Jim Engineer

What will be made after all is said and done of the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress in Houston, Dec. 28 to Jan. 1, 2001? What kind of lasting legacy will it leave on our evolution as a world Zarathushti community in the new millennium?

And how will future generations of Zarathushtis be shaped by lessons learned from this gigantic assembly of conflicting thought and passion?

Through the years, or at least at the next world gathering, we will learn the answers to these questions. But until then, we can only draw a few conclusions about this fascinating 'Zarathushti Odyssey' by careful and objective analysis of its origins and eventual transformation at the JW Marriott Hotel in Houston.

With three years of planning, budgeting, coordinating, infighting and an unfettered proliferation of divisive email, the Congress managed to attract more than 2,200 Zarathushtis, including over 400 youth, from all walks of life and nationality.

The passionate work of hundreds from the Zoroastrian Association of Houston (ZAH) and FEZANA, along with a host of North American and international speakers, track chairs and committee members culminated in the Congress, with overall responsibility for the four-year initiative falling on the shoulders of co-chairs Homi Davier and Dolly Dastoor and

the 8-member WZC 2000 Executive Board.

Among the many highlights, Congress-goers enjoyed the Seventh Zarathushti Games in the days preceding the Congress, the laying of a Millennium Time Capsule (to be reopened in 50 years) on the grounds of the ZAH center, the unveiling of a handmade 'Unity Quilt' bearing the logos of 72 Zarathushti associations, and a very special awards luncheon paying tribute to six winners of the World Zarathushti Awards.

Twenty women of the past 200 years, were inducted into the 'Daughters of Mashyani Hall of Fame' at another gala luncheon, while simultaneously, the business community gathered to launch the World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce. Several meetings were held to discuss the forming of a world apex body for Zarathushtis.

Among the numerous exhibits on photographs, art works, coins of the Sasanian era, and more, the Book Fair, featuring a massive collection of books on the religion, garnered great interest.

The Heritage Nite gala on the opening day of the Congress, featured the premiere performance of the World Zarathushti Orchestra. The International Film and Video Festival, organized by Feraydoon Demehri, featured films promoting Zarathushti heritage.

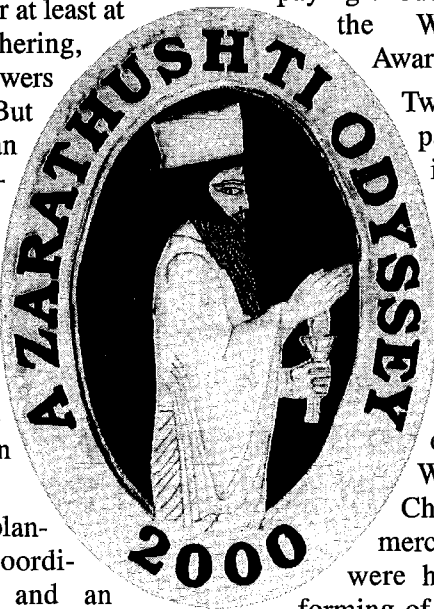


One very highly praised and well-received Congress event was the airing of the video created by journalist and filmmaker Tenaz Dubash titled *"In the Footsteps of our Forefathers,"* 60-minute documentary featuring the travels of 34 North American Zarathushtis who discover their roots on an intensive three-week exploration of Iran.

The presentations were broadly categorized into four tracks, scheduled in parallel daily: Social and Historical, chaired by Kaemerz Dotiwala, Religious and Educational, chaired by Pallan Ichaporia, Zarathushtra's Vision chaired by Mehrborzin Soroushian, and the Youth Track, orchestrated by a team of youth.

The youth, with an attendance of about 540, were very much an integral part of this Congress. Many had won scholarships to come, through essay contests, and other programs sponsored by the Congress as well as by organizations in India and Pakistan.

One could very well liken the six-day event to a modern-day political convention, full of pomp and pageantry, where much is ballyhooed by leaders and speakers who have sacrificed tremendous human capital to take center





stage in the mere hope their viewpoint would be heard.

One of those speakers was Dr. Ali Jafarey, a leader representing a burgeoning constituency that believes Zoroastrianism is a universal religion and open to all who wish to learn, believe and spread Zarathushtra's teachings. On the opposite end of the socio-religious spectrum of thought and belief was Ervad Kheikhosrow N. Dastur, a high-ranking priest from Bombay who leads Ilm-e-Khshnoom, a traditionalist school of thought with beliefs centered on preservation and rooted in astronomical and scientific interpretation.

Both men engaged in a highly attended FEZANA-sponsored event outside the auspices of the Congress, on the interpretation of Yasna 30.2 and the topic of Freedom of Choice. While the forum provided a healthy exchange of in-depth views and interpretations, it was far more anticlimactic than the fiery philosophical debates that led to its culmination.

Throughout the Congress permeated an unmistakable reverence and respect for the sheer number of Zarathushtis who had managed to congregate peacefully and socially to enjoy the company of each other, renewing old friendships and celebrating new beginnings. If there were no objective to be achieved other than rejuvenating the spirit of the Zarathushti

community, the WZC 2000 organizers did their job.

For most of the participants, three simultaneous New Year's Eve 'Millennium Ball' events at the Marriott proved to be the night where the Congress reached a zenith of goodwill in an atmosphere of friendship and revelry. It would be this spirit of cooperation and renewal of purpose that energized Congress participants, and gave its hard working team of organizers the rewarding feeling of satisfaction they deserved. ■

Jim Engineer is founder of the Zoroastrian Young Professionals of North America (www.zoroastrian-youth.com) and ZYNA, and a board member of the ZAC (Chicago). He also created the Youthfully Speaking section of FEZANA Journal.

Professionally, Jim is a seven-year award-winning public relations professional and founder and CEO of **e-rainmaker.com**, a Chicago-based high-tech public relations practice.



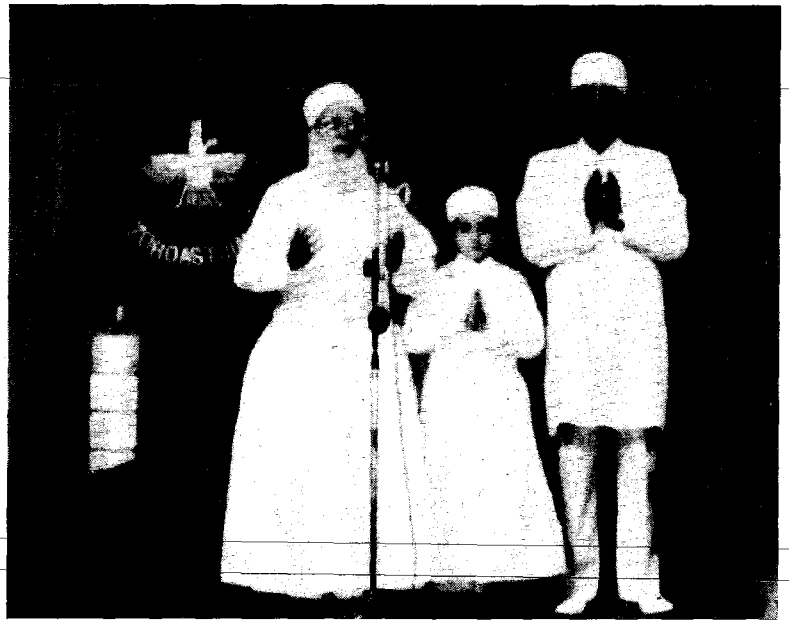
From left clockwise: WZC 2000 Executive Board: Co-chairs Dolly Dastoor and Homi Davier; FEZANA president Framroze K. Patel; Sarosh Manekshaw, Jimmy Mistry, Sarosh Collector, secretary Arnavaz Sethna and Yasmin Pavri (missing is Ardeshtir Anoshiravani); Operations co-chairs Roshan Sethna and Pervin Sagar; left, detail from Unity Quilt.

Photo Credits:

Photos for the Zarathushti Games and all the Congress-related articles in this issue of FEZANA Journal are gratefully acknowledged from Cyrus Rivetna, Feraydoon Demehri (from his website at www.oshihan.org), Noshir Medhora and Farrokh and Yashfara Mistree, except where noted otherwise.

Congress opens with pomp and ceremony

By Vahishta Canteenwalla



The Congress got off to an impressive start on the morning of December 28th. The audience was split between two halls – the Exhibit Hall, where the ceremonies took place and the Grand Ballroom upstairs, where they were simulcast on two big screens. People with red name tags were in the Exhibit Hall and people with blue name tags were in the Grand Ballroom.

The Congress was all abuzz, as Zarathushti gatherings are wont to be, when the start was signalled by four men and four women dressed in red T-shirts and black pants, who took to the stage to sing the opening song inspired by Yasna 30.2. It was *The Gatha Group* led by *Feraydoon Demehri*.

The opening benediction was given by *Ervad Asphandiar Dadachanji*, panthaki of the Vatcha-Gandhi Agiary in Mumbai, with *Mobed Rashid Khorshidian* from Iran and 12-year-old *Ervad Mehernosh Bhada* of Pakistan. It was a stirring sight to see the mobeds from the three mother countries, walk down the aisle with a lighted *divo*.

Congratulatory messages were received from US President *Bill Clinton* and *The Right Hon. Adrian Clarkson*, Governor General of Canada, followed by splendid renditions of the US (by *Sonia Behrana*)

and Canadian (by *Bella Tata* and *Vista Pourbahrami*) national anthems.

A 30-minute multi-media audio-visual presentation, narrated by *Kaemerz Dotiwala*, took us on a historical journey from Peshdadian times down to the present day.

Council member *Gordon Quan* read a welcoming message from *Lee Brown*, Mayor of the City of Houston, who proclaimed December 28th as “Zarathushti Odyssey Day.”

The *Chicago Zarathushti Choir*, dressed in colorful, traditional *garas* and *dagli-pagdis*, then gave a spirited rendition of *Chaye Hame Zarathushti*, with the crowd joining in the chorus with fervor.

In her stirring welcome address, co-chair *Dr. Dolly Dastoor* said that the Congress was “built on a dream of a total Zarathushti experience for the body, the mind and the spirit.” She urged that we build upon the momentum of the Congress and the “energy generated by 2000 souls sitting in this room” and “work together, in the spirit of give and take to build a Strategic Plan for the Future of the community, a Strategic Plan to form a Virtual Zarathushti nation.”

Co-chair *Homi Davier* welcomed delegates to Texas, and paid special tributes to the “dedicated volunteers

– Team Congress who, for the past four years have forsaken family, livelihood, finances and weekends ... for they believed in the Congress and the legacy it would leave behind for generations.” He also gave special thanks to the Houston Zarathushti community for their enormous contributions in time, talents, finances and support for the Congress.

Founding president of FEZANA, *Rohinton Rivetna*, introduced present president *Framroze K. Patel*, who lauded the efforts of Team Congress. His heartiest applause came when he said: “I also welcome the righteous individuals who made a conscious choice to be part of the Zarathushti community and willingly bring up your children as Zarathushtis ... whatever is your name, Nancy or Stephanie or John or Aadeline or Jignasha ... we welcome you with open arms, you are undeniably part of our community.” *Farrokh Firozgari*, president of ZAH welcomed delegates on behalf of the Houston association.

The Gatha Group treated the gathering to a beautiful rendition of the Iranian National Anthem.

There followed congratulatory and goodwill messages from around the world. *Dr. Khosrow Dabestani*, Zoroastrian representative in the Ira-



nian Parliament (the Majlis) read a message from the president of the Islamic Republic of Iran, **Ayatollah Mohamad Khatami**, and from the Speaker of the Parliament, **Mr. Karrobi**, both supportive of the Zarathushtis and welcoming Zarathushtis to Iran. **Dr. Mahyar Ardeshiri**, WZC 2000 representative in Iran, prefixed his message of goodwill with comments regarding Congress arrangements [see next page].

Bombay Parsi Punchayet trustee **Minoo Shroff** read a message of goodwill from the BPP (Officials from India had a significant presence at the Congress in the persons of BPP trustees **Rustom Tirandaz**, **Dinshaw Tamboly**, **Silloo Kavarana** and **Minoo Shroff**, BPP executives **Behram Dastur**, **Sheroo Master** and



Clockwise from top, Mobeds Dadachanji, Bhada and Khorshidian at benediction; Khosrow Dabestani (Iran); Banner at the Marriott; The Gatha Group with F. Demehri at right; middle left, Homai Mody (India); Farrokh Firozgari (ZAH president); bottom left, Sam Kerr (Australia); Dorab Mistry (UK) and Toxy Cowasji (Pakistan).



Mehli Colah; **Lt. Gen. (Retd) Adi M. Sethna**, Zarathushti representative on the Government of India Minorities Commission; and **Sam Bhacca** from the Surat Anjuman). Messages were presented by WZC 2000 representatives in India **Homai Modi** and **Sheroo Master**. The president of India, **K.R. Narayanan** had sent a message speaking in glowing terms of the contributions of Zarathushtis in India. **Dinshaw Tamboly** read a message from WZO.

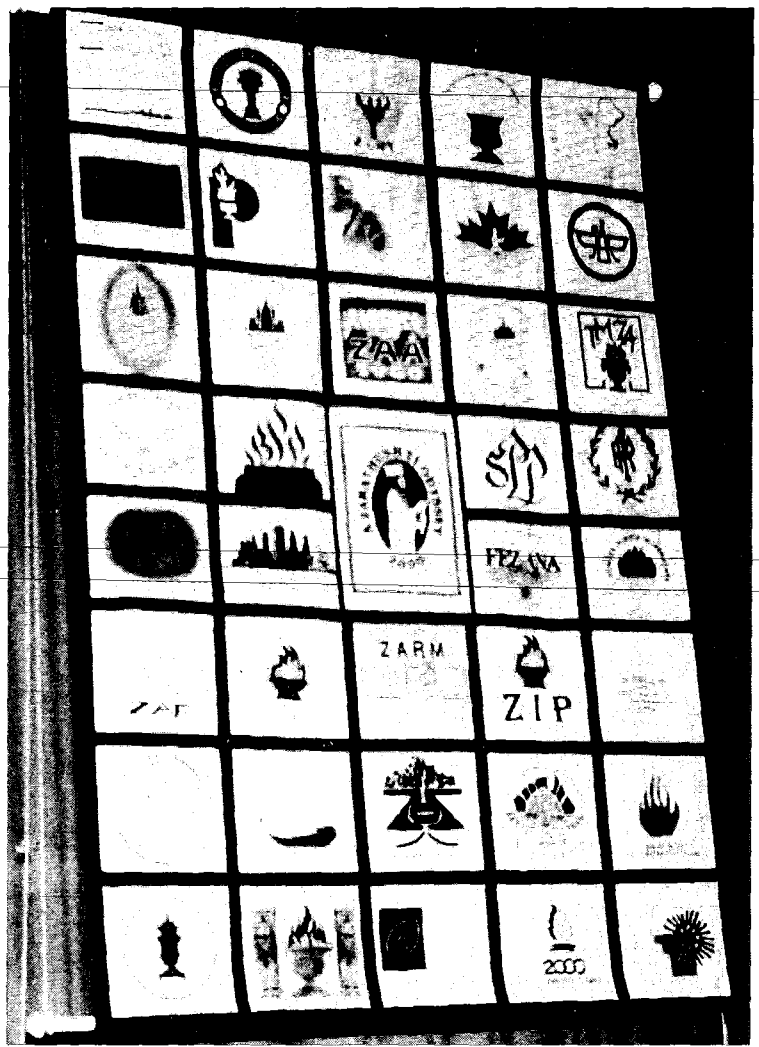
Greetings were presented by WZC 2000 representatives in: UK (ZTFE president **Dorab Mistry**), Pakistan (KZBM president **Toxy Cowasji**), Australia (**Sam Kerr**) and France (**Ketayun Kapadia**). **Russi Ghadiali**, president of the Singapore association, **Dinaz Mistry**, president of the Australian Zoroastrian Association and **Rusi Patel** from Dubai and others presented their messages.

Professor **Ken Vincent**, of Houston College gave a short talk about his study of the religion.

The two 'Unity Quilts [photo right] of the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress' were unveiled by **Khurshid Bamboat**.

To conclude the ceremonies, presidents of all the 24 FEZANA member associations, came on stage, introduced themselves and wished the Congress well.

Vahishta Bharucha Canteenwalla came to Montreal, Canada 25 years ago from Karachi. She is married to **Jambi** and is the mother of 2 daughters, **Shauna** and **Zara**.

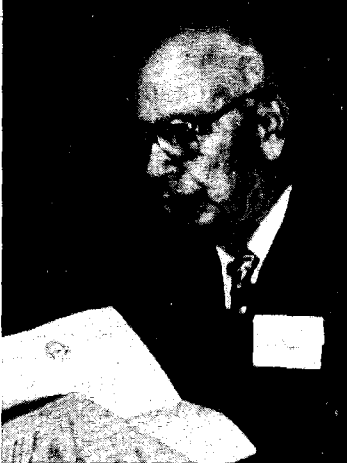


Above, One of two "Unity Quilts of the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress" bearing the logos of 76 world wide Zarathushti associations, expertly designed and crafted by **Khurshid Bamboat** of London, UK. The Quilts, a Legacy Project of the Congress, will hang in the Zarathushti Heritage and Cultural Center, in Houston.



"Chicago Zarathushti Choir", led by **Aban Daboo** (left) singing "Chaiyye Hame Zarathushti"

Dr. Mahyar Ardeshiri *Executive Director of the Headquarters of World Zoroastrian Congresses in Tehran, has requested publication of the following:*



... I would like to bring the following three points to your attention. First, prior to the Sixth World Zoroastrian Congress in Tehran, Dr. Dolly Dastoor, on behalf of FEZANA, asked these questions: (1) Unrestricted grant of visas to all applicants; (2)

Women's freedom of movement; and (3) Simultaneous English translation, in length, for Parsis.

Regarding the first two, we solicited the help of the Islamic Government of Iran, and which was granted. For the third, we rented the most well-equipped and expensive conference hall, and thus all FEZANA's requirements were met.

In preparation for the Seventh Congress, in Houston, we made similar requests: (1) Issuance of US visas without any restriction to all Iranian applicants; and (2) Simultaneous translation facilities. Both were promised.

Due to FEZANA's failure to act quickly and also due to uncooperative attitude of the US government, only 103 Iranians, out of 340 applicants, received visas. Iranians suffered similar experience in the World Zoroastrian Youth Conference in London. Some of our youth had to spend equivalent of their six month's salary and undertake two trips to Istanbul or Dubai, all in vain.

Hence, on behalf of Iranian Zartoshty, I propose: (1) In future, "World Zartoshty Congresses" be held only in the countries that are compassionate to Zartoshty community and have no visa restrictions; and (2) I formally propose to have the next World Zoroastrian Youth Congress in Iran.

Secondly, I would like to announce that Zoroastrian Anjumans of Iran have protested the decision of the Award Committee. We think that criteria have been used quantitatively (instead of qualitatively), arbitrary and in a discriminating manner. Hence, we withdrew our applications and are in the process of evaluating Iranian candidates and give them awards in Iran.

Hence I would like to have these comments recorded.

Finally, in implementing the recommendations of the Sixth World Zoroastrian Congress in Tehran, the WZC Headquarters in Tehran has done the preliminaries for creation of a Zoroastrian religious school in Tehran and establishment of an 'interest-free loan fund' for talented Zartoshty students ... I also announce that two courses of Mobedyari classes have been established ... ■

Dr. Dolly Dastoor *responds:*

The Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress like the Sixth Congress, had made it clear to **all** registrants of **all** countries that it was the responsibility of those attending the Congress to obtain their visas. We did realize that Iranians would face problems and additional costs (of travel to a country which has a US consulate). Contacts were therefore established very early on, with consulates in neighboring countries – Dubai, Turkey, Pakistan, India and Cypress, as well as with the State Department in Washington and the Religious Coordinator at the White House. No effort was spared to advise them of the Congress and the urgency of securing visas. Our representatives Rohinton Rivetna and Darioush Vafadari, **at their own expense**, traveled to Turkey, to make first-hand arrangements. The Istanbul Consulate, as also the other consulates, was most responsive to our appeals, letters, emails and phone calls and the staff even made special trips to open the office on a holiday, for last minute visa applicants (like Dr. Dabestani).

However ***we were very clearly told that the decision of whether the visa will be granted or not will depend solely upon what proof the applicant is able to provide ensuring his/her return to Iran.*** The Consulates also have their rules to live by.

We, like you, are very disappointed that the full complement of the Iran delegation was not successful in obtaining visas but these are some of the realities of the system we live in.

As regards the request for simultaneous translation, we had bilingual session chairs (English/Farsi) for all the non-track sessions. We had a bilingual Mistress of Ceremony for our prestigious Awards Lunch and bilingual entertainment as much as possible. I am sure we could have rented more equipment if the response to our fund-raising appeal was better.

And finally the Awards procedure has been completely above board. The international awards committee, of which Dr Ardeshiri was a member, had decided collectively that the judging will be based on quantitative criteria (a points system). An international panel of judges, including judges from Iran, evaluated the nominations. From Iran the committee received only names of candidates, with **no** supporting background information. After repeated requests, a few lines were submitted for some candidates but not enough to do justice to the nominees. All entries from Iran were, nevertheless, considered. But for the present, the criteria were neither "arbitrary" nor "discriminatory" as suggested by Dr. Ardeshiri.

We applaud the positive steps taken for the Religious school, the interest free loans and the Mobedyar classes.

We certainly understand and sympathize with the concerns of our Iranian colleagues, and do hope that future congresses will not have these issues to address. ■

zarathushtis speak out

From genocide to poetry and ancient rituals to technology, speakers covered the whole gamut, in keynote presentations and plenaries each morning, parallel sessions of the four 'program tracks' each afternoon, plus other presentations through the day.

Plenaries and Keynote Speakers

By Jamshed R. Udvadia

KEYNOTE ADDRESS AND PLENARY ON DECEMBER 29

Veteran diplomat **Jamsheed Marker**, an undersecretary general at the United Nations, delivered the opening keynote address. He stressed that seeking wealth of mind and spirit would lead to the success of the community. "We need to ensure the constancy of our values even as we adapt to the changes in our environment." In view of preliminary demographic indicators that the Parsi community in India is declining at the rate of 10,000 persons per decade, clearly an alarming situation that calls for urgent measures, Marker said: "Possessing a religious faith as profound and noble as Zoroastrianism, and a history as long and as inspiring as ours, we need have no fears for the future, but we do have responsibilities for our conduct, so that we deal with the problems of a rapidly changing world with imagination, boldness and pragmatic ability."

The vision. Prof. **Kaikhosrov Irani** chaired a panel on "May we not lose

the Vision". He said some aspects of our community reminded him of the decline of the Sasanian Empire.

Panelist **Sam Kerr** expressed a hope for global understanding, when "Zarathushtis will see enough reason to get together and promote an equitable relationship."

Keki Bhote said Zarathushtra's vision needs to be recreated by an interest in the theology, scientific inquiry without defiling Mother Earth, and inspired leadership built on ethics and trust. **Zarin Hakim** said it was time for the religion to thrive not just survive. We should not be afraid to take the first steps towards change.

Exclusivity and isolation will not help. **Dinyar Mistry** mentioned that rituals may change but faith will survive, and exhorted the community to break out of petty quarrels. **Mehravar Marzbani** saw the vision as a jigsaw puzzle with Mazda (wisdom) in the center and all the other pieces such as truth, leadership, man-ashni, gavashni, kunashni joined to it by asha. **Jamshed Sidhwa's** mes-



sage (read in absentia) mentioned that Zarathushtra did not propagate his message by harshness but by temperate reasoning and sweetness of tongue. Prof. Irani closed the session by stating that we need to make two commitments: to comprehend the world as a perfect organization with no one person in conflict with another, and to find out what has gone wrong with that concept and how it can be set right with *humata hukhta huvareshtha*.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS AND PLENARY ON DECEMBER 30

Keynote speaker **Khosrow Dabestani** [photo page 19] head of the Sharifabad anjuman, and representative of the Zoroastrian minority in the Parliament (Majlis) of the Islamic Republic of Iran, spoke in Farsi with translation by his nephew Ardeshir. He spoke of changes for the good of Zarathushtis in Iran. With the support of the present government and supreme leader Ayatollah Khamenai, he was working to eliminate restrictive civil laws on minorities. He hoped that Zarathushtis outside Iran would not forget their *maddar vatan* - they are in need of educated mobs, and the community as well as the government would welcome all Zarathushtis to Iran.

He said the technology of information (radio, TV, internet) is bringing the world closer. People should be taught all aspects of religion from childhood - just knowing the Gathas is not enough.

Gathic tradition. In the absence of **Dr. Pallan Ichaporia**, **Sarosh Manekshaw** introduced the panelists for the plenary on "The Gathic Tradition of Zarathushtra."

Pervez Mistry said the Gathas are not the beginning and end of the Zarathushti din; rituals and veneration of fire are also an integral part of it. Our prayers are *manthric* - the sound affects us. Perhaps our soul meets our fravashi on a different level. Just as gamma radiation cannot be seen yet is taken on trust, religious teaching cannot be questioned even though we may have no visible

Panel discussion on
 "May We
 Not Lose
 the Vision":
 Kerr,
 Marzbani,
 Irani, Araoz
 (at mike)
 Hakim,
 Bhote and
 Mistry.



proof. Some day perhaps science will catch up and prove our religion.

Dorab Mistry, president of ZTFE, quoted Taraporewala – the fullness of Zarathushtra's message will only be understood when we reach the same height of wisdom. Our core beliefs are triumph of truth over falsehood and righteousness over evil. An inquiring mind should question the scriptures without trying to alter them. If every generation decides to reform the religion, we will be left with a generation which does not respect our proud tradition.

KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS AND PLENARY ON DECEMBER 31

By **Kaemerz Dotiwala**

In keeping with the theme of the day "Preparing for the Third Millennium", four up and coming youth of our community were selected to give the keynote presentations. **Farishta Dinshaw** [right, top] from Karachi involved students of Mama Parsi Girls School to reflect our Zarathushti Odyssey through art. This journey commenced from pre Zarathushti times covered life during the various Zarathushti dynasties and ended up with a futuristic view of Zarathushtis in space. Farishta stated that even if our outward physical appearance may change, Zarathushtra's message in our hearts and minds will make the message of Zarathushtra survive to eternity.

Medical student **Laila Contractor** [right, middle] of USA, touched our hearts with the story of her friend

Zareen who had given up the Flame of Zarathushtra for the Cross of Christ. Not finding a community that was loving and caring but instead one full of bickering and bellicose, she looked elsewhere for her spiritual nourishment. Laila lamented the fact that support structures within the community are ruefully lacking. She urged support for religious education and research and exhorted each individual to take the responsibility to educate oneself.

I believe Laila's paper should be a clarion call to the community to make it an urgent action item.

The paper of **Dr. Sima Keshvarzi**, [right, bottom] manager of the medical laboratory at Tehran's Morafah hospital was read in absentia, since she was unable to get a US visa. She proposed development of communal infrastructures and a representative international Zarathushti foundation.

Ervad Marzban Hathiram made some observations: Our forefathers who left motherland Iran were not just refugees, they left to preserve and perpetuate their religion; the second diaspora left for a better economic

future. He said 'Good' in Good thoughts, Good words and Good deeds is not relative, but clearly defined in *Patet Pashemani* [Karda 3]. He believed there could be no real glorious future for Zarathushtis unless we remember, honor and follow the glorious traditions of our forefathers.

Innovative panel. In the plenary panel, **Khojeste Mistree**, delivered a passionate lecture, in his inimitable style, on "Bridging the Past to Build the Future."

A unique happening, that has never taken place at any other congress before, followed the lecture. Given the academic prowess and depth of knowledge of the Mistree brothers Khojeste and **Farrokh**, an innovative format was developed for the plenary panel – one brother steeped in academia looking at every answer through the lenses of scientific discourse, asking questions to the other, a walking encyclopedia of knowledge on Zarathushti religion, also steeped in academia, tempered by spirituality.

Close to a hundred people with a broad spectrum of views were asked to turn in questions. Farrokh culled them down into 38 questions, divided into 4 categories: (a) Who is



a Zarathushti (b) Pluralism (c) Rituals and fire temples; and (d) Living a Zarathushti life in the Western world.

The discussion gave an insight to the audience, the likes of which they had never experienced before. This session was quite possibly the intellectual highlight of the congress.

[Read more about this and the succeeding sessions on page 26]

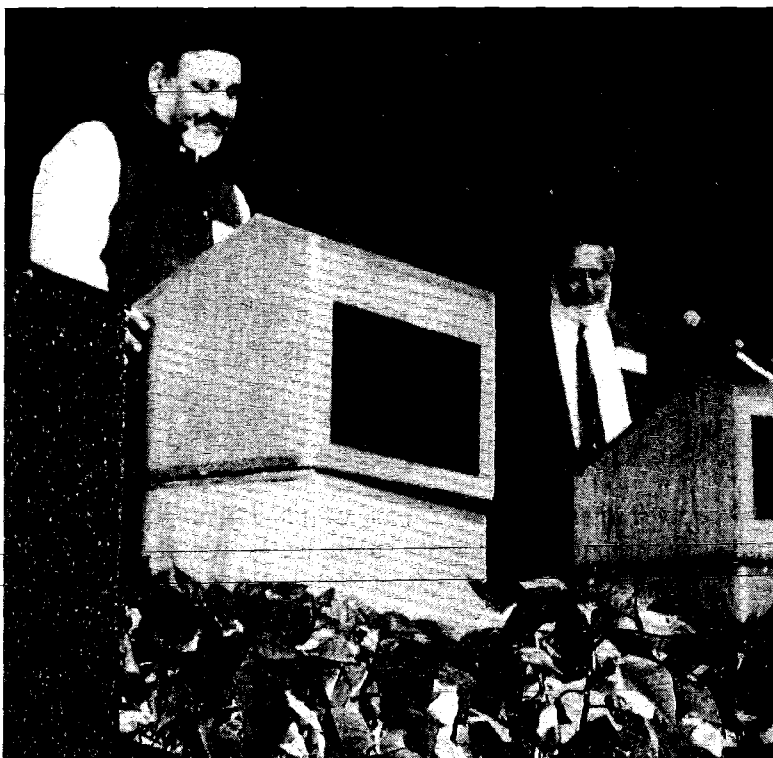
PLENARY ON JANUARY 1

By Mehrborzin Soroushian

The closing plenary, "Zarathushtra's Vision: the Individual Making the Difference" was co-chaired by **Dr. Mehrborzin Soroushian** and **Niaz Kasravi**. Dr. Soroushian highlighted the difference in the role of the individual now compared to yesteryear, when everything was taken care of by communal institutions. Now, collectively, each individual is responsible. **Dr. Jehan Bagli** discussed Gathic verses that guide humans to find their path as stewards of creation. **Dr. Farhang Mehr** [below] said those who work with courage (*khshthra*) for the



progress and perfection of the world, lead productive and effective lives. **Dinaz Mistry** of Australia showed how Zarathushtra's message is still fresh and invigorating today. History and political science student **Aysha Ghadiali** gave a youth perspective. **Dr. Khosro Mehrfar** of California offered special greetings in Farsi. ■



Brothers Khojeste Mistree [left] and Farrokh Mistree conducted an innovative question and answer session, viewed by some as the intellectual highlight of the Congress.

Social and Historical Track

By Track Chair Kaemerz Dotiwala

I envisioned the total program of the Social and Historical track to be like a beautiful symphony. Different items at different times, properly timed, making beautiful music, coming together and culminating in a roaring crescendo on the issue of "One Zarathushtra Many Zarthushtis" on the last day.

We sought to establish a standard of excellence, a hall mark for future congresses. We envisioned the program to: be educational; address current challenges; be well balanced; establish long term socio-religious goals and develop concrete programs; be innovative in format, emphasizing the intellectual as well as visual and touchy-feely experiences; bring out the influence of Zarathushtra's message on other faiths; showcase Zarathushti talent, works and culture to the Zarathushti as well as multi-faith com-

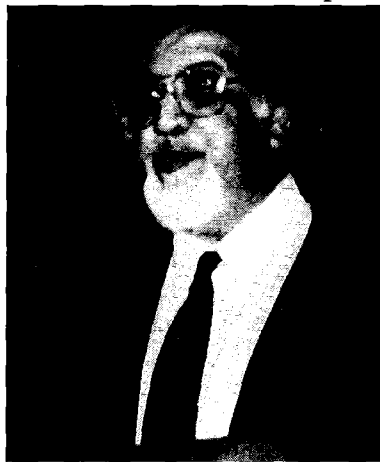
munity; and provide an unforgettable, total immersion experience for all.

The two panel sessions on December 29th, were in keeping with the main theme for the day "The Zarathushti First and Second Millennium".

Genocide. **Dr. Darioush Jahanian** presented a well researched paper on "Genocide of Zarathushtis" [FEZANA Journal, Fall 2000]. The genocide perpetrated on six million Jews is well known,

however, the genocide on Zarathushtis, one of the worst in world history, perpetrated, not only by the conquerors but also by some of their own people who had converted to the alien religion, unfortunately is not even known within the Zarathushti community.

Dr. Jahanian gave a detailed account of various massacres of Zarathushtis in Iran after the Arab conquests of the



Track chair Dotiwala

Ervad Yezdi
Antia and
Dr. Beheruz
Sethna.



“Rituals are an attempt to re-awaken those deeper layers of the psyche – which the light of reason and power of the will can never reach” ”

Sasanians. Hundreds of thousands were massacred with each wave of invaders – the Mongols, Turks, Afghans and others. During the Qajar dynasty, the Zarathushti population reached its lowest numerical and psychological point, with the burning, yet again, of books, enslavement, public humiliation and untouchable status. Zarathushtis should *never forget the sacrifices of our forefathers* who prevailed over such adversities, so we the inheritors can enjoy the fruits of freedom paid for by their blood.

Rituals. The panel on “*Tracing the History of Rituals*”, ably chaired by **Ervad Kobad Zarolia** extended to the speakers an opportunity to expound on rituals of the Zarathushti faith and their relevance in the western context; and further discuss whether or not, the community has the authority to incorporate changes to make them more meaningful and appreciated.

Ervad Yezdi Antia said “rituals are an attempt to reawaken those deeper layers of the psyche – which the light of reason and power of the will can never reach”. He believed that rituals should remain in the Avesta and Pazand languages, but suggested some adaptations to make them more significant: (a) for jashans and afringans, the congregation could stand up and recite certain passages together with the priests; (b) weddings and navjotes could conclude with a reading in English; and (c) for birthdays, lighting a *divo* and praying tandarosti before cutting the cake could be a family ritual.

Ervad Asphandiar Dadachanji [photo page 18] then very beautifully

demonstrated the *Boi Ceremony* along with an explanation by **Khojeste Mistry**. The love and dedication reflected by Ervad Dadachanji in just the demonstration, gave the attendees a new appreciation and understanding of our rituals, their significance and the commitment and dedication with which our priests even today carry out their responsibilities.

Technology. The panel on “*Using Modern Technology to Preserve an Ancient Faith*” chaired by **Behram Irani** looked at new and innovative technology to make Zarathushti studies academically accessible.

Dr. Beheruz Sethna, who, as interim Senior Vice Chancellor of the University System of Georgia, is the highest ranking Zarathushti academician in North America, gave an indepth overview of innovative methods using the electronic media to offer academic courses in Zarathushtian studies.

Computer whiz **Cyrus Mistry** spoke about cutting edge electronic technology that could make Zarathushti Studies electronically accessible. Cyrus shared his time with three colleagues from the University of Texas, who had used the Internet to operate a Zarathushti Students Association on campus.

Men and women. The round table panel on “*Have Zarathushti Men*

Failed Their Women?” was prompted by a perception that our men are not as committed to higher education and upward mobility as the women, resulting in some of our women looking for life partners outside the community. **Farishta Dinshaw** very lucidly explained that the topic unfairly chastised the men of our community, and it was important to first decide how we define success and failure.

Ervad Marzban Hathiram shared results of a survey of 10 men and 10 women in Mumbai. 40% of the men said that Zarathushti men had failed their women. 40% of the women concurred. Asked if Zarathushti women had failed their men, 20% of the men agreed and so did 20% of the women. When asked, “Have both Zarathushti men and women failed their Religion” 60% of the men and 80% of the women replied affirmatively. **Paurushasp B. Jila** [photo left] tended to think that both men and women have opportunities for study and career growth, and performed equally



well. After a lively question-and-answer session, both the men and women came out of the seminar feeling that it was more a matter of individual experience, rather than a subject on which we could have any definite conclusions.

Two Models. In a special session “*Two Models, Two Paths, One Zarathushti Community*” on December 29th, **Farrokh Mistree** argued that we have at least two models (classical Zoroastrianism and neo Zoroastrianism) and asserted that there is a fundamental and unbridgeable divide between these two doctrinal models. He got the audience thinking about how we could sustain the old order and allow the new order to do its own thing; and reflect on a way that people from either side of the doctrinal divide could work together.

The theme of the day on December 31st was **Preparing for the Third Millennium.**

In the morning plenary, **Khojeste Mistree**, true to his style, delivered a soul stirring lecture on, “*Bridging the Past to Build the Future*” to a standing room audience and a thunderous applause. In his talk, he reaffirmed traditional Zarathushti doctrine and the linearity of time within it. He commented on the tension between individualism and the collective good and then traced a brief history of the rise of individualism to the detriment of the common good. He observed:

“Under the banner of change and individualism, Zoroastrians, and now some neo-Zoroastrians, have sought to promote a paradigm of religious pluralism both in one’s beliefs and practices of the faith,” and added, “As the community moves into a new millennium, it is important that it address itself to the issue of who is a Zoroastrian.”

He went on to say, “... it is important that one moves away from the one community paradigm to a multidimensional one ... It is important that we accept this new development and deal with the issue pragmatically.”

He enjoined communities in the Zarathushti diaspora, at the dawn of the new millennium, to enshrine consecrated fire temples. Finally, he called on all Zarathushtis “to make a commitment to seek knowledge of

the past in order to know one’s role in the present so that one may be able to follow the path of Asha, existentially, by creating a holy fire in both the physical and spiritual worlds.”

One Zarathushtra, Many Zarathushtis. Khojeste’s talk was followed by a question and answer session between two brothers, **Khojeste** and **Farrokh Mistree**. One (Khojeste) has a deep academic and practical understanding of the religion and lives in the East, and the other (**Farrokh**) is a professor of engineering who lives in the West and who seeks answers to living the Zarathushti life. The audience sat enthralled as one brother asked and the other answered 38 questions. Some examples:

- What are the differences at the doctrinal, spiritual levels in your view of the reformist movement in classical Zoroastrianism?
- Zoroastrianism has been Islamized in Iran, Hindu-ized in India. What is your view on that?
- You are advocating a split. History proves that with splits there are conflicts with physical harm. Do you see this happening? (Answer: No I expect an amicable divorce).
- In your talk you refer to Ys. 30.2. Clearly this verse gives the individual the right to choose. How does this right to choose square with the notion of community and collective good?
- What advice is provided for us in the Gathas vis-a-vis settling our disagreements? In other words, according to the Gathas what role should mud slinging play in promoting the Zarathushti community?
- What is the role of an agiary/consecrated place of worship in this day and age?
- What role should education play to bridge the theological gap in our society today?
- If a person lives a life according to the teachings of Zarathushtra and

Religious and Educational Track

By Track Chair
Pallan Ichaporia

At the request of the co-chairperson of the Congress, I agreed to put into place the Religious and Educational Track, not knowing how disputatious and contentious the Congress would become. But as one says, “All’s well that ends well.”

In the face of opposition from the Executive Board of the Congress, invitations sent to the non-Zarathushti scholars had to be withdrawn. This set a bad precedent, which resulted in a number of Parsi scholars not attending the Congress.

I am grateful to the knowledgeable Zoroastrians who filled the slots vacated by the scholars and presented some good papers.

Gathic periods. **Homai Mody** chaired the session on the “*Gathic Period*”. **Prof. Kaikhosrov D. Irani** spoke of the Gathas as not only the founding

teaching of Zarathushtra, but also a novel religious vision. **Sarosh Manekshaw** described the Gathas as *manthric* poetry, written in a style so complex, that they have bewildered even the greatest of scholars.

Rusi Dalal chaired the



Rusi Dalal
(top) and
Dinshaw
Tamboly

[Continued on page 74]

session on the "Immediate Post-Gathic Period". Panelists spoke on a variety of topics. BPP trustee **Dinshaw Tamboli** high-lighted the historical formation of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, elaborating upon incidents that demonstrated BPP's operation since 1672. **Ervad Jal Birdy** examined the origin and composition of the Zarathushti scriptures, known collectively as the Avesta, and the role of the Gathas within that framework. **Rohinton Rivetna** commented that Zarathushtra's goal can be achieved through the three-fold path of Knowledge, Devotion and Action, and made observations about how these could be incorporated into building our Zarathushti communities and enhancing our spiritual lives.

Gathic vision. The following day's track sessions began with a panel on "Gathic Vision and the Later Tradition" chaired by **Mayor Filly Maravala**. **Maneck Bhujwala** showed how the teachings of Zarathushtra in the Gathas have not been compromised in the later scriptures. Instead, commentaries, explanations and later Avestan compositions by qualified scholar-priests help to bring out the deep meanings of Zarathushtra's philosophical concepts.

Rustom Kevala spoke about how the core beliefs of the religion impact our daily lives, and discussed how and if practice of the religion is likely to change over the next generation in North America. **Ervad Jehan Bagli** and **Ervad Kobad Zarolia**, each gave their perspective of the Gathic vision.

Core Gathic beliefs. The panel on "Integration of Core Gathic Beliefs" was chaired by **Gordafriid Aresh** [left]. **Ervad Godrej Sidhwa** and **Mayor Filly Maravala** presented their views on the subject. **Pervin Mistry** stressed that Gathic core belief is integrated throughout the non-Gathic scriptures, contained in the Avesta. Non-Gathic scriptures are not contrary to the teachings of the Gathas, but they develop and unfold the ideas and teachings embodied in the Gathas. ■

Zarathushtra's Vision Track

By Track Chair Mehr Soroushian

Zarathushtra's Vision Track focused on featuring presentations that had practical value for individuals and the community and that were drawn from the vision of Zarathushtra based on our best understanding of the same. The selection of the speakers was based primarily on their competency to do justices to the subject, and also with a view of adequate geographical, gender and nationality representation. Majority of the presentations were well attended and well received as reflected in the number of post-congress requests from the attendees for copies of the speeches.

The sessions organized by this track included:

"Zarathushtra's Vision reflected in Persian Poetry and prose" chaired by **Shahrokh Vafadari** of UK with translation assistance of **Dr. Sohrab Sadaat** of UK. **Mrs. Tooran (Shahriari) Bahrami** of Tehran, expounded, in Farsi, on how such central themes of Zarathushtra's vision as wisdom, truth, goodness, equality, individual liberty, humanism, find their way into compositions of Persian poets and philosophers.

"Social Pressures and a Zartoshti approach to dealing with them" chaired by **Dolly Malva**. **Dr. Ardeshir Anoshiravani** analyzed various aspects of social and family behavior according to the teachings of Zarathushtra as evident from the

Gathas and traditions of the religion. **Dr. Parastu Dubash** spoke of how Zarathushtra's message was relevant in his time, and continues to be beneficial for our use today, even though the social pressures we face are different.

"Individual's Views of Uniqueness of Zarathushtra's Vision" was chaired by **DhunMai Dalal** of Southern California. It featured presentations by **Farhad Ardeshir-pour** of North Carolina, **Zerbanoo Gifford** of UK, **Mehravar Marzbani** of Sydney, Australia, **Dr. Khosro Mehrfar** of Southern California; **Ervad Godrej Sidhwa** of Karachi, who explored the far reach, uniqueness and significance of Zarathushtra's vision; and **Shahriar Shahriari** of Southern California, who discussed how individuals not only have the ability but also the responsibility to contribute in their own microcosmic ways to affect the macrocosmic consciousness and bring about the Good Dominion.

"Zarathushtra's Vision and Issues of our Times" was chaired by **Dina McIntyre**. "Each time period in history has its own challenges and difficulties," she said, "Zarathushtra has powerful solutions for addressing the issues of our material world and making them an indispensable force for spiritual growth and happiness." Panelists were **Adi Davar** of Virginia who spoke of Freedom of Choice, and the Good Mind invariably choos-



Top, Track chair Dr. Soroushian, below, Touran Bahrami

ing the Absolute Truth, thereby renovating one's soul and also helping Ahura Mazda to make the world more progressive; **Tenaz Dubash** of New York; **Dr. Behroz Farsi** of Los Angeles, shared personal life lessons drawn from Zarathushtra's words and example; and **Trity Pourbahrami** of Ottawa. Unfortunately, due to complications beyond our control, the Congress attendees missed a great opportunity to hear the views of **Ervad Mazda Antia** who was also a panelist for this session. This topic will be explored further in the Summer 2001 issue of *FEZANA Journal*, to be guest edited by Dina McIntyre.

"Leading Productive Lives as We enter the Third Millennium consistent with Zarathushtra's Vision" was chaired by **Astad Clubwala** of ZAGNY. Speaker **Prof. Farhang Mehr** said, "To be productive, one's activities should be constructive and for the cause of Righteousness; it should be directed towards advancement of the world, *frashokereti*, happiness of human beings, *Ushta*, and preservation of the environment."

