



JOURNAL

SPRING 2001, BAHAR 1371 YZ

Mah Fravardin-Ardibehest-Khordad 1371 YZ (Fasli)

Mah Avan-Adar-Dae 1371 YZ (Shenshai)

Mah Adar-Dae-Bahman 1371 YZ (Kadmi)

Health and Healing

Medicine in the Avesta

Rohinton Mistry's "A Fine Balance"

Also inside:

Lest We Forget

Zarathushti Enterprise

Parsi Fiction

FEZANA

Federation of Zoroastrian
Associations of North America
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ON THE COVER:

Author Rohinton Mistry [page 87].

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Navroze Mubarak - Nouruz Pirooz Bad

Back in Roman times, the calendar year began in March, which is probably why the months were named *September* (the seventh month), *October* (eighth), *November* (ninth) and *December* (tenth). By about 150 BCE the official new year date was shifted to January 1, which was confirmed by the Julian calendar in 46 BCE and the Gregorian calendar in 1582.

The ancient Persians, however, in their wisdom, celebrated their new year (or Nouruz), on the date of the vernal equinox, around March 21st. What better choice of date can there be to start the new year than the first day of spring (at least in the Iranian lands of the northern hemisphere)?

In the spirit of rejuvenation, re-birth and renovation of nature and of all of Ahura Mazda's creations at Nouruz, this Spring issue of FEZANA Journal (with guest editor Dr. Dolly Dastoor) is devoted to *Health and Healing*.

My wishlist for Nouruz. This Nouruz I wish that the looming cloud of terrorism be lifted from our world; that fanatic 'evildoers' who would destroy innocent lives and disrupt the economies of nations for their beliefs and causes, whatever they may be, be condemned and realize the evil nature of their barbaric ways.

I wish that Osama, Mulla Omar and all such evil terrorists around the world, be rooted out and brought to justice. I also wish that in that process, though, no more lives be lost, either of the innocent, already suffering people of Afghanistan, nor of the valiant men and women who have left the comfort of their homes and families and are risking their lives, in far away lands.



I wish that our homelands of America and Iran, Pakistan and India – countries which we love dearly, across which we Zarathushtis live, and have families and friends – resolve their differences at a common table and not on the battlefield.

I wish that people of all faiths be solidly true to their own, but respect the other. In like vein, I wish we Zarathushtis would be true to our own persuasion, be it orthodox or liberal or any of the spectrum of shades in between, while yet respecting the other.

I wish we Zarathushtis would come together and support the creation of a sound world body, for the wellbeing of our community, now spread across the globe.

I wish that our Zarathushti associations be led by men and women with wisdom and foresight, and our actions are driven by what is right for the community, and not by personal agendas – so our communities may prosper and grow.

I wish that Zarathushtis everywhere be blessed with good health and happiness and find fulfillment in their chosen professions and enterprises.

I wish that the message of Zarathustra be practiced faithfully, in every Zarathushti household, so we can preserve and perpetuate our noble religion and traditions for ever.

I wish that my grand-daughters Olivia Zarine, 3, and Natasha Diane, 1, and all our children and grandchildren will be as blessed as our generation has been, and have the opportunities to grow up in an even better, gentler, kinder, more loving and caring world. ■

Roshan Rivetna
Editor-in-Chief, FEZANA Journal

FEZANA JOURNAL

wishes Zarathushtis
around the world
a happy and prosperous

Nouruz 1371

Mah Fravardin - Roz Hormazd

Sal Khojeste Bad

Jamshedi Nouruz

To boundless time, O Ahura Mazda, is born a babe this day. The earth has run her yearly round and the sun enters the vernal equinox with majestic grandeur. Jamshid of kingly glory was first among mankind to celebrate this festival day of spring, amidst thanksgiving and feasting and rejoicing, and named it Nouruz or New Year's Day.

Nature showers her bounteous gifts all around and hails this auspicious day. The earth wears the green of springtime and glories in regaining her youthful beauty. New life is buzzing everywhere and everything is throbbing with budding life. The hedges and groves resound with the ravishing and sweet melodies of a myriad inhabitants of the air, who wish all sentient creatures nature's Happy New Year.

Health and happiness such as mankind had never known abounded in the glorious reign of the renowned king, and old age and death were unknown in the land ... Vouchsafe, in Thy mercy, that untimely old age and untimely death may not overtake us.

May the budding season bring for us soundness of body and vigor of mind. May the mellow rays of the new sun quicken our hearts, and may the vernal beacon light lead our souls on the path of the new life that opens with Jamshedi Nouruz. ■

[Submitted by Mobed Zarir F. Bhandara, Los Angeles, California, Source: "Homage Unto Ahura Mazda" by Dastur Dhalla].

Nouruz Mubarak

by Siloo Mehta
Los Angeles, California

O for the coming of the glorious *Hour*
When the sun entering Aries, doth beneficently shower
Choicest blessings upon Mankind on earth
As Creation rejoices for a resplendent rebirth.

O for the coming of the effulgent *Day*
When nature's dressed in her gayest array;
When songbirds trill, colts kick, lambs bound,
Meadows, hills, brooks, babble to joyous sound.

O for the coming of that magnificent *Time*
Clothed in celestial light sublime
When the dance of the trees and the hum of the bees
Bring old winter to yield to the freshness of spring.

