

FEZANA



JOURNAL

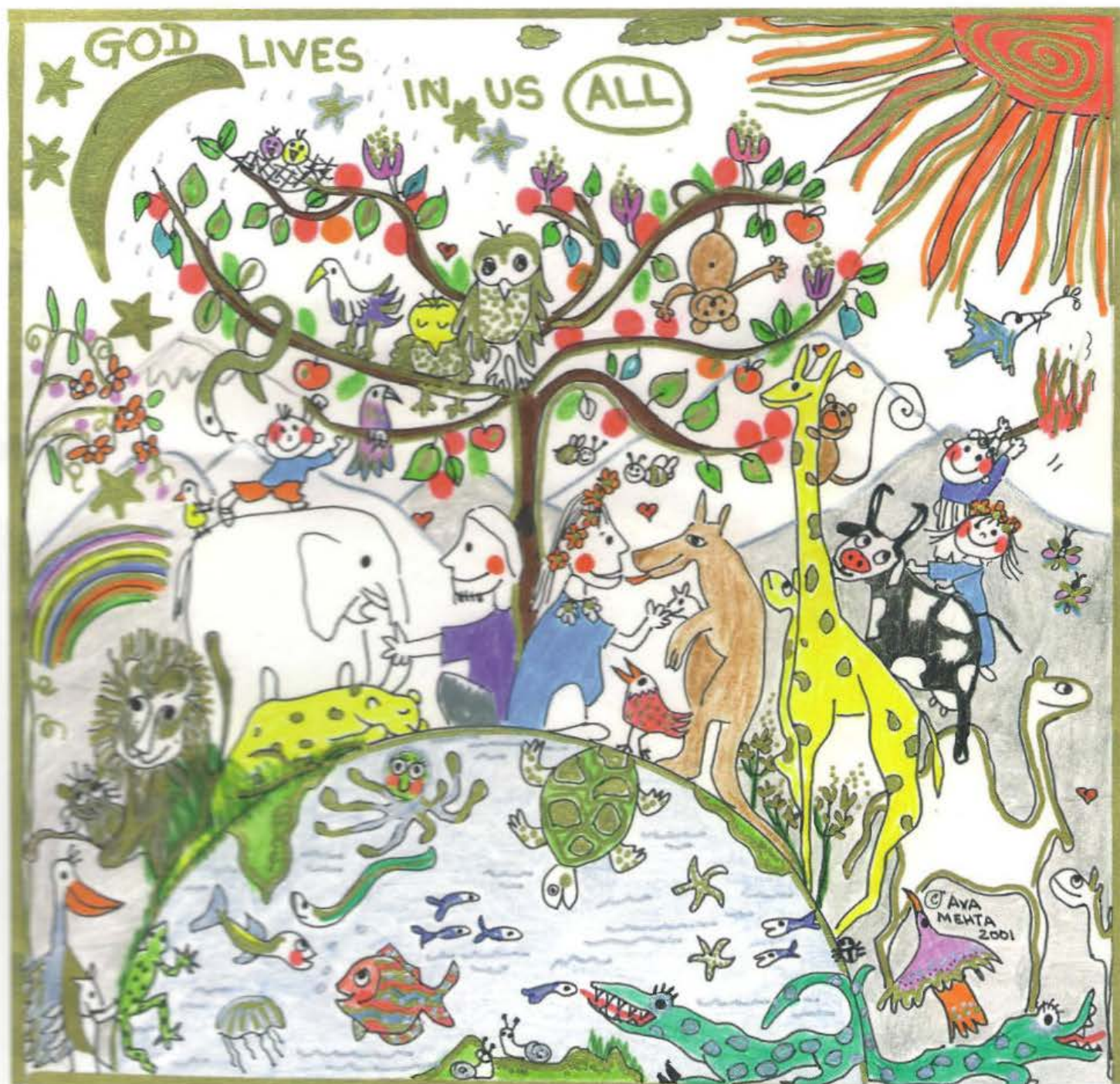
SUMMER 2001, TABESTAN 1370 YZ

Mah Tir-Amardad-Sherevar 1370 YZ (Fasli)

Mah Bahman-Asfandarmad 1370, Fravardin 1371 YZ (Shenshai)

Mah Asfandarmad 1370, Fravardin-Ardibehesht 1371 YZ (Kadmi)

Zarathushtra's Vision and the Issues of Our Time



PUBLICATION OF THE FEDERATION OF ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA

Common values. Isn't it truly remarkable that in the cradle of civilization (in the area of modern-day Iran), our prophet Zarathushtra delivered a message that is as fresh and relevant today, as it was when it was given, 3500 years ago? And it never ceases to amaze me how many of the values and teachings held dear by Zarathushtis are the very same ones cherished by Americans and Canadians, in today's modern world.

The religion of Zarathushtra is a positive, life-affirming, active-principled one, demanding **action**, and not asceticism, from its followers. Americans and Canadians too, are a spirited and action-oriented people. Very much like the North American enterprise system, Zarathushtra also rewards hard work and **industry**. The accumulation of wealth is not frowned upon, as long as it is achieved with honesty and integrity and used for promoting good.

Zarathushtra speaks of the ongoing struggle between the forces of *Spenta Mainyu* and *Angra Mainyu*, the coeval forces of **good and evil**. North American systems as well, are built upon checks and balances and a sound judicial system.

He has the highest regard for *Vohu Mana*, the '**good mind**', and enjoins man to think and reason for himself, before he can believe. This concept is so far ahead of his time, and so much in step with the American and Canadian ethos of developing the questioning mind, intelligence, knowledge and learning, rather than blind faith – a concept that makes the ancient religion so appealing to the younger generation of today. **Charity** and philanthropy, devotional service to humanity and volunteerism are ingrained in the Zarathushti psyche,

as they are among the larger community in the USA and Canada.

Above all, Zarathushtra was the first to emphasize harmony between man and nature. This is a major issue of the 21st century. Our prophet proclaimed an almost obsessive **respect for all creation** – the elements, the sun, the earth, fire and the waters. He taught us how to fit into nature's cycle. He taught us how to conserve and value our precious natural resources. He taught us good hygiene and clean practices. This was 35 centuries before OSHA and before environmental consciousness became a buzz word.

No wonder then, that we find North America to be such a hospitable place to practice our faith.

Rights and responsibilities.

Enshrined in the Constitution of the United States, are certain 'inalienable' rights, freedoms and liberties. The first ten amendments to the US Constitution, known as the "Bill of Rights", passed in 1791, ensure certain rights, among them: freedom of speech and the press, freedom in the exercise of religion, the right of people to assemble, the right to bear arms and more ...

What is often troubling to me, though, about the "Bill of Rights" is the lack of a corresponding "Bill of Responsibilities". The hackneyed assertion of these rights has often led to ludicrous tolerance of abuse (such as burning of the American flag, desecratory "works of art", defamation of the establishment and such, that we see on the news much too often). 'Rights, liberties and freedoms' are fine, but what about the attendant 'responsibilities'? We see how they can be abused unless grounded in responsibility.

Zarathushtra grants man many of the same freedoms, e.g:

Hear with your ears the
Highest Truths I preach,
And with illumined minds weigh
them with care,
Before you choose which of
two Paths to tread,
Deciding man by man,
each one for each –
Before the great New Age
is ushered in
Wake up, alert to spread
Ahura's word."

[Ys. 30.2, Taraporewalla]

However, as he grants these freedoms, Zarathushtra goes some steps further; he also grants man the tools (*Vohu Mana*, the 'good mind' and *Asha*, righteousness) to make the right choice:

"I seek Thy Teachings true
through Vohu Mana
Through Asha's wisdom,
seek the Goal of Life ..."

[Ys. 44.8, Taraporewalla]

And further, he grounds these freedoms in responsibility. More so than 'inalienable rights', Zarathushtra grants to his followers, '**inalienable responsibilities**'. He makes man ultimately responsible for his choice. In this life and in the hereafter, man reaps the consequences of his actions:

"The Righteous Soul shall
triumph and shall gain
Life Everlasting; but the
False shall find
Pain e'er renewed; –
thus Mazda Ahura
Supreme in Strength, hath laid
down this, His Law."

[Ys 45.7, Taraporewalla]

With such a profound, and yet entirely practical message, is it any wonder then that the vision of Zarathushtra has been kept alive for millennia, through the vicissitudes of time, and continues to attract and keep our youth in this modern day and age. ■

Roshan Rivetna
Editor-in-Chief



Our Common Bonds

The continuing social well being of our community depends on our ability to remain a community in both name and spirit. A community is a group that is one, because all members recognize some essential aspects of their lives, beliefs or practices as common elements that unite them. Our common bonds are the religion propagated by the prophet Zarathushtra and the many aspects of our social life, which are shared by a good number of the communal group.

With the passage of time, beliefs and practices change, which may cause shocks to the integrity of a community. At that point, what saves the community is a deeply held commitment to maintaining its existence. This calls for mutually respectful understanding and rational exchange with tolerance for divergent views.

If you read the local papers from Mumbai, you might be alarmed by the intensity with which opposing points of view are discussed and explained. This is also true of our North American Zarathushti community. Views exchanged and positions taken at various meetings, during conferences and in e-mails would lead you to believe that we don't respect opinions contrary to our own. These days, one hardly ever comes across the centrist's point of view on any substantive issue. We have very little tolerance for a point of view contrary to our own. We have a tendency to disregard an opinion expressed on a doctrinal issue by a learned priest or a lay persons well versed in the scriptures, as "they have not changed with time". We have seen this attitude time and time again.

We do have disagreements, which is perfectly understandable. But the attitude of tolerance and rationality is

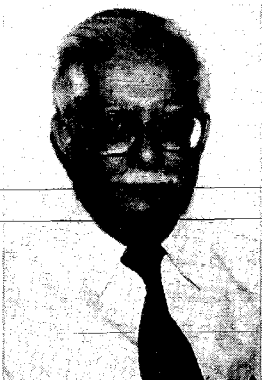
sadly absent. Why can't we believe as my late mother Goolbai ingrained in her children: "Why cannot you believe that I could be right, I am not saying that I am right." Instead of rational, we have offensive exchanges. We should resolve to

agree on whatever we can, and be reconciled to accept divergence where we cannot. We cannot expect that in an age of instant communication, we will not have any different points of view on subjects affecting our community.

"Herodotus wrote of our 2500 year old ancestors – the Hakhamenians – that

they were valiant and courageous in envisaging changing times and circumstances and in conditioning their lives according to the country and age in which they lived. Then let us, as their rightful heirs, follow in their footsteps and learn from their leadership that there is grace, dignity and wisdom in fashioning our lives according to the demands of this twentieth century" [From *'The Saga of a Soul, An Autobiography'*, 1975, Dastur Dr. Dhalla Memorial Institute, Karachi].

The need of the hour is an attitude of understanding, tolerance and commitment to rational conflict resolution! It will come with goodwill rather than the desire to resume one's position by debating maneuvers. This requires a change in our conceptions, our personal stature and our social function. But if we fail here, we shall have several independent Zarathushti groups and the disappearance of our community.



I would like to invite you to read a piece on the Op-Ed page of The New York Times of December 16. The joint-authors were Howard H Baker, John C. Danforth, republicans, and Sam Nunn, Robert S. Strauss, democrats. The title of their thought provoking article was: "Give the People What They Want: The Center". This letter was written after the United States had weathered a storm that would have sunk a less stable country. The election was over. The nation had a new President. America, as a nation, saw the close election as a mandate to work together, to come together, to find those areas of national interests that don't divide Americans, but rather unite us.

The article goes on to mention, "the new administration will need to put together a large, stable coalition from both sides of the aisle, isolating extremes in favor of consensus. The platform of this administration should be that of moderation." The article then quotes the haunting words President John F. Kennedy wrote but never lived to deliver: "Let us not quarrel amongst ourselves, with our nation's future at stake." It is time to heed those words, starting right now.

It is my fervent hope that Zarathushti Bakers, Danforths, Nunns and Strausses, the leaders of Zarathushti centrist coalition, will prevail in uniting the community.

Dade din beh Mazdayasni: agahi ravai go afargani baad. Hafta keshwar zamin. Aedun-baa d.

May the knowledge, practice and fame of the commandments of the Mazdayasni religion ever increase all over the world and pervade the people of all seven continents.

Amen. ■

Framroze K. Patel
President, FEZANA

Business Manager for FEZANA JOURNAL

We are deeply grateful to Jamshed Gandhi for serving as Business Manager for the past four years, diligently promoting advertisements and sponsorships for the Journal. We now look forward to working with Mahrukh Motafram, who has graciously accepted this vital position on the Journal team.

Golden Group in Houston

Houstonians had the first meeting of their "Golden Group" on May 13th at the Zarathushti Center. The invitations read thus:

Your children have grown up
And you have raised them well
Entrepreneur or Professional,
Married or Single
They are on their own and
successful, as everyone can tell.
With no care in the world
You still have zest to enjoy
Come to the meeting at 2:30 on
Sunday, May 13 to tell us
How your ideas we can employ.
Picnic, outing, travel, or cruise
Or just meet and exchange news.
Want to talk about the time when
you wanted to impress your boss
Your son came out and said
Dad is he the one you said
is a total loss?
So, come and join the fun
For now it is your turn
To embarrass your son.

[Manashni, Houston, April 2001]

Zarathushtis come together in Portland, OR

Last Sunday we were in Portland for our March 21st Nouruz party and something happened that I have been wishing and hoping for, for the last few years.

Someone suggested: "What is the point of meeting twice a year just to

socialize and eat? What about our kids, discussing our faith, giving to charities? Everyone agreed and showed much enthusiasm. "What have we done for our brothers and sisters back home? Parsi General Hospital? The madressa in Dadar?"

We discussed what happened at the Houston Congress (some friends and family members had gone and told their relatives here in Portland about it). Every one was anxious to get their copy of FEZANA Journal and read more about it. Others took down the address to send in for their own copy of the Journal.

We decided to meet more than twice a year. Two very enthusiastic young brothers from Calcutta, Dinyar and Noshir Mehta, said they'd love to do religious classes for us all.

Every time we meet we have pledged to contribute \$10/family, and looking at the pictures in Sooni Tarporevala's book "*Parsis*", we felt that our young dastooors-in-training deserve the money for art supplies and other necessities. So we collected some dollars then and there and Navzer from Bandra, an accountant, will take care of that end.

Thus, after a hearty meal of *kolmi-na curry chaval* (shrimp curry rice) and much more, ZOO (or maybe ZORO) was born – **Zoroastrian Organiza-**

tion of Oregon. We will be asking others who have been there before about the paperwork and formalities, and we'll let FEZANA know to count us in.

- Dinaz Kutar Rogers

Pir Sabz in Vancouver

For the fifth year, Vancouver area Zarathushtis will celebrate the annual Pir Sabz tradition, at Shannon Falls, in West Vancouver, Canada, on June 17th. The program will include prayers, games, learning to make the traditional 'sirog', songs, dances, "Choobo Falak" and more. Coincidentally, it will also be Father's Day, and there will be special programs for fathers too. Contact Feraydoon Demehri at (604) 926-9891.

New chapter begins for New York Zarathushtis

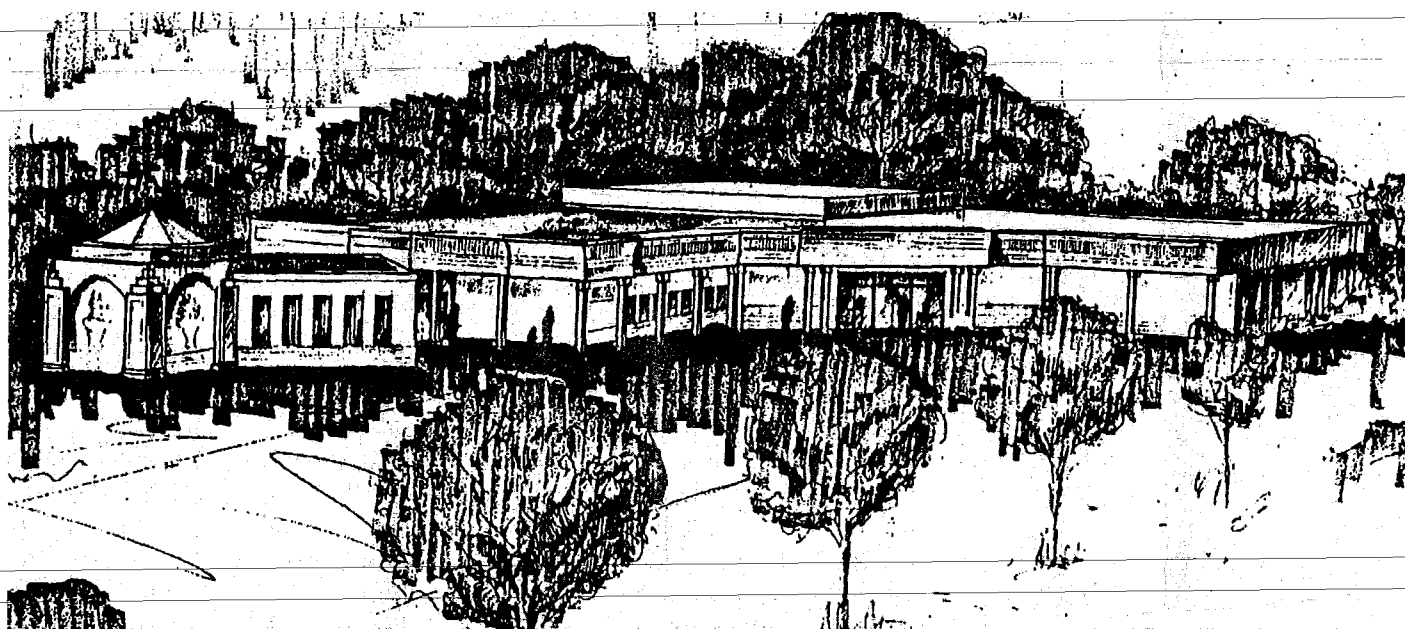
On June 17th, New York area Zarathushtis will bid farewell to their Darbe Mehr in New Rochelle with a jashan at 10:30 am. Everyone will then proceed to the new Darbe Mehr in Pomona, where there will be another prayer, followed by lunch. The Darbe Mehr in New Rochelle was purchased in 1977, making it the first Darbe Mehr to be established on this continent. The new Pomona property was purchased in March [see *FEZANA Journal*, Spring 2001].



■ INTERFAITH ■

Thanksgiving Square

Thanks to *Mobed Poras Balsara* of Dallas, members of the Interfaith Group of Thanksgiving Square in downtown Dallas, know a great deal more about the religion of Zarathushtra. During the presentation of our religion, in an easy-to-understand format, the questions put to Poras were not only indicative of the interest in our religion, but also showed that the group had read up on Zarathushtra. [From ZANT newsletter] ■



Zoroastrian Center and Darb-e-Mehr of Metropolitan Washington (ZCDMW) with the help of many friends of the Zarathushti religion obtained the zoning permit for building a new Center, in Vienna, Virginia, on January 16. ZCDMW is working very hard to begin construction of the new Center [architect's sketch is shown above]. Project Coordinator Khodarahm Shahryary writes: "It is very much needed that all Zoroastrians help in the construction of the new Center by donating funds." Please send your (tax-deductible) donation check (no cash) to ZCDMW, P.O. Box 16998, Washington, DC 20041.



Fundraiser for ZANT (Dallas) Center. Left, Aloo Desai of Dallas makes a "Multi-Family Garage Sale" sign for the garage sale [photo right] held earlier this year to benefit the building fund for the proposed ZANT Center. The Building Committee has been looking at sites and have located three that merit further consideration. The Garage Sale was one of numerous fundraisers (raffles, bazaars, melas and more) planned by ZANT members to boost the Building fund which now stands at \$96,000 to date. "In the spirit of Asha, let us get together to plan, coordinate and follow through with these events," writes ZANT social director Zenobia Irani, "We have the skill, the will, and the know-how to make these fundraisers a fun filled event." Contact ZANT president Meherban Roshanravan at (972) 462-1475.

COMING EVENTS

Kankash Youth Camp

Council of Iranian Mobeds will hold a youth camp at the San Jose Dar-e-Mehr, July 26 - 29, \$125. Contact Mehran Mazdyasni at (858) 793-4492.

Next Youth Congress

ZYNA proposes to hold the next *North American Youth Congress* July 3-6, 2003 in the US or Canada. No date or place has yet been set for the next *World Youth Congress*. There is interest from Iran and UK to host it. For further information contact ZYNA co-chair Sherazade Mehta at sherazadem@yahoo.com

Next World Congress

India, UK and Iran have all indicated interest in hosting the next world congress. ZTFE president Dorab Mistry appealed to India's BPP to consider the UK's strong case to host congress, which they did. Mistry writes: "... may I express our profound gratitude and appreciation of the support extended by you to ZTFE's bid to host the 8th World Zoroastrian Congress ... Your large-hearted decision to support ZTFE's bid will send an exciting signal to our Zoroastrian youth in the UK and in Europe ..." Mistry feels that since the 6th Congress was held in Iran in 1996, Iran will also respond favorably to ZTFE's bid.

IN COMING ISSUES OF FEZANA JOURNAL

Fall 2001:

The Zarathushti Commitment
Guest editor: Kaikhosrov D. Irani

Winter 2001:

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

Calendar of Festivals June - December

Maidhyarem Gahambar

Mah Daye, Roz Meher-Behram Sat Jun 2 - Wed Jun 6 (S)

Homaji Baj

Mah Daye, Roz Govad Sun Jun 10 (S)

Pir Sabz Festival

Mah Khordad, Roz Ashtad-Aneran Thu Jun 14 - Mon Jun 18 (F)

Pir Banu Festival

Mah Tir, Roz Meher-Behram Wed Jul 4 - Sun Jul 8 (F)

Maidyoshem Gahambar

Mah Tir, Roz Khorshed-Daepmeher Fri Jun 29 - Tue Jul 3 (F)

Jashne Tirgan

Mah Tir, Roz Tir Sun Jul 1 (F)

Fravardegan/Mukhtad/Hamaspathmedayem Gahambar

Gatha Ahunavad - Vahishtoish Tue Jul 17 - Sat Jul 21 (K)
Thu Aug 16 - Mon Aug 20 (S)

Pateti - Navroze

Mah Fravardin, Roz Hormazd Sun Jul 22 (K)
Tue Aug 21 (S)

Khordad Sal (Birthday of Zarathushtra)

Mah Fravardin, Roz Khordad Fri Jul 27 (K)
Sun Aug 26 (S)

Fravardian Jashan

Mah Fravardin, Roj Fravardin Thu Aug 9 (K)
Sat Sep 8 (S)

Maidyozarem Gahambar

Mah Ardibehesht, Roj Khorshed - Daepmeher
Fri Aug 31 - Tue Sep 4 (K)
Sun Sep 30 - Thu Oct 4 (S)

Paitishem Gahambar

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

Jashne-Mehergan

Mah Meher, Roj Meher Tue Oct 2 (F)

Ayathrem Gahambar

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

Jashne-Avangan (Avan Ardivisur Parab)

Mah Avan, Roj Avan Fri Oct 26 (F)

Maidyoshem Gahambar

Mah Tir, Roj Khorshed - Daepmeher
Tue Oct 30 - Sat Nov 3 (K)
Thu Nov 29 - Mon Dec 3(S)

Jashne-Adargan

Mah Adar, Roj Adar Sat Nov 24 (F)

Death Anniversary of Zarathushtra

Mah Daye, Roj Khorshed Wed Dec 26 (F)

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

Spend Fourth of July 2002 in Chicago

12th North American Zoroastrian Congress

Wednesday July 4 - Saturday, July 7, 2002

Hyatt Regency Hotel, Chicago

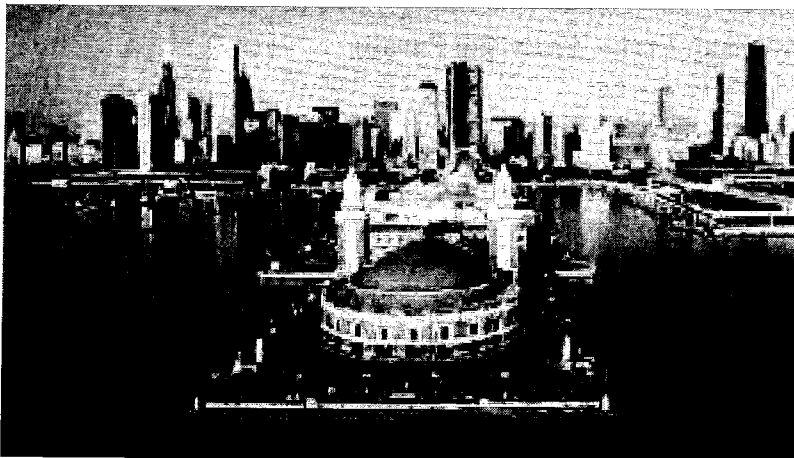


The venue for the 12th North American Zoroastrian Congress, to be held July 4 - 7, 2002 will be the Hyatt Regency Hotel, on East Wacker Drive, just off Chicago's "Magnificent Mile". It will be an ideal opportunity for your family to spend a few summer days in Chicago while attending the Congress. Enjoy the "Taste of Chicago" festival on the lakefront and the spectacular July 3rd fireworks display. Also worth visiting are the beautiful museums, art galleries, planetarium, aquarium and many, many more family-oriented attractions!

The exciting theme for the Congress is, *"Advancing Communities – Empowering Change"*. It will be an excellent opportunity for the young, the old and everyone in between, to come together and celebrate our heritage. The program promises to be enlightening with workshops, forums and panel discussions guided by our new young leaders to meet the challenges of the 21st century. The World Zarathushti Orchestra will be ready for another stirring performance.

Your financial support is needed to bring this all together. Please send your donation checks, made out to "Congress 2002 Fund", to ZAC, 8615 Meadowbrook Drive, Hinsdale, IL 60521. For more information see the ZAC web-site www.ZAC-Chicago.org/congress2002.

- Rashna Ghadiali, Chair, Congress 2002



History of Tirgan

In the Zarathushti tradition, whenever the name of the month (*Mah*) and the day (*Roz*) coincide, Zarathushtis celebrate with a festival and holiday. The fourth month of the Zarathushti *Fasli* calendar, *Tir* falls during June-July. *Tir Roz* is the thirteenth day, and falls every year on July 1st. This day is celebrated with the *Tirgan* festival.

The myth of Tir and Apaosha. *Tir*, or its archaic form *Tishtrya*, is the star Sirius, the brightest star in the constellation Canis Major. Its rising in southern Iran and the Indian Ocean heralds monsoon rains from June to September in the Indian subcontinent. Some 4,000 years ago, southern Iran also received the monsoons in summer. It has now receded eastward.

A long poetic piece in the Avesta, the *Tir Yasht*, composed in honor of the monsoons, records a fascinating myth. As the days of spring recede, dry, hot weather nears its peak. Apaosha, the demon of drought, governs the hazy blue sky. The grass lies scorched and the earth parched. People start praying for the rains. They pray to see the star Tir rise.

The prayers are heard, as the star finally makes its appearance – on June 22, the first day of the month of

Tir. It appears in the majestic form of a white stallion – erect ears, long mane, flowing tail and golden hoofs. But there stands in its path Apaosha – dark, bald, with no mane, and no tail. The fight begins. Their neighing shakes the world. Their hoofs pound the earth. The fight begins. For ten days and ten nights, the kicking and biting continues unabated.

Meanwhile, here on earth, the people pray for Tir's victory. Their prayers are answered. On the day of Tir (July 1), the rains come. Tir, lord of the clouds and rains, is victorious, and Apaosha, the demon of death and drought, is vanquished.

The legend of Arash. There is another legend linked with the Tirgan festival. The Iranians fought the Turanians, the nomadic tribes of central Asia for centuries. During the reign of King Manouchehr, the Turanians had an upper hand in the war. A truce was called and it was agreed that the boundary between the two warring factions would be determined by shooting an arrow. Wherever the arrow fell would be the demarcation line.

An Iranian youth, Arash, volunteered to shoot the arrow. The location was on the peak of Mt. Demavand (20



PHOTO: SHAH NAMA OF FIRDOOSI BY DR. BAHMAN SOHRAB SURTI

King Manouchehr

miles northeast of Tehran, the capital of Iran) at a height of 18,000 feet. On the bright morning of the day of Tirgan, Arash stripped naked, faced north, strained his bow with all his might and let the arrow fly. Then, exhausted, he fell to the ground, dead.

The arrow flew the entire morning of Tirgan and touched the ground at noon, 1500 miles away, on the bank of the Oxus River, in what is now Central Asia. The river, thus remained the boundary between Iran and Turan for centuries, until the Mongol hordes poured in to push the Iranians southward in the 10th century.

A tradition is born. During the reign of Firuz, the Sasanian king in the 7th century, a seven-year drought overtook Iran. Thousands starved to death. Precisely on the day of Tir, the rains came and doused the parched land.

Iranian Zoroastrians commemorate this day as the Festival of Tirgan, with merrymaking, having a picnic by the water, playfully sprinkling water (*aubrizan*) and drenching each other; and by remembering the story of Arash the Archer, who fell for his country, Iran. ■

[From ZANT Newsletter, Dallas, 1999]

Second Zarathushti Unity Cup Soccer

September 2 and 3, 2001
in California

Eighth Zarathushti Games

Basketball, Volleyball, Track & Field and more ...

July 3-7, 2002, in Los Angeles, California

For more information, look at

www.fezana.org

Email: zsc@fezana.org

Observing the Fravardegan Days

By Noshir Dadrawala
Mumbai, India

The last ten days of the Zarathushti calendar (i.e., Roz Astad to Aneran and the five days named after the five Gathas) are considered to be very holy, as doctrinally it is believed that during this period, the *fravashis* of the righteous dead come down from their spiritual world into this material world and bless all those who remember and pray for them. These days are known as the 'Fravardegan' or 'Muktad' days.

The five 'Gatha' days are: *Ahunavad* (possessing Ahunavar or the energy with which Ahura Mazda created this universe); *Ushtavad* (possessing divine happiness); *Spentomad* (possessing piety/devotion); *Vohu Khshathra* (possessing good spiritual power); and *Vahishtoisht* (possessing best spiritual riches).

Fravashi or farohar. During the Fravardegan or Muktad days, Parsis offer special prayers for the fravashis of their dear departed ones. The 'fravashi' or 'farohar' is the divine essence which is wholly pure and good. It is not to be confused with 'ruvan' or soul. The Avestan word 'fravashi' comes from the word 'fra' (to take forward) and 'vaksh' (to grow). In other words, fravashi is that spiritual essence or power that takes every good creation of Ahura Mazda forward and helps it to grow. Fravashi is also a prototype which is believed to have existed before the material creation. Even Ahura Mazda and His divine energies, the *Amesha Spentas* and the *Yazatas* are said to have their own fravashis. Plants, animals, mountains and rivers also have their own fravashi. They are the guardian spirits of the souls of the dead and protect and guide the souls of the living as well.

The *Rivayets* recommend six important religious duties for a Zarathushti,



Muktad table laden with flowers at the Zoroastrian Association of Chicago.

one of which is "remembering the fravashis of the departed on the fravardegan days."

Observance of Muktad. The Muktad days essentially center around the family and until a few decades ago, were observed largely at home. Today, with urbanization, small flats and difficulty in observing ritual purity at home, the focus has shifted from the home to the fire temple.

These days were holidays in the true sense of the word. Parsis would cut themselves away from worldly affairs and engage themselves in offering prayers, night and day. All houses would be cleaned, weeks in advance. Where possible, the walls would get a new coat of paint. Fire and incense would be kept burning, day and night, especially in that separate Muktad room where consecrated metal vases bearing clean well water and fresh flowers are kept on marble topped tables.

Flowers not only help keep the memory of a loved one green, but also create an atmosphere of peace, purity and love. With flowers, oil lamps, fire and the burning of incense, a virtual paradise is created on earth in honor of the visiting fravashis.

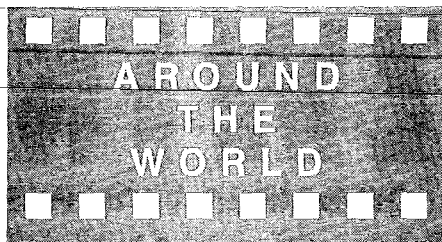
Parsis observe cleanliness and purity at the highest level during these days. All staunch orthodox families abstain from cutting hair and nails as also shaving, since nails and hair are doctrinally seen as *nasu* (a pollutant).

Muktad prayers. Traditionally, prayers should be offered in all the five 'gehs' (watches) of the day. During the first five days, the *Fra Mraot* [Chapter 20 of the *Yasna*] should be chanted or 1,200 *Ashem Vohu* should be offered. During the five Gatha days, the relevant Gatha or 1,200 *Yatha Ahu Vairyō* may be chanted. It is also considered meritorious to offer acts of charity in the name of the departed and offer *Patet* (repentance) for the soul of a near and dear loved one.

The last Gatha day is also known as 'Pateti' (the day for offering Patet – repentance for sins of omission and commission for the year which is to come to a close).

The New Year or Navroze (New Day) falls on the next day (i.e., Roz Hormazd, Mah Fravardin). This is the day of celebration, ushering in the New Year with much feasting and jubilation.

[Continued on page 94]



Iran-Austria Exhibit

The Iran National Museum held a cultural exhibit in Vienna from November to January, to display artifacts from ancient Iranian civilizations dating to seven thousand years ago. 188 artifacts, pottery, metal, stone, clay and gold items were on display. This exhibit was held following an agreement signed between the Iranian and Austrian presidents, on cultural cooperation. The next exhibit, covering from the fifth century to the contemporary era, will be held in Vienna in 2001. ■

[IRNA, November 2000]

Tours to Iran

Magic Carpet Travel Ltd. is a UK-based company specializing in group and tailor-made tours to Iran. They offer fully escorted tours so that visitors can fully enjoy the cultural, historical and religious purpose of their visit. Contact www.magic-carpet-travel.com, tel: 01344-622832; email: info@magic-carpet-travel.com. ■

Dig in Uzbekistan

Archeologist E. Lyle Radford of the University of Sydney, Australia, writes about their recent excavations at the religious site at Tash-Kirman in Uzbekistan.

"While a large number of mysteries remain, we are now certain of a few things:

- It is a fire temple!
- It was operational for 500-1000 years, based on the huge quantities of ash we have found inside sealed rooms.
- I uncovered two fire altars outside the central room of the complex.
- It will possibly take two more seasons before we are ready to enter the main building.
- Carbon dating above the building gives an early 4th century BCE date.
- Excavations have uncovered an even earlier structure, below this one."

Dr. Radford received an award from the Karakalpakstan government for promoting this site as the possible homeland of Zarathushtra.

Dr. Radford can be contacted at elradford@mail.usyd.edu.au. ■

Letter from Azerbaijan

Mr. Vugar Gurbanov of Baku, talks to FEZANA Journal about the religion of Zarathushtra in Azerbaijan [see Spring 2001, page 96].

FJ: *Are there any practicing Zarathushtis in Azerbaijan?*

VG: I think not. There is no Zarathushti group operating in Baku.

FJ: *What is the religion of the population in Azerbaijan?*

VG: The religion of Azerbaijan is Islam and the majority of them are Shiah muslims. There are Christians and Jews as well, who are free to practice their religious beliefs.

FJ: *Is there interest in the religion of Zarathushtra?*

VG: There is great interest, especially among the researchers for research purposes. But nobody is interested to practice it as a religion.

FJ: *What research is being done?*

VG: There has been a lot of research in Azerbaijan in this field and the number of books is increasing. I know an Azerbaijani who speaks good Pahlavi, and is translating the Avesta. My friend works at the Academy of Sciences and is writing a thesis on the Zarathushti religion.

FJ: *Do the Azerbaijanis believe their ancestors were Zarathushti?*

VG: Yes, almost every educated person knows it and can give you some information about the religion of Zarathushtra in Azerbaijan.

FJ: *Are there any Zarathushti archeological sites in Azerbaijan?*

VG: Yes, there are some which are being preserved by the government. One of them is a popular fire temple in Surakhani built by Parsi Indians many centuries ago. Can you visit Azerbaijan? It will be a very interesting journey. ■

[Contact Mr. Gurbanov at (994 12) 97 90 00; gurbanov@bp.com; AzeriMasterword Services, 2 Nevтчiler Avenue (Bailov), Villa Pertolea II, AIOC, BP/Amoco Offices, Baku 370003, Azerbaijan.]



Long voyage. The Times carried an article "Depressed rower vows to finish Pacific Voyage." He is none other than **Jimmy Shekdar**, a civil engineer in UK, who started his journey from Ho, Peru, on June 29, 2000, headed for Australia. He comments on his 239th day in the boat, surrounded by sharks: "I know I'm going to make it. It has taken me three months longer than expected, and I cannot wait to get off the ocean." He has spent weeks rowing in circles and by Feb 21st had rowed 9,371 miles to cover 7,529 miles of what should be a 8,134 mile trip. He rows for about 12 hours a day. Speaking on his satellite telephone, he spoke of surviving on cold porridge

made with desalinated seawater. He said he was dreaming of a meal of ice-cream, steak and chips. Jim is a former water polo international and rowed the Atlantic with David Jackson in 1997.

[From "What's On", Karachi Zarhosti Banu Mandal, April 2001].

Secret Women's Business

The original "Secret Women's Business" (SWB) was an interest-catching court case, fought by the women of the Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal tribe, to preserve their secret sacred sites on Hindmarsh Island, South Australia.

The name was borrowed, last year by a group of 12 Zarathushti women, spearheaded by **Dinaz Mistry**, [right] VP of the Australian Zoroastrian Association, to conduct a "social audit" in order to meet the ambitious goal of "making our religion and community relevant and meaningful."

"The old culture has transformed to a new one via computers, mobiles, internet," writes Mistry, in a report produced by the SWB in December 2000, "As we enter a new millennium, we have to thoroughly review our social, cultural and religious practice. We need to discuss, debate and lay foundations for our future benefit."



Social issues. The process started with a sleepover workshop on a Friday evening. Seventy women participated. They identified and discussed "Social, Cultural and Religious Issues", among them: lack of help for social social issues like divorce, unemployment; lack of community cohesiveness; apathy and disenchantment with the community; lack of programs to vitalize the community; need more support from established members of the community; concerns of the seniors, young mothers, newcomers; time management; Parsi-Irani issues; geographic isolation; communication gap; lack of facilities at AZA house; differing value systems.

They came up with specific, practical recommendations to provide support

and programs for all – youths, adults and seniors; better communications; reaching out to less-interested members; a "buddy" system between Parsis and Iranians and more ...

Religious/cultural concerns identified by the group included: lack of religious education and an efficient Sunday school; rituals and the difference between religion and culture; intermarriage and conversion; keeping the religion, culture, community and youth together; blending in Aussie cultural traditions; youth issues; difficulties of traveling to AZA House, etc.

Recommendations included practical suggestions for better religious education programs; communal prayers and choir singing; seminars; employing a caretaker; and "Change the attitude of our priests," since they thought the "current attitude will 'finish us off'."

Summary. The survey indicated that in

both the social and religious categories, 74-80% were pro-change; 15-21% were non-committal and 5% were anti-change.

The report concludes with a recommendation to "Modify the present narrow stress on our ethnic background, language and culture and its perpetuation and strengthen the wider stress on the Zoroastrian Australian ethnicity or perhaps the World Zoroastrian." The group asked for "unity, acceptance, tolerance and an open-door policy."

The younger girls had a simple message: "We love and respect you, but please stop fighting, gossiping and grow up, otherwise how do you expect us to come and feel happy at AZA."

- SWB Report 2000, Sydney, Australia

ZWIN

Zoroastrian Womens International Network



ZWIN was born on March 21st, the outcome of the panel on "Zarathushti Women at the Crossroads" at the World Congress in Houston last December.

Spearheaded by a committed group of core members from across the world (prominent among them Toxy Cowasjee, Dolly Dastoor, Bella Tata, Feroza Fitch and Aban Rustomjee) with Bostonian businesswoman Dr. Zareen Karani Araoz [above] as president, the "Zoroastrian Women's International Network" has set up a cyberspace network to pool the talents, expertise and contacts of women worldwide to collaborate on community issues – to do with women and children, health (like breast cancer), the aged and more.

ZWIN is not a funded body, but a network of volunteer women of all ages. All women are invited to join (there is no membership fee). Send an email to: ZWIN3@yahoo.com (the "3" stands for Humata, Hukhta and Huvareshta) or send an email to zareen@managing-cultures.com or go to the website at www.ZWIN3.net and get a list of contacts in your local area.