"Zarathushtra's Vision as it relates to other Religions and Schools of Thought" was chaired by **Shirin Kiamenesh** of Iranian

Zoroastrian Association of New York. **Dr. Kersey Antia** of Chicago said that when we see Zarathushtra's emphasis on importance of the environment, duty to protect God's creation, spiritual significance of the material world, equality of women, importance of ethics, human will and human choice, reflected in today's world, we can proudly say that the vision of Zarathushtra lives on for ever. **Dr. Daryoush Jahanian** of Kansas traced the interactions between Zarathushtrians and Jews starting with the first historical contact in 539 BC, and discussed how Zarathushti concepts found their way into Christianity and later into Islam.

"Journalists View of Issues Facing the Zarathushti community" was chaired by BPP trustee and WZO VP **Dinshaw Tamboly**. Panelists included **Shapur Captain** of WZO's *Hamazor* magazine, **Arnavaz Mama** of *Parsiana*, **Dr. Khosro Mehrfar** of California, an Internet-based journalist, **Mehraban Oshidari** of *Raah-Asha*, **Roshan Rivetna** of *FEZANA Journal* and **Dr. Mehraban Shahrini** of *Payk-e Mehr*. There was also a special appearance on this panel by **Lt. Gen (Retd) Adi M Sethna**, the

Zarathushti Member on the Government of India Minorities Commission.

Other special sessions. In addition there were several other independent sessions closely aligned with Zarathushtra's Vision track.

"Social Issues facing Iranian Zarathushtis inside and outside Iran," in Farsi, chaired by **Farshid Bakhtiyari** of IZA, featuring talks by **Mahvash PourBahrami** of Vancouver, **Dr. Sohrab Saadat** of UK, **Sharokh Vafadari** of UK, **Mehraban Oshidari** of CA, **Dr. Mehraban Sharvini** of Vancouver, and **Sima Bina** of Iran. *"Religion.com"* was chaired by **Farshid Bakhtiyari**. **Dr. Khosro Mehrfar** showed how one could create an awareness of the Zarathushti religion via the Internet.

"Ghundi Shahpur University in the Cradle of History" [see page 118] was presented in Farsi by **Dr. Mehraban Shahrini** chaired by **Houshang Namiranian** of Montreal. Zarathushtra's Vision Track was also involved in arrangement of the *Special Event* [see page 82]. ■

From left, **Dr. Khosro Mehrfar**, **Dr. Shahrini**, **Trity pourbahrami**, **Lt. Gen (Retd.) Adi M. Sethna** and **Farshid Bakhtiyari**.



The Youth Track at the WZC 2000 broke new ground, as it strove to create a highly interactive atmosphere in which Zarathushti youth from around the world could come together in a sharing of knowledge and ideas about their common heritage. It aimed to create a stepping-stone to a lifetime of learning about Zarathushtra's message for humanity, as well as laying the groundwork for world-renewing action by the Zarathushti youth of tomorrow.

First day. The Youth Track's first session opened with a multimedia presentation entitled *The Zarathushti Story* conducted by **Aaron Rustom**. It was effective in welcoming the youth from around the world, while instilling an intrinsic sense of pride within them towards their Zarathushti heritage. The presentation included images and sounds from millennia of Zarathushti history and culture.

The second session placed each participant in the spotlight, as attendees broke-up into small groups based on their age range. After short introductions and icebreakers, over 40 group leaders facilitated discussions covering the role of Zoroastrianism in the individual's daily life, and whether this role has been poignant in shaping their personal identity. The small group setting created an ideal comfort zone for participants to express their true opinions devoid of intimidation, while exposing themselves to honest perspectives from similarly aged youth from around the world.

The second day had two sessions, the first of which, entitled "*Zarathushtra's Impact*", included a panel of speakers who articulated how the Gathas could be incorporated into our daily lives and in the making of life decisions and choices. The session began with a brief overview of the Gathas by **Zenobia Rivetna**, followed by short presentations by panel members **Mandana Mehrain**, **Zarine Karani Araoz** and **Bapsi Sidhwa**.

The youth were broken up once again into their respective small groups in order to reflect on the previous Gatha session. Group members engaged in discussion over the basic

The Youth Track

Almost 550 youth from around the world participated in a variety of Youth Track presentations, workshops and activities.

By Track Leader Eric Engineer



Youth Track leader Aaron Rustom, center, coordinating small group discussions.

precepts of the Gathas, and were able to correlate how these principles were applicable in their daily lives. The session allowed the youth to place these ancient scriptures into a modern pretext, thereby confirming the transcendence of the Gathas over age and time. The older groups took this discussion further, brainstorming on steps they could take to live a life conducive to the preaching of the Gathas and Zarathushtra.

The third day began with three concurrently running workshops. **Tamina Davar** conducted an interactive workshop entitled, "*Exploring Personal Identity*", in which participants drew on life stories to create performance work, while better understanding their sense of individual identity. Businessman **Shahveer Dhatigara's** workshop, "*Starting and Running a Successful Business in North America*", provided invaluable insights to young or potential entrepreneurs. Immigration lawyer **Cyrus Mehta's** Question and Answer session, "*Immigration: Understanding Your Opportunities Abroad*", attracted many attendees from outside North America.

The next session, conducted by **Armaiti Homavazir**, was an open-microphone discussion, where youth from around the world were invited to take center-stage and share their experiences and dreams for the community on both a local and global level. Audience members shared stories of past successes and failures in their communities, so others could learn from the experiences. Many individuals described dream ideas or projects they wished to initiate within their local association or on a global scale. The session attracted a kaleidoscope of ideas and visions in an inspiring forum, so youth could learn from each other, help each other, and share in each other's dreams for the Zarathushti community.

Networking. In the Youth Track's last session, *Professional Networking*, **Roxana Mehta** and **Jim Engineer**, chair of Zoroastrian Young Professionals of North America, dissolved the audience into small groups based on their profession or area of interest/study. In addition to being able to network with others in

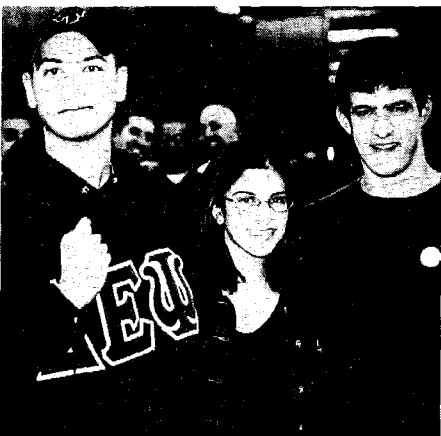


Youth Track sessions were in the Grand Ballroom [above] or in lecture halls or in small groups [below].



their field, participants discussed how their profession could contribute to the Zarathushti community in upholding positive values. The session also included the official launch of www.zoroastrianyouth.com, a website designed by **Sharookh Sidhwa** and **Jim Engineer**, dedicated to networking young Zarathushtis around the world.

With 550 youth from around the globe making up over a quarter of a Congress of over 2300 attendees, the Youth Track enjoyed high attendance and enthusiasm, and was able to reach out to many youth of different landscapes, backgrounds, and perspectives. Thanks to the hard work and cooperation of many volunteers, session chairs and over 40 small-group leaders, the Youth Track was successful in accomplishing its vision. It succeeded in creating the realization that being a Zarathushti youth is a privilege that comes with responsibility like any other. It inspired youth to leave the congress prepared to be agents of renewal in whichever way they may choose to benefit their community. ■



Eric Engineer is a senior at Rice University. Other Youth Track Leaders were **Arash Anoshiravani**, **Mazda Antia**, **Shanaya Godiwalla**, **Armaiti Homavazir** and **Aaron Rustom**.

Congress Profile

With 2340 attendees from 18 countries, plus many who came just to meet and mingle in the lobby, the Congress was possibly the largest gathering of Zarathushtis in recent times, anywhere, and most certainly, in the western diaspora. Most gratifying was the large youth presence.

	Youth	Total
USA	416	1421
Canada	48	203
India	32	103
Iran	8	95
UK	11	70
Pakistan	16	66
Australia	8	22
Germany	2	7
UAE	2	6
Venezuela		5
Singapore		4
France		4
Netherlands		3
Russia		2
Bangladesh		2
New Zealand		1
Japan	1	1
Yugoslavia		1
Unknown country		31
Partial attendance		293
TOTAL	544	2340

Zarathushti Field Students and India-Pakistan Youth Sponsorships

ZARATHUSHTI FIELD STUDENTS

The decision to sponsor Zarathushti students to participate in the Congress was among the most commendable of the Special Projects. For the 21 *Zarathushti Field Students* it was an experience they will never forget.

The students, from India, Pakistan, Iran and Australia, were selected on the basis of scholastic achievement, need, and community service; all applicants had to submit an essay. WZC representatives in India, Iran, Pakistan and Houston invited applications from the students, and a panel of judges was set up in North America to select the lucky winners.

The brainchild of *Aban* and *Purvez Rustomji* of Houston, the ZFS program was patterned on the American Field Service program, to provide a platform for deserving students and future leaders of our community. The Rustomjis appealed for funds – the cost for each student was estimated at \$2,000. In addition, Houston residents threw their homes open to the

students, overwhelming the youngsters with their warmth and hospitality. Host families kept the students entertained, arranging sightseeing and shopping trips and other outings.

Twenty-eight students were selected, 15 from India, three from Pakistan, two from Australia and eight from Iran. Five students from Iran were denied visas despite many efforts by Team Congress. Two students from India were also unable to attend for personal reasons.

One of the winning candidates, *Kaizad Deboo* of Mumbai, explained his reasons for wanting to attend WZC 2000: "... it would give me the necessary exposure and the vision to don the mantle of carrying the community into the future. With several issues of critical importance plaguing the community, a program of this stature would give youth like me a certain objectivity, focus and the direction required to combat the issues." *Binaifer Patel*, from Ahmedabad, gave her reasons in verse:

It's an intellectual way
to know and understand
Different people, their different
views and their different stands;

It's a platform to discuss,
debate and tackle
Our community problems;
and break through the shackle -

Of religious unconsciousness and
community indifference;
By knowing the worth and
understanding the significance

"Of being a Zoroastrian"
which we ought to,
And "doing" what we've got to!

Yazdin Mistry of Mumbai said attending WZC 2000 had inspired him "to study hard, work hard and earn a lot of money", so that some day he could repay his debt by sponsoring a deserving Zarathushti student to attend a future Congress." ■
By Delshad Kumana, Executive Director, Indo-American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Houston.

INDIA AND PAKISTAN SPONSORSHIPS

Indian sponsorships. The *Bombay Parsi Punchayet* sponsored 15 students to attend the Congress, with donations from philanthropic trusts of the Jeejeebhoy, Tatas, Wadias and other generous donors. Four were full scholarships of Rs. 1,00,000 (~\$2,200) each. The rest received airfare. The winners were selected from about 50 applications, by a panel of judges.

- *S. D. Master, Sr. Exec, BPP, India*

Karachi sponsorships. In all 14 students were sponsored from Pakistan, including the 3 ZFS students. The *Karachi Zarthosti Banu Mandal* and *Informal Religious Meetings* held competition and sponsored one student each. Funds were raised for the remaining individuals, who were selected on capability, incentive and need. Two mega-fundraisers were organized by the youth themselves; additional funds were collected from donations, selling silver farohars, and an extra surcharge for KZBM program tickets. One airline ticket each was donated by Akbar Enterprises and Lufthansa. ■

- *Toxy Cowasjee, KZBM, Karachi*

Below, all 21 ZFS students gathered at the home of program coordinators Aban and Purvez Rustomji in Houston on Christmas day, 2000.



A Pot-pourri of Sessions & Workshops

SHAH NAMEH AND POETRY READINGS

Stories from the *Shah Nameh* were told to packed audiences, in three sessions by **Jamshed R. Udvadia**. The stories pertained to King Jamshid, the evil Zohak, King Feraydun, his three sons, great grandson Minocher, the heroes Sam, Zal, Bijun and his loyal wife Manizeh, and finally the sad life of Firdowsi Tusi, the author of the *Shah Nameh*. **Dr. Homi Dhalla** [below] gave a poetry reading.

UNESCO PROJECT

UNESCO was fascinated that 0.01% of the Indian population (the Parsis) predominated its industry, business, science and arts – and initiated a project “*The Preservation and Promotion of the Parsi-Zoroastrian Culture and Heritage*” and invited **Dr. Shernaz Cama** of Delhi University to conduct the research.

In the absence of Shernaz, her father, Lt. Gen. (Retd) Adi Sethna, introduced the project and gave a multimedia presentation. **Piloo Jungalwalla** of Delhi, introduced the basic concepts of the religion and stressed the importance of sudreh and kushti. **Ava Khullar** said that as a

community, we are an inverted triangle, with the tip representing the youth, the middle representing the working people, and the base, which got thicker all the time, were people over 60 years. An appeal was made to worldwide Zarathushtis to support this project financially. For information, contact Dr. Cama at shernaz-cama@hotmail.com.

- By Sunnu Golwalla

ARCHEOLOGICAL STUDIES

Archeologist Dr. Roxana Irani, of the Department of Archeology at the Deccan College in India, presented “The Fire Temples of India and Iran: A Comparative Study”. The paper described her studies of the history of the sacred fires and fire temples through the centuries. She discussed differences of temples in India with the ones found in Iran, especially of those in Achaemenian, Parthian and Sasanian periods.

ZARATHUSHTIS OF TAJIKISTAN

Dame Dr. Meher Master Moos presented her trips to Tajikistan and her meetings with people who claim Zarathushti ancestry. She described the frugal way of life in the harsh mountainous regions. Every house

has two fires: one, as you enter, is the ceremonial fire which is kept burning, and another in the kitchen for cooking. Many used Muslim names to avoid paying taxes levied on Zarathushtis. In Uratapay, restoration has started on the palace of a Zoroastrian king. They are in dire need of funds for such projects as well as to improve their very frugal lifestyle. Contact Dr. Moos at mazacol@bom7.vsnl.net.in.

- By Perry Surkari

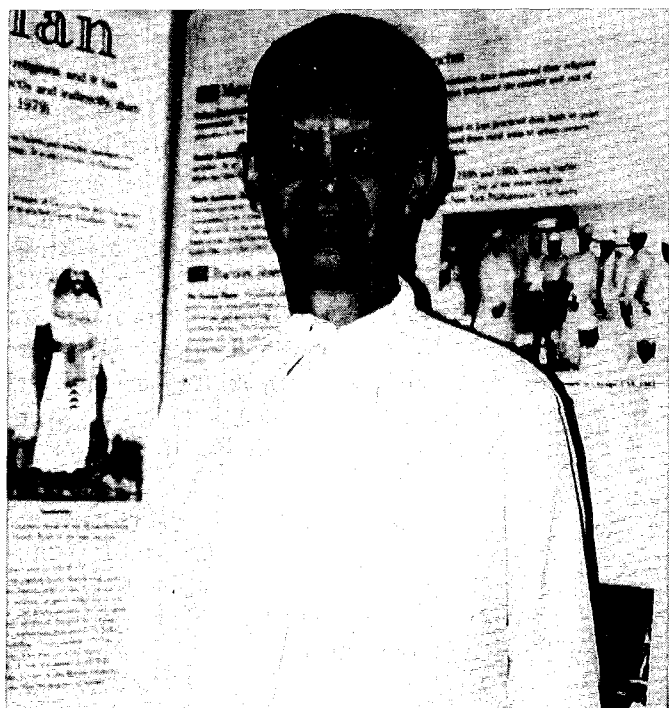
ZARATHUSHTI SURVEY

Dr. Purviz Kolsawala presented “Zarathushtis in the 21st Century”, results of a survey of opinions of Zarathushtis on various problems faced by them today. He showed some interesting responses to issues that have not been openly discussed before. 85% felt that our community is diminishing; reasons included late marriages, lower fertility rate, marriage outside the community, non-availability of suitable spouses, and high expectations for a spouse. A surprising result was that 75% said that conversions should be allowed.

- By Sharene Bharucha

ON MOBEDS

The general meeting of mobeds around the world could not be held due to conflicting commitments.



REVIVING ZARATHUSHTI HERITAGE

Dr. Homi Dhalla [left] spoke on “*Perspectives of Zarathushti Culture in the New Millennium*”. “With increasing urbanization and western materialism,” he said, “the community is getting scattered and fragmented. Old customs and traditions are gradually vanishing; our unique culture is slowly dissolving into the urban melting pot.” To arrest this alarming trend, and recapture and preserve the rich Zarathushti heritage, he founded the **World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation**, in 1998.

The Foundation has launched sixteen projects including: chronicling Parsi history; preserving Avesta-Pahlavi manuscripts and rare books; reprinting books; classes in Gujarati and in kushti weaving; setting Gathic stanzas to music; compiling an anthology of Parsi Gujarati poetry; restoring the historical Bahrot Caves; encouraging Parsi theater and songs, etc. He showed Avestan calligraphy by Perin Pudumji. These projects and more are described on a video CD available for \$5 from rivetna@aol.com, or contact wzcf@bom8.vsnl.net.in. [Also see page 33 and 118].

However, **Ervad Jal Birdy** [below] president of the North American Mobeds Council (NAMC) met with some NAMC mobeds, along with two new young mobeds and one



young mobed-year. The discussion centered around the important role mobed-years must begin to play on the North

American scene as the present cadre of mobeds retire.

At another NAMC-sponsored event, **Ervad Burzin Unwalla** of Houston gave an inspiring account of the history of mobeds, qualities required of a mobed, their devotion to duty, their role in providing spiritual guidance and preserving the fabric of the community. Burzin was joined by his father, **Ervad Peshotan Unwalla**, in melodious chanting of the Avesta. ■

BAHROT CAVES

PORTRAIT OF A COMMUNITY

Approximately 1,750 years ago the Iranshah fire was kept in hiding in the *Bahrot Caves*, 18 km from Sanjan on the western shores of India for 12 years. The project to archeologically preserve these caves as a heritage site has been undertaken by the World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation. In an interesting slide presentation, WZCF Chair **Dr. Homi Dhallal** showed the caves and the spot where the *atash* must have been preserved, with a *farohar* carved on the wall. The preservation project will commence once government permits are received.

Dr. Dhallal also showed some beautiful "*Portraits of the Community*" – paintings of illustrious Zarathushtis such as the Jeejeebhoyas, Wadias, Tatas, Cowasjee Jehangir and others. [see photo at right]. The WZCF has

undertaken the project, to restore and refurbish about 25-30 of these portraits [see page 118]. ■

- By Sunnu Golwalla

... AND MUCH MORE

In a session entitled "*Harmonizing Perspectives in our Diverse Worldwide Communities*", **Dr. Zareen Karani Araoz**, president of a cross-cultural management consulting firm, looked at some of the challenges the community is facing, and presented the Zarathushti perspective of conflict resolution to help harmonize differing groups.

Sami Guzdar, a research scientist from Texas, spoke on "*An Insight into the Future of the Zarathushti Religion and Community*." He sees a rejuvenation of the religion and community in India and abroad.

Houstonian Sunday School teacher **Vehishta Kaikobad**, presented a unique workshop on "*Nurturing the Spirit of the Child*" using methods, materials and practical demonstrations, providing valuable ideas and guidelines to parents and teachers.

Ervad Asphandiar Dadachanji, gave a soul-stirring account of the "*Journey of the Sacred Fire*" from Navsari to the Godrej Baug Agiary in Mumbai on December 8, 1999.

Malcolm Deboo gave an interesting historical account of "*Maneckji Limji Hataria – the Martin Luther King of Zarathushtis*", who, in the late nineteenth century, was instrumental in alleviating the suffering of the Iranian Zarathushtis at possibly the lowest ebb in their history.

FEZANA treasurer **Dr. Rustom Kevala** spoke on the "*Role of FEZANA in the Future*" [page 4].

Behram Dastur, chief executive officer at the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, presented an interesting view of "*Demography of Parsis in India*".

Padma Bhushan Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Adi M. Sethna presented "*The Status of Minorities of India with Special Reference to the Parsis*".

Aspi Maneckjee presented his perspective of the "Zarathushti family."



A painting of Ratanbai Wadia, one of the "*Portraits of the Community*". The project is seeking funds to restore these priceless treasures [see article at left and on page 118].

Keki Bhote presented "*Zoroastrianism's Damocles Sword – Extinction*."

Noshir Medhora talked about "*Science in Zoroastrianism*."

Armaiti May spoke about "*Vegetarianism in Zoroastrianism*" promoting the benefits of a vegetarian diet.

Firdosh Mehta and a panel of three, presented their views on "*Zarathushti Spirituality*."

Zerbanoo Gifford of UK, presented her charitable, political and interfaith work as director of the "*Asha Foundation*."

Principal of Queen Mary High School, **Rati Wadia** and **Dady Wadia** presented "*An Armchair Pilgrimage to Our Holy Fires*." ■

BREAST CANCER PROJECT

Nilufer Clubwala presented the *Breast Cancer* study underway at the Genetics Department of the University of Washington, Seattle, to determine if a genetic cause can be identified to explain the 2 to 3-fold increased incidence of breast cancer in Parsi women. The lab needs the participation of families with two or more individuals with breast or ovarian cancer who are still living. All that is needed is a small sample of blood and a family history. Contact Nilufer at kaikac@frontiernet.net or the lab (Ksenia Peters) at ksenia@u.washington.edu.

BONE MARROW DRIVE

A blood drive for bone marrow for Arshish Pavri, 40, of New Jersey, was conducted at the Congress. We had 183 donors. Dr. Pollack was amazed at the response from the community. She said in all the drives she has conducted, she has never run out of supplies, but that day, we did. In the true Zarathushti spirit, Dr. Katie Irani helped us get extra supplies within the hour. We also thank Ardeshtir Bakhtiani who helped us the whole day to draw blood. The sad news is that we have not yet found a match for Arshish, but he sends his sincere appreciation.

- By Yasmin Ghadialy

OPERATION EYESIGHT

Congress participants had been requested to bring along old, usable eye-glasses as a donation for the needy. About 500 pairs of eye-glasses were collected during the Congress. Bubble-wrap for packaging was donated by Dr. Lalitha Nagarajan and transport to Africa was arranged by Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington. The next such drive will be at the North American Congress in Chicago in July 2002. Jehangir Guzder of Canada has already pledged to underwrite the cost of transportation to the targeted eye-camps. *Please collect eye-glasses from your community, and bring them to Chicago next year.*

- By Behram Pastakia

Celebration of Zarathushti Women

A three-part special project, visualized by Dolly Dastoor and Aban Rustomji, included the "Daughters of Mashyani"; "On Wings of Time" – a showcase of Zarathushti apparel; and a panel on "Zarathushti Women at the Crossroads".

Daughters of Mashyani

Twenty Zarathushti women of the last 200 years are inducted into the "Daughters of Mashyani" Hall of Fame.

By Freyaz Shroff

According to an Iranian legend on Creation, *Mashyani* was the first woman on Earth, who then gave rise to the rest of human-kind.

Mashyani epitomizes all shades of womanhood: innocence and allure; tenacity and fragility; generosity and sentimentality.

The Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress paid homage to this extraordinary woman by creating a *Hall of Fame for the Daughters of Mashyani* in recognition of women whose contributions to the arts, business, education, have been of greatest value for the development of the Zarathushti community over the past 200 years. It is hoped that their vision, enthusiasm and accomplishments will inspire future generations.

On the afternoon of December 29, the style and talents of Toxy Cowasjee, who orchestrated this project, was reflected throughout the hall – from the table decorations, the specially designed napkin rings, the delectable luncheon, the flowers, the backdrop, the commemorative book – everything had a touch of class. The program began with the awards ceremony, inducting twenty women into the Hall of Fame:

● **Bai Motlibai Maneckjee Wadia:** rebuilt Udvada Atash Behram.

● **Jerbai Nusherwanji Wadia:** pioneer of low-cost housing complexes.

● **Madame Bhikhaiji Cama:** "Mother of Revolution", social activist.

● **Lady Hirabai Cowasjee Jehangir:** first woman to chair the Bombay Parsi Punchayet.

● **Lady Meherbai Dorabji Tata:** philanthropist, humanitarian.

● **Manijeh Kermani Shahrokh:** founder of the Zoroastrian Women's Association.

● **Gool Khurshed Minwalla:** pioneer of Montessori system in Pakistan.

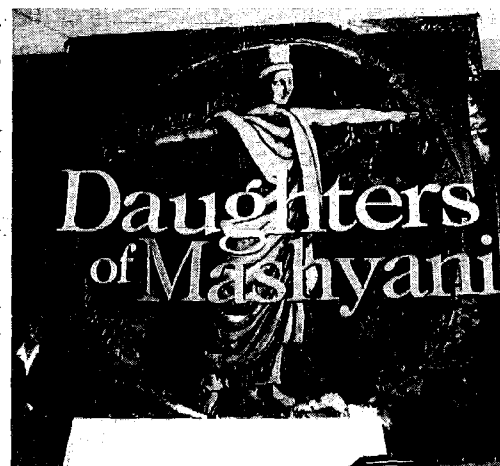
● **Farangis Kaikhosrow Shahrokh:** worked for upliftment of women in Iran, co-founder of California Zoroastrian Center.

● **Dr. Banoo Jehangir Coyaji:** eminent gynecologist, obstetrician and community health worker.

● **Meher Jamshed Patel:** tennis champion, social service.

● **Roda Homi Mistry:** first Zarathushti elected to India's Rajya Sabha.

● **Parichehr Namdar Freydooni:** renowned Iranian artist.



● **Tooran Shariari Bahrami:** lawyer and poet.

● **Dr. Armaity Sapur Desai:** moving force behind Social Work in India.

● **Bapsi Sidhwa:** noted author and novelist.

● **Roshan Rivetna:** creator and driving force behind FEZANA Journal.

● **Dr. Mehroo D. Hansotia:** noted obstetrician and gynecologist.

● **Dr. Dolly Dastoor:** clinical psychologist, past FEZANA president and active community worker.

● **Dame Meher Master-Moos:** lawyer, founder of the Mazdayasnie Monasterie Charity Trust

● **Shireen Khushroo Kiash:** India's triple international, basketball, hockey and cricket champion.

ON WINGS OF TIME

The awards and luncheon were followed by a spectacular fashion show, "On the Wings of Time". Produced by **Hovi Shroff** of Florida, the show presented apparel from the 1800s to the present. The audience was taken through the changes in fashion throughout our history, in Iran, once we left its shores, in India and on to the countries of the western diaspora. The models walked down the central runway with style, their colorful garas and

dupatas flowing in the wind. The parade of nations, at the end of the show, appropriately reflected our ability to adapt into our new homelands, be it Australia, America or the Far East.

The classy afternoon concluded with all 30 models holding laser lights to create a glow in the darkness and Hovi singing, "Lord, who am I ... that you



Zarathushti Women at the Crossroads

Panel discussion celebrating the role of women

By Sunnu Golwalla

"Zarathushti Women at the Crossroads", coordinated by **Shernaz Joshi Verahrami** was presented by a panel [photo above] of ten speakers, following the *Daughters of Mashyani* luncheon. The seriousness of the purpose could be judged by a breakfast meeting by the speakers the next morning and its deliberation presented to interested persons, the following afternoon.

For the first of three modules, on "Family, Child and Education", **Dr. Mehroo Bengalee**, whose paper was read in absentia by **Sheroo Master**, said there were certain basic norms of Zarathushti family life such as cleanliness, orderliness, respect for nature, and responsibility for women to provide a proper environment for her family. **Dinaz Mistry** of Australia, felt we had to stop the

needed a support system; we needed to be open to change and to provide religious education. **Zareen Karani Araoz** of USA said "values are caught rather than taught" and we therefore need to live the life of truth, purity, charity, equality, peace and faith if our children are to grow up to be good Zarathushtis.

For the second module, on "Community Involvement and Representation", **Zerbanoo Gifford** of UK, spoke on the empowerment of women and enlightenment of men. She wanted to stir up zeal in women and said: "A great deal of talent is lost to the world for lack of courage." **Katayun Kapadia** of France, said: "Stand up and be counted" and added that we need to nourish our children, raise our families and take care of our elders. She touched on the apathy in the community to come forward to serve, but felt that teamwork, innovation and a 'can do' attitude could overcome this. **Dr. Vera Mehta** of Yugoslavia, said that our women were the architects of our society. **Bella Tata** of Canada, felt it was important to establish one's priorities and to know how to juggle them, then one could succeed in her role as a professional and homemaker. Also, she said that everyone must dream because if you cease to dream you cease to live. "Think big and have a vision," she urged.

The third module was on "Health, Elder Care and Ageing". Nilufer

drifting process and the whole community should plan for the future. In India and Iran children picked up our culture and religion in a natural way with the agiaries, rituals and living in *baugs*, which was not easy in the west. We therefore

Clubwalla invited participation in a project to study the high incidence of breast cancer among Parsi women. Ksenia Peters, a member of the research team had flown in from Washington, to participate in this forum [also see page 34]. **Rubina Patel** of USA showed graphs of how cancer genetically appeared in families from grandmother down to the grandchildren. **Soonamai Desai** of USA saluted the daughters of Mashyani who silently served the elders with devotion. She concluded by saying that we had the right mind, spirit and heart for this responsibility, we just needed to adjust this to modern life.

The panel did not remain at crossroads but sought a direction next morning and the following afternoon. The outcome was to create a Zarathushti Women's Network to disseminate information, promote contacts and collaborate on community issues, particularly health concerns such as breast cancer and cardiovascular disease. Suggestions also came forth for a senior citizen's community center in North America where older Zarathushtis could be together. ■

Sunnu Golwalla of Karachi, is a professional secretary who loves to write in her leisure time.

When God made Woman ...

When God made man, he was acclaimed in the heavenly world as a good Architect.

When, with softer and finer clay, and with unprecedented craftsmanship he made woman, he was hailed by all as the best and matchless Moulder of all time."

- Anonymous

World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce is launched

The vision of a chamber of commerce to promote business and enterprise among Zarathushtis worldwide, finally materializes.

By Sarosh Collector



Clockwise, keynote speaker Nadir Godrej; Chamber incorporators: Homi Davier, Rohinton Rivetna and Sarosh Collector and Kobad Zarolia.

The World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce is finally a reality [also see page 101]. Its first organizational meeting was held following the *Business Luncheon* on December 29th, attended by about 250 persons. **Homi Davier** and **Rohinton Rivetna**, along with **Kobad Zarolia**, provided a brief history of past meetings and events leading up to its incorporation, in the State of Illinois, in December 2000. The aim of the Chamber is to rejuvenate the entrepreneurial spirit and promote businesses for the overall economic growth of our community worldwide.

After luncheon, **Dorab Mistry** introduced the keynote speaker **Nadir**

Godrej, whose innovative and inspirational speech, a poem [see next page] on the Zarathushti entrepreneurial spirit, will be remembered for a long time.

After lunch, the meeting sat down to serious business. It was decided to add the word "World" to the title, and take the following initial initiatives:

(1) Create a website and database for Zarathushti businesses and professionals worldwide, to provide a forum for communication.

(2) Encourage development of local and regional 'cells', both formal and informal, to operate as support groups for local businesses and pro-

[Contd. on next page]

Zoroastrian Enterprise

By Nadir Godrej

Entrepreneurs are everywhere
The mom and pops we know.
To start a business isn't rare,
But tough to make it grow.

The Parsi gents of yesteryear
Were known for enterprise.
They were brave, they had no fear
And they were very wise.

Just look at Mr. Jeejeebhoy
Who started off in rags.
He was a young and orphaned boy
But then he packed his bags.

In Bombay he began to trade
And soon took off for China.
And people knew he always paid,
His goods were best, none finer ...

While different lands have different views
Some favor enterprise.
In America they do find use
For those who fail and rise.

They know those who've failed are tough
And have the chance to learn.
To be just smart is not enough
Failure helps to earn

Experience that hard knocks provide
And nothing else can teach.
If failure is made bonafide,
Any nation could then reach

America's level of enterprise,
Which of course is high,
Provided that it would be wise
Enough to also try

And have the laws that can provide
Good venture capital,
The nations hopes won't be belied
If it could wrap it all

With taxes that are very low.
We could then see enterprise
Expand quite fast and quickly grow
To an enormous size.

The Internet is now at hand
And all can have a shot,
If only we can understand
What latest trend is hot.

Now Parsis are spread everywhere,
And they can choose their land.
If you the Diaspora dare
Then once again you'll stand

In the big league of enterprise
Renowned in every place.
I know we can attain the prize
If we just join the race.

exhibits & bazaar

From book fairs to match-making, from sales of rich 'garas' to cans of cheese, the Congress provided something for all tastes.

International Zarathushti Book Fair and Book Launchings

By Tamina Davar

A world-famous author event, a bustling community bookstore, and books from 'A' to – you guessed – 'Z'. Day one's program featured internationally acclaimed author **Bapsi Sidhwa**, Houston's most famous Zarathushti, hosting a Book Launch; and a first-ever International Zarathushti Book Fair and Exhibition, open for the Congress's duration. Both were official Legacy Projects of the Seventh Congress.

BOOK LAUNCHINGS

Sidhwa introduced the Book Launch's seven new titles. Two books actually commissioned for the

[Continued from previous page]

fessionals. Such a cell (formal) is operating in Chicago, and an informal one in Houston.

The following individuals were elected/appointed as directors: **Meherwan Boyce, Sarosh Collector, Homi Davier, Edul Daver, Ness Lakdawalla, Dorab Mistry, Dadi Mistry, Rohinton Rivetna, Fali Shroff** and **Kobad Zarolia**.

Alayar Dabestani contributed \$5,000 towards startup capital for the WZCC. For further information, contact Sarosh Collector at saroshjc@aol.com. ■

Legacy Project were *Triumph Over Discrimination: the Life of Dr. Farhang Mehr*, by Boston Globe editor Lylah Alphonse [see page 116], a biography of Iran's former Deputy Prime Minister who escaped during the Islamic revolution, but remains a scholar and religious equality activist. The second, *The Philosophy of Zarathushtra and the Mazdayasni Tradition*, by well-known scholar **Dr. Kaikhosrov Irani**, explores philosophy and shifts in Zarathushti historical traditions. *Parsis: the Zoroastrians of India – A Photographic Journey*, an unprecedented coffee-table photo book [see page 117] by screenwriter **Soonie Taraporevala** (of *Mississippi Masala* and *Salaam Bombay* fame) quickly sold out at the Book Fair.

Veteran scholar **John Hinnells'** *Zoroastrian and Parsi Studies: A Collection of Essays* contain sociological histories of Parsi and Iranian Zarathushti communities in India, UK and North America. **Dame Mehr Master Moos** and **Ruby Lilaowalla's** *Zoroastrians Worldwide at the Millennium* is colorful chronology of Zarathushti achievements worldwide.

In-progress works included *Concordance of the Gathas*, a translation by **Pallan Ichaporia** and **Helmut Hum-**

Videos/Films, Photos and Persian Music

PERSIAN MUSIC

In a delightful presentation entitled "A Glance at the Music of Persian Zoroastrians with The Gatha Group," [photo page 15], **Feraydoon Demehri** [below] gave an introduction along with performance by *The Gatha Group*, [photo page 19] on melody for prayers, Gatha songs in Farsi, pilgrimage and traditional songs played on tanbour, daf and tonbak, Dari songs, monajats, songs for special occasions, and other topics on history of the music, instruments, and players. Contact gathagroup@oshihan.org or website at www.oshihan.org.



Mobed Rostam Shahzadi; "The Old Man", first documentary in Dari, Cham, Yazd; "4 Peeri Sabz", memorial days of Peeri Sabz in Vancouver; "Paradise", the masterpiece of Shahriar Shahriar and Shervin Shahriari; "An Experience", by our youth in Tehran; "Nou-ruz in Baku Fire Temple", from Azerbaijan; "Unbaked Brick", Iran. The next ZIFF will be in Vancouver in Fall 2002. See www.oshihan.org.

PHOTO EXHIBITION

An exhibition of 31 photos, was presented by **Feraydoon Demehri**.

The photographs, mainly by amateurs, depicted some rich and beautiful Zarathushti ceremonies – navjote, wedding, pilgrimages, gahambar, and jashans [photo right].



ZIFF

ZOROASTRIAN INTERNATIONAL FILM/VIDEO FESTIVAL

Feraydoon Demehri presented the *Zoroastrian International Film/Video Festival* featuring the following films: "Fire on the Roof", Mazra Kalantar, Yazd; "Always with the Light," Zoroastrian Pilgrims of Iran; "Circle of 4", a modern look from our youth; "Last Words of the Mobed", the last interview with late

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF OUR FOREFATHERS

Another session that drew packed crowds and repeat showings, was an airing of the 60-minute documentary film "In the Footsteps of Our Forefathers" by **Tenaz Dubash** capturing the journey of 34 Zarathushti youth to Iran last year [also see Books and Such on page 120] ■

Above, photograph of Gahanbar by Nazanin Nikanam i the exhibition of photographs. Below, artist Homi Meherhomji of Pakistan exhibited 58 paintings; one of his donated paintings auctioned for \$800. Right, Marzbeen Toddywalla set up a stall of beautifully embroidered garas, kors and jablas.



Zarathushti Bazaar

By Sam Kerr



Coin of Ardeshir I (224 - 240 CE) the first Sassanian ruler, wearing the classical Sassanian crown, with its tiara, silk cap covering the 'orymbos' of hair and the superstructure, with ribbons holding the open tiara. The type of the crown was altered each time a significant event occurred during his reign, and his 'khwarena' changed. This is a Type II coin, minted in 224 CE, after the defeat of the Parthian, Artabanus IV, in the Battle of Ctesiphon. The face always looks to the right on Sassanian coins (Parthian coins show the king facing left). The reverse side shows a massive Fire Altar of the Achaemenian type. This coin, on loan for the exhibit, is of EF (Extra Fine) quality and valued at between \$400-750.

Exhibit of Sassanian Coins

Collector **Dr. Sam Kerr** of Sydney, Australia, exhibited a collection of 27 rare coins and a poster exhibit tracing the history of 2 Parthian and 41 Sassanian emperors. The posters recorded the history of the various dynasties, along with pictures of the coins of Roman emperors against whom there were encounters. Kerr's exhibit included some coins on loan from various sources and some photographs from the British Museum.

Due to security reasons, the coin trays were on exhibit for only 3 hours daily, with a police officer present. The price of the coins varies depending on its condition (Mint, Extra Fine, Very Fine and Fine). An ordinary VF coin of King Visthakm (592-596 CE) has a base price of 1600 D.Marks. The coin of Papak (on Obverse) and Ardeshir I (his son, on Reverse) is priceless. There are many such priceless coins. The coins in the exhibit were all EF or better. ■

With a bustling carnival-like atmosphere prevailing in the Marriott, I managed to obtain a good portion of the feedback about the sales and exhibits for this article, from the delegates during transit in the elevators and in the corridors. The conversation was almost always typically spontaneous and pleasantly so. The introduction, in the train of events, often happened to become only a chance occurrence, if there was sufficient time before interruption from a third person or arrival of the lift destination. In such anonymity I learned a lot about my own Sassanian coin exhibit.

Kraft cheese stall. I saw a lady holding a little blue tin of Kraft cheese. She was emphatic she wouldn't care to have any other brand. Why? "Because the tinned variety has an almost mystical and unique flavor" and the texture, the consistency and right amount of salt. "O! it is so heavenly, it melts in the mouth." Then, "It comes from Australia." [To order, call Cowas Patel in California, at (626) 967-0037].

Matchmeup.com. In a nearby booth [photo left] I studied the art (or science) of "Intelligent Interactive Online Matchmaking." I spied on a few eligible youth in the process of 'registration'. One young lady philosophized, "Who knows, uncle, what is in store for us in life". How true, I thought. She turned out to be the granddaughter of a school friend. [For information, call (512) 589-8022, zoroastrian@matchmeup.com]

Cultural artifacts. At another booth, I developed ideas about our own Center in Sydney when I saw Iranian and classical music CDs, cultural artifacts and glass momentos showing an etching of Zarathushtra being sold at a rapid pace for the benefit of the community.



Garas and more. I met a lady clutching an elegant modern remake of an antique 'gara' in the crowded elevator. During the few seconds before her floor arrived she quickly explained why she did not buy a similar 'old gara'. In Gujarati she said, "Choothai jaayech, ne faskai parech ... Sahebji". The young lady in charge of the stall, **Marzbeen Toddywalla**, [photo page 39] said she had sold more than 50% of her stock of garas, jhablas and kors. [Contact **Marzbeen @hotmail.com**].

Jewelry. The jeweler was curious at my enthusiastic interest in the gemstones rather than in his artwork, which (to my mind) was more of the Vedic tradition. He began to co-operate when he realized I am a (part time) gemologist. I did not ask him how many pieces were sold. In comparison, a lady wearing the purest sky blue aquamarine (some as large as 25-30 carats) necklace, pendant and earrings fascinated me. When I appreciated the cut and polish of the stones she explained they were bought in Zanzibar but mounted (in this beautiful framework of gold of the Sassanian tradition) in Bombay. The obverse sides of the Sassanian coins (shown in the Coin Exhibit) are replete with the most exquisite of gemstones.

Herbal products. The lady at the counter described the whole range of her products as offering the right nutrition for a balanced life. She handed me a brochure, which seemed to suggest they were the answer to a huge range of illnesses. A few more were added in writing. She introduced her husband, who was a surgeon. He explained, "the nutrients contain 21 amino acids left intact by a special method of mechanical extraction." I asked him if the 7 'essential' amino acids were among the 21. He would not say. Luckily, a friend accosted me at this stage and we moved away.

At the **Mazdayesnie Monastery** stall I met **Dame Meher Master Moos** promoting her books and the **Zoroastrian College** in Sanjan, and

Time Capsules – in Houston and Sanjan



*Left, Project coordinator **Firdosh Mehta** [left] and **Er. Boman Sanjana** at the historic interment ceremony in Houston on December 30. Below, all seven BPP trustees witnessed the ceremony in Sanjan on November 20.*



doing a brisk business in gold-plated farohar pins and tie-clips.

And more ... There were many other small advertisers, who handed me there business and professional cards – cell phone packages, chartered accountants, consultants and more. ■

Dr. Sam Kerr is a Lecturer and Consultant Surgeon at the University of New South Wales, College Hospitals in Sydney, Australia.

In separate ceremonies of historic proportions, 'Time Capsules', bearing articles reflective of our times, were interred – the one, beside the Sanjan Stambh, on the shores of western India, at the site where our forefathers landed, 1370 years ago; and the other in the swanky new atrium of the Zarathushti Heritage and Cultural Center in Houston, Texas.

The articles – silver miniatures of ritual implements, scriptures, historical documents, Zarathushti newspapers, magazines and CDs, traditional attire, scriptures, prayer books, stamps, coins, a flag, and more – were all shrink-wrapped and sealed in a nitrogen-injected, oxygen-free environment in the 4-foot aluminum canister, and lowered, ceremoniously, into the ground.

The time capsules will be opened 50 years hence, in the year 2050.

The time capsule project, conceived as a Legacy Project of the Seventh Congress, was coordinated by FEZANA VP **Firdosh Mehta** of Alberta and the **Bombay Parsi Panchayet**.
- By **Roshan Rivetna**

World Zarathushti Community Awards

By Dinshaw F. Joshi

For the first time in the history of world Zoroastrian congresses, **World Zarathushti Community Awards - 2000** were presented, on December 30, during the Seventh Congress. The Awards Project was administered by a committee comprising: **Dinshaw Joshi**, USA, Chair; **Yasmin Pavri**, USA, Vice-Chair; **Burjor Antia**, India; **Mahyar Ardeshiri**, Iran; late **Villy Gandhi**, USA; **Rustom Ghadiali**, Singapore; **Nergish Jamasji**, Pakistan; **Purviz Kolsawalla**, Australia; **Dorab Mistry**, UK; and **Sam Vesuna**, Canada.

Master of Ceremonies **Trity Pourbahrami** conducted the Award Ceremonies in English and Farsi. **Dinshaw Joshi** outlined the selection and specifically the three basic principles, Transparency, Equality and Impartiality, which governed all actions and decisions of the Committee.