These: *Hour, Day, Time*, year after year have been
Of peace and goodwill; Roz Hormazd, Mah Fravardin.
To draw divine currents, the Ameshaspands vow,
“*Nemo vey Ameshaspenta vispe hvare hazaoshao.*”

Khurshed Yazad, the custodian of cosmic treasure-trove
Through Meher Yazad, bestows the divine gift of love.
All shall be cleansed this day, throughout all lands
Spenamino and *ghanamino*, for the day,
shall shake hands.

When the powers of good and the powers of ill
Shall temporarily but miraculously bow to His will
Why can't we then, humble creatures, rise above
And choose to wish all, friend and foe,
A Splendent Nouruz!

Navroze Heralds

by S. S. Sethna
Mumbai, India

Navroze heralds the smiling year's sweet return,
What time the earth renews her winter-weeds outworn.

And nature spreads her robe of green around,
To grace with fairest flowers each wasted ground.

Now gone are nature's frowns and fears,
Motley month of March mercifully appears.

Radiant and resplendent in beauteous bowers,
Crowned with sunshine, fruits and flowers.

Sweet-tongued birds sing on leafy trees,
Freshly blows the scented and balmy breeze.

Herbs and trees with rich luxuriance crowned,
Virgin flood of flowers spread the blighted ground.

Hills, valleys and gardens are now seen,
Decked in gleaming robes of pleasing green.

Blooming and blushing, March has come again,
When Padshah Jamshid played his gladsome strain.

His tables spread with wine in rich regal mode,
With piled up dishes and things of noblest sort.

A myriad gay-plumed birds, their grateful notes combine,
And creeping plants, their blossomed tendrils twine.

All in grateful ecstasy in praise of Him, the Lord,
Even the winged world makes each tuneful chord.

With Jamshedi Navroze comes spring, her charms to display,
When day and night rule the world with equal sway.

Let this day drown the universal cry of want and woe,
From our hallowed cities and hamlets lone and low.

[From *Parsidom*, March 2001]



Haft Seen table. The ceremonial table set up for Nouruz, is laid out with a special cloth, '*sofreh-e Haft Seen*', and seven dishes, each beginning with the letter 'S' (or *seen*) symbolizing rebirth, health, happiness, prosperity, joy, patience and beauty: *sabzeh*, sprouts of wheat or lentils; *samanoo*, a wheat sprout pudding; *seeb*, apples; *seer*, garlic; *senjed*, fruit of the lotus tree; *serkeh*, vinegar; *somaagh*, sumac berries. Other items also laid out are: the *Avesta* prayer book, picture of Asho Zarathushtra, a *mirror*, an oil *lamp*, a *goldfish* in a bowl and *rose water*. [For more on the traditions of Nouruz, see *FEZANA Journal*, Spring 2001].

Integrity and Unity of the Zarathushti Community

In this statement to the community, I wish to present what is clearly called for at this time – on this continent, and indeed worldwide—the genuine and willing acceptance by the Zarathushti community of its integrity and its unity.

All seem to be expressing this sentiment, but we have seen no clear way of bringing this about. To this end, I make a few suggestions.

The integrity of the community is threatened by a series of oppositions, divisions and polarities. The issue that deeply underlies all of these differences is whether to accept change or to resist it. Change in personal belief and practice is not an issue here, for that is a matter of one's personal conscience and convictions. The subject of conflict in our micro-community, in this day and age, has become change in the social practices of our community. Being tolerant of views that may differ from one's own views can bring about change.

I therefore suggest that general discussion be initiated and carried on with mutual respect and polite exchange. First, one needs an understanding of all the items of agreement and disagreement in the community, which could be done by a committee. The committee can then formulate these issues and gather opinions throughout this continent, as has been done previously. Finally, FEZANA can organize a meeting where a variety of views can be aired, and if we are wise and fortu-

nate, make policy recommendations to our community.

There is a danger that one must keep in mind. This procedure may, in fact, split our continental community into two groups: those accepting the policy recommendations and those rejecting them.

Therefore, one must keep in mind the formulation and articulation of the statements of what we, Zarathushtis, agree upon and take to be our belief and commitment – the Mazdayasni life. What this will hopefully achieve is recognition of our integrity, and within this umbrella of our faith, some of our diversity. As long as we respect each other's *reason, righteousness, and dignity*, we shall be able to live in peace and contentment, free of resentment, and shall be able to genuinely appreciate our unity.

The polarities that separate us are not of the deep substance of our faith. They are social practices that have been established over the last few centuries, perhaps just a few decades, and thus must be seen in a social context. Sometimes the polarities are between the social conservatives and social liberals or reformers. Sometimes the polarity is between those who wish to maintain traditions and those who are prepared to make traditions adjust to social change.

There are a multitude of attitudes that have clogged our communal conflicts. A good, open, respectful discussion will be able to air them. If we can maintain a stance of respectful

exchange and avoid angry words, sarcastic remarks and rude rejections, our community will move along the path of adjustment towards unity and mutual respect.

This is so much in accordance with the social conceptions of our prophet. There is no reason for our community not to engage at a level of discourse of mutual respect and rational exchange to achieve that one goal, the unity of the Zarathushti community living in the embrace of the Mazdayasni faith. ■

Framroze Patel
President, FEZANA

An apology to our overseas subscribers

Due to exorbitant increase in overseas mailing rates (to about \$8 per copy by air and \$3-\$5 by sea) since Jan 2001, FEZANA Journal has been exploring various ways of getting the Journal to you in a reasonable time and affordable cost. We have tried a new "Periodicals Rate" (which takes 2-3 months to reach) and mailing in bulk to a contact in each country. Please bear with us, as we tune our system. We value your readership very much.