Seven Parsi Priests Visit Iran

Ervad Marzban Hathiram, one of seven priests from India, who visited Iran last year, in a tour sponsored by the Iranian Anjuman, Mumbai, talks about his impressions of the trip.

The most important discovery was the immense respect that people all over Iran have for Zarathushtis. There is considerable awareness of the Zarathushti religion amongst most Iranians. Their level of knowledge is minimal, but they do know and accept that Zarathushtis were the original inhabitants of Iran.

As for practice of the religion – there is no *pav mahel*, i.e. no major liturgical ceremonies like Yasna, Vendidad, Visperad and Nirangdin are performed. There is no priest holding a *bareshtnom*. Indeed there is no concept of *nahn*. Many fire temples in the cities are mere buildings, sometimes without any fire. Most places had a *divo* and a dormant *afarganyu*, which we would rekindle. There is no five *gah boi*. There are very few priests. Priestly dress is often absent; the Head Priest smokes a cheeroot and walks about in a suit.

Throughout Iran, the practice of dokhmenashini has stopped despite the presence of really well-built dokhmas. Aramgahs are used.

Very few Zarathushtis wear the sudreh and kushti all the time.

My impression is that the relative prosperity and absence of persecution has made the Iranian Zarathushtis a complacent lot. The past years of persecution somehow kept them together and infused in them a fierce pride to protect the religion at all costs. However, vital knowledge about the rituals and doctrines of the religion was lost, and books, manuscripts, etc. were burnt.

So, while in the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries, priests from India visited Kerman and Yazd with questions

regarding the religion and its practice, today we had to answer questions from priests and lay persons alike on some very basic issues.

In this somewhat disturbing scenario, it warmed our hearts to see some spiritually strong fires in the villages adjoining Yazd like Kuchebiyog, Zainabad, Sharifabad, where ordinary Zarathushtis, living a very simple agrarian life, with very little material wealth, have preserved fires which are believed to be centuries old.

The shrines of Pir Sabz, Pir Herisht, Seti Pir, Pir Banou [photo below] are also very spiritually charging.



The Iranian Anjuman is interested in more priestly exchanges from India.

Conclusion. The trip has been an eye opener. We were able to see in reality what we had studied in history books and Avesta texts. We saw how persecution can result in the complete obliteration of a people and all its traditions and precepts. Full credit goes to those martyrs of old who withstood the tyrannical oppression of the Muslims and persevered in preserving their religion.

However, there is a danger today that the relative freedom and prosperity is causing an alarming degree of complacency in following the essential rules of our religion. If they are not careful, Iranian Zarathushtis will succeed in accomplishing themselves what the Muslims could not do for over a millennium – wipe out the Zarathushti religion and its followers. May that day never occur. ■

Lost Persian Army

Accidental discovery of Cambyses' army that perished in the Western desert in 523 BCE.

It is a mystery which has perplexed Egyptologists for centuries and sent scores of adventurers scouring the vast wilderness of the Saharan Desert for clues. In 523 BCE, a mighty Persian army of 50,000 men was said to have disappeared without trace in the desolate plains of the Western desert.

Last September, a team of Egyptian oil prospectors surveying near the lost army's intended destination – Siwa Oasis on the border of Libya, came upon sand dunes littered with fragments of textiles, daggers, arrow heads and bones. Finally, it seemed, the sands had begun to give up their secret.

When they disappeared more than two millennia ago, the ill-fated soldiers were on their way to destroy the sacred Oracle of Siwa, under orders from the Persian emperor Cambyses, son of Cyrus the Great. Cambyses had invaded Egypt in 525 BCE and subsumed the Nile valley into the mighty Persian Empire.

The story of the doomed army is told by Herodotus. Cambyses had ordered the dispatch of 50,000 soldiers and a great train of pack animals. Marching west into the Sahara, the army eventually came to the last of the natural springs, after which there lay before them the vast Western desert, with no water or shade for 30 days' march.

According to Herodotus, after many days of struggle through the soft sand, the troops were resting one morning when calamity struck. "As they were at their breakfast, a wind arose from the south, strong and deadly, bringing with it vast columns of whirling sand, which buried the troops and caused them to utterly disappear." Men and animals were

[Continued on page 19]

Letter from the High Priests of India

"We, the Vada Dasturjis of India, do hereby appeal to your goodselves with a total sense of responsibility, that the system of *Dokhmenashini* and the consignment of our dead bodies to the Towers of Silence (*Dokhmas*) is the only venerated and prescribed system in our religion.

No dead body of any Parsi/Irani Zoroastrian can be consigned to the *dokhmas* unless the pristine system of the *Paidast* and accompanying prayers is performed. Simultaneously, no Parsi/Irani dead body upon which such prayers are chanted, may be viewed by any non-Parsi or carried away from the Bunglis and consigned to any other place out of the Doongerwadi complex other than the *Dokhmas*.

Dokhmenashini in its pristine glory must be preserved at all costs, no concession or relaxation sought should be allowed, and if such concessions are given, it is totally anti-doctrinal.

Our attention has been drawn to some three resolutions passed by a group of people called the Disposal of the Dead with Dignity Action Group, which is a matter of grave concern and to which your goodselves have reportedly acceded, to two out of three, which is totally anti-doctrinal and unacceptable to us.

We therefore, urge you to reconsider the decision that you have arrived at and refrain from implementing the same, in the larger interest of retaining the glory and tenets of Zoroastrianism and the community in its age-old form. We are confident that you will not let us down and also the thousands of devout Parsi/Irani Zoroastrians.

With best wishes,
Yours Sincerely

Dr. Firoze M. Kotwal (Mumbai)
Dr. Kaikhushru Dastur Minocher Jamaspa (Mumbai)
Dr. Hormuzdyar Dastur Kayoji

Debate on the Doongerwadi Decision

In a letter to the community dated February 15 [see FEZANA Journal, Spring 2001, page 11], Trustees of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet, "having considered all issues, doctrinal as well as legal" presented their decisions to help preserve the endangered dokhmenashini method of disposal of the dead. An emotional debate has ensued within the community, especially on the following two decisions: (a) To allow the use of bunglis to those who opt for methods of disposal other than the traditional system of dokhmenashini; and (b) The Trustees would have no objection, should any priests perform the obsequies from the bunglis at Doongerwadi, of opting for an alternate method of disposal. Here we present some perspectives on this contentious issue.

Mirza (Udwada)
Nadirsha Pestonji Unwala (Bangalore)
Kaikobad Dastur Phirozji Dastur (Udwada)
Noshirwan Dastur Manchershah Dastur (Surat)
Sardar Dastur Hormuzdiar Noshirwan Kaikobad Dastur (Pune)
Meherji Dastur Kaikobad Meherji Rana (Navsari)

Let Sense Prevail: the Rationale Behind the Decisions by the Trustees of BPP Concerning Doongerwadi

By

Minoo R. Shroff
Dadi B. Engineer
Dinshaw K. Tamboly

[Excerpts from a letter of March 5]

... it is essential for us to mention by way of a preamble, that as Trustees, we have to think with our heads and feel with our hearts, and take decisions based on virtual realities. Whilst we do consider the sensitivities of any issue that we deliberate, discuss and debate, we cannot take decisions based on emotions and sentiments. We have taken the decisions in all sincerity and after due deliberation.

Our (Trustees) serious involvement with the issue in question began dur-

ing May 1998, when we received repeated complaints ... It was ascertained that the existing system of *dokhmenashini* was indeed not functioning satisfactorily and in need of strengthening ... With a view to combat the issue, we invited many individuals – Prelates, Priests, Scholars, our Doongerwadi Committee etc. ... to suggest solutions to strengthen our traditional system that was not functioning effectively ... As a result various options such as the aviary project, herbal/chemical composition application project, the air freshening project and the solar panel project are presently being pursued ...

The Trustees do not claim to have any knowledge about our religious doctrines, on account of which we sought guidance in these matters from those in the know.

Regrettably, the religious scholars and Priests familiar with the doctrines began to differ on the subject and chose to counter and confront rather than co-operate with one another ... With religious scholars and Priests differing with one another, High Priests being indecisive and prone to vacillate, the issue ... prompted individuals who are concerned about the system not working satisfactorily to seek an alternate form of disposal.

These like-minded individuals have now formed a group [DDD – Disposal of the Dead with Dignity] to

exercise a privilege that is theirs; a fact confirmed by legal opinion ...

The specific concern of this group is that those who are its members are also Zoroastrians, vested with a right, that allows them the freedom to choose their mode of disposal, and the community infrastructure, that is available for all Zoroastrians, cannot be denied to them ...

After much deliberation, a perusal of our Trust Deeds and advice from the legal fraternity, we arrived at the conclusion that it was indeed under law, obligatory for us to allow the use of bunglis to those who wished to have the prayers performed at Doongerwadi and thereafter remove the body to a place other than Doongerwadi for cremation or any other mode of disposal.

... the Trustees took the decision not only in due deference of the law, but also to save the existing system, sustain and strengthen it.

It is a known fact that Trustees have not abandoned any of the projects to strengthen the system ...

Some individuals have expressed indignation that the High Priests were not consulted before the decisions were taken. Having experienced time and again in the past, that our Prelates tend to shift positions, can anyone in all honesty blame the Trustees for not consulting them? In addition, the provisions of law have to be given due weight as explained above.

Those outraged by the decision taken may kindly realize that by acceding to a request, the Trustees have in actual fact acted decisively to preserve our traditional system of dokhmenashini. The system can and will come under threat, should any aggrieved Zoroastrian, deprived of his rights, as enshrined in the constitution of our nation, pursue the matter legally.

We urge all individuals who hold divergent views on this issue to think and ponder with rationality and a cool mind. In other words, our fervent plea to all sections of our community is – **Let Sense Prevail.**

A traditional voice ...

[Excerpts from a letter by Ervad Zal N. Sethna of UK, dated March 25]

... All of a sudden, the Three [BPP] Trustees want the community to believe that they are the champions of ... our ancient traditions. Can anyone believe this, when [two of them] are also leaders of the WZO, an organization with a reformist agenda ...? What the Three Trustees are saying is that a small group of wealthy rebels have the legal right, in accordance with the constitution of India, to defile our establishments and override the religious laws, practiced by the Parsis for thousands of generations.

In fact the converse is true. The Indian constitution gives all citizens the right of freedom, to practice without hindrance, their religious beliefs in accordance with the laws and established practices of their faith ...

Our forefathers gave us Doongerwadi, the Dokhmas and Bunglis under Trust ... They are to be used only for the purpose of Dokhmenashini. It is incumbent upon the Three Trustees to honor the original wishes of the donors, or be held in contempt for breach of trust.

The laws of the land cannot supercede ... I have a feeling that this is the first step to undermine the constitution of our Trust Deeds, and prepare the grounds for a crematorium on the Doongerwadi lands ...

The second point I wish to make is that the Trustees have seen no need to consult our learned Dasturs, scholars, or the Parsi community ... the Trustees have taken the decision unilaterally ... Are we to assume, that in future the Trustees of BPP, will have the sole divine right, the power and the authority to take decision and act as arbitrators in all communal matters, including religious matters? Should we as an intelligent progressive community allow the Trustees to decide our faith in this undemocratic manner?

I do firmly believe, that every Parsi Zoroastrian born in the Zoroastrian

faith, has a religious right to all the Zoroastrian rituals and prayers after his or her demise, regardless of how the body is disposed of. The prayers are meant for the *fravashi* and the *ravan* of the departed soul, and even if due to great misfortune the body is not placed to rest at Doongerwadi, the prayers should not be denied.

Under the circumstances, **a separate bungli** should be provided for the prayers of the dead, where Dokhmenashini is not performed. Our present Bunglis cannot be used in those circumstances ... The sanctity of our Doongerwadi will be destroyed.

[The Trustees] should think once again, with a Zoroastrian mind and a Zoroastrian heart. ■

**In the LAP
(Love-Appreciation-Pride)
of Ahura Mazda**

DakhmehNishini with Manashni, Gavashni and Kunashni

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Westminster, California
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A grandmother told her grandson:
“It takes a strong person to fight, but it takes a stronger person to walk away from it.”

To which the little boy replied: “What happens Grandma, if someone is left with...no way...to walk away?”

Dear Zarathushti sisters and brothers, on the topic of DakhmehNishini in India:

● Are we leaving our community with no way to walk away?

● Are we walking the mystical path with practical feet or the practical path with mystical feet?

We may have studied the legal aspect, but have we examined the spiritual landscape? Does it have something to do with faith or belief?

I believe that DakhmehNishini has nothing to do with being traditional

or liberal. Rather, it has something to do with faith. And we must not mess with someone's faith, irrespective of our viewpoints.

DakhmehNishini has been peacefully practiced by our foremothers and forefathers for centuries in our Motherland Iran and Fatherland India. All this time, the liberals as well as the traditionals have benefited from this simple and effective system.

So how come, suddenly this timeless, spaceless and precious practice is now labeled as obsolete, simply because there is a shortage of vultures?

Why are we allowing a shortage of vulture to affect our culture?

For example, I am allergic to penicillin.... but my wife is not. So, would it be fair to deprive my wife of its therapeutic value? Likewise, some of us may have become allergic to the process of DakhmehNishini, but that does not mean that the entire community has to be deprived of its time tested benefits. Also, one does not tamper with penicillin or its derivatives, instead one looks for an entirely new antibiotic for successful results.

A gorilla, Katy, was trained to communicate in sign language. One day Katy was asked:

"Katy, do you understand the difference between right and wrong?"

Katy responded in sign language:

"Katy does not understand the difference between right and wrong, but Katy can *feel* the difference between right and wrong."

It seems that as intelligent people we may have understood the difference between right and wrong, but have we used our wisdom to feel the difference between right and wrong.

In nature, a leaf contains various colors. In the spring it is green. In the fall, the green pigment called chlorophyll fades in the dying leaf, bringing out the fiery autumn hues that were present all along. Even in death, God provides beauty in nature.

So what kind of beauty have we created for our Zarathushti spirit when it transits from the material world into the spiritual world.

Is it focused on healing or peeling the spirit?

A mother while talking about love asked her little daughter:

"Honey, why do you think grandma and grandpa always hold hands together?"

The little girl said:

"Because, if they let go, they will kill each other."

Is that the reason why we are choosing not to let go ... of our ego?

Are we exercising our *love of power* or our *power of love*?

A doctor after extensively examining a patient told him that:

"Sir, I cannot put my finger on the problem but I think it has something to do with your drinking."

To which the patient responded:

"OK, doctor, I will come back when I am sober."

So what does it take for us to sober up so that we can collectively make decisions that will eventually *heal* rather than *peel* our community?

To begin with:

We must say what we mean and mean what we say, but let us not say it mean.

In the past three months, after reading dozens of emails on this topic, it seems that some of our fellow Zarathushtis in India are opting for cremation instead of DakhmehNishini.

It also seems that they intend to buy a separate piece of land for an electric crematorium.

However, they want to have their ceremonies performed at the same bungli in a traditional way.

In the interest of peace, the trustees (a majority) of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet have agreed to respect their wishes. But somehow, this perceived notion of *peace* has put our community in *pieces*.

It feels as if someone is drowning and we are trying to grab the water instead of the person.

The emphasis is on the Disposal of the Dead Body with Dignity, but what about the *peace* and *respect* for the *dignified soul* during its transition from the material to the spiritual world?

For those opting for cremation, do we really want the prayers of our transiting soul to be performed at a place which is emanating peeling vibrations, thereby causing our spirit to be cremated much before our body gets cremated.

It is like asking for our soul to be in peace at the expense of putting other souls in pieces.

Let us focus on a dignified, graceful and peaceful transition of the *soul* along with the body.

If a separate piece of land is going to be purchased for an electric crematorium, is it possible to accommodate a bungli at the same premises for prayers?

This is an appeal from my *spirit* to yours.

This tradition will manifest a healing vibration.

Because we will still have everything to gain, without creating any human pain.

Let us beat our heart for the community instead of beating the heart of our community.

I will leave you with this thought to meditate upon:

Breath becomes worth giving when death becomes worth living.

Let us ensure that the purpose of our life is to serve as warming others, and not as a warning to others.

In the spirit of giving and living with Manashni, Gavashni, and Kunashni to all. May you *always* be *blessed* in *all-ways*.

Love and Light!

Meher Amalsad

Westminster, California

Meher Amalsad is author of *Bread For the Head*™[also see page 93].

Bombay Journal

In Death, the Unlovely Vulture Is Sorely Missed

By CELIA W. DUGGER

BOMBAY — Up on Malabar Hill, in the midst of this teeming, polyglot metropolis, breezes off the Arabian Sea caress the bungalows of the rich and rustle into a 50-acre forest that has for centuries been the place where Parsis, followers of the ancient prophet Zoroaster, brought their dead to be devoured by vultures.

Since the 17th century, Parsi descendants of the Persians who found religious freedom in India a millennium ago, have carried their dead up Malabar Hill. And until a few years ago, more than 100 of the shambling, unkempt birds would watch from the treetops to see whether pallbearers forked left or right. Then the vultures would soar over the dense, tangled greenery to the walls of the chosen Tower of Silence, a stone amphitheater where the corpse was to be laid.

The “jostling, flapping rabble,” as one bird guide described them, would then descend, and in an hour or two only a skeleton would be left.

But something has gone terribly wrong at Doongerwadi, the tranquil park dedicated to Zoroastrian death rituals. Barely a dozen vultures remain, not enough to quickly and fully consume the 1,000 bodies placed in the Towers of Silence each year.

The white-backed birds — which also used to dispose of the carcasses of sacred cows across north India efficiently — are in danger of extinction. The birds’ long bald necks droop into the shape of nooses as they sicken. When they perish, their big awkward bodies fall, hanging in trees like ghastly ornaments ...

The scientists have formed a partnership with the Parsis of Bombay — one of India’s tiniest but most



An older Tower of Silence, top, not being used, at Malabar Hill.

successful religious minorities — to save the vultures and, with them, the Parsis’ traditional method of disposing of their dead.

The Bombay Parsi council plans to build an aviary on Malabar Hill where disease-free vultures will be bred in captivity. The central government has given its permission to proceed, but the council is waiting for a go-ahead from the Maharashtra state government.

Still, even in the best circumstances, it will be at least four years before there are enough full-grown vultures, said Dinshaw Mehta, a trustee of the council. He said that these days the decomposing bodies are sometimes left exposed for as long as three weeks before the tropical sun dries them out. Sometimes, a foul odor drifts on the wind. And so Parsis are faced with a wrenching quandary that has stirred an emotional, polarizing debate within the community: what should they do with the dead in the meantime?

Some, like Phiroze Bativala, whose wife, Dhun, died last year,

have chosen cremation over the traditional method ...

But for many Parsis in Bombay, the death of the vultures is not just a threat to an ancient custom, but a challenge to their distinctiveness as a people.

On a stroll through the peaceful confines of Doongerwadi ... Khojeste Mistree, an Oxford-educated Zoroastrian scholar, reacted to the horror outsiders often feel about the Parsi way of death and explained why he is among its impassioned champions.

“It’s no more horrifying to me than being eaten by worms over 30 to 40 years or being burned by fire,” he said ...

In disposing of the dead, Parsis are enjoined to avoid polluting fire, earth and water. So long as there is a Tower of Silence where bodies can be eaten by scavengers and exposed to the rays of the sun, Parsis are required to do so, he said.

It is a final act of charity to the vultures, a hygienic and economical

[Continued on page 94]

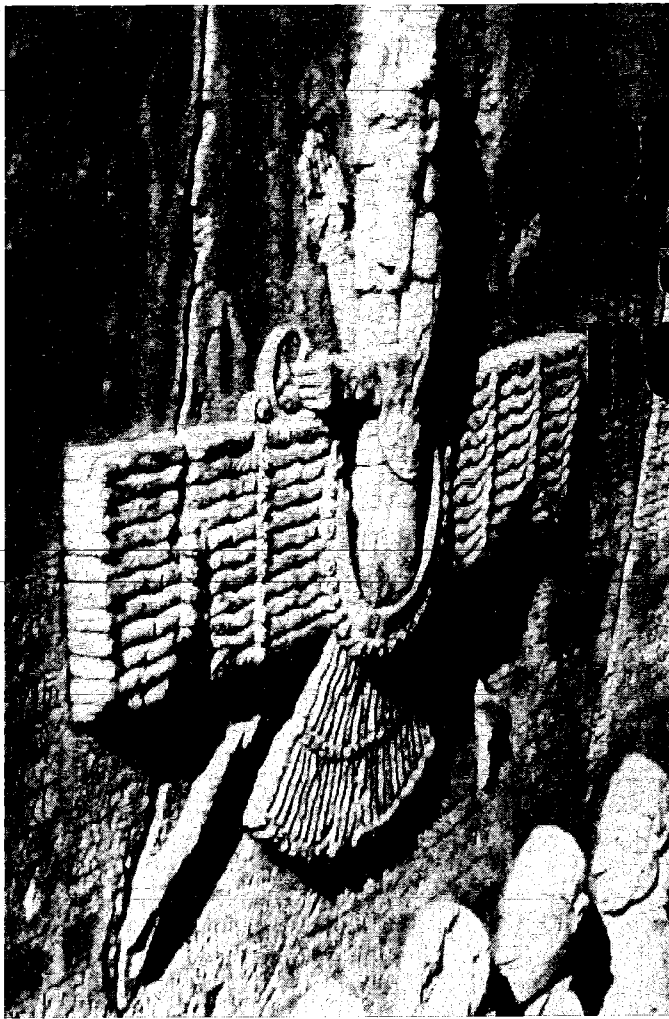


Fig. 2: Behistun – the winged figure of Ahura Mazda (520 BCE) [photo: G. Cameron]

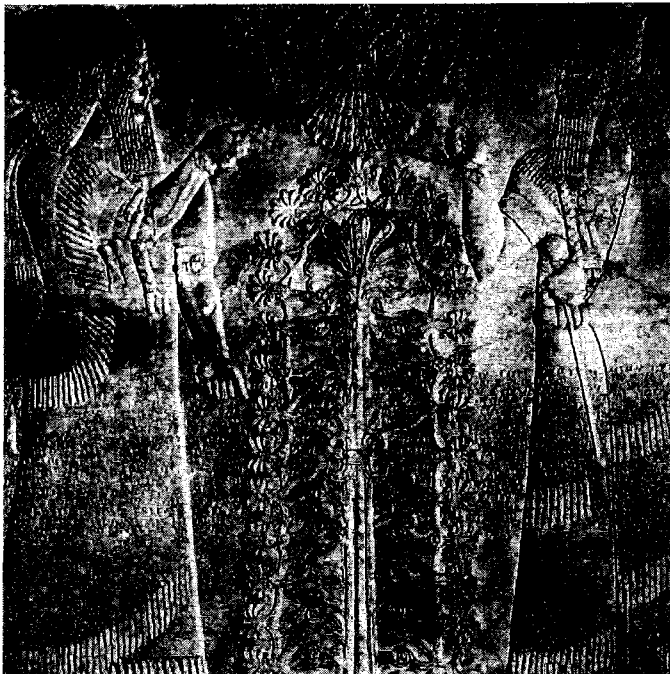


Fig. 3, below: Part of a stone relief of Assur-nasir-pal (c. 865 BCE) at the British Museum [photo: British Museum Publications]

Dialogue to the Mummy of the Persian princess'

By Vera S. Katrak

Based on the art motifs of the wooden sarcophagus, the author clarifies that the mummy does not belong to the Achaemenian Persian period.

The spring issue of FEZANA Journal includes an article by Roshan Rivetna – ‘Mystery of the Princess’ – on the controversial mummy at the National Museum, Karachi. It is essential reading for anyone interested in this topic, especially as the present discussion continues as its sequel. Various disputed opinions on the subject are summarized by her, as also the chequered background of the mummy’s origin. Its dating still remains a moot point and, this conflicting aspect is mainly addressed in the essay that follows.

An important field of study to assess, when trying to determine the status of this paradoxical mummy, is the carved embellishment on all four sides of the wooden sarcophagus [Fig. 1, facing page]. Limited in their repertoire, these motifs are exceedingly repetitive – winged figures, fire altars, giant single rosettes, a grove of pine trees and, crenellations along the rim of the lid by way of vertical ornamentation. Their stark, board-like background is

completely devoid of any pictorial detail; even the insertion of a decorative border fails to appear.

Placed between horizontal registers, each static motif is carved on a slab-like projection, and is based along a level plane. Persepolitan bas-reliefs are also similarly arranged between linear registers. However, here the groups of figures, carved in low relief and, also without an inserted background, show a lively rendition of figural composition. Visually, they appear to be galvanized into action by the expertise of the master craftsmen's skill.

Unusual, to say the least, is the combination of a mummified female figure, duly coroneted, placed inside a wooden sarcophagus ornamented in imitation of motifs from Achaemenian bas-reliefs. Though similar in subject matter to these earlier dated examples, the sarcophagus carvings are far removed from the excellence in workmanship of their Persepolitan prototypes. Clumsy, disproportionate, unharmonious in the choice of juxtaposed motifs, there is a certain feel of the less than 'geniune' about these undated carvings in wood. They remain a separate entity from the mummified figure lying within the sarcophagus – a cross-cultural riddle, as it were, yet to unfold!

Nonetheless, an Egypto-Persian nexus did exist historically. Persia first made territorial contact with Egypt at the time of the early Achaemenids, when in 525 B.C. Cambyses II added Lower Egypt to his empire. This then became the satrapy of Mudraya, with Memphis as its capital. The liberal kings of ancient Persia allowed Egyptian customs to prevail in their new dominion and, the art of mummification, so essential a part of Egyptian culture, was not discontinued. Over the years, Achaemenian court art also absorbed many Egyptian influences, a prominent example

being the winged disc, frequently reproduced in the sculptural reliefs of Persepolitan palaces as also in the art of other Achaemenian sites, such as Susa.

In 1972, an object of tremendous interest was unearthed at Susa – the colossal headless statue of Darius I, in typical Persian dress. The accompanying inscription written in hieroglyphs, reads:

"This is the stone statue which Darius ordered to be made in Egypt so that in the future he who looked at it would know that the Persian man held Egypt."

Not only was it a unique portrayal in the round of Darius' royal person, but as the inscription states, it was "ordered to be made in Egypt." Undoubtedly, the King of Kings regarded it as the imprint marking his accession to this new domain, the furthest of his western conquests.

Achaemenian art is confined in its iconographic selection. It is mainly an 'imperial' art, its themes dealing with the royal court, with images of kings, courtiers and tribute-bearers from across the ever-widening Empire. Lord Curzon most effectively encapsulates the essence of this art: "Everything is devoted, with unashamed repetition, to a single purpose, viz the delineation of majesty in its most imperial guise, the pomp and panoply, of him who was well styled the Great King." [1].

Here the primary religious icon is the winged figure of Ahura Mazda, portrayed exclusively in conjunction with the person of the king, as seen on rock carvings and, on palace reliefs and even in the glyptic art of the period.

The first known representation of this winged figure in Achaemenian art was at Behistun, in 520 BCE [Fig. 2]. It visually dominated the rock carvings and the trilingual inscriptions of Darius I. In the accompanying text of these inscriptions, virtually the King's autobiography, he repeatedly invokes Ahura Mazda by name and, claims that by his favour Darius' kingship was made possible. Under royal patronage, the master sculptors were commanded to create for the first time a powerful image of this Persian deity, which was to take the form of the winged figure of Ahura Mazda. Seldom was it shown with such magnificence as in this Behistun rock relief [2]. Later, this image was to dominate the art of the times and, that of Darius I's lineal descent and, visually to establish an Achaemenian Persian religious identity for the next two hundred years.

It was not merely an artistic borrowing from Mesopotamia, an influence commonly used in Persian art of the period, that led Darius I to choose this

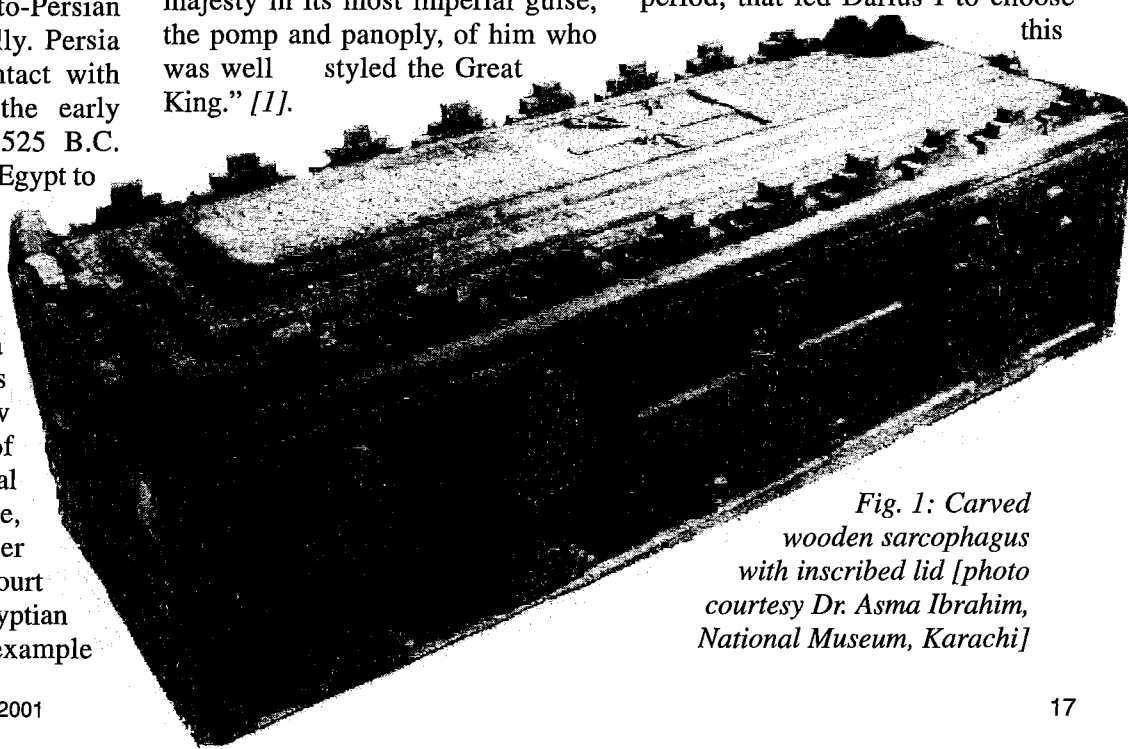


Fig. 1: Carved wooden sarcophagus with inscribed lid [photo courtesy Dr. Asma Ibrahim, National Museum, Karachi]

image of a winged figure. His iconographic innovation had a deeper significance. In the Behistun inscriptions, the King had reason to emphasize his claim to the Achaemenid throne, for he was from the collateral branch of the royal family. His constant reference to Ahura Mazda making his kingship possible needed this supporting artistic image:

“... under the protection of Ahura Mazda I became King; Ahura Mazda granted me the kingdom.”

In early Assyrian art, the winged figure in close association with the person of the king, holds great significance: “It is the iconographic representation of the divine right of kings.” [3]. An important relief in the British Museum of the time of Assur-nasir-pal (c. 865 BCE), [Fig. 3], [4] illustrates thematically the significance behind Darius I’s choice of a similar scene at Behistun. In the Assyrian relief, the god Assur is handing down the circlet of authority to King Assur-nasir-pal. With upraised hand, the King acknowledges the fulfillment of his prayer.

How similar is the pose of Darius I’s standing figure at Behistun to its Assyrian prototype! Even the wings of the Ahura Mazda figure show a Mesopotamian parallel – not feathered, as in the Egyptian style both at Persepolis and on the mummy sarcophagus, but with horizontal wavy lines, embellished by curls. The winged figure of Ahura Mazda is dressed in the royal flowing Persian *candys* and, a tall cylindrical hat flared at the top – the Persian *tiara*. The latter has horn-like insertions at the sides, an Assyrian symbol of divinity. The eight-rayed solar disc above it is also borrowed from the same artistic source. At Behistun, the gold circlet in the left hand of Ahura Mazda, though prised out, is clearly visible on the rock surface in outline.

The symbol of this winged Ahura Mazda figure, first seen in 520 BCE in early Persian art, did not last beyond the end of the Achaemenid

dynasty. Its stylistic inspiration from across Western Asia, was swept away by the conquest of Alexander the Great and, it faded out of the iconography of Persian art beyond this point. Strangely, it was to have a resurgence in the nineteenth century in the sub-continent, among Parsi co-religionists. Dr Mary Boyce [5] refers to this interesting revival of an old religious symbol: “... and it was in the nineteenth century that the name ‘Cyrus’ became current among the Parsis and the symbol of the winged disc from Persepolis was adopted by them as the Zoroastrian symbol, to appear proudly over the gates of fire temples and schools.” However, now it was not to be represented as in the spirit of Achaemenid times, when it co-existed with king-



Fig. 4: The golden coronet of the ‘mummy princess’ [photo: Dr. Asma Ibrahim, National Museum, Karachi]

ship alone. It evolved as the *Fravashi* – the guardian spirit, also known in the Parsi vernacular as *Asho Farohar*, a talismanic emblem that was to permeate the Zoroastrian world of today.

To revert to the mummy sarcophagus and, to the significance of its centrally placed winged figure: from previous discussions it has been concluded that in Achaemenian art, the winged figure symbolically represents the deity Ahura Mazda; that it was conjointly portrayed only with the person of the king; that the hand-

ing down of the circlet of authority by the winged figure was the bestowal of the divine right of kingship. Now the ‘mummy princess’ would hardly fit into this scheme of Achaemenian art conventions! Moreover, the Achaemenids emphatically believed in the male dynastic succession. Were this princess to be ‘the daughter of Xerxes’, as some epigraphists maintain, [6] then the accompanying cuneiform inscriptions, with flawed syntax and, with insertions from Darius I’s Behistun inscription, would nullify this supposition. The epigraphical evidence [7] as a whole, questions the authenticity of the mummy as having any Achaemenian connections at all.

About four miles from Persepolis stands the royal necropolis of Darius I and his successors, at Naqsh-e Rostam. These were rock-cut tombs and, that of Darius was the prototype for the rest cut along the cliff-side. The rock carving shows the apotheosis of the King, who in facing the fire altar while in prayer, invokes the winged figure of Ahura Mazda above [8]. Inexplicably, Achaemenian reliefs show no representation of fire altars other than the examples at Naqsh-e Rostam, despite their religious implication. Two fire altars are placed side by side in the carvings on the wooden sarcophagus. Their pairing resembles the placing of incense-burners in the Persepolitan reliefs of the king enthroned and, giving audience. However, their traditional 3-stepped base and fire holder, as also the central recess, follow the examples depicted on the royal tombs. Unlike their prototype, the flames are not naturalistically carved; instead the live fire is shown more like a cone, with a few incised lines for the darting flames.

The remaining motifs on the sarcophagus – the single rosette, the pine trees, and the crenellations along the lid, must be discussed as a group. Individually, they are of scant artistic significance. Without exception, they are derived from the

Apadana staircase reliefs at Persepolis. The delicate 12-petalled rosette, usually forming floral chains of pure decoration, is here blown up singly, to a disproportionate size. Placed between horizontal registers, this single rosette, the central winged figure and the two fire altars, are all of equal height, giving the setting of this main panel of the sarcophagus the effect of provincial 'craft', rather than the mastery of Achaemenian palace art.

The grove of pines – the *Pinus Prutia*, [9] carved along the head side of the sarcophagus, has an unusual parallel in the design of the mummy's golden coronet. No known example of Achaemenian jewellery or crown indicates a similar pattern [see Fig. 4]. Even stranger is the fact, that this 'mummy princess' is totally bereft of any form of jewellery, so essential an item on mummified bodies, both male and female, found in Egypt.

Epilogue. Forgeries are a well-established factor in the study of antiquity. A recent publication, [10] lavishly illustrated, discusses this vexed problem in art objects from the Near East. Such dubious artefacts have often been housed in important museums and, retrieved when subsequent research leads to their removal from public view.

What then does one deduce from the chequered saga of this 'mummy princess' of unknown provenance? Epigraphists are at variance among themselves regarding the dating of the cuneiform inscriptions. This essay, based on the art motifs of the wooden sarcophagus, clarifies that the mummy does not belong to the Achaemenian Persian period, in spite of the existing Egypto-Persian historical connections. One awaits patiently for the results of the radio-carbon tests, promised by the National Museum, Karachi.

Ultimately, will the final analysis help to unravel this cross-cultural riddle, which continues to grip the attention of both the layman and the initiated? ■



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Lost Persian Army ...

[Continued from page 11]

asphyxiated as they huddled together, gradually being enveloped in a sea of drift-sand.

This was one of three military campaigns planned by Cambyses to conquer the rest of Africa after he invaded Egypt in 525 BCE, putting an end to the 26th dynasty of the Pharaohs and beginning a period of Persian rule that covered the next two centuries, until the invasion of Alexander.

A team of archaeologists from Helwan University and the Council of Antiquities in Cairo will be investigating the find. The 10-kilometer-square site will be sifted as the Egyptian specialists gradually uncover the remains left by one of history's most remarkable incidents. Nothing like this has ever come to light before and the team expects to find a treasure trove of military memorabilia.

The Persian forces consisted of many elements, including foreign mercenaries such as Greeks, Phoenicians, Carians, Cilicians, Medes and Syrians. Their helmets, leather corselets, garments, spears, bows, swords and daggers will all be there ready for analysis. Bone marrow from the soldiers can be sampled for DNA testing. Our knowledge of ancient warfare in the first millennium BCE is sure to be hugely enhanced by this astonishing and accidental discovery of the lost army of Emperor Cambyses.

Archeologists are divided on this subject. "Classical Greek writers said the army drowned in a sand-storm, but there is no other source of this information," says Gaballah, secretary-general of the Council of Antiquities, "It could have happened, but where? Everyone has his dreams, but we don't want to raise hopes."

And the mystery of the lost army may still linger on. ■

[Excerpted from *The Express*, November 16, 2000, and from "War Relics in Sahara" by Michael Theoloulou, in *San Jose Mercury News*]

ZARATHUSHTRA'S VISION AND THE ISSUES OF OUR TIME

Guest Editor Dina G. McIntyre





Dina G. McIntyre has a Bachelor of Science degree from Carnegie Institute of Technology (now Carnegie Mellon University), and a Law degree from the University of Pittsburgh School of Law. She has practiced law for over thirty years in Pennsylvania, currently as in-house legal counsel for a high tech corporation. In 1989-90 she was the Editor of a twelve lesson course on the Gathas called "An Introduction to the Gathas of Zarathushtra." She has spoken on Zarathushtra's teachings all over the United States, and in Canada, the UK and India. Her writings appear at www.vohuman.org and www.zarathushtra.com and www.zoroastrian.net.

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

Facing page (and cover): paintings depicting "God Lives in us All", painted specially for this issue of FEZANA Journal by artist Ava Mehta

Zarathushtra lived before recorded history, in a society and culture very different from our own. Yet it never ceases to amaze me how relevant his thoughts are to our lives and times. So I invited an assortment of people to select an issue of our time, and tell us how, in their view, Zarathushtra's vision helps us to deal with it. Each contribution presents a different perspective, the way colored crystals fall into different patterns with each turn of a kaleidoscope. The variety enriches us, regardless of whether we may agree or disagree with some of these perspectives. For the front cover and cover-story illustrations, I asked a talented young artist, Ava Mehta to illustrate the concept of Ahura Mazda's immanence (presence) in all things. I hope you enjoy the results.

the web of immanence

There is one teaching of Zarathushtra that links into all the others, and provides a solution for so many of the ills that plague us.

By Dina G. McIntyre
Glenshaw, Pennsylvania

Fans of the original Star Trek series may remember Ensign Chekov. When the series first started, for every technological marvel that came up in the course of any discussion, Chekov claimed a Russian inventor. It became a standing joke. I am beginning to feel that I have a Chekov-complex, because for just about every ill that plagues our world, I (an unabashed Gathicist) find realtime answers in Zarathushtra's thought. As guest editor, allow me to give you a bird's eye view, with a few examples.

Consider the great divide that currently exists between **religion and science**. In Zarathushtra's thought, the two are seamless, because to him, truth – *asha* – finds expression in the worlds of both mind and matter, as two sides of the same coin; and religion is an on-going quest for truth.