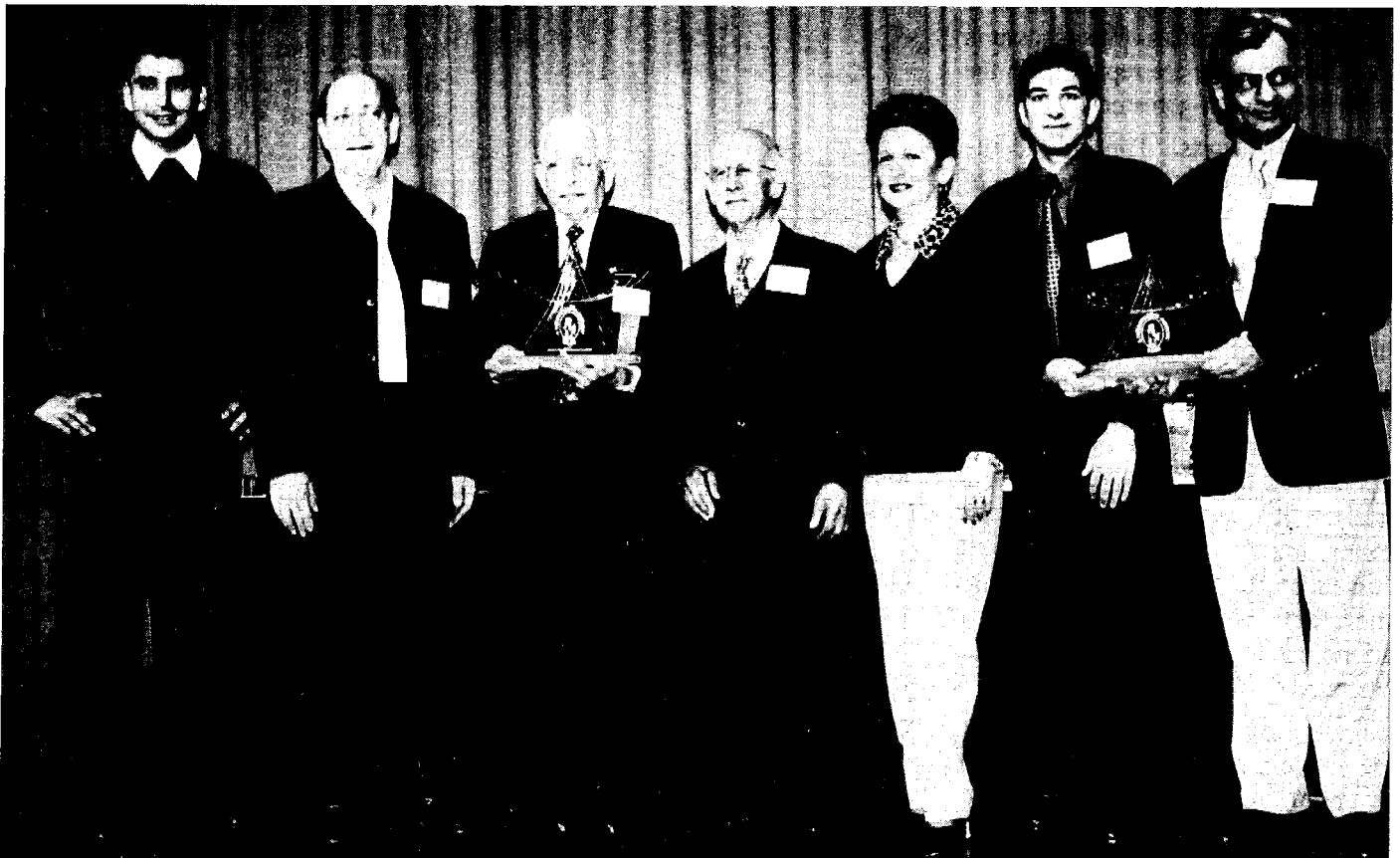
Dinshaw appreciated the services of the forty-nine respected Zarathushtis from nine countries who undertook the onerous and sensitive task of evaluating the seventy-nine nominations received. He also thanked the six judges who reviewed the ninety designs from forty-four artists around the world who submitted designs in response to the *International Competition for Awards Trophy Design* for the trophies to be presented to award winners. He thanked **Godrej Companies** of India, late **Mobed Faridoon Zartoshty** and **Mobed Mehraban Zartoshty** for sponsoring respectively through generous donations, the Outstanding World Zarathushti Award and the World Zarathushti Youth Award for Outstanding Leadership. In conclusion Dinshaw remembered late **Mobed Faridoon Zartoshty** for his large philanthropic contributions to the worldwide Zarathushti commu-

nity and late **Villy Gandhi** for her contributions as member of the Awards Committee and earlier as member of the North American Zarathushti Community Awards Committee. The audience observed a minute's silence in memory of these two departed Zarathushtis.

A trophy and certificate were presented to the winners of the Awards and the Trophy Design Competition. In addition, an honorarium of \$1,001 each was presented to the winner of the Youth Award and the winner of the Trophy Design Competition [see next page].

The ceremony concluded with a vote of thanks by **Yasmin Pavri** to all those who had assisted the Awards Committee through the two-year project. Specifically, **Ness Lakdawala** for his assistance in the manufacture of the trophies in Canada and their transport to Houston; **Feroza Fitch** for design and production of the awards certificates; and **Marzi Byramji** for printing of the Awards brochure.

From left, **Zubin Irani** (for Dr. Jamshed Irani), **Prof. Kaikhosrov Irani**, **Dinshaw Joshi**, **Mehraban Zartoshty**, **Humayoon Goshtaspour**, daughter of late **Faridoon Zartoshty**, **Kerman Jasavala** and **Shahrukh Mehta** (for **Zubin Mehta**).



WZC 2000 Award Winners ...

OUTSTANDING WORLD ZARATHUSHTI AWARD

PROF. KAIKHOSROV DINSHAW IRANI

(New York, New York, USA)

In recognition of his outstanding leadership, contribution and service to the worldwide Zarathushti community by advancing the knowledge of Zarathushti theology, history and culture amongst both Zarathushti and other communities worldwide and thus enhancing both the knowledge and the cause of the Zarathushti faith and religion throughout the world. *Prof. Irani was introduced by Dr. Purviz Kolsawalla of Australia. Industrialist Nadir Godrej presented the award.*

WORLD ZARATHUSHTI AWARD FOR HUMANITARIAN SERVICE AND/OR PHILANTHROPY

LATE MOBED FARIDOON AND MOBED MEHRABAN ZARTOSHTY

(Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada)

In recognition of their selfless work and devotion towards alleviating the misfortunes, pain and suffering of Zarathushtis internationally through munificent contributions to social and humanitarian causes amongst the worldwide Zarathushti community. *The Zartoshty brothers were introduced by BPP Trustee Minoo Shroff and the award was presented by Dinshaw Joshi. Humayoon Goshtaspour accepted the award for her father, late Mobed Faraydoon Zartoshty. [See Personal Profile on page 88].*

WORLD ZARATHUSHTI AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN BUSINESS OR PROFESSION

DR. JAMSHED IRANI

(Jamshedpur, Bihar, India)

In recognition of his having achieved through personal excellence the highest level of prominence in his chosen profession and whose achievements have been widely recognized both in his country, India, and internationally. *Introductions were done by Sam Vesuna of Toronto, and the award was presented by Homi Davier of Houston. In the absence of Dr. Irani, his son, Zubin Irani, accepted the award.*

WORLD ZARATHUSHTI AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN PERFORMING ARTS, PAINTING OR LITERATURE

MAESTRO ZUBIN MEHLI MEHTA

(USA)

In recognition of his having achieved, through personal excellence, the highest level of international prominence in the performing arts (western classical music). *Introductions were done by Dr. Dolly Dastoor of Montreal, Canada. The award was presented by Dinshaw Joshi. In the absence of Zubin Mehta, Shahrokh Mehta accepted his award.*

WORLD ZARATHUSHTI YOUTH AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP

KERMAN YAZDI JASAVALA

(Wimbledon, London, UK)

In recognition of his achievements as a young Zarathushti deeply involved in Zarathushti community affairs and for his personal contributions to the advancement of the Zarathushti faith among Zarathushti youth in the UK, which has been recognized by his peers and who is considered to be an emerging, outstanding, dynamic and forward-looking future leader of the worldwide Zarathushti community. *Introductions were done by Dorab Mistry of UK; Mobed Mehraban Zartoshty presented the award.*

INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION FOR AWARDS TROPHY DESIGN

SHAHRAM AKHTAR-KHAVARI

(Tehran, Iran)

For his design of the award trophy which was selected as the best from amongst the ninety designs from forty-eight Zarathushti artists around the world and adopted as the trophy to be presented to each winner of the World Zarathushti Community Awards. *Introductions were done by Rustom Ghadiali of Singapore. Ness Lakdawalla of Montreal, presented the Awards. In the absence of Shahram Akhtar-Khavari, Dinshaw Joshi accepted the award.*

The Global Scholastic Competition was a WZC 2000 project for youth between 17 - 21, directed at stimulating their thinking, in the area of Zarathushti culture and religion. Papers were invited on the broad topic: "A *Blueprint for a Viable Zarathushti Community of the Future.*"

The project was publicized worldwide with the help of international committee members. Thirty-three papers were received, from India (14), Iran (4), US (7) Canada (6) and Australia (2). In the interest of fairness, the papers were numbered and distributed randomly among a primary international panel of 14 judges. A short list of five essays were re-evaluated, by a second panel of three judges from USA and Canada.

The awards strictly constituted a scholarship for higher education. The 1st and 2nd rated papers were awarded \$5,000 and \$3,000 respectively. The award funds were made available through the generosity of the Zoroastrian Charity Funds of HongKong, Canton and Macao. Awards were presented on December 31, at the Congress.

First prize winner. The top ranking essay paper was submitted by **Zubin Hiranmanek** of Lindfield, NSW, Australia, a first year B.Com and Law student at University of Western Sydney. Zubin is a distinction student in math, an avid chess player, an award winning Scout, and 1998 Captain of the school hockey team. He is interested in pursuing studies in Zarathushtrian theology. In his award-winning essay, he wrote:

"Through the centuries, we have survived the Greek and the Arab invasions, overcome mass persecution and annihilation. All of this has given us strength and we have developed the capacity to amicably mingle and assimilate with others, without defiling our religious sanctity and thus retained our distinguishable entity with prominence.

"Each and every one of us needs to take stock of the current situation and

"Blueprint for a Viable Community" Global Scholastic Competition

By Jehan Bagli

strengthen our commitment to preserve our community. On a personal level, I have vowed to work towards the construction of an agiary in Sydney.

"Like our forefathers, through charity and benevolence we need to advance the cause of righteousness and 'move creation towards perfection'. We need to pattern and mold our lives, and give gladly whatever sacrifice of time, money and personal ambition that may be needed, so that the identity and integrity of the community be preserved and the noble religion conserved in its pristine purity for future generations."

Second prize winner. The second

place award was presented to **Pashna Munshi** of Mumbai, India. Presently a student of Somaiya Medical College, Pashna won the Best Student Award in 1997. A Girl Guide, a Choral group singer, an accomplished pianist, award winner in theatrical arts and a Grey Belt in martial arts, Pashna's ambition is to be a surgeon. She wrote:

"The blue background as I see it, is our chequered history; our glorious heritage, and the white line indicates the path, that we, as a community wish to follow in the future. Not only is it important for this grand design to be viable, it has to be practicable, with the capacity to grow, expand and develop into something vivid, real and stimulating. A blue-print that will see the community through another vast expanse of time.

"An architect, an engineer, a designer works on his drawing board, equipped with the knowledge of his subject and sees the blue-print in his mind's eye before he can translate it into reality. He cannot activate his mind's eye unless he has formal

knowledge, which in turn forms the basis of what he eventually wants to create, knowledge of where he comes from and where he wants to go, in terms of the end product. Therefore, as the future architects and engineers of the Zarathushti community, we have to be aware of our history, our background and above all what indeed, constitutes our religious identity.



Global Scholastic Competition coordinator, Dr. Jehan Bagli.

"Let us use our innate and acquired wisdom collectively and apply our minds to the various blue-prints that will emerge from this very essay competition. If we principally agree that what we want to do here is to save and preserve our religion which has enriched the lives of countless Zarathushtis for ions of time, then like the house of the wise man in the *Denkard*, the future of this Zarathushti house, where Parsi and Irani Zarathushtis dwell, will be full of light and without any defects, for it will reflect the light that comes from the abode of Mazda, from His kingdom of Endless Light."

The third and fourth place winners were, **Toranj Raimalwalla**, of Mumbai, and **Ferzad Mirza** of Toronto. The fifth place was tied between **Aysha Ghadiali** of New York and **Percy Mistry** of Mumbai. ■



Above, Negin Shahryari in Iranian dance by California youth; below, Zareen Hakim in Indian dance by ZAGNY.

The Congress offered a melange of entertainment for every palate. Showcasing talent from around the world, the program on December 28th, kicked off with a lively performance of "Houston Chalo", a song written especially for the Congress by **Aban Daboo**, and sung with gusto by the **Chicago Zarathushti Choir** [photo page 20]. Then followed a piano recital by 13-year-old **Jamshed Meherhomji** of Karachi, who won the audience over with his musical ability and popular favorites from Beethoven and Mozart. A well deserved standing ovation for the young prodigy.

The highlight of the afternoon was the recitation of Mathew Arnold's poem "Sohrab and Rustom" by **Renu Setna**, renowned theatre actor from London. The audience was mesmerized as he flawlessly delivered a two-hour soliloquy, many

A time to celebrate

Congress delegates enjoyed a variety of cultural entertainment programs and three galas – Heritage Nite featuring the World Zarathushti Orchestra, Texan Nite and the Millennium Banquet.

Cultural Entertainment Programs

By Lyla Nicholson

drawn to tears by the storyline and the depth of his performance.

Next in line was Human Calculator **Minoo Jokhi**, who dazzled the crowd with his mathematical prowess. Other highlights included an exotic Kathak dance by **Naznin Rao** from India, a dance performance by **ZAH children**, and an entertaining skit "Tea with Shroff", by **Farishta Dinshaw**.

December 29th once again, offered an array of items for those seeking a lighter alternative. By popular demand, there were repeat performances from the prodigal young pianist and the Human Calculator. Also featured was a magic show by 12-year-old **Pearl Bhumgara**, who has already delighted audiences around the world with her deftness.

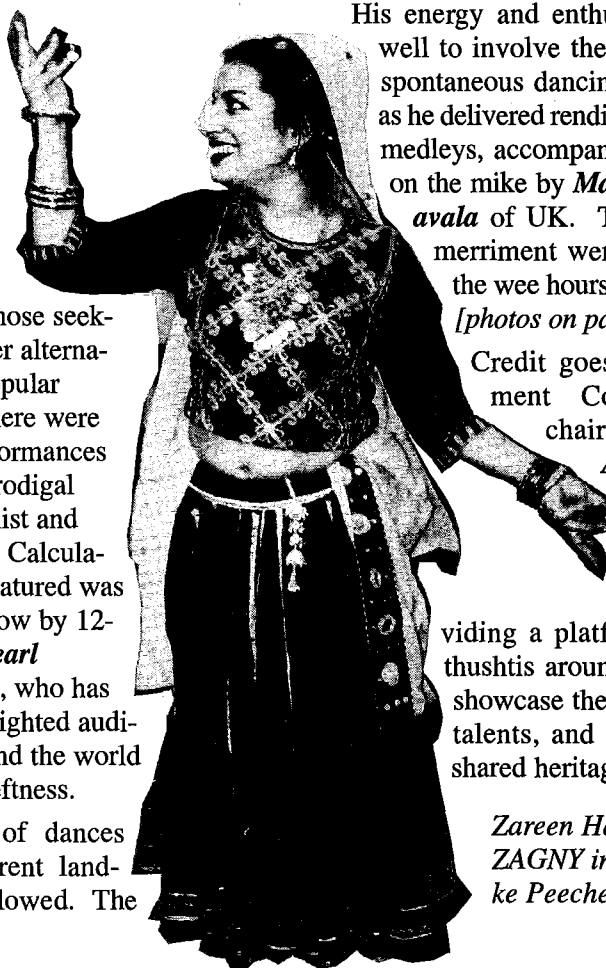
An array of dances from different landscapes followed. The

CZC (California) performed an exotic Iranian dance, while **ZAGNY** performed the Bollywood favorite "Choli ke Peechey" [photo below]. The **ZAH children** performed a Mexican dance. A truly multicultural afternoon.

December 30th offered an evening of Indian music and songs by popular artist **Adi Tamboli** from West Virginia. His energy and enthusiasm worked well to involve the audience, into spontaneous dancing in the aisles, as he delivered renditions of popular medleys, accompanied impromptu on the mike by **Mayor Filly Maravala** of UK. The evening of merriment went on well into the wee hours of the morning [photos on page 50].

Credit goes to Entertainment Committee co-chairs **Gordafriid Aresh** and **Fereshteh Khatabi**, and others on the team, for providing a platform for Zarathushtis around the world to showcase their multicultural talents, and celebrate their shared heritage. ■

Zareen Hakim of ZAGNY in "Choli ke Peechey".





World Zoroastrian Orchestra thrills at World Congress

By Cyrus Mehta

The Highlight of the Heritage Nite gala on the opening night of the Congress was the premiere performance of the **World Zoroastrian Orchestra**. The idea of such an orchestra came into being in 1998 when a group of young Zarathushti musicians performed admirably under **Piroozi Cooper** at the North American Congress in New York.

Several months later, **Cyrus Mehta** [right] a lawyer and amateur violinist, initiated a search for musicians all over the Zarathushti world. Piroozi, an oboist, and her brother **Farobag Cooper**, conductor of the *Chicago Philharmonia*, helped in this effort. Later **Adil Mehta**, another conductor, from California, also pitched in.

After countless hours, hundreds of e-mails and many telephone conversations, the idea bore fruit on the evening of December 28, 2000, the opening night of the Congress. The orchestra featured the work of Bombay-based Parsi composer **Meher Madon-Jansen**. Soprano **Dilshad Khambatta** liltingly sang *Jashme* from Madan-Jansen's larger oratorio *Ahura*. Aably accompanied by flutist **Ayesha Dastur** and string orchestra, Dilshad enthralled the audience with a beautiful melody based on words from the Avesta.

Pianist **Sorab Wadia** then passionately performed the First Movement of Rachmaninoff's *Piano Concerto No. 2*. The orchestra, under Farobag's inspirational leadership, complimented Sorab in this daringly romantic work.

The orchestra also sparkled with the well-known works of Johann Strauss'



Blue Danube Waltz, Nicolai's *Merry Wives of Windsor* and Highlights from Bizet's *Carmen*. **Adil Mehta** competently conducted the last two works, which also brought out the virtuosity of its concertmaster, **Jamshed Turel**. Young trumpeter **Firdosh Khambatta** played the solos in the *Chanson du Toreador* of *Carmen* with great flourish and aplomb. The surprise of the evening was a delightful rendition of *Chayye Hame Zarthoshti*, specially arranged for symphony orchestra by **Farobag Cooper**.

About 23 Zarathushti musicians from the US, Canada, Australia and India collaborated with an equal number of musicians from the Houston Symphony, Houston Grand Opera and other local orchestras. This novel experiment enabled Zarathushti musicians to rehearse, learn and perform with some of the finest professionals in the country. All the solo spots were performed by Zarathushti musicians, many of whom major in music performance.

The experience of playing in the first ever Zarathushti Orchestra can best be summed up in the words of trumpeter Firdosh Khambatta: "... I've always felt that music and the arts were short-sided in the Zarathushti community, except for Zubin Mehta. I must say that the best part of playing in the orchestra was simply listening to the principal horn player of the Houston Symphony. He was beyond amazing – never scratching a single note and playing every passage with the utmost precision and clarity. He truly was an inspiration for me...."

It is hoped that there will be many more such endeavors to encourage and showcase the talents of Zoroastrians who have chosen music as a vocation. ■

Three Gala Nights

By Dolly Malva

HERITAGE NITE GALA

Following the stirring performance of the *World Zoroastrian Orchestra*, and a scrumptious dinner, including *bogoli pullav* by the hotel's Iranian chef and *jerdaloo-ma-marghi* by Chef Kairasp Lashkari, Congress delegates were taken on a wondrous "*Zarathushti Odyssey*" in song and dance.

Heritage Nite had been billed as "dress – traditional", and it was wonderful to see the women in their magnificent *garas* and some in colorful Iranian dress, and the men in *daglis* and *pagris*.

The odyssey began in Iran with the colorful extravaganza of "*In a Persian Market*" performed by members of **ZAH**, with *Iranian dances* by **CZC** (California). The guests were then transported to India, to a Tableau in *Jadiv Rana's Court*, to be treated to *Garba* and *Raas* dances by **ZAGNY** and a *Sindhi* dance performed by Zarathushtis from *Pakistan*.

The Zarathushti odyssey continued on to the west, with a beautiful *aria* sung by the talented **Sonia Behrana** of Houston, a *Modern Dance*, a *Jazz Dance* by **ZAH**, and even a Russian Cossack dance by the children of **ZAH**. The evening culminated in a grand finale of "*We are Zarathushtis*" to the tune of "*We are the World*", by the Houstonians.

Truly this was a traditional Heritage Nite to be proudly remembered by all for a long, long time.

Top, dancers from "In a Persian Market"; right, two dancers from the Pakistani Sindhi Dance; left, Vehishta Kaikobad, of ZAH, singing "We are Zarathushtis".





Above, Texan Nite; Right, revellers at the New Year's Eve Millennium Ball

TASTE OF TEXAS NITE

Congress delegates got a real taste of "The West" at the *Taste of Texas Nite*, on December 29th, including a grand Tex Mex buffet and an evening of "foot-stomping" entertainment.

To showcase the varied cultural influences on Texas, from Mexico and South America, a variety of dances were performed – some by professionals and some by members of ZAH – including the *Country Western 2-step*, waltz and swing, *Tap dancing*, *Mexican Salsa*, *Meringue* and the South American *Flamenco* dance.

ZAH youth performed a *Mexican Folkloric* dance. **Ramin Goudarzi** gave a classical spanish guitar recital.

Zerin Namdarian was responsible for putting this highly entertaining, knee-slapping, foot stomping, program together. Houston's very own **Yasmin** and **Noshir Medhora**, **Persis Behramsha** and **Zerin Namdarian** took lessons at the *Texas Dance Country School*. These five, along with **Vispi** and **Pervin Sagar**, who have

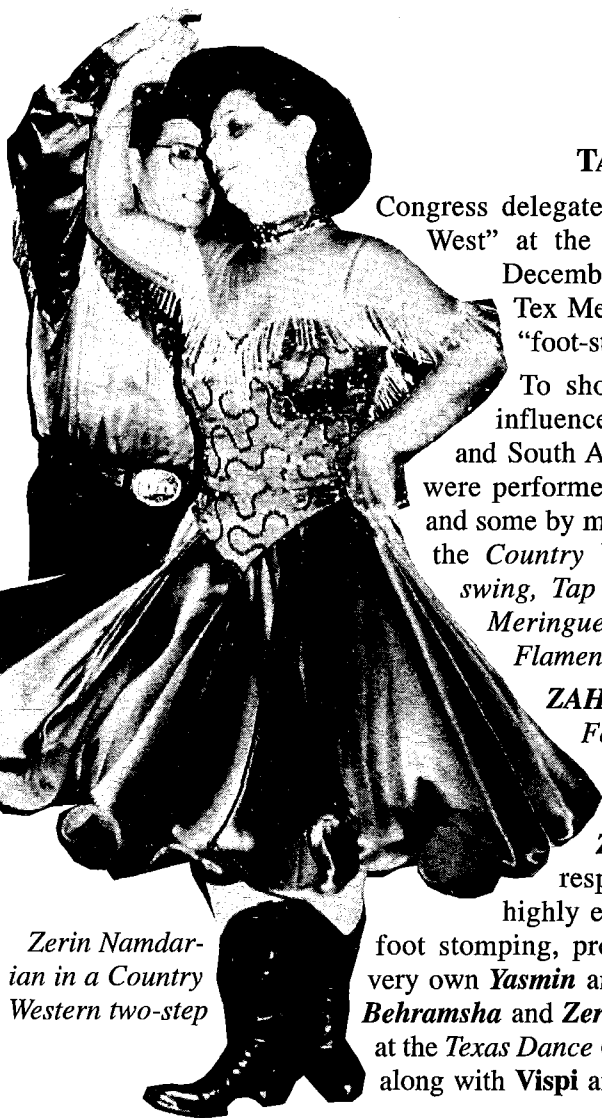
been doing country western dancing for 3 years, and instructors of the School, performed a synchronized dance routine. A 2-step solo was also performed by **Pervin** and **Vispi Sagar** [see cover photo]. The program ended with members of the audience, many in western jeans and cowboy hats, doing the ever popular Four Corners line dance.

Needless to say, everyone had one, fun, Texas style Hee Haw! ■

NEW YEARS' EVE MILLENNIUM BALL

A highlight of the Congress was, of course, the *Millennium Ball* held in two packed ballrooms at the Marriott. Fabulous **door prizes** including TVs, VCRs and much more, were given to the lucky winners. **FEZANA Raffle** winners were drawn; the grand prize, a laptop computer was won by **Perween Cooper**.

ZAC's *Chicago Zarathushti Choir* sang their special rendition of "*Chicago Av-jo-Ji*" inviting everyone to the next North American Congress, in Chicago in 2002.



Zerin Namdarian in a Country Western two-step



A dedication to the World Zoroastrian Congress 2000

Bapsi Sidhwa

*(At Daughters of Mashyani -
Hall of Fame induction)*

They say
People with no land of their own
Are dust to the wind,
Are blown away.
We who have no land to claim
Are not blown away.
We are resilient.

They say
A people dispersed by
conquest fall apart.
Scattered like rice
On loamy earth,
we have sent down roots -
Have not fallen apart.

Like sturdy sapling transplants
We have stood fast on alien soil,
Coaxed hospitality from it.
Others have claimed us as their own
We belong to humanity.

Like men who embrace a new faith
Become promoters of that faith,
We have cultivated the bits of earth
We have lit upon -
In Zoroaster's name.

They say people felled by conquest
lose their will and incentive.
We are not dispirited.
Our spines are straight,
We are survivors.

Though we have lost pieces
of our past to antiquity,
Our poets and musicians,
Visionaries and philanthropists,
Are creating a new
Zarathushti heritage.

A tribal carpet (from *Afghan Carpets*), 2 airline tickets to India (by *Air India*), oil paintings (by *Gave Cursetjee* and *Homi Meherhomji*) and a *gara* were among the many items auctioned to raise funds for the Congress. On the stroke of midnight, the new year, the new century and the new millennium were ushered in. It was wonderful to see all the Zarathushtis, in both ballrooms, wishing each other "Happy New Year", with hugs

and kisses to all. It was good to see the delegates set aside the weighty issues of the day for a few moments, and have some fun.

Dancing continued until 2 am. It was difficult to leave old and new friends. But the memories of this wonderful evening and the entire Congress will always be etched and 'freeze-framed' in the minds of all who came to Houston.

A true Zarathushti Odyssey! ■

Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!
For your enormous contributions in time, talents and financial support for the Congress ...

- WZC 2000 sponsors FEZANA and ZAH.
- Co-chairs Dr. Dolly Dastoor and Homi Davier.
- The WZC 2000 Executive Board and Track Leaders.
- The numerous hardworking Committees.
- The WZC 2000 reps in Iran, UK, India, Pakistan and Australia.
- All the wonderful people of Houston.

Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!



Some precious

T rue, the plethora of plenaries, panels and presentations provided a veritable feast for all tastes, and one felt much like the proverbial little boy in the candy shop. But to this author, the most precious moments of the Congress were the unplanned ones.

Elevator encounters. Like the time I ran into, and surprisingly recognized, a fellow Queen Marian from 40 years ago, in the elevator during a session break. In fact many of my memorable encounters were in the packed elevators or in the crowd waiting for one. It was there that I recognized the badge, and finally saw, a long time email buddy whom I had never met before. We talked briefly, just until his floor arrived.

Musical evening. Another memorable moment was at *Adi Tamboli's* [left, middle] musical evening. What was billed as a performance by the popular musician, soon turned into a jam session, with *Mayor Filly Maravala* [left, top] at the mike, singing popular Indian and Gujarati tunes endlessly; and a hall full of Zarathushtis, young and old, Parsis and Iranis, clapping and dancing spontaneously in the aisles. The session was still going strong when we left at 2 am.

Youth. One of my most heart-warming moments was when we came out of the Tamboli show at 2 am, and saw a throng of possibly a couple hundred of our youth 'hanging out' with each other in the hotel lobby. At that moment, thoughts of 'assimilation' and 'dying out' seemed remote.

Hallway interactions. It wasn't just the youth that 'hung out' in the hallways. It was here, even more than in the conference rooms, that many a weighty issue was discussed and oldtime friendships renewed. [Below, from left, BPP (India) trustees Minoo Shroff and Dinshaw Tamboli, Dr. Mahyar



moments

Ardeshiri (Iran), Rohinton Rivetna (USA); Sam Motashaw (Germany), three youth; Mobed Khorshidian (Iran) and Far-rokh Mistree (USA)].

It was for moments such as these, that the long lines at meals, the endless wait for the elevator and the 'standing room only' at events, were all gladly forgiven.

THANK YOU, Team Congress!

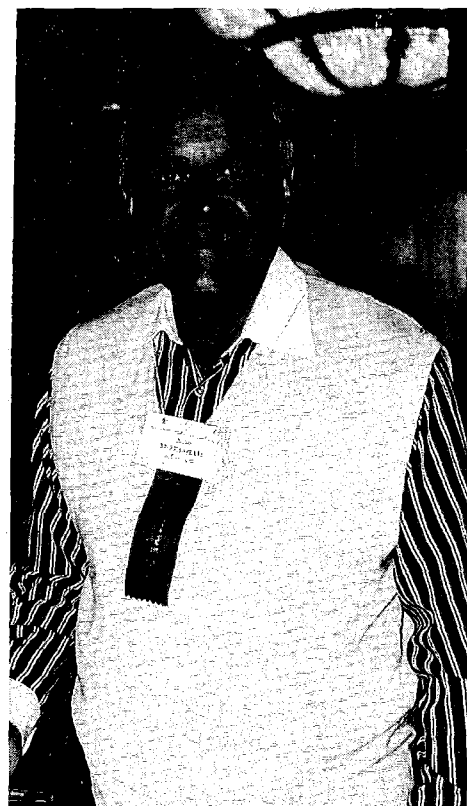
So, after all was it worth it? The four years of sacrifice – of time, money, and at times, relationships? Was it worth it?

Well, to violinist Cyrus Mehta, who worked for 3 years to create the World Zarathushti Orchestra, at least, it certainly was. For it is because of the Congress, that he met and is now married to Liley Gheewalla, the Orchestra's cellist [see story page 111]. ■

By Roshan R. Mehta

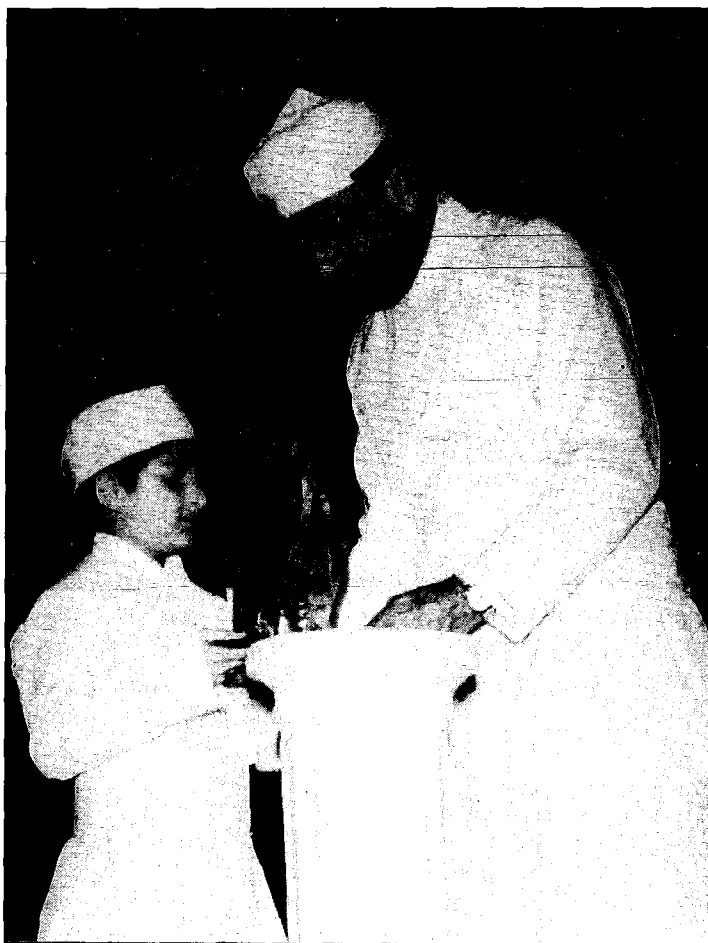


About 40-45 'old girls' of the *Karachi Mama Parsi School* showed up for a school reunion, and while waiting for the room to be readied, broke out into a stirring rendition of their school song in the hallway: "Let us march on to knowledge, The girls of the Mama School" ... "We also met old teachers who had settled in America, and altogether had a very moving experience ..." says Mamian Sunnu Golwalla.



Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress closes on a high note of hope

passing the torch



Closing remarks from the Congress co-chairs ...

THE CLOSING JASHAN

By co-chair Homi Davier

The hall at the Marriott in Houston was packed to capacity, the air was perfumed by the rich fragrance of sandalwood and the room reverberated with the chants of 18 mobeds [photo below] from across the globe. Zarathushtis from all over the world had congregated together for the closing ceremonies of the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress, in Houston on January 1, 2001.

This solemn Jashan ceremony, marking the advent of the year 2001, was most significant. It rekindled the Zarathushti spirit and was symbolic of the WZC 2000 theme, calling for our youth to chalk out our future.

Closing remarks. Our world has seen a multitude of changes – some rapid and overwhelming. Through all these changes we see the one which affects us the most and that was the Congress. These were five days of searching for our roots with a quest for a future promising peace and change. Keynote and session addresses allowed for diversity. We had new blood and the young Zarathushti bringing in thoughts and ideals from across the world. At last, at long last, we had a Zarathushti con-



ference dedicated to showcasing our Zarathushti talent!

WZC 2000 far surpassed the expectations of the organizers with participants rejoicing, listening and discovering centuries worth of history and culture. Looking around, one could glimpse the diversity and that, friends, is the strength of our community.

There were newfound friendships, casual talk and serious learning. The program was rich in art, literature, history and culture. Serious discussions with strong emphasis on our rich traditions and rituals brought about awareness of the unknown. In short, at WZC 2000, there were no boundaries and it was a true 'World Congress' where diverse choices, ideals and thoughts were allowed to flourish simultaneously. ■

PASSING THE TORCH

By Co-chair Dr. Dolly Dastoor

On January 1st, 2001 the first day of the new century and the new millennium, the 2340 Zarathustis attending the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress passed the flame for the preservation of the religion to the next generation embodied in 12 year old *Ervad Mehernosh Bhadha* of Karachi. The lighted flame was presented by *Ervad Shapur Pavri* of Houston symbolizing the present generation [photo left].

It was a poignant moment when Ervad Shapur handed over the delicately crafted glass flame with the diva inside it, to Ervad Mehernosh imploring his generation to keep the flame alive. He told him, "You are too young to understand or appreciate what is being passed on to you today ... this is not your private possession, but a symbol of the shared and sacred trust between your community and its priesthood".

Ervad Pavri in a very powerful speech reminded the congress participants that "our priesthood is the glue that holds our community together, as

the priesthood goes, so does the community, if we disrespect the priests, we dishonor ourselves. In the 1300 years since the last Zoroastrian King, we have no king, no country, no borders, no religious head, nothing we can call our own. All we have are our 168 Atash Behrams, Dadgahs and Darbe Mehrs which are like tiny islands of Zoroastrianism in an ocean of indifference and apathy".

In accepting the Torch, young Ervad Mehernosh, delighted the attendees with the recitation of a paragraph from *Atash Nyaesh*. He then gave a short blessing. He said: "As our com-

“ I pray that our community has the courage to always abide by the truth, the grace to accept all points of view and the wisdom to know that united we stand and divided we fall. ”

munity steps into the new millennium, I pray that it has the courage to always abide by the truth, the grace to accept all points of view and the wisdom to know that united we stand and divided we fall ... and above all I pray that all creations of Ahura Mazda grow and prosper and the message of Asho Zarathushtra lives on forever."

This ended the congress on a very high note of hope for the future of the survival of the religion.

Closing remarks. The two days of the World Games and the five days of the Congress created an air of total magic. Let us preserve this energy, and the friendship we created in these 7 days and let it help us forge ahead to a vibrant new Zarathushti Virtual Nation of the 3rd millennium.

The theme of the congress was "*A Zarathushti Odyssey*" and our mission was: "To learn about our religion, heritage and culture and to celebrate together as we launch our Zarathushti Odyssey into the new millennium". And we are happy and proud to say that we fulfilled our mission. We learned about our religion through sessions, we learned of

our heritage and culture through various special and legacy projects, we initiated in this congress, the Games, the Zarathushti Field Service project of sponsoring 30 youth, the Unity Quilts, the book launchings, the orchestra. And we helped you celebrate at the Heritage Night, at the Texas night, at the Daughters of Mashyani Lunch, the Business Lunch, the Awards Lunch, and the Millennium Ball. We wanted people to be happy, socialize and realize the potential strength of the community.

This congress was planned and organized by a diverse group of people, both geographically and ideologically. The result was perfect harmony. And we can take some lessons from this.

The Orchestra which we heard on the Heritage night was harmonized by a diverse group of people who did not know each other till two days before.

The models and their coordinator of "*On Wings of Time*" show did not know each other till two days before, but they were in sync and the show was marvellous. The Book Fair displayed books from a diverse spectrum of Zarathushti ideology, yet it harmonized into a place of knowledge.

And the best example is the Unity Quilts of the 7th World Zoroastrian Congress, each logo represents our diverse individuality but it is harmonized beautifully by Khurshid Bamboat into something which would represent us through time.

There were no resolutions from this congress, and it was intentional. This was not a delegated congress, and there is no global forum to implement resolutions. Once we have a World Body uniting us all we will be able to pass and implement resolutions.

Our challenge in the first decade of the 3rd millennium will be to orchestrate and harmonize our diversity, so that rather than make others play to our tune, we all do what we are capable of doing in the best way we can, to create a symphony of beautiful ideas and actions. ■

What the press said ...

Zoroastrians try to keep 25 centuries of faith alive

BY RICHARD VARA
HOUSTON CHRONICLE, DECEMBER 2000

... In Zoroastrianism, fire symbolizes the inner spiritual flame that burns within each person. It represents an enlightened mind, ablaze with light and truth. Zarathushtra, a Persian prophet also known as Zoroaster, sparked the fire that grew into one of the world's oldest major religions ...

Keeping the flame burning is an issue before the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress ...

Zoroastrian Congress Heads to Houston

BY ASEEM CHHABRA
REDIFF.COM, DECEMBER 2000

Next week, over 2,000 Zoroastrians from around the world are expected to gather in Houston ... This is the first time in the Congress' 40-year history that the event will be held in North America. All previous meets have been held either in Mumbai or Tehran ...

World Zoroastrian Congress a huge success

BY DELSHAD KUMANA
INDIA HERALD, JANUARY 12, 2001

The recently concluded Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress can be best described in one word – grand.

Conference energizes Zoroastrians

BY MAE GHALWASH
HOUSTON CHRONICLE, JANUARY 8, 2001

Zoroastrians, members of an ancient faith who feared they were on the brink of extinction, discovered in Houston last week that their community and faith are very much alive ... Nerina Rustomji, 27, “... for the first time I felt the threat [of extinction] dissipating,” said Nerina Rustomji, 27, “I felt that not only will Zoroastrianism remain, but that its members will be successful in the West.”

CHASING HISTORY

Calcutta-born Tenaz Dubash travels through Iran to trace her roots

SONIA CHOPRA
THE INDIAN EXPRESS, JANUARY 12, 2001

There was a viewing of Tenaz Dubash's documentary “In the Footsteps of Our Forefathers” at the Zoroastrian Congress in Houston ... about 34 Zoroastrians, with a passion for history, took a journey deep into Iran, to discover the country which gave birth to their religion ...

Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress

Grand event with 2,200 delegates

DELSHAD KUMANA KUMANA
INDIA ABROAD, JANUARY 12, 2001

Zarathushtis, followers of what is believed to be the world's oldest surviving formal religion, came from as far afield to launch the Zarathushti Odyssey into the new millennium ... This is the first time in its 40-year history that the Congress was held in North America ...

Parsi Women: Where are all the Men Disappearing?

ASHISH PAVRI
ASIAN AGE, JANUARY 10, 2001

Have Parsi men failed their women?

The question generated considerable debate at the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress ...

Picking up on a prevailing perception that Parsi men tend to be less educated, less enterprising and less economically successful than Parsi women, a survey conducted in Mumbai found that many in the community believe this is actually true ...

Homi Davier said he didn't think so. The survey sample was very small, and the results were not a reflection of the entire community's views ...

As Zoroastrians Enter a New Era, Assimilation Becomes a Concern

An ancient religion founded in Persia now has followers worldwide

BY GUSTAV NIEBUHR
THE NEW YORK TIMES
MONDAY, JANUARY 1, 2001

The cities listed on name tags worn by men and women at a hotel here offer evidence that a highly international gathering is taking place ... yet they share a common bond as Zoroastrians, members of a monotheistic faith whose long history includes centuries of glory as the religion of classical-era Iran.

The geographic diversity at the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress indicates a new chapter in an ancient faith, a process of globalization that carries opportunity and peril.

Among Zoroastrians, a "second diaspora" is under way, said Jamsheed Marker, a veteran Pakistani diplomat who is an undersecretary general of the United Nations. About 11 centuries ago, many made a migration, "a flight from oppression," he called it, from Iran to India. Behind today's journeys, he said, lies "an incentive to become part of the future and participate in it."

If the future for Zoroastrians is measured by professional achievement, then it is on display here at the conference ... the program for the five-day event is thick with advertisements placed by Zoroastrian business people, real estate agents and engineers ...

But amid the plenty, there is some unease, as many Zoroastrians worry that as they become increasingly scattered, they risk assimilation into the cultures around them ...

Contributing to the anxiety is an increase in interfaith marriages involving Zoroastrians, a trend that some worry will leave the children of those unions with little connection to Zoroastrian traditions. The situation echoes similar concerns among American Jews, who also struggle with questions related to a high rate of interfaith marriage. But American Jews, with a population of six million, have the advantage of numbers ...

"... By theological principles, the acceptance of non-Zoroastrians into the community is permissible," said Farhang Mehr, professor emeritus of international relations at Boston University, who said Zoroastrians in his native Iran decided in favor of that course some years

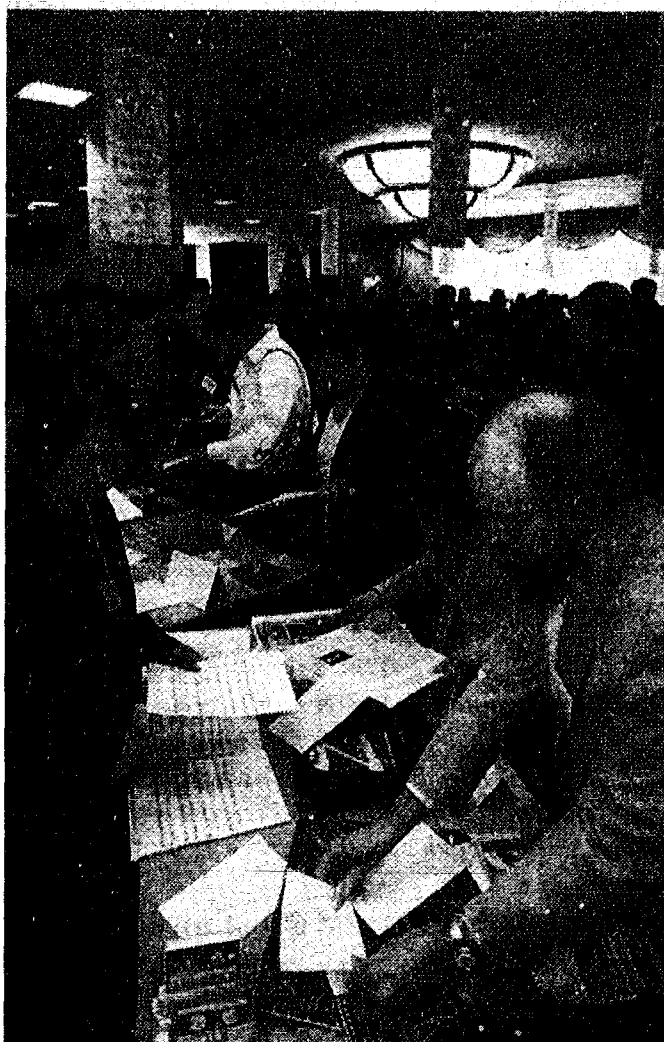
ago ... "If the religion is good, then others will benefit from it," he said ...

But Jal N. Birdy, a structural engineer who leads the North American Mobeds Council, took a different view. "In order to survive in a vast multitude of different races and cultures, we had to formulate certain rules," he said. "And one of the rules is, we have to be an exclusive community, which is borne out by our scriptures to a certain extent."

"We have to encourage people to marry within" the faith, Mr. Birdy said ...

The weight of history hangs in the debate ...

As they have left India and Iran to settle elsewhere, Zoroastrians have created new institutions. Immigrants to the United States [and Canada] now have 24 local Zoroastrian associations, as well as a national organization, which publishes a magazine, the FEZANA Journal. It includes space for men and women to advertise for Zoroastrian partners ...



One of two photographs in the New York Times, showing distribution of information at the FEZANA desk at the Congress. Photo by Phillippe Diederich for the New York Times.

impressions & comments

Members of our worldwide Zarathushti anjuman give their impressions and comments about the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress

By Farrokh and Yashfara Mistree



Yashfara and Farrokh Mistree teach, research, publish and supervise students together at Georgia Tech. They live with their two sons Dinsha and Behram, Khojeste's and Firoza's daughter Tashan, and Farrokh's mother Nergesh, in Atlanta.

After much thought and effort we decided to list the contributions alphabetically and let each person tell you the story in his/her own words. So now this article includes both Impressions and Comments from the anjuman. In the interest of egalitarianism we have dispensed with academic titles and positions people hold in various organizations, and for space and readability we have been forced to edit some of the contributions. If you are unhappy with what we have done – we thank you for your contribution and sincerely apologize. If you are happy with the outcome – let us enjoy our very own article!