IN COMING ISSUES OF FEZANA JOURNAL

Summer 2002:

Introduction to the Religion of Zarathushtra – history, doctrine and customs.

Fall 2002:

Zarathushti Temples and Worship

Winter 2002:

Religious Education and Youth Leadership



New Board of Directors at CZC. *Fereshteh Khatibi [far left] was elected president of the new Board of Directors at California Zoroastrian Center in Los Angeles area. Other directors are, from left, Gilda Kasravi (secretary), Keikavous Varjavand, Goshtasb Vafadari (vice president), Shahryar Afshari (treasurer), Mehrdad Mondegar and Irandokht Anoshirvani. Fareshteh can be reached at bano33@aol.com.*



Mehergan jashan in Washington state. The Zoroastrian Society of Washington State celebrated Mehergan last October, at the home of Behram and Manijeh Deboo, in Everett, WA. About 79 adults and children, including Zarathushtis from India and Iran celebrated this festival. After a welcome by ZSWS president Farhad Namdaran, Behram Deboo explained the ceremony and gave a translation of the prayers. Behram performed the jashan for this ancient tradition. Manijeh recited *Kalme Din* and led a hambandagi. Alayar Dabestani requested all to observe a one-minute silence in memory of those who perished on September 11. A potluck dinner followed.

ZSO votes on building new darbe mehr

At the October 21, 2001 Extraordinary Meeting, members of the Zoroastrian Association of Ontario (ZSO) decided by a 78% majority vote, to approve the proposal to demolish the present structure of the Mehraban Guiv Darbe Mehr, and build a larger and more functional darbe mehr. "The hard work to realize this dream will now begin," writes ZSO president Sam Vesuna, "We look forward to the commitment and cooperation of all our members for their talents, services and financial backing to get this project going." [ZSO newsletter].

ZAC (California) elects 2002-2004 officers



Khushroo Lakdawala was elected president for the two-year (2002-2004) term of the Zoroastrian Association of California based in Los Angeles.

Other officers are Daraius Mistry (vice president), Gulshan Kasnavia (program chairperson), Kashmira Variava (youth coordinator), Diana Taraporewalla (treasurer), Keki Engineer (secretary) and Rhoda Lakdawalla (Jt. secretary). Khushroo can be reached at khushroo@directvinternet.com.

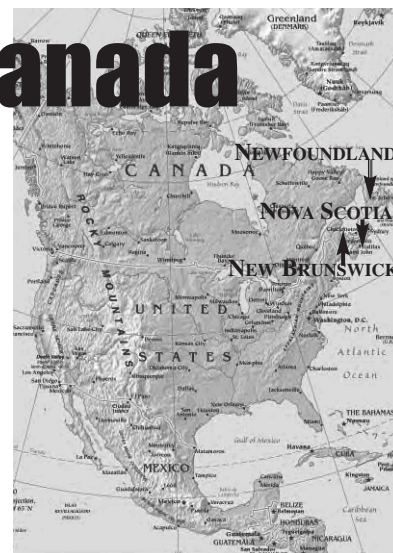
New board at ZARM

Immigration lawyer Rumi Engineer was elected president of the new board of directors at the Zoroastrian Association of Rocky Mountain, in Denver, CO. His team includes Nosh Tarachand (vice president), Phiroza Shroff (secretary) and Farida Contractor. Rumi can be reached at rengineer@qwest.net. ■

Zarathushtis of Atlantic Canada

A tiny community of Zarathushtis makes its home in Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and New Brunswick in the far eastern corner of Canada. Though small in numbers (just 40 individuals including ten children and four youth) they are large in heart and professionally well-off. Especially noteworthy is the fact that this community boasts the highest readership of FEZANA Journal – *every one* of the Zarathushti households in Atlantic Canada receives a copy!

By Sarosh Rustom and Shirin Jagosh



Zarathushtis of Nova Scotia, gathered for a celebration at the Jagosh residence last December.

PHOTO COURTESY BEHLI BHATHENA.

Zarathushtis residing on the far eastern coast of Canada are concentrated in Nova Scotia. There is also one family in New Brunswick and one in Newfoundland. The Zoroastrian Association of Atlantic Canada (ZAAC) was established in 1990.

The first Zarathushtis to arrive in Nova Scotia were Adi and Jaloo Jagosh with their family in 1963, followed by others in the late 1960s and early 1970s. At one point we numbered about 50, but some have since relocated. At present we total about 40 persons, of which 33 are in Nova Scotia, mainly

in the Halifax area. Our group includes about 10 children, 4 youth, and 7 persons enjoying retirement.

The Zarathushtis of Atlantic Canada are gainfully occupied in a number of diverse professional and voluntary capacities. We are involved in engineering, health care, insurance, finance, airline and public transportation, education and government.

We usually have 25 to 30 persons attending ZAAC functions, mostly from the Halifax metro area. Our most popular event is the annual jashan, hosted by a family in their home.

Visiting mobeds and scholars. Since we do not have a resident mobed, we invite mobeds from central Canada and the US. Over the years, we have been graced by the presence of mobeds Gev Karkaria, Yezdi Antia, Fariborz Shahzadi, Firdosh Bulsara, Nozer Kotwal and Gustad Panthaky. We are deeply grateful that our visiting mobeds and their families have generously given us their time. We appreciate their dedication by sharing their knowledge and views of our faith. ZAAC will continue to call upon the mobeds of North America to bless our community, and enlighten us with their Zarathushti perspective.

We have, on a few occasions, had an educational presentation done for us by our visiting mobed. These have always provoked thought and constructive dialogue. Someday, we hope to have the benefit of a visiting scholar to further stimulate our interest in Zarathushti beliefs and the future direction of the religion.