For those who are concerned about a society in which blaming everyone

and everything else for their own actions, has become endemic, Zarathushtra offers an effective antidote – **individual responsibility**. We can have the best form of government in the world, we can enact the best laws, we can have the best organization or corporate charters, but they don't mean a thing unless they are implemented from day to day, by individuals making the right choices. We can confer. We can advise. But when all is said and done, it is individual responsibility that saves us from the collective cop-out.

For those who worry about the **ego-centric rat-race** we sometimes get caught up in, Zarathushtra implies that 'completeness' (*haurvatat*) is achieved at both an individual and a collective level. Perfecting ourselves is a necessary first step, but completeness is ultimately attained when everyone makes it. So at each step along the way, in order to make it, we must both give and receive help. It is the paradox of the individual and the community – individual responsibility

ity, and mutual loving help; each concept flowing seamlessly into and out of the other; both essential to realizing the desired end.

It is sobering to think how many people in the world live under **dictatorships**, deprived of basic human rights. According to Zarathushtra, even the object of our worship is to be chosen in accord with asha (*yatha ahu vairyo* ...). Logically then, people should also have the right to choose their temporal rulers in the same way. If this idea of Zarathushtra were to be believed and held worldwide, it would solve not only the problems of dictatorship, but also those of democracy.

In matters of governance, whether of nations, or corporations, or even community boards, we often are beset by **abuses of power**. The wealth of some nations gets siphoned off into the pockets of corrupt politicians, leaving little or nothing to spend on needed infrastructure, such as roads, water and sewage systems, electricity, telecommunications, schools, urban planning – the infrastructure needed to form the foundation of a thriving economy. In our own country, corporate management sometimes exploits workers, and workers' unions sometimes exploit management, each locked in a

destructive struggle which reduces productivity, damages the business, and, if not checked, eventually puts both management and labor out of work. Zarathushtra's solution is *vohu khshathra* – the rule of asha and *vohu mana*; the idea that power and authority are a trust to be exercised in a way that promotes asha; the profound realization that, to be effective, an essential ingredient of power is service (another interesting paradox):

"...fame is to serve Thee and the truth, Wise One, under Thy rule."

[Ys. 32.6, Insler translation] [1]

In a world where so many live below the poverty level, where the children of Bangladesh and Africa haunt our TV screens, where women in Afghanistan are victimized, where on a lesser scale, **poverty, adult illiteracy, drugs, crime, prejudice and environmental pollution** afflict North American communities, Zarathushtra's "can-do", action-oriented teaching provides a powerful remedy. He teaches that it is not enough to think good thoughts and speak good words. We have to use our minds and hearts to search for solutions and take action, so that each of us becomes a co-worker with Ahura Mazda, a benefiter, (*saoshyant*), a savior of our world, solving one small problem at a time. He says:

"Yes, those men shall be the saviors [saoshyanto] of the lands, namely, those who shall follow their knowledge of Thy teaching with actions in harmony with good thinking and with truth, Wise One ..."

[Ys. 48.12, Insler translation] [1]

I love the teaching of a prophet who tells us that on the **path of spiritual evolution**, a good first step is justice, being fair, but an even higher step is generosity:

"... the beneficent have correctly chosen ..."

[Ys. 30.3, Insler translation] [1]

If we could commit to generosity in our dealings with each other, what a happy difference it would make, as generosity often (though not always) begets a corresponding generosity from the recipient.

On the other hand, Zarathushtra does not teach us to be willing victims. He encourages us to **fight wrongful actions**, but with truth and good thinking, not with anger or hatred or prejudice. If we fight hatred with hatred, or anger with anger, or prejudice with prejudice, we simply create more hatred, anger and prejudice. By showing us the path of the *ame-sha spenta*, Zarathushtra helps us to realize that a good end can never be accomplished through wrongful means.



Illustrations for this issue of FEZANA Journal. The beautiful illustrations (on the cover as well as throughout this series of cover-story articles) are the artwork of a talented young Zarathushti, **Ava Mehta**, who agreed to illustrate the idea of Ahura Mazda's immanence (presence) in all things. Ava was born in India and now lives in London, as a single parent, with her two young daughters. She has taught children for over 10 years, and has won medals and certificates for her creative teaching style. She has also completed a Rudolf Steiner course in education, and has taught children with cerebral palsy and Down's syndrome. She was the author of the highly successful illustrated children's book, **"The Story of our Religion – Zoroastrianism"** which was published by Zoroastrian Studies at the Tata Press in India in 1988. Ava is currently working on a book of illustrated Persian Tales for children, and is looking for a publisher. In her spare time, she volunteers for holiday camps, drama groups, and craft classes for children and hopes one day to open her own school for small children for "teaching through doing and making."

In the final analysis, there is one teaching of Zarathushtra that links into all the others, and provides a solution for so many of the ills that plague us. It is the idea that **God is immanent** (present) in all things, and that therefore, we are all part of one whole. If, when making our choices, we could remember that teaching, just imagine what the consequences would be. How would we speak or act in a given situation, if we remembered that God is present in the object to which our words or actions are directed – whether it is a human being, or another life form, or our environment?

Can this teaching be carried to its logical conclusion? Probably not. Do I swat mosquitoes? Sure I do (with a mental apology). Would I eliminate a colony of ants that were lunching on my house? As humanely as possible (and to the extent necessary), yes I would. Should we kill to eat? We have to, if we want to survive. Even we vegetarians kill or cut plants. I do not know why our world is ordered in such a way that we have to kill to survive (although I have some ideas). However, we can use our minds/hearts to ensure that we don't victimize.

If we believe this teaching of Zarathushtra – that God is present in all things – we would understand that we are all inextricably linked in a web of existence – an interdependent ecosystem. We would understand that whether it is another human being, or another life form, or our environment, we cannot victimize it, we cannot trash it, without harming ourselves and God. If we could turn this thought into actions, its Light would flood our lives and make our world a brighter, happier place.

“... Therefore may we be those who shall heal this world ...”

[Ys 30.9. Insler translation] [1] ■

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zarathushtra's vision of freedom of choice

Its implication for today's community issues

By Adi Daver
Falls Church, Virginia



Freedom of choice is the bedrock of faith revealed to Zarathushtra by Ahura Mazda. This teaching of the Prophet is ingrained within all Zarathushtris. It might nevertheless be worthwhile to remind ourselves of his vision of that freedom. If we all understand it clearly, and live according to it, it could not only bring us greater personal happiness, but help us free our community from issues like pluralism, intermarriage and inclusion which have haunted it in this century. Why do I say this?

Zarathushtra's Gathas are suffused with the thought that as Ahura Mazda's 'hamkars', the purpose of one's journey on earth is to renovate and perfect our souls progressively, and thus help Him to renovate and perfect a world and universe that is contaminated by imperfections and inequities. This is his ultimate rationale for the freedom of choice given by Ahura Mazda to every human being. Zarathushtra says in many ways, that we may see those doing wrong and harm prosper on this earth, but on leaving it, their reward will be eternal woe in the "realms of darkness", whereas eternal happiness in the "realms of light" awaits those who have made the right choices in life.

The right choices. To help make the right choices, Ahura Mazda has even given every person a dual support system. First, He has placed within each of us, the same 'attributes' which He has in Himself. These

attributes later became known as the *Amesha Spentas*, and in human beings translate as: *Vohu Mana*, good mind; *Asha*, absolute righteousness; *Khshathra*, service or love of mankind; *Spenta Armaity*, inner serenity; *Haurvatat*, spiritual perfection; and *Ameretat*, immortal bliss after death. They work in a complementary relationship with each other.

Second, to guide in so using them and in making the right choices, Ahura Mazda has also endowed every person with 'Daena Vanghui', his good conscience or 'voice', which is always in communication with *Spenta Mainyu* – his progressive mentality.

The Gathas [Ys. 34, 1-2 and Ys. 47] beautifully encapsulate how this support system can help everyone to renovate one's soul progressively and attain immortal bliss. Here is stanza 1 of Gatha 47 [Ys. 47-1], which summarizes this gift given to all persons:

**"Led by Thy Spenta Mainyu
and Thy Vohu Mana,
Led on by best thoughts, and
words and deeds of Asha,
Haurvatat and Ameretat shall
Man attain
Through his Khshathra and
his Holy Armaity;
Mazda Ahura has on all
mortals these bestowed."**

*[Paraphrase of
Taraporewala translation]*

A person can choose to heed, or ignore, this support system. But in every moment of life, it prompts a recognition when one's good mind has grasped the path of absolute righteousness, that by choosing to follow it, one can provide service and love to mankind, achieve inner serenity

and move towards perfection and immortal bliss.

Zarathushtra thus wisely tells us that freedom of choice does not imply unconstrained freedom to do what, and how, one pleases. He wants us to honestly test each choice that we make, by using the support system within us. If a choice is made with a good mind, it is based on absolute righteousness, and it is in the best interest of all concerned, then it enhances inner serenity and leads to perfection and bliss for one's soul, and of Ahura Mazda's world and universe. The tools for doing all this intuitively, are crystallized in the

that their Zarathushtri parents and spouses do.

Indeed, Zarathushtra repeatedly asks mankind everywhere – "living mortals", "those from near-by and afar", "men and women of all lands" – to heed his teachings and choose his path towards Ahura Mazda. Nowhere in my reading of the Gathas, or about the practice of the faith until some 200 years ago, have I been able to find any explicit or implicit suggestion that he wanted only those who would be born into his faith, to choose to live by its concepts. Nor can I find that he taught that except for them, no other human beings are blessed with Ahura

they cannot use those gifts to choose Zarathushtra's path towards Him?

I do realize that not all of you will share these views. I fully respect your right to continue to believe that unconstrained freedom of choice corresponds with Zarathushtra's vision. My only purpose is to give another input which explains why it does not. All I ask is, place it in the scales of your individual judgment, ponder over it carefully and honestly! Those who see some merit in it, may then decide to adopt Zarathushtra's vision of freedom of choice, as their way of life. It is my conviction that as increasing numbers do that, our community can – and will – free itself of such issues in the millennium ahead.

“ Nowhere in my reading of the Gathas, or about the practice of the faith until some 200 years ago, have I been able to find any explicit or implicit suggestion that he [Zarathushtra] wanted only those who would be born into his faith, to choose to live by its concepts. ”

simplified trilogy of our faith: *Good Thoughts, Words and Deeds*.

Broader community issues. If we understand and live according to the freedom of choice as Zarathushtra envisioned it, then it might also help us to better understand how we must deal with broader community issues.

First, Ahura Mazda has gifted His support system to all human beings, not merely those born into Zarathushtra's faith. With its help and guidance, all have the freedom to learn and understand his teachings. Thereafter, if they conclude, that it would be the absolutely righteous choice for them to pay obeisance to our common Creator in the way Zarathushtra taught, then surely they have the freedom to do so. Such persons include those from other faiths, who may thus make that choice. They include our sons and daughters who, despite marrying their soul mates from other faiths, choose to be devout to the faith in which they were born. They include children of such marriages, and spouses who decide that they want to pay obeisance to the Creator in the same way

Mazda's Daena Vanghui and divine attributes to guide them towards choices which can contribute to the progressive perfection of their souls, world and universe.

Neither can I find anywhere that he wanted Zarathushtri women to be barred from entering our places of worship, and worse still, to be cast out of the faith, if they married spouses of other faiths. In a religious teaching which repeatedly equates women and men, I cannot find any suggestion anywhere that this should be their fate, whereas Zarathushtri men who intermarry can continue to practice the faith. Nor can I find anywhere that the spouses of both, or their children, even after studying Zarathushtra's teachings, cannot choose to follow them through the use of Ahura Mazda's divine attributes and inner voice placed within them.

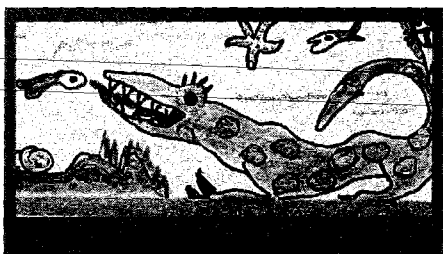
Since Ahura Mazda has placed these in all human beings so that they can each make the right moral choices in the course of their lives, how can any person dictate to any of them that



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echoes of zarathushtra in the modern field of conflict resolution

By Arthur B. Pearlstein
Malibu, California



Conflict happens. Effective and meaningful resolution of conflict, all too often, does not. As we look around our world – from fighting in the Balkans and the Middle East, to labor strikes, to divorce – we can find conflicts that persist despite the painful costs and despite the fact that there may be a variety of possible resolutions that would leave the parties better off. This reality has spawned a relatively new field of study known as “conflict resolution.” Cobbled together from an eclectic variety of disciplines – including law, psychology, economics, and sociology – conflict resolution has developed theories and principles that have constantly expanding application in new areas of human endeavor. As I near the end of an academic fellowship in the field, I am struck by the degree to which these guiding principles have seemed so familiar to me. I have, as it turns out, seen them before: in the Gathas of Zarathushtra.

Guiding precepts. One of the guiding precepts of conflict resolution is the *importance of participation and creativity in our approach.* The key

is to use conflict, where possible, as a positive force that prevents stagnation, stimulates curiosity and learning, and promotes the search for new solutions at both individual and social levels. Being creative and constructive; taking responsibility; using our good minds to bring about fresh ideas; these are themes that recur frequently in the Gathas.

Conflict resolution is also about *better outcomes.* Theorists talk about integrative approaches to problem solving: “expanding the pie before

“ The relatively new field of study known as “conflict resolution” ... has developed theories and principles that have constantly expanding application in new areas of human endeavor ... I am struck by the degree to which I have seen them before: in the Gathas of Zarathushtra. ”

dividing it,” or “creating value before claiming it,” or, what has become a cliché, seeking “win-win solutions.” The use of a *collaborative approach* to reach the right result, in the right way, at the right time, is something Zarathushtra would have applauded. He taught that wise people should unite and pool their wisdom to improve the world:

“... those who strive with good name shall be united in the good abode of good mind and righteousness of the Wise One.”

[Ys. 30.10, D. J. Irani translation]

At the same time, seeking a resolution that leaves all the parties better off, rather than merely taking from one to give to another, echoes Gathic teaching.

“...Happiness linked with dishonor, happiness that harms others is poison for the seeker.”

[Ys. 53.6, D. J. Irani translation 1994]

Another key principle of conflict resolution is the *need to listen to, understand, and respect differing positions.* As the prophet taught:

“One who listens and realizes the truth, becomes a life-healing wise person. He controls his tongue to express the right words when he wills. He, O Wise One, through Your radiant light, proves good to both parties.”

[Ys. 31.19, Jafarey translation]

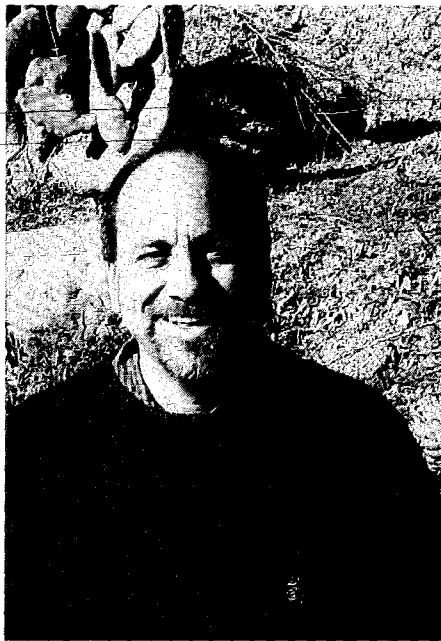
In the domain of law, the legal community is being urged by many to move away from its exclusive, adversarial focus on the use of courts to resolve conflicts and instead, to *seek more constructive, alternative dispute resolution methods.* Negative and reactive thinking produced by adversarial argument, stifles imagination and creativity and often constrains settlement of disputes. Our attempts to address every conceivable social issue with a written proscription has led to excessive reliance on law. The Gathas contain only guidelines, not a list of proscriptions. Zarathushtra counseled against reactive, destructive thinking—he warned against anger and bitterness.

As the study of conflict resolution expands, we gain new and greater insights into the degree to which conflict provides opportunity for growth. In recognizing the *importance of learning*,

“... how to deliver the wrong into the hands of righteousness.”

[Ys. 30.8, A. Jafarey translation]

Zarathushtra anticipated the modern field of conflict resolution by thousands of years. ■



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

the gathas lessons to grow through



Sharing some personal life and Gatha-derived insights on how to live more effectively and promote personal growth and responsibility.

By Behrouz Darabi Farsi
San Jose, California

I am a grateful student of life and I believe that a critical issue of our time is to encourage personal growth and responsibility. Zarathushtra's revelations have moved my heart and mind, as well as challenged me to grow into a more enlightened, loving and dynamic individual. In my studies, I have come to view the Gathas as an invaluable spiritual and intellectual resource, propounded by a prophet whose own personal and spiritual evolution is awesome.

I would like to discuss aspects of Zarathushtra's philosophy that are dear to me and also share some personal life and Gatha-derived insights on how to live more effectively. Specifically, I want to share some thoughts on the truth, the good mind, service derived from good thinking, and love. As I have become more aware of how these elements promote intellectual and spiritual growth, I have also committed myself to incorporating them into my life on a regular basis. This, in turn, has enabled me to make greater strides towards fulfilling my personal mission. I share with you now, in the hope of fueling a similar fire within you.

Some fundamentals of the religion. So let us begin with some fundamentals of the religion of Zarathushtra that form the framework of my principle-based belief system.

Ahura Mazda created the human body, conscience, intelligence, and the life force.

“Since Thou, Wise One at the beginning didst fashion for us by Thy thinking creatures and conceptions and intentions, since Thou didst create body and breath, since (Thou didst create) both actions and words, (all these things) whereby a person with volition expresses his preferences.”

[Ys. 31.11, Insler translation] [1]

Ours is a reality in which two opposing sets of ethic, the just and the unjust exist.

“Yes, there are two fundamental spirits, twins, which are renowned to be in conflict. In thought and in word, in action, they are two: the good and the bad. And between these two, the beneficent have correctly chosen, not the maleficent.”

[Ys. 30.3, Insler translation] [1]

We are all equal and meant to work together to promote truth and good thinking.

“Wise Lord, whoever – be it man or woman – would grant to me those things which Thou dost know to be the best existence, namely, the truth for the truth and the rule of good thinking (with that person) as well as those whom I shall accompany in the glory of your kind – with all these I shall cross over the Bridge of the Judge.”

[Ys. 46.10, Insler translation] [1]

We are co-creators with God. Our understanding, our good words, and our good deeds give life to Mazda's rule.

"That good rule must be chosen which best brings good fortune to the man serving it with milk. In alliance with truth, it shall encompass the best (for us) through its actions, Wise One. This very rule shall I now bring to realization for us."

[Ys. 51.1, Insler translation] [1]

And...

As God's co-workers, we are able to realize our divine essence through our good thoughts, words, and deeds.

"Through a virtuous spirit and the best thinking, through both the action and the word befitting truth, they shall grant completeness and immortality to Him. The Wise One in rule is the Lord through piety."

[Ys. 47.1, Insler translation] [1]

Vital lessons to grow by. This powerful set of paradigms, along with the rest of the Gathas, which chronicle Zarathushtra's trials and revelations, guide us and reveal vital lessons for us to grow by:

A. Zarathushtra demonstrated the importance of having and staying committed to a mission.

His objective was to make sense of the world around him and grow through his relationship with Ahura Mazda. This growth would in turn enable him to better understand how to access Vohu Mana, act in accordance with Asha to manifest the Amesha Spenta and establish Mazda's kingdom on earth.

B. My mission: To deepen my relationship with Ahura Mazda and strive to embody the Amesha Spenta.

The following quotation eloquently summarizes the Amesha Spenta and alludes to the possible nature of a Zarathushtrian heaven: "The quest for truth and righteousness (Asha) is not possible without the influence or inspiration of a benevolent spirit (Spenta Mainyu). You cannot grasp the truth or what is right without good thinking (Vohu Mana). And if you understand a truth, speak it, or

put it into action, you are in effect bringing to life in that small way the rule of truth and good thinking (Khshathra) with your service (Armaity) to that ideal. And the ultimate reward is completeness and immortality (Haurvatat and Ameratat), that state of being, which is the perfecting or attainment of the preceding values—a state of being that is one with God." [2]

In order to realize the Amesha Spenta, we need to be disciplined and maintain our integrity in the process of working towards our goals. I offer you a personal motto that helps me to move forward during challenging times:

If you want a thing bad enough
to go out and fight for it,
to work day and night for it,
to give up your time, your peace,
and your sleep for it,
if all that you dream and scheme
is about it,
and life, it seems useless and
worthless without it,
and if you'd gladly sweat for it,
and fret for it,
and lose all of your terror of
the opposition for it,
if you simply go after this thing
that you want,
with all of your capacity,
strength and sagacity,
faith, hope, and confidence,
and stern pertinacity,
if neither poverty, hunger,
nor pain of body and brain
can keep you from this
thing that you want,
if dogged and grim,
you beseech and beset it,
Then with the help of God
you shall get it!

Zarathushtra's Heaven. Now, with a powerful set of paradigms and personal mission in hand, let us explore how we can live within this framework and realize Zarathushtra's Heaven in our lifetime. Life is inherently challenging and can shake you to your roots at times, so it is heartening to know that Zarathushtra drew his strength and insight from the Truth and Vohu Mana.

1. Truth and Vohu Mana are integral to living (growth, prosperity), as opposed to not-living.

"Whom hast Thou appointed as guardian for me, Wise One, if the deceitful one shall dare to harm me? Whom other than Thy fire and Thy (good) thinking, through whose actions one has nourished the truth, Lord? Proclaim that wondrous state to me for the sake of the (good) conception."

[Ys. 46.7, Insler translation] [1]

My reflections on truth and honesty:

(a) Truths govern our reality, therefore let us commit ourselves to acknowledging and respecting them, so that we may better comprehend and advance the world.

(b) By nurturing an honest approach to life and seeking out the truth, life becomes eminently richer.



(c) Having an internal locus of control aids one in establishing an honest dialogue with oneself, which is critical to growth. What I mean by an internal locus of control is simply to work from within yourself and act upon the world, as opposed to allowing your external environment to direct your course.

My reflections on effective good thinking:

(a) By thinking critically, openly, honestly, provocatively ... your consciousness expands.

(b) To gain greater insight (into yourself, Ahura Mazda, and others) incorporate strategies into your life, such as prayer, meditation, thought-provoking discussions, in-depth studying, making a concerted effort to learn from mistakes, journal-writing, etc.

(c) Explore yourself and God by interacting with others, engaging in new activities, and entertaining new ideas/concepts.

It is exciting and comforting to know that Ahura Mazda resides within everyone and pervades all things.

2. Give substance to the truth and Vohu Mana by exercising Armaity, which represents the actions that stem from good thinking.

"But to this world He came with the rule of good thinking and of truth, and (our) enduring piety [Armaity] gave body and breath (to it)..."

[Ys. 30.7, Insler translation] [1]

My reflections on service to God and the self:

(a) You and I are co-creators with God. We must take personal responsibility and lead by example to make a positive difference (there's no reading between the lines, it is hard work, but it has to be done).

(b) Challenge yourself to explore and grow through a greater understanding of the progressive mentality.

(c) Speak good words, perform good deeds and as you do, the doors that line life's corridors open to you.

(d) Strive to make a difference at the level of self, family, local community, state, nation and the world.

(e) The ripple effect means that no matter what you do, you make a difference – so make it count!

Lastly, the time honored question of "What is love?" I have found an answer that is very satisfying:

3. Love means to worship Ahura Mazda with his own enduring values (the Amesha Spenta)

"I know in whose worship there exists for me the best in accordance with truth. It is the Wise Lord as well as those who have existed and (still) exist. Them (all) shall I worship with their own names, and I shall serve them with love."

[Ys. 51.22, Insler translation] [1]

My reflections on love:

(a) Love encompasses a personal sense of responsibility that encourages one to care about all of God's creation.

(b) Treat others as you would like to be treated and closely align your actions with the Amesha Spenta.

(c) By helping all of God's creation, your connection with Ahura Mazda becomes ever-more intimate.

(d) Give of yourself, because the more you give, the more you will be enriched (look around you at the "Givers" and this truth becomes clearly evident).

(e) Understand the conditional nature of your love, and slowly build the bridges to unconditional love.

Finally, I would like to conclude with one of my favorite Yasnas:

"Therefore may we be those who shall heal this world! Wise One, and ye other lords, be present to me with support and with truth, so that one shall become convinced even where his understanding shall be false."

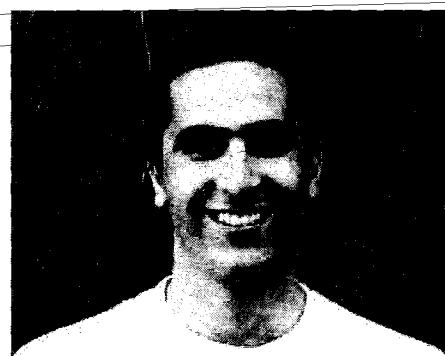
[Ys. 30.9, Insler translation] [1]

I hope that your life's events inspire you to study the Gathas and delve deeper into yourselves, so that you may positively impact your own life, as well as the rest of Ahura Mazda's creation. May Ahura Mazda always light your path and bless you with lessons to grow by.

NOTES:

[1] Stanley Insler, *The Gathas of Zarathustra*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1975.

[2] Dina G. McIntyre, *An Introduction to the Gathas of Zarathushtra*, No. 8, page 13, The Gatha Studies Trust, Pittsburgh, May 1990.



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He dwells within our heart ...

The Little Space within the heart is as great as this vast universe. The heavens and the earth are there, and the sun, and the moon, and the stars; fire and lightening and winds are there; and all that now is, and all that is not; for the whole universe is in Him and He dwells within our heart.

- Upanishads (c. 800 BCE)

my vision for the religion of zarathushtra in the 21st century

By Hannah M. G. Shapero
Washington, DC

Many 'reformist' Zarathushtis stress above all, the Good Religion's humanistic philosophy of rational thought and 'progressive' thinking, reaching for perfection, free choice, good thoughts, good words, and good deeds – sometimes they consider it all there is to the religion. But *any* modern liberal religion or philosophy can provide that. Why wouldn't Zarathushtis just become Unitarians? Or secular humanists? What's the point of remaining a Zarathushti if its message has become identical with numerous other modern humanistic philosophies?

Some personal history here. I come from a Jewish family, my grandparents came over from Russia/Ukraine in the early decades of the 20th century. They were nominally Jewish, but had little or no Jewish observance, and some of them actively rejected any Jewish religion. My parents rejected Judaism and all religions as well, and are confirmed atheists. I, the third generation, became a Roman Catholic! Good grief!

But other third-generation Jews like myself, especially when they have families themselves, begin anew a spiritual search for roots. These inheritors, instead of finding Catholicism as I have, have gone back to the Jewish culture, beliefs, and practices that the 'enlightened,' humanistic elders rejected: not only Kosher food, Sabbath observance, and synagogue attendance, but also the deeper elements of Judaism such as Talmudic study, Jewish philosophy, and the

mystical Kabbalah. I know numerous 'returned Jews' who have become *more* Orthodox in their practice, rather than secularizing themselves further with 'ethical monotheistic philosophy.' Indeed, my own Catholicism is a similar return to a more mythically aware, structured form of worship.

What's going on here? What if it happened with the religion of Zarathushtra? Every time Zarathushtis preach their 'gospel' of philosophical humanism, rational thought, ethical excellence and 'free choice' being their ultimate values, I think: when they have forgotten all the wonderful mythic, cosmic, and ritual symbolism of the Zarathushti faith, what will the

“ What attracts me about the religion of Zarathushtra is its sense of the Divine presence in all things, whether it be fire, sun, waters, animals, landscape, or food and drink ... ”

third or fourth-generation spiritual searchers have to look back to?

Certainly, the ancient religion *is* in need of reform. Those practices which originated in pre-technological, agricultural Indo-Iranian societies need to be either set aside or updated according to what is feasible to practice in the modern world. How would such a reform work? It could be possible to go through the deposit of Zarathushti myth, ritual, belief, structure, symbolism, and see which



things are worth keeping and which aren't. And there should be an opening to philosophical and mystical aspects of the faith, a deeper intellectualism than just "good thoughts, words, deeds." The trouble is that the authentic 'mystical' aspects of the Zarathushti faith have been overshadowed by the pseudo-Hinduism and occult theosophy of the Kshnoomists and Pundolites.

The religion of Zarathushtra attracts me not because of its philosophy of rationalism and ethical behavior – I had plenty of that growing up among Jews and Christians. What attracts me about the religion is its sense of the Divine presence in all things, whether it be fire, sun, waters, animals, landscape, or food and drink. Not only that, I love the wonderful myths and symbols which are in the poetic hymns of the Avesta, such as the Yashts and the Yasna. These create a dramatic universe in which the story of God unfolds. It gives us a part in a heroic cosmic drama of good and evil, in which not just human beings are important, but many levels of spiritual beings as well as the souls of the departed

(*Fravashis*). It honors the non-human world of nature, prays to Sun and Moon and Waters and stars, sees God in things that are not human. Zarathushti Fire symbolism is the central symbolism of my own spiritual life. To me, the religion of Zarathushtra is about COSMOS – a universe formed and sustained by divine order, which is called *Asha*, which is also symbolized by the fire. Unlike the reformers, I don't condemn these mythical and symbolic elements as simply "pagan corruptions," despised by Zarathushtra, which must be swept away. I see these things not as corruption, nor as a "secret code" for any theosophical hidden doctrine taught by hidden masters. I see the myths and symbols of the Avesta – and of many of the rituals – as signs pointing to archetypal realities, the landmarks and maps of a sacred cosmos in which human beings are only part of a greater unity, of both spiritual world and physical world. I believe that Zarathushtra taught us to realize that sacred cosmos.

I think there should be a kind of 'DNA resource' (the way zoos are now keeping cells of endangered animals in banks) which preserves everything (even the 'bad' stuff!) about the Zarathushti tradition, from the Gathas all the way through the Empires to the medieval period, the Pahlavi texts, the Parsi adaptations, etc. – something that a later Zarathushti searcher could go back to, seeking the original roots and practices of his/her religion. Some work like this is being done currently by Dastur Kotwal and Jamsheed Choksy, as well as by Philip Kreyenbroek.

Spiritual seekers of the later Zarathushti generations will have incorporated the spiritual values and desires of the Western world, which includes consciousness of complex philosophical, ritual, aesthetic, and mystical ideas. They will expect from the religion of Zarathushtra not just something that will cause them and their family to 'think,' 'be good,' and do philanthropic activity, but to

have a relationship with God and a place in the sacred cosmos. I know this because I myself, and most of my friends, are engaged in just such spiritual quests. Some of them have re-discovered the Jewish and Christian faiths of their ancestors. Others (like me) have switched to a religion which satisfies their temperaments and needs more than their ancestral faith. Many others have chosen an entirely different religion, such as Buddhism, Baha'i, and especially Neo-Paganism ('Wicca' and other varieties), which is growing in numbers despite being badly misunderstood by the 'mainstream.'

There is a role for perennial spiritual searchers like me to play in the future of the religion. It may be that outsiders will help to keep the 'spiritual DNA resource' of the religion of Zarathushtra alive, in trust for those seekers – whether ethnically Zarathushti or not – who want to enter into the ancient Zarathushti cosmos and contemplate the power of the eternal flame. ■



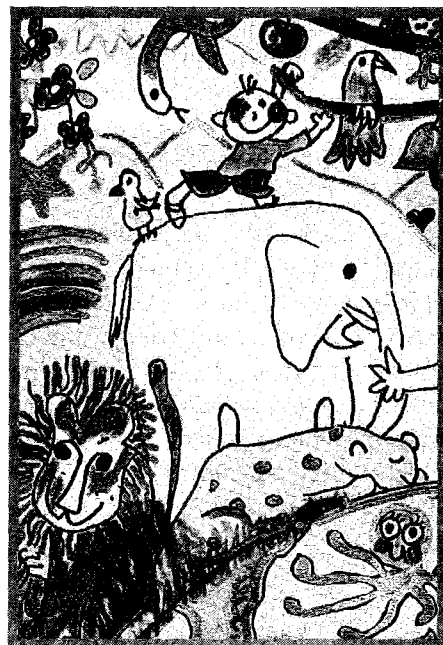
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Equality for All

By Farida Bamji

Some Zarathushtis
have an ego
They think we know it all.
Please try to swallow
one's pride. As it is said:
"Pride goes before a fall."
Treat everyone equally,
No matter who you be,
Regardless of occupation,
religion, skin color or race,
Before one falls from
Ahura Mazda's Grace.
He must really feel sad
To see His sacred teachings
Twisted, turned inside out,
and being misunderstood.
Let's practice what
He stands for,
Fight for what is good.
He judges one not
By the wealth or the
degrees one holds,
But by the Good Deeds
In the Gareban one holds.

Farida Bamji of Ottawa, Canada is a sociologist and housewife. She loves to read and compose poems, do crochet, ceramics and embroidery.



science and the religion of zarathushtra

By Lovji D. Cama
Tenafly, New Jersey



The endeavor of understanding Asha is science when applied to the physical world and is religion in its truest sense when applied to the moral world. When we look at the universe in this way the distinction between science and religion disappears.

Albert Einstein once said: "If something is in me which can be called religious, then it is the unbounded admiration for the structure of the world so far as our science can reveal it."

While some of his other quotes suggest that he did not believe in a personal God, Einstein considered himself to be religious. The "structure of the world" that amazed Einstein is analogous and possibly synonymous to what we as Zarathushtis call Asha.

A personal God, who rules at will and the workings of whose mind can not be comprehended or questioned is a concept that is rather difficult for a scientist to accept. What about the Zarathushti concept of Ahura Mazda? Here is a concept of God whose main attributes are absolute wisdom and absolute goodness, a God who is incapable of evil and in that sense not absolutely powerful. This is a God who is completely predictable. Ahura Mazda, who is *Vohu Mana* (the good mind) and *Asha* (righteousness and the divine law), has a perfect plan for the universe that he has created.

The nature of this perfect plan is subtle and intricate but it is not capricious. Its intricacy arises from the infinite nature of its Creator but it can be understood and unraveled, though perhaps not completely. The understanding comes from the use of the 'good mind' that has been granted to mankind. This endeavor of understanding Asha is science when applied to the physical world and is religion in its truest sense when applied to the moral world. When we look at the universe in this way the distinction between science and religion becomes blurred and the conflict disappears.

“ This is a God who is completely predictable. Ahura Mazda, who is *Vohu Mana* (the good mind) and *Asha* (righteousness and the divine law), has a perfect plan for the universe that he has created. ”

Where does the conflict between religion and science come from? In the absence of knowledge about the physical world, religion creates myths that temporarily may satisfy humanity's need for understanding the mystery of the physical world. Over time, these myths do not stand

up to critical examination via a scientific approach. When religion insists on the validity of these myths, there is conflict. Such is the conflict between the theory of evolution and the Biblical myth of special creation. In fact, at face value, most of the stories of creation as described by various religions are in conflict with the theory of evolution, including our story of creation in the Bundahishn. Does evolution then conflict with the teachings of Zarathushtra? In my opinion, no. It is possible to take these myths, not literally, but as attempts to explain the nature and origin of man in God's plan, in which case the conflict goes away. Evolution in my mind is the Law of Asha unfolding to create mankind, this is the real story of creation. The laws of nature which are part of the divine Law of Asha, have created a sentient being that is aware not only of

itself, but also of the creation around it. A being willing to attempt to understand the Creator, and if the Law of Asha is the plan of God for the universe, then evolution is the only way this could have happened.

The pursuit of science is the pursuit of understanding the mystery of the

physical world. Two of the greatest mysteries are the origin of the universe and the nature of life.

According to the Big Bang theory, our universe started from a point of inconceivably immense energy and following the predictable laws of physics, gave rise to all the stars and galaxies as we know them today. One cannot but be amazed at the order that is present in the universe. Biologists and physicists alike have found that our universe is very finely tuned.

“ Science, the methodical pursuit of trying to understand the universe as perceived by our senses, and religion, the attempt to understand our Creator and the universe through our spirituality, are not mutually exclusive. Especially for Zarathushtis, science and religion answer questions at different ends of the spectrum of Asha, the Divine Order. ”

The slightest of deviations of the laws of physics would have prevented the events leading to our present state and would have produced a very different universe in which humans would not have evolved. If our universe is a product of intelligent design, then this order that one can see and measure is the order introduced into the universe by the designer; for a Zarathushti, this is a manifestation of Asha.

In the last hundred years man has made great strides in understanding the nature of life, to the extent that the entire genomes of quite a few species, including our own, have been mapped. Though the blueprint for life appears to be laid out in a very simple fashion, we have not

been able to figure out all the mechanisms by which even a simple bacterial cell functions. That is not to say that we do not know many of the biochemical steps. Even our limited knowledge has been useful, for example, in defending ourselves with antibiotics against bacteria. However, the more we learn, the more there appear to be phenomena left to discover. The complex systems of chemical reactions that are a living cell require an order that we can only begin to decipher. In the absence of this order, there is no life and as we have said, for a Zarathushti, this order is a manifestation of Asha.

Ecology is a relatively new field of science. Its genesis is the belated realization that man in his progress has disregarded the effects of his endeavors on the rest of nature. The success of this species has taken a great toll on other species whose habitats man has destroyed. Man has come to the realization that the power that science has given to man over nature must be used wisely, i.e. with the good mind to establish 'Kshathra Vairya' (a just dominion, in which all species can thrive). Ecology is our attempt to do that. The religion of Zarathushtra teaches us great respect, and even a reverence for nature. This is demonstrated by our rituals and our prayers dedicated to various aspects of nature. If the world would have the same reverence for nature that Zarathushtis are supposed to show, ecology would always be a part of the decision making process.

Science, the methodical pursuit of trying to understand the universe as perceived by our senses, and religion, the attempt to understand our Creator and the universe through our spirituality, are not mutually exclusive. Especially for Zarathushtis, sci-

ence and religion answer questions at different ends of the spectrum of Asha, the Divine Order. Often, when their spheres overlap, they provide each other with important insights and thought-provoking questions.

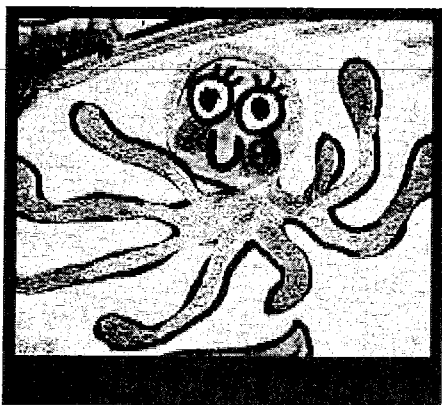
For an example of this, we can return to the Big Bang theory: where did the initial energy come from? Is it God who put it there? Or even more stirring, is that energy a manifestation of God? Finally, as Zarathushtis, we are expected to use our good mind to reconcile our ancient myths with our new scientific findings. ■



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***You will find, as you look back upon your life,
that the moments that stand out are the
moments when you have done things for others***

- Henry Drummond



emotions

Examining emotions – anger, hatred, greed, envy, revenge – in the light of Zarathushtra's teachings.

By Maharukh Shroff
Mumbai, India

Who among us has not been consumed by negative emotions, at one time or another in our lives? Anger, hatred, greed, envy, revenge, are some of them. In this article I would like to examine these in the light of Zarathushtra's teachings.

In the Gathas, Zarathushtra talks very little about emotions. He does not tell us how to deal with emotions either. Does this mean that Zarathushtra has forgotten a very important aspect of human nature? I do not think so. Zarathushtra was an enlightened man. It is highly unlikely that he could have missed something as important as this!

To my mind, Zarathushtra does not emphasize emotions, because he does not think they are a reliable guide to live our lives by. It is very important to have a balance as far as emotions are concerned. Even a divine emotion such as love can very easily turn into an obsession if not reined in at the appropriate level. Similarly a certain amount of ambition may be necessary to better our lives, but if carried too far, it can change to greed or lust for power.

So what is the balancing factor that checks positive emotions from going into the negative zone? The answer is *Vohu Mana* – the good mind, an attribute of Ahura Mazda, which exists in all of us as well. We are expected to use it, to refine it and to perfect it, in our quest for ultimate perfection – *Haurvatat*.

Emotions exist all the time, but they must be tempered with Vohu Mana, with rational thinking. That is the wisdom that Ahura Mazda has. That is the wisdom that Zarathushtra acquired. That is the wisdom Zarathushtra wants mankind to acquire.