In December, Roshan Rivetna and Khorshed Jungalwala invited us to write an article detailing our impressions of the WZC 2000 Congress. We were simply delighted. And then it hit us ...wouldn't it be nice if this article was written by members of our world-wide anjuman? O.K. but what about the theme? How about celebration of the Congress Mission? And that was it. At the Opening Ceremony on December 28, we circulated over 2000 invitations to contribute. Subsequently, we sent out a host of emails. We invited all to send us up to 200 words celebrating the following:

"The mission of the WZC 2000 is to recognize, learn and celebrate our Zarathushti heritage through the millennia so that we may confidently go forth and continue our Odyssey in the next millennium."

We received 80 contributions. Some were impressions (what we sought) others included a commentary and a few were just commentaries. We tried to categorize the contributions. We tried to separate the impressions from the commentaries.

Navroze D. Amaria ...

Littleton, Colorado, USA

I was very pleased with the presentations on educational and scholastic subjects. The presentations provided me with significant insight into our religious heritage and the challenges that we are currently encountering. I was especially pleased with the impromptu question and answer session between Farrokh and Khojeste Mistree. This session provided me with much appreciated education on religious issues and proposed methods of their resolution. These issues at the present time are polarizing our community and impeding our smooth journey in this new millennium. It's through frank discussion/dialogue that we can realize a common solution/approach for the greater good of the Zarathushti community.

What are we to do?

The thing I heard most,
At the W.Z.C.
Was that we have to protect
Our identity.

We have come to the West,
Where we number so few,
With such a small population,
What are we to do?

In our new home,
We have to survive,
And like we did in the past,
We must strive to thrive.

So if our kids
Are only half Zoroastrian,
Then they have half the identity
Of a true Zoroastrian.

And if our kids
Are one-fourth Zoroastrian,
Then they have one-fourth the identity
Of a true Zoroastrian.

So if we marry outside,
This is what we get.
Their Zoroastrian identity,
Our kids must forget.

At the Congress we learned,
To keep our identity.
So you must marry inside,
Like a true Zarathushti!

- Anonymous

Nirvana Anoosheh ...

San Francisco, California, USA

The interest shown by my co-religionists in wanting to learn more about the Gathas and Zarathushtra's vision lifted everybody's spirit. I found it encouraging that we are getting closer to Zarathushtra and his teachings. This reinforced my commitment to continue investing my efforts in the Gatha study group that I founded. I am moved to suggest that it would be good if similar study groups were initiated and the findings interchanged between the groups on the internet.

Zareen Karani Araoz ...

Winchester, Massachusetts, USA

My memories:

● Over 2000 Zarathushtis from all over the world, some donning exquisite traditional garbs, re-connecting and coming together as a community for seven days.

● The outstanding and harmonious World Zoroastrian Orchestra, brought together by Cyrus Mehta, that served as a superb symbol demonstrating that Zoroastrians, however diverse, could come together and create "great music", if we could harmonize and work towards a common goal, in spite of some significant differences in beliefs.

● The many singings of *Chaye Hame Zarathushti*, bringing out the passion of our community to belong and stay together, that resounds in my mind and heart as another affirmation of our Unity.

● The inspiring way our Youth worked together – a beacon of our community's future.

● Our morning breakfasts culminating in establishing "Women Zoroastrians Worldwide".

The unforgettable and powerful jashan performed by eighteen dasturs, the impact and vibrations of which still linger; the resounding Ashem Vohu by Khojeste Mistree; and, the clear voice of the twelve year old Dastur Mehrnosh, with his fervent call for unity, that will be carried home by all who heard him.

May Ahura Mazda bless all who worked so dedicatedly towards this very laudable and unforgettable event.

Arman Arianne ...

Los Angeles, California, USA

The Special Session organized by FEZANA, in my opinion, was a gift to the North American Zarathushti community, that enabled the community to bring Yazashney Gatha from words to deeds. Several hundred Zarathoshtis showed up to hear the best with their own ears and ponder with a bright mind, so that each per-

son got a chance to choose the better mentality. This program drew one of the largest audiences at the Congress and I was enthralled to be amongst so many co-religionists who gave Yasna 30.2 a body of reality.

Dogdoe and Temo Arjani ...

La Canada, California USA

You did it! You Did It! YOU DID IT! Thank you all!

Inviting and hosting more than 2000 Zoroastrians, young and old, from all around the world was indeed a monumental task. Feeding them, answering their questions, and directing them from one location to another was quite a job. You entertained us, enlightened us, and provided us a chance to get together with long lost family members and friends.

Though we could not attend every event, we did enjoy all those that we attended. Entertainment programs were excellent, and performers highly trained.

Last but not least, we are happy that all went well, with Ahura Mazda's blessings. And some of those learned speakers' wisdom did sink deep.

We parted with civility and harmony. That was the biggest achievement of this World Zoroastrian Congress.

Ervad Jehan Bagli ...

Mississauga, Ontario, Canada

The Congress did recognize and celebrate Zarathushti heritage and presented an occasion to renew acquaintances and make new ones. To this end it successfully achieved the goals it was targeted for. It was encouraging to witness youth participation in general and the youth talent in particular. Successful harvesting of talents of Zarathushti youth can go a long way to ensure an enlightening future for Zarathushti community. Sam Kerr should be congratulated for an impressive and well presented exhibit of the Sasanian numismatic collection.

This first North American gathering of world Zarathushtis clearly demonstrated, at least to me, that Zarathushtis in general, and those of the North American diaspora in particular, are gradually beginning to understand both the spiritual and intellectual implications of the kernel of the teachings of Asho Zarathusht. It is only through nurturing of this dual comprehension, that we can ensure the evolution of a convergent formula that must encompass, Zarathushtis of *all* mankind, as we forge ahead with this odyssey into this new millennium.

Farzeen Bhada ...

Karachi, Pakistan

The World Zoroastrian Congress 2000 started with a bang. What seemed at the onset as five days, at the end just appeared to be the passage of a mere 24 hours.

Time really flies when you're having fun!

It was indeed a task for all the organizers who had lived it, breathed it and planned it for more than the last two years. To be able to organize an event of such magnitude successfully deserves kudos and to achieve the purpose of the WZC2000 was not only to bring the Zarathushti community together but was to celebrate our rich culture and tradition and to address and resolve issues that were and are being faced by our community. There was so much to do, so much to partake of and so many people to meet that it was a constant flurry of activity. The talks and sessions were interesting and informative especially when the floor was opened for question and answers.

Upon an overview of the Congress, suffice to say that it was an experience which will be a fond part of my memory always.

Ervad Mehernosh Minoo Bhadha, 12

Karachi, Pakistan



I am 12 years old and have returned home with sweet memories and having made many new friends.

I have no words to express my feelings, how I felt meeting and greeting so many of our fellow Zarathushtis, who showered me with their love and affection, making it possible for me to bear the separation from my mummy and daddy for so many days and so far from home. Being the youngest priest attending the

Congress, I was chosen to play a role in the opening and closing ceremonies.

Opening Ceremony. On December 28th, in a jam packed hall the opening ceremony started with singing by an Iranian choir. Just then entered three priests, hands folded all dressed in the traditional *jama-pichori* and *pagdi* representing the young and the two older generations. I was the fortunate one to represent the young generation. All three walked up to the table and lit the diva placed in a torch especially designed for the Congress. Benediction by the three generations of priests then followed. I felt very honoured to be part of this special event.

Closing ceremony. A jashan was first performed by the priests at the Closing Ceremony on January 1. The lighting of the diva then followed. Once again I was the lucky one to be chosen to light the diva and deliver the benediction. The torch was passed to me by Ervad Shapur Pavri of Houston symbolizing that the responsibility of carrying forward our religion into the New Millennium has been handed over to the next generation. I then recited a prayer with its translation in English followed by a short blessing which ended the Congress with a very encouraging ovation from all those present.

I certainly look forward to the next congress but must admit that I shall count every passing year hoping to be present 50 years from now to re-open the time capsule in Houston myself.

Keki R. Bhote ...

Glencoe, Illinois, USA

My positive impressions:

- Active enthusiastic participation of 400 of our youth augers well for passing the Zoroastrian torch to them.
- Ali Jafarey drawing over 500 people, despite the WZC 2000 Executive blackballing him, was adulation for one of the greatest Zoroastrian scholars alive.
- Kaikhosrov Irani's panel – "May we not Loose the Vision" was excellent. It showed how we can continue Zarathushtra's vision today.
- Meher Master Moos' "Zarathushtis of Tajikistan" was an eye opener on how our faith could be opened up there with millions.
- Also Dinshaw Tamboly on Parsi Panchayat History; women's lunch; awards lunch; Homi Dhalla on Bahrot Caves.
- Khojeste's surprise statement that there could be two 'churches' – conservative and liberal – as long as there was a live and let live cordiality between them.

My negative Impressions:

- Logistics – a disaster; 2300 people were 5 pounds of sugar in a 2 pound bag; rooms overcrowded and small.
- Schedules – a near disaster, especially lunches and dinners.
- World Apex Body – this discussion had no place at the Congress.
- A pity, with over 1% of the total Zoroastrian community attending, no actions planned or taken, no consensus reached. Little accomplished – a major opportunity missed.

Maneck Bhujwala ...

San Jose, California, USA

Some of my observations on the Congress:

- Overall the Congress was a successful event. The hard work put in by the volunteers over the last few years bore fruit.
- It is a credit to the community that we conducted ourselves in a civilized manner. There was no abusive language or violence from any individual or group. The Traditional group peacefully passed out photocopies of information on Traditional religion, and copies of other material in support of their position.
- It was a great opportunity for me to meet a lot of new people. I met Arman Arianne, Percy Katrak and Charlotte Kharas and others (previously known only on the Internet), and many others. I also met many of my relatives and their children
- The video presentation "In the Footsteps of Zarathushtra" was great. We bought a copy.
- The slide show on fire temples, historic places in Iran and India and famous Parsis was very good.
- It was good to see our daughter in the video of an earlier Zoroastrian sports event in Los Angeles many years back.
- The Heritage night program was great, with the Zarathushti orchestra (so many talented musicians). The Gujarati Garba and the Sindhi dance and modern dances and other entertainment.

Farhad Billimoria ...

Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

There were many moments to remember at WZC2000, but for me by far the most poignant was in the final few minutes of the Closing Jashan. I'm sure every single soul in that auditorium would have felt the goosebumps rising on the back of their necks when young Mehernosh Bhada of Karachi, a Dastur of only 12 years, recited the final prayers and closed the Congress with the final words "United we stand and divided we fall." That single moment exemplified the spirit of the Congress, and gave meaning to its motto "Unity within Diversity".

I was impressed that in honour of the WZC 2000, the State of Texas proclaimed the 28th of December 2000 as "Zarathushti Odyssey Day" - a fitting tribute to those involved in the Congress and to the religion as a whole. To me, WZC 2000 truly exemplified the essence of being Zoroastrian.

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Sam Billimoria ...

Irvine, California, USA

I was disappointed that there were no photographs of Zarathushtra anywhere in lecture rooms.

I was perturbed by the overuse of the word 'vision' to describe various events in the program. Vision is an euphemism for existentialism. Everyone wants to project a vision. With so many 'visions' what is Zarathushtra's true vision? In my opinion, it is the propagation of these diverse visions that are tearing us apart.

There was too much stress on the Gathas. There are such large differences in the various translations (from the sublime to the ridiculous) that I am concerned that this diversity is confusing to the laity.

Lovji D. Cama ...

Tenafly, New Jersey, USA

I was impressed by the tremendous amount of talent the community has and was exhibited at the conference in the entertainment evenings and the afternoons. The Heritage Night was a treat. It showed the modern international face of our Zoroastrian community. The Sasanian coin exhibition and the book exhibition were wonderful.

The gathering of over 2000 Zoroastrians in one place was a unique occasion in North America. To go to a mall in the US, and for a few days, to see a large number of Zoroastrians around me is an unusual experience, that I will savor for its rarity.

The program of talks and presentations was wide, but there appeared to be a dichotomy of talks that supported the traditional view and those that supported a progressive view with very little in the middle ground. There appeared to be a call for a division of the community along the traditional and progressive lines instead of a call for unity in diversity.

Shahnaaz F. Cama ...

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

Never in my life have I seen so many Zarathushtis congregated at one place! It was a great feeling. For once, I felt that I was part of the majority or the mainstream of society, my society. I felt a sense of pride and purpose. I saw people who I had not seen for more than 20 or 30 years. I met children of people I had gone to school more than 25 years ago. I also made many new friends in Houston. It was indeed most rewarding to attend this Congress, and my hats off to the organizers of the conference. They did a great job and their hard work paid off. I am already looking forward to the next FEZANA Congress in Chicago in 2002!

Hutoxi Contractor ...

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

Memories that I will treasure:

- The wonderful audio-visual, shown by Khojeste Mistree, that dealt with the story of creation and doctrine.
- The four young speakers from four continents each of whom gave a key-note address on December 31st. how pertinent on the last day of the new millennium.
- The Book Fair; what a feast to see so many books published by members of our community.
- The Question and Answer session between the two Mistree brothers; so different, so imaginative so informative, so touching.
- The math wizard, the dancers, the World Zoroastrian Orchestra; what talent we have in our midst.

Oh what a success and how rewarding for those who put in countless hours of work!

Farobag Homi Cooper...

Chicago, Illinois, USA

As preparations were underway for the Zarathushti Orchestra's inaugural performance, there was one word in particular that came to mind which defined the efforts of organizers and participants – perseverance.

It has often been said that America is a melting pot of cultures whose respective members may not necessarily wish to melt. Yet, a large part of our community's collective success has been based on emulating the Western mode of thought. But while our forefathers were rightfully justified in embarking upon careers that would pay immediate dividends, succeeding generations have done little to venture beyond the world of mercantilism (which, parenthetically, is underscored by our social mores that all too often simply capitulate to the dictates of popular culture).

Our challenge, then, lies in blending selectively, and embracing those ideals that contribute towards excellence -- and not just success which can be ever so fleeting. Alongside medicine, law, and religious studies, music is one of the cornerstones of the Western intellectual tradition. Exposure to it builds strength, discipline, perseverance, and ultimately creativity, which is the hallmark of excellence. These attributes are the building blocks of character; and it is our character, individually and collectively, which will help lend definition to our heritage towards its rightful place in society.

Cyrus R Cowasjee ...

Karachi, Pakistan

This was the first of such congresses attended by me, admittedly due to my wife's involvement and not through any volition of my own. Having attended, I

felt it was a most wonderful experience. The meeting of so many Zarathushti minds and bodies of the varying backgrounds was most exhilarating. The plenary sessions and programs were enlightening. My impression was that there was over emphasis on joint prayers and recitations and evoking His blessings during each session. One's communication with one's maker should be a more personal affair. The playing of *Chaye hame Zarhosti* by an orchestra for the first time evoked tremendous pride.

The mobeds gave an impression of feeling not respected by the community. One particular young mobed seemed to make a demand for recognition and respect. Our mobeds should understand that respect can only be earned and not demanded. I fully agree with Ervad Pavri in his closing sermon that mobeds alone can be a cohesive force for the community but for this they need to be more enlightened and educated to lead their flock in this challenging world. Their role should not be restricted to theology. They should follow Dhalla's teachings. Overall the organizers and the hotel management did an excellent job of which they can well be proud. I am glad I came.

Toxy Cowasjee ...

Karachi, Pakistan

WZC 2000 has been part of my life these past three years, being directly involved not only in the project entrusted to me, but assisting many others, besides encouraging co-religionists from Pakistan to attend this event. Now in retrospect, one is in awe how a congress of this magnitude gelled together successfully, and I feel confident it was due to the team spirit shown.

The highlight for me, was to see so many old friends, put faces at last to the people I corresponded with, and most of all the large gathering of youth. Thankfully we set them a good example and the threatened rallies never took place. One needs role models and it is in our hands to give the future leaders inspiration.

Aban Daboo ...

Aurora, Illinois, USA

Injoyed the Congress immensely because I met friends and acquaintances after many years. It was very gratifying to recognize and be recognized after decades by school and college friends, and old neighbors. From what I've heard there were approximately 500 youth from all over the world who participated. First of all let me applaud their parents for encouraging the youth to attend. It was extremely heartening to witness their participation.

In context of the Mission of the Congress "to recognize, learn and celebrate our heritage"...I do feel the youth did achieve this objective. With respect to ".....go forth and continue our odyssey in the next millennium" I found that the youth had numerous questions, but all of them did return home with something more than what they came with by way of knowledge, awareness, and friend-

ship. As a result, I feel comfortable in saying that there is absolutely no doubt in my mind that our youth will continue our odyssey with as much pride and dignity as their parents and grandparents.

Hodding Carter has said, "There are only two lasting bequests we can hope to give our children. One of these is roots; the other, wings." We succeeded in giving our youth roots at this Congress.

Rusi and Roshan Dalal ...

London, UK

The highlight for us was the debate and confrontation between the two eloquent and erudite brothers. We feared for the younger brother (Khojeste) as the elder brother (Farrokh) tried to take him apart. We are glad that the elder brother did not succeed although he did a marvelous job of stretching his younger brother. We were most impressed.

Ardeshir B. Damania ...

Davis, California, USA

The Book Fair and sale was a brilliant idea and the organizers must be congratulated for this also. I have never seen so many books on Zoroastrianism and related topics in a single room anywhere else in the world! I was impressed by the wide range of the topics covered; from the attire of the soldiers in the Sasanian armies to the scholarly discussion on the religious texts. There were books for the kids as well as religious scholars as well as books by such Parsi authors as Bapsi Sidwani and Rohinton Mistry for light reading. I am glad that youth and old alike took great interest and bought books which may enlighten them about the past and thereby shed more light on what events shaped who and what we are today.

The video presentation of a group of youths' tour of Iran and visits to the holy shrines was also very welcome. Only by undertaking such a pilgrimage can our youth truly understand what it means to be Zoroastrian. Only then they will not fritter away our culture and religion by marrying outside the community.

The Millennium Ball was a blast and music to suit three types of taste was provided from modern hi-hop to classic rock 'n roll. I am sure several alliances between girls and boys were forged at the Congress. For that reason alone, the Congress was a gigantic success!

Dolly Dastoor ...

Brossard, Quebec, Canada

What the Congress was NOT about:

What the Congress did not do was to create a forum to discuss the doctrinal and social issues of immediate concern to

the community. And this was for a purpose. This was not a delegated congress but a congress of individuals, and hence no position statement or a resolution was issued.

What the Congress was ALL about:

The Congress brought together Zarathushtis of all ages, all ideologies, all persuasions, from all parts of the world and made each feel a part of the larger Zarathushti community. We collectively raised the consciousness of our community to its potential in terms of our youth and our collective talent. We opened the gates of inclusion and tolerance. We opened our hearts and our minds to our co-religionists. The Congress made us all feel good about ourselves as a community and it achieved what the organizers had set out to achieve, namely, a "holistic Zarathushti experience". How we use this experience to enhance our lives as individuals or as a community can only be answered by each person through acts of good deeds in the future.

Adi Davar ...

Falls Church, Virginia, USA

This congress set future standards by blending deliberations, fun and entertainment. But unlike previous WZCs, it distilled neither conclusions nor goals for the community's future, because of too wide a program and primary focus on one school of religious convictions. Massive attendance by youth from all countries, demonstrated their fervor for the faith. Their energy in inter-relating with each other and having fun, while also deliberating their vision for our community, bode well for its future. But by scrupulously keeping their deliberations between themselves, they sent a telling message that they abhorred the adults' tiresomely divisive debates about our community's future course.

FEZANA showed exemplary courage in sustaining the Zarathushti milieu of democracy and free choice by sponsoring its Special Event on December 30, 2000 ending irrational expenditure of energy over two years to preclude one person from addressing the Congress. That it went so well, owes much to the grace of both speakers and the mixed audience's quiet appreciation of their differing viewpoints.

It was satisfying that the proposition to split the community based on a non-existent Zarathushti who believes only in Gathic principles and not even in prayers, kushti ritual and fire temples, was met by a dignified call for a 'truce' to first find and reconcile the many commonalities which bind, before sounding a clarion call to divide, Zarathushtis.

By quietly eschewing the stridency of any group's extreme messages, the youth and the large majority of adults instead resoundingly signaled moderation, conciliation, rationality and solidarity as the quests of our community's odyssey in this millennium. That was WZC's signal achievement.

Homi M. Davier ...

Sugarland, Texas, USA

At WZC 2000 Zarathushtis from across the globe met to rejoice and celebrate their heritage, history and culture. The air was filled with curiosity, excitement and apprehension. First timers remained bewildered whilst at the same time seasoned players were busy chalking out new territories. I can only express the joy I feel in my heart that so many people came from around the Zarathushti world. But what now that the Congress is over?

My vision for the future, post WZC 2000, calls for a meeting of ways and a search for the truth. A large majority of the Zarathushtis would end up looking for a path between our rich traditional past and the newfound reformist's call for the New World. Recent evidence displays a desire to have a distinct division with two different beliefs running parallel. But, eventually, it is my sincere hope that the strength of our diversity and the path carved by the middle of the road individuals determine the future of the Zarathushti faith beyond 2001.

Finally, notwithstanding one's individual belief and interpretations, there ought to be one vision or "common" factor determining how Zarathushtis should enter this new millennium. There should be a call for Zarathushtis of all denominations with diversified beliefs, centuries old traditions and newfound research to coexist whilst, 'collectively' charting the course for the 'New World'.

Farishta Murzban Dinshaw ...

Karachi, Pakistan

ZAH and FEZANA put on quite a show, and the credit goes to the individuals who worked so hard to make the WZC2000 a memorable Congress. Of the myriad memories, which is my personal highlight? Undoubtedly, the opportunity to hear Farhang Mehr speak. Other than that, one image that remains piercingly clear is of an American police officer standing outside the main hall, handcuffs hanging from his belt, arms folded across his chest. I doubt if anyone who attended the Congress remained untouched by the corrosive undercurrent of the "exclusion-inclusion" controversy surrounding Ali Akbar Jafarey, and the threats of agitation against his presence. All the more ironical when one considers that we are descendants of the people who, four millennia ago, spread the message of "hearing, pondering, deciding". If this Congress were to leave one legacy for posterity, I would wish it to be the realization that by vilifying someone who does not conform to our beliefs, or by allowing others to do so, we diminish ourselves. Asha is infinite and timeless. It does not matter who preaches it, or in what form, Asha remains unscathed, unchanged. We have nothing to fear in our future — except ignorance.

Rustom B. Engineer ...

Houston, Texas, USA

Seeing 2,200 Zarathushtis under one roof was an experience all in itself! After watching the happy crowds of people in the hotel lobby and the ever so slow elevator, it was obvious that no matter what part of the world we lived in, getting together with another Zarathushti, whether old friends or meeting for the first time, was a joyful event. It was hard to tell who came from which country, and for all practical purposes, it was evident that we all seemed to have assimilated into the mainstream Western way of life. May be, it is time we leave our baggage of regional differences behind and use this Westernization as a common platform to stand on and strengthen our religious heritage.

Rusi Gandhi ...

Montville, New Jersey, USA

It was a thrilling experience to attend Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress in Houston. First I want to congratulate the FEZANA, Executive Board and the ZAH. Looking ahead to what our global Zarathushti community will be in the next millennium, I know it will not only survive but will prosper. Our history, culture and core beliefs will bring us together. Modern technology will facilitate us to know more about our religion and tradition. Priests and scholars will be bridging the past to build the future and our youth will help us all continue our Odyssey into the uncharted and exciting waters of the new millennium.

Vahishta Gati ...

Karachi, Pakistan

I have never before in my life been so overwhelmed by the number of Zarathushtis, their achievements and accomplishments. We may be a small community but we sure have a great diversity of careers and professions – I was delighted to meet a Zarathushti Opera Singer, a Zarathushti actuary, even a Zarathushti human calculator! What have we not achieved?

What I liked best about the Congress was the energy exuding from every individual present - everyone rushing to some session or the other. This thirst to learn as much as one could about one's faith, itself shows that there is hope for survival against all odds. I was in a constant dilemma through the five days as to which of the many sessions to attend.

It was truly an experience to have heard so many distinguished speakers. I'm not in a position to say whether I agreed or disagreed with their views but I would like to mention how inspiring Farhang Mehr's speech on the 31st of December, was for me. That was when I truly felt proud of being a Zarathushti – a member of a faith, so

ancient and yet so modern in its outlook which gives all individuals the right to think and choose the Right Path.

Firoz Ghandhi ...

Novi, Michigan, USA

Having attended the Congress and heard a lot I have been contemplating about the future of our community and I would like to share these thoughts with you.

I don't consider myself pro or con conversion. I am still researching, but I have my fears. I believe conversion should be done if it will make us, as a community, stronger. If the points in favor of conversion will help create a stronger foundation of education, leadership, culture, faith, places of worship, and sports then I think we should consider it. However, if conversion is simply done out of fear or extinction, then the concept of conversion is misused. Let us not use conversion out of fear because dilution is also one step to extinction.

Russi Ghadiali ...

Singapore

We had never attended a Zoroastrian Congress and this was our first experience. I went with an open mind, with One Resolution – Enjoy the Event.

What was interesting to see, was so many Zarathushti highly educated youth interacting, partying with their old and new friends, volunteering from time to time and daily attending / participating in the religious and historical talks. The youth were there to learn and enjoy the daily talks and make use of the open forum of question and answers. This brought them out of their shell and we could see the hunger not only for religious knowledge but also facts. Their questions, arguments and challenging the speakers with their own facts were the real highlight. This was the major and most important success of the WZC.

The young priest from Pakistan was outstanding and made us feel that the Zarathushti religion will continue to exist. Let us all put more efforts to give our youth such opportunities.

One other observation, the Young Zoroastrians of North America are growing in numbers, educated and must continuously take the lead in promoting religion and harmony in the world community. They must also take the lead in doing charities for our poor brothers and sisters in India.

Let us unite worldwide and let our youth lead the way to progress.

Behramjee Ghadially, 18

Karachi, Pakistan

For me, there were many highlights at the Congress; I will only deal with a few. Having the Olympics alongside the Congress was excellent. The school at

which the sports were played provided world class facilities to the participants and spectators. Having won a gold medal in table tennis added more to my joy.

The opening ceremony was well broadcast to the audience via multimedia presentation, the Texas Night stands out for providing the most entertainment, the lecture that Khojeste Mistree gave on 31st December, was the best, the tension leading up to Ali Jafarey's interpretation of the Gathas was intriguing and lastly the Q & A session with four speakers was extremely informative.

The most interesting part of the Congress to me, however, was the tension leading up to Ali Jafarey's speech. On the one hand, you have people threatening demonstrations and protests and on the other hand you have FEZANA who is very keen on having him speak no matter what. Actually I believe all this hip-hype made the event a huge success by ensuring a huge turnout. But if you ask anyone why he/she went to watch, most will say "We came to see a fight, an argument etc." and that was proved right as many listeners were fast asleep when both speakers spoke that evening.

Kayzad Giara ...

Karachi, Pakistan

When I was asked to write an essay for the field student project, I wrote that it was my dream to go to America and learn more about my religion. This became possible because of the hard work and dedication of Aban and Purvez Rustomji and numerous people of the Zoroastrian Field Service and the WZC.

I feel that the Congress truly achieved its purpose of enlightening Zarathushtis about their religion, heritage and culture. When I entered the Congress I was truly surprised to see so many Zarathushtis from around the world. The WZC 2000 gave me a strong feeling of unity. The speeches and debates put forward by the organizers were really informative and the deep teachings really broadened my mind about our religion, heritage and culture, and encouraged me to enlighten my friends and family about what I learned.

I would really like to give credit to the people who made the WZC 2000 possible by their hard work, they all did a remarkable job. It was an exposure which I cherish and I believe all youngsters should have.

Sunnu Golwalla ...

Karachi, Pakistan

What struck me the most at the 7th World Zoroastrian Congress was the diversity of our people. The short sub-Continental to the tall Aryan; the orthodox to the liberal; the Gujarati-speaking to Farsi or English, and all were practicing Zarathushtis.

This diversity has become a matter of concern to some, as to how such a small number and scattered globally,

can retain its identity. It does not trouble me because I think that for all these years this is how we have existed. To me, this makes us special and different.

Americans proudly say, there is no typical American and theirs is a leading nation. Apparently there is no typical Zarathushti but that can be our strength. Rather than unify we can work for a harmonic alliance.

Diversity is a reality. In fact, it makes us that much more interesting. If we open our minds and hearts we can welcome it. I felt it in the smiles I got from American Zarathushtis and Persian Zarathushtis, and instantly felt we belonged. I celebrate the diversity and am glad that it touched me positively.

We are smart enough not to fight reality, but accept it and build on it. Shall we?

Dara Homavazir ...

Thornhill, Ontario, Canada

Sports and entertainment: Participated and enjoyed a lot. The entertainment was excellent.

Lectures: Attended Khojeste Mistree's and Kaikhosrov Irani's lectures and was impressed. Very interesting.

Meeting old friends and making new ones: Yes, that is one of the reasons our whole family registered and attended conference.

One sad part: Vegetarians were not catered to properly. The food did not meet my expectations.

We will certainly attend future congresses.

Farahnaz Irani ...

Karachi, Pakistan

WZC 2000 was surely one of the largest Zoroastrian gatherings ever organized. It was a whole new experience for me and I thoroughly enjoyed every single day of it. In fact, I felt that the seven days were too short.

Meeting old acquaintances and friends, whom I last met when I was a kid, was such a joy. At the same time, meeting Zarathushti youth from different countries and discussing various youth-related issues was a mind opener. Besides the various religious lectures given by learned speakers, casual discussions with newly made Zarathushti friends, was an excellent way to soak in what is happening globally to our religion and our people.

It was an exhilarating experience not only to be among over 2000 Zarathushtis, but also to meet some of our distinguished Zarathushtis who have attained international recognition.

I strongly feel that the organizers of the WZC 2000 did a great job. They succeeded in bringing together Zarathushtis old and young, from different walks of life and from different parts of the world.

The whole experience of attending the WZC 2000 made me feel proud to be a Zarathushti.

Franey Nariman Irani ...

Karachi, Pakistan and London, UK

I was encouraged to observe that WZC2000 moved beyond only religion, (which no doubt is a core issue and has importance at any such Congress) and encompassed discussions on aspects of Zoroastrian family and social life; the concerns of our women today; events involving the youth such as sports music and entertainment; remembered our past glories and acknowledged our present luminaries by honouring men and women who by their action and example are outstanding role models for our future generations; held Book Launchings and a Book Fair; an exhibition of Sasanian Dynasty coins; a Film and Video Festival; Millennium Time Capsule; encouraged commerce and trade through the Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce; and solicited donations for Field Students to attend the Congress from Australia, India, Iran and Pakistan and for cash prizes for the Global Scholastic Competition. Whew that was a lot to get into one sentence!

Dinshaw Joshi ...

Chevy Chase, Maryland, USA

At the end of this momentous event in the history of the worldwide Zarathushti community on which a few expended so much effort to ensure its success and a couple of thousand Zarathushtis participated in the event at great personal cost in time and money, it is relevant to ask, "Was it worth it?" My answer to this question is ambivalent.

Yes! It was a success in that the efficient management of perhaps the largest gathering of Zarathushtis in modern times provided an excellent opportunity for interaction between Zarathushtis from around the world. For this effort, the organizers deserve the community's sincere gratitude. The sports event particularly provided a great opportunity for the Zarathushti youth for interaction. However, this interaction within each age group and between young and old would have been better served if the organizers had allowed for at least one event where people could move around, mix and interact, instead of being tied for a couple of hours to some few other guests around a table.

On the substantive side, my answer is **No!** Except perhaps for the Women's Forum at which some very pertinent issues were raised and discussed by the forum participants who have agreed to pursue these further, several of the other major issues which today rile the community were not programmed for discussion. In this regard, the program coordinators did a disservice to the community by presenting only one side of the coin. It is appreciated that major issues dividing the community cannot be resolved at such large gatherings but open discussion of each specific issue between scholars could

have resulted in establishment of a separate Council of Elders for each such issue and made available such Council's guidance for further deliberation.

Sam Kerr ...

Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

On December 27th, one single phone call from me to the PR section of the hotel brought, within minutes, an army of Zarathushti helpers to my aid. I hope such vital personal impressions based on a varied experience during this Congress will be unabashedly shared with the organizers for the next Congress.

The options I had to choose from were enormous: Talks, exhibitions, meeting relatives, friends and impromptu continuations of previously incomplete meetings, acceptance of invitations, even failing to honour some – all these formed an integral whole during the period of a few days. In creating this holistic experience the organizers, the many unheralded volunteers and spontaneous helpers (with hand-held telephones and wireless radios) did an excellent job at the cost of personal and family sacrifices.

I believe that this Congress is only the beginning of a new era in the building up of a much-wanted communal and global consciousness among Zarathushtis worldwide. Congratulations and thank you!

Rustom J. Kevala ...

Potomac, Maryland, USA

The closing ceremony was highlighted by a jashan performed on the stage by 18 mobeds. The setting was reverential and the ceremony spiritually uplifting. There was a feeling of thanksgiving in the air, the end of a successful Congress and the beginning of a new era for Zarathushtis all over the world. It was clear that the audience was feeling happy to have taken part in the Congress. Zarathushtis from all parts of the world were present and joined together in happy thoughts.

As I sat listening to the jashan I recalled some personal thoughts that I wish to share with you. The jashan ritual is full of meaning and spiritual significance. There are two excellent books, one written by Ervads Jehan Bagli and Adi Unwalla and the other written by Ervad Yezdi Antia, that explain the ritual in great detail. But they do not provide translations of the actual recitations. I don't think it would be difficult to take the next step: to develop the jashan prayers in English in a modern context while keeping some of the original words and the ancient traditions intact. Such a text would provide a bridge from the past to the present. The ritual, I think, when properly performed with understanding and passion, can infuse a benevolent atmosphere and help to bring the community together.

Charlotte Kharas ...

Dallas, Texas, USA

Of all the many informative sessions conducted throughout the course of the Congress, none was as enlightening as the question and answer session conducted by Farrokh Mistree and his brother Khojeste Mistree. The questions posed, were well thought out, and addressed all shades of the spectrum of the debate being so heatedly argued on the Internet. These needed to be asked without muddying the issues and Farrokh was very forthright and candid.

The answers given by Khojeste were eloquent, reasoned and erudite, with relevant passages and instances quoted from the Gathas and the other extant Zoroastrian literature. A viable solution to the debate was offered, so that a live and let live mindset may be developed. The Zoroastrian community here in North America may go through an "amicable divorce" and subsequently each side is able to build on its own ideology without feeling the need to disparage the other. For me, this session reinforced the value of preserving our rites, rituals and traditions intact since these have succored the community through all vicissitudes.

All in all, it was a memorable Congress and the hard work of its organizers was very much in evidence and greatly appreciated.

Nikan Khatibi ...

Laguna Miguel, California, USA

Let me give you my perspective with regard to the group discussion format used in the Youth Track.

I had the opportunity at this Congress to be a group discussion leader and I found that this was the best way to get youth of all ages into conversations about the religion. I found that in smaller groups, youth of all ages were able to communicate and express their ideas a lot better compared to a large group with one scholarly speaker. Also, in smaller groups I found that youth felt more connected to the religion in the sense that they felt open to talk about any topic and actually shared some of their own problems.

At the social level, I found this format to be the best way for one Zarathushti to meet another and actually keep the friendship going. I did not know any of the youth in my group. Ever since our first meeting, and to this date, I keep in touch with more than half of them.

It is my impression that the small group format was very successful in that it facilitated both socializing and learning in a fun manner.

Scherezade Khursigara ...

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Awe Inspiring

It was a meeting of the minds,
A gathering of a community from near and far.
The young, the old, the disabled, and the healthy,
United by one thing,
and that is being Zoroastrian.

Views to be shared
Opinions to be discussed
Questions to be asked
Answers to be given.
Old ties to be reunited
New friends to be made.

Talented individuals surrounded us.
Proud of our past
Anxious about our existence in the future.
The energy, the excitement, beamed through the town.

Activities endless
Chaos was expected
Complaints bound to occur
A mass event with an outstanding
turnout was unexpected.
Educational it was
A learning experience it was
Keeping an open mind
was the key to the success of this assemblage.

The Olympics did exactly what they were meant to do.
With spirits high and outcomes unknown
We put our best foot forward
and took the plunge.
Some of us lost,
others won,
But in the end we all came out triumphant,
knowing we did the best we could.

Though the sun did not shine much in the
cool city of Houston
the light in the hearts and in the eyes
of over 2000 Zoroastrians
radiated and glistened through the gloom.
Providing enough luminosity
to brighten the world
and the lives of those we touch.
Physically it may be over
but mentally and spiritually,
A new journey has begun.

Natasha Khursigara ...

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

I love to travel and play sports. I sat in a darkened room watching *In the Footsteps of our Forefather's* with my new friends that I made at the sport events and other Zoroastrians young and old. I felt like I was actually there sweating in the hot sun where I thought I could tan. Amazing, stunning sites in this movie really attracted me. After seeing this homeland video, a place that I have never been to, I would love to go and explore the ancient home of my religion which is very unique and fascinating.

It was amazing meeting new and old friends. When I left I was a bit heart-broken. But I said to myself that, "Hey I will hopefully see some of these people again so I should not worry. I should keep smiling and keep in touch with all my friends over email and phone and make sure that they come to the 2001 Youth Congress in Toronto, Canada."

Peace out and may Ahura Mazda bless everyone.

Shahriar Khushrushahi ...

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

I had never imagined the number of new friends I would make at the WZC 2000. I got the chance to meet Zarathushtis from Iran all the way to Australia all in a span of five days. So many people of different cultures, yet all shared one common belief system. I felt that the WZC 2000 was extremely well organized, for it catered enormously to every single age group in a course of five days. There was so much to do that I had difficulty deciding the events to attend. I particularly enjoyed the events catered for the youth. Right from the disco nights and Small Group Sessions to chatting in the Parsi-packed lobbies. A lot of hard work had been put into the Congress and it definitely did not go unnoticed. What I have taken from the Congress is a whole group of new friends, which I can so easily keep in touch with in this day and age. Nevertheless, what warms me up every time I think about it, is the fact that in five days I mingled with approximately 1% of the entire world's Zarathushti population.

Purvez Kolsawalla ...

Cambridge Park, New South Wales, Australia

The most important plus point, from my perspective, for the conference was its inclusivity. All viewpoints, Traditional, Ultra Traditional, Liberal were heard politely and peacefully. Although I question how many opinions of people were changed by all these lectures.

The essential issue was the networking with old and new friends. The ability to place a face against a name that one was familiar with was important. To talk informally and exchange viewpoints was great. To see our youth

doing so much networking and intermingling is the best impression that I have come out with. The symbolic passing of the torch to a young mobed from Pakistan was very touching. All in all, a job well done.

Perviz Madon ...

Vancouver, BC, Canada

I truly enjoyed the Olympics and it was wonderful to see so many youth from all over the world participate and win or loose in the true spirit of sportsmanship. This tradition should be carried on and encouraged as this is the best way the youth of tomorrow will network and meet their peers from all over the world. The Zarathushti Orchestra was one of my very favorite events as I truly believe that music plays a vital role in an individual's life and to see the talent of our Zarathushtis on stage that night made me feel extremely proud.

I especially enjoyed the jashan performed by our mobeds the morning of the closing ceremonies, and was very impressed by the passing of the torch from Ervad Shahpur Pavri of Houston to our very young Ervad Mehernosh Bhada from Karachi.

The Women's Luncheon was very well planned and developed and a very big thank you to Toxy Cowasjee and her committee for doing all the research for the Daughters of Mashyani. It was a proud moment for us women of the 21st century to honour our predecessors - what great role models they've been to all our Zarathushti women worldwide.

As per the mission of WZC 2000, I am assured that we will confidently go forth and continue our odyssey into this the new Millennium.

Dolly R. Malva ...

Downey, California USA

It was so nice to see so many co-religionists from around the globe. The opening ceremony was done well and it started the Congress with an upbeat note. The closing ceremony - with the 18 mobeds doing the jashan provided a very memorable and lasting experience for me. To have this take place in North America was truly great.

The entertainment was one of the highlights of the Congress for me. Every day there was some event which was very nicely done. The world orchestra with our youth was marvelous together with Heritage Night.

The fashion show, "On the Wings of Time" was another good one, together with the "Daughters of Mashyani".

The dancing and impromptu singing by some of the delegates was great fun and it was really nice meeting old friends and making new ones without knowing them.

All in all the WZC 2000 was a grand show and I took away a lot of good memories.

Bahman Marzbani ...

Turramurra, New South Wales, Australia

Okay, so the WZC 2000 was a great success. The logistics, programs, speakers, etc. were excellent. Now, let us go back and review the previous WZC and realistically see how many of those resolutions that were committed at that time were in fact implemented. It is human nature to share the excitement at the moment of an event. People have short memory retention cycles once they are out of the environment, even though they had a great time while in it. Periodic follow-up as a reminder to the resolutions to those responsible to see it through would be nice.

Having attended this Congress I am left with the impression that we need a World Body – one that is operated by full-time professionals with various Zoroastrian Associations around the world contributing a nominal financial amount to it. Other religions are more visible because of this type of focused action. Talk alone does not solve a problem – action does. Let's act.

Mehravar (Naazee) Marzbani ...

Turramurra, New South Wales, Australia

I came to the Congress with the belief that we need young leaders. Let us give them an opportunity and support them morally and financially. Their presence at the Congress and their participation in lectures clearly indicates their eagerness to know more about Zarathushtra's vision and teachings.

The youth showed that they cared for their community, and demonstrated a practical approach towards the cause of Zoroastrianism by way of communicating with each other, establishing communication links, and showing their leadership qualities. Their music, compositions, songs and speeches filled my heart with pride.

I left the Congress with the firm impression that our youth, given the chance, will lay the foundation for our vision, hopes and in fact bring to fruition Zarathushtra's vision for the future.

Mehran, Mitra (Javidan)

Mazdyasni & Family

San Diego, California, USA

We send you our sincerest appreciation for a job well done in spite of lots of unexpected happenings. Our special thanks go to members of the WZC 2000 Executive Committee. But no job can be done without all the help of the wonderful volunteers. We therefore tip a huge Texan hat to all the people (locally, nationally, and internationally) involved in bringing the Seventh World Congress to such successful fruition.

Farhang Mehr ...

Boston, Massachusetts, USA

On the one hand:

Provided a forum for families, friends and fellow Zarathushtis from all over the world – *renewed friendship and promoting solidarity.*

Provided an intellectual forum in which Zarathushtis of different schools explained their views in a civil manner – *paved the way for future dialogue.*

Provided a pleasant ambience for young Zarathushtis to meet and interact – *resulted in comradeship, fellow feeling, community spirit and esprit de corps.*

Enhanced the interest of fellow Zarathushtis particularly the youth, in learning more about their religion and rich culture – *helps preservation of religion and culture.*

Sports activities, artistic programs, entertainment provided joyous occasions for the youth to socialize – *pleasure and affection.*

On the other hand:

Crammed program – *led to confusion.*

Frequent changes of schedule (place and time) deprived some from attending their favorite sessions – *disappointment for some.*

Ambiguity of some subjects (the Track chairs – except one – had failed to send out a guideline to the speakers) – *irrelevancy of some talks.*

Lack of simultaneous (or any other form of) translation – *disappointment of Iranians who could not follow lectures in English.*

Quality of meals and chaos in seating guests – *created bitterness and dissatisfaction.*

Hmmm! Considering both hands – what's the final grade?

Taking into account the number of participants, enormity of the task, and the nature of voluntary work, the management of the WZC2000 was a great success and the organizers deserve high marks and sincere congratulations.

Hosi P. Mehta ...

Chicago, Illinois, USA

I always used to think of religion as a way of life, a prescription on how to live my life. Attending the Congress in Houston has enhanced my understanding: religion articulates the connection between our spiritual and material existence, it teaches us on how to live our life and our after life thru the physical aspect of living a good productive material life and makes a connection to the spiritual thru our prayers and rituals and advances us on the path to perfection.

I thank the combined wisdom of all the speakers that brought this awareness to me. I thank all the great people

in Houston who made this Congress possible; work done with good thoughts and intentions always gets rewarded. Thank you for the wonderful and informative Houston experience.

Jehanbux R. Mehta ...

Karachi, Pakistan

I came with a skeptical mind and I left highly impressed:

- I was delighted to see and meet so many Zarathushtis from or of Iran.
- I was impressed by a well-selected set of speakers who addressed a good variety of topics – but I could not attend some as others at the same time were equally interesting.
- I found the Congress to be very well organized with excellent co-ordination among all. Full marks to co-chairs Dolly and Homi, the two vice-chairpersons, track leaders and the hoard of volunteers.
- I liked the emphasis on youth and found their active participation to be very encouraging.
- There was plenty of food at lunches and dinners, but taste and flavor did not appeal to me.
- The entertainment was entertaining – particularly the World Zarathushti Orchestra.
- I was disappointed that Ali Jafarey was not invited by the organizers to speak and impressed that FEZANA filled the gap.

I left Houston filled with pride of our heritage, boastful of the high calibre of people we have amongst us in all fields and confident that our vibrant religion will see through this new Millennium and more.

Behram Mistree, 16

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

I walked in on a session that dealt with raising children as Zarathushtis. I found this both interesting and useful because emphasis was placed on prayer and tradition in raising children instead of gala events and formal dinners. The session was grossly underpopulated, however, and lost much of its efficacy due to an emphasis on the inconsequential business of politicking. If the community is to survive we desperately need overflowing attendance at such sessions and we need to remember that in such sessions the emphasis should be on religion.