Charity. Our charitable contributions are largely directed to needy Zarathushtis in India, through WZO. We are dedicated to maintaining regular annual contributions. Last year, we are proud to have joined with Zarathushtis worldwide by making a special donation (via WZO) for earthquake relief efforts in western India.

ZAAC also takes pride in making consistent efforts through the years to support our local food bank, and local agencies in the Halifax area that are dedicated to lending a helping hand to less fortunate persons in our society.

Staying connected. ZAAC has always made sure that every member household receives a copy of *FEZANA Journal*, so that we maintain our connection with the widespread Zarathushti communities, current events, history and religious perspectives.

“ Every member household receives a copy of *FEZANA Journal*, so that we maintain our connection with the widespread Zarathushti communities, current events, history and religious perspectives. ”

We are a small, close-knit group. Our activities are a Navroze function, a jashan, picnics in the summer, pateti, Thanksgiving/gahambar, and a bowling fundraiser.

Welcome to visitors. Atlantic Canada is a region blessed with friendly people, abundant natural beauty, universities, and an emerging prosperity through a steadily broadening industrial and technological base. We encourage and welcome visiting Zarathushti tourists and students to contact and meet us. ■

ZAAC may be contacted through Sarosh Rustom, president, at sgr28@hotmail.com; and Shirin Jagosh, secretary, at (902) 835-5221 or s_jagosh@hotmail.com.

NY Darbe Mehr in process of being sold to Jehovah's Witnesses

Trustees of the New York darbe mehr are in the process of selling the New Rochelle property, for \$610,000 to the New Rochelle Chapter of Jehovah's Witnesses. The resolution to sell was approved by a vote of 384 to 2, at a special meeting on December 16th. The Arbab Rustom Guiv Darbe Mehr is now located at the new premises in Suffern, NY. [ZAGNY newsletter].

C O M I N G E V E N T S

For coordination of event dates, contact Firdosh Mehta, FEZANA VP and chair of the FEZANA Coordination and Planning Committee, at firdosh.mehta@primus.ca.

UN assembly on ageing

As a UN NGO enjoying consultative status with ECOSOC, FEZANA has received an invitation to the *Second World Assembly on Ageing*, in Madrid, Spain, April 8-12, 2002, at the Palacio Municipal de Congresos. See www.madrid2002envejecimiento.org or contact FEZANA.

FEZANA AGM 2002

The *15th Annual General Meeting of FEZANA* will be held from May 25-26, 2002, in Montreal, Quebec. The meeting will start at 9:00 am on Saturday 25th and is scheduled to end at approximately 1:00 pm on Sunday 26th. For more information, please contact FEZANA secretary Arnavaz Sethna at ahsethna@yahoo.com or FEZANA vice president Firdosh Mehta at firdosh.mehta@primus.ca.

Zarathushti Games

The *8th Zarathushti Games* will be held July 4-7, 2002, at California State University. Contact zsc@fezana.org, website: www.fezana.org [see pages 10-11].

Business Conference and Business Breakfast

The World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce (WZCC) *Business Conference* and *Business Breakfast* will precede Congress 2002, on July 3 and 4, 2002, in Chicago. Visit www.zac-chicago.org and www.wzcc.org. [See page 68].

NA Congress 2002

The *12th North American Zoroastrian Congress* will be held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Chicago, July 4-7, 2002 [see pages 7-9 and 42].

Soccer Tournament

The *Third Unity Cup Zarathushti Soccer Tournament* will be held on

Labor Day weekend in September 2003. Contact zsc@fezana.org, tel: (310) 219-8811, www.fezana.org/zsc.htm [see pages 10-11].

World Youth Congress

The *Third World Zoroastrian Youth Congress* is in December 2002, in India, organized by the Federation of Zoroastrian Youth of India, FOZYA, with support from the Bombay Parsi Punchayet. Contact Meher Amalsad at babameher@prodigy.net or FOZYA president Porus Karanjawalla at porusk@indiainfo.com.

FEZANA AGM 2003

The *2003 FEZANA AGM* will be held in Boston, Massachusetts, on the Memorial Day weekend (May 2003), hosted by ZAGBA.

Next NA Youth Congress

The next *North American Zoroastrian Youth Congress* will be held in Toronto, Ontario, July 24-27, 2003. A week of post-congress activities is also planned. Contact nazyc2003@yahoo.com.

NA Congress 2004

The *13th North American Zoroastrian Congress* will be held in the San Francisco Bay area in 2004. The date is not yet set.

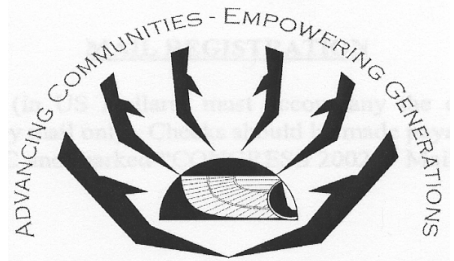
Next World Congress

India and UK have supported the bid from Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE) to host the *8th World Zoroastrian Congress* in the UK. Official announcement of the venue or the date has not yet been made.