Zarathushtra has also given us complete freedom of choice. We are explicitly told:

“Reflect with a clear mind, man by man for himself on the two choices of decision.”

[Ys. 30.2, Insler translation]

With the help of our *Vohu Mana*, each one of us must make the right choice every moment of our lives. If you choose to love, choose also not to allow that love to degenerate into an obsession. If you choose to raise your voice in anger against an injustice, choose also to restrain that anger so that there is no bloodshed.

It is evident that Zarathushtra was well aware that there is a very fine line between positive and negative emotions. Therefore, as in the proverb, instead of giving us fish to eat, he taught us “how to fish”, so we could feed ourselves for a lifetime. He gave us the tools to handle our emotions. He has assured us that our efforts to strive for balance in our emotions and in our lives shall never be in vain:

“But to the person who chooses correctly Comes endurance of body and steadfast serenity Through strength, good mind and righteousness. Of all these, such a person

shall be Yours, Because he has come fully out of the fiery test.” ■

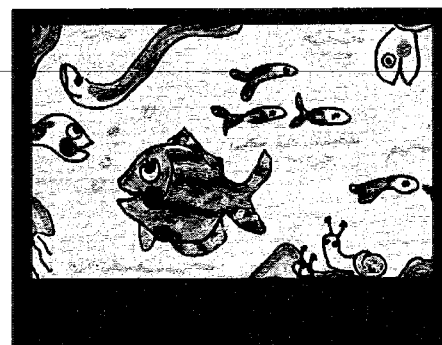
[Ys. 30.7, A. Jafarey translation]



Maharukh Shroff is a professionally qualified Chartered Accountant who ranked 12th in all-India and was awarded a gold medal for the best lady candidate. She worked as a Management Consultant in a firm of chartered accountants in India until her daughter was born. She taught aerobics for 10 years after qualifying in England as an aerobics instructor, and at present advises family and friends on investment in stocks and shares. Her interests include cookery, computers and ballroom dancing. But her greatest interest is her religion and studying the Gathas. She says: “It has captivated and consumed me.” She lives with her husband, Rohinton, in Bombay, India, and visits her children Tanaz and Zubin in the United States.

Z-Vision

believers or followers



By Meher Dadabhoy Amalsad
Westminster, California

It is said that: *"If you have insomnia, don't count sheep, talk to the shepherd."* That is the difference between spirituality and rituality. Likewise, rituality is in the Christmas tree, spirituality is in the Christmas spirit. Many people throw away the spirit along with the tree, not realizing that the spirit lives even after the tree goes.

So, is it the believer or the follower, who keeps the spirit of the Z-Vision? Let us find out.

One day when my daughter Anahita was about three years old, she asked me, "Baba, where is God?"

I told her, "Sweetheart, God is in your heart."

She said, "OK".

After a few minutes, I noticed her sitting on the sofa, looking towards her tummy, and talking to herself. So, I asked her, "Sweetheart, what are you doing?"

She said, "I am talking to God."

A little boy was drawing something in his class, and the teacher asked him, "Sweetheart, what are you drawing?"

He said, "I am drawing a picture of God."

The teacher said, "But nobody knows what God looks like!"

The little boy said, "They will, after I am done."

Believers confirm.

Followers conform.

Believers transform.

Followers perform.

I believe that no one can do everything but everyone can do something and be everything.

Be a Believer and remember that:

**"Faith is the evidence of that which cannot be seen
That is the premise on which the Z-Vision has always been."**

In the spirit of Z-Vision with Love and Light to you All. ■

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Meher Dadabhoy Amalsad is a professional speaker and author of *"Bread for the Head"*™. His message on *"Unity within Diversity in Humanity"* has been heard by millions on numerous Radio and TV talk shows nationwide. For his contribution to society, Meher is listed in the Millennium series of *"Who's Who in America"* as well as in *"Who's Who in the World, 2000-2001"*. He lives with his wife Katayoon and daughter Anahita in Southern California.

Children Learn What they Live

If a child lives with criticism,
He learns to condemn.

If a child lives with hostility,
He learns to fight.

If a child lives with ridicule,
He learns to be shy.

If a child lives with tolerance,
He learns to be patient.

If a child lives with encouragement,
He learns confidence.

If a child lives with praise,
He learns to appreciate.

If a child lives with fairness,
He learns justice.

If a child lives with security,
He learns to have faith.

If a child lives with approval,
He learns to like himself.

If a child lives with Acceptance and friendship,
He learns to find Love in the world.

- Author unknown



applicability of the principles of the zarathushti religion to modern day living

By Mitra Mehr
New York, New York

There are two aspects to being a Zarathushti: one is to take part in the community (to engage in rituals and traditions of the community) and the other is to identify with the Zarathushti religious doctrine. For Zarathushtis living in diaspora who, either by choice or the restrictions of time and distance, are not active in a community, the religious doctrine is particularly significant, since it alone must fulfill the role of defining religious identity. It is on the Zarathushti religious doctrine that I would like to focus here.

Freedom of choice. One of the important (and some would argue more controversial) principles of the religion of Zarathushtra is freedom of choice — the idea that we, as individuals, have the freedom to choose between right and wrong. In accordance with the law of consequences, we reap what we sow and the events in our lives often flow from the choices that we have made.

The idea of freedom of choice frees us from the notion, popular in ancient and medieval times and somewhat prevalent today, that our lives are predetermined and that our destiny is not of our own making. By empha-

sizing that we, as individuals, are capable of making the decisions that shape our lives, the concept of freedom of choice frees us from the dictates of figures of authority, be it monarchs or religious figures or others who have assumed the role of making our decisions for us.

Making the right decision. At the heart of the concept of freedom of choice, is the notion that all of us carry with us the tools that enable us to make the right decision. The idea, (one that we don't always credit ourselves with in struggling with our personal dilemmas), is that all of us have the ability to reach a conclusion that is 'right'. What enables us to make the right decision?

According to the Gathas, we have several faculties, three of which enable us to exercise our freedom of choice responsibly. The first of these faculties is '*mana*' which means the ability to reason, to think logically, critically and with compassion. The second faculty, '*daena*' or conscience, is a surprisingly modern concept that has been a subject of significant debate in the last century. The third faculty is '*baoda*' which translates to intuition or perception. Interestingly, the word 'Buddha', as in Buddhism, is derived from *baoda*. According to Zarathushti doctrine, if we think rationally, follow our conscience and trust our intuition (which is partially drawn from our experiences and percep-

tions), we will be better able to choose right over wrong.

Self-actualization. The natural question, then, is: where will the 'right' decision lead us and how is that applicable to our modern lives? Like Hinduism, Buddhism and other 'eastern religions', the religion of Zarathushtra embodies the concept of enlightenment and describes that as realizing and achieving one's potential; that is, becoming everything that we as individuals can be. In other words, 'self-actualization'.

“ If we think rationally, follow our conscience and trust our intuition (which is partially drawn from our experiences and perceptions), we will be better able to choose right over wrong ”

The ideal characteristics, those qualities that we would want to achieve, are embodied in the concept of God or Ahura Mazda. According to the Gathas, we are not created as blank slates, conditioned by our environment; rather, we are in essence, 'good', brought into this world with seeds of 'God-like' attributes. To

what extent we develop these qualities is a function of our choices.

These qualities are: *Vahishta Mana* (the best wisdom), *Spenta Mainyu* (creativity), *Asha Vahishta* (righteousness, justice and truthfulness), *Spenta Armaiti* (compassion, tranquility, generosity), *Khshathra Vairya* (constructive power), *Haurvatat* (perfection; self-realization) and *Ameratat* (eternity). If we develop our wisdom and creativity, if we act with righteousness and compassion, we will acquire constructive power which will in turn enable us to achieve a state of perfection or *Haurvatat*. Upon achieving that state we will attain eternal life or *Ameratat*.

“ The Zarathushti path to self-actualization entails remaining involved in the everyday world – by learning, creating and doing that which will bring happiness to others ”

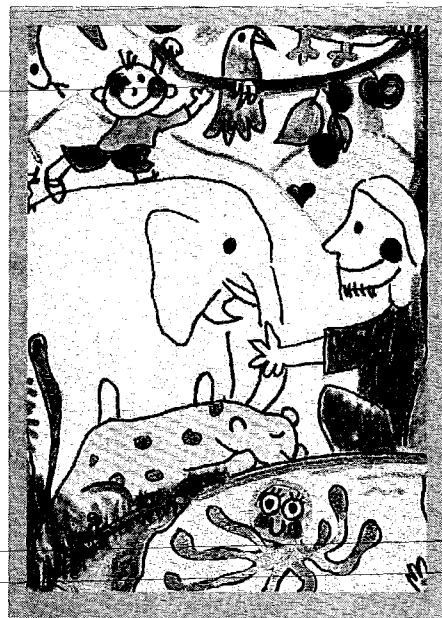
Unlike Buddhist philosophies, enlightenment is not achieved by separating ourselves from the mundane world with its everyday demands. There is no need for fasting and meditation or abstinence from worldly pleasures. The Zarathushti path to self-actualization entails remaining involved in the

everyday-world – by learning, creating and doing that which will bring happiness to others.

Therefore, we should plant the garden and smell the flowers, create the cuisine, write the poetry, direct the movie, compose the music and equally important, perform acts of generosity and charity, for by engaging in such activities and by pursuing our potentialities, will we achieve inner peace and in the end, eternal life.

The idea of freedom of choice carries with it a vision of human kind that is optimistic and surprisingly applicable to modern living. Unlike some popular notions of ‘self-improvement’ the focus of self-actualization in Zarathushti doctrine is not simply the individual but the individual in the context of society, working to bring happiness to others — a vision that may enrich our lives and provide us with a guideline for personal fulfillment as we rush to meet the demands of our daily lives in a fast-paced world that is changing before our eyes. ■

Mitra Mehr was born in Shiraz, Iran, and lived there until 1982 when her family moved to Boston, Massachusetts. She attended Brown University where she obtained a B.A. in History and the University of Pennsylvania Law School where she obtained her J.D. She currently resides in New York and works as a corporate attorney in the New York law firm of Dewey Ballantine LLP.



By Zareen Hakim
Forest Hills, New York

Growing up as a Zarathushti in America has been one of the most beneficial and challenging aspects of my life. My sister and I were brought up like most Americans, but with a beautiful twist of Indian and Iranian cultures, given to us by our parents and ancestors. Throughout my life, this cultural diversity has sparked many questions from my peers as to “What was I?” and “Where was I from?”. I’m sure that the North American Zarathushti youth of today can relate to this. It is this issue of our time that I wish to explore in this article. I also wish to emphasize how Zarathushtra’s vision is at the root of our strength as a people, and allows us to maintain the same ‘religious identity’, if not the same ‘cultural identity’.

Always having to explain my heritage to others and not having them understand or recognize my ethnicity or religion, was often a source of frustration for me. It was confusing because I, myself, didn’t know everything about my religion or the origins of our traditions, and because there were so many inconsistencies in what people believed.

As a child, I would think, “Am I Indian because my parents are from

You cannot overestimate the unimportance of practically everything

I love this principle. It’s a little exaggerated but needs to be said. The art of being wise is the art of knowing what to overlook. The petty and the mundane steal much of our time. Too many are living for the wrong things.

- John C. Maxwell

Exploring how Zarathushtra's vision is at the root of our strength as a people, and how it allows us to maintain our religious and even our cultural identity.

defining identity: discovering strength through diversity

India? No wait, I'm just as American as any of my classmates are. Then again, I'm Parsi, too...". I was proud of my roots and wanted to give people an accurate description, but while I attempted to do so, I was never truly content with my responses.

As I grew older, I realized that I was crafted from all of these pieces, and that my identity was viewed differ-

“ Am I American? Yes. Am I Indian? Racially, no, but culturally, somewhat. Am I Iranian? Racially, yes, but culturally, not exactly. Am I also a Zarathushti? Yes. ”

ently, depending on the circumstances. Am I American? Yes. Am I Indian? Racially, no, but culturally, somewhat. Am I Iranian? Racially, yes, but culturally, not exactly. Am I also a Zarathushti? Yes. These realizations forced me to learn more about my various identities in order to properly explain them to curious individuals as well to myself. More so, it allowed me to separate my 'culture' from my 'religion', a difficult but necessary thing to do when this level of diversity surrounds a new generation.

While the rise of cultural and racial diversity seems to be challenging the growth of our small Zarathushti com-

munity, I don't think it should be. For example, the Parsis who fled Iran adopted different cultures, but maintained the practice of the common Iranian religion. In the same sense, the religion of Zarathushtra has been maintained and even spread in North America and other parts of the world, despite the change in cultural orientation and the rise of ethnically mixed marriages.

What does this mean? It means that the religion of Zarathushtra can flourish, despite these changes. It means that one does not have to be brought up in Iran or India to be able to practice it. Furthermore, it means that people of different ethnicities can adopt the religion of Zarathushtra as their religion if they choose to. The beauty of Zarathushtra's vision is that it allows us and others to thrive in all environments. It is a religion of tolerance, equality, acceptance, compassion, and most of all, **choice**. It allows a person, **any** person, to choose his/her own path through the use of *Vohu Mana*, which according

to the Gathas, has been bestowed upon **all** humankind.

There is strength in cultural and ethnic diversity – strength in others carrying out Zarathushtra's universal message. If we look to the Gathas, embrace the core elements of our religion, Zarathushtra's vision has the power to unite across all levels. I hope that we as a community will one day recognize that this vision is a gift to humanity, and that it can bring light to all where there is darkness. After all, isn't that what the religion of Zarathushtra is all about? ■



Zareen Hakim, an active member of ZAGNY, grew up in New York State. She holds a BS in Biology from the State University of New York (SUNY) at Binghamton and is currently an Assistant Vice President in the Securities Lending division of J.P. Morgan Chase & Co. Her interests include art and graphic design, and she is working towards pursuing a career in a related field. Zareen was one of the 34 pilgrims who traveled to Iran last summer. She was thoroughly amazed by the experience, which has sparked an even greater desire to learn more about the religion of Zarathushtra and to find ways to keep Zarathushtra's vision alive.



ambassadorship & leadership

Object lessons for the new Zarathushti youth

By Natalie Vania
Mountain View, California

In *Contemporary Moral Philosophy and The Gathas* [1], I outline a view of Zarathushti morality by which obligation upon the agent is incumbent. Obligation and balancing one's obligations are broad areas of an agent's concern. The prime Zarathushti duties to forward Truth and *Frashokereti*, and, to think, speak, and do well are not displaced by our smaller duties, two of which are especially relevant for today's youth. Duties of ambassadorship and leadership are relevant to the Zarathushti ethos and especially pressing in our era. We live today in a dynamic condition of swift and global change, in which we must treat challenges adeptly for the future Zarathushti unfolding.

Remarkable change is interwoven into our times. Technologically, politically, socially and globally, the condition of humanity is in flux. Amidst this change, the Zarathushti heritage itself is newly brought into North America and as well reconceived in its ancient proximities. As we take this noble heritage forward and advance it, what special charges are upon us? What should the North American Zarathushti youth undertake to ensure that our descendants, removed even more so than ourselves from the old cultures, receive a bright and shining heritage and love we have found in the light filled ethic of Zarathushtra? Unlike for many immigrant groups, our position

in North American society is one of high obscurity – we are unknown.

A social identity will develop for Zarathushtis in North America. It will serve as the culture's concept for locating us in cultural and social life. A danger inheres for our generation in this development – if the social

“What should the North American Zarathushti youth undertake to insure that our descendants, removed even more so than ourselves from the old cultures, receive a bright and shining heritage ...”

identity established for Zarathushtis in North America is inadequate, generations will be limited by the mistake. One does not get a second chance to create a first impression! As unknown parties, awaiting recognition and awareness by the culture, politically-nuanced duties fall upon the new generation. An obligation of gentle ambassadorship rests with us – we must make ourselves known in a reliable, welcome, full, distinctive, and positive way.

Obscurity is not only a limitation. In being unknown, others are not yet aware of the full force and positive contribution we bring. I suggest using this to advantage. A unique position as the new youth generation of Zarathushtis gives one an extra reason, a special obligation, to strive for excellence and leadership. Generally, a leader is empowered to do bet-

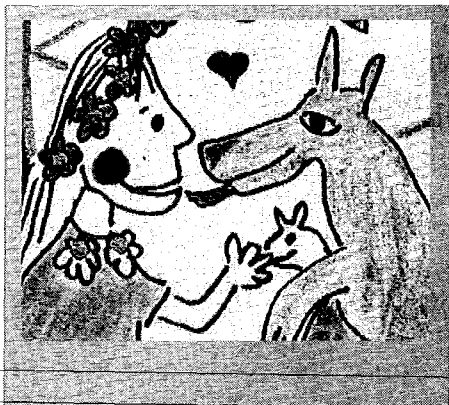
ter for those whom he/she leads. Those in the earliest generations in North America, lead in the creation and establishment of the identity that future generations will receive from early effort. This provides a reason our non-Zarathushti peers do not have to strive for a degree of leadership, whether through steady capacity and sheer excellence in our undertakings, or whether through public acknowledgement. In being of the new youth generation, we have in our hands a charge which an extra striving for excellence serves. ■

[1] <http://www.vohuman.org>. *The Vohuman Journal*, Winter 2000.



Natalie H. Vania is a Doctor of Philosophy, taught as a Professor, and is a Charlotte W. Newcombe Fellow of The Woodrow Wilson Foundation.

A perspective on the interconnectedness between Zarathushtra's doctrine of 'frashokereti' (perfection, renovation, rehabilitation and healing) and the Christian doctrine of love (love thy neighbor, and thy enemy).



heal thy enemy

By Shahriar Shahriari
Westminster, California

Zarathushtra's doctrine of 'frashokereti' has been called by many a name, including perfection, renovation, rehabilitation and healing. Similarly, the Christian doctrine of love has been referred to in numerous ways and through various metaphors, including loving thy neighbor, and enemy.

In an unbiased universal logical approach, the circularity of most arguments becomes apparent, since the end point is invariably dependent upon the starting point as well as the route taken. Through the same mechanism, we can argue that love will inevitably lead to healing as one of its by products. But we can also say that healing, once elevated to a true and authentic level, will have love as one of its prerequisites.

The point is not to argue about which is more important or superior. We simply cannot resolve this question, just like we cannot resolve whether the egg pre-dates the chicken.

In a more holistic and universal approach, we need to recognize the interconnectedness and inter-relationship of all life, including all of its aspects. Therefore, this brief article should not be considered as an analytical approach to dissecting love versus healing.

Instead, the table below should act as a guiding map to pondering and meditating upon the various aspects of these two approaches. By no means is this table conclusive or comprehensive. It is merely a snapshot from one perspective.

Hopefully meditating upon these points will bring into light the importance of the various aspects of these approaches, and ultimately show the relationship between the two – not so much as steps along the path to a certain end, but as legs upon



which we must stand, to fulfill our humanity.

Shahriar Shahriari, best known as the author of "*Thus Spake the Real Zarathushtra*" and most recently "*The Z Factor*" is also the creator and web master of www.zarathushtra.com. He has spoken at numerous congresses and other events on the topic of Zarathushtra's spiritual philosophy. Recently he got married to Mahboobeh, and currently lives in Los Angeles CA.

	Love thy enemy	Heal thy enemy
Doctrine	Harmony	Frashokereti (healing the world)
Pre-requisite	Acceptance	Understanding
Operating Level	Love/Heart	Wisdom
Approach	Passive	Active
Context	Individual	Communal
Process	Self-Purification	Synergistic
Responsible for	Self	The World
Relationship to Other	Interconnected	Interdependent
Reward	Self-Love	Self-Satisfaction
Pitfalls	Victimhood	Self-Righteousness
Results	Reconciliation/Peace	Connection/Fulfillment
Final Outcome	Everything works out for everyone.	Everything works out for everyone sooner.

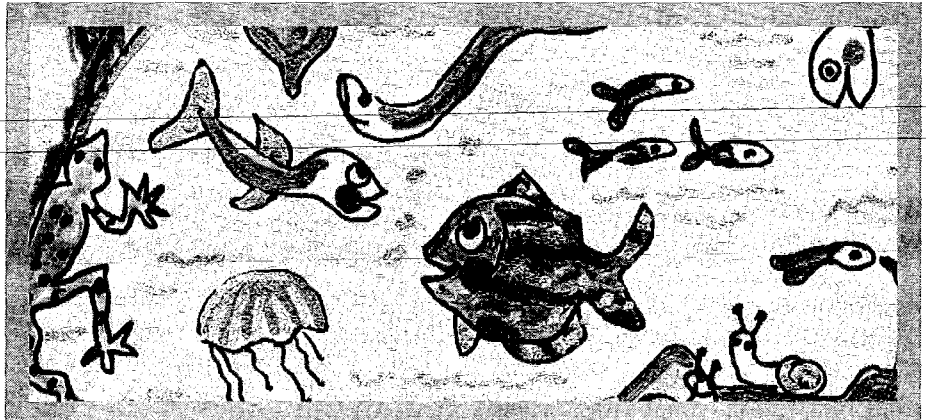
By **Tamuchin McCreless**
Dallas, Texas

Zarathushtra's vision can help deal with a number of modern issues, including that of scientific discovery. Understanding the vision of Zarathushtra can help anyone to understand scientific method. The two are full of ironies. As everyone knows, the Zoroastrian religion emphasizes good thoughts, good words and good deeds. The religion also acknowledges that good and evil coexist and that one cannot exist without the other. How ironic that good thoughts, good words and good deeds do not rid the world of evil but merely allow good and evil to live in harmony with each other. That sure does sound strange doesn't it?

The very idea that good and evil must coexist and that the world needs both to thrive will help one to understand scientific method. Zarathushtra emphasizes that life is a search for truth. Scientific method is a tool for finding truth. The method is also filled with ironies just as is the Zoroastrian religion. Scientific method requires an individual to form a hypothesis, which is a proposed answer to a given question. The method then requires not that the hypothesis be proven but that it be disproved. If the hypothesis is disproved, a new hypothesis is formed and again attempts are made to disprove it.

How ironic that the search for truth is filled with discovering what is false, and that the very process of discovering what is false reveals truth, or at least brings us closer to it. Even more ironic is that the greatest scientific leaps have not come upon proving a given hypothesis, but rather on disproving a long standing hypothesis. The world changed in great measure when Galileo was able to disprove the long standing hypothesis that the sun revolved around the earth. The discovery of this falsehood led him and others closer to the truth, that the earth revolves around the sun.

the ebb and flow of contradictions in truth



“ The search for truth is filled with discovering what is false, and the very process of discovering what is false reveals truth, or at least brings us closer to it ... How can we know good unless we know bad? How can we see light unless we know dark? It almost seems that life is a contradiction of itself. ”

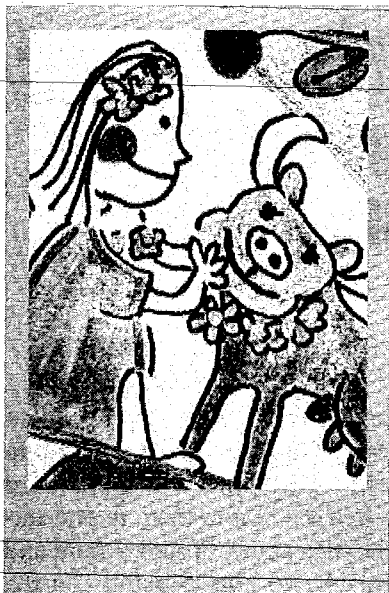
For years, scientists believed that life generated spontaneously from some unknown force until Louis Pasteur was able to disprove this by sterilizing fluid in a specially shaped container and showing that nothing grew in the fluid. This changed the way biologists thought about life.

It is ironic that the discovery of a falsehood opened peoples' eyes and minds and helped them search for truth. More ironic still is that when interpreted most literally, scientific method *never* reveals truth, only possible truths. The truth is never truly discovered, we only bring ourselves closer to it when we reveal that an apparent truth is actually false.

This seems strange, but it is just like Zarathushtra's vision. How can we

know good unless we know bad? How can we see light unless we know dark? It almost seems that life is a contradiction of itself. Perhaps Zarathushtra's vision encourages us to understand how these apparent contradictions are not contradictions at all. And perhaps our search for truth lies in discovering how these contradictions can coexist. ■

Tamuchin McCreless lives in Dallas, Texas. He has a bachelor's degree from Texas A&M University in genetics, and a master's degree in healthcare administration from Trinity University. He plays the keyboard/piano like a nightingale sings, but for his own amusement.



the role of women in society

a zarathushti standpoint

By Tenaz H. Dubash
New York, New York

I have been asked to pick a topic that is important to me and explain how Zarathushtra's message keeps it alive and relevant. I have chosen to look at the role of women in society, from a Zarathushti standpoint. As clichéd as it sounds – we have entered a new millennium and with it have come several opportunities and challenges for women. How do we deal with them?

I have chosen to find answers to this question by looking at the Gathas. The first quote is one of my favorite passages from the Gathas. It states:

"Hear the best things with your ears and ponder with an enlightened and inquiring mind. Then each man and woman, for his or herself, select either of the two mentalities, good or bad."

[Yasna 30. 2]

This, to me, is a very powerful message, because Zarathushtra is acknowledging that both men and women have the same rights and responsibilities when it comes to their spiritual and material lives.

In another passage from the Gathas, Zarathushtra says:

"The Wise God Ahura Mazda knows and recognizes the best in any person of mine, for his or her veneration, done in accordance with righteousness. I shall, on my part, venerate such men and

women, passed away or living, by their names and shall lovingly encircle them."

[Song 16, Ys. 51.22]

Again, this is a very powerful message. By saying these words, Zarathushtra not only acknowledges the equality of men and women, but personally blesses them both for choosing the path of righteousness.



Tenaz Dubash at Aag e Bam, on pilgrimage to Iran in Summer 2000.

The next two quotes show the role that women played as rulers in Gathic society. The first one is from the Gathas and the second one that supplements the first one, is from the *Haptanghaiti* – comprised of seven

short Yasnas. Passage one, attributed to Zarathushtra, states:

"May good rulers, not bad rulers, rule over us with actions of understanding and serenity."

[Song 13, Ys. 48.5]

His immediate successors in the *Haptanghaiti* state:

"May a good ruler, man or woman, rule over us in both the mental and physical existences."

[H7, Ys. 41.2]

Once again, this is a very modern, inspiring and abiding message and gives me a lot of confidence and strength in defining my role as a woman today.

During the World Congress in Houston, in December 2001, I gave a short talk about this subject, which included two clips. The first was a historical one and looked at the equal status of women under Sasanian kings. The second one was a modern one which shows some unedited footage of how some young Zarathushti women felt about the fact that they cannot become priests and other contemporary problems facing women in our community.

In the summer of 2000, I was in Iran with thirty-four Zarathushtis, where I shot and produced a documentary about the religion of Zarathushtra.

[Continued on page 43]



zarathushtis who care an international zoroastrian humanitarian organization

By Trity Pourbahrami
Vancouver, British Columbia

The idea started germinating shortly after I started working at the Canadian Society for International Health. I knew that Zarathushtra's vision: "May we be among those who renovate and renew the world" [Ys. 30.9] would be central to its creation and success.

My initial concern was whether I was re-inventing the wheel, therefore I shared my idea with Zarathushti friends living in North America, Europe, Asia and Australia. I asked them to advise me on past and present endeavors similar to mine with a focus on their successes and failures.

In September 2000 during a project mission to Baku, Azerbaijan I visited an ancient *atash gah* on the outskirts of Baku, located in the middle of one of the worst environmental disaster sites I have seen. As I stood on the roof of the caretaker's living quarters, looking at the children playing in ponds blackened with oil, he told me that natural gas had lit up the sacred fire in this Zarathushti temple for many centuries. What would Zarathushtra think of us? How can we as Zarathushtis preserve this *atash gah*, but allow the children to live and play in one of the world's most polluted areas?

The combination of this experience in Baku and several other shocking experiences during my subsequent visit to Iran assured me that no time was better than the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress to share my idea of an International Zoroastrian Humanitarian Organization with the Zarathushti Community.

As a panel member in the Zarathushtra's vision track I only had a few

minutes to share my thoughts with the congress delegates. I stressed the need to unite the efforts of the many Zarathushtis who are presently involved in humanitarian efforts all over the world. The creation and success of such an organization will depend on the involvement and dedication of Zarathushtis in many different capacities. We will need the expertise of professionals in a variety of fields such as marketing, management, fundraising, medicine, engineering, education etc. We will also need dedicated volunteers who are willing to travel to different project sites and work with local partners.

Following my presentation I was approached by a number of interested and dedicated Zarathushtis. Some were veterans who offered their experience and support in starting the organization, while others

were youth who were excited about the opportunity to get involved in projects. The youth who approached me asked me to join them in presenting the idea at the "Youth Forum and Career Networking Session" on the following day of the Congress. It was incredible how my idea was growing wings and appealing to so many dedicated Zarathushtis. By the end of the congress we succeeded to gather a large list of individuals interested in an International Zoroastrian Humanitarian Organization.

Since the end of the Congress a group of us, living in several countries, have been drafting more formalized guidelines for the creation of this organization. We have also started the process of contacting leaders in communities around the world to gain a better understanding of the needs and resources available in different areas.

Atash Gah on the outskirts of Bakum Azerbaijan



We also need your help. If you are interested in making Zarathushtra's vision a reality, to renovate and renew the world, please contact us. You can contact us via e-mail (trityp@saturn.vfx.com), by phone 604-925-4480 or by fax 604-925-4485 (in Vancouver, Canada). Please address all correspondence to "The International Zoroastrian Humanitarian Organization (IZHO) Committee."



Trity Pourbahrami grew up in Iran and Canada. She has represented the Zarathushti community at the 50th anniversary celebrations of the United Nations. She was one of the founding presidents of the Zoroastrian Youth of North America (ZYNA). Trity has a Bachelor of Science in Physiology and Physics. She is working at the Canadian Society for International Health on a project involving partners in Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan and the World Health Organization. After completing her graduate degree she plans to pursue a career in the field of Population Health, with a focus on Women's Health.



**The best
things in life
aren't things.**



brightness in the Shade

By Timothy R. Smith
Lompoc, California

Where might one find a dynamic international community of men, women, and children, most of whom are actively looking for answers that will permanently change their lives for the better? Well, one of the unfortunate of many possible answers is to look in our prisons today. In the United States alone, some two million people are now incarcerated, a dark statistic that reflects a frustrating ineffectiveness of our society to cope with those individuals who, for whatever reason, seem compelled to disregard the boundaries established by law.

It is not a pleasant topic to think about; most of us would rather be thinking of just about anything else that's not quite so dismal. But of those two million people in prison, the vast majority will eventually be released, not because of lenient courts or parole boards, but because the crimes of which they were convicted simply do not warrant life sentences. Today, this presents itself as a problem of such magnitude that we have no choice but to best deal with the facts, if we have the slightest interest

in improving the sometimes dysfunctional society in which we live.

One morning a few years ago I woke up and resolved to stop whining about the sensational crime of the day reported in the morning newspaper. Instead, I volunteered to spend some time with inmates in the maximum security unit at a federal prison near my home (without having the slightest idea of what I was getting into, I might add). I quickly discovered that firm sentencing and often outrageous crimes were not the issues at hand, nor was the conspicuous absence of traditional 'rehabilitation' programs, which are no longer a mandate for most adult prisons.

Rather, I found that inmates have an indisputable need to find out why the choices they made in their lives have led them to this dark place. Confusion thrives, and no wonder – most inmates must try to figure this out in phenomenally unnatural conditions that bear no resemblance whatsoever to normal social situations. By some miraculous means, inmates are expected to learn to become produc-

Role of Women ...

called "In the Footsteps of our Forefathers." To read more about this documentary, or to order a copy, please go to www.zarathushtra.com or e-mail me at TDubash@aol.com.

Tenaz Dubash has a Bachelors degree from Cornell University and a Masters degree in Television/ Radio & Film from the Newhouse School of

[Continued from page 41]

Communications at Syracuse University. She has over seven years of television production experience including positions at ABC, PBS and CNBC. She also worked as an associate producer for the Radio, Television, News Director's Foundation on an "Excellence in Journalism" series. She is currently working as a writer at office.com.

tive citizens of our society on their own. That rarely happens.

Now, if there is a doctrine that speaks clearly of the dynamics of choosing between right and wrong, between truth and the lie, between good and evil (and in a very practical sense, between a life of crime and a life of good works), it will be found in the philosophy of Zarathushtra.

Zarathushtra recognized the exercise of free will as an intrinsic human right, but also that individuals have a basic responsibility to use this gift to promote justice in the society in which they live [1]. Eloquently stated by Professor K. D. Irani, the postulate of social justice is that society is responsible for the undeserved suffering of its members. In the ideal condition [2] no one stands to gain through the deprivation or suffering of another. Obvious that our society has been and still is far from this today, the organizing power of society must bring about through law, social structure, or by some other practice, a condition in which no one's advantage is dependent upon the suffering of another [3].

Any person understanding these bright principles in the course of daily life has a renewed opportunity to become a productive member of civilized society, even while incarcerated. All prisons are not alike, but because my choice has been to work with inmates in more difficult circumstances where a strong sense of separation from others is the norm, my experience finds that an effective mode of discussing these ideas is usually in a one-on-one setting. No inmates are 'assigned' or 'required' in any way to participate; it is voluntary. In a more relaxed environment for a few minutes at a time, inmates are encouraged to find ways to put theory into action.

Initially, most inmates are very good at seeing how well these principles especially apply to the actions of others. For example, one person first inter-

preted the idea that no one's advantage should depend on the suffering of another in this way: "if only 'so-and-so' hadn't told the cops and made a deal for themselves, I wouldn't be here today." Point well taken, but that was not quite where I had intended we go with this topic, so we continued working on it for several months.

I recall a change in his perspectives when one day he was instead saying, "I was making a fortune, I'd always heard dealing dope was a 'victimless' crime, that the people using drugs were weak. I was the weak one - I should have been paying attention to what I knew was right from wrong in the first place, then I wouldn't have ended up here. All I was doing was

“ Now if there is a doctrine that speaks clearly of the dynamics of choosing between right and wrong, between truth and the lie, between good and evil (and in a very practical sense, between a life of crime and a life of good works), it will be found in the philosophy of Zarathushtra. ”

taking advantage of other people's weaknesses, instead of helping them to really be strong. Now, I want other inmates to know what I know. You know, we need to make this a better place for everyone."

He was not expected to explain himself to me - that's not part of the program. He also knew his comments would not gain him a single point towards an early release. No matter what, this person will not be leaving prison for many years, and in the interim his resolve will be tested under pressure and stress many times over. Still, the notion that he has developed a sense of purpose in life after all, an interest in bettering the community, and that he is willing to share his experiences with others are all good signs for now.

One is naturally tempted to impatiently ask if any of this actually works in the long run. I once had a

basketball coach who said that if we just dribbled around the court and never took a shot with the ball we were never going to score any points. The same is true here: we can quite easily predict the outcome if we never try anything at all. Zarathushtra's teachings were never intended for a few, but for the greater good of all humanity. Further, we cannot be so hypocritical as to expect any immediate satisfaction in transforming inmates, when the rest of our world is torn with strife and discord, poverty and hardship, hatred and war.

Life is an ongoing process, and uncovering some fundamental principles that point the way to brighter civilization is important for all.

Facing the future as "ex-convicts", inmates are especially challenged, so being realistic goes a long way. A few suffer from mental disturbances sufficiently severe that any real success first depends on substantial advances in psychiatric treatment; these individuals are unfortunately at some risk for recidivism if they should

some day be released. At the other extreme, a few should have never been sent to prison in the first place, but when two million persons are incarcerated, some very unfortunate mistakes are occasionally made. In between, for the vast majority, there is reason to have hope.

Meanwhile, we must consider that children with one or both parents in prison, deprived of guidance and without sufficient training and experience to make good choices, often end up performing delinquent acts of their own. Sad as it is, many of tomorrow's criminals are already in training today, part of a cycle that ultimately must be broken.

There are so many prisons, jails, and detention centers that now nearly everyone can find one nearby. Though working closely with inmates may not be for everyone, there are a great many aspects to this

complex issue that need to be addressed. In all quarters, every member of the Zarathushti community can add a profound level of understanding that will have a direct and immediate benefit to society. Each person will surely see what needs to be done. ■

[1] In particular, cf. Ys. 30.2,3,6-8 and especially Ys. 31.19.

[2] In Zarathushtrian terminology, *Asha*.

[3] cf. K. D. Irani, "The Idea of Social Justice in the Ancient World," in K. D. Irani and M. A. Silver, *Social Justice in the Ancient World*, Westport Connecticut, Greenwood Press, 1995, pp. 4-5.



Timothy R. Smith is a scientist and inventor of numerous commercial patented products, processes, and applications; currently vice president of World Minerals Inc. He is an elected fellow of The American Institute of Chemists and California Institute of Chemists, and also is a member of the American Chemical Society, the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry, and serves on several committees for standards development. His interests include the religion of Zarathushtra, music, art, photography, and social justice. In 2000, he was recognized by the US Department of Justice as Volunteer of the Year for his work at the Federal Correctional Complex at Lompoc, California.



the first amendment & gathic democratic concepts

There are ten amendments that constitute the 'all important' Bill of Rights, but only one of them is 'first' – the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

This topic reflects the values of Zarathushtra, which speak to the ideals of a democratic society. First, we will begin with an overview of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution and show how beautifully it encompasses liberties and freedoms granted our society and conferred upon us as well by our Good Religion. We will then take a look at how congruent the first amendment is with our three tenets. The words in the Bill of Rights echo them with beauty and clarity, but none so much as the First Amendment. Surely this must be the reason the framers of the Constitution chose to make it 'First':

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

[Bill of Rights, December 15, 1791]

We find ourselves in very interesting times. The subject of our 'rights' as Zarathushtrians is being questioned. What rights do we seek? What rights do we have? What rights are being threatened? These are all questions that Zarathushtra answers. Our

prophet, much like the framers of the Constitution had a vision. His vision predates by thousands of years, many modern democratic concepts of liberty and freedoms. Why is it then that we, his followers have found it so difficult to integrate his beliefs and teachings into our lives, particularly issues of 'freedom' and 'choice'?

Zarathushtra shows the path of freedom and liberty. Before the words of the First Amendment were ever put to paper, they were preceded by Zarathushtra's message of freedom to choose our path in life, and in particular, the freedom to choose, to follow the teachings of Ahura Mazda. In the foreword to *The Gathas: the Hymns of Zarathushtra*, by D. J. Irani, Rabindranath Tagore says, "Zarathushtra was the greatest of all the pioneer prophets who showed the path of freedom to men, the freedom of moral choice, the freedom from blind obedience to unmeaning injunctions ..."

**"By Thy perfect Intelligence,
O Mazda**

**Thou didst first create us having
bodies and spiritual consciences,
And by Thy Thought gave
ourselves the power of thought,
word, and deed**

**Thus leaving us free to choose our
faith at our own will."**

[Ahunavaiti 4, Ys. 31.11,
D.J. Irani translation]

When Prophet Zarathushtra walked on this earth, the path was not clear and easy for him to preach his divine message. Freedoms, as outlined in the First

Amendment, were not the 'order of the day'. Zarathushtra acted courageously, as he spoke against the powers that did not want to lose the blind and unquestioning obedience of the people. He was the communicator, par excellence of divine truth, and so throughout the Gathas we find Zarathushtra exercising his *freedom of speech*, and the people listening, exercising their *freedom of assembly* and, it follows, their *freedom of choice*, to accept or not accept Zarathushtra's message. In his unique teaching style, Zarathushtra was not just 'talking' freedoms, but also modeling, for the first time ever, how we were to exercise and preserve these freedoms.

**"Listen unto the teller of Truth,
a healer of existence,
Listen unto him who thinks
of Righteousness,
Listen unto him the enlightened
and the knowing,
Who, standing before Thy holy
Fire, with his powerful words
and flowing tongue,
Reveals the truth to the
contending sides."**

[Ahunavaiti 4, Ys. 31.19
D.J. Irani translation]

Also, M. M. Dawson in *The Ethical Religion of Zarathushtra*, states: "it might be said that Zoroaster was the discoverer, or at least uncoverer, of individual morals; the very evolution of the most primitive, but fundamental and, therefore, the eternal notions of right and wrong, (which) is first discernible, in the original Gathas, Zoroaster's own contribution to the enlightenment of mankind."