Dinsha Mistree, 17

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

It is my impression that the Congress in Houston, meant different things to individual Zarathushtis. There were those who rekindled old friendships from many years ago. There were those who created new friendships that will

last for many years to come. There were those who went to advocate their opinions and concerns stemming from many years of Zarathushti service. There were many more who went to determine the future of Zoroastrianism.

The loudest message I heard from the Zarathushti global community was not the bickering and politicking that seems to have become all too common in the many local, national and international organizations – it was the need to educate and inform the youth about our wonderful religion. Even if we cannot agree on the details of how to do this, this Congress showed me that our hearts are in the right place.

Tashan Mistree, 18

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

A Sense of Community – this ungrammatical statement is a treasured feeling that I have taken away from my Congress experience. Whether early in the morning, or late at night, riding in the elevator, walking into a conference room, or just sitting in the lobby, I was overcome with a sensation of contentment brought about by the masses of fellow Zarathushtis that surrounded me.

We may dwell on the fact that we are a small community in today's world, but this Congress exhibited a magnanimity of spirit that impressed me the most. This spirit was visible in every aspect of the Congress from the orchestra, to the Olympic games, to the lectures and the nightly entertainment.

Surrounded by successful Zarathushtis both young and old, I thoroughly enjoyed every moment. As a young adult, I delighted in the activities directed at helping the youth interact. The breakout sessions enabled a further understanding of the kind of role we must play in future community affairs, and helped to focus on issues pertinent to our community. The Congress was a successful first step towards breaking new ground in the new Millennium.

Mazdayasno Ahmi, Mazdayasno Zarathushtrish.

Khojeste Mistree ...

Mumbai, India

It was delightful to meet and be amongst 2300 Zoroastrians from all parts of the world. The program was well balanced by the WZC 2000 Executive Board who sought to include all by organizing the program in four different tracks that reflected varying religious perspectives. The FEZANA Board giving legitimacy to Ali Jafarey at the World Congress, in my opinion, was a low point of the Congress. It was lovely to see so many of our youth interact with each other during the Congress days. The Zoroastrian World Orchestra was a real treat. Salutations to the Houstonian Zoroastrians for giving the community such a great Congress.

Dorab Mistry ...

London, UK

For me, the twin highlights of the Congress were the Inaugural Ceremony and the plenary session featuring the Mistree brothers.

It was a great idea to have every participating Zarathushti region to announce its greetings at the Inaugural Ceremony.

The plenary lecture by Khojeste Mistree and the subsequent Q & A session handled by Farrokh Mistree were an intellectual feast. Even those who do not normally agree with Khojeste Mistree found the session most interesting. That session showed the Congress at its best.

The events associated with the Congress such as the International Book Fair, the Book Launches, the film "*In the Footsteps of Our Forefathers*", the Time Capsule and the Awards were also very imaginatively crafted and handled.

In retrospect, the decision of the organizers to invite only Zarathushtis to speak at the Congress worked out very well and gave an opportunity to many ordinary "thinking" Zarathushtis a platform.

Most important was the cheerfulness and camaraderie that all participants radiated and which made the entire program so enjoyable.

A particular word of praise to the Houston organizers who worked tirelessly: I cannot recall anyone ever losing his or her temper and that says a lot for their sagacity in the face of this massive turnout. ZAH can be very proud of its dedicated band of organizers.

London is bidding very strongly for the next WZC. Houston will be a very hard act to follow.

Pervin Mistry ...

Mississauga, Ontario, Canada

What interested me the most?

The recital of Gujarati poems written by renowned Parsi poets such as *kavi* Khabardar. The session was presented by Homi Dhalla; poems were recited by Ervad Peshotan Unwalla in a unique and amusing '*quavali*' style involving audience participation through a chorus of "wah", "wah". At the end of the Gujarati recital, the poems were translated with English narration by Homi Dhalla.

What was so outstanding about the poems was the substance conveyed. The poems expressed the instability of the human mind; the corruption in the Indian Government with special reference made to the Mundra case and Krishna Menon. These Parsi poets exercised their freedom of expression with truth and humour, making their indelible mark on the conscience of the readers. I would definitely recommend that we include many such sessions that reflect our culture and heritage in future Congresses.

What impressed me the most?

The fact that our youth, Ervad Marzban Hathiram, Ervad Burzin Unwalla and Pervez Mistry proved to the audience that they are committed to uphold the traditions of our sagacious forefathers as these have been handed down through countless centuries, unaltered. I was impressed that for the first time at a Congress on the soil of North America there was substantial participation of traditionalists compared to previous Congresses.

What surprised me the most?

The most touted Special Event sponsored by FEZANA turned out to be an ordinary event after all.

Homai Mody ...

Mumbai, India

Iwould like to congratulate all those who put in their Herculean efforts whether it was to produce dances and shows or work on awards, sports, essays, the Unity Quilt etc. they were all well done and much enjoyed by all. I am sorry to have to criticize, but you did ask for my impressions and I have to give them to you honestly.

● Too much was happening at the same time and one found one could not even therefore attend half the sessions taking place. Had the program been less overcrowded and too much not happening all at the same time, it would have been more meaningful.

● There was much too much of entertainment and no real serious discussions which at any conference should have been in the reverse.

● Even when serious sessions took place such as the one I chaired, I was surprised to find no proper arrangements for the seating or introduction of the chairperson. I had to make my notes as best I could while sitting with the audience. There was no rapporteur. Normally the notes are compiled by the chairperson with the help of the rapporteur and on the last day all chairpersons not only submit their report but the outcome of their sessions which was totally bypassed.

● Though we got kits, there was not a single presentation paper in it. The role of the chairperson was made even harder therefore as no homework could be done and so the chairperson's comments on a sheet of paper presented for that purpose at the session was hardly a proper evaluation. I was far from happy at the role I played, being used to much more in-depth preparations and a more systematic way of executing it.

● The question answer session with the Mistree brothers, came across as a 'gimmick' and should have no place in a conference. This was felt by many people.

● No real issues of the community were discussed which is in reality the reason why the past six Congresses were held.

● The concentration was really on fun, entertainment and togetherness to bring in the Millennium which was well done.

● There was a lot of unhappiness due to the fact that though all paid the same registration fees, all were not given the opportunity to be in the same hall and witness the actual inauguration, etc. but sat separately and only saw things second hand on the screen.

● Due to the overcrowding and segregation, one could not meet several people or even see where they were. Those whom I had desired to meet at the Congress therefore and discuss serious issues with, I did not meet at all.

● At some sessions there were too few chairs and several people had to either stand or walk out.

The episode of Mr. Jafarey left a bitter taste in my mouth. I am glad that ultimately the Zarathushti way prevailed which is to hear with your own ears and decide for your own self what is right and to be accepted and what is not accepted.

Mahrukh Motafram ...

Brookfield, Wisconsin, USA

The "live and let live" philosophy propounded at the Congress seems to have stuck in my mind for some reason. Is this going to work for us on this continent? The dispute between the Gathas only and the Gathas together with the rituals and traditions concerns me. Which one is correct? I have not read the Gathas in their entirety but I understand their importance. The philosophical aspect of our religion is embedded in this beautiful doctrine. Can we just follow these? Do we need rituals to understand the relevance of the doctrine?

I live my religion every day, all the good thoughts, words and deeds and the rest that goes with it. I could say that I will follow the philosophical path, take the individualistic approach to nurture and keep the fire alive within me. But is that enough? The traditions that we grew up with, together with certain rituals mean so much to me. I want my children to have this piece so that they can be a part of the whole collective Zarathushti community. I do believe we need a combination of both.

Yes, we can live and let live in this country. By being so few wouldn't it be wonderful if we could somehow find a way to come together in a way that we could really reap the benefits of our truly remarkable religion, the way our prophet Zarathushtra intended to. An idealistic picture no doubt, but I believe it is possible.

Farhad Munshi ...

Amherst, Massachusetts, USA

I saw the Congress as a great experience, a fun place to meet old friends and make new ones.

I saw youth and wondered why there was no opportunity for us to be educated and inculcated into what essentially defines a Zarathushti, our rituals and practices.

I saw priests and wondered why there was no session in which common rituals, like the navjote, wedding, jashan, death ceremonies, and the kushti that most Zarathushtis perform, were explained.

I saw four of the six sessions on religion and education on the Gathas and I wondered why none of the speakers related the Gathas to their daily lives. Was it not possible to have something less lofty and closer to the common Zarathushti's heart and life? Why was it not possible to deal with something simple like the importance of rituals and practices in one's life and their continuing relevance in today's world?

I came to the Odyssey looking to learn more about our rituals, their meaning and their significance. I left wondering how many left with more knowledge than that which they brought with them.

Mehraban Oshidari ...

Cupertino, California, USA

I have to say that meeting old friends and making new ones was one of the most important factors.

I have learned through my life (I almost 80 years old) that a good and learned friend is the main source and the best means of acquiring knowledge. Fortunately, this Congress was the focus of learned Zarathushtis from all around the world. The Congress was organized so that it was easy to make familiarity and friendship with new people and also benefit from their valuable speeches about our eternal religion.

There is a proverb in Farsi language that is told thus: "Thousand friends are little, and one enemy is much." This is a real fact, because more and more wise friends help the eager and interested people to become progressive and successful in their life.

There is a poem in Farsi that reads: "The one, who you spend most of your time with him/her, should be more learned than you, in order to increase your wisdom."

Thanks for a very valuable Congress.

COMPLIMENTARY SUBSCRIPTIONS. FEZANA JOURNAL is happy to donate one year's subscription to each North American Zarathushti who has his/her navjote/sedreh-pushhi performed and to each couple announcing their wedding in the Journal. Donations to support this initiative will be deeply appreciated. Credit card accepted. Use the subscription/donation form at the end of this Journal or contact Rustom Kevala, (301) 765-0792, rustom@aol.com.

Aban and Purvez Rustomji ...

Houston, Texas, USA

Twenty-two hundred of us met to fulfill the WZC2000 mission – to learn about our religion, culture and heritage. Our mission was accomplished. We celebrated. We felt the power of knowledge over ignorance, understanding over prejudice, the arm of friendship extended over the continents, willing cooperation, old ways, new ways. For us the greatest value was watching families like ours working together, supporting each other, and yet establishing their own identity in the area of expertise.

Individually, we were vibrant and successful. And together, we were spectacular!

Adi M. Sethna...

New Delhi, India

Iwould like to share the following thoughts with my coreligionists. The excellent program covering such varied fields brought together a large number of Zarathushtis who hungered for belonging to the Zoroastrian fold and seemed committed to taking the community forward on its Odyssey.

The Congress provided an opportunity to youth, many attending such a Congress for the first time, to air their views with informality and openness and to interact with their elders. A realization of the danger of demographic extinction seemed to draw upon the delegates. Greater cultural bonding appeared likely based on a historical heritage. Both these trends, in my opinion, need strengthening.

The real results will accrue when those who pass on their new found experience to their co-religionists back home and put into practice, at the local level, what they learned at this Congress.

Minoo R. Shroff ...

Mumbai, India

Meeting friends and making new ones was one of the most important facets of the Congress. The Congress was exceedingly well organized. The caliber of the contributors was high and offered a fine opportunity for interaction within the Zarathushti global diaspora. The social functions were very entertaining, particularly the rendering by the Zartoshti Orchestra.

Contemporary issues were well presented and debated though not conclusively. I am optimistic about the future of our community. The opening and closing ceremonies were stirring. The closing ceremony in particular and the presentation by the young mobed from Pakistan was a striking finale.

Anahita Sidhwa ...

Coppell, Texas, USA

At the North American Congress in Houston a decade ago, my lasting memory was the feeling of joy in being in a banquet room with 500 other Zarathushtis. That was the first congress I attended. Since then I have attended many others, but after WZC 2000, my over-whelming thoughts remain the same. Yes, I heard many inspiring speakers, heard about lots of worthwhile projects, saw many interesting books, beautiful pictures and movies, enjoyed the pageantry of the entertainment, but the most precious memory remains the togetherness I felt in being a part of this extended family of Zarathushtis.

I was overjoyed by knowing that I was amongst my own, that we are a family like others, with our faults and our blessings, and feeling the ties that bind us. These connections between people may span oceans and decades, but they are strong, not because of intellectual exercises, but because of an essential spark that connects us to our common history and heritage.

Mehrborzin Soroushian ...

San Diego, California, USA

The staging of the largest yet recorded World Zoroastrian Congress by the North American Zarathushtis was clear confirmation of the capabilities mustered by the relatively small but growing Zarathushti community of North America. Despite the logistical challenges of hosting 2300-plus people at the Congress, many of the attendees walked away with a good sense of the event they partook in; and used it as an opportunity to renew friendships and make new Zarathushti acquaintances from across the globe in celebration of the legacy of the man whose vision has inspired us for close to 4 millennia.

The events that unfolded in North America leading to the Congress were even more significant, as the FEZANA member association voting that came about provided proof positive that the mainstream North American Zarathushtis are moderate, pro-human dignity, and against bigotry and racism with the majority opting for inclusion rather than exclusion.

As we chart our path on this continent, let us heed the lesson that we need to revert to the vision of Zarathushtra Spitaman, being that of a universal faith meant for the uplift and salvation of all humanity.

Dinshaw Kaiki Tamboly ...

Mumbai, India

If the Congress were to be described in one word, that word would be *outstanding*. The Zarathushtis of North America have successfully executed the staging of the Seventh World Congress for which all involved deserve accolades.

Over 2300 Zarathushtis attended the Congress which is *far in excess of attendance at any other earlier Congress*. The Zarathushti Orchestra and Daughters of Mashyani were two outstanding eye-moistening interludes. The concurrent sessions arranged during the afternoons proved to be a dilemma for many, not knowing which to attend and which to leave out. It takes all sorts to make this world, and as expected at such an event, there were some moments – thankfully very few – when a handful of individuals, generated more sound and less light.

Well done FEZANA and ZAH! Well done Team Congress. Your act will indeed be a hard one to follow for whichever region that hosts the 8th Congress.

Erach and Siloo Tarapore ...

Lafayette, California, USA

The Houston Congress was truly an international one. It was remarkable that the organizers had appealed to the governments of India and Iran to allow their citizens to come to the US. They had also helped to arrange for funds that would defray travel expenses.

It made one proud to know that such scholarship, such clarity of thought and diction resides within our Zarathushti community. The open panel session with Farrokh and Khojeste Mistree was particularly remarkable. Though perhaps grueling for the panelists, it encouraged enthusiastic audience participation and directly addressed their questions.

The musical talent, the innovative dance routines and the slide shows were a feast. The book exhibition was easily the finest collection of books on Zoroastrianism that we have seen outside India.

Most heart-warming of all was the friendly atmosphere at the Congress. The young adults could sense this too and felt comfortable enough to chat with near strangers till late in the night. We realized that scores, perhaps hundreds of people, must have worked together for years to put this Congress together. Among them, we could observe the great camaraderie that is borne of working together so hard, for so long and with such success. This feeling of warmth pervaded the Congress and added immeasurably to our joy of this experience.

Rustom S. Tirandaz ...

Mumbai, India

I came with great expectations and most were pleasantly fulfilled. Yet, I left with a hollowness in my heart, that we had not acknowledged the need to live our lives as per the laid down tenets of our religion, so essential to help us to grow in the 21st Century. I was disappointed that the North American Zarathushtis failed to recognize the importance of the faith and belief struc-

tures of our forefathers, for which they sacrificed their very beings on the altar of our faith. I was further disappointed that the message that was inadvertently sent out to India was that a muslim was the center stage of the World Zoroastrian Conference and since this was the position taken by the Zarathushtis of the most advanced nation in the world, why do we [in India] continue to obstruct such a seemingly progressive move?

I am sad to say that if we are to survive as a Parsi-Irani Zoroastrian community, a great uphill task awaits the likes of Khojeste who promote Parsi-Irani Zoroastrianism against the cosmopolitization of our religion. Maybe Zoroastrian pluralism advocated by Khojeste, at the conference, is an answer.

Finally, I freely admit that like all things done in the USA, the WZC 2000 was beyond my wildest flights of fancy. The whole show was simply grand and, but for a few minor hiccups, was planned and executed with almost military clockwork and precision. A big thank you to y'all.

Parviz Varjavand ...

San Francisco, California, USA

I was in a corner of the hall, as the jashan was being performed. I closed my eyes and went into some kind of meditation. I felt very good and warm and positive about the ongoing ritual. I felt these mobeds were my trusted elders in a solemn assembly performing a sacred and ancient ritual. I was part of them, and a long history connected me with what they were saying and doing. Goodness and blessings and unity were all around me. I was basking in the warmth of all the good forces that I associate with being a good Mazda Yasni Zartoshti. I wished this feeling to stay and its *mehr* (love) to keep on growing and becoming more and more *afzoon* (increasing).

Then, dark images started dashing into my mind, whispering voices that called these mobeds the leftovers of evil persons who tormented Zarathushtra. The voices called them "mumblers who were ignorant and did not know what they were mumbling." Suspicion suggested that they were leftovers of the cruel *kavis* and blood-thirsty *karpans* and *usigs*, those persons that Zarathushtra despised and hated.

It seemed to me that these were the very same voices that not only whispered with great persuading power in my ears, but also in those of every young person in our community. I did not know what was happening to me. I could not tell which of the voices I should be listening to, which one was speaking the Truth and which telling the Lie? Which message will help me move with serenity into the future and which will hold me back with filthy fear and ugly suspicion? What should I do when I hold the hands of my grandchildren Deanyar, Cyrus, Bijan,

and Mithra? Should I point to the men in white who are praying and say: "These are your friends, they are good persons, feel safe with them, feel blessed with their voices and prayers"? Or should I say: "These men are your enemies, they are evil persons; feel violated by them. They defile the Mazda Yasni teachings and are mumbling *druj*"?

These feelings did happen to me, and they tell a truth about our situation. This is where we are, and this is what we are doing to ourselves. What say you?

Ken and Pam Vincent ...

Houston, Texas, USA

As members of the Houston Interfaith community in general and friends of the Houston Zoroastrian community in particular, we thoroughly enjoyed attending the Congress. It was a pleasure to see so many of our "old" friends and to meet new ones. The spiritual and historical meetings we attended were inspirational and well-prepared. (We elected to remain neutral with regard to the political meetings.) As a writer of comparative religion, Ken was like a "kid in a candy store" when confronted with the variety of offerings and the many rare finds in the Book Fair.

Most of all, we were impressed with the young people whom we found to be articulate and thoughtful individually. As a group, their joy at being together was so palpable that it reassured those of us in the "older generation" that their religion has an optimistic future.

Rati Wadia ...

Mumbai, India

The unique experience of communicating with our fellow Zarathushtis from across the globe has warmed the cockles of my heart.

Ervad Kobad Zarolia ...

Mississauga, Ontario, Canada

The saying that "all things in Texas are bigger and better" is an understatement when we consider the overall success of the WZC 2000. The Congress was not only attended by a record number of Zarathushtis, but it also involved Zarathushtis in the organization of it. Hats off to Dolly Dastoor and Homi Davier and their Team Congress.

For Parsis, Iranis, liberals, moderates and traditionalists alike, this was a time to meet new people, share new ideas, and passionately debate old ones. It was also a time when one bumped into someone one had not seen or spoken to for years. I met a schoolmate of mine after 39 years!

Although the last two years were plagued by power struggles, politics and mindless bickering, the WZC 2000 provides us with a springboard for the future. We must use this as an opportunity to gather under the flag of choice – traditionalist, moderate or liberal and build a future for our family and community. The time for bickering is over. The time to move forward should be our motto for the new century and millennium. ■

One Zarathushtra, Many Zarathushtis ...

[Contd from page 26]

is not born of Zarathushti parents, can he/she call himself a Zarathushti?

● If a person born of Zarathushti parents lives his life according to the teachings of Zarathushtra but does not follow the daily rituals, can he call himself a Zarathushti?

● If a person who is born of Zarathushti parents does not live his life following the teachings of Zarathushtra, but blindly follows the rituals can he call himself a Zarathushti?

Khojeste Mistree and **Farhang Mehr** came together in the next session. Farhang requested Khojeste to speak first. Khojeste amplified the

points he made earlier in the day and culminated this talk with a call to recognize Zarathushti pluralism and to embrace a 'live and let live' philosophy in the interest of harmony within the community.

Farhang Mehr graciously endorsed the points made by Khojeste, in the form of three accords [see page 1] and stated emphatically: "... we should unite against attacking each other publicly." He expounded on doctrine; admonished us to avoid extremes; asked us to wear the sudreh and kushti; asked us to keep rituals that are meaningful; allowed that prayers may be put to music;

stated that the Tower of Silence is the best method of disposal but it is one thing to defend it, and quite another to say that there is no other way; asked us to encourage our children to marry within the community; indicated that Gathas do not prohibit females priests; stated that conversion has bad connotations and that he favors acceptance after examination. Both speakers were warmly received.

The day culminated with Kaemerz Dotiwala chairing a session in which all the speakers formed a panel and answered questions from the floor. EVERY person who wished to ask a question was accommodated. ■

a partisan view of the seventh congress

by Shahriar Shahriari

At the outset, let me state that in my view, Zarathushtra's spiritual teachings have the ultimate goal of enlightening the heart and mind, and freeing the soul and spirit, in a way that every member of the human race can ultimately approach and become one with Ahura Mazda, without any need for segregation, tribal division, or creation of intermediaries between individuals and their Creator.

The Congress. WZC 2000 was the labor of love of hundreds of individuals, who dedicated thousands of hours of work, over a four year period of their lives. They created an event that surpassed any and all praise. Any attempt to describe the event can only be reductionist in nature and will diminish from the holistic experience of the Congress.

I will not attempt to describe the Congress. I will neither praise it, as I will not be able to do it justice, nor will I criticize it, because any criticism can only be a reflection of our community and not the Congress. I will only use the various events of the Congress to reflect upon the state of the Zarathushti community, as we enter the third millennium.

Our community has obviously reached a fork in the road. The advent of the second diaspora and the migration of the Zarathushtis to the West have created both problems and opportunities for us as individuals and as a community. And the Congress was perhaps the turning point of this phenomenon.

The WZC 2000 was a clearing for the acting out of the various ideologies and spiritualities. The politicizing of this event was also another indication of the existence of the various spiritual views of Zoroastrian philosophy.

The struggle. A few of the 'guardians' of the faith, very early on

in the history of the Congress decided to take control and push their agenda. Contrary to much of the pre-Congress publicity, the agenda was not inclusion versus exclusion. That was only the mechanism, the modus operandi of those who controlled the Congress agenda, versus those who wanted to have a different experience.

The real struggle was one between a Sasanian Zoroastrianism, wherein tradition and ritualism was the predominant factor, and man's relation to Ahura Mazda was one of distance that could only be bridged through rites of purity, performed by intermediaries; and a Zarathushtrian Zoroastrianism, wherein Zarathushtra clearly describes to us how our world operates, what is our purpose in life, and how each and every one of us as individuals, and as the human community, can become one with Ahura Mazda.

Congress program. With over 2000 attendees and 150 speakers was too big an event for any one person to follow. At any given time (with the exception of keynote speeches and subsequent plenary sessions), there were a minimum of 5 events taking place simultaneously. At times it was difficult to choose where to be, and made one wish to be able to bi-locate and be in two or more places at the same time.

Tenaz Dubash's video *"In the Footsteps of our Forefathers"*, aired three times by popular demand, recorded the journey of 34 Zarathushti youth from North America back to their original homeland, Iran. Perhaps the frank discussion among the pilgrims, which took place near the end of their journey, was a telling tale as to where the Zarathushtis of North America are taking our faith.

While the adult sessions were highly structured, tightly controlled and filled with speeches and presentations, many of which were aimed at pushing the various agendas, the youth track took a different approach.

They structured their sessions in a way that they would be participative. Most sessions were either workshops or small group discussions, with the aim of getting everyone involved and contributing. They valued every contribution, and attempted to draw upon what was coming through the grassroots. Fear of what might have emerged, it seems, never occurred to the young organizers of this track.

The special event. Then there was the much politicized and publicized FEZANA Special Event. The outcome of 6 months of high profile politicizing, and 4 years of silent and eventually vocal soul struggle of the Zarathushti community in North America. To include or not to include – that was the question.

No matter which side of the argument one stood, very early in the afternoon, it became apparent that in spite of the various efforts of a handful of people, the hall began to fill, as early as two sessions prior to the Event. By the time the historical Event was about to begin, the room was packed with over 1000 people, and about 300-500, I was told, were kept outside due to fire hazard limitations.

Before the speeches of Ervad Kaikhosrow N. Dastoor and Dr. Ali A. Jafarey even began, it was evident that Zarathushtrians present at the Congress were interested in hearing everyone.

Communal soul struggle. The schizophrenic psyche of our community, and the communal soul struggle that we have been going through was most evident in the overall perspective of the Congress program. Starting with a Sasanian view of Zarathushti spirituality during the opening ceremony, and moving on towards displaying the plurality of viewpoints and spiritual beliefs within the community, culminating in devoting most of the last day of

speeches to the topic of "One Zarathushtra, Many Zarathushtis".

I cannot help but ask the motives and the intent of the people behind this way of programming. How much can we separate man from man, and man from God? Do we really need intermediaries to tell us how to relate to others? Do we really need brokers to make us favorable in the eyes of Ahura Mazda? And if the community is moving towards freeing the spirit, should we split the community so that not everyone will be free – that some will still give credence to self-appointed intermediaries and brokers of God?

There were many presumptions and unspoken assumptions in the Congress programming. Many things that have simply been taken for granted, just because they are the way things are. By keeping them that way, they remain unthinkable. And as long as they are unthinkable, they cannot and will not be questioned.

Dr. Farrokh Mistree and his brother, Khojeste Mistree had a dialogue in one session, the intent being the brother from the West would be presenting our dilemmas and soul searching to the brother from the East, seeking answers to very difficult questions that we face.

Well, I suppose that was the honorable and natural course of events, because it is unthinkable for the brother from the East, representing the continuity of tradition and spiritual knowledge, to be anything other than all-knowing. Let me ask the unthinkable question: why is it that the brother from the West needs to be the one asking the questions. Perhaps it would be more appropriate for the brother from the East, who has not had the challenges, experiences or the opportunities of the brother from the West, to be the one asking the questions and opening his horizons.

The soul searching of our community is not limited to Sasanian versus Zarathushtrian Zoroastrianism. It goes deeper than that. It is the struggle of the new seedling to find its way out of the earth, and reach

towards the sun, and become a tree. The seedling may have originated in the old tree, but it is distinct, with its own right to struggle through its own life and challenges.

These 'guardians' of the community have lost their power to determine the course of events, particularly with regards to the affairs of our youth. So as a survival measure and in order to maintain their rule, knowingly or otherwise, they are fragmenting the community. Because for them, it is better to have full control over a smaller but predictable portion of the community, rather than have self-determination with communication and dialogue among all individuals.

They cite religious pluralism as the reason for this so-called 'problem', and 'live and let live' as their altruistic solution. But in reality they promote a split, without dialogue.

However, the reality of pluralism is that there are as many spiritual beliefs as there are individuals on this planet. And ultimately, just as Zarathushtra taught us, every single one of us has the ability and the responsibility to approach and become one with Ahura Mazda.

The distinction we need to make is that we can only make this a reality with the help of our Zarathushtrian and our human brethren. But not through controlling them, nor through alienating them. In short, 'live and let live' is not the same as 'Leave and let live'.

Perhaps it is safe to assume that our Zarathushtrian community in the West has grown up. ■

[Excerpted by Roshan Rivetna. Full article is available from the author at Shahriar@zarathushtra.com.]

Shahriar Shahriari is a popular speaker, author and human imagination consultant, working with both organizations and individuals. He is co-producer of the video *PARADISE*, and author of "*Thus Spake the Real Zarathushtra*", "*1+1=3*" and "*The Z-Factor - Life's Driving Lessons*".

A Gathering of Zarathushtis

By Magdalena Rustomji

An Occasion Poem – in commemoration of the World Zoroastrian Congress
Only some stanzas are published here. Get full poem from mrustomji@houstonisd.org

... **THE CHALLENGE:**

The beginning of this Odyssey is marked!

a time of struggle,
arrows of conflict,
horses of change,
speakers of truths

Challenges are met along the way,
Prophetically embodied in

the name by choice,
Odysseus of the Greeks,
troubled and plagued

Odysseus, synonymous with
turmoil, storm and strife
and search for truth,
and search for home,
and search for light,
and search for justice ...

... **AND NOW :**

From the eye of storms
and clouded skies,
to the light of sacred fires,

We have arrived,
A Gathering of Zarathushtis
Sycophantic before the sacred fire,
in this communal effort

To celebrate, To share
To reflect, To dream
To learn, To listen
To embrace, To hope

To speak, To think, To act

And in this council of Zarathushtis,
In this gathering of humanity,
We walk away with some
good words

and some good thoughts
and some good acts
of what our future is to be

The Zarathushtrian Way
will not be lost, for we are
Promoters of justice

and of the truth
and of the good
and of the best,

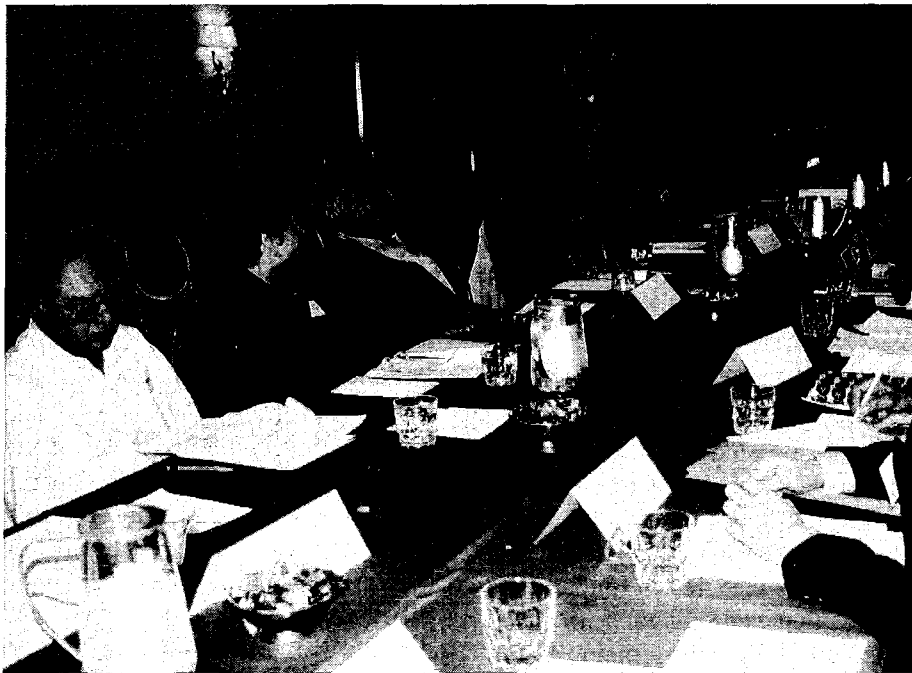
Promoters of the
RIGHTEOUS ORDER!

world apex body

Developments during WZO 2000, towards formation of a representative world apex body for Zarathushtis.

By Roshan Rivetna

Several Meetings of Regional delegates and a panel session during the Congress, were productive in bringing the vital matter of a world apex body to a wider audience. Unfortunately, while several action items have resulted, no resolutions were taken either in the Meetings, or on the floor of the Congress. With an unprecedented number of representatives from every Region and some WZO officials, all gathered under one roof for the Congress – it was surely an opportunity missed.



Er. Godrej Sidhwa of Karachi Parsi Anjuman addressing Meeting of Regions.

With a flurry of activity in the months preceding the Congress, and through five planned and unplanned meetings on the topic during the Congress, the matter of a strong and sound world apex body for Zarathushtis, came once again to the forefront of Regional attention. While the meetings were productive in disseminating information on the background and status of this vital matter to a wide audience of interested persons

and providing a forum for delegates to air their views, it was disappointing that no conclusive resolutions were taken nor convergence reached. Another disappointment was that WZO (World Zoroastrian Organization) chose not to participate in any of the meetings.

No doubt *it was an opportunity missed* – when delegates from every region of the world as well as some WZO officials, were gathered in unprecedented numbers.

While substantial revisions have been made by WZO in its latest (December 2000) draft, in response to concerns raised by FEZANA (via Prof. K. D. Irani) and by other world regions (coordinated by Rohinton Rivetna), some fundamental issues still remain that need to be addressed before its charter can gain general acceptance. Meanwhile, there is a growing sentiment among some regions (primarily India and UK), that the matter has been brewing too long, and if WZO does not show concrete steps to amend the remaining fundamental issues, within a reasonable time-frame, the alternate, however grim, of forming a separate 'Body of Bodies' should be considered.

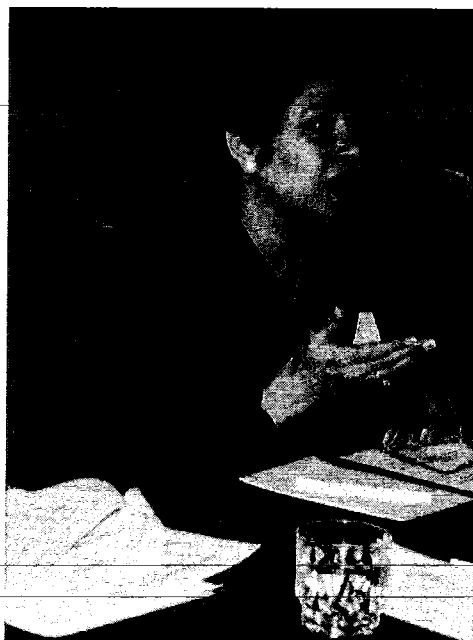
PROGRESS SINCE FEZANA AGM 2000

FEZANA resolution and follow-up. At the FEZANA AGM in May 2000, FEZANA voted to "... accept the April 2000 draft of the WZO Charter and proceed to join WZO's Council of Federations after further modifications, as required by FEZANA Member Associations and other world Regions, are incorporated into it."

President Framroze Patel appointed a committee headed by K. D. Irani (comprised of Dhunmai Dalal and Rustom Kevala and assisted by Firdosh Mehta) to negotiate with WZO on behalf of the FEZANA region; and Rohinton Rivetna would continue to facilitate convergence on the WZO charter from other World Regions.

K. D. Irani met with WZO officials (Rumi Sethna, Adi Davar and Farhang Mehr) and addressed primarily some concerns regarding the independence and integrity of the two Councils defined within WZO (the Council of Individuals and the Council of Federations). In November, he reported that the draft (of October 2000) was now "entirely satisfactory to the concerns of FEZANA" and "favorable in every way to the formation of the World Council of Federations within the body of the WZO ...". He recommended that FEZANA join WZO now.

Thus, in a letter to FEZANA Associations, Framroze wrote: "I have assurance from Rumi Sethna, Chair-



man of WZO, that WZO will review any and every worthwhile suggestion FEZANA has, and will incorporate them in the final draft ..." and requested the Associations to "Please let FEZANA Secretary Arnavaz Sethna know, no later than December 15, 2000, whether your association authorizes FEZANA to join WZO."

Subsequently, this decision was postponed until the FEZANA meeting called expressly for this purpose, in Houston, on December 27th, preceding the Congress [see below].

Meeting of Regions, London, November 2000. Meanwhile, Rohinton Rivetna convened a Meeting of Regions in London on November 25-26. Its stated purpose was "to review, line by line, the Restructured WZO charter of October 2000, and generate a compilation of comments, with the aim of seeking convergence from all Regions and WZO" in time for the Congress. It was unfortunate that WZO did not participate in this meeting.

With input, primarily from ZTFE (president Dorab Mistry, past president Rusi Dalal and others), exhaustive comments from Keki Gandhi (secretary of the Indian Federation), Noshir Sachinwalla (president of the Zoroastrian Association of Australia) and others, the charter was scrutinized line by line, for: consistency and

completeness; to ensure it was workable, viable, properly representative and non-partisan; and to safeguard against manipulation or takeover by any special interest group.

A long, clause by clause list of concerns (some minor and some major) was compiled and presented to WZO. In his report, Rivetna wrote: "... the Council of Federations will operate within the ambit of the restructured WZO, provided these concerns are addressed to the mutual satisfaction of the Regions and WZO."

WZO responded within a few days with a clause by clause response, and a revised, December 2000, draft. While most of the minor issues were addressed the few, fundamental issues, that have plagued its acceptance all along, still remain. A summary of these major outstanding issues is given here [see page 80].

MEETINGS IN HOUSTON, DECEMBER 27, 29, 30 AND 31.

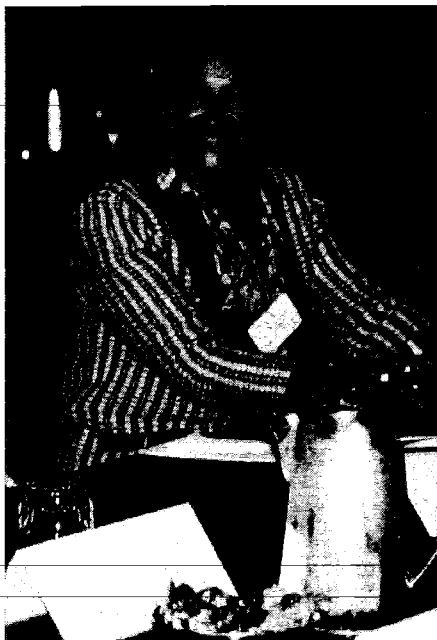
Five meetings were held during the Congress in Houston, including one FEZANA meeting.

Meeting of Regions, December 27, was convened by Rohinton Rivetna with the aim to "seek convergence from all world regions and bring to fruition our One World Body, within the ambit of the Restructured WZO." "We are Coming Together in the

spirit of Cooperation NOT Confrontation," he said, "to seek understanding and convergence, and to solicit the collective wisdom of all stakeholders (all the Regions and WZO) to ensure that we have a sound and viable world body."

Participants included Rohinton Rivetna (facilitator); Farokh Mistree (recorder); Australia (Dinaz Mistry on behalf of Noshir Sachinwalla, president of Zoroastrian Association of Australia and FEZAA, Purvez Kolsawalla, treasurer FEZAA, Sam Kerr, secretary FEZAA, Mehravar Marzbani...); India (BPP trustees Rustom Tirandaz and Minoo Shroff, Khojeste Mistree ...); North America (FEZANA VP Firdosh Mehta, Dhunmai Dalal, Kobad Zanolia, Ness Lakdawalla ...); Pakistan (Karachi Parsi Anjuman trustee Dhun Ghadiali and secretary Godrej Sidhwa); Singapore (Rusi Ghadiali); UK (ZTFE president Dorab Mistry, ex-president Rusi Dalal, secretary Paurushasp P. Jila, Mayor Filly Maravala ...) and several other interested observers.

WZO officials had declined to participate. WZO president Rustom Dubash's position was that "advocating a debate, discussion or session at the WZC in Houston ... is simply counter-productive when a substantive consensus has now been reached by many Zarathushti leaders, individ-



uals and regions, on WZO's April 2000 draft ... neither Rumi [Sethna] nor I, or any other member of WZO's International Board, will participate in any of them." Iran concurred with WZO and did not attend any of the meetings. Dr. Mahyar Ardeshiri wrote: "I fully endorse the October 2000 changes and therefore, on behalf of Iran, I do not agree to holding another meeting on the subject ..."

The meeting, chaired by **Dorab Mistry**, started with Messages of Goodwill from each Region. **Rohinton Rivetna** presented the background and status and gave an analysis of the major issues that remain in the latest (December 2000) WZO draft [see below]. He urged all the Regions to 'Come Together' in a common forum with WZO, to work on resolving the remaining issues, focussing primarily on the Council of Federations; and then, "join WZO's Council of Federations and start functioning without any further delay."

Rivetna reiterated: "We must Come Together under one umbrella under the restructured WZO ... with trust and goodwill on both sides, convergence could be reached ... forming a separate body on ideological lines will have grim consequences: we will create a great schism within the world community – liberal associations and federations will join one body and traditionals the other; and neither will

have the necessary mandate to serve as our world body; moreover it will undermine the hierarchical structure of 'local associations', 'regional federations' and 'world body' that we have taken such pains to develop over the last 30 years. In the end our world community will be the loser, and we will have no united voice in matters of global import in internal and international forums."

Rustom Tirandaz made a powerful call for a separate 'body of bodies'. "Any right thinking individual must realize that any apex body as the name suggests, has to necessarily be an 'organization of organizations' ... one cannot imagine the United Nations comprised of nations as well as individuals ... the apex body has to be absolutely safe-guarded against the vicissitudes of vested interests and ambition and convenient revisions.

In earlier correspondence with Rivetna, **Keki Gandhi** had submitted an astute compilation of "fundamental principles which are being sacrificed at the altar of 'let us make do with what we have in the form of the existing WZO'" ... "In your anxiety to reach a consensus," he wrote, "you have bent yourself backwards to such a great extent that you have totally lost sight of the real goal – of forming a truly representative world body."

UK (ZTFE), Pakistan (KPI) and Australia (Dinaz Mistry) concurred with India that the fundamental issues in

Clockwise, Dhunmai Dalal, Dorab Mistry, Rohinton Rivetna, Russi Ghadiali, Mehravar Marzbani, Rustom Tirandaz.

the WZO charter should be resolved within a reasonable timeframe, failing which, steps should be taken to form a separate Council of Federations. **Khojeste Mistree** urged that the definition of a Zarathushti should be spelled out in the charter and not left ambiguous. Mehravar Marzbani made an impassioned plea for a united apex body for all Zarathushtis.

Firdosh Mehta, having been intimately involved in the world body deliberations for many years, concurred with the explanation of major outstanding issues in the December charter. **Framroze Patel** joined the meeting briefly and thanked WZO for responding to the concerns list in less than 7 days. **Purvez Kolsawalla** and **Russi Ghadiali** concurred with the need to strengthen the WZO charter.

Dhunmai Dalal lent her insights and offered suggestions to make the two Councils within WZO autonomous and independent. **Farrokh Mistree** asked participants to brainstorm on how they would build a world body, if they were to start from scratch.

Alternative courses of action were laid on the table for discussion: (a) Accept the December 2000 charter as is, and join WZO's Council of Federations; (b) With a view to accepting the WZO charter and joining WZO's Council of Federations, continue to resolve the major issues, setting a reasonable time limit to reach convergence; (c) Same as item 'b' but in addition, start functioning informally as Council of Federations without further delay; (d) Same as item 'c' but also register the Council of Federations. No votes were taken; the representatives will seek direction from their constituencies.

FEZANA Meeting, Houston, December 27. Participants at the FEZANA meeting that immediately followed, included FEZANA officers and association delegates, WZO VP Dinshaw Tamboly, some regional representatives and other interested persons.

President **Framroze Patel** thanked K. D. Irani and his committee for conducting the negotiations with WZO. **Prof. Irani** reported that the concerns of FEZANA (focussed primarily on the independence and integrity of the two Councils) had been taken care of by WZO, and recommended that it was now time for FEZANA to 'join WZO'. If and when problems arise, in the charter, they could be resolved, he said, "when goodwill prevails among the parties, but in the absence of goodwill, there does not exist a constitution that will ensure a smooth functioning."

Rohinton Rivetna presented the major concerns still outstanding [see below] and advised that "it would be premature for FEZANA to 'join WZO' now." He further cautioned against unilateral action by any one Region, but hoped, instead, that

FEZANA would continue to drive the work on effectuating a convergence and that "all the Regions, and minimally the four principal Regions of India, Iran, UK and North America, become founding members of WZO's Council of Federations, together. Without representation from at least a majority (preferably all) of the world's regions, no organization would have the mandate to be called a world body."

“ The representative arm and the welfare/charitable arm must be independent and autonomous ... for the former must operate under the rigors, constraints and mandate of their Regional constituencies, whereas the latter must operate free of those constraints, but be accountable ”

Some associations had asked for more time to consider their positions. Framroze announced that no votes would be taken now and further information would be disseminated to the Associations.

Panel Discussions/Meetings, Houston, December 29, 30, 31. There was standing room only at the Panel Session on December 29th, as several delegates from the Meeting of Regions presented their visions and positions on the topic of a world apex body. There was lively participation from the audience and due to the high level of interest in the subject a second Session was arranged, in a larger room, the next day.

A core group of Regional Representatives met at a lunchtime meeting on the 31st, to draw up a course of action. The sentiment was that if WZO does not submit concrete proposals to address the concerns within a reasonable period of time (3 months) first steps would be taken towards the formation of a 'body of bodies'.

A Steering Committee was appointed, with Minoo Shroff as chair, and including Rohinton Rivetna, Dorab Mistry, Firdosh

Mehta and Noshir Sachinwalla, to work with WZO and reach a settlement within the next few months.

MAJOR CONCERNS

By Rohinton M. Rivetna

This is a broad overview of the major concerns remaining in the Restructured WZO Charter of December 2000. This does not include a large number of less substantial issues in regards to consistency, clarity and accuracy of the charter, and some streamlining to ensure its workability.

(1) The two Councils must be independent and autonomous

in terms of objectives, assets and management. The original vision of a representative, apex body, the 'Council of Federations' is now subsumed within the Restructured WZO. WZO's 'Council of Individuals' can be viewed as the welfare and charitable arm of the world wide community. We must ensure, however, that the two sub-bodies are independent and autonomous in regards to their objectives, assets and management so that each can function best within its realm. There is much wisdom in that approach; for the **representative branch** must operate under the rigors, constraints and mandate of their Regional constituencies, whereas the **charitable branch** must operate free of those restraints, but be accountable. Much work remains to be done on the charter to ensure this separation of the 'welfare' and 'representative' arms.