Ninth Zarathushti Games

The *9th Zarathushti Games* will be held on the July 4th weekend in 2004. Contact zsc@fezana.org, website: www.fezana.org [see pages 10-11]. ■

Calendar of Festivals



Ayathrem Gahambar		
<i>Mah Meher, Roz Ashtad - Aneran</i>	Tue Feb 12 - Feb 16	(K)
	Thu Mar 14 - Mar 18	(S)
Fravardegan/Panjeh/Hamaspathmedayem Gahambar		
<i>Five Gatha days</i>	Sat Mar 16 - Mar 20	(F)
Char-Shanbe-Soori (Heralding the New Year)		
<i>Tuesday prior to Nouruz</i>	Tue Mar 19	(F)
Nouruz or Jamshedi Navroz (New Year)		
<i>Mah Fravardin, Roz Hormazd</i>	Thu Mar 21	(F)
Khordad Sal (Birthday of Zarathushtra)		
<i>Mah Fravardin, Roz Khordad</i>	Tue Mar 26	(F)
Pir e Herisht Festival		
<i>Mah Fravardin, Roz Amardad-Khorshed</i>	Wed Mar 27 - 31	(F)
Ava Ardavisoor nu Parab		
<i>Mah Avan, Roz Avan</i>	Tue Feb 26	(K)
	Thu Mar 28	(S)
Fravardegan (Remembrance of the departed)		
<i>Mah Fravardin, Roz Fravardin</i>	Mon Apr 8	(F)
Jashan-e-Ardibeheshtgan		
<i>Mah Ardibehesht, Roz Ardibehesht</i>	Mon Apr 22	(F)
Atash-nu-Parab		
<i>Mah Adar, Roz Adar</i>	Wed Mar 27	(K)
	Fri Apr 26	(S)
Maidyozarem Gahambar		
<i>Mah Ardibehesht, Roz Khorshed - Daepmeher</i>	Tue Apr 30 - May 4	(F)
Zarathusht-no-Diso (Death anniversary of Zarathushtra)		
<i>Mah Daye, Roz Khorshed</i>	Mon May 6	(K)
	Wed Jun 5	(S)
Daye Mas nu Jashan		
<i>Mah Daye, Roz Fravardin</i>	Sun Apr 28	(K)
	Tue May 28	(S)
Maidhyarem Gahambar		
<i>Mah Daye, Roz Meher-Behram</i>	Fri May 3 - May 7	(K)
	Sun Jun 2 - Jun 6	(S)
Homaji Baj		
<i>Mah Daye, Roz Govad</i>	Sat Jun 8	(S)
Pir e Sabz Festival		
<i>Mah Khordad, Roz Ashtad-Aneran</i>	Fri Jun 14 - Jun 18	(F)
Pir e Banu Festival		
<i>Mah Tir, Roz Meher-Behram</i>	Thu Jul 4 - Jul 8	(F)
Maidyoshem Gahambar		
<i>Mah Tir, Roz Khorshed-Daepmeher</i>	Sat Jun 29 - Jul 3	(F)
Jashne Tirgan		
<i>Mah Tir, Roz Tir</i>	Mon Jul 1	(F)
Fravardegan/Muktad/Hamaspathmedayem Gahambar		
<i>Five Gatha Days</i>	Wed Jul 17 - Jul 21	(K)
	Fri Aug 16 - Aug 20	(S)
Pateti-Nouruz		
<i>Mah Fravardin, Roz Hormazd</i>	Mon Jul 22	(K)
	Wed Aug 21	(S)
Khordad Sal (Birthday of Zarathushtra)		
<i>Mah Fravardin, Roz Khordad</i>	Sat Jul 27	(K)
	Mon Aug 26	(S)
Fravardian Jashan		
<i>Mah Fravardin, Roz Fravardin</i>	Fri Aug 9	(K)
	Sun Sep 8	(S)

The 12th North American Zoroastrian Congress

Hyatt Regency Hotel, Chicago
July 4 - July 7, 2002

Congress Tel: (630) 789-1983

<http://www.zac-chicago.org>

Registration. Register on line at the Congress website [above] and pay by Visa, Master Card or Discover; or send a check by mail. Registration details and form are also available from your local association.

Hotel. All attendees are strongly encouraged to reserve rooms at the Congress 2002 venue, at Hyatt Regency Chicago (151 East Wacker Drive). Reservations for accommodation should be made directly with the Hyatt. Call **(800) 233-1234** or **(312) 565-1234**. Ask for the "Zoroastrian Congress" special rate of \$125/night. Each room can accommodate two couples or a four-person family.

Air travel discounts. American Airlines (tel: 800-433-1790) will give a discount of up to 15% off lowest applicable fares if booked and ticketed 60 days in advance. Valid July 1 to July 9, 2002. Mention authorization number A1972BA Chicago Philharmonia.

Car rental discounts. Avis (tel: 800-331-1600) will give up to 50% off the applicable rate. Valid for rental June 26 to July 14, 2002. Mention discount number D086447 Chicago Philharmonia.

Calendar of Festivals, at left for Fasli (F), Kadmi (K) and Shenshai (S) religious festivals for March - September 2002.

CONGRESS 2002 gears up for final leg on road to Chicago

The mission of the 12th North American Zoroastrian Congress in Chicago, July 4-7, 2002, is to empower North American Zarathushtis with practical ideas for meaningful community change, and energize a base of new leadership to embrace the challenges of the new millennium.

With registration levels strong, expectations high, excitement building, and the final three months approaching, the Zoroastrian Association of Chicago and its army of dedicated volunteers is entering the final leg of what promises to be one of the most innovative and inspiring North American congresses in recent memory.