These 'rights' are so relevant to each and every one of us, not only individually, but also, communally. Constantly, we debate them. We have had our most recent example - our Zarathushti community having been involved worldwide, in the struggle concerning the 'right' for one man's voice to be heard during the World Zoroastrian Congress 2000; and the absolute 'right to

peacefully assemble' by those who opposed this Zarathushti.



Yezdi and Magdalena Rustomji and Aaron Rustom.

Paradoxically, those who advocated exclusion used the same First Amendment rights, which they previously ignored, in their attempt to ban Dr. Ali Jafarey from speaking. In the end, as we all know, Dr. Jafarey and K.N. Dastoor spoke, without interruption. The 'exclusionists' protested, as was their right, and, even if there were only two protestors, their right was guaranteed and respected. The great crowd of Zarathushtis gathered, had the freedom to assemble, and listen to the message, as was their right.

The beauty of our religion and the rights we have as citizens in a democracy are that all 'realities' can coexist and even flourish with all others. This is a simple idea, set forth by our prophet Zarathushtra and fought for repeatedly, some two-hundred-years ago. This idea is the concept of freedom and liberty guaranteed us by both the Bill of Rights and the Gatha of the Good Religion. This is Zarathushtrian, and this is the Bill of Rights - the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

First Amendment concepts in the Gathas: Good thoughts, Good words and Good deeds are congruent with the concept of freedom in the Bill of Rights.

Zarathushtra's Ahura Mazda was ever chiding humanity - to save itself from itself, first. This dualistic, real-

ity - of humanity's conscious mentality and unconscious mentality - was Zarathushtra's religious doctrine, as well as social philosophy positing the existence of the Twin Spirits - *Spenta Mainyu* and *Angra Mainyu*. Although this doctrine required of humanity to accept, without attribution, Angra Mainyu as the corrupting force, yet humanity was religiously required to strive to overcome it through the means of *Spenta Mainyu*. This ethical, religious imperative is to be practiced according to the Gathic mantra:

"Humata, Hukhta, Huvareshta"

This mantra, as we find it in the Gatha, is absolutely congruent with the concept of freedom of speech in the First Amendment. The wonderful gift, that humans are able to produce utterances with meaning, comes about first of all in our infant beginning. We then proceed to repetition of what was heard. Much later, we proceed to the more difficult task of analyzing and weighing all the messages. We begin to use our critical mentality, *Vohu Mana*. We begin to form our very own opinions and finally, to express them.

**"As I lift my voice in songs of
Thy veneration,
Actuated by Truth to direct my
speech to the right path
of wisdom;..."**

[*Spenta Mainyu* 4, Ys. 50.6
D.J. Irani translation]

**"And Wise One, let one listen
to it through good mind.
Let one listen to it through
righteousness."**

[*Spenta Mainyu Gatha*, Ys. 48.7,
A. Jafarey translation]

However, it is unfortunate that this mantra is usually, simplistically interpreted as 'Good' thoughts, words and deeds, to explain a profound *theology* and *ethical social philosophy*. This is de-constructionism of an ancient thought, that is so religiously and ethically charged: for it is the seminal call to humanity, to

Mantra	Implication and practical application
Humata	Implies that humanity first think. It demands that humanity exercise a critical mentality toward seeking the reform of existence.
Hukhta	Implies that humanity speak articulately. It demands that humanity must clearly identify social problems for the reform of existence.
Huvarashtra	It implies that humanity engage in purposeful action toward the reform of existence.

live as fully conscious human beings. The Gathic dualistic theory together with the threefold tenet, has established a cosmology and eschatology that gives the clearest view yet toward the Reform of Existence – and it requires critical thought.

The Gathic theory for the Reform of Existence (the idea of *'Behesht'* – the progression of the world towards the best) is portrayed in the existence of Spenta Mainyu and Angra Mainyu; and the threefold mantra directs one to employ democratic means in achieving the Reform of Existence. We know from the Gatha that Zarathushtra was a proponent of freedom of speech, the very medium he used to proclaim his message. From him we learn that speech is to be responsible, knowledgeable, truthful, and it is to instill a sense of purpose in accordance with the Law of Asha.

“Lord, one who listens and realizes the truth, becomes a life-healing wise person. He controls his tongue to express the right words when he will. He, O Wise One, through Your radiant light, proves good to both parties.”

[Ahunavaiti 4, Ys. 31.19,
A. Jafarey translation]

Zarathushtra's ancient thought – of four millennia:

“May Good Rulers, Not Bad Ones, Rule Over Us”

[Ys 48.5, Duchesne-Guillemin]

was the seminal call for a Bill of Rights propounded for all humankind. This ancient thought had to have given impetus to the Liberal Tradition; a new worldview that first challenged anti-democratic policies, and superstitious theologies.

In essence, Zarathushtra showed the enlightened path of freedom to humanity in the Gatha. That divine message contained a Zarathushtrian Bill of Rights. Dr. Farhang Mehr says [*The Zoroastrian Tradition*]: “Man's liberty is the most precious of God's bounties. It is a component of divine law; it is the natural right of every human being.” He continues, “Man's liberty is so inalienable that God does not curtail man's freedom of action even with regard to man's choice of religion.”

As Zarathushtis, we must continue to be guardians, and yes, ‘watch dogs’ for these freedoms, for *all*. We do this because, it is the right thing to do. We must never allow those freedoms to be seized from anyone, by anyone. We must defend them because they were advocated by Zarathushtra. They were required by him, and reflected in his very own **Good Words**. He fought many battles to be able to exercise his very own right to **Freedom of Speech** to those who **Freely Assembled**. And He fought many battles for those who wished to exercise their right to **Freedom of Choice**.

May we all become life-healing, wise persons, through Ahura Mazda's radiant light. May it always be so! ■

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Aaron Rustom is a Houston, Texas native, born and raised. Since 1987, he has been active with the Zoroastrian Youth Group of Houston, and has attended and presented at numerous congresses. Most recently, he was a Youth Track Chair for the World Zoroastrian Congress in Houston. Aaron is also a past editor of the “Youthfully Speaking” section of *FEZANA Journal*. Aaron now lives in Atlanta, and works for CNN, where he is an associate producer for the political show “The Spin Room”.

Yezdi M. Rustomji and his wife Magdalena have lived in Houston since 1965. Along with their son Aaron, they have been involved in activities of the Zoroastrian Association of Houston since its inception and participate in various Interfaith Group activities. He has spoken at various conferences and is a frequent contributor of articles on various aspects of the Zarathushti religion. An avid outdoorsman, he has climbed in the Himalayas, Kenya and Tanzania. In Texas, he canoes, kayaks, bicycles, rock climbs and has developed and participated in triathlons.

Maria Magdalena Rustomji was born in San Luis Potosi, Mexico and immigrated to Texas as a young child. For the past 20 years she has been a licensed professional counselor (psychotherapist) working with “recent arrival” immigrant high school students, in group and individual sessions. She is very involved in her Zarathushti community and is a founding member of the Zarathushti Study Group. Her other interests include gardening, poetry and the cinema. She is the coordinator of an annual Writing Festival that celebrates Poetry Month and has written a poetry module for use in group work with adolescents.



a common tradition

advocating evolution towards a vegetarian diet

“ Eating meat leaves behind an environmental toll that generations to come will be forced to pay, and it is also the main source of all major diseases. ”

By Mobed Zarir Bhandara
Irvine, California

A majority of us Zarathushtis and human beings follow a common tradition in spite of the fact that we have so many different factions and beliefs in our community – we consume animal products. According to the Shah ameh, this tradition of killing animals for food was introduced to the people by Abris, a personified devil (*Ahriman*). We have followed this tradition to this day without realizing: Whose tradition are we following? Or how does it affect us and our environment.

The output is in direct proportion to the input – “garbage in garbage out”. The food we eat affects our mental and physical health, thinking and disposition to a very great extent. A classic example – in the history of human evolution, one country has rarely initiated and waged (except for it’s defense) any wars against other nations to expand its own boundaries, and that is India, where over 75% of the people are vegetarian.

“Nothing will benefit human health and increase chances for survival on earth as much as the evolution to a vegetarian diet” – Albert Einstein [quoted from *People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, PETA, Vegetarian Starter Kit*, page 4].

Zarathushtra’s message in the Gathas is very clear and that is taking good care of animals. God gave us dominion over animals, to protect them, not to kill them. Zarathushtra was giving food to animals and we started mak-

ing animals our food. All animal creation is under the special protection of Good Mind (*Vohu Mana – Bahman Ameshaspand*) and cruelty to animals is a sin. Quite logically therefore early Zarathushtis had abstained from eating meat, as we know from the *Shah Nameh*. Isn’t it an irony that we (supposedly) respect and revere God and yet we fail to respect God’s own creations? Who are we respecting then? We call ourselves ecologists. We take great pride in saying Zarathushtra was the first one to teach mankind to take care of the environment.

Do you know that eating meat leaves behind an environmental toll that generations to come will be forced to pay and it’s also the main source of all major diseases. According to Dr. T. Colin Campbell, nutritional researcher at Cornell University and director of the largest epidemiological study in history, “The vast majority of all cancers, cardiovascular diseases, and other forms of degenerative illness can be prevented ... simply by adopting a plant-based diet.” [Quoted from *PETA*, page 5]. Heart disease, cancer strokes, diabetes, osteoporosis, obesity, and other disease have all been linked to meat and dairy consumption. The flesh of fish can accumulate toxins up to 9 million times as concentrated as those in the waters that they live in, and the flesh of some sea animals, like shrimps, prawns and scallops, contains more cholesterol than beef. Fish on farms are also fed antibiotics that are passed along to humans, impairing

the immune system. Vegetarianism is an automatic cholesterol cutter. Dietary cholesterol, which causes heart disease, is found only in animal products.

Start good eating (free of cruelty and misery) which will enhance good thinking and long living. Please forward questions to Zarir F. Bhandara 14801 Doncaster, Irvine, CA 92604, email zbhandara@hotmail.com. ■



Ervad/Mobed Zarir F. Bhandara [above, with son Zerkxis] has been an ordained priest for 28 years, first in the Anjuman Atashbehran, other agiaries and Doongerwadi (Tower of Silence) in Bombay, and for the last 10 years in Southern California. He received the Best Student award, from Bombay University, for 4-year post graduation priestly studies. He has represented the Zarathushti religion at interfaith conferences in India and North America. He has a 4th degree black belt in Karate.



the gathas in rap

By Dinaz Dotiwalla
North York, Ontario

All the sacred utterances of Zarathushtra
Are contained in five hymns called the Gathas.
These hymns are in the form of Poetry
Revealed by God to Zarathushtra for you and me.

The divine Gathas show, depth of his vision,
his intellectual quest,
These magnificent five are indeed his best.
In his thirtieth year he saw a ray of light,
So elegant, so brilliant, so handsome, so bright.

"Do not be alarmed," said this shining star.
"I'm the Good Mind or Vohu Mana,"
Said Vohu Mana, said Vohu Mana.
He took Zarathushtra to the celestial court
Of the Lord of Wisdom, whom he sought.

"I have some questions, many by far,
I need some answers," said Zarathushtra,
Said Zarathushtra, said Zarathushtra.

CHORUS: "I am Wisdom, the Creator and Superstar,
I am always good," said Ahura Mazda,
Said Ahura Mazda, said Ahura Mazda.

"There are two spirits – the better and the bad
The struggle between them is oh so sad.
With every good thought, or word or deed,
I get more power, yes indeed.
The good will triumph eventually
And evil will be vanquished at Frashokereti."

Chorus: "I am Wisdom, the Creator and Superstar,
I am always good," said Ahura Mazda,
Said Ahura Mazda, said Ahura Mazda.

"The Amesha Spentas seven
Are my helpers in Heaven,
The Bounteous Spirit, The Good Mind,
The Best Truth, you should always find,

The Desirable Kingdom, Holy Piety,
Perfection, Completeness, Immortality."

Chorus: "I am Wisdom, the Creator and Superstar,
I am always good," said Ahura Mazda,
Said Ahura Mazda, said Ahura Mazda.

On judgment day, the life hereafter,
The soul is judged at the Bridge of the Separator,
The righteous soul ascends to the House of Song,
The House of Deceit is where the wicked belong.
At the end of time the evil souls will be cleansed,
Time will cease, and Frasho Kereti will commence.
All the seven creations will be a perfect sight,
And everyone will live together in endless light.

Chorus: "I am Wisdom, the Creator and Superstar,
I am always good," said Ahura Mazda,
Said Ahura Mazda, said Ahura Mazda.

The Gathas are a dialog of Zarathushtra
He had with the Wise Lord, Ahura Mazda,
They are divided into hymns of five
With seventeen chapters incorporated inside.

Ahunavaiti, Ushtavaiti, Spenta Mainyu,
Vohu Khshathra, and Vahishtoishiti too. ■



Dinaz Dotiwalla lives with her husband and three children in Toronto. The poem was written for and performed by the children of the ZSO (Zoroastrian Society of Ontario) religion class she was teaching in 1990. Dinaz works for a Dairy Food company and is also an artist and a floral designer.



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, lores, legends and memories related to our faith, community, Iran, India, that we grew up with as young children. Jot down those sayings your mother used to say, and send them in, with your version of the meanings, to Dinaz at 1240 Takena SW, Albany, Oregon 97321, tel: (541) 967-1911, email: drogers@proaxis.com.

The Little Shoeshine Boy at Navsari Railway Station

By Dinaz Kutar Rogers

"Honour and shame from no condition rise.
Act well your part, there all the honour lies."

- Alexander Pope

The train was late. The railroad platforms that alternately lined the two rows of tracks were almost deserted. An unusually balmy breeze blew in, cooling the muggy afternoon by a fraction of a degree. There were a few scattered inquiries as to the tardiness of our train, The Flying Rani (The Flying Queen). Speculations about the delay were many. The one that caught my attention was that the run of this train originates somewhere up north, maybe the security police had to check the train for acts of sabotage. Others were more philosophical. So when do they ever arrive on time? Oh this is India, we take our own time to do things. It will be here sooner or later ... !

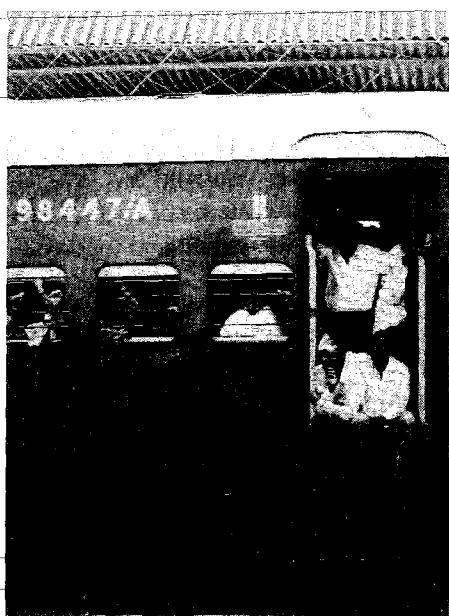
On a sleepy Sunday afternoon even the business at the tea-stalls and soda and snack vendor booths seemed sluggish. A hot cup of Indian tea would have been perfect for an afternoon of waiting for the Flying Rani southbound to Bombay to thunder into the station. Instead, a train going north pulled alongside the platform opposite us and for a while the population of the station increased.

Navsari, some 250 kilometers north of Bombay, like many Indian villages abounds in stray animals, like cows, goats, dogs and cats. Goats, because of their agility seem ubiquitous in the dusty, narrow streets. Dirty, white, cantankerous animals, they would nibble at anything and everything.

The vendor booths became busier as the northbound train departed. The passengers were typical Gujaratis – women clad in brightly colored saris, their necks, arms and fingers adorned with the warm orangish glow of gold jewelry; some had designs of *mehendi*, a reddish-orange paste on their hands, arms and even in the part of their beautiful, black hair. The married women had *tikka*, a red dot in the middle of their foreheads. Some men were in Western attire, shirts and pants, whereas others wore long loose shirts and *dhotis*, instead of pants. Some wore on their heads, colorful turbans that helped their wearers escape the relentless Indian sun and provided a cushion for luggage atop their heads. Somewhere in the throng, a mother yelled at her children to hurry up, travel-weary children cried, their wailing and screaming mingling with the braying of the goats.

Amidst the bustle and confusion, a shoeshine boy appeared, asking if he could shine our shoes. "Oh please, saheeb," he implored. "Shoe polish? Boot polish? Only one rupee please? Saheeb?" All the members of our party were wearing either sandals or *chumpals* (sandals without straps) except for the youngest girl, who had insisted on wearing tennis shoes and socks in the hot, humid weather. Everyone looked down at their feet and regretfully shook their heads. There was not much to polish and besides, we were getting impatient for our train to arrive.

The boy was profuse in his praise of the generosity of the saheeb. He proudly displayed a few *paisas* he had managed to earn. He took one of the man's hands pleadingly, making a million tender entreaties, reminding us that he was not asking for charity, but the opportunity to earn some money. Too bad he did not stay around, for some of us were moved by his poverty and pride. He could have earned some rupees for his sheer eloquence and persistence.



Then on his match-stick legs he sprinted to the platform across from us to ply his trade among the just-embarked passengers of the now-departed northbound train. From what we were able to observe, the boy was unsuccessful at procuring any business from them. Then the laziness of the afternoon descended upon the railroad station and we resumed our watch for our Flying Rani.

The little crowd watched with wonder as the boy cradled the hapless animal's head in his bony little lap. The lad looked around and asked that someone bring some water for the animal. Realizing the futility of the situation, the cluster of the curious faded faster than the life from the poor, scrawny animal. No one helped.

My heart was heavy at leaving the village that my father had grown up in, where my grandfather had built a

[*Vendidad XVIII, II, 17(41)*, translated by James Darmesteter; from "*The Zend Avesta*", Vol. IV, Part I, by J. Darmesteter and L. H. Mills] ■

- Friends are like wine; they get better with age.
- Good times are better when shared.
- An understanding friend is better than a therapist – and cheaper.
- Gems may be precious, but friendship is priceless.



~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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Feel free to submit photos, articles, or any comments you might have to one of the 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 the question is...

Do you think it is a challenge growing up with both the American and Zarathushti culture? If so, what do we have to do about it?

IT'S TERRIBLY HARD GROWING UP WITH BOTH CULTURES. I MEAN IN ONE SENSE I AM TRYING TO FIT IN WITH MY AMERICAN FRIENDS, WHILE ON THE OTHER HAND, I'M TRYING TO COPE WITH BEING A PARSEE ZARATHUSHTI. IT'S REALLY A CHALLENGE, BUT TO ME, IT'S WORTH IT ALL. I FEEL THAT I AM BLESSED TO HAVE THE PRIVILEGE TO BE A PART OF BOTH WORLDS AND LEARNING BOTH CULTURES.

RUSTOM WADIA
LANSING, MICHIGAN



[Youth Talk continued...]

This is a very interesting topic. I have always wondered when you would bring it up. I personally believe it is hard to grow up with both cultures. Parents must understand that we are trying to fit in both worlds and the things that we do have a reason. I know in the Zarathushti religion it looks kind of bad to have a boyfriend or girlfriend at such a young age, but for example in the American culture its okay. There are many differences in both of the cultures and we the youth are forced to bring them together.

Cyrus Engineer
W. Palm Beach, Florida

I don't see growing up in two worlds a real challenge. Come on, most everyone in this country is forced to adapt to both cultures. I see this as a step forward in our religion. I think religion should work and adapt to the society of that time. I think our religion must transform and work with today's society. Many people I know are still stuck in the conservative view that our religion takes. We the youth are growing up in this new world, let us decide how religion will work for the better of our generation.

Delhaz Irani
New York, NY

It's pretty hard growing up in two different cultures. I know it all too well. When I go to the Center, my clothes are especially nice and my shirts are always tucked in. It seems as if I have to change myself every time I go to the Center. It's starting to get to a point where I am feeling somewhat uncomfortable going there. But I know I am not the only youth out there that does it. I guess we just have to understand that being part of two cultures means that we have to adapt to the different ways of both. But when it comes down to religion, I make the religion of Zarathushtra work in both cultures.

Afshin Namdarian
Dallas, Texas

What's going on in your Z-community?

The readers of the FEZANA Journal would like to know what's going on in your youth community? Therefore, for every issue, I will travel to a different Z-community in North America. I need your help! Please submit photos or comments you have regarding your community. Contact one of the editors and let us know what's going on.





~Nikan's View~



Last month, I had the opportunity to attend a very meaningful and enjoyable youth discussion at the local Zarathushti center in Orange County, California. The topic of the discussion was 'how the religion plays a part in the lives of today's youth'. That day I went to the center pretty much curious like everyone else, but also I had this feeling that I already knew what many of the youth were going to say. To my surprise, many of the responses that I heard from my generation that day were very unpredictable and actually quite interesting.

The discussion began by breaking everyone into small groups and giving each group a real world scenario that incorporated the religion and the youth. Some of the many topics that were presented to the youth were, for example, the clothes worn to the center, getting a tattoo, or even having a boyfriend or girlfriend. The whole point of the activity was to allow the youth an opportunity to see where the older generations were coming from and actually act out the exact expressions that would be given by their parents and/or community. That day, I found this activity to be the greatest icebreaker to get the youth talking and ready to discuss. As soon as the activity was over, hands just shot up in the air. Many of them, wondered what exactly was wrong with these scenarios. Many of them wondered if they were even mentioned in the religion? The bottom line to it all was the question of growing up with both the American and the Zarathushti culture and how it seemed they were living a double life. Trying to fit into both cultures is not an easy task. Especially when one culture is liberal while the other is quite conservative. The best piece of advice that I could give the Zarathushti youth out there struggling to create their identity and trying to fit in comfortably into both cultures is simply, 'Be Yourself'. Our religion preaches the idea of doing what one thinks is right. Therefore, be your own special self. I myself am a 'hybrid' just like you; stuck in between two cultures and I find that, what works is simply doing what I think is the right way to go. It's hard for the older generations to understand what we are going through. But in that sense, it is also very hard for us to gain knowledge and feel comfortable understanding the ways of the older generations. We must do our best to incorporate these two cultures and gain an understanding of them each.





~ Relevance of the Gathas ~

By: Nenshad D. Bardoliwalla



To demonstrate my profound originality yet again, this editorial is about the relevance of the Gathas, which finally goes to show you that every once in a while, the FEZANA Editorial Board can stick to the topic at hand! Ok, quick: How many chapters are there in the Gathas? Who authored them? Do the verses rhyme? What 1980's hit song's lyrics were based on the Gathas? Chances are, you know a lot more about when those gorgeous guys and girls of "Survivor" are going to be appearing on television next than even one of the answers to my questions. Shame on you! You're a Zarathushti and you've never picked up a copy of the Gathas? You don't even know who wrote them? And on top of that, you're going to watch Survivor tonight instead of reading them? Blasphemy! In my extremely uninformed and biased opinion, the Gathas are the single most important verses any Zarathushti could ever lay their eyes on. If you don't own a copy, do not walk, but run to your local bookstore or get online and get yourself a copy.

As you probably know, there is a vast amount of Zarathushti literature that has proliferated over the centuries. And you may have even read some of it and learned a lot about our great religion. But there's one little fact about the Gathas that makes them special. The only literature in the Zarathushti cannon that we are quite certain actually originated from Zarathushtra's mouth himself is the Gathas. Not the Vendidad. Not the Bundahishn. And definitely not "Zoroastrianism for Dummies." Does that mean that all of the other works are not meaningful, or important, or spiritually edifying? Not at all. But when I want to contemplate the true substance of what our religion is about, from the person who just happened to start this whole monotheistic religion business, it's just me and my copies of the Gathas (I have at least six translations).

Here's the most stunning thing you will learn when you read the Gathas. 90% of the way our religion is practiced today is not reflected in the Gathas at all. Contemplate this statement for a moment, as it must surely sound ridiculous to you right now (then again, this is me we're talking about...) Is it actually possible that the way our religion is practiced today is that far removed from the message of our Prophet? If you consider the theological message, then the answer might be no. But if you consider the rituals and traditions that have come to embody our religion, then the answer is most definitely yes.

Think about every single ritual that embodies your and your fellow community members practice of the Zarathushti Din. Singing "Chaye Hame Zarthoshti" completely out of tune and tempo at New Years? Not mentioned in the Gathas. Putting chalk on the sidewalk when mischievous Cyrus Nentin has his Navjote? Not mentioned in the Gathas. Having priests be the sole members of our religion capable of performing intricate ritualistic practices? Not mentioned in the Gathas. In our next issue, we'll explore these paradoxes in further detail. In the meanwhile, get a hold of the Gathas and start reading. I can guarantee, it will be worth your effort.

Special Note: To demonstrate the sincerity of my commitment to having our youth understand the Gathas, I will donate an English translation of the Gathas to the first 10 FEZANA youth under the age of 18 who write to my home address expressing their desire to have a copy of the Gathas for themselves. The only qualifications are that the youth must explain his or her commitment to being a good Zarathushti in detail (minimum one-page) and must not have access to the Internet (because the Gathas are available online at <http://www.avesta.org>). Parents may help their younger children to write the letters. My address is:

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a newly discovered armenian parable on zarathushtra's laughter at birth

by Arthur Ambartsumian

St. Petersburg, Russia

In memory of
Shams-ul-Ulama
Jivanji Jamshedji Modi

The Greek and Latin writers were not the only ones to mention the Iranian Prophet Zarathushtra (Zoroaster, Zoroastres). This was pointed out since the 19th century, when A. V. Williams Jackson, professor of Indo-Iranian languages at Columbia University, published in 1899 in New York, one of his best books on Zoroastrianism, entitled *Zoroaster. The Prophet of Ancient Iran*, where he gathered most of the classical passages mentioning Zoroaster's name.

Armenian writings. In his Appendix VI "Allusions to Zoroaster in various other older literatures" A. V. W. Jackson observes the allusions to Zoroaster in Armenian literature. The old and medieval Armenian writers and historians started to mention the Prophet's name from the 5th century in the form of 'Zradasht', after invention of the Armenian alphabet.

Four major Armenian writers recounted about Zarathushtra:

(1) The historian Moses of Khoren (Movses Khorenatsi; 5-9 CE) in his work *Armenian History* [I.6; I.17].

(2) The monk Elisaeus (Eghishe, or Elishe; 5 CE) in his work *About Vardan and the Armenian War*.

(3) The philosopher Eznik of Kolb (Eznik Koghbatsi, or Kolbatsi; 5 CE) in his work *Refutation of Heresies*.

(4) The ecclesiastic Thomas Arzrouni (Tovma Artsruni; 9-10 CE) in his work *History of the Artsruni's family*.



Armenian Kilikian Court Gospel No. 5786 (1136 CE) depicting the marvelous birth of Jesus. On the right side, three magi Zoroastrians of the Parthian time, Casper, Melchior and Balthazar came to glorify the child-birth.

In the history of Moses, Zarathushtra is depicted as a king of the Bactrians, a Magian and a patriarch of the

Medes, who was a contemporary of the Assyrian queen Semiramis.

In the opinion of the monk Eznik, he seemed to be a son of Ormizd [cf. *Plato, Alcibiades I, 121c-122a*] and a grandson of Zarvan. According to this legend a son of Ahrmen threw down the son of Ormizd. One can assume that a son of Ahrmen might be the legendary killer of Zarathushtra – Brad-resh.

Recently reading a collection of the fables and parables of the Armenian medieval writer Vardan Aigektsi (13 CE) in a critical edition by N. Y. Marr based on many Old Armenian manuscripts [*Sbornik pritch Vardana/A Collection of the Parables of Vardan, Vol. I-III, St. Petersburg, 1899*], we have found another very interesting and previously unnoticed allusion to Zarathushtra.

It was in a parable entitled *The Laughter of Zaratushtra* (here he is named as Zroastr, in Armenian 'Tsitsagh Zroastri') which was entirely devoted to the Iranian Prophet. The parable talks about the birth of Zarathushtra, and the well known miracle of his birth, when he laughed instead of crying.

Greek and Latin sources. The tradition recounting the loud laughter of Zarathushtra as he came into the world is very old.

We have the account of Pliny the Second [*Plinius Secundus, Naturalis Historia, VII.15*]: "the child's brain throbbed so violently as to repel the

hand laid upon his head" – a presage of future wisdom.

An account from Augustine states: "Zoroaster alone is said to have laughed when he was born, and that unnatural omen portended no good to him; for he is said to have been the inventor of magical arts, though indeed they were unable to secure to him even the poor felicity of this present life against the assaults of his enemies; for, himself king of the Bactrians, he was conquered by Ninus, king of the Assyrians" [*Aurelius Augustinus, De Civitate Dei*, 21.14].

The Iranian prophet is also mentioned in the preface of the *Icelandic Snorra Edda*, as the Assyrian king and one of the 72 builders of the Babylon Tower: "He laughed before he cried when he came to the world." [*Edda Snorra Sturlusonar, formali 2; 12-13 CE*].

Accounts in Avestan and Pahlavi texts. It could be suggested that more detailed descriptions of the marvelous birth of Zarathushtra had been recounted in the unpreserved Avestan texts, such as *Spend-Nask*, for instance [*cf. Denkard, VIII.14*].

In the Avestan *Ard Yasht* we found only one hint of this subject: "During his birth and growth, waters and plants were rejoicing" [*Yasht 17.18*]. The main accounts of Zarathushtra's birth preserved in the Pahlavi Zoroastrian literature. One is in *Denkard*: "The first evidence was that he laughed during his birth. Many marvels connected with the young child frightened his enemies (king Duras-run, his relatives and servants) and they undertook several attempts to kill him, but it was in vain" [*Denkard VII.3.2-3, 24-25; 9 CE*].

Another reference is in *Vizidagihai Zadspram i Juvan Jam*: "Vohuman entered into the soul of the baby and Zartusht laughed" [*Ch. XIV, 12-17; 9 CE*]. This part of the *Zadspram's*

book could be called a Zoroastrian Gospel [*Ch. XIII-XXIII*] as it relates on the parentage, birth, mission, and vicissitudes of Zarathushtra's life.

Some additional references are contained in Persian Zoroastrian writings, preserved in Persian translations or renderings. The large poem *Zartusht Nama* [13 CE] ascribed to the Zoroastrian poet Bahram Pazhdu, in the chapter "The first marvel and birth of Zartusht" tells thus: "He laughed when he came out from his mother".

The same subject, but in prose is related in *Dabistan-ul-Mazahib* [*Ch. 14; 17 CE*] and *Ahvalat-i Zaratush Payghambar* ("The Life and the Deeds of the Prophet Zarathushtra"). Both are derived from the old Zoroastrian book entitled as *Sharistan i Chahar Chaman* written by Farzana Bahram Farhad Yazdani.

We also have two brief-Muhammedan accounts of Muhammad ibn al-Karim ash-Shahristani in the book *Kitab al-Milal wa an-Nihal* (11 CE) and of Muhammad bin Khvand-shah bin Mahmud known as Mir Khvand or Mirkhond (15 CE) in his treatise.

Newly discovered Armenian parable. The Armenian parable *The Laughter of Zarathushtra* expands the list of references and continues the tradition of the Christian attitude to the religion of Zarathushtra.

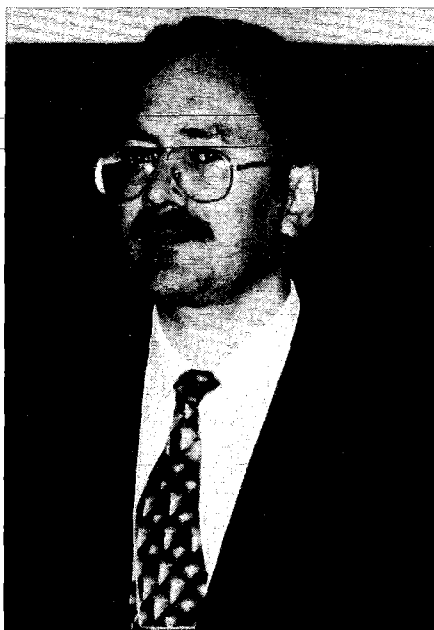
The relevant passage from this parable in my translation from Old Armenian is as follows:

"Again the wisemen say that nature is limited: so the child is born with weeping and until the fortieth day he knows only weeping and sleep, but he does not know laughter. Then some child laughed, whose name was Zroastr, and the devils (devs) considered his deed as evil and burned him on fire".

This newly discovered parable of the Armenian writer Vardan Aigektsi

reflects the late Zarathushti legend about the birth and the death of the Iranian Prophet.

Some Zarathushti books state that Zarathushtra was killed by his adversary Brad-resh [*Denkard V.3.2; Bundahishn; Sad-Dar; Dabistan*]. According to the Persian *Shah Nameh* (and perhaps also the Sasanian *Khvaday-Namag*) the tragical event of magophonia took place in the fire-temple in Balkh. ■



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INTRODUCTION

It is difficult to understand our prophet Zarathushtra's thoughts and words. They were expressed in a language, long dead. Moreover, as Mary Boyce asserts in the very first line of her book, *Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*: "Zoroastrianism is the most difficult of living faiths to study, because of its antiquity, the vicissitudes which it has undergone, and the loss, through them, of many of its holy texts."

According to Boyce, Zarathushtra lived some time between 1700 and 1500 BCE. In that period the Persians were not familiar with writing, and their religious works were handed down orally from one generation to another. It was only around 500 to 600 CE that the holy texts were first committed to writing in the form of *The Great Avesta*, but in a language called the Younger Avesta. Younger Avesta differs from Zarathushtra's language, which is called Gathic Avesta. Furthermore, Boyce continues, through successive conquests by Arabs, Turks, and Mongols, "not a single complete copy of the Great Avesta survives." What survives is estimated to be a quarter of the cannon, and amounts to 72 chapters. Of these, only 17 brief chapters (also called songs or Yasnas) are attributed to Zarathushtra himself. They are in Gathic Avesta and have a poetic format. The remaining chapters, all in Younger Avesta, are assumed to have been composed later by Zarathushtra's followers.

Since these 17 out of the 72 chapters are considered to be Zarathushtra's own composition they have had special interest among the Avesta scholars, and currently there are at least 30 different translations of them, with more on the way. Unfortunately,

Understanding the Gathas Purpose and a Methodology

By
The Harvard Gatha Study Group

while each translation claims to be faithful to the original, they do not agree fully with one another. This makes it hard for one who is not versed in the Avesta language, to decipher what Zarathushtra really said. To make matters more difficult for the non-Avesta student of Zarathushtra, even those Avesta scholars who believe that they have figured out what Zarathushtra said, have a hard time understanding and conveying what Zarathushtra meant. This does not really matter if one is content to repeat the Gathic words by rote with faith and devotion in the sound symbols alone. Those of us, however, who seek for the true meaning and import of the Gathas are faced with a very steep uphill and few footholds. What is the way out? One possibility, is the approach followed by Harvard Gatha Study Group, in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

THE HARVARD/CAMBRIDGE GATHA STUDY GROUP APPROACH

It is only the rare Gatha study group that has a committed Avesta scholar to lead them week after week, and so it is very easy for a group of non-Avesta generalists who may be scholars in their own field to get bogged down in methodological issues on how to tackle the Gathas. We were no exception.

In the beginning, we could not agree on which translation to use, on which topics to focus on, or which resident scholar to lean on (e.g., Professors Mehr, Russell or Skjaervo). But as Stanley Insler concludes in his introduction to the translation of The Gathas of Zarathushtra: "... Zarathushtra is a man haunted by a vision

which has pursued him relentlessly throughout his life, and his poetry is in as many ways the autobiography of an idea as much as it is the self-portrait of the prophet ... For where doubt and hesitation exist in the understanding of the Gathas, they exist only for us. For Zarathushtra, who composed these exalted poems with all the craft of his admirable poetic art, the compelling character of his message was undoubtedly clear, and he surely labored with great pains to express his thoughts in a fashion ultimately comprehensible to those who cared to listen to him. And for us too, the approach to these lyrics must be the same: an effort founded upon the careful labor and examination into the composition of the prophet's poetry to reveal its underlying unity of thought and language."

Thus our methodology needed to reflect our purpose. Since our purpose was to understand as best we could what Zarathushtra meant and since as Insler states, the Gathas are "the autobiography of an idea," we decided to start from the very beginning of the autobiography and work our way to the end. As for which translation to use, even Insler's translation, which has the best of intentions and is one of the most highly regarded, fails to achieve any great clarity. The same can be said for all the other Western translators: e.g. Moulton, Humbach, Duchesne-Guillemin.

Then there are translations by Zarathushti scholars: e.g. Taraporewala, Jafarey, Bode and Nanavatty, Kanga. They are less faithful to the text, but try to be more meaningful with lots

of piety and lofty language, which can make for interesting reading but still eludes any clear understanding. We mean no disrespect to these great Western and Eastern scholars. We owe a great debt to them, for without their translations we would not know where to begin. We appreciate that as scholars they faced the daunting task of remaining faithful to the text, making a 3500 year old dead language come alive, and providing an interpretation that is meaningful to practicing Zarathushtis. No wonder then that none of the translations – Western or Zarathushti – agree with one another.

In the end we felt that no individual translation does justice to Zarathushtra's exalted teachings, but each of them has something special to offer. This led us to the conclusion that if we were to pore over, compare and contrast a number of the major translations, verse by verse [e.g., Table 1], we might achieve the clarity that eluded us in any single translation. Besides, as Insler notes, "And for us too, the approach to these lyrics must be the same: an effort founded upon careful labor and examination into the composition of the prophet's poetry to reveal its underlying unity of thought and language."

Thus, we take up each verse in sequence and attempt to figure out how each scholar translated every word and phrase [e.g., Table 2]. Then we try to agree on and write up the clearest possible interpretation – not translation – in plain English. Our goal is understanding the meaning behind the meaning. After over three years of doing this religiously, albeit only once a month for about three hours, in a group of 4 to 8 persons, we have managed to complete only three Yasnas: 28, 29, and 30.

So, we have certainly fulfilled one of Insler's criterion of following in Zarathushtra's footsteps, that of "careful labor and examination." Whether we have achieved the more important criteria of clarity, and unity of thought and language, we shall

leave for the reader to judge. And so, it is with this rather long preamble that we offer for your edification, our interpretation of Yasna 30.

YASNA 30

30.1 Now I shall speak to you seekers who will listen – even those who think they know.

That which is to be learned from the Wise One, so that you may attain happiness.

I will reveal to you the importance of the Good Mind and that of Truth.

30.2 Listen with your ears for what is the best, and reflect with a clear mind.

Decide between the choices, man by man, each for one's own self.

Be prepared to learn about the coming Great Event.

30.3 Those twin spirits from the beginning have been in conflict.

They are the Good and the Bad – in thought, word, and deed.

Between these two, the wise have chosen correctly, but not the unwise.

30.4 When those spirits clashed with each other for the first time

Constructive and destructive forces resulted that will last until the end of time

Those who follow evil will have the worst mind while the righteous will have the best mind.

30.5 Of the two spirits, the wicked chose to do the worst.

Whereas the good spirit, armored with divine light, chose to be righteous.

Those who keep the faith and perform virtuous deeds will please God.

30.6 Even many of the petty gods and their followers did not choose correctly.

When they were deliberating, they were deceived into choosing the worst mind.

Therefore, they followed the false path and thus polluted others and the world.

30.7 But to those who chose rightly using Truth and their Good Mind,

They will receive enduring inner strength and serenity (Armaity), That will protect them through whatever fiery ordeals they are put through.

30.8 When those who chose wrongly, suffer the consequences of their wrong deeds,

Then Oh Mazda, your moral power of the Good Mind will be revealed to them.

That will then teach them to get rid of falsehood and deceit and accept Truth.

30.9 And so may we be like you, Oh Ahura Mazda, who will renew this world.

Support us, through your helpers (the Amesha Spentas) when reason fails

So that we may remain steadfast and let wisdom prevail.

30.10 When destruction descends upon the false ones that have prospered,

Then swiftly will they realize the value of the Good Mind and Truth.

And join those striving for the good, and proclaim the glory of the Wise One.

30.11 When therefore you understand these two laws of happiness and misery,

Which Mazda has decreed for mankind: "Suffering for the followers of deceit

Prosperity for the followers of truth." Then happiness unto you.

INDIVIDUAL COMMENTARIES ON YASNA 30

(1) **Cyrus Mehta:** Yasnas 28 and 29 of the Ahunavaiti Gatha were preliminaries to Zarathushtra's teachings. In Yasna 28 Zarathushtra prayed to Ahura Mazda with humility for the divine gifts of Asha and Vohu Mana, so that he might bring joy and happiness to the world. In Yasna 29, Ahura Mazda, after consulting with Asha and Vohu Mana, appointed Zarathushtra as the prophet who, in those troubled times, would propagate Ahura Mazda's teachings to all humanity. Finally in Yasna 30, the teaching proper begins.