(2) Multiplicity of sub-bodies within WZO.

Besides the two Councils, WZO defines two other sub-bodies with voting rights: the 32-member International Board; and WZO's General Meetings. This results in unnecessary complexity, overlap of objectives and dilution of the purview of the two Councils.

We must ensure that the **International Board** and the **WZO General Meetings** are in place for coordination and administration alone, and all

substantive work is done in one or other of the two Councils.

(3) Proxy voting can lead to manipulation. The WZO charter allows voting by open proxy on the Council of Individuals and at WZO's General Meetings. Proxies are also allowed in establishing the quorum. Also the quorum of 300 (and 100 for adjourned meetings) including proxies, is too low.

This lays us open to manipulation by a few or possible takeover by one or another special-interest group. In matters as substantive as elections, Constitutional Amendments and passing Special Resolutions that could affect our doctrine and practices, we cannot sacrifice integrity of the voting at any cost.

We must eliminate open proxy voting, and replace it with voting by mail ballot. Alternatively, if it is logistically not viable to eliminate proxies, the purview of that sub-body must be reduced to inconsequential, administrative matters.

(3) Voting structure is not properly representative.

On the International Board, voting is by a simple majority of the 32 directors. Thus the 16 directors from the Council of Individuals representing WZO's individual membership, will have an equal voice with 16 members from the Council of Federations, representing a vastly larger global population. And also, each Region will have an equal voice; thus India and Iran together, where 80-90% of Zarathushtis reside, will have only 4 votes, whereas the other regions representing only 10-20% of the world's population, will have 12 votes.

This imbalance has to be corrected by assigning votes roughly proportional to the number of Zarathushtis in the constituency. Alternatively, the purview of the International Board should be limited to coordination and administration only.

If we view the Council of Individuals as the charity and welfare arm and the Council of Federations as the rep-

resentative arm, parity of voting between the two Councils does not stand to reason.

At WZO Meetings, Individual Members of WZO get 1 vote and Federation Members get 1 per 500 persons in their Region; also, Individuals and Federations each have 50% share of votes. Again, this gives a disproportionately high weightage to Individual Members.

Since very substantive matters such as Constitutional Amendments and Special Resolutions are within the purview of WZO meetings, this voting structure will need to be revised to make it more equitable. Alternatively, these substantive matters should be moved to the purview of one or other of the two Councils.

On the Council of Federations, the Regions should have greater flexibility in selecting their representatives. Also, the number of votes assigned to each Region needs to be revisited

“Our objective is to create a strong body that will stand the test of time – a people's body, not a body of people that happen to be in transit today.”

and gain consensual agreement from the Regions.

(4) World body should be non-partisan in definition of a Zarathushti. The latest (December 2000) draft uses the term “professed Zarathushti” as a requirement for Individual Membership and for office-bearers. This is not acceptable to those of the traditional persuasion, who would prefer to see “born and initiated” Zarathushtis in the world body.

In this charter, whichever way we define a Zarathushti – ‘born’, ‘initiated’, ‘born and initiated’, ‘born and/or initiated’, ‘professed’ or some other – this will always be a bone of contention, and will divide the community along orthodox-liberal lines and jeopardize our efforts to jumpstart the world body.

At this critical juncture, as the world body is striving for convergence, we must seek to soften the lines of division, and avoid forcing the issue and locking horns on this sticky point. Over time, as practices evolve, the definitions and solutions will emerge naturally.

We must ensure that our world body remains totally non-partisan. The suggestion offered, therefore, is to leave it as simply “Zarathushti”, “Zarathushti as commonly and generally defined” or “Zarathushti household” or “Zarathushti family” (which would include non-Zarathushti spouses) and not force any definition of the term Zarathushti.

As long as there is a good filtering mechanism, we should have no qualms. On the Council of Federations, there is a natural filter – since each Association/Federation will perform that function as they select their representatives, based on their respective guidelines.

WZO is agreeable to this suggestion; If the Regions disagree, this issue may turn out to be a show-stopper.

THE CALL

To come to convergence on these major issues, as well as to look through the charter once again with a fine tooth comb for accuracy, completeness and consistency, it is imperative that the Regions sit down at a common table with WZO, and work with diligence and mutual trust to arrive at a settlement. Rather than behind-the-scene diplomacy, my sincere plea to all the Regions and to WZO is to set aside personal politics, and commit to such a face-to-face meeting at the earliest possible date, to bring this long-standing matter to fruition.

However difficult it may be, we must learn to focus on the problem at hand and not the people or even the process. After all, our objective is to create a strong body that will stand the test of time – a people's body, not a body of people that happen to be in transit today. ■

background & impressions of the special event

Some perspectives on the contentious FEZANA-sponsored 'special event' in Houston, featuring Ali A. Jafarey and Ervad K. N. Dastoor.

By Roshan Rivetna

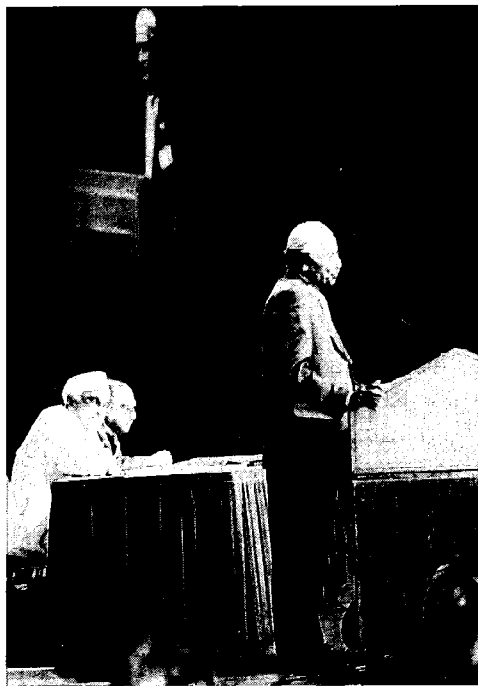
Background of the Special Event

Riding on the coat tails of the 'Principle of Inclusion', 'freedom of speech' and 'democratic principles', 'Zoroastrian-by-choice' **Ali Akbar Jafarey** drew a packed audience of supporters, some dissenters and mostly the 'just curious' at a Special Event on December 30, at the Marriott Hotel in Houston. He shared the podium with **Ervad Kai-khushro N. Dastoor**, proponent of the Ilm-e Khshnoom school of Zoroastrianism, as the two presented their diverse interpretations of a verse from the Gathas [Ys. 30.2].

The event, sponsored and funded by FEZANA and ably chaired by FEZANA vice-president **Firdosh Mehta**, was held outside the aegis of the World Congress, as a compromise solution to a passionate war that raged on the Zarathushti internet, and escalated to resolutions and counter-resolutions by FEZANA associations, embroiling the Congress Executive Board (EB), FEZANA and the Zoroastrian Association of Houston (ZAH).

While the controversy had been simmering for a decade and more, Dr. Jafarey, co-founder of the California-based **Zarathushtrian Assembly (ZA)**, whose mission it is to open the doors of the Zarathushti faith to all who wish to enter, was catapulted into the public eye last year, in the stormy aftermath of the EB's decision to exclude him from the slate of speakers at the Congress.

Voices of protest. Armed with a purported list of 6,000 signatures the traditional lobby, headed in North America by **Ervad Jal Birdy**, President of the North American Mobeds'



Dastoor, Mehta and Jafarey.

Council, and the Traditional Zoroastrian Mazdayasni Association made their case against the inclusion of Ali Jafarey. Opinions from India (the high priests, the Bombay Parsi Panchayet, Khojeste Mistree's *Zoroastrian Studies* and numerous organizations, anjuman and publications) and UK (the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe) supported the protest.

"The act of inviting Ali Jafarey is a step towards endorsement, encouragement and legitimization of his activities," said Birdy, "his conversion-initiation ceremonies pose a danger to our co-religionists living in Islamic countries ... Can you in good conscience allow the life of even one Zarathushti to be put in danger by allowing Mr. Jafarey and his conversion activities to be legitimized at a World Zarathushti Congress?"

The **Karachi Parsi Anjuman** wrote about the "serious consequences": "... in Pakistan, conversion from the Muslim faith to any other faith, is anti-Islam and is covered under the Hudood Ordinance and other Laws, which faces the death penalty."

Traditional activist **Pervin Mistry** wrote about Jafarey's "distortion of our sacred scriptures." "He has suppressed verses from the *Vishtasp Nask*, suppressed evidence from the *Fravardin Yasht* that Asho Zarathushtra was a priest; an entire nask, the *Vendidad* is written off, as are all other nasks; *hoama* is referred to as the 'wisdom-wasting drink'; Gathic words are replaced and misinterpreted ..." According to Birdy, "Jafarey has at one stroke declared that only the Gathas form the true Zarathushti scriptures and the rest of the Avesta is of highly suspect origin. Together with the rest of the Avesta, Mr. Jafarey has got rid of all our rituals and with it our priesthood itself."

BPP trustee **Rustom Tirandaz** wrote: "... Jafarey's position and avowed beliefs are a danger to our community. He has heaved insults on our beliefs and practices. He claims to be the 'Ratu' of his flock, a term reserved only for our Holy Prophet Zarathushtra ... the EB should not give Jafarey any seal of legitimacy ..."

Dorab Mistry, president of ZTFE wrote: "The Managing Committee of ZTFE is in agreement with the sentiments expressed by **Mr. Jamshed Guzder**, President of BPP ... An invitation to Dr. Jafarey to participate in this major Congress should not be extended ... the sensibilities of Zoro-



Dr. Ali A. Jafarey

astrian communities in the UK and Europe as well as in India and the adverse impact on our community in Iran must be considered ...”

Jafarey explains. Dr. Jafarey posted point by point refutations of these allegations on the various Zoroastrian aliases and on the web (at www.zoroastrian.org). He called the perceived danger to co-religionists “a false alarm and a hollow hoax and an insult to all Iranian Zoroastrians ... Are the Iranian Zoroastrians so dull, dumb, deaf and drugged that they cannot realize the supposed danger hanging over their heads for more than a decade? What about the Zoroastrian Representatives in the Islamic Parliament of Iran? What about the Council of Mobeds in Tehran? What about the Council of Iranian Mobeds in North America? What about a seasoned diplomat like Prof. Farhang Mehr, who is incidentally a founder of ZA ...? Are they all asleep ...?”

Jafarey explains “... I perform navjotes of only those who, of their own knowledgeable free will, decide to choose the Good Religion ...” and “no part of the Avesta says that only an ‘ordained priest’ should initiate a candidate.” He goes on to cite numerous verses from the Gathas in support of conversion: “... convert



Ervad K. N. Dastoor

with force of tongue those gone astray” [Ys. 28.5] and “... help us to convert all living men.” [Ys. 32.3].

“What I have never done is hold the Zoroastrian priesthood in contempt ... It is Asho Zarathushtra who condemns the pre-Zarathushtrian priestly order ...” says Jafarey, “The ZA respects all scholars, priest or not ... What it does NOT recognize is the murmuring priest who goes by rote alone and does not know and understand what he recites ... The ZA does not entertain a priestly class. It has proficient persons who officiate at their religious ceremonies.” Jafarey explains that “the title of Ratu is a generic title used for persons of high learning ...” It was not self-imposed, but awarded to him by the ZA in a special ceremony.

While he vehemently denies ever denigrating any scriptures, Dr. Jafarey does uphold that “The only person who speaks directly to us is Zarathushtra through his divinely inspired Gathas” and that all the other parts of the Avesta are “compositions-cum-editions by unnamed pre and post Gathic composers ...”

Dina McIntyre, a Pittsburgh lawyer and one of the seven founder members of the ZA) defends the changes in rituals and ceremonies: “No one is trying to destroy our past. Dr.

Jafarey’s writings demonstrate that there is much in our past that he loves and respects ... If an idea or practice is relevant to a person’s life today, that person will keep that idea or practice alive. If it is not relevant to the person, that person will disregard it ...”

The EB Decision. At its meeting on July 7, 2000, the EB (whose members comprise four from FEZANA and four from ZAH) mostly in deference to the protests, declined to accept Dr. Jafarey among the slate of speakers presented by Mehrborzin Soroushian, one of the four Congress Program Track chairs.

The only member of the EB who (later) spoke out strongly in favor of inclusion was **Dr. Ardeshir Anoshiravani**: “Eliminating Dr. Jafarey’s name from the roster of speakers of this congress will be detrimental to this Congress, to the future of our religion and the Constitution of the United States.” Among the other members of the EB, FEZANA representatives **Dolly Dastoor** voted in favor of inclusion, **Framroze Patel** abstained and **Jimmy Mistry** voted “No”. All four of the ZAH representatives – **Homi Davier**, **Yasmin Pavri**, **Sarosh Manekshaw** and **Sarosh Collector** – voted “No”.)

““ The act of inviting Ali Jafarey is a step towards endorsement, encouragement and legitimization of his activities ... ””

The Principle of Inclusion. This precipitated a flurry of emails on the ‘zoroastrians@listbot.com’ and other newsgroups on the internet. The EB, FEZANA and the establishment in India and UK went through the wringer.

In a letter to FEZANA President Framroze Patel, **Mehr Soroushian** wrote: “FEZANA cannot afford having its representatives violate the WZC 2000 Operating Guidelines that clearly endorse the inclusion of all people ... FEZANA’s constituents

are here and not in Mumbai ...” He put out a Call for Action on the internet: “Our public officials must realize the constituents they need to plan for are the youth of North America whose value system is based on liberty and justice for all as enshrined in the constitution of the USA ...”

The eight-member WZC 2000 *Youth Committee* solidly supported Soroushian: “The By Laws and Constitution of FEZANA, as well as the Operating Guidelines of WZC 2000, make it undeniably clear that no FEZANA representative can vote against the Policy of Inclusion. We agree with Dr. Soroushian that if the FEZANA representatives do not abide by these guidelines, then they should be removed and replaced.”

Shahriar Shahriari, Meher Amalsad, McIntyre, Shahrokh Mehta, Yezdi Rustomji, Maneck Daroowalla, several recently initiated members of ZA, and others campaigned for Inclusion on the internet. **Rustomji**, decrying the EB for “arrogantly ignoring the WZC 2000 Rules”, “misusing authority” and “instigating and encouraging factionalism” announced he would go on a hunger strike on October 8. **Shahrokh Mehta** wrote: “We live in the United States. Our Declaration of Independence gives us fundamental rights based on ‘All Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and pursuit of Happiness.’”

The sentiments were formalized in a motion by **Farshid Bakhtiari**, president of New York’s Iranian Zoroastrian Association (IZA) and seconded by **Mehran Khadivi**, president ZAMWI (Washington DC): “The action of the EB ... was a violation of the Principle of Inclusion specified in the Operating Guidelines ... Compliance is not optional. Any FEZANA representative of the EB who ... fails to vote in accordance with this directive is requested to resign, or ... shall be removed.”

Gev Nentin, president of ZAGNY, the Zoroastrian Association of New York, seconded by **Nasswan Dossab-**

hoy, president of the Boston Association (ZAGBA) offered another motion asking FEZANA associations to vote on whether “Dr. Jafarey should be invited to speak at the Congress” or not; and requiring the FEZANA representatives on the EB to abide by the results.

“ ... no FEZANA representative can vote against the Policy of Inclusion ... if they do not abide by these guidelines, they should be removed and replaced. ”

In his inimitable way, **Meher Amalsad**, in a letter entitled “Emotions with Z-Motions” campaigned for both motions: “These motions are going to create Breakthroughs not Breakdowns in our community. They will give our community a Break and not Break the community ... Let us stop dodging and start lodging responsibility ...”

Results of Motions. FEZANA associations voted in favor of both motions. On October 3, FEZANA president Framroze Patel requested all four FEZANA representatives on the EB to “abide by the wishes of FEZANA Members that Dr. Jafarey should be invited to speak at the Congress.”

While this mandate from the FEZANA associations was binding on the four FEZANA representatives, it was not, on the four ZAH representatives. They stood firm on their “No” vote and the EB as a whole maintained their original exclusionary stance.

On October 18, Framroze Patel announced a “compromise that has come about through the willingness of all parties to give a little and at the same time maintain their core beliefs.” FEZANA would “sponsor a Special Session” with Dr. Jafarey and Ervad K. N. Dastoor as speakers (the latter, an erudite Ilm-e Khshnoomist, had also been excluded from the slate of speakers at the Congress) and that FEZANA would have “sole jurisdic-

tion over the format and content of the event.” Beyond making a hall available at the Congress venue, the EB would have no role in it.

And thus FEZANA committed to organize the ‘Special Event’. Threatened boycotts of the Congress by the liberals were withdrawn. Rustomji ended his fast.

Fresh Charges. Meanwhile the traditionalists unearthed discrepancies in Dr. Jafarey’s published biographical data and academic qualifications. Birdy publicized a letter from the Registrar of the University of Karachi, stating: “... neither Mr. Ali A. Jafarey has been enrolled for Ph.D. nor has he been granted Ph.D. degree in Persian Language and Persian Literature.” Birdy further produced a copy of a birth certificate stating that Jafarey was born in 1921 in Karachi, and not in Kerman as stated in his published biodata.

“Whether Mr. Jafarey holds a Ph.D. from Karachi University in Persian Literature or any other subject is not at issue here,” wrote Birdy, “What is important is that, if he has been deceiving the community for all these years, we cannot knowingly condone this behavior...”

Copies of these documents were distributed by protesters at the Event. No public explanation has been given to date by Dr. Jafarey.

The Event. Eventually, the Event took place. To this author, the impact of the Event was not so much in the presentations by the two speakers (which were both quite tame, after all the hype) but in the circus outside the hall.

It was most distressing, and a tragic commentary on our community to see 5 or 6 armed guards in uniform, with guns, ready for action, guarding the entrance doors. Do we Zarathushtis need armed guards at our gatherings? To defend against our own? This sight to me, was easily the most disturbing of my 6 days in Houston.

Lets see what others thought of this episode in our history.

Impressions of the 'Special Event'

What folks had to say about this episode in our history

Yezdi and Magdalena Rustomji ...

Houston, Texas

The Event happened in spite of efforts by some to undermine it, even at the eleventh hour. Over 1200 persons were in the hall with 300 – 500 people outside, wanting to go in. Firdosh Mehta chaired the event in a praiseworthy manner. Dr. Farhang Mehr gave moving introductory remarks. Ervad K. N. Dastoor made his 30-min. presentation. Dr. Jafarey was then introduced, receiving a passionate standing ovation, before and after his 30-min. presentation. While the two speakers widely

“ ... will go down as a great event in our history. ”

disagreed on the interpretations of Yasna 30.2, both agreed that freedom of speech shall not be curtailed.

This Special Event will go down as a great event in our history. We will be given high marks for coming to terms with our collective conscience and for facilitating freedom of choice as the Zarathushti way. The Righteous Order, which Dr. K. D. Irani speaks about, was the order of the day. The concept of Asha was put into action thus: (a) Two Program Tracks had the integrity to be inclusive with speakers; (b) Zarathushti individuals had the courage to bring issues to the community; (c) North American Zarathushti Associations acted in accordance with Asha; (d) FEZANA responsibly abided by the Zarathushti community's mandate; and (e) FEZANA worked diligently and with integrity to bring about the event.

This Event, then, is the beginning of, in Shahriar Shahriari's words, the 'Zarathushtrian Zoroastrianism'. We will now continue on this path of righteousness and justice, individually and communally. We will pursue, in thought, word and deed, values grounded in Asha. We will now use the lessons and the experience of the Special Event for the welfare of our community, always acting in Truth!

Arman Arienne ...

California

Dr. Jafarey, a Zarathushti fundamentalist, produced 52 instances from the Gathas and other parts of the Avesta to prove that the word 'choose' or 'choice' in the Avestan texts means the choice of religion through comparative study. He said the Zarathushti religion is the first missionary religion in history. The missionary work was accomplished only through peaceful enlightening of the people. Force was never used.

Although the winner of this so-called debate was obvious, the first place should really go to our Zarathushti

community. While the two speakers were interpreting Yasna 30.2 in words, our community was practicing it in deed. Many hundreds showed up to "hear the best with their own ears and ponder with a bright mind", so that each person has a chance to choose the better mentality.

Ervad Jal N. Birdy ...

Corona, California

This was one event that should never have occurred. Unlike the Houston half of the Congress EB, who had the backbone to stand firm in deference to world opinion, FEZANA's lack of leadership used the prop of their inadequate voting system as an excuse to felicitate a fraud. It was somewhat gratifying to know that the 'Event' was kept outside of the Congress agenda.

In contrast to his adversary on the podium, Ervad Kai-khushro Dastoor quite convincingly showed the audience the utter folly of interpreting Gatha Ys. 30.2 as a license to do anything one pleased using one's thoroughly inadequate, but much touted, *Vohu Manah*. He demonstrated the vast disparity existing between interpretations of the Gathas and the senselessness of considering the Gathas alone as the only true Zarathushti scripture based on specious interpretations. During question time Ervad Dastoor offered to convert members of the audience to Islam by showing them the beauty of that faith, implying thereby the inappropriateness of converting from one's religion of birth to another.

“ This was one event that should never have occurred. ”

Ervad Dastoor clearly carried the evening by his delivery and well-reasoned thoughts. Speakers who deceive their unsuspecting audiences in the guise of scholarship do not qualify for 'Inclusion'; it is hoped they will be kept firmly at bay in future congresses.

Parviz Varjavand ...

San Carlos, California

For a short time, history can be written as if it was those who wanted to preserve their ancient heritage that were the aggressors against those who wanted to push forward in the name of modernity. This however will be proven wrong, but usually after the damage has been done. History will show in the long run that it was Pizarro and Cortez who committed crimes by destroying the customs, rituals and traditions of the Incas and the Mayas and not the other way around.

Modernity can destroy the past a lot faster than the past can destroy modernity. A people can keep a sacred flame burning with prayers and dedications for a thousand years while it will take half an hour to put that flame out

““ Modernity can destroy the past a lot faster than the past can destroy modernity. ””

and replace it with a gas pilot in the name of progress. A bulldozer can rip apart in half an hour, rain forest land that took millions of years to grow, all in the name of progress and modernity too.

May God grant us the wisdom not to hurt others uselessly.

M. P. Bhandara ...

Karachi, Pakistan

The event was a huge success. It was attended by a greater number of delegates than any other meeting. The “Purist” point of view was represented by Ervad K. N. Dastoor and the focus of the debate was on Yasna 30.2. I was very impressed with the moderation, scholarship and humanism of both speakers. My earlier impression that Dr. Jafarey had been treated unfairly by the Congress organizers was confirmed at this debate ...

As in most world religions it is not that the religion must come to terms with modern times but to save religion from those who believe in it literally as if it were a manual for a repair of a refrigerator. Our ‘literal’ mechanics love to pick at random words and sentences and work them to death. Like all faiths we too have our conservatives and progressives battling out on the torso of the 21st century.

The issues that most concern Zoroastrians today relate to marriages outside the faith, disposal of the dead, the continuance of ritual inherited by the Parsis from Hindu customs and finally but not least the claims of those who wish to adopt the Zoroastrian faith irrespective of race and creed out of belief in its divine mission ...

The construct of a neutral high minded Zoroastrian Supreme Council will elevate the Zoroastrian debate to a dignified high ground – from the noisy platform it has become. The formation of such a Council may seem a tall order for a community that likes to bicker on every nut and bolt. But remember the downside is likely to be a split in the Zoroastrian church between Parsicentric Zoroastrian beliefs and those who wish to open the doors of the faith to a revived destiny.

Furhok K. Tangree ...

La Roche sur Furon, France

Surely, human rights, applicable to all by law demand a recognition of responsibility by all. Until this is installed as an aspect of religiously correct contemporary dogma, it could be a recipe for the decline of our Zoroastrian community into an uncaring society seeking compensation for natural human frailties and accident, with which we are all from time to time beset.

Denying authorized access to Dr. Ali Jafarey is akin to totalitarian constitution, one that is alien to a quintessentially Zoroastrian power: freedom of choice, the cardinal doctrine and the greatest of the principles of Zarathushtra that set out to bring the light of understanding into the darkness by making alive the truth of all religions.

Franey Nariman Irani ...

Karachi, Pakistan and London, UK

Isuggest that at future congresses, delegates be given the opportunity to hear all scholars of our religion – those with orthodox and/or liberal views, followed by enlightened discussion.

““ Censorship and dogma will turn away our young. ””

Censorship and dogma will turn away our young who are growing up in a world where information is easily available through libraries or the Internet.

The Ali Jafarey episode sent a clear message to the WZC 2000 organizers. The delegates voted with their feet. Though not formally admitted into the Congress agenda, a simple topic analyzing a Gatha verse drew more crowds than any other similar session. Ali Jafarey was dignified, learned and uncontroversial on the selected topic, and being so, he impressed the audience and by default discredited his opponents.

Khojeste Mistree ...

Mumbai, India [Excerpted from Ushta, a Zoroastrian Studies publication]

This is a dangerous phenomenon that North Americans are brewing on their own home ground. By inviting Jafarey, FEZANA is offering to the youth of North America, a role model which is antithetical to everything that is representative of our faith on two very important grounds: (a) Jafarey has disfigured and changed the prayers in the Khordeh Avesta. By accepting him as a speaker, FEZANA has set the seal on the right of permitting an individual to distort and change our sacred texts. (b) Jafarey has been academically dishonest by claiming to hold a Ph.D. degree from Karachi University. The University has denied awarding a degree to Ali Jafarey. By accepting him, FEZANA is promoting the Untruth.

On these grounds alone, an un-Zoroastrian precedent has been set by FEZANA ... Whatever be the political compulsions of the situation, should this be the path to take?

Let us take the Principle of Inclusion, so well touted by these bleeding heart liberals, to its natural conclusion. Since the Jafareyists have been given backdoor acceptance, their next logical demand will be for FEZANA membership. I'm sure FEZANA will, with its liberal 'let's not displease anyone' philosophy, go out of its way

“ ... By inviting Jafarey, FEZANA is offering the youth of North America a role model that is antithetical to everything that is representative of our faith ... ”

to accept them... and we could have Jafarey voted in as president by the North Americans who are so insistent about inclusion.

Do the Parsis who support Ali Jafarey, recognize that the Jafarey group will proceed without scruples, to divide the Zoroastrians of Iranian origin from the Parsis of India? Maneckji Hataria, Ardeshir Reporter, the Panday family, Dinshaw Petit, Keikhosrow Shahrokh, and a host of other Zoroastrians did everything to bring the Iranians and Parsis together at a time when Iranian Zoroastrians were ruthlessly persecuted by the Qajars in Iran. Their efforts are now being consigned to the dustbin of history, by the promotion of Jafareyism.

And a summation by Rohinton Rivetna ...

Hinsdale, Illinois

History will undoubtedly record the turmoil and the anguish that we faced this year in regards to inclusion or not of Ali Jafarey as an invited speaker at the Congress. Did our actions in this recent episode advance our goals (our common goals being perpetuating the religion of Zarathushtra as well as our own spiritual enhancement)? Did it make us proud? What kind of report card will history give us?

How should we gauge this watershed event in terms of cost and benefit – the intellectual effort, countless hours spent and the heavy toll in relationships severed? If nothing else, we must learn from the lessons it teaches us, so that our community moves forward with the knowledge gained and the efforts of those that agonized in its throes for so many months will not have been in vain.

We realize, of course, that the real issue here is not the validity of the Principle of Inclusion. That, like apple pie

and motherhood, can hardly be denied. The real issue here, is the acceptance (or not) of the new Zarathushti identity and ideology that Dr. Jafarey represents. Certainly, it is a long leap of faith to assume that the vote for Inclusion implies an endorsement and acceptance of the latter.

As a world community, we are now facing a shift in paradigm with various new 'neo-Zarathushti' identities and ideologies emerging – 'Zarathushtis-by-choice' such as Dr. Jafarey and his followers, as well as those in Central Asia who claim Zarathushti heritage.

Change, of course is inevitable, but cannot be hurried. And its acceptance cannot be coerced. We should not get ahead of ourselves in the evolutionary process.

Devout Zarathushtis of the traditional persuasion anguish deeply over the rationalization of their faith by the neo-Zarathushtis, founded in reason and intellect, rather than belief and heritage; a faith preserved by their ancestors, in exclusion, for centuries, with untold sacrifices.

“ ... The real issue is not the validity of the Principle of Inclusion – that, like apple pie and motherhood, can hardly be denied. The real issue here is the acceptance (or not) of the new Zarathushti identity and ideology that Dr. Jafarey represents. ”

Such strong and deeply rooted beliefs and religious convictions cannot be changed overnight, and certainly not with a vote, or in the callous, uncontrolled medium of the internet. Democratic principles do not necessarily apply.

We should, rather, set up our infrastructures, to anticipate and prepare for such paradigm shifts before they occur, so our community is not always in the 'fire-fighting' mode, and we can become masters of our fate and not victims of our destiny.

Free, open and frequent dialog on this matter, in a non-confrontational setting, possibly at a seminar with all stakeholders present, may be a good first step. All must commit to exercise equanimity, forbearance, compassion and respect. Gradually, over a period of time, through proper understanding and appreciation of various positions, our thinking clarifies, understanding deepens, solutions emerge, and the transformation occurs, imperceptibly, in a natural manner.

But we must take the first steps, now. ■

two men of VISION

By Roshan Rivetna

The Zartoshty brothers, Mehraban and Faridoon, exemplify the Zarathushti values of industry and charity



"In business, our success was mainly due to hard work (sometimes 15 to 18 hours a day) with sincerity, honesty and our unbreakable family unity," says **Mehraban Zartoshty**, whose name today, along with his late elder brother **Faridoon Zartoshty**, is synonymous with philanthropy – be it scholarships for students, endowing a chair at London University's prestigious SOAS, helping build darbe mehrs in the west, or giving new life to a sick child.

"With the grace of God and our sincere efforts, hand in hand and heart to heart, my brother and I succeeded in building a huge business, but we never forgot the less fortunate and our duty towards our community."

"One of the main principles of our business, taught by our father, was to always set aside a portion of our income in a separate account, a private family trust, to be used for charity."

"You will be surprised to know what a large amount soon accumulated – as drop by drop makes an ocean."

"So we worked hard together, earned together and never forgot our father's advice. We feel privileged today, to be able to fulfill our duty to our community."

Early years. Mehraban was born into a mobed family in Yazd, Iran. He did his primary education in Farsi along with his religious education, in Yazd.

At the age of 14 or 15 he completed his navar/martab training and examination and, with a grand celebration, became an officially ordained mobed.

At 16, Mehraban went to Bombay to join his father's business, which was managed, single-handed by his elder brother Faridoon, since their father had passed away. On the advice of his brother, he continued his education and completed 2 years at Elphinstone College. However, with the outbreak of World War II, he had to leave college and join the business.

Mehraban returned to Iran in 1946 and married Miss Paridokht, daughter of Mobed Rostam Mawandad. He brought his bride with him back to Bombay for a year and then went together to New York where he took a course in Business Administration as well as doing some business. After three years in the US, he returned to Iran in 1951, with his wife and two American-born children Homa and Vida.

Building a business. With more experience now, more knowledge and a wider view, Mehraban and Faridoon developed an import-export business and manufacturing of plastic products. In less than 20 years, they built a huge business.

Move to America. After the revolution of 1979, Mehraban joined his children in London, and now lives in Vancouver and San Diego. With the cooperation of other Iranian mobeds,

Mehraban established the "Council of Iranian Mobeds of North America" and served as its president for ten years, until he stepped down last year.

Message to youth. "I hope that our youth, in whatever state of life or business they may be, follow the advice of my father and always set aside a percentage for charity, and see the enjoyable results" said Mehraban, as he received, jointly with late brother Faridoon, the *World Zarathushti Award for Humanitarian Service and Philanthropy* [see page 42] at the Seventh World Congress in December 2000, "To get an award is once in a lifetime; but think of the daily joy and inner happiness you get every time you help a deserving student and get news of his success, or a sick person is saved from a critical medical condition. That is the real reward. That is real happiness."

To Mehraban, most important is unity of the community: "Our community is rich in every walk of life – doctors, lawyers, scholars, architects, artists, business – we have so many talented people. What we need now is unity and understanding, instead of criticizing each other. We should especially respect and help our own scholars and our students and make our community strong and self-sufficient, instead of stretching our hand to outsiders, though we should respect them for their services. ■

[Also see page 113]



✧ Youthfully Speaking ✧

"The mouthpiece for the next generation"

"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 THE 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!"

Youthfully Speaking ~Z-Editors~

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Laguna Niguel, CA*

*Nenshad Bardiowalla
Nenshad@yahoo.com
San Mateo, CA*

Feel free to submit photos, articles, or any comments you just might have to one of the co-editors. We love to hear from you!!

"Youth Talk"

by: Nikan Khatibi

In every issue of Youthfully Speaking, a question will be asked to the Zarathushti youth concerning topics and issues in our religion. This time's question is...

Do you, as a youth, believe you are making a difference in your Zarathushti community? If not why do you think you are not?

I believe that I am making a difference in my Zarathushti community, because I have begun to look into my faith, what it means and so on. Everything I know, I know by the Grace of God. And not until recently, I have begun attending religious meetings, which gives me a very good synopsis and understanding of my religion.

*Hufrid Avari
Los Angeles, CA*

In Massachusetts where I live there aren't many Zarathushtis, but I can tell I am being a good Zarathushti in my community. This is because I make the effort to spread the culture and let people know what the religion of Zarathusht is all about. I love educating my classmates and teachers about this religion. At a young age everyone is suprised that I am very interested and eager to learn about my religion. It's something to be very proud of. I have lots of faith that the religion of Zarathusht will continue to spread and continue to be one of the oldest religions ever.

*Negeen Yazdani
Boston, MA*



"Youth Talk" continue...



Not enough to really matter. As a youth I feel that the elder members of the community do not have enough trust in us to give us any real responsibilities. For instance, at the congress, they might give us a few panels to participate in, but they are the less important topic and do not let us voice our opinion in the more controversial topics. We are the future of the religion, why shouldn't we be allowed to be as involved as the older generations.

Viraf Soroushian
San Diego, CA

As a youth I recognize some of the needs of our community. I have been active in my youth group for the last three years, and can only hope that in some way I have helped the youth bond with each other, forming a feeling of community unity. It is this feeling of one for all and all for one that I believe will help keep our religion prospering way beyond the year 3000A.D.

Veera Sidhwa
Sugarland, Texas

The answer to your question is yes. I do my best to attend functions and different ceremonies going on in the Dar-be-meher. I understand that simply going to the functions is not enough. But to me, just doing this, is making a big difference in the community because it shows that I am still interested and fully support my religion. Though my time is very limited, I feel a sense of obligation to attend; an obligation that I enjoy.

Sanaz Khodavandi
Washington D.C.

Do you have questions concerning the religion?

Favorite websites for this issue

- World Zarathushti Directory:

<http://www.wzdir.com>

I find this site to be one of the quickest ways to find another Zarathushti. While you are there, add yourself to the directory.

- Vohuman.org

<http://www.vohuman.org>

Definitely one of my favorite educational websites. It even has the latest news concerning the religion.

- Shahnameh Society

<http://www.shahnameh.com/>

Want to hear more stories from the Shahnameh? Be sure to check this site out.

Do you have pictures of Zarathushti youth gatherings in your area?

We want your help! Be sure to email one of the editors and let us know who you are and what city you belong to. We'll be waiting!!



~Nikan's View~



The religion of Zarathushtra has been around for thousands of years. It amazes me to think that after such struggles our religion has gone thorough, how today, it can still exist. Our ancestors have kept this religion alive generation after generation, in hopes of finishing what Zarathushtra started many years ago. Can it be after so much hard work and dedication that our ancestors endured, that our religion can slip away because the newer generations of Zarathushti youth simply do not have interest any more?

More than anything else, I would love to see my religion come together, grow, and prosper in the future. But how can all these things come true, when the next generation of youth decides not to make a difference. I'm simply asking a little bit from each and every one of you youth out there. Go out, and make a difference in your Zarathushti community.



Attend the local functions and learn what they are all about. Do your best to help out at the functions and even co-organize it with others. Organize a dance or skit for the event and do your very best to bring your other Zarathushti friends with you. Another way to get involved is by joining the youth group in your area. The best way to get involved in your community and have a whole lot of fun is through your local youth group. Go on small camping trips, plan a dance at the center, or simply hang out together once a month talking about aspects of the religion that interests you. We are the next generation of Zarathushtis. If we do not take responsibility for our religion, then who will? It is our duty as the next generation of Zarathushtis to preserve this religion and therefore make ourselves an active part of it. Because if we don't take responsibility, I'm afraid we can only read about our religion in the future. So as of today, make an effort to participate in your community and especially your local youth group. Because waiting until tomorrow can be too late for our religion.





Never Can Say Goodbye – Part II

By: Nenshad D. Bardoliwalla



The tragedy of early and seemingly unjust deaths has haunted me since the day that another Mrs. Gandhi, who was especially dear to me, passed away in October 1995. For every reasonable, rational response that anyone, especially my parents, provided me, I could not comprehend how the just and merciful god, Ahura Mazda, could possibly allow such a good woman to die so close to her 50th birthday, when she had two young children and had already suffered through the premature and sudden death of her own husband a few years before. Here was another woman of impeccable character, incredible strength, and extremely generous of her time to her community, her neighbors, her school district, and anyone else who asked her. Yet, in spite of her indisputable and innumerable good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, the ravages of cancer destroyed her far quicker than anyone could have anticipated. Why? "It was just her time." "The ways of the Lord are mysterious." "We are not meant to know God's plans." "Her body may be gone, but her soul will live on forever." All of these kinds of "reasons" were offered as justifications of these untimely, unjust deaths. But shouldn't events like these lead us to question the true nature, or even existence, of divinity? For was it not just a century ago that the power of flight belonged only to birds through the design of the Lord? The force of the Earth's gravity irrefutably inescapable by Ahura Mazda's divine will? The boundary between space and time as clear as that between God's gift of life and death itself? It seems as if the story of human cultural evolution seems to contain a fascinating subplot, or perhaps the only plot, of how, as our understanding of the universe and our place in it has increased, the explanatory coherence that our conception of God and divinity seems to provide has been reduced dramatically. Few scholars would disagree that religion has begun to play an increasingly smaller roles in people's lives over the last few centuries. I would venture to assert that many of the youth's faith in our religion is not nearly as strong as that of their parents, or of their grand parents. Many of us revel in the rich cultural traditions and noble values transmitted by our ancestors...but can we really say that about the teaching of the religion itself? Sure, some of us know our prayers, others of us faithfully tie our kusti's every day, and a few of us even translate Pahlavi to English for some mirth on a lonely Saturday night. But how many of us can really, truly, honestly say that we really believe in the words of Zarathushtra? And before you nod yes without so much as pondering my question, ask yourself another question. Why? Why do you believe? Because you were brought up to believe? Because you never thought to question those beliefs? Because the possibility of those beliefs being false is too frightening to bear?

As I end this article, I hope you will spend a few moments to really contemplate whether or not our religion provides the answers to the questions that you are usually afraid to think about. Maybe it does and maybe it doesn't. Regardless of your answer, I suspect that the journey that you will take to arrive at your conclusions may be worth more than the final answer itself.





Bringing back memories from WZC 2000...



By: Nikan Khatibi

This past winter break, I had the opportunity, just like the other thousands of Zarathushtis, to experience one of the biggest and best congresses ever, the World Zoroastrian Congress 2000 in Houston, Texas. The atmosphere there was always on the go. Things were taking place left and right, and speaking on behalf of the youth, it was definitely a time to look back on. Below, I have handpicked a couple of pictures to bring back memories for those of you who attended. And for those of you who were not able to make it, hope to see you there the next time. Well, here we go!!



Pictured above is a group of Zarathushtis who I know are definitely looking back at the good times they had at the congress. But besides all the fun and enjoyment of making new friends and seeing old ones, the congress brought each one of the attendants a better understanding of what it truly means to be Zarathushti.





Pictured above are the finalist for the Zarathushti Sport Olympics that took place prior to the congress. It simply shows that Californians are the most athletic because both teams came from Southern California. Top Row: Team Goodfellas who came in first; Bottom Row: Team Lakers who came in second. Way to go Californians!



And finally, pictured above are a group of Zarathushti youth who can definitely touch the crowd with their beautiful voices. The Gatha Group presented a wonderful performance at the Congress that made this special event just right.

READERS' FORUM

This column is a forum to present information and opinions. Letters (under 500 words) may be submitted to the Editor. The Journal reserves the right to edit all materials for clarity and space.

On past issues ...

Heartiest congratulation on your article "Interlude in South Africa" [Fall 2000]. In humility, it has given me great satisfaction at having contributed in a small measure with the data for it. Your article has put Zarathushti South Africans on the world map. A giant **THANK YOU!**

Dr. Dara Randeria

Durban, South Africa

I have just begun reading your Millennium issue. It is a blockbuster which will take me a while to get through, but I think the effort you folks put into it is super!

Congratulations on a fantastic effort.

Zenobia Turnbull

Burnaby, British Columbia

I was delighted to see the article about "Parsis Honored on Stamps" in your Commemorative issue and sincerely thank you for the credit line. It has come out really well – an issue to be cherished. Congratulations!

Prakash Mody

North York, Ontario

Thank you very much for the very fine Millennium issue. I would like to express my gratitude and my admiration for this very well planned, thoughtful and handsome production.

Mary Boyce

London, UK

Many thanks for your Millennium issue. Congratulations on a job well done – it is informative and classy.

Sam Bhada

New York, New York

The Millennium Issue of FEZANA Journal receives an A+ mark. This Journal has improved with every new issue. This is what we need as a community in the West.

Jamshid Varza

Palo Alto, California

Congratulations again for another excellent issue, as usual. Very few may realize what a lot of work goes into it ... I loved Roshan Rivetna's editorial on being a "Parsi-Indian-Iranian-North-American-Zarathushti" [Spring 1999]. I read it twice! She is very right!

Silloo Mehta

Cypress, California

Request from Russia

We thank you from Avestan Republican Byelorussian Association for your remarkable magazine, which is of huge help for us. We translated articles from it into Russian for education of our people.

Unfortunately, we cannot pay the high subscription, as the average wages in our country is about \$40 per one month. If it is possible for free-of-charge issues, we Zoroastrians in Belarus will be very grateful to you.

We very much hope for your help to promote materials on Zoroastrianism in our country.

Lukashevich Yuriy

Avestan Republican Byelorussian

32-336 Yakubova Street

Minsk, 220101, Belarus

zarathushti@mail.ru

www.avesta.webservis.ru

[Generous-hearted readers interested in sending a gift subscription to Mr. Yuriy or anyone else, please contact our subscription manger at rustom@aol.com].

Demographic gabbing

It is with amusement that I hear about we Parsis being on the way to extinction. All they do is play about with a few statistics and leave out the quality of life and our contribution ... The present conditions of struggling with life in India have made it inconvenient to have a large family. In Canada and USA were we Parsis migrate in large numbers, we do marry and have three or four chil-

dren. A few reasonable restraints in Bombay does not extinct a race ...

For the past 300 years Parsis contributed towards the industrialization of India – shipbuilding, textiles, iron and steel and the nuclear industry. Now you go to any department store here in North America and the place is full of items made in China and Korea. Unless our industries are encouraged, we will see them going extinct. It's about time we do less of demographic gabbing, and take proper action to industrialize in India, otherwise India will be the one heading for extinction.

Jehangir (Jan) Medora

Scarborough, Ontario

"Odamiyat" in Tajikistan

We We are proud that the Zoroastrian religion was the first historical religion of Tajik and it became a base for development of sciences, religions and cultures of the whole of mankind.

The "Odamiyat" Association has a resource center of literature on Zoroastrian religion, culture and science. The purpose of this center is popularization and dissemination of the Zoroastrian heritage. Zoroastrian doctrine will be relevant in the 21st century too, because it is necessary to protect nature. Perhaps Zoroastrian ideas will unite all mankind for its survival in the future. We would like the next generation of Tajiks to be proud and know their great heritage of the Zoroastrian era.

We would like to develop relationships with the different Zoroastrian centers in the world and exchange our knowledge, initiatives and plans.

Rosiamo Ashurova

President, Association "Odamiyat"

rosiamo@herbs.tajik.net

"Avesto" in Tajikistan

I received information about the Congress in Texas. This is of great interest to our organization, Charitable Association "Avesto", and also for our Republic of Tajikistan.

We have two films, in Tajik (Pears) and Russian, about the activities of

our organization. These films were shown by our Republican TV.

Due to this, we have more members. We would be happy to send this to you if interested.

Dr. Firuza Abduuloeva
Chairman, "Avesto"
12, Tekhron Street
Dushanbe, 734025, Tajikistan
email: chairman@avesto.td.silk.org

... and from Azerbaijan

I am writing from Baku, Azerbaijan, one of the countries practicing Zoroastrianism during the times of the Sasanian dynasty of Iran. Now there is no Zoroastrian organization operating in Baku.

My friend is writing a thesis on Zoroastrianism in Azerbaijan (its old name is Atropatena or Adurbadaghan, the country of magis). Some Azeri scholars here claim that Zaratusht was from Azerbaijan.

The reason for my writing to you is to get an English copy of Avesta and some other books about Zoroastrianism to increase my knowledge. In Azerbaijan, finding these types of books is very hard, especially after the collapse of USSR. Please advise if you can be of some help.