An outstanding lineup of speakers is scheduled to deliver thought-provoking and innovative sessions all tailored around the Congress theme: ***Advancing Communities, Empowering Generations*** this July 4 - 7, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Chicago. Programming will be focused on understanding the issues and challenges we, as individual Zarathushtis



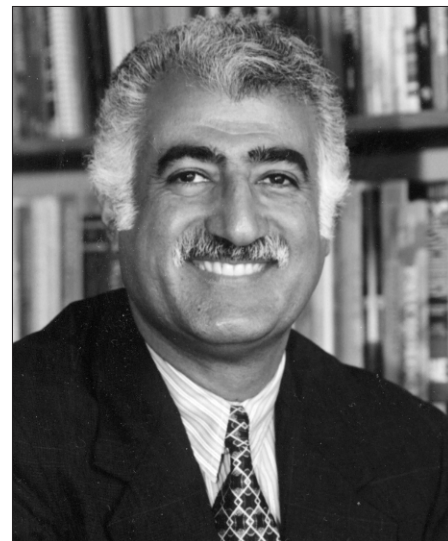
and communities, face as a collective North American community in a

post-September 11 world.

How will the Congress 2002 experience distinguish itself from the eleven that preceded it?

Who knew the horror of September 11 would so dramatically alter the way we live, think, earn, spend, travel and live?

Much is different about Congress 2002. Sessions will focus specifically on the following topics: the heightened need for interfaith understanding; intergenerational cooperation and focused dialogue on community building, Parsi/Irani understanding and community continuity, wellness, our identity as North American Zarathushtis, and the



Mehraban Khodavandi, PhD, is a professor of education and psychology and past dean of the graduate school at Lakeland College in Wisconsin. He has received numerous honors, including twice being named "Outstanding Professor of the Year" by colleagues and students; Lakeland Alumni Association's "Outstanding Faculty" award and the "Underkofler Excellence in Teaching" award from the Wisconsin Foundation of Independent Colleges. He is a highly-sought after speaker on the Zarathushti religion.

emerging issues facing our growing elderly population – will help put into perspective the changing dichotomy of our times.

Gone are the days of squabbling over interfaith marriage, conversion and other themes that haunted congresses of the past. Congress organizers believe the 12th North American Zoroastrian Congress will help put into perspective the realism and need to grow collectively as a spiritual community in North America, demonstrating how, through individual and community success stories, we can develop a framework for progress in the new millennium.

A stellar lineup of four outstanding Zarathushtis will set the mood and pace in the first and only plenary session of the Congress, consisting of an interactive panel discussion and open



Parisa Khosravi is senior vice president and managing editor, International Newsgathering, for CNN in Atlanta, GA, responsible for international news gathering at all CNN networks. Parisa has played a significant role in producing international news for CNN for 14 years, and shared in a number of prestigious awards, including a 1993 Golden Cable ACE Award; a 1992 Peabody Award; a 1993 Emmy Award; a Sigma Delta Chi Award; a 1994 duPont Award; and a 1995 Overseas Press Club and duPont awards.



Aaron Y. Rustom is Associate Producer, CNN-Headline News, Atlanta, GA. Born and raised in Houston, Texas, has been working with CNN News Production for the last four years. Aaron attended the University of Texas at Austin, where he majored in Radio-Television-Film and minored in Sociology. Aaron has been involved with the Zoroastrian youth in Houston. He has attended and presented at several congresses in the past, and supported planning efforts for a youth congress and world congress in Houston.



Bapsi Sidhwa is a distinguished international author and writer, Houston, TX. She has published four novels and has been translated into German, French, Italian, Greek and Russian. Among her honors: the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Writer's Award in 1994, Pakistan's Sitara-i-Imtiaz, the German LiBeraturepreis and a Bunting Fellowship at Radcliffe/Harvard. Her **Cracking India** (a New York Times Notable Book of the Year and a Quality Paperback Book Club selection), has been made into the film **Earth** by Deepa Mehta.

mike Q&A. Participating in the panel will be **Mehraban Khodavandi**, professor of education and psychology, Lakeland College, Sheboygan, WI; **Parisa Khosravi**, senior vice president and managing editor, International Newsgathering for CNN, Atlanta, GA; **Aaron Y. Rustom**, associate producer, CNN-Headline News, Atlanta, GA; and **Bapsi Sidhwa**, distinguished international author, writer, Houston, TX.

Youth will have more than just the Congress discos and the excitement of downtown Chicago at their disposal. Congress 2002 will feature one session on each of the three Congress days, exploring and engaging youth participants with meaningful discussions on the past, present and future of North American Zoroastrian life. Featuring small group

chats, interactive panel discussions and creative presentations by youth groups throughout North America, youth sessions will explore current topics relevant to growing up as a first or second generation Zoroastrian in North America. One (community building) will be a joint session with the adults. Some of the topics include: inter-racial dating/marriage, interfaith relations, preserving and passing on Zoroastrian spirituality, customs and traditions, and the importance of having a vision and plan for building our communities.

The three youth sessions, a FEZANA session, FEZANA Awards lunch, a Business Conference hosted by the World Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce, and a workshop hosted by ZWIN 3 - the Zoroastrian/Zoroastrian Women's Interna-

tional Network, all make Congress 2002 a must-attend event for all interested, forward-thinking North American Zoroastrians.

Evenings will be filled with two gala banquets and innovative entertainment, including the return of the Zoroastrian Symphony Orchestra, which made its debut at the World Zoroastrian Congress in Houston. Moreover, the nightlife, sights and sounds and events in downtown Chicago this Independence Day weekend will truly make the Congress 2002 experience unforgettable in the Windy City.

To learn more or register, visit www.zac-chicago.org, or call the organizers at 630-789-1983 (due to the overwhelming volume of calls, please allow 1 to 2 days for a call back).