Yasna 30 begins by acknowledging that the twin paths of good and evil have existed since the very beginning of time. Each of us has a choice regarding which path to follow. We are asked to reflect with a clear mind and make our choice. Those who follow the path of good will be rewarded with serenity and divine strength, whereby they will successfully overcome even the most fiery of ordeal. On the other hand, those who follow the path of evil will lose their peace of mind, lose their prosperity and suffer in various ways as a consequence of their evil deeds. This is the law of cause and effect.

The Yasna, however, goes one step beyond causality by explaining how this inexorable law will actually benefit the wicked. Zarathushtra understood that pain and suffering are great teachers. Often they are better teachers than happiness and prosperity. To this end Zarathushtra points out that after a dark period during which the wicked pay for their sins by losing their peace of mind or their prosperity, they will eventually realize that the path they have been following does not lead to happiness and will then turn, of their own accord, to the path of good.

For me the great significance of this Yasna is that it hints at a plausible answer to the age-old problem, “why did God create evil?” Perhaps He did so to give us freedom to choose between the paths of good and evil. A world in which there is no evil is by its very nature a world bereft of moral choice, bereft of the opportunity to reflect, or to experience painful consequences. Can one regard such a world as good? Can one consider a person to be good who has no opportunity to act otherwise? Can you take any credit for being good if you never had the inclination to sin, never had to struggle to resist temptation? The term ‘good’ only has meaning because it can be contrasted with its opposing twin, ‘evil’. One would find it impossible to comprehend the concept of life if there were

no death. But the presence of death forces us to value our time alive, and make the most of it. The presence of evil forces us to reflect, to suffer to struggle and to evolve.

(2) **Nasswan Dossabhoy:** *Zarathushtra’s Six Great Ideas and his Unique Theology.* While there is widespread disagreement among Avesta scholars about the precise meaning of many of Zarathushtra’s thoughts and words, by a deeper analysis of the many translations and interpretations, a surprising consensus emerges when it comes to his six most important ideas, and what they mean in plain English. These six ideas can be divided into two categories: three ideas with which to grasp our complex reality or what Prof. Irani calls “View of the World,” and three ideas on how to successfully cope with this reality or what Prof. Irani refers to as “How to Live.”

The three main ideas with which to understand reality (or to view the world) are: **Conflict** between good and evil; **Choice** in thoughts, words, and deeds; and **Consequences** of choices made. Similarly, the three core ideas on how to cope with this reality (or how to live the good life) are: *Vohu Mana* – to activate the **Good Mind** through good thinking and pure thoughts; *Asha* – to articulate the **Truth** by distinguishing what is true, real, orderly and right, in our speech; and *Mazda* – to follow through with actions that value **Wisdom**, rather than wealth or power, as the highest value to pursue in life.

Zarathushtra’s paramount theological insight is about the fragility of God’s goodness, and remains totally unique in religious thinking to this day, since it is rejected by every other major religion of the world and even by many putative Zarathushtis. Unlike the supposed all-powerful gods or God of other religions and cultures, who by and large toy with humans bestowing benefits when they are patronized, and get peevish if not downright angry when they are not,

Zarathushtra’s God needs and respects human abilities, even the weakest among them, not as helpless children but as helpful adults.

This is the essential understanding that needs to be imparted, especially to our children, so that they can be rightly proud of a religion that is finally able to reconcile faith and reason, in the pursuit of the good life. It is only with such understanding that they can be living evidence of why historians of comparative religion have often referred to Zarathushtis, as “people of the Good Religion.”

(3) **Albert Bailey:** In Yasna 30, it is recognized that good and evil have always been here, from the beginning. The existence of evil is not the fault of man, but is a primordial reality, as the natural and inevitable opposite of goodness. Together they are responsible for the constructive and destructive forces which propel the evolution of the world. In the natural world, this manifests in the physical evolution of the universe and in genetic evolution. In the social world, it is manifest in creative human thought and moral choice.

Superficially, it might seem that the forces of destruction should prevail, for it is easier to tear down than to build up. But creation, whether natural or intellectual, can build upon itself when each step of the creation withstands the test of its virtue. In the long run, integrity prevails and the world improves.

TABLE 1 (YASNA 30.1)

Avestan:

At ta vakhashya isenta ya
Mazadatha hyatchit vidushe
Staotacha Ahurai yesnyacha
vangheush manangho
Humanzdra asha yecha ya
raochebish daresata urvaza.

Insler (to the adherents): Yes, to those (of you) seeking, I shall speak of those things to be borne in mind – even by one who already knows – both praise and worship for the very Wise Master of good thinking and for truth,

which things are to be looked upon in joy throughout your days.

Taraporewala (literal): Now to those-eager shall-I-speak of-the-Two who (are) created-by-Mazda, – all-this (teaching is) for the wise;

and (I shall recite) hymns unto Ahura, and praises of Vohu Mano;

(I shall explain) the Sacred-lore of Asha as-well, so-that ye-may-attain unto Perfection in-Realms-of-Light.

Taraporewala (free English): Now unto eager listeners will I speak Of the Two Spirits Mazda did create; –

This for the Wise; – to Ahura my hymns I'll offer, and my chants to Vohu Man';

And Asha's Sacred Lore will I expound, That ye, grown perfect, may attain his light.

Kanga: I will speak (unto you), O those desirous for knowing (matters of Religion) (about these matters viz) two spirits, homage unto Ahura Mazda, worship of the Good Mind and efficacious Holy spell (gained) through truth. I regard these (matters) worth-learning (and) profitable on account of (this) spiritual illumination.

Anklesaria: Therefore will-I-announce to-the-willing-inquirers

And to-those-who are of-good-meditation by-means-of-the-Law-immutable, the-two which are eminent-gifts, which-verily are for-the-wise,

The-praises of-Ahura Lord and the adorations of-the-good-divine-Intelligence, the-joys which are-seen through-the-luminaries.

Jafarey: Now I shall speak to those who wish to hear of the two principles, which are of importance even to the

wise. I shall also, with veneration for good mind and the good consideration of righteousness, have praises for the Lord, so that you may see brilliant happiness.

Sethna: Now I shall proclaim to those who have assembled here, all that is to be learnt from Mazda, viz., the hymns of the Lord, the praises of good mind and what noble principled righteousness is, which by its light points out the real bliss.

Duchesne-Guillemain: Now will I speak to those who will hear

Of the things which the initiate should remember;

The praises and the prayers of the Good Mind to the Lord

And the joy which he shall see in the light who has remembered them well.

Moulton - Bartholomae: Now will I proclaim to those of you who will hear

TABLE 2 (YASNA 30.1)

Avestan	Anklesaria	Taraporewala	Kanga
At	Therefore	Now	--
ta	two	Two	these-two
vakhshya	will-I-announce	shall-I-speak	I-will-speak
isento	to-willing-equirers	those-eager	those desirous
ya	which	who	which
Mazadatha	emminent-gifts	created-by-Mazda	divine-spirit
hyatchit	which-verily	all-this	about-these - matters-viz
vidushe	for-wise	wise	knowing-matters-of-Religion
Staotacha	and praises	and hymns	homage
Ahurai	Lord Ahura	Ahura	Ahura Mazda
yesnyacha	and adorations	and praises	worship
vangheush	of-good	Vohu	Good
manangho	divine-Intelligence	Mano	Mind
Humanzdra	of-good-meditaion	Sacred-lore	efficacious-Holy-spell
Asha	Law-immutable	Asa	truth
yecha	and to-who	as-well	I-regard
ya	which	so-that	these-matters
raochebish	through-luminaries	in-Realms-of-Light	spiritual-illumination
daresata	are-seen	ye-may-attain	worth-learnin
urvaza	joys	Perfection	profitable

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.

Kudos ...

Congratulations! You have outdone yourself. You have captured the entire World Congress in these pages [*FEZANA Journal, Spring 2001*]. It was well worth waiting for.

Arnavaz Sethna
WZC 2000 Secretary
Houston, Texas

... I loved the way Yashfara and Farrokh Mistree designed their “Impressions & Comments” of the World Congress [*FEZANA Journal, Spring 2001*] – let those who were there speak for it. Clever, innovative, democratic and eclectic way of “writing” the article. And those who gave their impressions were not afraid to point out the negative aspects too, though there were not that many of those, which in itself speaks for the success of the Congress.

The booths must have been fun. All those books! What a terrific atmosphere. A great jump start for the renewal and growth of all Zarathushtis.

For the last few years, I have been subscribing to FEZANA Journal for my parents in Mumbai. You may not believe it, but the Journal is a 'hot commodity' not only with my parents, but with the whole building in Dadar Parsi Colony! My neighbors keep reminding and inquiring about it long before it is due, and when it is late, not only Behroze but also the poor postman is in trouble!

I guess, with my being so far away from home and family, this Journal, with such good US parsi sansar news, acts as an umbilical cord between Mumbai and USA!

Behroze Daruwalla
Houston, Texas

Russian Readers

Our website www.avesta.webserv.ru is one of the few sites in Russian, devoted to our Zarathushti Din. Translations of the basic prayers, Pahlavi texts and other texts are placed here. I hope in the near future, we will add translation of Gathas. Separate sections are devoted to rituals, the calendar and festivals, migrations of the Aryans. There is also a forum where Russian followers of Zarathushti Din can discuss questions.

Basically I use materials from the Internet and the FEZANA Journal magazine. I want to thank the editors of this remarkable magazine, for their kind work. Please continue to send articles to us. The number of people in Russia, who want to learn more about the Zarathushti religion, has increased.

*Lukashevich Yuriy
Minsk, Republic of Belarus
email: zarathushti@mail.ru*

Houston World Congress

I found the Houston Congress to be a high-voltage, expensive and well-turned out fashion parade, interspersed with jazzy dinners. Every day, social butterflies of our rich cul-

A horizontal line of 18 small, solid black diamonds arranged in a single row, used as a section separator.

***A lot of confusion
arises in this world
out of a narrow mind
and a big mouth.***

**“Why worry and get wrinkles.
Smile and get dimples.”**

Kersey H. Antia
Orland Park, Illinois

[Readers are invited to send in jokes and tidbits of humor – especially, typical Parsi and Iranian humor. We will be happy to publish them - Ed.]

tural heritage would gather like a 'mela' (fair) to chat in the lobby of the Marriott Hotel; they would then run around like crazy chickens for the meetings (which kept changing rooms at random); and in the evening, turn out on-time, for the dinner extravaganza.

The dinner scene could be described as the flurry of the ruffled, irate commuters hunting for seats on a train at Churchgate Station at peak hours. Well-dressed, otherwise dignified professionals would attack, like a charge brigade of the famine-stricken on the entrance doors, to rush and save tables and chairs, much to the amusement of the bewildered hotel staff.

Instead of wasting their time and energies, for example, to publicize and finally allow two old men to share a platform to discuss the pros and cons of open conversion, the WZC organizers could have better utilized their efforts to smooth out the logistics of seating and feeding 2200 plus guests. For example, in the freezing Houston temperatures, the tables of ice-filled tumblers of chilled water could have been replaced by hot tea.

In this day and age, when we may come and go in this world just by 'double clicking', the simple message for all is to follow *simplicity*. For our faith to survive, we need not have a grand exhibition of wealth and power. A religious congress need not be like the sales meeting of a mega corporation.

We are all, each one of us, 'God' plus 'desires'. So by plain subtraction of desires, we come closer to God. And if we must have reforms, just add the word 'simple' to Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds.

Sohrab Irani
Anaheim, California

Congress Suggestions

... Although my physical presence was not with you for the World Congress in Houston, my heart and spirit was on your same wavelength. I offer some suggestions for the next World Congress:

● The statistical world map indicating Parsi/Zarathushti distribution in your Program Book will be very useful, and should be kept up-to-date.

● Showing of a documentary *Us Parsees of South Africa*, co-produced by (late) Dr. (Mrs) Jer D. Randeria.

● Display of books by Dr. Jer Randeria – *Fresh Enquiry into Eternal Themes* and *The Parsee Mind*. It will be an asset to our community if such books are put on the Internet.

● A study of the concept of Good Thoughts/Words/Deeds, originally postulated by Zarathushtra, as imbibed in other religions as well as in the field of psychology ("That as you think – so you are").

● A comparative study of Zarathushtra and other prophets. I am planning to expound on the concept that Zarathushtra and other prophets were holy spirits, non-physical.

● It would also be fitting at the opening ceremony to have a minute of silence in honor of all those Zarathushtis of yester year who kept ablaze the fire of the religion.

In the service of Zoroastrianism,

Dr. Dara Randeria
Durban, South Africa

Did we goof with the Fasli calendar?

Fasli New Year Jamshedi Nouruz was celebrated on March 21, 2001, though the spring equinox occurred on March 20, 2001, at 7:30 am in Chicago. The calendar would have self-corrected to March 20, had we not inserted Awardad Sal Gah on March 20, 2001, following the Vahishtoish Gatha day.

Was not Awardad Sal Gah supposed to correct the calendar to conform to nature's phenomenon of the vernal equinox, and not to conform to the date March 21st, in the Gregorian calendar?

This issue was raised in FEZANA Journal last year. Neither the community nor the scholars took notice. A pre-empted dialog did not occur, to avoid adding the extra day.

We have vexed over the two erroneous calendars – the Shenshai and the Kadmi. Now we add yet another erroneous Fasli calendar, which is supposed to be seasonal, but will drift to mid-Spring in the next millennium. Will we then expect our descendants to correct our shortcomings? Or create yet a *fourth* calendar?

One non-Zarathushti Iranian friend said: "We celebrate New Year for two weeks anyway, so whether the day falls on the 20th or the 21st does not really matter."

Well, does it matter to us or not? Are we too busy trashing the Shenshai and Kadmi calendars? Do we learn from the shortcomings of the bygone era or make more mistakes?

Mehroo M. Patel
Westchester, Illinois

Gender differences in our religion

I would like to point out some erroneous statements made in past issues by some of your distinguished contributors in regards to women's status in our religion. For instance, Dr. Rustom Kevala wrote "But some of our cultural and religious beliefs unfortunately do emphasize gender-differences" [*FEZANA Journal, Fall 1994*] and Dr. Dolly Dastoor laments: "There are taboos against menstruating women ..." [*ibid*].

I would like to clarify your readers' understanding of the truth in this matter. The fact is this practice stems from the later Sasanian belief (quite un-Gathic in my opinion) that anything that leaves the human body becomes polluted, '*naso*', and puts us in a state of impurity, which is ungodly.

While this indeed led to strict observances during the menstruation cycle and was hard on women (though I remember many observing ladies openly preferring the break it provided them from the rigors of daily life), it was inconceivably harder on the practicing mobeds, who were the ones responsible for starting this

practice. For, anything leaving their body, like nocturnal discharges during a *bareshnum* (nine-day *nahn*) negated the *bareshnum* ordeal (and an ordeal it truly is!) and they had to undergo it all over again. Even a sneeze, or losing a hair or passing wind during a ritual, which lasts for hours, negates the ritual.

Any mobed with a problem in this area (for example, even a minor skin discoloration) would disqualify the otherwise well-qualified mobed from performing inner rituals. One of the saddest moments of my teenage years was to see a well-qualified Udvada yozdathregar mobed, the father of a dear friend, committing suicide because these rules did not allow him to practice mobedi and support his family.

This should hopefully suffice to better understand the misinterpretation

of "gender differences", as both genders have suffered from it.

*Kersey H. Antia
Orland Park, Illinois*

On faith and reason

There has been much debate lately on 'faith' and 'reason'. My contention is that faith is a valuable resource for the religious life. It offers a way of seeing that allows the faithful to experience life and Ultimate Reality in ways which are closed to those without faith. Tradition is another valuable resource. Reason is yet another. To suggest a battle between faith and reason seems unproductive. Both are gifts to be celebrated ...

I once woke from sleep on a rock at Pir Sabz to the sound of a young girl singing a song of pilgrimage. It was about two o'clock in the morning, and

the stars were shining in the dark sky. Other pilgrims around me woke to listen to the singing and enjoy the view.

I was in a foreign land and yet I felt safe and supported. I felt a part of something much larger than myself. I was aware of a long tradition being relived in that place. I understood then that all of life is a prayer.

It was an experience which profoundly changed my attitude about the religion I was studying and about life in general. That experience and others like it were, for me, as important as the academic work in which I was engaged. Had I taken the Joe Friday Dragnet approach ("Just the facts, ma'am") I would have missed a rich and important part of the experience of being a Zoroastrian in Iran.

My point is that there are many ways of being religious and if we are open to each other, we can learn much that might enrich our lives. It is possible

To Remember Me *by Mehroo M. Patel*

At a certain moment a doctor will determine that my *manu* (brain) has ceased to function and that, for all intents and purposes, my life has stopped.

When that happens, do not attempt to instill artificial life into my *tanu* (body) by the use of a machine.

And don't call this my 'deathbed'. Call it, instead, my 'bed of life', and let my body be taken from it to help others lead fuller lives.

Give my heart to a person whose own heart has caused nothing but endless days of pain.

Give my blood to the teenager who has been pulled from the wreckage of his car, so that he might live to see his grandchildren play.

Give my kidneys to one who depends on a machine to exist from week to week.

Give my liver and lungs, intestines and pancreas to those in need of them.

Take my bones, every muscle, every fiber and nerve in my body, and find a way to make a crippled child walk.

Take what is left of me to a school or laboratory to help someone learn to make life easier and better for others.

Burn what is left of me still and scatter the ashes to the winds to help the flowers grow.

If you must bury something, let it be my faults, my weaknesses, and all my prejudice against my fellow beings. And do not erect a tombstone.

Give my sins to *Ahriman* (the devil). Give my *urvan* (soul) to Ahura Mazda. If, by chance, you wish to remember me, do it with a kind deed or word to someone who needs you.

If you do all I have asked, I will live forever and attain Haurvatat-Ameretat.

[Dr. Mehroo Patel, of Westchester, Illinois, believes "there is no greater happiness than a gift to make life possible and livable. What gift can make this happen other than the gift of a part of myself." She is convinced that donation of the corpse does not interfere with Zarathushti last rites and has taken actions towards this donation herself and instructed her family accordingly. She urges readers to discuss their wishes with relatives, add it to their living will and their drivers' license. For more information, please contact Dr. Patel at (708) 409-9361.]

to discuss differences in religious belief and practice in ways that are respectful and logical.

*Dr. H. Michael Simmons
Bloomington, Indiana*

Birthday cake and candles - revisited

Candles on a birthday cake, the light they shed, the glow on happy faces, are a pleasing sight. Altogether a pleasant custom and a fun thing!

But, are we well advised in blowing out the candles on our birthday cake? Surely an inauspicious thing to do, because for Hindus and Zoroastrians a lit flame is something special, something sacred, a symbol of life and divinity.

The lighting of lights, whether they be candles or *divas*, are propitious acts but putting them out, and making the world dark, are the opposite. When Othello says "Put out the light, then put out the light", he is speaking of his deadly intent. When Pandit Nehru said "the light has gone out" he was referring to a death, an assassination.

The subject of birthday candles had come up for a lively discussion when I was at Oxford (1952-58) and the members of the Hindu mandal there wanted to give me a birthday party. Having demurred to the friendly proposal and then to the English fashion of its observance, I was prevailed upon to suggest an alternative, while retaining the popular and ubiquitous cake, candles, and Happy Birthday song! What I suggested passed muster and later spread. Here it is:

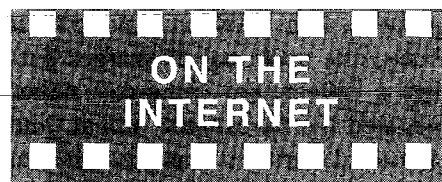
(1) A birthday cake, round in shape, is brought in on a plate by its bearer, whether host/hostess or another person. It has a single unlit candle, the 'birthday candle', stuck in the middle of it. The other, the 'yearly candles', as many as the birthday-person's

completed years of age, are stuck around it *on the plate* and already lit. (2) The birthday candle is lit by the birthday-person who says 'Om', as also do others. (3) Then as the birthday-person raises the birthday candle, the company recites 'Om Nijadin Rajasis' (a royal benediction); for the birthday person is, verily, the monarch of the day! The birthday-person then installs the candle on high, on a candle-stand on the mantelpiece or high table, before a mirror, from where it illumines the occasion. Flowers and photos of the person's parents in their youth (whose occasion it also is) may be placed around the candle-stand. By the light of the candle, the person looks at him/herself in the mirror, to general applause. (4) Others carry and place the 'yearly candles' on either side of the presiding center. (5) The cake is not cut by the birthday-person, but by the host or relative. When about to cut the cake, the host turns to the birthday-person and says, "Happy Birthday, dear —". Whereupon everyone takes up the birthday song. (6) The host gives the first piece to the birthday person, and portions to his or her parents and grand-parents. Feasting and merriment follow ...

*His Highness Sri Rajmahal,
Dhrangadhara, India*

[Submitted by Rati Cooper, Principal, Rajkumar College, Rajkot.]

These suggestions, with appropriate Zarathushti blessings, could very well be a model for Zarathushtis, who wish to follow the western birthday cake and candles tradition, enhanced with a Zarathushti flavor. Suggestions of suitable Zarathushti blessings to be incorporated in the celebration described above, are solicited from readers. - Ed.



Community websites

A number of web sites offer community services and products of interest to Zarathushtis. Some of these (by no means a complete list) are listed here.

www.wzcc.org

Website of the **World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce**. All Zarathushti businesspersons, entrepreneurs and professionals are invited to join. Contact fali_shroff@wzcc.com. *[Also see page 69].*

www.zwin3.org

Website of the **Zoroastrian International Women's Network**, whose objectives are to pool the talents and efforts of women worldwide to address community issues. All women are invited to join. *[Also see page 8].*

www.wzdir.com

A directory of Zarathushtis worldwide. All Zarathushtis are invited to register their name and address.

www.parsibazar.com

Parsi goods and services and an online directory, are offered. Zarathushtis are also invited to register for free to sell their goods or services. They also have a Parsi Chat Channel.

www.zocircle.com

The Zoroastrian Circle website ("ring-master" Nauzer Elavia nauzer_elavia@hotmail.com) provides links to other Zoroastrian websites. Owners of websites, are invited to join the circle.

www.zoroastrian.net

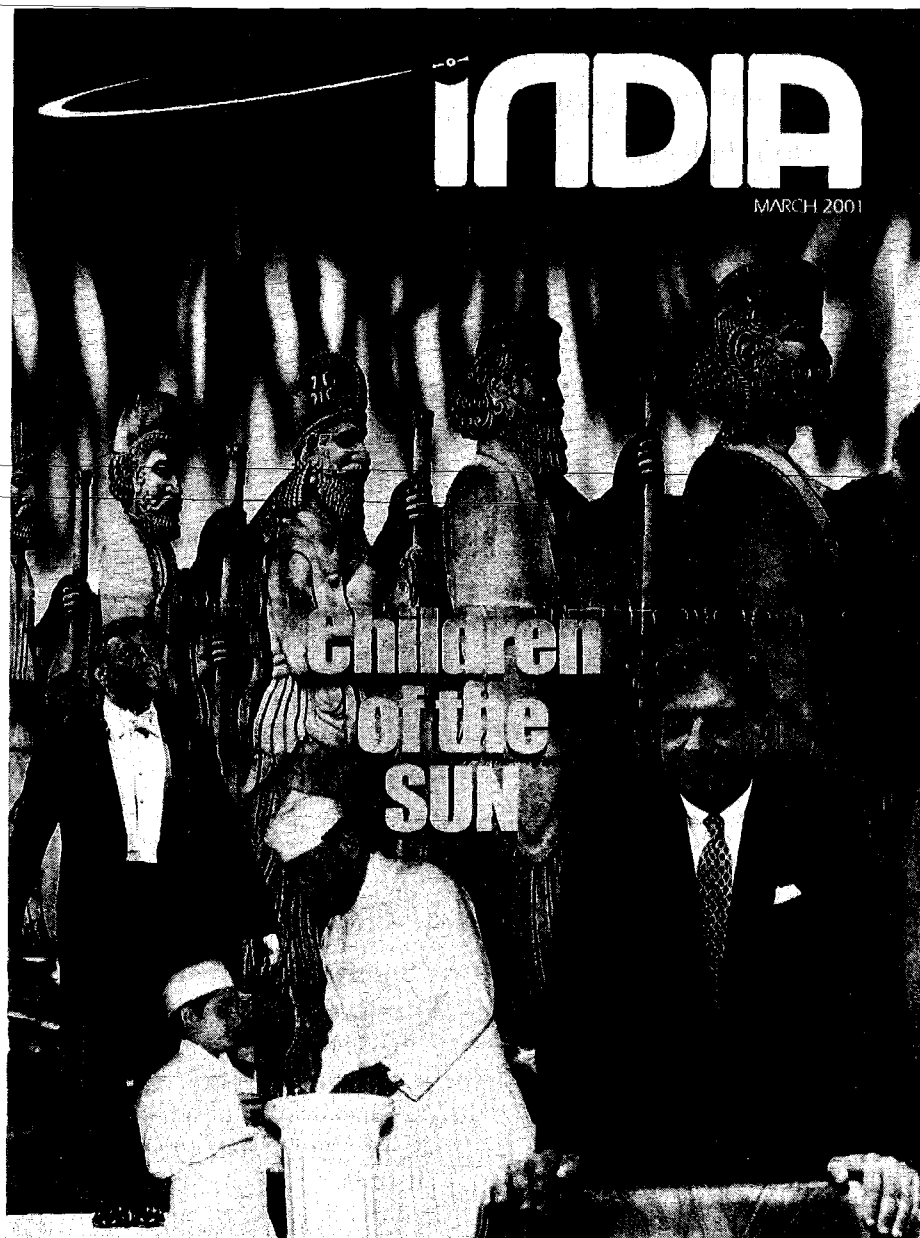
This website provides free email, directories, Zoroastrian greeting cards, announcements, listings of jobs available/wanted, and other community services.

www.parsicommunity.com

This website provides email, e-greetings, e-shopping, announcements, matrimonials, yellow pages, chat-room and more. ■

FEZANA JOURNAL invites you to "Adopt-a-Reader"

There are many interested anjumans and individuals, in Iran and India who would like to read **FEZANA JOURNAL** but cannot make the payment. Can you adopt a reader? All donations welcome. Please use the form on p.96.



Cover of "Little India", showing from left, Zubin Mehta, Ervads Mehernosh Bhada of Karachi and Ervad Shapur Pavri of Houston, at the World Congress, and Parsi industrialist Ratan Tata of Mumbai.

by LAVINIA MELWANI

"... Parsis have left their footprints all over the city [of Bombay] and countless hospitals, roads, colleges and housing for the poor all bear Parsi names. This small community has produced a surprisingly large number of entrepreneurs and philanthropists, academics and professionals. After their encounter with the British Raj, the English language and education became the Parsi calling

card and many of them developed a real love and talent for Western music, theater and the arts ...

"In the stormy days leading to 1947, however, many used their British education to fight for independence and change, including such stalwarts as Dadabhai Naoroji, Madame Bhikaiji Cama and Sir Pherozeshah Mehta. After independence, there was the visionary Jamsetji Tata, whose descendant JRD Tata started

The March 2001 issue of "Little India" magazine featured a 14-page article on Zarathushtis, entitled "Children of the Sun". Drawing heavily upon Sooni Taraporevala's new book "Parsis: A Photographic Journey" [reviewed in FEZANA Journal, Spring 2001], author Lavinia Melwani presents a vivid portrait of the Parsis of Bombay and present day Zarathushtis in North America. Only a few excerpts are given below.

the first national airline, which later became Air India ...

The Parsis, who first came to India fleeing religious persecution in Iran, are interestingly once again on the move. There are many who have moved to foreign lands in search of opportunities and the list includes some famous names: There's the Parsi First Family – the Mehtas ... Canadian author Rohinton Mistry ..., writer Firdaus Kanga ..., author Bapsi Sidhwa ..., rock star Freddie Mercury, Miss India Meher Jessia ... and late beauty queen and Star Trek actress Persis Khambatta ... ambassador Jamsheed Marker ...

This small but totally fascinating community has indeed thrived in different parts of the world ... What is remarkable is how it managed to keep its faith and culture alive in the melting pot of America.

Indeed, for the 3,000-year-old Zoroastrian community – suppressed in its homeland of Iran, and scattered across the continents – the best hope lies in its youth ... A remarkable 60-minute video by New York filmmaker Tenaz Dubash, documenting the journey of 34 young Zoroastrian Americans to their ancestral land of Iran signals hope that while the young Zarathushtis may adapt to America, they value and will likely preserve their 3,000-year-old faith and culture. After all, they are the sugar in America's abundant bowl of milk.

Societal values may be stalling India's recovery

[Excerpts from a syndicated column "Commentary" in Chicago Tribune, August 12, 1997]

The anniversary of India's independence on August 15th is also the anniversary of over half a century of Indian democracy, a formidable achievement by the second most populous, and nearly the poorest, of the world's societies. But this is also an anniversary of continuing economic ills.

In 1950, post-colonial India had the strongest economy in Asia, with 2 percent of world trade. Its share in world trade today is 0.8 percent, and its economic rank is now near the bottom in Asia. India has failed to gratify its founders' enthusiastic expectations for growth and prosperity ...

India's economy prospered in certain fields. For a time, foreign investment came ... introducing a fraction of Indian consumers to the questionable pleasures of satellite television, shopping malls and franchised fast food. India's young and educated created an important software industry. But self-sustaining development has failed to follow ...

Many make a formidable case blaming corruption for this. Corruption as well as economic success are connected to cultural factors that are often misinterpreted. A new management book, for example, which praises 'East Asian' business, cites interesting surveys contrasting Asian and Western attitudes toward compromise and competition.

Needless to say, Asia's 'tiger' economies rank high on "stakeholder responsibility," cooperative work solutions, consultation, consensus, team responsibility, concern for "taking care of one's fellow man" and so on. The US and Britain – champions of individual-

ism and competition – rank in the last 10 in all these values. (India was not included in this survey) ... Are 'Asian values', as generally understood, really what cause success?

I would argue that the national cultural attitudes which affect economic performance are much more specific and fundamentally derive from religious values. This is exactly what Max Weber argued about capitalism where it originated, in Europe. He said that a specifically Protestant ethic shaped capitalism in the 17th and 18th centuries in Britain and Holland and was responsible for its success, among Protestant minorities elsewhere in Western Europe.

In India, pre-independence capitalism and industrialism developed chiefly in the Parsee community, Zoroastrians of Persian origin, who take a robust view of the struggle of good with evil and believe in individual human responsibility.

Hinduism expresses an other-worldliness with respect to earthly rewards and teaches resignation before apparent injustices in life. If one's destiny is to be a sweeper, or if one is born in an 'untouchable' caste, this traditionally has been thought an ineluctable destiny, dangerous even to question.

This system is conducive of a certain passivity, a tolerance of human corruption connected to the belief that the individual's real purpose is withdrawal into an impersonal world-spirit.

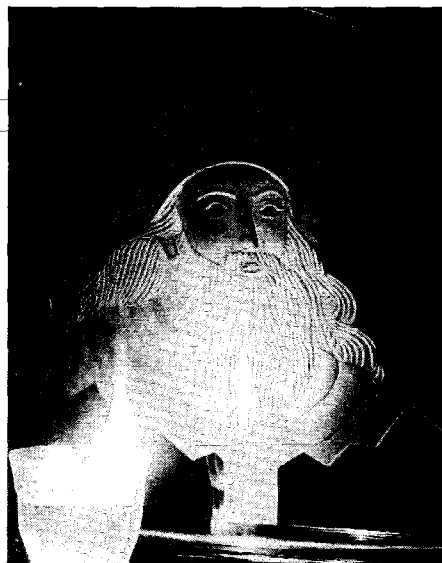
It is scarcely the capitalist spirit.

The inherited values of a society do shape its modern practices, but in far more complicated ways than most present discussion acknowledges. ■

■ **ZARATHUSHTI** ■
ENTERPRISE
PRODUCTS AND
 ■ **SERVICES** ■

NEW BUSINESSES

FEZANA Journal will be happy to announce any new business/enterprise in this column. Please send your announcement to the Editor.



Zarathushtra and Farohar etchings in glass

Zubin Phiroze Wadia of Mumbai manufactures and exports etchings of Zarathushtra Saheb [shown above] and of the farohar, on curved glass. These beautiful pieces are available in different sizes (approx. 12" x 10") and designs. They are priced at \$150 inclusive of freight and safe packing (in thermocol) to USA/Canada. Contact Zubin at Building No: 1, 502-B Salsette Parsi Colony, Pump House Road, Andheri (East), Mumbai 400 093, tel: 91 22 820 0976, email: zubin1971@hotmail.com. ■

Parsee General Hospital

Fundraiser on June 24 in New York

Last year \$25,342 was raised and every penny sent to the hospital. Send checks made out to ZAGNY, to Jamshed Ghadiali 2686 Belcher Street, Baldwin, NY 11510, tel (516) 378-4516, ghad@aol.com.

World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce

Local chapters are being formed in Chicago, Houston and New York

By Meherwan P. Boyce
Houston, Texas

The World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce (WZCC) is starting out with great enthusiasm amongst the community. The interest is very positive and three chapters – in Chicago, Houston and New York – are currently being formed and have all had their exploratory meetings. The attendance at these meetings has far exceeded our expectations and nearly all the attendees became members. Our goal is to have three hundred members at year-end and we feel we can achieve this as nearly a hundred members have already expressed that they will sign up.

The Board of Directors has been meeting via a phone board meeting on the fourth Sunday of each month. These initial meetings are meetings

to discuss the various aspects of this organization.

WZCC is a Professional Business Organization and not a religious organization. Any person who is interested in promoting the goals of our organization, to energize the Zarathushti entrepreneurial spirit, is welcome. This entrepreneurial spirit is not limited to businesses only. All professionals also have this spirit of entrepreneurial excellence and of

tion. There are special membership fees of \$20.00 annually for this category. We would request parents to please encourage our youth to join the WZCC.

We plan for this organization to be a dynamic, energetic group of businesses and individuals working towards a common goal – to achieve excellence in whatever path we choose for our businesses or ourselves.

“ ... the goal of our organization – to energize the Zarathushti entrepreneurial spirit ”

achieving the highest goals in their chosen career paths.

The organization also welcomes young men and women and a special category has been established for student members aged 18-30 years who are attending an educational institu-

Your comments, ideas and suggestions are welcome and we look forward to seeing an increasing number of people at our meetings. The networking between members will reinforce the entrepreneurial spirit of Zarathushtis, and together we will achieve our goals and leave a legacy for Zarathushtis, which will see us into the next millennium. ■



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: Student (\$20); 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

The Zoroastrian Co-operative Bank

"Bank that is Big on Tradition and Trust"

The Zoroastrian Co-operative Bank Ltd., was established in Mumbai in 1927. For decades it was a sleepy little bank with its only branch at Horniman Circle (in the Fort area).

Then in 1993, the Board of Directors appointed Mr. K. H. Taraporevala as its managing director and F. K. Banatwalla as its general manager. Since then, things started moving at this bank, with these two movers and shakers.

The duo, under the able guidance of the directors, renovated the main branch and computerized it. They then opened one branch after another – at Dadar, Tardeo, Bandra, Andheri, Lokhandwalla's (at Andheri West), Pune, etc.

All branches have the latest state-of-the-art computers and qualified staff with business being conducted on sound principles and properly controlled from their new corporate office.

Their ninth branch opened at Mahim in January 2000. It received overwhelming support from clients who were waiting to open accounts, and collected total deposits of over a crore of rupees (approx. \$220,000) on the very first day.

The Bank has developed a reputation for integrity, speed and efficiency; and staff members strive to please customers with a warm welcome and a happy smile.

Total deposits of the Bank have crossed Rs. 120 crores and they will soon be on the Reserve Bank of India's list of Scheduled Banks. It is authorized to keep NRE and NRO accounts.

The Bank is aggressively marketing to attract clients from all communities. It extends various types of loans at competitive interest rates and specializes in speedy and efficient handling of customer's needs.

True to tradition, it is a well-managed organization, that lives up to its motto – "Bank that is Big on Tradition and Trust." ■

[Excerpted from *Jame Jamshed Weekly*, February 2000]



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FRIENDS WORLD PROGRAM



[The following article about Sam Bhada is excerpted from *Forbes* (global) magazine, August 23, 1999. Bhada is presently Vice President and General Manager of the Radisson Hotel, at 511 Lexington Avenue at 48th Street, New York, NY 10017, tel: 212-755-4400]

ENTREPRENEURS

hotelier

Sam Bhada's smartest career decision was to spend his honeymoon in New York.

A Parsi in Manhattan

By Rahul Singh

Successful entrepreneurs always work hard, but they also seem to have a knack for being in the right place at the right time.

For Sam Bhada (pronounced "Sahm Bah-dah") the right place was New York, the right time, 1981. Then 32, he had worked his way up to resident manager at the Taj Mahal group of hotels' prestigious Taj Hotel in Bombay and had just married a pretty Taj receptionist, Skaila Setna. They honeymooned at New York's Inter-Continental Hotel, which had a reciprocal arrangement with the Taj Group.

The Taj Group (controlled by India's wealthy Tata family) was about to buy the Lexington Hotel in midtown New York for \$35 million. Out of curiosity, Bhada went to check out the Lexington. In the lobby he bumped into his boss, Ajit Kerkar, then managing director of the Taj Group.

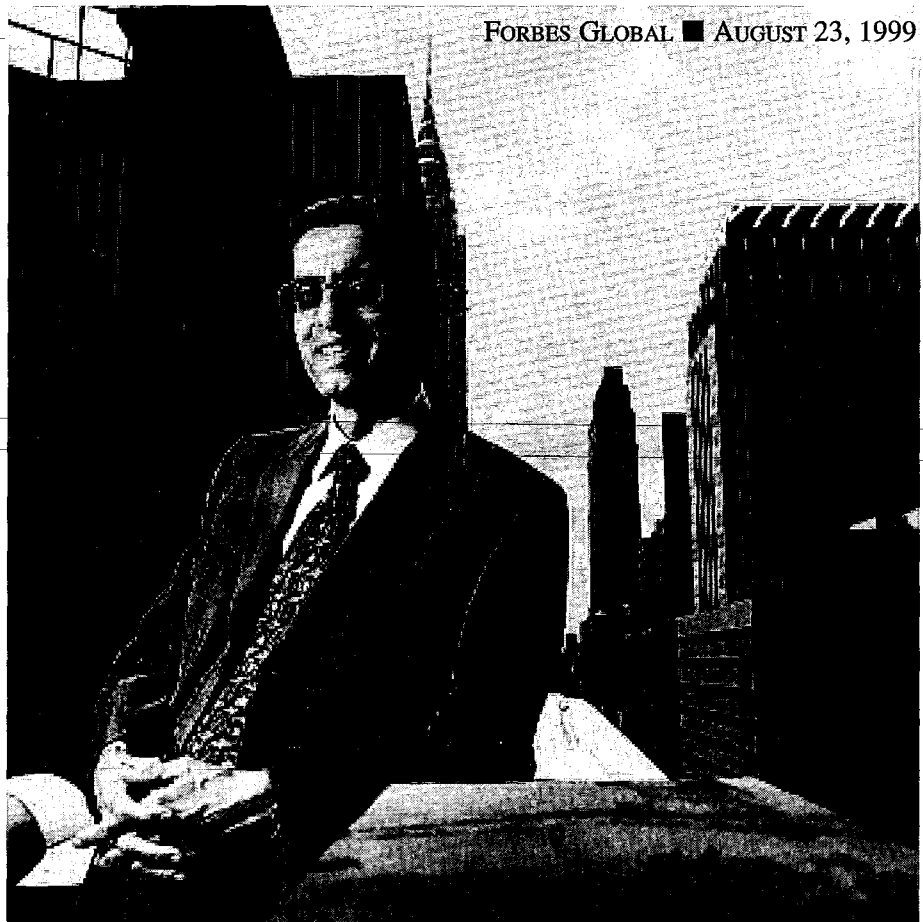
"What do you think of the property?" Kerkar asked Bhada.

"It's a bit of a dump compared with the Taj," was Bhada's considered response, "but it has great possibilities because of its location."

Countered Kerkar: "How would you like to run it?"

Jokes Bhada today: "It was the longest honeymoon in my life."