Vugar Gurbanov
BP Amoco p.l.c.
99 Mirza Mansur Street
Baku Azerbaijan
(994 22) 978152
gurbanov@bp.com

Parsi - thy name is Charity

Some time back I had an interesting conversation with a prominent Zarathushti of USA. It is said that "Parsi thy name is Charity"; however it seems that while charity can make a big difference to those who are less fortunate, in certain form it can also sap vitality of the receiver. My friend was complaining about the attitude of many persons who seem to think that givers of charity belong to a special class destined to give and that the receivers have a birth-right to receive. He illustrated his opinion with examples of fund raising in USA and articles from Mumbai

newspapers about rich or influential persons occupying charity buildings meant for the poor.

Recently I came across two examples of Sikh system of charity, from which we may be able to draw a lesson. Every *gurudwada* hosts a daily *langar* at which anyone can get a free meal. There is also the promotion of a positive aspirational level. Every sikh who eats at the *langar* is motivated to go out, earn a living, and one day host a *langar* with his own money.

The second example is from "Freedom at Midnight" by Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre. When Menon (secretary to Lord Louis Mountbatten) arrived in Delhi en route to Simla, he discovered every rupee he owned had been stolen. Despairing, he finally approached an elderly, distinguished Sikh, explained his plight and asked for a loan of 15 rupees, to cover his fare to Simla. The Sikh gave him the money. When Menon asked for his address so he could pay it back, the Sikh said: "No, until the day you die, you will always give that sum to any honest man who asks your help".

Six weeks before Menon's death, his daughter recalls, a beggar came to the family home in Bangalore. Menon sent his daughter for his wallet, took out fifteen rupees, and gave it to the man. He was still repaying his debt.

Minocheher Damania
Mumbai, India

Be fruitful and multiply

I enjoyed reading Ardeshir Damania's "Persia, Past and Present" [Fall 2000, page 64-65]. Your last paragraph urging young Zarathushtis to look into their ancestral past and the sacrifices and suffering ... touched my heart. Over many years, from my previous studies I am quite aware of the brutality suffered by our people but no matter how many times I read about it, from different Zarathushti and non-Zarathushti writers, it never fails to bring tears to my eyes and

that question - does the rest of the world know about it?

There has been much talk about Western Imperialism, and, for example, protests on Columbus Day, apologies from Christian clergy, etc. to the natives of the North and South American continents. But we shall never be able to protest thusly and ask for apologies and compensation.

Instead, we must divert our energy and passions to build our communities, to do our best and work diligently, each using our own special talents and energy to strengthen and advance our faith ... And keep in mind that old Biblical injunction: "Be fruitful and multiply".

United in Zarathushtra,
Dinaz Kutar Rogers
Albany, Oregon

On the Internet

The venerable *Jame Jamshed* newspaper of Mumbai, currently in its 169th year, has gone online, at:

www.jamejamshedonline.com

The site aims to reach a global audience by providing a wide spectrum of services, including an online subscription to the weekly, opinion polls, upto-date deaths information, and online submission of articles.

The site allows advertisements at a very reasonable cost - on the home page or one of the inner pages.

Check it out!

We Goofed!

World population figures. The Zarathushti population of Sri Lanka (estimated to be 100 persons) was inadvertently omitted from the world population figures [Winter 2000, page 10]. This then makes the total world population of Zarathushtis to be 276,612 persons.

Additionally, there have been some questions raised about the figure of 157,000 for Iran. An explanation is given on page 8.

TIME, NOVEMBER 13, 2000

ORNITHOLOGY

BOMBAY'S TINY BUT INFLUENTIAL AND prosperous community of Zoroastrians, known around the world as Parsi, is facing a thorny religious problem. The traditional Parsi death rite – the placing of a corpse in a *dakhma*, a small open-air amphitheater, where it is devoured by birds of prey in about two hours – is threatened.

India's common white-backed vulture is on the verge of extinction, hit by an unidentified virus sweeping South Asia. To protect their way of death, Parsi leaders plan to build a 50-foot high aviary around their jungle-shrouded "Towers of Silence" in one of the toniest areas of central Bombay to breed vultures and to cope with three human corpses placed there on an average day.

The aviary needs government approval and has not been without

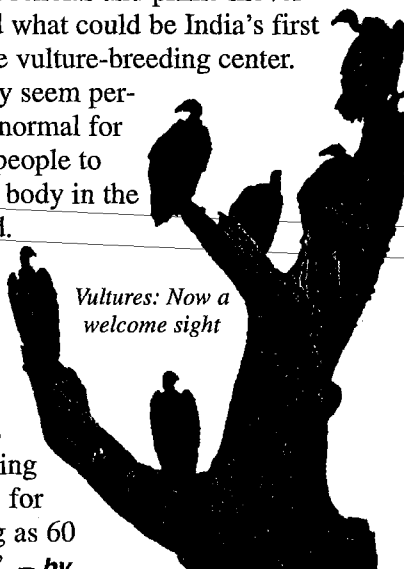
its critics, who question the initial \$222,000 price tag and annual \$44,000 maintenance cost. "We have to consider what is doctrinally right for the religion," says Khojeste Mistree, an Oxford-educated Zoroastrian scholar and prime mover behind what could be India's first captive vulture-breeding center.

"It may seem perfectly normal for some people to bury a body in the ground.

To me it is repulsive that worms are eating a body for as long as 60 years." – **by**

Michael Fathers/Bombay

Vultures: Now a welcome sight



India's Parsis ponder future

By Sanjeev Srivastava in Bombay 11 January, 2001, South Asia Ed.

India's Parsi community, who originally migrated from Iran, are followers of one of the oldest religions in the world – Zoroastrianism.

They have traditionally dominated business and commerce in the country's finance capital, Bombay.

Prominent Indian business houses such as the Tatas, the Wadias, and Godrej are all Parsis.

But with a fast depleting population, the prosperous community is in the midst of an identity crisis and Parsi elders are debating ways to save the community from extinction.

Small but successful

The Parsis are a small community who stick together and guard their culture and customs zealously.

Nearly a third of the world's 125,000 Parsis live in Bombay.

With deaths outweighing births, Parsis may be a dying community demographically, but they are quite high on the Indian social ladder.

"In the old days, the Parsis were the most highly educated ..." says Jimmy Guzder, head of the Parsi Punchayet in Bombay. "That is why they prospered and carried on trade with foreign countries ..."

Whether it's a soap factory or setting up the country's first steel plant, some of the biggest names in Indian business are Parsis.

Though the Parsis have maintained their exclusivity – by discouraging conversions and inter-religious marriages – their enterprise has helped them integrate well with the local population ... Parsi elders are now worried about their decreasing numbers. They have decreased in the last 100 years and the number of old vastly outnumber the young ...

Their dwindling numbers now pose the biggest challenge for community elders.

Letter to Time

Excerpts from a response to Time Magazine by Dinshaw Joshi, of Chevy Chase, Maryland:

The item titled "Ornithology" ... was quite disturbing. It also presents a distorted and one-sided picture of the Zoroastrian community's practice of disposing off the remains of the departed.

The practice of consigning bodies of dead Zoroastrians to Towers of Silence dates back to ancient times in Iran where Zoroastrians placed the bodies of their departed in specially constructed enclosures, later called Towers of Silence, on hilltops to be devoured by birds of prey. It was a practice evolved out of convenience and is not prescribed by Zoroastrian scriptures. When about 1400 years ago Zoroastrians from Iran migrated to India ... they adopted the same practice. However, today ... Towers of Silence are available only in very few cities and towns on the west coast of India ... There are no Tow-

ers of Silence elsewhere in India or in any other country – here Zoroastrians have adopted burial or cremation ...

The contention that burial is repulsive is an insult to billions of people around the world who follow that practice. Increasingly, even in places where Towers of Silence are available, many Zoroastrians prefer to be buried or cremated because of the scarcity of birds of prey ...

Many wise and enlightened Zoroastrians have proposed a most sensible alternative of installation of an electric crematorium on the vast property in central Bombay where the Towers of Silence are located but that also was unacceptable to the orthodox elements of the community. However, ultimately even they may have to bow to the inevitable and accept electric crematoriums as the only real alternative to the dwindling population of birds of prey near the Towers of Silence.



Lest We Forget

By Dinaz Kutar Rogers

Do you remember any stories or sayings?

"Lest We Forget" is hosted by Dinaz Kutar Rogers, a high-school biology teacher and published writer. Readers are invited to contribute their stories, lore, 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, to Dinaz at 1240 Takena SW, Albany, Oregon 97321, tel: (541) 967-1911, email: drogers@proaxis.com.

An Invitation to Readers of FEZANA Journal

In the Fall 1997 issue of FEZANA Journal [page 74] a letter entitled "Keep Snapping that Rope" from Feroze Motafram touched me deeply. When this column "Lest We Forget" debuted in Fall 1999, Feroze's 'rope' letter came to mind – and so, with his kind permission it became an aromatic piece of sandalwood, adding brilliant sparkle and familiar fragrance to those legendary flames of our magnificent heritage. With this in mind, I am asking readers – if any one of you have a favorite article, letter or editorial, from a past issue of the Journal, that has touched your heart, haunted your thoughts, made you think, made you react – please write and let us know, with a brief explanation of how and why the piece touched you. So, once again ...

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 ad 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

Parsi taro Thaberiyo

By Dinaz Kutar Rogers

Ahunavar(Yatha Ahu Vairyo)

Yatha Ahu vairyo, atha ratush

Ashat chit hacha,

Vangheush dazda managho

shyaothananam

angheush Mazdai

Khshathremcha Ahurai a yim

dregubyo dadat vastarem.

Nargol is a quaint little village on the shores of the Arabian Sea. It is some 80 miles (170 Kms) north of Bombay and about 7 miles (10 Kms) north of Sanjan. Sanjan, celebrated in the *Kisseh-i Sanjan*, is where our ancestors landed seeking refuge from religious and political persecution. Now we shall celebrate Nargol in yet another tale acclaiming our Zarathushti Din.

Not too long ago, the Parsi community in Nargol was much larger than it is now and most were farmers and/or tended fruit orchards. Nearly all of these agricultural lands were outside the confines of the village, out in the wilderness, surrounded by jungles. Attacks from wild animals and at times from some hostile, indigenous tribes made everyone vigilant and so as a precaution women and children stayed within the safety of the village. The male members of the families would be out working in the fields and orchards (*wadi*) for weeks and months at a time.

Nargol had Parsi families with surnames like Karbhari, Sarkari, Soor-angeewalla, Agassiwalla, Sarangi-walla, Raimalwalla and Gowadia to mention a few. Most of these family names were adopted from the small and outlying villages that the farms and orchards were located in – like Soorangee, Raimal and Gowada. Children went to school in Nargol and all went to the local Agiary for worship, celebrations and ceremonies.

Parsi prayers. For centuries many natives of these areas worked as domestic and farm help for the Parsi families. Others worked as the crew on the boats ferrying Parsi businessmen from one place to another on the coast, near and far. No matter in what capacity they served, these natives watched and observed, observed and absorbed the life style and life rhythms of the Parsis. They watched as the Parsis taught their children the Kushti prayers and observed them invariably turn to the morning sun in the east and the setting sun in the west and toward a natural fire source or artificial light in the dark of the night as they performed their kushti and other prayers.

They listened to the ancient and powerful prayers – and remembered some, especially the *Yatha Ahu Vairyo*, maybe because it was customarily the opening invocation, and chanted over and over in certain prayers. Before starting on their boat trips and especially in times of storms at sea they noticed the Parsi travelers perform their Kushti – saying their prayers in audible whispers. They saw the clean, simple and honest lives these unassuming, hard-working Parsis led, and the stories, especially the power of their prayers, came down from one generation to the succeeding generations. Over time the Parsi's *Yatha Ahu Vairyo* prayer came to be known as "*Parsi taroh thaberio*".

Parsis leave. Later on, many of these boatmen turned to fishing as the Parsis turned to other professions and most left for Bombay. An important reason that some Parsis gave up agriculture was that the communist movement led by a woman they called *rani* (queen) had provoked the native population with the slogan "*khode tehnee jameen*" (the land belongs to those who actually till it). Rather than fight the threats, the passions of these now-riled populace (especially the young

men and women whom the credo of the communist and socialist rhetoric appealed to) and risk life and limb, many Parsi landowners and farmers gave up their lands to the local natives, without a fight or protest. I remember this so well as my grandmother, Piroja Maneckshah Nandaru, used to talk about it, as her brothers (our 'Dosoo mama' as we called him affectionately) had to give up their lands and farms to the native rebels.

Boatmen invoke 'Thaberyo'. These native boatmen flourished and prospered in their new endeavor but the nature of the sea and its rewards and dangers remained constant. And when a big storm would rage at sea, the fishermen would call upon God



*Seth Poonjiagi Daremeh, the local agiary in Nargol.
[Photo courtesy "Zoroastrian Fire Temples" by Marzban Giara]*

to help them and evoke "The Parsi Prayer" the way they remembered it (or were taught by their elders):

*Parsi taroh thaberyo,
Parsi taroh thaberyo,
Parsi taroh thaberyo ...*

Their anxious wives and families on shore would do the same. Invariably they would make it safely to shore.

After such miraculous safe passages through stormy seas, the fishermen and their families would come to the gates of the fire temple and give the priests money for sandalwood, to be offered on the fire altar as a gesture of their gratitude and for the flower garland to be hung over the main door of the agiary ("*Sookhad-loban na paisa, toran na paisa*").

Sometimes after a particularly rough storm, they would ask the priests to

perform the Machi ceremony for them [*FEZANA Journal, Fall 1999*].

Power of prayer. This is a yet another example about how time and time again those not of our faith have attested to power they see or have experienced in our Zarathushti prayers and ceremonies. This compels us to see with new eyes and reverence the awesomeness of our magnificent spiritual and cultural heritage.

Some thirteen hundred years ago *this* was worth fleeing our ancestral homeland for, and now in our times with tremendous challenges (to mention a few – our dwindling numbers, secularism, dissensions over petty things) facing us *this* is worth fighting for!

TRANSLATION AND EXPLANATION

Translation: Just as a King acts according to his will, so does the Dasturan Dastur by means of righteousness etc (acts according to his own will). The gift of Vohu-Manah (i.e. Good mind) for those working for Hormazd of this world; he who constitutes himself to the protector (or the nourisher) of the poor (accepts) the sovereign rule (of the entire world) (as it were) of Hormazd.

Explanation: Both, the sovereign king ruling over the countries and the pontiff of the religion are of the same status and worthy of respect. Those who are performing good deeds for pleasing Hormazd attain heaven after death. He who gives help to the poor virtuous brothers, regards, as it were, Hormazd as the Lord of the entire world.

[Translation/explanation of the Yatha Ahu Vairyo prayer is from Khordeh Avesta, Transliterated and Translated into English, With Copious Explanatory Notes, by Prof. Ervad Maneck Furdoonji Kanga, MA, 1993, Published by Bombay Parsi Punchayat, 209 Dadabhai Naoroji Road, Bombay 400 001, India.] ■

My mother used to say ...

"The old forget. The young don't know." - Japanese proverb

"Jaat vagar jatra-e nahi javai"

You cannot go on a pilgrimage without your kith and kin. One cannot undertake any pious or fundamentally important task without the support of one's family. This saying is uttered when an upstart thinks about branching out on his/her own, leaving the family for business, better prospects in another city, etc.

"Gher na chok-ra ghandi chaate, ne padosi nay aato bhaye"

Our own children lick the grinding stone, and the neighbors wish to have flour. This saying is used to chide some who neglects their own children and favors the neighbors'.

"Sow chuha kha-kay, billi haj-ko chalee"

After eating a hundred mice, the cat goes on a 'haj' (pilgrimage to Mecca). This saying, in Hindi, is used to describe a person who has done many misdeeds, and then tries to charade as a pious and good person.

"Paan kajiya nu mohnu karu"

The mouth is red of one who chews beetle leaves (paan) and the face is black of one who has hateful thoughts about others. Used when someone wishes ill of another without much justification. Wishing ill of another will be harmful to yourself.

"Kumloo vale, vallave tem valay"

A tender climbing plant will bend and twist as you desire. A young person can be impressed/trained to do things as you want. Once the person grows to maturity it is very difficult to change anything.

"Nahi ditha(n) nu dithun(n) nay Morvi ma mithu(n)"

Something not seen before, is seen, and there is salt in the village of Morvi. To acquire something that one has never had before, and not know how to handle it; something very valuable like salt in the village of Morvi (which is in the interior of Gujarat, far from the sea, and therefore it is impossible to find salt there). It is often used when someone comes into a lot of money or a coveted object unexpectedly or suddenly, and then, foolishly loses it all.

"Suthar nu man bawal ma"

A carpenter's mind is always in the bawal (wood). Used to describe someone who is all the time thinking about his job/work. For example, a stockbroker who is always watching the Wall Street quotations.

"Garaj-ay gathera-nay pan galay la-gai"

When one is in need one can even embrace a donkey. When one is in great difficulty, succor can be sought from any source however humble it is.

"Laygho pakri-nay doree-yo"

He ran fast, holding up his pyjamas. A common expression used to describe a procrastinator, who does things in a

hurry at the last moment. One of my relatives missed his entrance examination to an engineering college in Bombay, having misread the date. He then went to Baroda the next day in great haste and secured a place at the MS University. My father used this saying in describing the incident.

"Aag lagi nay kuvo khodva gaya"

To go to dig the well (for water) after the fire starts. To look for a remedy for a situation after it has deteriorated beyond redemption, rather than take steps to prevent it in the first place.

"Mehnat-na fal mittha hoy"

The fruits of one's own labor are always sweet. If one works hard and achieves something, the satisfaction is very great or sweet. If one comes into good times easily it does not bring as much satisfaction. It could also mean that hard work is always rewarded.

"Ghorow nay gadharoo ek ki-dhoo"

To treat a horse and a donkey as the same. Used commonly when one tries to pass off something inferior as the real McCoy.

"Sea(n)p-ay chhachhunder gariyoo"

The snake has swallowed a porcupine. When a snake mistakenly swallows a porcupine; it cannot digest it neither can it disgorge it (because of the spines). In this situation the snake invariably dies. When someone does something rash and then cannot extricate oneself from the situation, eventually leading to grave consequences. One of my father-in-law's favorite sayings.

"Saadoo nay sutroo, nay galli ma nu kutroo"

Plain and simple, like the mongrel dog in our lane. Used to describe something plain and simple. If there is only dal and rice to eat at home, the woman of the house would use this saying to describe the simple fare she is about to serve. Parsis, living in the villages of Gujarat feed the stray dogs, but do not allow them to enter their homes. These stray dogs are referred to as 'pahariyas' (from the mountains).

"Paar-ki aash, sa-daa-ni ras"

Hopes on others, everyone's disappointment. If you depend on others for anything, you will be disappointed. In other words, "Self help is the best help".

Note: (n) denotes a nasal sounding ending of a vowel.

Parvin Damania is Administrative Assistant in the Institute of Toxicology at University of California, Davis. She has a BA in English literature and French from the University of Bombay and a diploma in Secretarial Practice from Davar's College, Bombay. Contact Parvin at padamania@hotmail.com.

World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce is launched at the Congress in Houston

The World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce was launched at the Seventh World Congress on December 29 [see page 36].

The Chamber is looking forward to working closely with all Zarathushtis in helping the community enrich itself in trade, commerce, charitable and cultural activities of all communities in which its members live.

Mission and Goals. The Mission of the Chamber is energizing of the Zarathushti entrepreneurial spirit in all the countries of the world through a networking of business and cultural activities.

The Chamber is established to facilitate networking, increase trade, commerce and economic welfare of Zarathushtis worldwide. It plans to enhance the economic well-being of the community by using the vast resources available, to create opportunities for new business and enterprise.

It will generally undertake promoting the sale of goods. The Chamber will

organize markets, enforce rules of trade and in general protect the interest of its members.

A strong focus of the Chamber will be on education, governmental relations,

“ The mission: Energizing of the Zarathushti entrepreneurial spirit in all the countries of the world through a networking of business and cultural activities ”

economic development, business and professional growth through various initiatives and incentives. It's main asset will be its database providing information on topics ranging from job availability to a bank of data on Zarathushti business worldwide.

Purposes. The chamber is incorporated as a commercial association, exclusively for providing service to Zarathushti businesses. Its purposes include the following:

- To facilitate, encourage and promote the spirit of entrepreneurship among Zarathushtis.

- To promote Zarathushti businesses worldwide.

- To promote cooperation, networking and solidarity among Zarathushti businesses and the professional community.

- To gather appropriate statistics regarding Zarathushti businesses and professionals worldwide.

- To develop a mentoring program.

- To identify sources of funding for Zarathushti business ventures.

BRIEF HISTORY

Early efforts. In 1990 as part of the Seventh North American Zoroastrian Congress in Houston, it was decided to form some type of committee within the FEZANA umbrella to help foster and promote Zarathushti businesses in North America. This initiative was well received, however due to multiple reasons, it never seemed to get any inertia and move forward.



World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce

WWW.WZCC.ORG

Website is under development. Watch for more to come!
Contact WebMaster Fali D. Shroff at fali_shroff@hotmail.com

All Zarathushti businesspersons, entrepreneurs, would-be business persons and professionals are invited to join this global network.

Membership: Individual (\$50); Organizations (\$100)

Please make checks to WZCC and mail to Sarosh Collector, Treasurer, 217 Lazy Hollow Drive, League City, Texas 77573, tel: (281) 332-8661, saroshjc@aol.com

Information: Contact Corp. Secretary Edul Daver, tel: (732) 469-1866, daver@acupowder.com



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FRIENDS WORLD PROGRAM



Keyannejad-Kapadia Zoroastrian Scholarship Fund

The Triangle Fraternity Education Foundation is pleased to announce the creation of the Keyannejad-Kapadia Zoroastrian Scholarship Fund (endowed by Mr. Homi Kapadia and his sister Mrs. Mahrokh Keyannejad) . The scholarships generated by this fund may be used for undergraduate or graduate study in an accredited university in the USA.

To qualify for an award, the applicant must be a member of Triangle Fraternity, have at least a 3.0 cumulative grade point average (out of 4.0) and be enrolled in an engineering curriculum. Additionally, priority will be given to candidates who are:

- Enrolled at Michigan State University
- Not citizens or Permanent Residents (Green Card) of the USA
- Of the Zoroastrian religion

Triangle Fraternity was founded at the University of Illinois in 1907 and is recognized as the social fraternity for students majoring in engineering, architecture or the sciences. Triangle Fraternity is:

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For information about the scholarships and the application process, please contact:

**Triangle Fraternity National Headquarters, 120 S. Center Street, Plainfield, IN 46168
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Las Vegas meetings. In 1997, once again there was an effort in this direction, spearheaded by Rohinton Rivetna, Farshid Salamati, Homi Davier and Sarosh Collector. A Business Conference was held in Las Vegas in 1997 and again in 1998, both well attended. It was an excellent opportunity to meet other Zarathushti business persons, network, and learn from their successes and failures.

Various issues were discussed, and it was agreed that a business organization, independent from FEZANA was required, that could represent and serve Zarathushti businesses and professionals in North America and around the world. It was also the general consensus that this organization should be structured along the lines of a Chamber of Commerce. These meetings also gave birth to a website www.zbnet.com, set up by Shahriar Shahriari, for listings of Zarathushti businesses and other posting. The website lasted for two

years until it was no longer viable due to funding shortage.

Charter drafted. In February 2000, Rohinton Rivetna, Homi Davier, Kobad Zarolia and Sarosh Collector met for a long 'working' weekend in Chicago, at Rohinton's house and started drafting the Corporate Charter and By-Laws for the Chamber. Many thanks to Roshan Rivetna for putting up with us for the three days, feeding us, and enduring our vociferous arguments, and especially for somehow deciphering and collating all our cryptic notes, chicken scratchings and notations to arrive at the final document that was presented at the Houston meeting.

The World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce is registered in the State of Illinois, as a not-for-profit entity, and will shortly request tax exempt status from the IRS.

*By Sarosh Collector
and Homi M. Davier*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Directors of the World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce elected at the first meeting of the Chamber and at a subsequent telephonic conference on Feb 25.

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Meherwan Boyce (TX)

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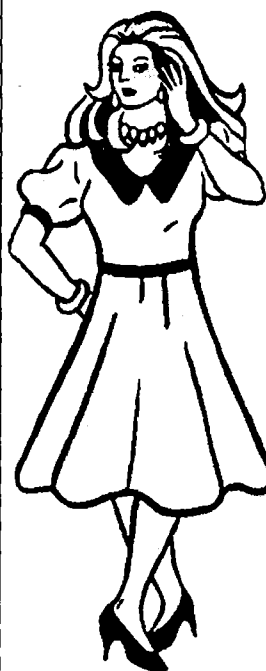
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Celeste (left) and Dr. Jerry M. Kheradi, with Perween Cooper, winner of the FEZANA Raffle Grand Prize of an IBM Laptop computer.

FEZANA RAFFLE WINNERS

It gives me great pleasure to announce that the FEZANA Raffle was indeed a success. Raffle tickets were sold through the efforts of all the associations and at the WZC 2000. We were successful in raising \$7200 and received 113 new /renewed FEZANA Journal subscriptions. The money will be distributed equally to the FEZANA Funds. Thank you to everyone who participated. A special thank you to Karen Diamond, Vice President, Merrill Lynch, and Hooty Enterprises for their generous donations of gifts, and WZC 2000 for holding the drawing, at the Gala Millennium Ball.

Grand Prize - IBM Laptop Computer

Perween Cooper, New Canaan, CT

1st Prize - Rado Watch

Bomi Sanjana, Houston, TX

2nd Prize - Pair of Ladies Watches

Sima Jam, Ontario, Canada

3rd Prize - Merrill Lynch Personal Financial & Estate Plan

A. Dabestani, N. Vancouver, Canada

4th Prize - Merrill Lynch Personal Financial & Estate Plan

Zubin Mobedshahi, San Francisco, CA

5th Prize - Merrill Lynch Personal Financial & Estate Plan

Kobad Malesra, Cranston, RI

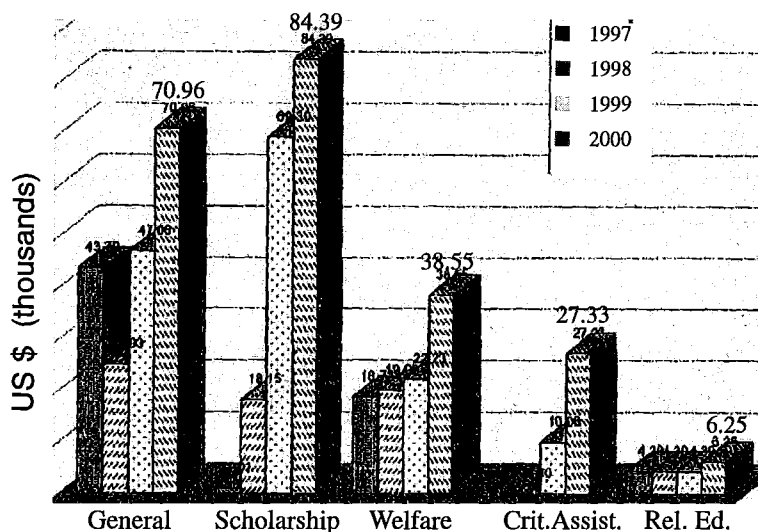
Celeste Kheradi
FEZANA Raffle Committee

FINANCIAL CORNER

Financial Progress Report

WZC 2000 in Houston was indeed a big success. The FEZANA coffers not only benefitted by the successful raffle drawing which was held at the Gala Millennium Dance but also by obtaining new subscribers to FEZANA Journal.

Progress: In the year 2000 we had two Matching Funds Campaigns; the one held in spring of 2000 raised \$5650 and the one in fall raised \$6500. This resulted in a total of \$12,150 and this amount was matched by me, bringing the full amount for the matching fund campaign for 2000 to **\$24,300**. Besides the above campaign, we were able to raise **\$7200** from the FEZANA Raffle. With the help of all the associations and many hard working individuals, this raffle was a success. A special thank you to Karen Diamond, Vice President, Merrill Lynch and Hooty Enterprises for their generous donation of the prizes. Below is the new graph which shows the various FEZANA Funds from December 1997 to December 2000.



Funds received this quarter: See Acknowledgments [page 107].

Endowment funds: Presently we have two endowment funds: **Hor-mazdiar F. Damkevala Fund**, totaling \$61,093, and **Mehraban Dorab Kheradi Scholarship Fund**, totaling \$57,126. Presently \$2688 collected for the **Dr. Keikhosrow Harvesf Fund** has been added to the Critical Assistance Fund; once it reaches \$25,000 it will become an endowment fund. With a minimum of \$25,000 you can form an endowment fund in your family name or in the name of a beloved family member who has passed away.

Our goal remains the same and that is to build each of the FEZANA funds to \$75,000 - \$100,000 by December 2001. With the help of Ahura Mazda, we should be able to reach that goal.

New Millennium Vision: In view of the fact that the treasurer and the Funds and Finance committee chairperson are in office for 2 and 3 years respectively, philanthropic individuals interested in donating large sums to FEZANA do not have continuity of rapport and close confidence with a person or a board of trustees that is in existence for a longer period of time. For this reason, I propose we form a new "Financial Advisory Board" of three trustees chosen by the President who will stay in office for 7 years tenure, along with the treasurer and Funds and

Finance Committee chair for 2 and 3 year terms respectively. This "Financial Advisory Board" will have the full responsibilities of fiscal management and investment decisions for all the FEZANA Funds and determine the amount of money which will be distributed annually to each of the FEZANA Funds.

In closing, we would like to acknowledge and thank all of you who have been kind enough to donate to the various FEZANA Funds in the year 2000 and may God bless you and your family. Let us keep up our Zarathushti spirit of helping the less fortunate by continuing to support the FEZANA Funds.

Jerry M. Kheradi, MD, Chair,
Funds & Finance Committee

Tel: (401) 353-2343, email:

jkheradi@cs.com

Rustom Kevala, PhD, Treasurer
(301) 765-0792, email:

Rustom@aol.com

Committee: Dr. Meherwan Boyce,
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FINANCIAL CORNER

Donating to FEZANA Funds

The making of appropriate, significant charitable contributions is an art. And, like any art, it is a living, creative process that adapts to the changing needs and wishes of the donor.

Each year, thousands of people contribute their time, talents and money to America's charitable religious, educational, cultural, service and healthcare organizations. Indeed, private philanthropy is the foundation of every charitable endeavor, and it is our hope that you will want to continue this tradition.

Benefits of charitable giving. The nation's tax laws recognize the role of charitable organizations in meeting public needs that are of benefit to society. As a result, incentives are provided to encourage charitable gifts. Thoughtful donors plan their contributions to minimize the after-tax cost while securing allowable benefits for themselves and their families.

The virtually annual revisions of the tax code over the last decade have made it imperative to make informed choices in financial and tax planning. Throughout these changes, the traditional benefits of thoughtful charitable giving have been preserved, and planned giving enjoys an enhanced role in ordering one's affairs to attain both philanthropic and financial goals. Depending on the specific arrangement, donors can expect some or all of the following benefits of thoughtful charitable planning:

- Satisfaction from providing the means to favored charities to fulfill their purposes.
- Income-tax savings through the charitable deduction for the value of the gift.

- Avoidance of the capital-gain tax on contributions of appreciated, long-term, capital-gain property with respect to certain gifts.

- Retained payments for the life of a donor and/or other beneficiaries.

- The possibility of increased spendable income with certain arrangements.

- Elimination of federal estate tax on the value of the interest in property passing to charity upon the donor's death.

- Reduced estate-settlement costs.

We strongly urge prospective donors to consult with their own tax and legal advisors for a full discussion of the tax implication of their planned gifts.

Consider FEZANA in your planning. Charitable giving is an art and we hope you will consider FEZANA in your planning. FEZANA is a not-for-profit charitable organization and all contributions are tax deductible. Please make checks payable to FEZANA and mail to:

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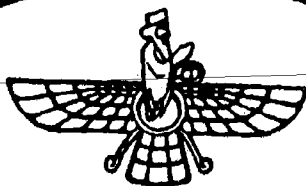
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Kindly contact me for information with regard to donating long term appreciated securities, charitable remainder trust or charitable lead trust.

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FINANCIAL CORNER

Why does FEZANA need funds?

I often get asked: Why does FEZANA need funds when all its work is done by volunteers? To answer this, one needs to look at FEZANA's expenditures over the past few years and project FEZANA's future needs.

EXPENSE CATEGORY	FY1998	FY1999	FY2000	FY2005 (projected)
Welfare	1,993	1,569	1,200	5,000
Critical Assistance	0	0	3,100	5,000
Religious Education	390	0	4,400	10,000
Scholarships	0	0	2,000	10,000
Journal	15,423	26,004	30,750	40,000
Other publications*	13,396	1,725	6,100	10,000
Congress/meetings	706	1,100	5,900	10,000
Youth/Sports	1,300	7,960	2,500	10,000
Other committees	2,160	2,600	500	5,000
Website	1,489	2,019	2,500	5,000
Administration	4,242	4,582	4,500	25,000
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$41,099	\$47,559	\$63,450	\$125,000

* Directory, religious texts, etc.

My projections for the year 2005 are based on the priorities voiced by participants at the "Future of FEZANA" session at the WZC 2000 [see page 4]. Administration will become a major expense as FEZANA's coordination, correspondence and public interface needs increase, with the probable need for at least one paid, part-time staff member and an office. Against this backdrop, a rough breakdown of FEZANA's revenues is shown below:

REVENUE CATEGORY	FY1998	FY1999	FY2000	FY2005 (estimated)
Membership dues	4,459	4,555	5,048	10,000
Donations	28,252	11,409	27,791	50,000
Journal (subscr.+donation)	14,232	20,189	30,270	40,000
Sales of directory/rel.ed.	11,215	10,056	10,000	20,000
Interest & invest. income	1,554	3,473	4,287	20,000
Endowments	0	78,604	44,362	???
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$59,712	\$128,286	\$121,758	\$140,000+

Membership dues will remain at under 10% of the revenues (excluding endowments). Therefore FEZANA will need ever increasing donations to provide the services expected from an organization serving a growing population of Zarathushtis in North America. FEZANA's investment income will depend on the accumulated endowments, which are expected to increase as the number of Zarathushtis who may give or leave legacies to FEZANA increases.

Rustom Kevala, Treasurer

Acknowledgments

FEZANA gratefully acknowledges donations received for the two quarters through February, 2001.

General Fund. Dhun Batlivala, IL (\$10); Psi Bavadaam, NY (\$21); Morvarid Behziz, CA (\$36); Jeroo Daruwalla, CA (\$10); Adi Davar, VA (\$10); Karen Diamond, FL (\$1000); Jimmy Dholoo, MD (\$20); Noshir Dutia, NJ (\$21); Freddy Engineer, CA (\$22); Rita Engineer & Jaloo Captain, FL (\$51); Rustom Ferzandi, KS (\$60); Dr. Mehraboon Irani, NM (\$10); Hormuz Irani, GA (\$101); Mehraban Irani, TX (\$50); Shahrukh Iranpur, FL (\$60); Jehangir Jasavala, CA (\$30); Perin Kadwa, CA (\$10); Borzoo Kushesh, NY (\$20); Manutcheher Parsi, KS (\$1,000); Mani Surkari, TX (\$10); Perviz Patel, IL (\$10); Mithoo Pithawalla, NJ (\$30); Rusi Press, NJ (\$10); Dr. Freney Sagar, NY (\$20); Homi Sarkary, NY (\$50); Behram Shroff, VA (\$21); Hoshang Shroff, MA (\$15); Bella Tata, BC (\$51); Rusi Tavadia, MI (\$22); Hoshang Vaid, CA (\$51).

IBM Corp, Raleigh, NC (\$75) in memory of Tahemtan Bam (\$75).

Farida Major, FL (\$10) in memory of beloved father, Firoze K. Dubash;

Critical Assistance Fund. Dr. Roshan Bhappu, AZ (\$22); Behram Buhariwalla, NJ (\$30); Tenaz Dubash, NY (\$2067 from sale of "Footsteps" video at the Congress); Behram & Fareida Irani, TX (\$500); Dr. Mehraboon Irani, NM (\$10); Shahrukh Kanga, TX (\$15); Roya Kaviani, NJ (\$10); Villoo Kharas, MI (\$15); Dr. Jerry Kheradi, RI (\$1,000); Shahrookh Lala, MI (\$101); Kersi B. Shroff, MD (\$20); Nina Udvardia, PA (\$51); Capt. Homey Writer, CA (\$31).

Gujarat Earthquake. Faridoon Aidun, VA (\$51); Bejun Anklesaria, TX (\$50); Thritee Baxter, NY (\$101); Darius Daruwalla, TX (\$100); J. H. Dudha, TX (\$501); Farrokh Engineer, MD (\$201); L. E. Faust, TX (\$25); Iraj Jahanian, CA (\$80); Noriko Katsuki, Japan (\$100); Sohrab Kianian, CA (\$101); Dr. Jerry Kheradi, RI (\$1000); Framroze Patel, NJ (\$98); Ramesh Patel, Hinsdale Food Mart, IL (\$25); Dinaz Rogers, OR (\$101); Kersi Shroff, MD (\$100); Behram Shroff, VA (\$201); Parizad Sidhwa, TX (\$100); Mehr Soroushian, CA (\$50); Aderbad Tamboli, TX (\$50); Kati Tamboli, TX (\$31); Rohinton Tarapore, LA (\$101); Peshotun Unwalla, TX (\$31); Parviz Varjavand, CA (\$707); Aspi Wadia, TX

(\$50); Zoroastrian Association of Alberta (\$2300Cd); Zoroastrian Association of Chicago (\$1000); Zoroastrian Association of Florida (\$1001); Zoroastrian Association of Houston (\$1600).

Noriko Katsuki writes from Japan:

"I was greatly saddened to hear of the sudden and untimely earthquake ... "Mazda Yasna Japan", superintended by Dr. Okada is a study group in Zoroastrianism. He and his associates, including me, would like to aid your friends in rehabilitation. Would you please accept our donation help?"

Journal Fund. Anonymous, IL (\$470); Silloo Mehta, CA (\$30); Dinaz Rogers, OR (\$21); Meherwan Motivala, NJ (\$36); Jehangir Mistry, MI (\$10); Dr. Behram Pastakia, MD (\$250); Cyrus Rivetna, IL (\$77 from sale of Iran trip photos); Edul Udvadia, IL (\$10); Parviz Varjavand, CA (\$150); Parviz Yeganegi, BC (\$90).

Journal Millennium Issue. Dr. & Mrs. Jehan Bagli, ONT (\$120); Coating Engineers, Inc., TX (\$100); Farhad & Huty Contractor, PA (\$101); Jim Engineer, e-rainmaker.com, IL (\$500); Behram & Fareida Irani, TX (\$200); Dr. Jerry Kheradi, RI (\$1000 in securities);

Perviz C. Patel, CA (\$101); Freyaz Shroff, NC (\$100); Zoroastrian Association of California (\$101); Zoroastrian Association of Houston (\$101).

Religious Education Fund. Dhanji Byromshaw, ONT (\$48); Dr. Mehraboon Irani, NM (\$10); Khurshid Rudina, MN (\$21).

Scholarship Fund. Hoshang Baria, DE (\$25); Dr. Roshan Bhappu, AZ (\$50); Dr. Mehraboon Irani, NM (\$10); Dr. Jerry Kheradi, RI (\$5554 in securities for matching funds); Bahman Maneshni, AZ (\$101); Dr. Nari Shroff, FL (\$15).

Welfare Fund. Jamshed Antia, IL (\$25); Cyrus Austin, AZ (\$301); Jal N. Birdy, CA (\$31); Dr. Farokh Contractor, LA (\$100); Jimmy F. Dholoo, MD (\$150); Tenaz Dubash, NY (\$2,067 for Zoroastrian Sports Club in Tehran, from sale of "Footsteps" video at the Congress); Behram & Fareida Irani, TX (\$500); Adi Gandhi, CA (\$101); Dr. Mehraboon Irani, NM (\$10); Minoo Italia (\$300); Jehangir Jasavala, CA (\$30); Farrokh Namdaran, BC (\$101); Rohinton Ogra, IL (\$90); Homiyar Panday, NJ (\$10); Dinaz Rogers, OR (\$101); Dick Vazir, FL (\$20). ■

PLEASE GIVE FROM YOUR HEART

Please make all checks payable to "FEZANA", and send to the address in the appeal, or to FEZANA Treasurer Rustom Kevala, 8812 Tuckerman Lane, Potomac, MD 20854. Please indicate the intended purpose clearly. For tax exemption eligibility see FEZANA Journal [Summer 2000, p. 71 and Fall 2000, p.88]

SOAS scholarships

Through a generous donation of Fari-doon and Mehraban Zartoshty, and augmented by the school, the prestigious *School for African and Oriental Studies (SOAS)* in London, has established a full-time post in Zoroastrianism [see page 8], the first such post at any university, anywhere.

The school is now seeking donations for scholarships to enable Zarathushtis and others to pursue the academic study of Zoroastrianism at



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both undergraduate and post graduate levels. Large donations may have a Named Scholarship. Contact SOAS, University of London, Thornhaugh Street, Russell Sq, London WC1H 0XG, or *Prof. John Hinnells* at JHinnells@compuserve.com.

Alleviating blindness

SAIVA (*Student Action for Indian Volunteerism and Aid*) is an organization run by the University of Wisconsin, dedicated to the alleviation of blindness in India. Its main goals are to construct a free rural eye care clinic in Andhra Pradesh, support a job-training program for the blind, and provide assistance to the Wisconsin-based Combat Blindness Foundation that utilizes preventative measures, such as free cataract surgeries for the needy in India. Last year SAIVA raised over \$6,100, and donated 100% of it for the free eye clinic in India. Please send checks made out to "Combat Blindness Foundation", to SAIVA volunteer *Anahita Dua*, 121 West Gilman Street, Room 906A, Madison, WI 53703.

Looking for helping hand

Shapur Billimoria, 41, of Kerala, India, has been physically handicapped following an accident in 1979. He also has osteo-arthritis and IHD (Ischaemia Heart Disease) and other complications. He is appealing for financial help to cover high hospitalization and medical bills: "Life has become a struggle for survival – I am homeless, all alone and with no source of income. I am living on the mercy and charity of others ... I humbly beg you to lend me a helping hand to enable me to live and survive."

Jasmine Bhathena of Pune is seeking help to pay back a loan for surgery and medical expenses of Rs. 26,000. She and her husband, who works for a construction company, were taking care of a totally bedridden child suffering from MPS Type VII and an 85-year-old mother-in-law. She writes: Kindly grant me a helping hand to pay back my debt."

Cyrus Izedar, of Mumbai is appealing for help to cover high medical and radiation therapy costs for his wife who was diagnosed with cancer of the cervix: "... my children are

studying in college, and with no current job, I have exhausted all my resources and have borrowed loans from friends and relatives ... I request humbly for your kind help in this crucial moment of my life."

Donations for the above 3 appeals may be sent, clearly marked, to FEZANA [see above].

FEZANA Scholarships

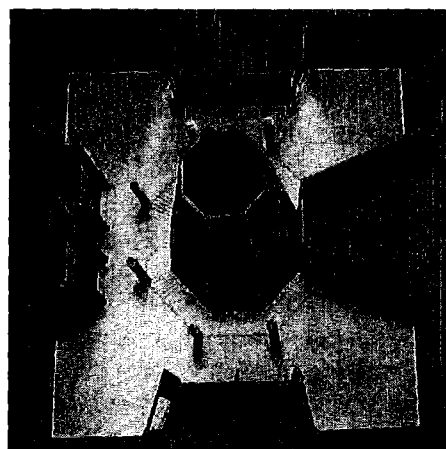
The FEZANA Scholarship committee is pleased to announce the winners of Academic Scholarships for 2000-2001 of \$1000 each:

Behnam Bastani of North Vancouver, Canada, studying for a B.S. in computing science at Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC.

Dinyar P. Patel of Bakersfield, CA, studying for a BA in International Relations at Stanford University, in California.

To apply for next year contact FEZANA Secretary Arnavaz Sethna at (281) 499-1832 or ahsethna@yahoo.com.

Please Help us All to Pray Together, to Stay Together!



Model of the 'kebla' (inner sanctum) of the proposed Atash Adaran in UK.

In our newly-established homes, in our respective secular countries in the West, it is a sad but true cold fact that we do not yet have even *one single* Emblem of our Religion – Atash Bahram, Atash Adaran, Atash Dadgah – such as were established by our illustrious ancestors for worship, and which made them successful, praying together and staying together. We are committed to rectify this, out of concern for our very existence in the decades to come. Modernization will not become our third holocaust!

Our goal is to establish an Atash Adaran and an associated bungli in the UK. Families of mobeds (3) will be residential on 3-yearly assignments from India, Iran or Pakistan. A holy edifice, like in the past, will ensure success and perpetuate the Zarathushti faith in our secular countries for future generations.

Who are we? As a Religious Charity Trust, with donations from around the world. We are committed to provide that place where we, and more importantly our children, can at last feel the strength, warmth, beauty and devotion of the Zarathushti community. We are of the united and strong belief that our Agiary is

of the highest priority for our community. This determination was conceived in January 2000. With the help of gentle-minded Zarathushtis, our Charity Trust was approved and registered in the UK on 25th October, 2000, as the **European Zarathushti Fire Temple Trust**.