Zarathushti Games - 1

Farsi 1

Farsi 2

YS 1

YS 2

YS 3



New Year's celebration in Houston, TX. Special thanks to Homi Bodhanwala for the photo.



New Year's celebration in Orange Country, CA



Maneck Bhujwala, fourth from left, representing the Zarathushti religion, at the interfaith service at Cesar Chavez Park in San Jose on September 23. To his right is Bishop McGrath of the San Jose diocese.

Interfaith service in San Jose

Around 1,500 people gathered at Cesar Chavez Park in San Jose, on September 23, for an interfaith service, sponsored by the American India Foundation. Oakland Mayor Jerry Brown and San Jose Mayor Ron Gonzales joined religious and political leaders [photo at left] to pray for healing and reminded those in attendance that America's strength lay in its solidarity. Maneck Bhujwala gave a short background of the Zarathushti religion and recited the *Yatha Ahu Vairyo* and *Ashem Vohu* prayers with English translations. The diverse group, from different faiths and different political parties, all spoke of the importance of turning to a higher power to help cope with tragedies such as those of September 11.

ZAMWI is active in interfaith arena



Ervad Brig. Behram Panthaki, leading a group of 20 men and women of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington, dressed in dark suits with farohar tiepins, and white dresses, carrying candles, at the Interfaith Concert at the magnificent Basilica of the National Shrine. Zarathushtis were given the singular honor of leading the opening procession of nine faiths, at the Concert, organized by The Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington, on November 6. Over 2,000 people attended. The concert was aired on TV in December and was shown at US embassies around the world.

“Our efforts were truly rewarded when the word ‘Zoroastrian’ was so often repeated loud and clear ... at the Basilica” - a ZAMWI member

A report of the ZAMWI PR committee (Fereshteh Farahmand, Kersi Shroff and Jimmy Dholoo) enumerated numerous ZAMWI efforts “to ‘reach out’ and bring awareness of our ancient faith, its rich history and principles to the Washington area community.”

In October, the Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington, which represents eight faith groups, voted to accept Zarathushtis as an Observer Member, the initial step towards full membership, after glowing endorsements from other religious leaders: Ms. Kaur of the Sikh tradition said: “[Zoroastrians] are very educated, very rich and extremely charitable ... and their charities are open to Indians of all faiths.” Cantor David Schnayer of the Jewish faith stated: “... Without Cyrus [the Great] there would be no Jews in this room ... and neither would there be any Christians.” Sup-

port for ZAMWI's entry as the ninth member of the IFC was unanimous, and the delegation received a warm standing ovation.

Other activities included: a 3-session presentation by Adi Davar and Kersi Shroff, on Zoroastrianism, at the Forum for the Study of Comparative Religion at the *Library of Congress*; lecture on Zoroastrian Temples by Adi Davar at the *Smithsonian Associates* series on Places of Piety; presentation by Fereshteh Farahmand at the Yalda celebration at the *University of Maryland*, organized by Cyrus Dholoo; presentation by Dr. Jamshid Goshtasbi at the *Iranian American Cultural Association's* Mehrgan function; an interview with *Discovery TV channel*, arranged by Gulzarine, Rustom and Fahad Vania, on the Zarathushti concept of heaven and hell, for a forthcoming program on Dante's Inferno; helping Persepolis Productions in redistribution of the DVD of *"On Wings of Fire"*; poster exhibits on nine religions including the Zarathushti religion, at the *National Press Club* in Washington.

Er. Brig. Panthaki has been involved in numerous 'reach out' activities including a *September 11 Prayer Meeting*; talks at the *Rotary Club*, *GWU* and *George Mason University*; preparation of a package of prayers for *hospital patients*; inter-cultural function at the *Indian Embassy*.

Ontario Multifaith Council

Er. Dr. Jehan Bagli, represented the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario, at a Ontario Multifaith Council celebration on the theme of Valuing Life's Passages. Eleven faiths presented reflections/prayers. Dr. Bagli presented Yasna 28.1, Ashem Vohu and the last line of Ahuna Vairya. "It was an interesting opportunity to bring information about the Zarathushtrian faith to others," commented Dr. Bagli, "At least two members of the Christian faith asked me if Zoroastrianism was an off shoot of Islam, which initiated an interesting dialog."



September 11 prayer meeting in Chicago. Rohinton Rivetna [with cap] a trustee of the Council for a Parliament of the Worlds Religions, was among religious and civic leaders including the Rev. Jesse Jackson [center front] at an interfaith service called by Cardinal George at Holy Name Cathedral in Chicago. Rivetna presented a statement from FEZANA president Framroze Patel to the cardinal.



Reza Pahlavi – man with a mission

Reza Pahlavi, son of the late Shah of Iran, told Barbara Walters on 20/20, November 14: "My only mission in life is to see the day that my compatriots go to the polls in that national referendum, and cast their votes to decide the future of their country. That day to me is the realization of my dream for Iran."

Pahlavi, says that what he offers Iran today is not his royal birth, but his point of view as a modern man and a realist. He said the Islamic regime that toppled his father has deprived the Iranian people of freedom and democracy – ideals he has come to respect in the nearly 20 years he has lived in the US. He argues that secular democracy would offer Iranians a better choice than the theocracy under which they



live now. "We cannot have a true democracy unless there is separation of church and state". Pahlavi attributes his discontent within Iran to two things: lack of political freedom and lack of economic opportunity. Like many exiled royals, Pahlavi says he is willing to step forward – if his country needs him.