Like the Taj Group's Tata family, Bhada and his wife are members of



FORBES GLOBAL ■ AUGUST 23, 1999

JONATHAN LEVINE

India's closely knit Parsi community. The Parsis fled Persia to escape Muslim persecution in the 13th century [Editor's note: the generally accepted date for the migration is between the 8th and 10th centuries] and found sanctuary on the west coast of India. Numbering only 100,000 now (of whom 10,000 are in the U.S.), the Parsis are known for their integrity and their entrepreneurship – qualities Bhabha would need to fix the Lexington's problems.

When Bhada took the job, the property was losing around \$500,000 a year ... Bhada's first step was to put in place a staff dedicated to pampering well-heeled travelers ...

Team in place, he used niche marketing to increase the occupancy rate ... As business travelers began filling the Lexington's rooms, the national airlines followed suit – today the hotel hosts crews from Luftansa,

British Airways, All Nippon Airways, Air India and Singapore Airlines.

**Sam Bhada
In the right place
at the right time.**

Within 5 years the Lexington was earning \$4 million, and Bhada was able to persuade the Taj Group to pour \$20 million into a top-to-bottom renovation. That lured more high-quality business. Today six of Japan's top ten corporations book their executives into the Lexington...

In 1989 the Taj Group reopened the St. James Court Hotel in London – another struggling hotel in a prime area, which Taj had bought ... [Bhada's] big London break came when he discovered that the president of India was to pay a state visit to England.

A state banquet was to be held. The traditional places for such a banquet,



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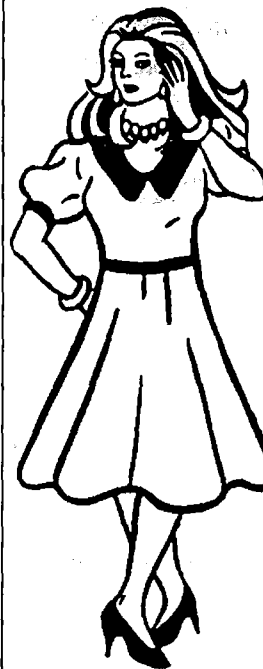
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apart from Buckingham Palace, were the Savoy or Claridge's. But why not the Indian-owned St. James Court? India's High Commissioner agreed.

"It was the proudest day of my life," Bhada gushes, still excited at the memory. "To have almost the entire royal family come to the hotel – the Queen, the Queen Mother, the Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Charles and Princess Diana ... "I had solid gold cutlery from the personal collection of the Tatas flown in."

The event led to contracts from Prince Charles to cater events at St. James and Kensington palaces, and an invitation to have tea with Queen Elizabeth.

To keep the buzz going, Bhada began offering free rooms to sports celebrities – tennis stars Pete Sampras and André Agassi during Wimbledon, top runners during the Marathon, professional boxers. "I allowed any individual medal winner in the Olympics to stay free in the hotel," Bhada boasts ...

In 1995, the Tatas asked Bhada to return to New York ... the Lexington's profitability has climbed from \$4.5 million in 1995 to \$14 million this year.

In June 1999, the Taj Group sold the Lexington to Dallas-based Highgate Group and Chicago-based Oxford Capital for \$105 million ... The new owners invited Bhada to stay on with them. Bhada, whose two teenage daughters, Benaifer and Shanaya, were born in the U.S. and attend Connecticut schools, agreed.

After three decades in the hotel trade, Sam Bhada still gets a charge out of the job. Earlier this year he turned 50, went for a routine medical checkup and learned that one of his kidneys was cancerous and had to be removed immediately. He spent a week in the hospital; then, despite his family's protests, he went back to his desk at the Lexington. "I just couldn't stay away." And he's already started training for his 14th New York City marathon. ■

[The following article, about Ness Lakdawala's firm, Dectron, in Montreal, Quebec, is excerpted from *The Gazette, Montreal*, January 20, 2001]



Dectron is a family-run, publicly traded business. Ness Lakdawala and his daughters Leena (centre) and Roxanne are key executives.

Breathing easy

St. Laurent firm Dectron makes devices that improve air quality and produce drinking water from dehumidifiers

SHEILA McGOVERN
The Gazette

Dectron Internationale ... specializes in designer air. Clean, fresh indoor air. It can cure sick building syndrome and reduce humidity levels in the steamiest of places.

Dectron president Ness Lakdawala sees boom years ahead for his industry for two key reasons:

■ Health and environmental officials are increasingly concerned about indoor-air quality ...

■ High-tech industries – such as manufacturers of circuit boards ... must have very clean plants.

So the market potential is huge, he said, and the challenge for little Dectron will be meeting it ...

Lakdawala has already started expansion. When he acquired Dectron five years ago, the company, founded in 1977, was a small but thriving specialist in dehumidifying the air around swimming pools ... Since 1998, Dectron has been on a bit of a buying spree, picking up: **Ref-Plus** – a commercial refrigeration company; **circul-Aire** – an air-filtration company in Montreal; **IPAC** – an air-conditioning company in Niagara Falls, NY; and **International Water Maker of Florida** ...

Each of the acquisitions was chosen to expand the line of services the company has to offer ...

The acquisitions have boosted the companies' sales to \$31.4 million U.S. in 2000 from \$20.5 million in

1999. Net earnings ... jumped from \$863,331 US in 1998 to ... \$1.127 million in 2000 ...

The company now employs between 400 and 420, with about 300 of those in the Montreal area. It has two Montreal plants, and one each in Boucherville, Saint-Hubert, Saint-Jerome, Niagara Falls and Fort Lauderdale.

To cover the cost of all this expansion, Dectron went public in 1998 with an issue of shares that trades on the Nasdaq market. The experience proved a little unsettling, to say the least.

"As far as the stock market was concerned, we were babes in the woods," he said. To help with the initial public offering, Dectron turned to J. P. Turner & Co, and Klein Maus Shire Inc. As it turned out, KMS – which handled about 75% of the stock – ran afoul not only of the FBI, but also of the legendary Gambino crime family ... Dectron paid a price for its association. The stock was issued at \$6 and initially rose to \$8.75, then plunged to \$2. It has worked its way back up to a little over \$4.

The Lakdawala family owns 65% of the \$2.75 million shares, and his two daughters, Leena and Roxanne, play active roles in running the company ... Leena, vice-president (production) ... Roxanne is head of marketing.

Ness Lakdawala himself is no stranger to the industry. An engineer with 35 years' experience, he previously owned part of two other companies, **Blanchard Bohn** and **Blanchard Ness**, but sold both ...

Right now, the company has a number of technologies, but to get the manufacturing capacity needed to compete on a major scale, it is going to have to acquire a company of significant size.

Lakdawala has hired new financial advisers and is hitting the road trying to drum up interest in the company.

[Excerpted from *Fortune*, May 15, 2000]

The Indians of Silicon Valley

By Melanie Warner

... When people call Silicon Valley's Indian population a mafia, they mean that the immigrants who live in the Bay Area and work in high tech – roughly 200,000, according to *SiliconIndia* magazine – have formed an amazing web.

Indians invest in one another's companies, sit on one another's boards, and hire each other in key jobs. Many live in close proximity and hang out together. The network might be only mildly interesting if so many of the Valley's Indian immigrants hadn't become phenomenally wealthy and successful in the past ten years.

... Bay Area Indian immigrants represent America's most successful immigrant group. Collectively, they've created companies that account for \$235 billion of market value. If you add up just the net worth of the people mentioned in this story, for instance, you'll get more than \$8 billion.

It's safe to say that without Indian immigrants the Valley wouldn't be what it is today. Indian engineers have been coming to the US in increasing numbers since the 1970s ... High-tech companies need people desperately – US engineering schools simply don't produce enough graduates to fill the specialized jobs the high-tech industry creates ... and the engineers US schools do produce, typically aren't as talented as those from India. Many Indian immigrants have graduated from schools that make Harvard and MIT seem easy to get into. The six Indian Institutes of Technology ... produce some of the world's smartest techies. Last year only about 3% of the students who applied to IIT got in, while 11% to 18% were accepted at Ivy League schools.

Kanwal Rekhi, 54, is the unofficial but quite undisputed godfather of Silicon Valley's Indian mafia. Rekhi went to IIT Bombay and is personally worth more than \$500 million. As head of The Indus Entrepreneurs, or TiE, the Valley's large, influential Indian networking group, he is at the center of a whole lot of wealth creation. Since he left his job as chief technology officer of Novell in 1995, Rekhi has poured millions of his own dollars into more than 45 startups founded by Indians, many of them IIT grads.

Although he's made more money by funding entrepreneurs than he did by creating a company and selling it to Novell, Rekhi insists he doesn't care about earning money any more. He'd rather help entrepreneurs for free. "I've got more money than anybody should. More than I can spend in ten lifetimes," he says.

But this sort of angel investing is not really what Rekhi considers his true calling. If you ask what he does, he'll tell you he mentors entrepreneurs. That means, among other things, that every week, he spends one or two days meeting with other Indians who want to talk about the companies they've started ...

By far Rekhi's most successful mentoring achievement is **K. B. Chandrasekhar**. Chandra isn't the wealthiest Indian in the Valley – that distinction goes to **Vinod Khosla**, a co-founder of Sun Microsystems and partner at Kleiner Perkins – but as founder of Exodus Communications, Chandra's the best-known Indian Internet entrepreneur ... Now Exodus is a \$242 million-a-year company that employs 2,000 people ... In 1995, he was almost out of money, and if he wasn't able to raise more, would probably be returning to India with his wife and three kids. Rekhi became his savior ... Helping Chandra proved to be Rekhi's best

investment decision ever. The \$1 million he put into Exodus for an initial 2% stake is now worth \$130 million.

The wealth-creation potential of this network is huge. So naturally, it was only a matter of time before the Valley's money establishment discovered it. The same Venture Capitalist firms that used to look warily at Indians starting companies, now trip over themselves trying to get Indian deals in the door ...

What VCs have realized is that Indians are not only some of the best entrepreneurs they've ever met, but they're also wired into one of the Valley's most precious resources – technical talent ... ■

Did you know?

- Who is the co-founder of Sun Microsystems, the company that is sweeping the Internet with its brain-child Java?

Vinod Khosla

- Who is the creator of the Pentium chip?

Vinod Dham

- Who is the third richest person in the world?

According to a report in Fortune magazine, it is **Aziz Premji**, CEO, Wipro. The Sultan of Brunei is in 6th place now.

- Who is a president at AT&T Bell Labs (now Lucent)?

Arun Netravalli

- Who is founder and creator of Hotmail?

Sabeer Bhatia

- Who is GM of Hewlett Packard?

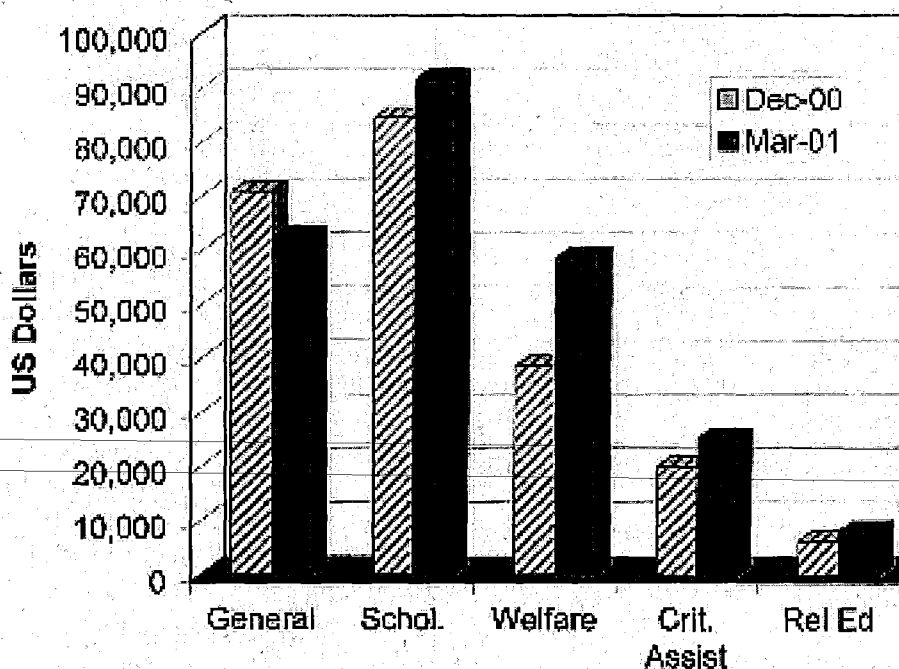
Rajiv Gupta

- Who is Testing Director of Windows 2000?

Sanjay Tejwrika

[From www.tie.org, website of The Indian Entrepreneurs (TiE), a forum for Indian entrepreneurs, venture capitalists and angel investors].

FINANCIAL CORNER



Note: The Welfare Fund amount for March 2001 includes \$9,000 set aside for Gujarat earthquake relief (A total of \$12,000 was collected through April).

Financial Progress Report

Progress: We are making progress in gradual steps and increments [see chart above]. Your continued support is needed to reach our goal by year end. Please send in your donations to the fund or funds you wish to support. All donations are tax deductible.

Funds received this quarter: See Acknowledgments [page 77].

Endowment funds: 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. Please contact me for details.

Our goal still 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.

Kindly make your check payable to FEZANA, specify the fund name, and mail to:

FEZANA
c/o Dr. Rustom Kevala, Treasurer
8812 Tuckerman Lane
Potomac, MD 20854

In closing, we would like to acknowledge and thank all of you who have been kind enough to donate to the various FEZANA Funds 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, Mr. Alayar Dabestani, Mr. Manucher Mobedshahi, Dr. Borzoo Nadjmi ■



Dr. Jerry M. Kheradi is chair of the FEZANA Funds and Finance Committee.

Some Interesting Financial Facts ...

\$322,600 – New York Yankee per-player share for winning the 2000 World Series [*USA Today*, 2000].

\$300,000 – Minimum annual income required to be considered among the “wealthiest 1% of Americans” [*Spectrum Group*, 2000].

\$163,939 – Annual salary for the British Prime Minister [*U.S. News & World Report*, 2000].

\$157,000 – Annual salary for Federal Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan [*BusinessWeek*, 2001].

\$145,100 – Annual salary for a member of Congress [*Roll Call*, 2000].

\$126,000 – Likely annual retirement income of an affluent American over the age of 50 [*U.S. Trust*, 2000].

\$124,261 – Average annual salary for a one-star general in the U.S. Army [*American Demographics*, 2000].

\$93,432 – Median income for a Wall Street Journal reader [*Mediamark Research*, 2000].

\$86,087 – Median income for a New York Times reader [*Mediamark Research*, 2000].

College Tuition and Tax Planning Strategies

Help the Grandkids

Normally, you're limited to giving just \$10,000 a year to any one person before the gift tax kicks in (\$20,000 for couples). With private tuition running more than \$20,000 a year, however, a grandparent may want to contribute more toward a grandchild's education. One way to do that is to pay your grandchild's tuition. The safe way of doing this is to pay directly to the college, so that the gift tax won't apply.

Note: This rule is just for tuition, not for room and board. You can also make a lump-sum contribution of \$50,000 to a state-sponsored college savings plan and, as long as you make no more deposits during the subsequent four years, you won't be liable for the gift tax. For more information, check with your financial advisor or tax planner.

More College Help

If you choose to stay within the \$10,000 gift-tax limit, there are other ways to help your grandchild pay for college. One is to pay off student loans after the child graduates. Since doing this doesn't impact the student's aid formula while he/she is in school, it's often a better way to help out.

Giving stock is another good strategy. You avoid capital gains taxes on any profits, and the student probably will get a tax break, paying as little as 8% in capital gains tax when he/she cashes in the stock. If you want to leave money in your will, ask your financial advisor about an inter-generational transfer trust, which lets you leave up to \$1 million to your grandchildren with no estate tax consequences.

College Aid Taxes

Your child has won a college scholarship. Now, you have to figure out if any of that money goes to Uncle Sam. Here's the rule: If your child is not going for a degree, all of the scholarship money is taxable. If your child is in a degree-granting program, any money earmarked for tuition, books, supplies and equipment is tax-free, while funds designated for room and board are taxable.

But be careful – the exemption for books and equipment only applies to materials that are required for all students enrolled in the course. And don't worry about losing your child's dependency; the scholarship money won't count as a contribution toward his/her support, and as long as you provide at least half of the support, you can keep the claim. ■

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\$70,779 – Median income for a USA Today reader [*Mediamark Research*, 2000].

\$20,672 – Average annual salary for a private in the U.S. Army [*American Demographics*, 2000].

76.5% – Average life expectancy of an American citizen [*NCHS*, 2000].

75% – Percentage of Americans who say they 'hate' financial planning [*ReliaStart Financial*, 2000].

76% – Percentage increase in the number of millionaire households throughout the past 5 years [*U.S. Trust*, 2000]. ■

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Acknowledgments

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(\$25); Marion and Noshir Hormuzdiar,
CT (\$35); Minoo & Ruby Italia, TX
(\$15); Minocher Reporter, OR (\$22);
Zoroastrian Association of Northern Cal-
ifornia (ZANC) (\$121); Zoroastrian
Association of Greater Boston Area
(ZAGBA) (\$20).

Welfare Fund. Diana Damkevala, CA
(\$75); Noshir & Mitra Irani, CA (\$30);
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(\$15); .

Gujarat Earthquake. Edul Bamji, NJ
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vez Shekhdar, ZAPA (\$50); Zoroastrian
Association of California (ZAC) (\$1688);
Zoroastrian Association of Chicago
(ZAC) (\$3,201); Zoroastrian Association
of Pennsylvania (\$1171 + \$101).

Critical Assistance Fund. Roshan &
Perin Bhappu, AZ (\$50); Homiyar
Choksi, VA (\$30); Dr. Ardeshir & Parvin
Damania, CA (\$100); Diana Damkevala,
CA (\$75); Virasp & Kamal Davar, NJ
(\$51); Rustom Engineer, TX (\$25).

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Dinoo Antia, FL (\$21); Homi Byramji,
NJ (\$151); Mrs. Rosahn Cama, TX (\$10);
Capt. Rumi J. Engineer, Dubai, UAE
(\$20); Percy Nikorawalla, NJ (\$101);
Dilna & Parvez Pohowalla, OR (\$110).

FEZANA SCHOLARSHIPS (2001-2002)

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

FEZANA is pleased to provide financial assistance to deserving Zarathushti women and men who have obtained admission for attendance at institutions of higher education (accredited degree-granting colleges or universities) in USA or Canada.

Scholarships. For the academic year 2001-2002 two scholarships of \$1000 each will be awarded.

Eligibility. To be eligible, the applicant must complete the application form and provide: (1) Proof of status in USA or Canada (a minimum of one year residency is required); (2) annual financial need including assistance already pledged, by other trust funds, charitable institutions or the institution of choice; (3) other financial assistance available from family and friends; (4) past academic record(s); (5) extra-curricular activities in the community including contributions to Zarathushti functions/organizations.

Award criteria. Applicants will be rated on Merit of Scholastic Achievement (40%), Financial Needs (40%), Extra-curricular Activities (10%) and Communal Activities (10%).

Application. Application forms are available from the FEZANA website at www.fezana.org or from Dr. Dolly Dastoor (dastoor@total.net). Completed application forms should be returned **by August 1, 2001** to:

**Professor Mehraban Khodavandi, Chair, FEZANA Scholarship Committee,
P.O. Box 359, Sheboygan, WI 53082-0359 • email: khodavandim@lakeland.edu**

Farangis & Pavindokht Zardoshty, Homayoun and Iran, Scottsdale, AZ \$1000 in memory of their parents Fari-doon and Mehrbanoo Zardoshty.

Scholarship Fund. Jehangir & Olive Mobed, IL (\$25); Ratansha B. Vakil, TX (\$11).

Journal Fund. Barbara H. Cathey, IL (\$50); Dinshaw & Goolcher Joshi, MD (\$40 + \$72); Perviz & Burjor Patel, IL (\$35); Union Church of Hinsdale, IL (\$30). ■

Zinobiya needs help

In 1997, it was discovered that Zino-biya, 25, was HIV +ve, as a result of medical negligence in Surat. Anti-viral therapy, under Dr. Zarir Udwadia, at Parsee General Hospital, Mumbai, has made a dramatic transformation; but the drugs are very expensive and need to be continued for 3 more years. Her father is a cashier and mother works at the Surat Parsee Panchayat School, and do not have the means to pay the high cost of treatment. Please send donations, marked "Zinobiya" to FEZANA [see above].

PLEASE GIVE FROM YOUR HEART

Please make 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, page 71 and Fall 2000, page 88]

Udvada pilgrim center

The Youth Wing (YW) of the World Zoroastrian Organization (WZO) in India is conscientiously working towards the development of the Udvada Pilgrim Center.

This facility will cater to those who cannot afford the prevailing accommodation prices and are hence unable to visit Udvada. A caretaker and a helper will manage the daily operation of this facility. It does not aspire to serve as a hotel or dharamshala.

Estimated cost is Rs. 500,000 (\$12,000). Contributions in excess of Rs. 100,000 (\$2300) will be memorialized with a plaque. Please send donations, marked "Udvada" to FEZANA [see above].

Panchgani Dar-e-Meher

The Panchgani Dar-e-Meher is considered to be one of the cleanest and most meticulously maintained places of worship. Though over 65 years old, faced with paucity of funds and a dwindling local Parsi community, the trustees "lovingly and stoically" maintain it and "burnished it with pride and joy." For a donation of Rs. 5000 (\$115), a *maachi* and *afiringan* will be offered on any day of the year, and *tandarosti* recited daily, for the next five years. "Not only will you be rendering help to a well-loved place of worship, but also you will have the blessings of our beautiful prayers. Please send donations, marked "Panchgani" to FEZANA [see above].

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:

Serious About Scholarship ● Sets and Demonstrates High Standards ● Celebrates Achievement

For information about the scholarships and the application process, please contact:

Triangle Fraternity National Headquarters, 120 S. Center Street, Plainfield, IN 46168
Tel: (317) 837-9641 ● fax: (317) 837-9642 ● www.Triangle.org

Gujarat earthquake relief efforts

North American Zarathushtis respond generously to help quake victims

Letter from Ahmedabad Anjuman

"We refer to the personal visit of your Houtoxi and Farhad Contractor, as well as to the kind donation ..."

writes *Ervad N. B. Kanga* and *F. H. Davar*, Jt. Hon. Secretaries of the Ahmedabad Parsi Panchayat, in a letter to FEZANA president Framroze K. Patel.

"On behalf of our *humdins* [fellow Zarathushtis] here, as well as the entire present board of the Ahmedabad Parsi Panchayat, please accept our sincere gratitude for your care and concern to help our humdins in their hour of need.

"Enclosed please find an alphabetical list of applications received by us for financial/residential aid ... from those Parsis affected by the recent earthquake.

"You will observe there are over 22 applicants, whose financial needs run to a total of about Rs. 36.33 lakhs [approx. US \$75,000].

"... before the approaching monsoon, we hope to carry out at least the imminent repairs to the damaged properties ..."

Kaemerz Dotiwalla, chair of the FEZANA Welfare Committee and earthquake appeals coordinator Rohinton Rivetna, for coordinating the FEZANA effort.



Houtoxi Contractor and Er. Navroz Kanga, at the Vakil Anjuman Aderan.

Ahmedabad visit report by Houtoxi Contractor President, ZAPA

Over \$12,000 was collected [through April 2001] by FEZANA, for relief efforts for victims of February's devastating earthquake in Gujarat. Further amounts were also sent by some associations and individuals through other organizations (various Indian Associations, WZO, etc).

We would like to say a BIG THANK YOU to all the North American associations who led a cooperative effort in collecting the funds and to all the individuals who were so generous with your donations. Thanks also to

Mr. Navroz Kanga, joint secretary of the Ahmedabad Parsi Panchayat, has been leading the widespread efforts around Gujarat to coordinate relief for the quake victims [see letter above].

With the funds collected, efforts are underway to help both those Zarathushtis who have lost their homes entirely and those whose property is desperately in need of repair. I have personally visited and spoken to many of them. Anjuman properties, too, were not spared by the earthquake and are badly in need of restoration.

Over 25 individuals appealed to the Ahmedabad Parsi Panchayat for funds (ranging from Rs. 25,000 to 8 lakhs) to enable them to rebuild homes and community centers. A sub-committee, appointed by the Panchayat, visited each applicant, assessed the need and recommended the amount to be disbursed.

Four particularly broad appeals enabled the Panchayat to help the greatest number of Parsis affected by the calamity. *Rustom Baug*, a badly damaged residential block adjoining the *aderan*, houses 18 families. Repairs were started very early and are nearly complete. The *Vakil Charity Blocks*, comprised of six residential buildings, were so badly damaged that the Panchayat had to relocate some families while repairs were ongoing.

The *Zoroastrian Ladies Industrial Cooperative Society*, which runs sewing, cutting, needlework and other classes for girls/ladies, on similar lines as the Ratan Tata Institute in Mumbai, was also badly damaged and is being repaired. The *Parsi Dharamsala* was also badly damaged and is under repair.

Fortunately, by the grace of Ahura Mazda the two *aderans* (fire temples) in Ahmedabad were spared. The Vakil Anjuman Aderan [photo above] was opened at Khamasa on March 3rd 1933. This *aderan* was initially founded as a *dadgah* in 1846 in the middle of the city at Khamasa. In 1875 it was destroyed in the Great Floods. After being repaired, renovated, and re-established in July of 1877, by Sheth Khurshedji Behramji Nanavati, it was handed over to the Panchayat to be administered by them. Ahmedabad's second *aderan* was established at Kankaria in 1925. It is run by a private trust. ■



The Village Children of South Gujarat

Chicago pediatrician Roda Patel talks of her work with the Gram Seva Trust, in the village of Kharel – that has now become a passion for her and her husband, heart surgeon Khushroo Patel.

By Roshan Rivetna

Pediatrician Dr. Roda Patel and her husband, heart surgeon Dr. Khushroo Patel have a comfortable home and practice in suburban Chicago; but, now with their three children grown with families and professions of their own, they are drawn back to India, to give back a little of “the good life” to the thousands of malnourished children in the villages of Gujarat.

Roda has been going to India since 1995, when she spent 9 months surveying the condition of children in and around the village of Kharel.

“To my dismay,” she writes, “the most pressing need I found was to tackle the problem of malnutrition in these children. Malnutrition retards not only their physical growth but also their mental and emotional development. In addition, these children are highly susceptible to infectious diseases and the mortality rate is very high.

Roda first started a pediatric clinic in the Gram Seva Trust Hospital where the doctors have made it their life’s mission to uplift the community in this area consisting of 40 villages with a population of 70,000. These villagers had no recourse to any medical help prior to the establishment of Gram Seva Trust in June 1994.

In 1997, they started two *Anganwadis* (AWs) followed by two more in 1999. These are child health and education centers where they monitor the children’s health and nutrition status and also educate them. Many of these children have now started

going to school (which was not even an option before) and are doing very well academically.

“This is a very exciting milestone for us,” says Roda, “as this has given a boost to our young ones who are now enthusiastic about going to school and so are the parents.”

In 1998, the clinic examined and treated 278 children. Of these, they found 40 had mild malnutrition, 97 had moderate malnutrition and 123



had severe malnutrition [*like the two siblings in the photo above*]. Only 18 of the 278 were not malnourished.

With the permission of the Gujarat Child Services Agency, the clinic has now “adopted” 40 of the agency’s AWs consisting of 2715 children.

In 1999 they checked 1,600 children medically and provided the necessary treatments and Protein-Energy-Powders to them. To reach all the needy children is a challenge as they live in very secluded areas.

During her visits to the clinic, Roda also helps reorganize the management of the Anganwadi project, providing guidance regarding record

keeping, proper time management and especially regarding followup of the malnourished children. She arranges for the social workers to be more diligent, and to increase home visits. Of course, they need to hire more workers to ensure all these programs are carried out adequately.

During 2000, 2861 children were checked in the clinic. It was gratifying to note that 1016 of them – a much larger percentage (35.5%) than in earlier years – were nutritionally normal. Only 72 (2.5%) were found to be severely malnourished. In addition, 772 were treated for minor illnesses like gastroenteritis, scabies, respiratory infections and 82 were treated for major illnesses like tuberculosis, severe anemias, pneumonia, and severe dehydration, often requiring hospitalization.

They also give in-house training to the AW workers. Night education programs are also well received by the villagers. They also go with their educational videos to different villages 2 to 4 nights a month.

Under their guidance and supervision, the workers: monitor the weight of the children and grade their nutritional status; distribute nutritious snacks and Protein-Energy-Powders; give informal education through play and educational toys; monitor their immunization status; make arrangements for medical check-ups and follow up on their treatments; plan home visits for 0-2 year olds and monitor their growth; plan group meetings and health education through audio visual aids.

Their plan is to provide the clinic’s services to all children of these 40

AWs with: regular medical check-ups and treatments; provide protein-energy rich powders, Iron folic syrup and vitamins to the undernourished children; and provide education and training to the children and throughout the community. They also need to increase awareness regarding Sickle Cell anemia and Tuberculosis, as both these diseases are very prevalent.

The challenge of this work has attracted Jehan Rivetna, a Health major at Northern Illinois University; she will be spending 3 months in Kharel this summer as part of a required internship for graduation.

The work cut out for the Patels and their workers is abundant.

"Though the process is slow and sometimes frustrating," says Roda, "it is certainly very worthwhile and extremely satisfying. The joy one feels in seeing these sad, malnourished, frightened children transform into happy, healthy, enthusiastic ones, ready to face and dream about their future tomorrows is beyond compare."

How you can help:

For Rs. 1000 or \$100, you can become a supporting member of Gram Seva Trust.

Rs. 2001 (\$45) will provide full treatment for one in-patient for one day incl. lab/x-rays/medicines.

Rs. 3001 (\$70) will provide cataract surgery for one patient.

Rs. 5001 (\$115) will provide general surgery for one patient.

Rs. 10,001 (\$225) will provide entire treatment including surgery for one patient.

Rs. 25,001 (\$560) will provide maintenance expense of the entire hospital for one day.

Please send your donation, marked "Gram Seva Trust" to FEZANA [see page 78]. For further information, contact Dr. Roda Patel at (847) 297-3347, email: rodak@aol.com.



Top, The Gram Seva Trust hospital in the village of Kharel, 18 km south-east of Navsari in southern Gujarat. The charitable hospital, managed by the Trust, a voluntary organization dedicated to health-care and rural development, serves the needs of 70,000 people from 40 surrounding villages of Gandevi, Navsari and Bilimora areas. Below, Dr. Roda Patel teaching a health education class for children, organized by the Gram Seva Trust.

“ The joy one feels in seeing these sad, malnourished, frightened children transform into happy, healthy, enthusiastic ones ready to face and dream about their future tomorrows is beyond compare ”

Funds sought for project to preserve and record art works from our priceless Zarathushti heritage

"Portrait of a Community" is a project initiated by Chemould Publications and Arts Trust, in collaboration with the World Zoroastrian Cultural Foundation and the National Gallery of Modern Art in Mumbai. Objectives of the project are to:

- (1) Identify paintings of historical, social and aesthetic value.
- (2) Collect biographical data on selected paintings and photographs.
- (3) Photographically document the paintings.
- (4) Compile a comprehensive database, including photographs, on a CD-ROM.
- (5) Help and advise on restoration of paintings; and
- (6) Exhibit paintings at the National Gallery and produce an exhibition catalog.



Glass painting from Iran, of Rustom, the famous warrior eulogized in Firdowsi's Shah Nameh, from the collection of an agiary in Mumbai.

Kersi Treasurywalla, member of the Committee (that also includes Khorshed Gandhi as Chair, Homi Dhalla, Pheroza Godrej, Rustom Jejeebhoy, Bachi Karkaria, Sam N. J. Maneckshaw, Homai Modi and other concerned Parsis) writes:

"The Committee has begun work in earnest and has located a surprising number of interesting portraits in and around Bombay. Plans are now underway to photograph these professionally, annotate the portraits, and place them in the correct historical perspective, for publishing.

"You will appreciate that undertaking all these tasks costs money, a commodity in which we are woefully short. The Bombay Parsi Punchayat and a number of other enlightened

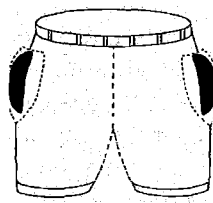
trusts have come to our rescue, but we are yet way below target.

"We are now looking to friends in North America who could help us financially, in this project to preserve art works from our priceless Zarathushti heritage."

If you know of old paintings, or would like to purchase the CD-Rom or donate for this project, contact: Dr. Dhalla, at 91-22 381 0025, wzcf@bom8.vsnl.net.in, www.worldzarathushticulturalfoundation.org. Please send donations, marked "Portraits" to FEZANA [see page 78].

Help for the Elderly

Hip fracture in the elderly is a devastating problem – mobility is



restricted and quality of life severely compromised. The best solution is to prevent these fractures. A new

bio-mechanical device called the "KPH Hip Protector" has been developed in Scandinavia, which, in clinical trials, has shown an 80% reduction in risk of fracture. It is available for \$85. For information, contact info@erimed.se in Sweden, or BPastakia@aol.com.

■ MATRIMONIALS ■

FEZANA will coordinate initial contacts between interested parties; we do not assume any responsibility for verifying credentials. Contact Roshan Rivetna.

Male, 30. Established Parsi family seeks alliance with educated, professional, good-looking, caring Parsi girl; for their highly educated, professional, handsome, caring, well-settled son, 30, 5'9", living in the US. Respond with biodata, email address and returnable photograph to fujisawa_5@yahoo.com. [M01-12]

Gentleman, 42, accountant, currently in India, interested in meeting suitable woman. Willing to relocate to USA. Call Freny at (541) 552-9177. [M01-13]

Attractive girl, 34, residing in Singapore, vice-president for a multinational bank, seeks educated, good looking and caring man. Contact flavia_mistry@pacific.net.sg. [F01-14]

Looking for a soulmate?

Have you visited these websites?

www.ozemail.com.au/~zarathus/soulmate.html

and

www.matchmeup.com

■ MILESTONES ■

Births

Nisa Ardeshiri, a girl, to Mahvash and Farzad Ardeshiri [ZSO].

Aliya Byramji, a girl, to Rubina and Feroze Byramji, granddaughter to Byramji Collector and Khorshed Khan, of Houston, on December 27.

Aarash and Fravash Chothia, twin boys, to Pearl and Khushru Chothia, brothers to Zurvan and Spenta, on December 17 [ZSO].

Zarius Engineer, a boy, to Kersi and Thrity Engineer, brother to Zubin and Zaran, in Houston, on November 15.

Kai Fallahzadeh, a boy, to Kourosh and Ginette Fallahzadeh, of Kapuskasing, Ontario, on February 6.

Nina Gazdar, a girl, to Cyrus and Mikiyo Gazdar, granddaughter to Dhun and Sam Gazdar of Mississauga, Ontario, and Noriko and Soshiro Masuda of Japan, on February 2.

Adina Mistry, a girl, to Nina and Adil Mistry, on March 21 [ZAGNY].

Yazdy Mistry, a boy, to Jarafshan and Tehmus Mistry of Auckland, New Zealand, grandson to Roshni and Jamshed Mobed of Houston, Texas, and Yazdi and Thrity Mistry of Auckland, New Zealand, on November 2.

Sophia Michelle Olson, a girl, to Maynaz and Matthew Olson, sister to Madison and granddaughter to Katie Irani, in Dallas, on March 26.

Shane Kaezad Setna, a boy to Phiroza (née Phiroza Minoo Bamjee of Karachi) and Kaezad Jal Setna (originally of Lahore, Pakistan), in Cincinnati, Ohio, on July 14.

Zahan Shokrehkuda, to Fauziya and Khushnood Shokrehkuda, on February 20 [ZAH].

Navar Ceremony

Zaheer Bulsara and Farhad Bulsara, sons of Firdosh and Chisty Bulsara of Ontario, went to India for their navar ceremony, in December.

Poruz K. Khambatta, son of Kayomarz and Goolcher Khambatta, of New York area, grandson of Hoshang-

shah and Pilloo, graduated from navar class in Mumbai in December. He was given the "New Navar" award from the Sohrabji Hormusji Kutar Fund, by ZAGNY, at the Jamshedi Nouruz function in New York.

Cyrus Panthakee, son of Dara and Katy Panthakee of Ontario, underwent the navar ceremony in India, in December.

Navjote, Sedreh Pushi

Joshua Bulsara, son of Adil and Stacey Balsara, of Houston, TX, on December 23.

Zarah Bhader, daughter of Faredun and Kashmira Bhader, of Houston, Texas, on December 25.

Stephen Engineer, son of Rashna and Hoshi Engineer, of Highlands Ranch, Colorado, at Saher Agiary in Mumbai, on December 23.

Karl Khambatta, son of Kayomarz and Goolcher Khambatta, grandson of Hoshangshah and Pilloo [ZAGNY].

Arzan and Delara Patel, son and daughter of Sarosh Patel and Zaver Shroff of Sunnyvale, CA, in Mumbai, on July 23.

Weddings

Roya Izadian, daughter of Dr. Ros-tam and Farangis Izadian of Boston, MA, to **Farshad Khorrami**, son of Ardeshir and Parvin Khorrami of Bethesda, MD, in Toronto, on September 1. The couple will make their home in Toronto.

Deaths

Sheila N. Aga, daughter of late Sadanand and Jean Chawla, wife of Noazer Aga and mother of Ayesha K. Dadyburjor and Armand Aga, after a 2 1/2 year battle with cancer, on April 25. Sheila was a lady of exceptional talent and founder of **Aryamesh Exports**, an internationally recognised company [ZANT].

Kaikobad N. Bilimoria, father of Baku Kermani, in Ottawa, Canada, on October 3.

Behram Contractor, 70, husband of Farzana Contractor, brother of Darius (of UK) and Dadi (of France), aka popular columnist 'Busybee', of heart failure, in Mumbai on April 9 [see obituary].

Rustom Hormusji Dalal, 91, possibly, the first Zarathushti to settle in Chicago, brother of Naval (Nergish) Dalal of Bangalore, uncle of Edul N. Dalal of Webster, New York, in Chicago, on March 13 [see obituary].

Rustom Damania, 62, husband of Deenaz, brother of Ardeshir (Parvin) Damania of Davis, California and Minocheher (Parvin) Damania of Mumbai, father of Delara and Tarana, after a valiant fight with bone marrow cancer, in Bangalore, on March 24 [see Profile on page 86].

Jerbanoo Hormusji Dotiwala, grandmother of Mahveer Javat and great grandmother of Sherezade and Hormuz, in Karachi, Pakistan, on January 29 [ZSO].

Peshotan Byramjee Javat, father of Zarine Peshwan Patel, in Mumbai, on April 1 [ZSO].

Mehrban Soroush Bahram Javid, brother of Katayoun, Bahram and Aflatoon Javid, in Tehran, on April 1 [ZSO].

Ratan Kakalia, founder of Dadar Parsi Grah Udyog, in Mumbai, in September [see obituary].

Alayar Keikhosrow Kalantar, father of Keikhosrow, Esfandiyar, Khodarahm and Hormozdyar Kalantar, in Yazd, on March 21 [ZSO].

Homi Kapadia (Keyannejad), 73, of Athens, Greece, of a heart attack, in Boston, MA, on May 9. He lost his sister, Mahrokh Keyannejad on March 24, whilst they were in Toronto.

Jehangir Karanjia, 94, husband of Aimee, father of Sonny (of London. UK), Darius (of Toronto) and Jamshid (of California), in Toronto, on October 28 [see obituary].

Jaloo Katila, sister of Gool (Edul) Udvardia of Chicago area, in Udvada.

Dowlat Kaviani (Qumarsi), mother of Giti Hormosyari of Northern California, in Kerman, Iran, on May 1.

[Continued on page 87]

Rustom Hormusji Dalal ('Dr. Russ')

LIFE OF AN INDEPENDENT, INTELLIGENT AND VERY PRIVATE INDIVIDUAL —
A SIXTY-YEAR RESIDENT OF THE CHICAGO AREA

Quite possibly the first Zarathushti to settle in Chicago, Dr. Rustom H. Dalal, born in India in 1910, came to the US in 1935, and earned a D. Sc. degree in Chemical Engineering from MIT. Rustomji passed away on March 13th, having lived in the Chicago area for about 60 years.

Rustomji came under the wings of ZAC in 1989, following a phone call from a young Indian Resident M.D. at Northwest Memorial Hospital, who informed us that an old Parsi gentleman was hospitalized and that he had no one to look after him.