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT! Your donation, however big or small, will make the difference in giving our drifting community a heart again. Please send your donation checks payable to FEZANA, marked "UK Agiary", to FEZANA [see above], or to European Zarathushti Fire Temple Project, 77 Worple Road, Staines, Middlesex TW18 1HJ, UK. For further information, contact Rohinton Irani at Tel: 44 (0) 1784 459360 or email: owner@feast.co.uk.

Efforts from USA and Canada for Quake Victims

The toll in India's worst earthquake in half a century, on January 26th, is reported to be over 35 thousand dead (though unofficial numbers are as high as 100,000). What happened that day in Bhuj, near the epicenter of the quake, which measured 7.9 on the Richter scale, is best described by Dr. Rao, a surgeon in Bhuj:

"For many moments, the tremors did not stop. I screamed again and again: Oh God, why don't you stop?

"Dhadak, dhadak ...

"Buildings were crashing down and a monstrous cloud of dust covered the city. It was like a huge plane landing right on your head.

"When I came outside, Bhuj was dead. That was the worst 15 minutes of my life ..."

Zarathushtis impacted. Miraculously, the *Bhuj* agiary still stands, though damaged a bit, and the one Zarathushti resident of Bhuj, who looked after the dadgah, is safe. The agiary compound served as a camp for survivors.

According to reports by Dinshaw Tamboly of WZO: the 40 Zarathushti residents of *Rajkot* are all safe, with minor damage to property; there is a small crack in the agiary wall. In *Jamnagar*, all Zarathushtis are OK and the agiary is safe. The 30 or so families in *Porbunder* suffered only minor damage to property; there is no loss of life in *Surat*, but properties are damaged; both atash bahrams are safe. In *Navsari*, as well, there is no loss of life; there is some damage to property belonging to Zarathushtis; the atash bahram is safe. In *Bilimora*, there has been damage to property belonging to Zarathushtis.

Mr. Tamboly further reports that the major disaster area is *Ahmedabad*. All buildings over 3 stories have cracks. There are confirmed fatality reports of a Zarathushti girl Monaz Patel, her husband Aashish (non-Zarathushti), and their daughter.

FEZANA's "man on the spot" - ZAPA president Houtoxi Contractor, who is visiting her hometown of *Ahmedabad* writes that she has met with the Ahmedabad Parsi Punchayet. They have confirmed that there is no major structural damage to any of our religious, commercial or residential properties, but all would need massive repairs. This will be a heavy financial load on the Punchayet, running into lakhs of rupees. One displaced family is being taken care of. There is damage to the anjuman property behind the agiary and residents have been given shelter at the community hall next to the agiary. No Zarathushti casualties are reported in *Anjar*, *Bhachau* or other parts of *Saurashtra*.

Relief efforts. FEZANA Welfare Committee chair, Kaemerz Dotiwalla is coordinating the relief effort along with all the US and Canadian associations. An initial amount of \$3000 has been sent to the Ahmedabad Anjuman. Collections through February are acknowledged on page 107.

Donations for Earthquake

FEZANA Welfare Committee chair Kaemerz Dotiwalla writes: "It has always been a part of our great Zarathushti heritage to lend a helping hand...this cause deserves our generous support and our most devoted efforts". 100% of the funds will be transferred, without any administrative or bank charges. North American Zarathushtis may send their checks marked "Gujarat earthquake" to their association, or to the FEZANA coordinators:

In Canada: Make checks payable to ZSO - Zoroastrian Society of Ontario, and send to:

Firdosh Mehta

10444 - 18th Avenue, NW
Edmonton, Alberta T6J 4Z8

In USA: Make checks payable to FEZANA, and send to:

Rohinton Rivetna
5750 South Jackson Street
Hinsdale, Illinois 60521.

The agiary in Bhuj ...

There is a daremeher in Bhuj, built by my great-grandfather Khanbahadur Pestonji Sorabji Bhujwala, who was personal assistant to the Maharaja Khengarji Rao of Kutch. I was there eight years ago, with my family, to visit my cousins who live in our ancestral houses. Miraculously, from reports over the internet from India, both the daremeher and my cousins and their houses are safe.

By Maneck Bhujwala, San Jose, CA

And the agiary in Karachi

The miraculous survival of the agiary in Bhuj, reminds me of another disaster involving our agiary in Karachi.

Karachi-ites may remember the devastating fire in the late fifties in the heart of the city of Karachi, in the Saddar area. The fire, started from mishandling of firecrackers destroyed a twenty city-block area of 50+ buildings. Hundreds of people died including some Parsis, mostly from residents refusing to leave their homes and shoppers who were trapped inside shops, where shop owners mistakenly closed the metal shutters for security. The fire took over 15 hours to curtail.

The Parsi Agiary (built in 1849) stood almost in the center of the Saddar fire and yes, miraculously remained untouched. Many took refuge in the compound, with mass hysteria taking place outside. The water from the agiary's well was used to help those who needed assistance. Later the Parsis were amongst the most prominent donors in rebuilding the Saddar area and helping the Bohras, the predominant local residents, to resettlement.

The agiary today continues to stand as a magnificent architectural landmark amongst the impoverish buildings in one of the most congested traffic area in the heart of the city. Thousands of people daily walk and drive by this historical site and marvel at this hallowed space of peace and tranquility. ■

Shahrokh Mehta, Syracuse, NY

■ MATRIMONIALS ■

FEZANA will coordinate initial contacts between interested parties; we do not assume any responsibility for verifying credentials. Contact Roshan Rivetna.

Male, 34, professor, seeks a suitable female who is career-minded, fun-loving and family-oriented, residing in North America, aged 26-34. Call (405) 752-9896 after 7 pm or email threeh@netscape.net [M01-1]

Attractive Parsi female, 28, practicing CA in Mumbai, seeks contact with well-settled, caring and fun-loving gentleman from Mumbai or abroad. Contact aunt at (604) 837-1544, zenot@hotmail.com. [F01-2]

Female, 26, PhD, MBA, working in genetic engineering research in USA. Enjoys outdoors, music, reading. dnadr@rocketmail.com. [F01-4]

Female doctor, 43, 6in UK, willing to relocate. Outgoing, fond of music, traveling. Call friend in Canada at (905) 764-6667. [F01-5]

Attractive divorcee, 39, downs successful business near Mumbai, two teenage children, good homemaker, caring, pleasant, sociable, willing to relocate. Seeks well educated, self-sufficient gentleman 40-50. Email: rostam@wantree.com.au. [F01-7]

Smart, attractive, educated woman, 31, working in USA, seeking decent, well educated man upto 35, in USA only. Easy going and flexible. Character/moral values are very important. zorowoman2000@yahoo.com. [F01-8]

Well-settled, professional male, 30, 6', athletic, good family, fond of sports, outdoors, traveling, reading and music. Seeking educated female with good values, living in USA. parsee01@yahoo.com. [M01-9]

Professional male, 37, fair, 6' 7", MBA, working in CPA firm in US. Seeks well-educated female with good personality. Phone brother in Canada (604) 515-4270 or zarir_d@hotmail.com. [M01-10]

One good result from the Congress in Houston ...



In August 1999, **Liley Gheewalla** made an application to play the cello in the World Zoroastrian Orchestra. She addressed it to 'Mr. Mehta' – **Cyrus Mehta**, who was conducting a worldwide search for Zoroastrian musicians for the orchestra that would perform at the World Congress in Houston.

Liley was a member of the Bombay Chamber Orchestra and was taught by its founder Jini Dinshaw. When Cyrus received Liley's application, he wrote her stating that he was delighted to receive an application from a cellist – who are always hard to find – and also said that he too once played in the Bombay Chamber Orchestra and was taught by Ms. Dinshaw. They exchanged e-mails. Cyrus visited Bombay in April 2000 on a business trip, and met Liley. In September, her company sent her to New York on a short-term business assignment. In November, they decided to tie the knot.

Liley and Cyrus were married on January 28, 2001 at the Hudson River Club in New York City overlooking the Statue of Liberty. Music was an integral part of the celebration and musicians from Cyrus' New York Lawyers orchestra, as well as the bride and bridegroom, played chamber music. A Zoroastrian religious ceremony will follow at the Colaba Agiary in Mumbai.

Cyrus Mehta, 36, son of noted Mumbai lawyer Dara Mehta and Vera Mehta (who is with the UN in Yugoslavia), manages a prominent immigration law firm in New York, which he founded in 1993. **Liley Gheewalla**, 28, daughter of Daisy and Yezed Gheewalla of Mumbai, is a financial analyst with a credit rating agency CRISIL, an affiliate of Standard & Poor's. ■

Looking for a soulmate? Visit the website, maintained with relentless dedication by webmaster Porus Havewalla:

www.ozemail.com.au/~zarathus/soulmate.html

Parsi girl, 25, fair, 5' 5 1/2" BA (Psychology), professionally qualified in Travel and Tourism; home-loving, enjoys music, reading, swimming. Send bio-data and photo to marker@wminet.net. [F01-11] ■

Quotable Quotes

"Keep your eyes wide open before marriage, half shut afterwards."
- Benjamin Franklin

"The husband and wife are one, and that one is the husband."
- Harvard Law School, 1855

"A single man is an incomplete animal. He resembles the odd half of a pair of scissors."

- Benjamin Franklin

"A man is incomplete until he has married. Then he is finished."

- Zsa Zsa Gabor

"I have come to the conclusion never again to think of marrying, and for this reason: I can never be satisfied with anyone who would be block-head enough to have me."

- Abraham Lincoln, 1838, after being rejected by Mary Owen]

■ MILESTONES ■

Births

Natalie Yasmin Balsara-Vetzel, a girl to Dr. Nilufer Balsara-Vetzel, granddaughter to Dr. Framroze Balsara in Kitchner-Waterloo, Canada, on October 13.

Arzaan Bharucha, a boy, to Cyrus and Diana Bharucha, grandson to Viraf and Rashna Bharucha, in Florida.

Aliya Byramji, a girl, to Rubina and Feroze Byramji, granddaughter of Byramji Collector and Khorshed Khan, on Decembmer 27 [ZAH].

Shayan Daruwalla, a boy, to Darius and Nancy Daruwalla [ZAQ].

Alyssia Divecha, a girl, to Kaizad and Vicki Divecha, granddaughter to Villie and Rohinton Divecha, and great granddaughter to Mani S. Divecha and Gool H. Patel, on august 20 [ZSO].

Farzan Dubash, a boy, to Shaan and Behram Dubash, on December 17 [ZSO].

Freddy Fitter, a boy, to Khushroo and Ruki Fitter, brother to Roxanne and Shahnaz, on July 15 [ZAC-California].

Kamran Ghandhy, a boy, to Darius and Jenny Ghandhy, on July 19 [ZAC-Cal].

Aiden Harrison, a boy, to Zenobia and Harry Silliphant, grandson of Perin and Soli Pardiwalla and Betty and Harry Silliphant and great-grandson to Shirin Dastoor; nephew of Shehnaz, Tanaz and Julie.

Darius and Cyrus Irani, twin boys, to Firoza Jamaji and Zubin Irani, in Massachusetts, on September 21.

Zain Jal Irani, a boy, to Shiraz and Jal Irani, of Gilroy, California, brother to Jasmyn, grandson to Dr. Bahman and Dolly Irani in England, and Hoshi and Arnavaz Daruwalla in England, on September 14.

Porus Karwa, a boy, to Hoshang and Firuza Karwa, grandson to Homi Karwa [ZAC-California].

Aditya Khande, a boy, to Nergish and Gautam Khande, on January 19 [ZSO].

Lila Kothari, a girl, to Reji and Yasmin Kothari of New York; granddaughter to Kanti and Yasmin Kothari and Kersey and Katy Bhatena, all of Chicago area, on December 29.

Vahaab Ladha, a boy, to Kainaz and Junaid Ladha, grandson to Meher and Dara Suntok, on January 5 [ZSO].

Yazdy Mistry, a boy, to Jafarshan and Tehmus Mistry of Auckland, New

Zealand, grandson of Roshni and Jamshed Mobed of Houston, TX, on November 2.

Zen Panday, a boy, to Mahrukh and Sorab Panday, in Herndon, VA, on Feb 2.

Logan Pfob, a boy, to Binaifer Kapadia and Roman Pfob of Edmonton, grandson to Franey Kapadia of Medicine Hat, Alberta, great grandson to Roshan Kapadia of St. Catharines, Ontario, on July 29.

Kiyan Rogers, a boy, to Shernaz Bamji and Dave Rogers, in San Francisco, CA, on July 31.

Jahan Sidhwa, a boy to Riah and Shahroukh Sidhwa, grandson to Nani and Roshan Wadia, and Dinoo and Bejan Sidhwa, of Ontario, on June 6.

Natasha Diane Rivetna, a girl, to Jamshed and Tamara Rivetna of Dallas, sister to Olivia Zarine, granddaughter to Rohinton and Roshan Rivetna, on October 31.

Stephan Todywala, a boy, to Sam and Lyla Todywala, a brother to Zane, of Miami, Florida, on October 11.

Navjote, Sedreh Pushi

Tanaz Asli, daughter of Rustom and Anita Asli, on July 2 [ZSO].

Cyrus Bahrassa, son of Feraydoon Bahrassa and Persis Shroff of Little Rock, AR, in Mumbai, on July 23.

Naryus Divecha, son of Sami and Dilnavaz Divecha, on July 15 [ZSO].

Zorast Gustavsp, son of Jamshed and Tushnamaity Gustavsp of Richmond, BC, in Karachi, on august 27.

Meher and Hormuz Nicolwala, children of Zenia and Adil Nicolwala of Texas, in London, UK, on June 4.

Natasha Panthakee, daughter of Dinyar and Behroze Panthakee, on July 22 [ZSO].

Rohan and Jehan Panthaky, sons of Keki and Meher Panthaky, of New Westminster, BC, in Mumbai, on August 27.

Sharlene Petigara, daughter of Shahrukh and Perveen Petigara of North Vancouver, BC, on August 5, 2000.

Yasna and Yazdan Rabadi, children of Vera and Neville Rabadi, grandchildren of Silloo and Boman Kotwal and Roshan and Pervaze Rabadi, in Brampton, ONT, on September 3.

Zubin Sadri, son of Ronny and Kashmira Sadri, in Louisville, KY, on July 9.

Zal and Kaivan Shroff, sons of Anahita and Zubin Shroff, of New York area.

Weddings

Rushad Amaria, son of Adi and Shernaz Amaria, to **Gulshan Bhesania**, daughter of Kersi and Sanobar Bhesania, on July 21 [ZSO].

Jehangir Irani, son of Arnavaz and Gustad Irani, of Boca Raton, FL, to **Zena Bharucha**, daughter of Jimmy and Roshan Bharucha, of Philadelphia, on October 28.

Zubin Chinoy, son of Homai Chinoy of Montreal, to **Aruna Nilakantan**, in Quebec, on June 10.

Minocher Cowasjee, to **Rukshana Writer**, daughter of Homey and Bacchi Writer, of Irvine, CA, in Karachi, on August 5.

Hooman Darabian of France to **Nazanin Mehin**, daughter of Houshang and Parvindokht of North Vancouver, BC, in Tehran, on March 30.

Mehbad Dastur, son of Dinshaw and Aban Dastur, of Ontario, to **Zenobia Marker**, daughter of Nergesh and Sarosh Marker, on July 8 [ZSO].

Raiomand Krishnayya, son of Pervize and Krish Krishnayya of New Jersey, to **Meghan Bruckert**, in Chicago, on Oct 7.

Cyrus Mehta, son of Dara and Vera Mehta of Mumbai to **Liley Gheewalla**, daughter of Daisy and Yezed Gheewalla of Mumbai, in New York, on January 28.

Zubin Shroff, son of Farida and Rohinton Shroff of Chicago, to **Courtney Picotte**, in Chicago, on September 29.

Jehan Tamboowalla, son of Merwan and Maharukh Tamboowalla of Kronberg, Germany, to **Tara Kathleen Epps**, daughter of Timothy and Stella of Tennessee, in Tampa, FL, on November 25.

Shahriar Shahriari, formerly of Vancouver, to **Mahboobeh Ghorbani** of Los Angeles, in Orange County, CA, on October 17.

Farhad Shishbiradaran, son of Pericher and Sohrab Shishbiradaran to **Shirin Sethna**, daughter of Freny and Boman Sethna, on July 2 [ZSO].

Deaths

Ardeshtir Adorbeki, husband of Katayun Haquiquat, father of Parvin, Khodayar, Rostam and Parvez, in Tehran, Iran, on October 2 [ZSO].

Mobed Faridoon Zartoshty



A LIFE OF INDUSTRY,
INTEGRITY AND PHILANTHROPY

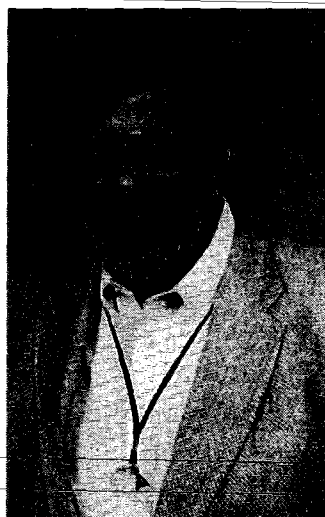
Faridoon Zartoshty, elder brother of Mobed Mehraban Zartoshty, father of Paridokht in Anaheim, Irandokht in Vancouver, Farangis in Arizona and Humayun Goshtaspour in Toronto, passed away in Anaheim, California, on November 17.

The name of Faridoon Zartoshty, and his brother Mehraban, is synonymous with charity and philanthropy for perpetuation of the Zarathushti religion and communities in USA, Canada, UK, Australia, India, Iran and around the world. Mehraban eulogizes his elder brother thus:

"My brother Faridoon, was named by our parents, Shah Faridoon, i.e. King Faridoon, and he really proved himself to be the king of our family; not a king by stature with pomp and power, but an ordinary man – wise, intelligent, hardworking, honest, with a strong willpower, with the result that in the course of time, he brought our family in business under one umbrella."

"He was more than a brother to me. He was my guardian, advisor and a good leader. In business, he was my partner as well as my friend. We worked together throughout our life and our success was mainly due to hard work, with sincerity, honesty and our unbreakable unity." [See page 88 for a profile of the Zartoshty brothers]

"Rest in Peace dear friend Rumi!"



On December 18, the Chicago Zarathushti community was shocked and saddened by the sudden untimely passing of Rohinton (Rumi) Engineer, 50 – a devoted family man, a pillar of support to the community, and a hallmark in the jewelry business.

Born and raised in Bombay, after graduating from Sangli Engineering College, Rumi came to the US and did his Master's in Engineering in Madison, Wisconsin. During his student days, he used to work with a jeweler and developed a love for the business. After several years as an independent wholesaler, Rumi founded **Prudential Jewelers, Inc.**, in 1986. He built up Prudential from scratch through hard work and sound business ethics. He received tremendous encouragement and support from his wife, Beverly, who also worked with Rumi in their business. Five years ago they opened their new 2,500 sq ft. store at the prestigious "1 North Wabash Avenue" location on Jeweler's Row in downtown Chicago.

Rumi did business the old-fashioned way – he was honest, he gave good value, his service was outstanding and he always stood by his word and his product. His customers were spread throughout the US. Because of his business ethics and reputation he would receive orders over the phone even without the customers coming into his store. Rumi had people skills and charm that endeared him to all who dealt with him. He treated all his customers with respect and would not hesitate to be truthful when the situation demanded.

Rumi had a love for life, was full of fun, kind-hearted, and always pleasant. Like all fun-loving Parsis he enjoyed his *dhansakh* and *kavab*! If he did a minor repair job for you and you asked him what it would cost, he would smile and give his standard reply, "It will cost you one *dhansakh*!" Rumi was a dutiful son and a proud husband and father. He made it a point to attend ZAC events regularly and donated generously to all ZAC causes and fundraisers. He brought his children regularly to the religious classes, while he attended the Gatha discussion group. He was also an active supporter of the fledgling Chicago chapter of the Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce. Last year Beverly and Rumi celebrated their silver wedding anniversary.

Rumi will be missed very much by his family, his friends, the community, his staff, business associates and his customers.

Rest in peace dear friend Rumi!

- By Aban and Aspy Daboo

Kaikhushroo R. Alpaiwalla, husband of Zarin, father of Hira (Toos) Daruwala, in Indianapolis, on November 6.

Minocher Bhikaji Anklesaria, husband of Homai, father of Bomanshaw (Bomi) in Karachi, on October 22 [ZSO].

Aloo Avari, mother of Nausheer (Dinci) Avari, in Mumbai [ZAGNY].

Khorshed Minocher Boovariwala, mother of Bomi, Freny Moosa and Meherengiz McMahon, in Ottawa, on October 12.

Rohinton (Rumi) Engineer, 50, from a massive heart attack; husband of Beverly, father of Kashmira and Rustom, son of late Mehroo and late Minoo Engineer of Mumbai, brother of Tehmtan (Binaifer) Engineer of Mumbai, in Chicago, on December 18 [see obituary].

Shirin Guzder, wife of Jamshed Guzder, chair of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, in Bombay.

Sharyar Iranshad, 77, husband of Banoo, father of Ardeshir, Shahrokh,

Farrokh, Kourosh and Shahram, in Richmond, BC, on June 19.

Ratan Kakalia, founder of Dadar Parsi Grah Udyog, in Mumbai, in September [see obituary].

Homai Karwa, wife of Homi Karwa, mother of Perin Amroli and Hoshang Karwa, sister of Alamai Vaghaiwalla, on July 29 [ZAC-California].

Banoo Kayvani, mother of Shirin Khodavahn Bonshani, grandmother of Manijeh, Mitra and Siamak, in Tehran on December 14.

Maneck Mistry, husband of Edith, father of Jamie and David in Toronto, on October 2.

Homi Marolia, 90, father of Dinyar, Silloo, and Sheroo; grandfather of Farzeen, Roxanne, Binaifer and Pourasp in Vancouver passed away in Vancouver, on May 26. [Any confusion caused by previous misinformation regarding the above is regretted].

Dossan Mistry, wife of late Burjor, mother of Siloo and Ronnie, on January 20 [ZSO].

Banoobai Mobed, mother of Shireen Vatcha of Toronto, and Jimmy and Fali Mobed of Karachi, in Karachi, on October 14.

Roshan Mody, 86, mother of Dan Mody and Abaan Maschmeyer, succumbed to cancer, in Edmonton, Alberta, on November 2.

Minoo Bomanji Narielwala, husband of Roshan, father of Farida Aibara, Ferozy Chapgar and Farhad Narielwala, in Mumbai, on November 4.

Dadiba Framroze Raimalwalla, 83, father of Mahrukh (Maneck) Bhujwala of San Jose, in Mumbai, on December 3.

Jehangir Sattha, 75, husband of Gool, father of Kaiomarz, Beheroze of Vancouver, Paurichisti Meherhomji and Bak-tawar Bhagwagar, in Mumbai, on July 4.

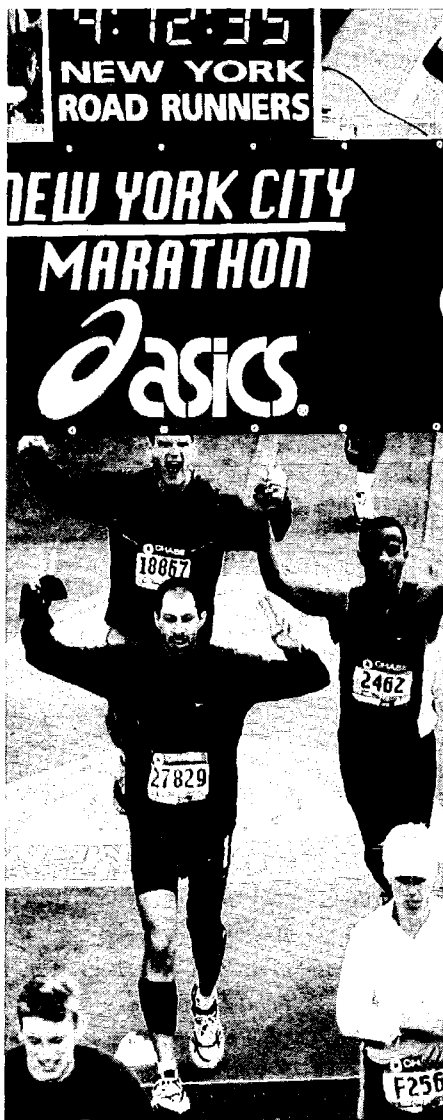
Hirji Thanawalla, husband of Perin, father of Rustom, Dina Carl Engineer and Pervin Rustom Sethna, in Mumbai, on December 18 [ZSO].

Faridoon Zartoshty, elder brother of Mobed Mehraban Zartoshty, father of Paridokht in Anaheim, Irandokht in Vancouver, Farangis in Arizona and Humayun Goshtaspour in Toronto, in Anaheim, California, on November 17. [Also see pages 88 and 113]. ■

EVENTS & HONORS



Ashraf Divecha of Pinehurst, NC has been working on an Eagle Scout project for six months: "I started this project with two boxes of shoes and now I have approximately 300 boxes of clothing, books, toys and shoes. My target is 500 boxes." Ashraf will ship these boxes via a US government program, in armed forces vessels to India. To meet his 3-fold goal of "helping my Zoroastrian and Indian community and getting my Eagle Scout rank" he has selected the recipient of his collection to be the Avabai Petit Orphanage in Mumbai. For more information, contact Ashraf at divecha@juno.com.



Firdaus Dotiwala [in dark shirt in front] of Riverdale, New York, joined 32,000 brave souls last November to run the 26.2 miles in the New York Marathon. He writes: "As we got onto the Verrazano Bridge the wind hit us. It was so windy and cold that we could feel the drag on one side. But I guess the euphoria of the entire event overshadowed everything else ... Past the bridge we started seeing the people who had braved the cold and were out in the thousands to cheer us throughout the race. My favorite part was Brooklyn where thousands and thousands of people were screaming their lungs off for us. There were water carts, Gatorade carts and people were giving us things to eat and drink. There were choirs singing and live bands playing. We moved on, into Queens, then Manhattan, to the Bronx and onto Central Park ... When I finally saw the finish line and crossed it, there was not so much of excitement, but a feeling of containment and relief that ultimately it was over. The legs would not stay still ... For it did not matter who won or who lost the race because each and every one won in one way or another!

Hoshi Deboo of Chicago was recently named executive vice-president operations, by XYAN.com of Pennsylvania, an internet-enabled provider of comprehensive digital content management and document solutions. Deboo will provide leadership to the company's national network of Strategic Production Centers.

Havovi Noshir Engineer of Ontario, is the proud recipient, in December, of a Certificate of Recognition of services rendered as member of a City of Toronto Advisory Committee on access, equity, and human rights.

Noshir Langrana was appointed to the first Mary W. Raisler Distinguished Teaching Chair in Mechanical Engineering at Rutgers State University, New Jersey. Prof. Langrana was commended for his continuous dedication to teaching and research during his 24 years at Rutgers.



Miss India, **Priyanka Chopra**, 18, won the Miss World 2000 title at London's Millennium Dome, making her the fourth Indian, in 7 years to win that title. Earlier, in May, Lara Dutta of India, bagged the Miss Universe title, reminiscent of 1994, when Ashwairya Rai and Sushmita Sen became Miss World and Miss Universe respectively.



"Painting is my roadmap to an identity and individuality. Colors give me the freedom to explore and cross boundaries. Having an avid fondness for all natural beauty, I try to depict the best I can. But in my trying, I realize that the creation of one's own mind can bring peace, harmony, joy and happiness to one's soul and being. This I want to share with all."

She has worked all her life as a school teacher, but her passion has always been the brush and the canvas. Recently, she had the distinct honor of hosting a one person exhibition sponsored by the Art and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County in California – a recognition that she has arrived at her destination, come of identity, and is noted amongst her peers.

Following her dreams she was awarded a diploma in Fine Arts from the Pakistan School of Arts. During the 1970s she held several one person shows in Karachi and in time gained national recognition. Along with her family and herself, she took her passion to the US and after an absence of 20 years, came to return to her love of creation. She has been awarded several first and second places in art associations in California.

To see such zeal, commitment, talent and the pursuit of talent is such a joy to one, especially when that someone happens to be your mother. She is **Gulmoher B. Gandhi**, my mother of whom I am so proud. I congratulate her and remain in awe of such persistence, dedication and love of one's dreams and aspirations.

- Jamshed Behram Gandhi, Martinez, California

On January 25th, acclaimed orchestra conductor **Maestro Zubin Mehta**, was awarded India's second highest civilian award of Padma Vibhushan, by the Government of India, in recognition of his great achievements in the field of music. Former US ambassador **John Galbraith** was also awarded the Padma Vibhushan.

Phiroze Vasunia [right] a PhD from Stanford and professor of Classics at the University of Southern California, is all set to hit Hollywood. With co-writer Mumbai-born



film maker Michelle Taghioff, 34-year-old Phiroze has just sold the first draft of their screenplay "Titan" to Kinowelt USA, a Hollywood production

company. Titan is based on the myth of Perseus and his quest to battle both Medusa and the Kraken monster to save princess Andromeda. Phiroze

Triumph over Discrimination



The Life Story of Farhang Mehr

By Lylah M. Alphonse

Review by Shahrokh Mehta
Syracuse, New York

The story of his life, as told by Farhang Mehr, is the story of a lone Zarathushti's struggle against the constitution of Iran, which denies minorities the right to hold high political, judicial, or military positions. Mehr encounters this discrimination throughout his career, yet maneuvers his way to high level positions in government, industry, and academia.

It is a story of an honest but ambitious Zarathushti activist, growing up under the newly formed Pahlavi dynasty of Reza Shah and later serv-

Events ... [Contd from page 115]

has also written the soon to be released "The Gift of the Nile", a book on Greek perceptions of Egypt in the fifth century BCE, and is currently contemplating a project on the Greek and Latin sources of Zoroastrianism. Phiroze is the son of Hosi Vasunia, a well known theatre personality of Mumbai.

Governor Bush has nominated an Iranian, **Faryar Shirzad** as Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Import Administration. ■

TRIUMPH OVER DISCRIMINATION

The Life Story of Farhang Mehr

By Lylah M. Alphonse

Paperback, 250 pp., 34 black & white photographs.

(This book is sponsored as a Legacy Project of WZC 2000 by Hilda and Rumi Sethna through the WZO.)

\$13, plus S&H. Contact: Dolly Dastoor at dastoor@total.net or 450- 656-2036 in Canada and Lylah M. Alphonse at 617-771-5463 or email LMAlphonse@hotmail.com in the US.

Website:

www.lylahmalphonse.comΔ119

ing his son Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi (The Shah of Iran) as one of his confidants.

His narrative is told against the backdrop of the occupation of Iran during the Second World War, the coup d'état of 1953, the assassination of his close friend the Prime Minister, the civil disobedience and student protests, the Islamic revolution, and finally life in USA as an academician and world Zarathushti community's elder statesman.

From the time of receiving a prize as a sixth grader from Reza Shah to his first encounter with then Crown Prince Mohammad Reza Shah at a 'rigged' soccer match, Mehr talks in detail about his various appointments and disappointments during a period when Iran became increasingly important to the west, both economically and strategically.

A man of high principles and impeccable work ethics, Mehr takes the readers on a journey of his first 58 years in Iran as a student activist, editor, community leader, nationalist, author, lawyer, professor, governor of OPEC, Vice-Minister, bureaucrat, chancellor, and Iran's first and only

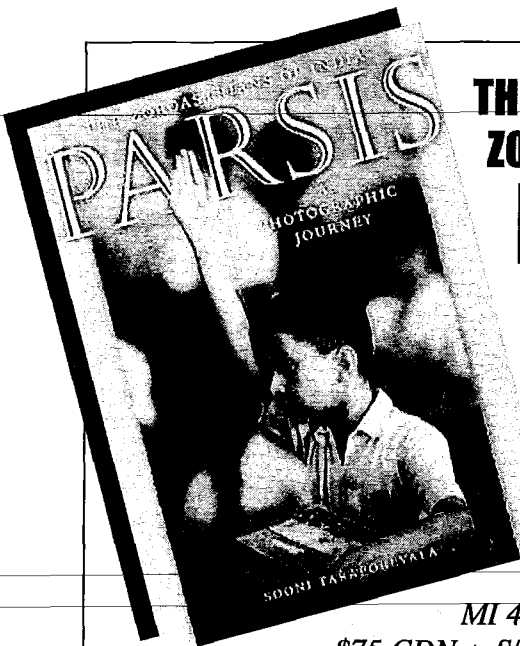
Deputy Prime Minister. As a troubleshooter, problem solver, and trusted technocrat, Mehr's distinguished record in fighting corruption speaks for itself. Although critical in retrospect of many of the Shah's policies, he served the Monarch with loyalty and devotion.

The book also talks about Mehr's reluctant encounters with the Shah's notorious secret police – the SAVAK, his obscure life in Iran's post revolution period due to unfounded accusations, his torturous journey out of Iran into freedom, and finally starting his new life in United States.

Mehr's passion for his religion of birth and of choice has always been admirable. Mehr concludes his story with a message to the world Zarathushti community, especially to the youth: "The acceptance of people born to non-Zarathushti parents is not a threat to the survival of the religion – the tradition of non-acceptance is a threat to our very existence." Mehr further states that "the threat to community solidarity comes, then, not from freethinking, but from intolerance."

The book is a real eye-opener for those readers who have only known Farhang Mehr in the west and will now learn about Farhang Mehr in Iran. Mehr lost and won many battles against discrimination in the country of his birth but may have won the final victory in the country of his adoption; all of Mehr's closest colleagues at the highest level of government in Iran were either assassinated, imprisoned, or are in exile. It will be for the readers to decide the extent to which Farhang Mehr really did 'Triumph over Discrimination.' ■

Shahrokh Mehta lived in Iran from 1965 to 1980. He first met Farhang Mehr over 30 years ago in Tehran, at the Tehran Zoroastrian Center during the time of the Shah's coronation. Shahrokh quickly learned that in Tehran's elite business and government communities, the name 'Farhang Mehr' was synonymous with 'Zarathushti' which in turn was synonymous with 'honesty.'



THE ZOROASTRIANS OF INDIA PARSIS

A PHOTOGRAPHIC JOURNEY
By Sooni Taraporevala

Hardcover, 175 photographs, 252 pages. A Legacy Project of WZC 2000. In US, \$50 USD + \$7 S/H from Pesi Sanjana, 28263 Golf Point Blvd, Farmington Hills,

MI 48331, ericht@rust.net. In Canada: \$75 CDN + S/H from Dinaz Dotiwalla, 158 Chipwood Crescent, North York, Ontario M2J 3X7, tel: 416-494-1730, phiroze@home.com.

Website: www.parsijourney.com or email editor@parsijourney.com

Sooni Taraporevala, screenwriter of hit movies *Salaam Bombay*, *Mississippi Masala* and *Such a Long Journey*, has created a first-ever visual portrait of India's Parsi community. Her new book of photographs offers an insider's view of Parsi life in all its diversity – from industrialists of the past to creative artists of the present, from agiaries to living rooms, from the streets of Bombay to the villages of Gujarat. Over a period of twenty years, Taraporevala has captured the faces, voices and unique culture of the Parsis in this critically acclaimed coffee table book.

The Sunday Times of India ...

"*Parsis*" boasts of unique shots - candid pics of people that say a lot more about Parsis and their way of life than thousands of words ever could ..."

India Today ...

"... a lavish, unabashedly nostalgic picture book ... History is nimbly woven with personal anecdotes and interviews in her wistful prose."

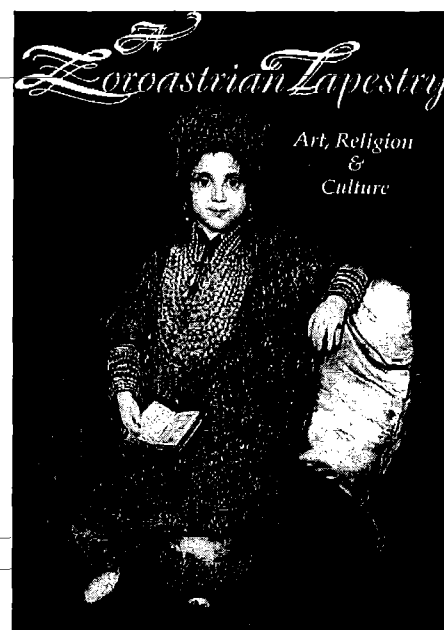
FEZANA Journal reader Dinaz Rogers of Albany, Oregon ...

"... I started going through it and was so excited I had to share it with someone. So I took it over to my uncle's. After the first few pics he started to laugh and laugh, almost a boyish giggle – the young priests reminded him of himself, and some even had a slight resemblance to him.

"A little later on looking at The People (Our People) that we all left behind, he felt a little sad and nostalgic, almost felt like crying. Maybe we should all heed what Mahatma Ghandhi reportedly said, that is quoted on page 9: 'In numbers Parsis are beneath contempt, but in contribution, beyond compare.'

"The journey begins with Young Priests, then takes a leisurely stroll through The Faith and the Faithful, The City, Legends, The Village, Generation Next, Rites of Passage and the Last Journey.

"Hate to be trite but 'a picture *is* worth a thousand words' – the book left me wanting for, in Oliver Twist's famous words, '**MORE PLEASE**'" ■



A ZOROASTRIAN TAPESTRY

Art, Religion & Culture

*Edited by Pheroza
Godrej and Firoza
Punthakey Mistree*

A Legacy Project of WZC 2000. Over 675 pages, nearly 1000 color illustrations, bibliography, glossary. ISBN 1-890206-22-9.

Price approx. \$175 (volume discounts available). SPECIAL OFFER TO FEZANA JOURNAL READERS UNTIL MAY 31st IS \$100. Contact pjgodrej@godrej.com or Antique Collectors' Club, Market Street Industrial Park, Wappingers' Falls, New York 12590, tel: 845-297-0003, email: info@antiquecc.com, website: www.antiquecc.com.

This monumental work documents 3,500 years of history and heritage from Ancient Times, the Greeks, Medieval Sogdians, Persian Empires, Mythology, Literary Treasures, interactions with Hinduism, Judaism and Christianity, the Arab Conquest, the Kurds, 20th century Iran, Rituals, Costumes, Theater and Art. ■



The Gatha Translation Committee presents ...

The Gatha Translation Committee is pleased to announce its intent to sponsor a book about the *University of Ghundi Shahpour*, written by **Dr. Mehraban Shahrivini** [photo above]. The University was a 'shimmering star' in fourth century Persia during the Sasanian dynasty.

This book sets a precedent as being the first truly factual text regarding this subject. Its contents will leave a lasting impression on history for generations to come.

After publication, complimentary copies of the book will be sent to Zoroastrian anjumans and associations worldwide. A copy of the book will be furnished to each individual who graciously donated to the Gatha Translation Committee. In addition, hundreds of copies will appear in Iranian and Indian universities and libraries as well as other world-renowned institutions. This book will further inform the world of our ancestry's great accomplishments.

With Ahura Mazda's will, this worthy undertaking will conclude this year.

*On behalf of the
Gatha Translation Committee
Hooshang Harvesf, Ph.D.
Jacksonville, Florida*

PORTRAIT OF A COMMUNITY

A Pictorial Record of Parsi Heritage

The rich heritage of the Parsi community and the important role it has played in India's history is reflected in many portraits that were mainly painted in Western India circa 1850 onwards. Many of these paintings continue to be displayed in homes, fire temples and public institutions. However, several of these paintings are in a state of decay and others remain undiscovered.

This project is designed to locate and document paintings that are of great importance to the community, and wherever possible, to restore those which have a special significance. It is intended that the research initiated by this project will form a base for an ongoing study of the Parsi community. The project hopes to identify paintings of historical value; collect biographical data on the paintings; document the paintings in pho-

tographs; and compile a comprehensive database, on a cdrom. It will also help and advise on restoration of

paintings. Selected paintings will be exhibited at Mumbai's National Gallery of Modern Art.

FUNDS NEEDED!

Estimated project cost is approx. \$30,000. Contributions, large and small, will be gratefully accepted. Donations over \$1000 will be acknowledged in the catalog. Help is sought from interested persons worldwide to ensure that



Dhunjibhoy Coursetjee Shroff with his son Ardheshir, daughter Maneckbai and baby son Dorabji.

the vibrant, colorful history of the Parsis is well represented and endures for future generations to understand and respect. The project was initiated by *Chemould Trust*, with *World Zoroastrian Cultural Foundation [WZCF]* and *National Gallery of Modern Art, Mumbai*. Contact, in Mumbai (91-22) 284 4356 or email: portraitofa-community@hotmail.com. ■

"BREAD FOR THE PARENTS' HEAD" by Meher Amalsad

Following his successful book *"Bread for the Head"*, **Meher Amalsad** plans to inspire us now with a 2 1/2 hour audio program *"Bread for the Parents' Head"*, which is a live recording from a Radio Talk Show.

Using simple yet poignant anecdotes Meher conveys messages which strike a chord within every parent's heart. Using the principles of psychology, unconditional love, respect and equity, he highlights the critical impact of parenting on children. Here are some of his memorable quotes:

"Treat your child as a co-pilot of a plane rather than as a passenger of a train, only then you will visit places far beyond your imagination."

"We must forgive the being, and forget the doing, to create healing."

"Instead of guiding kids with strings attached, guide them with wings attached."

"Our children need more 'role models' instead of 'rule models'."

Available in mid-2001, it will make a valuable addition to any library. Contact babameher@prodigy.net. - By *Shaila Presswalla & Yesvy Gustasp*

PARSI STATUES by Marzban J. Giara

Hardcover, 336 pages, 240 color photographs, bibliography,
First Ed. 2000. Order from Marzban J. Giara, Dhunmai Building,
667 Lady Jehangir Road, Dadar, Mumbai 400 014. Tel: 416 6204;
Email: giara@bom5.vsnl.net.in.

Review by Dolly Dastoor
Brossard, Quebec

In all countries statues are a time-tested way of honoring their eminent citizens. But how many times have we passed by the frozen and immobile statues in marble or bronze, of men and women in the streets of any city we visit? How many times have we stopped to think who might these people have been while they were alive. **Marzban Giara** did just that, when he took a walking trail of Parsi landmarks around Mumbai in February 1998, organized by the British Council. The result is this magnificent book "Parsi Statues", with 240 full color photos, giving us the collective history of the community from 1763 with the birth of Cursetjee Manockjee Shroff, to the death of Shapoorji Fakirji Jokhi in 1990.

The life stories behind these statues give the community their pride in the

indefatigable spirit of honesty, industry, hard work, perseverance and determination that distinguished their ancestors, their stories give us all a place to stand upon. The description of each statue so painstakingly researched by Giara, gives details of why and when each statue was erected, where it is located, who unveiled it, who sculpted it and a life sketch of each person.

With three years of intense research, in libraries, old magazines, on the internet, personal contacts and visits, Mr. Giara has brought to light the contributions of Zarathushti men and women immortalized in statues – truly a collector's item.

In *Parsi Statues*, we learn of the contribution and philanthropy of whole families – the Tatas, the Wadias, the Petits, the Jeejeebhoyas, Sir Cowasjee Jehangir and his family. We learn of the individual contributions of giants like Sir Phirozshah Mehta, Dadab-

PARSI STATUES



hoy Naoroji [on cover]. Kharshedji R. Cama, Sir Shapurji F. Bharucha – they built bridges, they built atash bahrams, they built hospitals, they built schools, they became administrators, builders, businessmen, doctors, educationists, industrialists, patriots, poets, scientists and social reformers. They all helped build Mumbai, all 134 of them.

The book also describes statues in cities of India other than Mumbai; of Shapur I; Firdowsi; Maneckji Hataria

Cut Here

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and Pestonji Marker in Iran; Ardeshir Mama, Navroji Pochaji, Shapurji Soparivala and his sons, Khan Bahadur Katrak, in Karachi.

An excellent compilation, in color, of commemorative stamps and First Day covers of Zarathushtis issued by India, Pakistan and Iran between 1950 and 2000 completes the contemporary history of the community.

The book vibrates with love and pride for the Zarathushti community which Giara wants to share with his readers. Besides being an excellent coffee table item, the book should be seen in all libraries of schools and institutions and given as prizes for competitions to instill communal pride in the next generation.

The community owes Marzban Giara a debt of gratitude for enriching the social/historical wealth of the community by producing at his own expense treasures like "The Global Directory of Zoroastrian Fire Temples", the "Zoroastrian Pilgrim's Guide", and now "Parsi Statues". Thank you Mr Giara! ■



Tenaz Dubash [left] and Anahita Deboo at filming of "Footsteps" at tomb of Cyrus the Great.

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF OUR FOREFATHERS

By Tenaz H. Dubash

60-minute video documentary. \$20 plus shipping, order from TDubash@aol.com; also on www.zarathushtra.com.

"Footsteps" captures the journey of 34 young Zarathushtis from North America, who travel through Iran in search of their religious and cultural roots. The collective passion of these young pilgrims for their ancestral homeland is brought out as the film explores their thoughts and feelings through this incredible journey.

On a shoestring budget writer/producer Tenaz Dubash, has produced a truly remarkable film of historical and popular interest to Zarathushtis and non-Zarathushtis alike. Proceeds from the sale of the video at WZC 2000 (\$6535) were used to repay a FEZANA loan (\$2,400), donated to the Youth and Sports Group in Tehran (\$2067) and donated to the FEZANA Critical Assistance Fund (\$2067). Thanks, Tenaz for giving of your time, talents and finances in the service of your community and your religion. ■

----- Cut Here -----

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