At that time, 80-year-old 'Russ' (as he called himself) was undergoing surgery. He was living at Ohio East Hotel in downtown Chicago, where he had lived for 30 years.

Dr. Russ had lived a secluded life. He had lost contact with his family and had no friends. Since that time, Dr. Mehroo & Minu Patel, Nergish & Kayomars Mehta and a few volunteers from ZAC started visiting Rustomji, off and on.

Dr. Dalal's situation played an instrumental role in kindling the need for ZAC to initiate and acquire ministerial services of Ervad Jamshed Ravji. ZAC was then able to provide both, spiritual as well as physical services on a regular basis to Rustomji (and other seniors) on a regular basis. Ervad Ravji [photo with Rustomji above] served him well above and beyond the call of duty, during the final years of his life, as well as, in bidding him farewell with the full four-day ceremonies after his demise.

As age began telling on our 'grand old man', he needed a closer watch. We moved him to an Assisted Living Facility in the suburbs, closer to where our members live. Drs. Mehroo and Minu Patel provided assistance as and when needed.



In 1999, Rustomji desired to search for a nephew, who he knew lived in USA. Announcements in the ZAC newsletter and FEZANA Journal caught someone's attention and brought the two together. Edul Dalal had been searching for his uncle for over 20 years, since coming to the USA in the late 1970s. They finally met each other, in Chicago, in 1999.

Dr. Russ was an extremely intelligent and interesting individual. He was a nutrition whiz. With his main staple of milk and fruits, he enjoyed good health for his age. He had

a passion for stocks and was very successful at it. He read Wall Street Journal, followed the market and did his own investing until the week prior to his demise. He will be fondly missed by those of us whose lives were made richer by knowing him.

Letter from Bangalore. [From Rustomji's brother Naval and his wife Nergish Dalal]. Thank you for all that you have done to help in our hour of sorrow ...

My husband and I are extremely hurt to have found our darling Rustom after 65 long years and then to lose him even before seeing him ... I was seriously thinking of coming over to you all to meet Rusi. We took it for granted that once we had found him, we would not lose him. For the rest of my life (of which there is not much left, since I am 80 years old) I am going to feel the pain that I did not make an attempt fast enough to see him ...

Once again, I thank you my dear ones for all that you all have done for Rustom and Eddie. I had all the peace of mind knowing you all were there to help my son. He has nothing but praises for each one of you, dear Zarathushtis of Chicago ...

[From ZAC Newsletter]

Jehangir Karanjia

A FULL LIFE, FILLED WITH
HONOR, RESPECT AND LOVE



Professionally, Jehangir Karanjia had a dynamic career as a well-known and respected figure in civil aviation in Pakistan and internationally. He was a founding member of Pakistan's Department of Civil Aviation and, in 1962, became Director of Civil Aviation for Pakistan. He was awarded the "Sitara A Khidmat" (the Imperial Services Order) by the government of Pakistan in recognition of his meritorious services to his country.

Jehangoo had a passion for flying. He had his first lesson from noted aviator Aspi Engineer. Since then he has clocked 3,000 hours in 12 types of aircraft.

Jehangir was also a keen sportsman. He played cricket and hockey at the tournament level.

Jehangoo and his wife Aimee immigrated to Canada in 1973.

Jehangoo, who at one time was the president of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario, was a true Zarathushti. During his illustrious career he was instrumental in helping Zarathushtis and non-Zarathushtis alike by finding jobs for many, many people, in Toronto.

His professional accolades pale in significance in comparison to what he believed was his greatest accomplishment, his family: wife Aimee, four children, six grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

From Eulogy by
Dr. Dhun Noria, Toronto

Behram Contractor ('Busybee')

INDIA'S MOST POPULAR COLUMNIST AND A VERITABLE INSTITUTION IN THE
WORLD OF INDIAN JOURNALISM

With the passing of Behram Contractor (a.k.a. 'Busybee') a veritable institution in the world of journalism, India has lost its only full-time, genuine satirist, and easily the country's most popular humorist. His column, "Round and About" began with the *Evening News of India* in 1966, went over to *Mid-Day* in 1979, and came to stay with the *Afternoon Dispatch & Courier* in 1985. It is the longest-running column in the history of newspaper journalism, and maybe Guinness will find space in its next edition to mention this.

Contractor had been suffering indifferent health, including a weakening of the lungs caused by half a lifetime of smoking 60 cigarettes a day.

He is survived by his wife Farzana Contractor, who is also the CEO of the newspaper. Farzana also produces *UpperCrust*, a food, wine and lifestyle magazine. Tragically, Farzana's eldest brother, Capt. Ishrat Khan, died in a road accident near Panvel, just a few hours before Contractor's fatal heart attack.

[Excerpted from "Busybee is no More!" by Mark Manuel, *Afternoon Dispatch*, April 9, 2001]

EULOGY

For an utterly sorrowful day engulfing me, a few stray thoughts and points of observation (all my own work):

Behram Contractor a.k.a. 'Busy Bee', my Guru is no more. His tragic and abrupt exit on April 9th saddened me beyond measure. His "Round and About" was a constant source of inspiration since my Poona college days in 1966. This was via the

Evening News of India. Then during my service in Iran, through the *Mid-day*. And now through the Internet the *Afternoon* in USA. All these times, my deep fascination for Busybee's free flowing fragrant humor and satire, found in abundance in his simple but thoughtful writings, pulled the inner strings of my heart.

He had the oozing zest to lead and enjoy a simple life to the brim. This was reflected like a mirror image in his simple, down to earth writings which soothed the mind to tranquility. His love for good food and spirits was always good nourishment to the body and soul. So in fact his writings covered the trinity of mind, body and soul for a balanced equilibrium.

We all come in this life with one and only one mission: to remove easily and liberate the soul stuck like a cheesecloth to the prickly, materialistic thorns of mind and body. According to me, Behramjee very easily released his soul from the clutches of mind and body. His simple writings taught us the ways to do so, by knowing yourself – flowing your thoughts in the centripetal direction instead of centrifugal.

May God grant eternal peace to Behram Contractor.

Busybee, although I never met you in person, you will never be out of my mind. Your writings have left the sweetest honey in my memory hives. Please do wait for me somewhere near, just around the corner, with all your "Round and Abouts", which my thirsty eyes would yearn to feast upon.

Adios Guruji,
Yours in utter grief,
Sohrab Irani, Anaheim, California



[Extracts from BUSYBEE's last column in the "Afternoon Dispatch & Courier", Mumbai, one day prior to his sad demise].

And, for a Saturday, a few stray thoughts and a few general opinions and a few points of view (all my own work):

Like who says travel is not both educational and profitable. President Clinton returns home today well fed and cosseted and looked after and possibly with a heavy job contract in his pocket.

Like once you have been the President of America, nothing is impossible, unless your name happens to be Nixon.

Like had I been Clinton, I would have planned my day the same way, except that I would not have included the visit to the *dhobi ghat* or to the Pawar residence for breakfast.

Like we cover the events in Kashmir with breathless speed as if the issue is about to be solved tomorrow. When it has been with us since the 1950s and everyday appears to be less soluble.

Like one way of solving it would be on a government to government basis. Let the governments meet, discuss, resolve, settle the dispute in their own time and space. Meanwhile, let the people lead their own quiet lives, away from the dispute.

Like my view from the house is the sea, miles of it extending to the coast of Africa, with ships on the horizon and an occasional fisherman venturing out and beyond.

But what I want to see are crowded roads and buses and people scampering after them, and stray dogs, and families living in the streets.

We always want what we do not have ...

- Busybee



Above, Prof. Rustom Damania with Canard aircraft. In 1987, India's first Canard Aircraft built by Prof. Damania at India's National Aerospace Laboratory [NAL], was successfully flown. Subsequently, this experimental aircraft was flown to Bombay by Prof. Damania himself in January 1989 where he was warmly congratulated by J. R. D. Tata and other senior government officials, and asked to design and build a new trainer aircraft for India.

Rustom Damania: Multi-faceted Aviation Scientist

A shining example of courage and determination in living with a deadly disease, without letting the disease rule his life.

By Roshan Rivetna

Professor Rustom Damania, passed away in Bangalore on March 25th, after a long illness. He was 62.

"... and lo and behold, it was airborne! It was a proud moment and I must confess that my eyes turned moist. There were others who were shouting, applauding, cheering and giving vent to their joy ... This couldn't just be a reaction to an attractive flying spectacle. I believe that it was an expression of national pride at a significant technological event." [see <http://www.nal.res.in/pages/hansa2fl.htm>]

The above is from a 1993 report about a memorable moment for India's National Aerospace Laboratory (NAL) – the inaugural flight of the aircraft Hansa – India's first locally designed and developed all-composite aircraft.

It was described in the press as "a milestone in Indian aviation." And it was certainly the crowning moment in the professional life of Rustom Damania, architect and project leader of the Hansa program.

As India's only Ph.D. (Flight Research) having a commercial pilot's license, Rustom is credited with several firsts by senior professional colleagues: "Professor Damania pioneered the design and building of small aircraft out of fibreglass composites for use in flying clubs ... He worked very hard to make the first all composite Hansa to fly in the Bangalore skies ... The era of aircraft design for research and development at NAL began with Dr. Damania's untiring efforts ... Rustom was in a sense the pioneer of aircraft building and flying activities in NAL ... Rustom Damania's contribution to NAL has been phenomenal ..."

After a post-graduate degree in Aeronautical Engineering from the prestigious Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore, Rustom completed his Ph.D. from the Mississippi State University, and returned to India, (the country of his birth and whose progress was of prime importance to him), where his career and achievements on the aeronautical front brought accolades.

A flair for design, sound engineering practices, adequate flying experience and a rigorous education with degrees in math, mechanical and aeronautical engineering from India and abroad, contributed to a unique and successful career that spanned over four decades.

He was associated with the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) as Professor, Director grade scientist at the National Aerospace Laboratories, a



Rustom Damania and wife Deenaz on a trek at Mulu Caves (Borneo).

consultant with Lockheed Aircraft Corporation, USA, worked with the Fokkers Aircraft Company in Holland, and collaborated on research projects with DFVLR in Germany, among several other work experiences and settings.

In 1997 Rustom Damania was invited to set up an Aviation Design Center in Malaysia. He returned to India in 1999.

At the time of his untimely demise, he was involved in the design and execution of a national project of strategic importance at the NAL.

Rustom Damania loved the outdoors and was happiest when out on nature

treks, or driving out into the countryside, or parachuting and flying planes while visiting different countries.

A colleague at NAL writes: "What a remarkable gentleman he was! Smiling, energetic, confident – even to the point of being labeled a daredevil – and with such wonderful personal charm.

"Damania was always a gentleman in a great hurry. He walked fast, he drove incredibly fast and, to no one's surprise, even built the Hansa-2 very fast. His friends say that flying with Damania from the Jakkur aerodrome was always doubly thrilling: first driving from the IISc campus to Jakkur at break-neck speed on his two-wheeler, and then actually taking off with him (fast!) on a trainer.

"It therefore saddens me deeply that death didn't come equally swiftly to him. Damania suffered immeasurably before the end came.

Diagnosed with Multiple Myeloma, a fatal malignancy of the bone marrow, in 1997, Rustom's spirit was always upbeat and positive. He was a shining example of courage and determination in living with a deadly disease, without letting the disease rule his life. His wife Deenaz writes:

"Within three months of undergoing major surgery and being diagnosed, he encouraged me to climb a 15,000 foot mountain on the island of Borneo along with him – that sweet moment when we stood atop that beautiful Kinabalu mountain peak (Sabah, Malaysia), symbolizes his life and approach to living." ■

ally, in Mumbai, on March 11 [ZANT].

Nergish Mistry, mother of Kersi Mistry and Nilufer Vania, in San Francisco, California, on January 29.

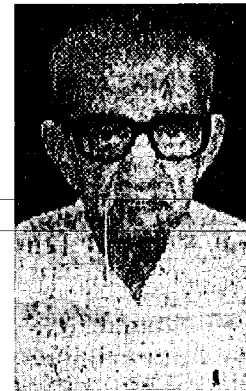
Shahpour Soroush Partovinia, father of Homa Khosraviani, Roksanah, Jamshid and Farshid Partovinia, in Tehran, on March 29 [ZSO].

Susan Roberts Peel, 45, sister of Mary Tengra, of cancer, on April 14 [ZANT]. ■

Ratan Kakalia

A SELFLESS, SINCERE AND
DEDICATED SOCIAL WORKER

Residents of Dadar Parsi Colony in Mumbai will recall social worker Ratan Kakalia. In his death, the Parsi community in general and the Dadar Parsi Colony in particular, have lost a silent, sincere and dedicated social worker.



Ratan Kakalia left a comfortable job to work for the poor of the Parsi community. He did not subscribe to the idea of doles to the poor, since that sort of charity created dependence

and loss of self-respect. He, therefore, started the Dadar Parsi Grah Udyog, where Parsi women could use their talents such as embroidery, sewing, cooking, making labels/envelopes, etc. to earn a livelihood. Kakalia made the rounds of the Colony, urging people to give their sewing work to these women and to try their cooking.

He also founded the Dadar Parsi Youths Assembly and started a library for DPYA, which I had the pleasure of running, initially. I had the good fortune of living my first 28 years in Dadar Parsi Colony and working with him during the 1950s and 1960s. These were my formative and training years, and I learned the spirit of volunteerism from him.

We would collect old newspapers by the truckload. Money from the sale of these papers was used to buy school and college books, which he "loaned" to needy students. . . , which service I had the pleasure of running, initially.

Ratan Kakalia has passed on, but he has left behind his spirit of social service, and his idea of dignity of labor.

[Submitted by Dr. Phiroz Dastoor, based on a Jame Jamshed article of September 17].

Deaths [Continued from p. 83]

Banoo Kayvani, mother of Shirin (Khadarahm) Bonshahi of Northbrook, Illinois, grandmother of Manijeh, Mitra and Siamak, in Tehran, on December 14.

Mahrokh Keyannejad, 86, sister of Homi Kapadia of Athens, Greece, in Toronto, on March 23, 2001.

Cooverbai Pestonji Khambatta, 85, mother of Zarine Shavak Ghadi-

EVENTS & HONORS

Beghzad Bana was one of the few schoolboys selected from thousands to escort the official Olympic torchbearers, in September. His stretch was 1.6 Km along Wakehurst Parkway in Sydney. His sister **Freeya** participated in the closing ceremony at the main Olympic Stadium. Beghdad and Freeya are the children of Nauzer Bana, former president of the Australian Zoroastrian Association of NSW [FED Newsletter].

Jamshed A. Cooper, son of Adi and Hilla Cooper, was admitted to the MIT MBA class in 2002. An honors student of Columbia University, Jamshed has been an executive with Canadian First Boston Corporation. He is also president of ebiz.com [ZAGNY Newsletter].

Edul Daver, of Warren, New Jersey, was in Mumbai in March, to receive the *"Distinguished Alumni Award 2001"* from IIT, Mumbai. Each year IIT bestows this honor on 10 graduates who have reached positions of eminence and have excelled in their field of work.

Qaizad P. Engineer, son of Pheroze and Roda Engineer, graduated from his NYPD (New York Police Department) class in November. He is a full time police officer working with Special Task Forces to make New York a safer and better place for all. He is the first Zarathushti to serve full time on the NYPD. Qaizad is also a certified and active member of US Marine Corps. [ZAGNY Newsletter].

Xerxes Sidhwa of Texas is in Morocco as a Peace Corps volunteer. He is enjoying his experiences living with a Muslim host family, especially the Eid celebration on March 6th.

Farah Aspi Wadia, daughter of Aspi and Aban Wadia of Loveland, Ohio, a senior medical student at NOU College of Medicine, was selected to continue her medical training in residency (pediatrics) at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation.



Rusi Gandhi of RE/MAX Properties Unlimited, in Montville, New Jersey, was awarded membership in RE/MAX of New Jersey's prestigious 100% Club. The award was presented at the 15th Annual RE/MAX Dinner Dance and Awards ceremony at the Tropicana Casino Hotel in Atlantic City.

Gandhi contributed to a statewide sales effort that resulted in RE/MAX of New Jersey's most productive year since its founding in 1985.

Gandhi, with over 24 years of real estate experience, specializes in residential and commercial properties. Dedication and commitment to the industry is evident in Gandhi's many professional affiliations and community organizations, including the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York and the Zoroastrian Association of Chicago. He was recently appointed President of the Tri-State Chapter of the World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce.

Gandhi has raised considerable funds for Zarathushti organizations with his standing offer: "The sale, purchase or lease of your property (anywhere in USA or even world wide) or that of your family or friends, will earn FEZANA or your local Zoroas-



Minoo Rustomji Shroff, Senior Trustee of the Bombay Parsee Punchayat, was awarded *The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon*, by the Government of Japan, for his outstanding contribution to the promotion of business and friendship between India and Japan.

Mr. Shroff is a well-known economic and financial expert, is advisor to, and director of, several leading companies, and has been actively involved in professional and business associations.

He has played a leading role in public life. He was past president of the Bombay Management Association and the All India Manufacturers Organization. Currently, Mr. Shroff is president of the Forum of Free Enterprise, Chairman of the Leslie Sawhney Program of Training for Democracy, senior trustee of the BPP and trustee of the Indo-Japanese Association. ■

trian association, 10% of all brokerage fees received."

For all your real estate needs, please contact Rusi Gandhi, 28 Route #46 West, Pine Brook, New Jersey 07058, Tel: (973) 575-6005 or (800) 575-6005, x117. ■



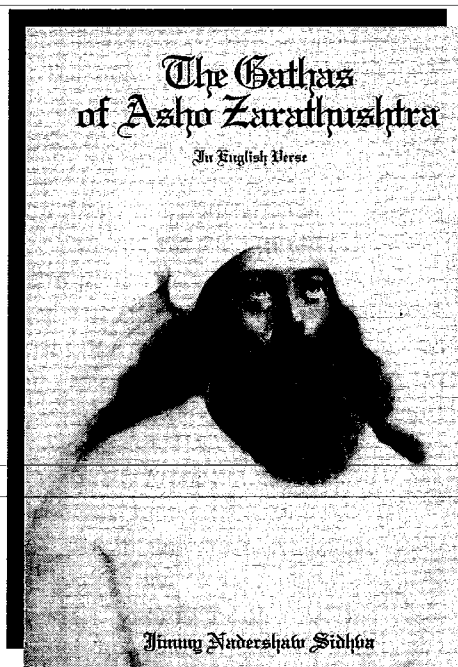
Above, At the Nouruz function of the Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania and New Jersey (ZAPANJ) on March 24th, Dr. Rohinton Balsara, president of ZAPANJ presented the "Good Life" awards to [from left] Freddy Syavax Patell, Zal Jehangir Chapgar, Sam Noshir Bapasola and Minocher Darius Dadachanji [far right]. Also in the picture is their Good Life program advisor, Diana Darius Dadachanji

Good Life in Pennsylvania.

Four young men from Pennsylvania recently completed the Good Life program under the able supervision of Diana Dadachanji. They conducted service projects, including visits to Valley Forge Nursing Home; cooking for the homeless at Norristown Hospitality Center; raising funds for the ZAPANJ building project and for the Gujarat earthquake; working with Nationalities Services to help newly arrived immigrants; arrange a trip to the Academy of Natural Sciences Museum in Philadelphia; helping clean up after ZAPANJ functions; and participating in First Aid and CPR programs. To top it all, each one wrote an essay on subjects like "The Parsis", "Gahambar", "The Jashan", and "The Navjote Ceremony". The Good Life Scout program was created by ZAGNY and administered with devotion by the late Villy Gandhi. Her husband, Homi, now carries on her work.



Camp in Ahmedabad. Over sixty Zarathoshti youth living in Ahmedabad attended a two-day camp run by visiting Zarathushtis from North America: Laila F.M. Contractor and Shanaya F. Deboo. Laila, who is a very active educator in both the Philadelphia and Pittsburgh Zarathushti associations, worked with the Zoroastrian Awareness Group of Ahmedabad (ZAGA), to design activities aimed to both increase the understanding of principles taught by Asho Zarathushtra, and build a sense of community among the youth of Ahmedabad. Laila is an avid student of the religion, and has run similar activities in the USA, where she is studying to be a physician. Shanaya is involved in international education efforts with children and is studying for her MBA at Harvard Business School. Laila and Shanaya found that the youth, ranging in age from 5 to 18 years, were extremely excited and eager to learn about the religion, and asked for more opportunities to do so. ZAGA has made great headway in providing these opportunities. Formed a few years ago by Ushita te, an association of Zarathushti women of Ahmedabad, ZAGA is spearheaded by the very devoted and inspirational Meher Medora.



The Gathas of Asho Zarathushtra In English verse

By Jimmy Nadershaw Sidhva

Hardcover, 246 pp.,
©Copyright Dr. J. N. Sidhva,
140 Backbay Reclamation,
Mumbai 400 021,
Tel: 91 22 202 2012.

All donations for the book will
benefit the "Goolbai and
Nadershaw Sidhva Charity Trust."

Review by Adel Engineer
Naperville, Illinois

A handsome new book on the Gathas is now available to Zarathushtis! What makes this work unique is that it offers to the community a translation of the Gathas in beautiful English verse that can be chanted or recited as poetry. None of the numerous existing translations have been in verse, making this fresh interpretation truly one-of-a-kind.

The author, Dr. Jimmy Sidhva, a retired radiologist, makes it clear that "a Shakespeare or a Shelley I am not, just as I cannot even begin to aspire to the scholarship of the giant Avestan interpreters", notably Kanga, Taraporewala, Ichaporia, Irani, Humbach, Insler and Chatterji, all of whose works he draws upon in compiling this composite.

Despite the modesty, Sidhva offers a very elegant, fresh interpretation, in verse – the outpourings of a man, who in his own words "has become entranced and virtually addicted to these wonderful songs, the Gathas."

The Gathas form a part of the Yasna, each chapter of which is termed a 'Haiti' or 'Ha'. The book covers the

five Gathas and the final stanza A Airyama Ishio [Ha 54] which is Zarathushtra's oration at the wedding of his daughter Pouruchista.

Each page has the Avestan text on the left in an ornate Gothic script and its translated verses on the facing page again in an attractive script font. This treatment is repeated for all verses with liberal white space (each page has no more than two verses) throughout the book.

In the prologue, Sidhva relates the divine revelation experienced by Zarathushtra in the form of Gathas which reveal not only the origin of creation, but also the goal toward which all creation moves. At the start of creation, Ahura Mazda created twin spirits *Spenta Mainyu* (Good) and *Angra Mainyu* (Evil). The third Gatha is totally dedicated to Spenta Mainyu.

Zarathushtra's message is that [Ys. 30.2]: "Each should listen with his ears, think with his illumined mind and then choose between Good or Evil".

The purpose of creation is for the souls of the righteous to fight and overcome the forces of Angra

Mainyu. The task of the soul is to progressively improve and refresh the world by frustrating the evil spirit. In its battles with Angra Mainyu, Ahura Mazda has the Amesha Spentas as his highest helpers. The Zarathushtrian doctrine is thus purely monotheistic with ethical and moral dualism. The prologue concludes with the following [Ys. 50.11]:

"Haithya vareshtam hyat
vasna ferashotemem"

The fulfillment of that total renovation which is according to the Will (of Ahura Mazda)

Gatha Ahunavaiti is the longest and describes the creation story as revealed to Zarathushtra. *Gatha Ushtavaiti* continues the discourse with Ahura Mazda and has the famous quote [Ys. 43.1]:

"Happiness unto him, through
whom others get happiness"

In *Gatha Ushtavaiti* [Ys. 44.18], an allegorical reference is made to the senses, the mind and illumination. According to Sidhva, this imagery is also found in the *Kathopanishad* and Plato's *Phaedros*.

A noteworthy verse [Ys. 46.19] is quoted below for its beauty:

Whosoever shall truly
accomplish through Asha
This total renovation for me,
Zarathushtra,
According to the will of
Ahura Mazda,
Shall receive the reward of
eternal bliss.
Mother Earth shall grant
every desire of his:
Wise Mazda has revealed to me
all of this!

A notable feature of this volume is that the author refers the reader to the connection between the Gathas and our daily prayers (such as *Kemna Mazda* and *Atash Nyadesh*).

Handsomely bound with a color rendering of Zarathushtra on the cover, this hard copy volume makes a very attractive addition to any library or coffee table and is recommended for any student of religion or lay Zarathushtrian.



The Image of Zoroaster: The Persian Mage Through European Eyes

By Jenny Rose

*Persian Studies Series, Number 21,
General Editor: Ehsan Yarshater.*

*Bibliotheca Persica Press, New York, 2000
Hardcover, 215 pp., ISBN 0-933273-45-2*

\$48 from amazon.com

Review by Sarosh J. H. Manekshaw
Houston, Texas

The book is centered around two very poignant questions:

1. Were Zoroaster to revisit the earth, would he recognize the portraits which people have painted of him?
- Anquetil Duperron
2. Who is Zarathushtra to us?
What shall we call him?
Is he a promiser? Or a fulfiller?
A conqueror? Or an inheritor?
A harvest? Or a ploughshare?
A physician? Or a convalescent?
Is he a poet? Or a genuine man?
A liberator? Or a subduer?
A good man? Or an evil man? --
- Friedrich Nietzsche

Jenny Rose answers these questions by "chart(ing) the history of the image of Zarathushtra from its initial conception until modern times..." While the term 'image' originally had the meaning of physical likeness, it changed in the middle ages to include the notion of a mental conception as well. In this latter sense, it includes the imagination as well as the imaginary. Thus, it includes seeing that which does not exist and that which is not plainly visible. Because this image is prone to the cultural, social and religious biases of the viewer, how that image is, in turn, projected to others can vary considerably from reality.

Thus, throughout this book one is presented with divergent and contrasting images of Zarathushtra from

the one that most Zarathushtis are used to. Some of these images were deliberately distorted (as in the case of Nietzsche's Zarathushtra) while others were overly embellished; but in each case the projector of that image had a definite purpose for how he depicted 'his' Zarathushtra.

Each chapter of the book displays the image of Zarathushtra as viewed by people in different periods and locations. The first chapter starts by portraying Zarathushtra as he is represented in the "Zoroastrian Materials" – the Avestan and Pahlavi literature. It then moves to the "European Beginnings" as represented by the classical Greek and Roman sources. The "Italian Magus" portrays Zarathushtra as he was viewed by the Italians during the Renaissance.

"Zoroastre: Tragédie Lyrique" presents Zarathushtra in the French literature. Anquetil Duperron, an eighteenth-century Frenchman, was probably the European most responsible for making the religion of Zarathushtra known to the western world. He came to India, studied Avestan and the rituals under several mobeds in Gujarat and, in 1771, published a three-volume translation of the Zend Avesta. His book was at first not well received by most European scholars, who had viewed Zarathushtra (and his religion) from a completely different perspective. But Duperron and his book gradually gained credibility when his sources were authenticated. After Duper-

ron's work was published there was a marked shift in the direction of Zarathushtrian studies as well as the way in which Zarathushtra was perceived in Europe.

"Sarastro, Masonic High Priest" depicts the Zarathushtra of Austria. This chapter describes how Freemasonry claimed many of its traditions as originating in ancient Iran. To this reviewer, this was probably the most fascinating chapter, since it describes the impact of Zarathushtra on one of the greatest musical savants – Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – and particularly to the influence on his opera *The Magic Flute*.

"Goethe and the English Romantics" focuses on the "esoteric symbolism and myth, rather than on the exact translation" of the texts of the Zoroastrian religion. Amongst the English Romantics who factored Zarathushtra into their works were William Blake, Lord Byron, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Percy Bysshe Shelley and John Keats.

“ Amongst the English Romantics who factored Zarathushtra into their works were William Blake, Lord Byron, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Percy Bysshe Shelley and John Keats. ”

"Thus Spoke Nietzsche" reviews the way Nietzsche developed a philosophy and came about presenting it, using 'Zarathushtra' as his mouthpiece. His monumental work: *Also Sprach Zarathushtra* presents Zarathushtra more as a superman and transformer rather than a prophet. It is interesting though to note that Nietzsche was the first European to use the prophet's correct name: Zarathushtra, rather than the Greek version Zoroaster.

The foundations of this book lie in Jenny Rose's doctoral dissertation at Columbia University. Earlier, she had done her Master's thesis on the Role of Parsi Women in India. (It may be noted that she presented a paper on this subject at the Seventh North American Zoroastrian Conference, in Houston, Texas in 1990). Although Ms. Rose is of European background, it was her Parsi grandmother who influenced her in deciding on the topic of her Master's thesis; which, in turn, led her to continue her doctoral research in Zarathushtrian studies.

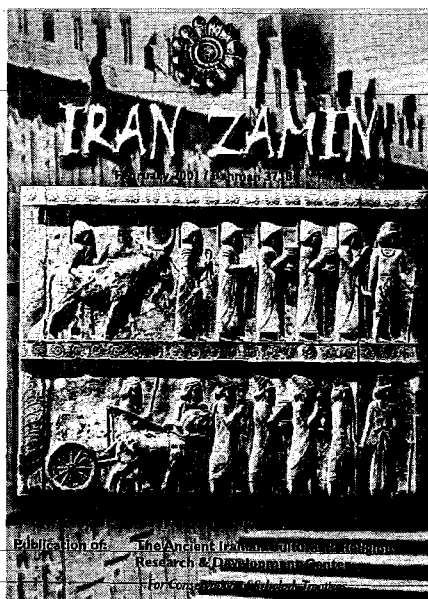
The Image of Zarathushtra, since it is a dissertation-into-book, is a scholarly work and as such is a book which must be carefully studied. It contains a wealth of information and numerous facts that most Zarathushtris will be surprised to learn.

I strongly recommend this book to all those who wish to become familiar with how Zarathushtra and the religion were perceived by different European communities from Classical times to the present. It is through an understanding of this transformation of Zarathushtra's image through the ages, that one can better learn the reasons for the very different images of Zarathushtra and his Gathas that continue to be presented by various individuals in North America.

Persian National Music Ensemble's "Novrooz" video tape

A video tape entitled "Novrooz" is available from the Persian National Music Ensemble, 5712 Hamilton Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21237-1421, Tel: (410) 866-0127.

Visit their website at
pnemusic@home.net.



The Ancient Iranian Cultural and Religious Research and Develop- ment Center

The Ancient Iranian Cultural and Religious Research and Development Center was established in Vancouver on February 21, with the aim of promoting research in the ancient Iranian culture and religion.

Founding members of this association are Goli Farhangi, Manucher Farhangi, Dr. Iradj Pourkarimi, Fariborz Rahnamoon, Rostam Shahbandari, Parviz Yeganegi and Mehraban J. Zartoshty.

"The magazine *Iran Zamin* will be our showcase to the world where writers and scholars present their latest findings" writes editor Fariborz Rahnamoon, in the first issue, in October 2000, "Our efforts are research oriented and not change oriented. We intend to make our findings known to the world at large ... At the outset we would like to make it clear that our research and our findings are in no way aimed at interfering in the system, practice and belief of the present-day Zoroastrian community. We respect their right to continue in the footsteps of their immediate ancestors, we also respect their efforts to evolve. ... What we write or say in this free world is in no way directed towards any community, religion or group whatsoever. We are on a path to discover the thoughts and beliefs of a people before they were influenced by governmental religion politics and further guided and molded by the pressure of being a defeated minority."

The English section of the bilingual (English and Persian) *Iran Zamin* magazine is also available on the Internet at www.ancientiran.com. To subscribe to *Iran Zamin* or contribute to this ambitious venture, write to AICR R&D Center, 703 Donegal Place, North Vancouver, BC, Canada V7N 2X6, Tel. (604) 986-2077.

A new cookbook is a'cooking ...

The Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago is compiling a new Cookbook for the Millennium. All (cooks or otherwise) are invited to submit their favorite recipes. A special section will feature traditional Iranian recipes.

"We desperately need your favorite recipes," writes Dr. Mehroo Patel, "They do not have to be original or authentic. Your own creative modifications are welcome (or rather needed). Portions should be in cups and spoons, weights should be in lbs or ozs, and not in metric measures, please, suitable for North American readers. All recipes submitted should be well-tried in your own kitchen. We will also welcome Iranian recipes for the special Iranian section of the cookbook."

Please submit the recipes, legibly hand-written or typed, one recipe per sheet, by August 15, to Dr. Mehroo Patel, Zoroastrian Association of Chicago, 8615 Meadowbrook Drive, Hinsdale, IL 60521. For information, call Dr. Patel at (708) 409-9361.

Bread for the Parent's Head

by Meher Dadabhoy Amalsad

Two audio-cassettes. © Copyright 2001 Meher Dadabhoy Amalsad
To order, contact Meher Amalsad, 15842 Villanova Circle,
Westminster, CA 92683, tel: (714) 895-3097,
email: BABAMEHER@prodigy.net

Review by Darius Mistry
Auckland, New Zealand

Meher Amalsad's set of two audio tapes *Bread for the Parent's Head*, are a must for every parent and prospective parent, as the thoughts and words he has expressed are priceless gems to be treasured by us all. Indeed we should be very proud to have such a dedicated and creative author amongst us. The cassettes are enlightening to listen to for every parent who has young kids who are of the age when they can be trained by their parents. My wife and I, being first-time parents of a young 3-year old daughter, found Meher's outlook on today's modern life an eye opener. Both of us listened to Meher's audio book together, and found ourselves saying "This is so true" several times.

The cassettes are in a very conversational style and make a good after-dinner recording to listen to. We sat over four separate sessions as it was too much to absorb in one sitting. Plus I was frantically taking down notes at the same time, as there are certain gems in these cassettes which are worth printing out and displaying on your bathroom mirror as a daily reminder. So take your time to absorb Meher's research, from his real life experiences.

In this modern-day world, where both parents are busy with their own

careers, the child is often left to sitters or teachers at school, to be taught the basic principles of life. Meher gives very lucid day-to-day examples which each of us as parents have faced at some stage in our lives.

Meher talks on a variety of very topical subjects. Here are a few: Freedom and democracy; cooperation versus competition; unity and conformity; creativity among kids; respect and trust; rights and privileges; being reactive versus reflective; how to handle defiance among kids; how to teach kids modern communication methods; what and how to develop true love among our kids; possession without obsession; how to teach kids to set goals to reach objectives, etc ... the list is long.

Being influenced by western society and its methods, it becomes very essential for us as parents who are first time migrants outside our home country to, first understand the true needs of our children, so they can cope, survive and prosper in the modern world, and at the same time, not lose the time-tested standards of morality which have enabled us to differentiate ourselves from the animal kingdom.

My recommendation is that every parent and prospective parent should listen to these tapes and give Meher feedback on the gems that he has given us.

Forthcoming Film on The Zoroastrian Diaspora

Writer/producer **Tenaz Dubash**, who produced the popular video documentary *In the Footsteps of Our Forefathers* last year [see *FEZANA Journal*, Spring 2001] is now looking forward to her next project – another film, with the tentative title *The Zoroastrian Diaspora*.

This film, a lot more ambitious than *Footsteps*, will cover Zarathushtis all over the world (Pakistan, Hong-Kong, India, Russia and Australia) but will concentrate on the North American continent.

It will look at the current contributions and achievements of Zarathushtis and will be very 'personality driven' (Zubin Mehta, Bapsy Sidhwa ...). The film will look at the cultural, theological, business, philanthropic and academic contributions of the Zarathushtis.

The people interviewing these 'Zarathushti personalities' will be young, inquiring Zarathushtis with some of the same interests and talents as the people they are interviewing.

The goal of the film is to portray an intelligent, informative, contemporary video on who we Zarathushtis are and what we stand for.

If you are interested in being part of the fundraising or editorial committee, please email Tenaz Dubash at TDubash@aol.com.

Deluxe Tour to Iran in Fall 2001

Silloo Mehta of Mazdeyasnie Connection California, 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, narration of detailed 14,500 years history of Iran, comprehensive pre-departure information. Next tour will be **October 27 - November 18**. Contact Silloo at (714) 995-8765, email: mazcon@mymailstation-com.



Zoroastrians Worldwide at the Millennium

By Dame Dr. Prof. Meher
Master-Moos, President, Zoroastrian College and
Ruby Lilaowala D.Litt. (Honoris Causa) (Med. Alt./Z.C.)

Hardcover, 564 pp., available from Mazdayasne Monasterie,
Mustafa Building, Sir Pherozechah Mehta Road, Fort,
Mumbai, 400 001, Tel: 266 0214.

Zoroastrians Worldwide is a monumental work, providing a historical record of the Zarathushti community worldwide at the turn of the millennium. In size it is of immense proportions (10" by 15") with a colorful, glossy cover, and photos or illustrations on almost every one of its 564 pages – a handsome addition to any coffee table or library and a valuable keepsake to pass on to succeeding generations.

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Fravardegan ...

[Continued from page 8]

About 200 years ago, the French scholar, Anquetil du Perron observed that the Parsis in Surat "give them (i.e the fravashis of the departed) the most magnificent reception. The houses are purified and decorated. They (i.e. the Parsis) do not go out of the house. They spend the day in prayers and works of charity."

Fravardin Yasht [13.14] states:

"In that house in which clean and pure water and vegetation is placed, the holy fravashis agree to move about."

Even today, the Fravardegan days are

observed by Zarathushtis all over the world with religious fervor and piety. Every agiary is abuzz with activity and the soothing chants of the Avesta. A visit to the agiary on these days gives one a glimpse of Paradise on earth itself. ■

Noshir Dadrawala, an International Fellow of the Center for the Study of Philanthropy, author and speaker, has been a columnist for *Jame Jamshed Weekly* for 20 years and is an editor of *Deen Parast* and the WZO magazine *Hamazor*.

Unlovely Vulture ...

[Continued from page 15]

method of disposal and a way of ensuring that all Parsis — rich and poor — are equal in death ...

... Dhanjishaw Medhora, a retired auto mechanic, said Doongerwadi must be preserved. He and his wife moved back from Nigeria, because she wanted to be sure the ancient death rituals would be performed when she died ...

Her husband tried to explain why it mattered so much, saying, "It is our tradition, that's why." ■

[Excerpted from *The New York Times*, March 1, 2001]

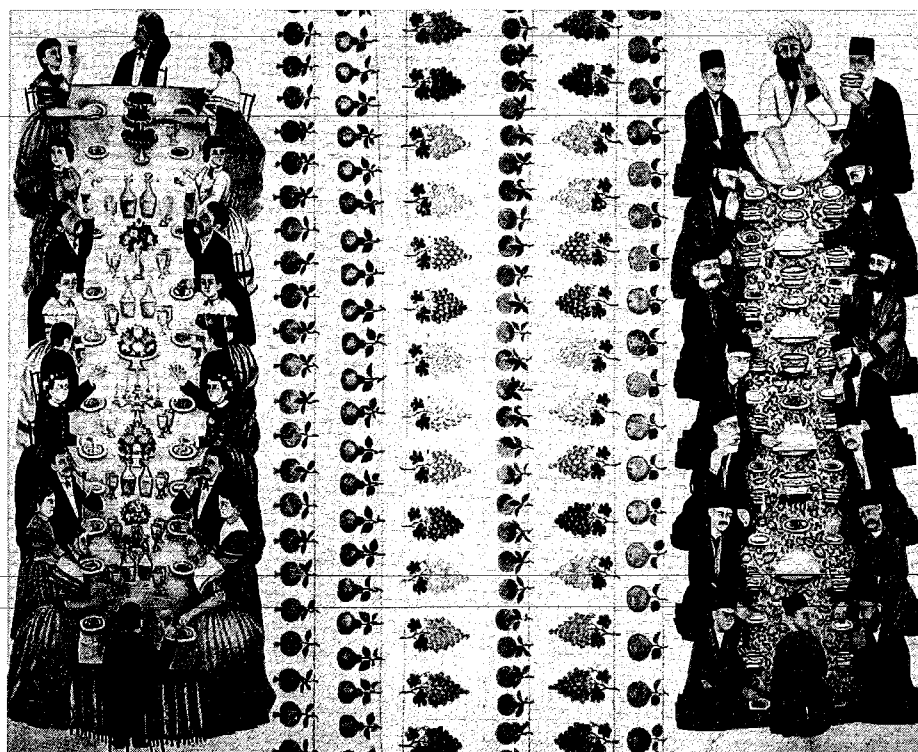
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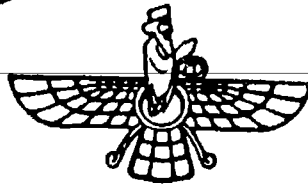
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