Pahlavi, 42, was to succeed his father, the Shah of Iran, to Iran's Peacock Throne and inherit his massive fortune. When his father fled the Revolution in 1979 (he died in Egypt in 1980), Pahlavi was 19 years old and studying to be a pilot in Texas. Now, he lives a modest life in suburban Maryland, with his wife, who is a lawyer, and two daughters. [©2001 ABC News Internet Ventures]



Toxy's trip to Afghan border to

While most of us watched images of the Afghan refugee camps on TV, felt depressed for a while, and then went about our business and our Christmas shopping last December, Toxy Cowasjee, immediate past president of the Karachi Zarhosti Banu Mandal (KZBM), decided to do something about it. Single-handed, she mobilized her friends, husband Cyrus, local businesses and a slew of volunteers into raising almost eight lakhs of rupees, loading up three trucks with a thousand cartons of food and clothing, and personally delivering them to a refugee camp in "no-man's land" near Quetta.

First trip. Toxy initially approached Roshan Bharucha, a minister with 11 portfolios, in Baluchistan, for advice on what would be most helpful to the refugees. At Bharucha's urging, Toxy flew down to Quetta in November to get a first-hand look. Accom-

panied by a policeman, Toxy was driven to Camp Rogani near Chaman, a 3-hour ride from Quetta "Barbed wire, about four feet high, runs along the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan," writes Toxy, "we saw a large number of Afghans waiting on the other side hoping to enter Pakistan ... At Rogani, virtually in the middle of the desert, there were tents in neat lines with an odd makeshift toilet ..."

Collection drive. Returning to Karachi, Toxy got to work. Within ten days, she had raised Rs. 788,244 (from KZBM and Cyrus' Muslim friends, including Rs. 85,652 or £1000, from WZO, London); and donations of 1,000 cardboard cartons; 10,000 kgs of flour, 2,000 kgs of sugar, 800 kgs of salt (B. D. Sethna), 1,050 Candyland Butterscotch packets, 15 dozen plastic balls, 50 footballs with airpumps and 150 new trousers and shorts (both through Fran International), and 5 dozen Vaseline bottles (Percy and Rashna Gazder). They also purchased 2,000 pairs of shoes, bales of sweaters, candies for the children and foodstuff.

Volunteers gathered at the Cowasjee container yard at West Wharf, and over a weekend packed 1000 cartons, each containing 10 kgs flour, 5 kgs rice, 2 kgs sugar, 2 kgs banaspati, 1 kg dates, 1/2 kg tea, 800 gms salt and 2 pairs footwear.

To the camp. On December 4th, three trucks were loaded up with the 1000 cartons along with 11 bales of sweaters, 3 cartons of children's trousers, 6 bales of sweets, 3 bales of plastic balls, 1 carton of 50 footballs and 35 boxes of medicines, headed for the two-day trip to Chaman.

Two days later Toxy flew to Quetta and met with the District Coordinating Officer (DCO). "Everything is very tense," writes Toxy, "There is more trouble in Kandahar and Spinboldek than there was during the Taliban regime ... and no one is allowed to cross the border." Toxy and the convoy of three trucks went to "no man's land" between the two borders. There is no road here, just sand.

The distribution. The DCO had organized the distribution. 618 peo-



Left, Toxy Cowasjee [center] at an Afghan refugee camp in “no man’s land” between the Afghan-Pakistan border, near Quetta. Above, one of three trucks loaded with cartons of food and clothing, distributed to the refugees.

aid refugees

ple had been lined up sitting patiently behind the barbed wire. The DCO had given each a signed slip of paper with a number. As each came up to receive their carton, their hand was stamped, and their name crossed off our list. Others, seeing cartons still remaining in the truck, started coming, and soon “there was a stampede, literally, and even though sticks and straps were used, nothing could stop them. The women were a nightmare, pushing in between and literally fighting with the men giving the parcels. I screamed to the truck men to shut their flap and drive away, otherwise we would have been trampled.” After a respite, they started distribution of the sweets from the other truck. “The children started coming, and once word got round, if you can imagine locusts devouring plants, they were doing that to me,” writes Toxy, “Many a time they got beaten by the ‘levies’



controlling the mob ... and I accidentally got a terrible thud too ... I probably looked like a refugee too ... the lenses of my glasses were full of dust and my navy anorak looked white.”

“Throughout our time at the border, two jets were crisscrossing and the Frontier Corps on horseback were coming and going right where I was.”

But the job was done for the day, everyone deserving had been given their due. The remaining cartons were distributed by the DCO, the manager of the trucking company and Toxy, in subsequent trips in January and February.

“Lady luck was on my side!” writes Toxy, “as on Sunday, three rockets were launched in Quetta, and no foreign reporters were allowed to leave Quetta. I am glad I got the job done in time.”

Another fine accomplishment, executed with finesse, by this inimitable lady.

- By Roshan Rivetna

ZWIN

Women's Network

As several Zarathushti youth from the US and other western countries aspired to go to India for the ZWIN Youth Connection program, we were affected by the events of September 11th and we decided that this program is best postponed to a later date, to avoid putting any of our youth at risk. We definitely plan to go ahead with the project as soon as it seems prudent to do so, since these links of friendship and understanding are even more meaningful in the current international scenario.

However, if all goes well, we hope to host deserving youth from India and Pakistan in the summer of 2002, thanks to the generous sponsorship of people like Hovi Shroff, who is spearheading this project. Other communities willing to sponsor and host Zarathushti youth in June, please contact Hovi at hovesS@aol.com. This could provide them the opportunity of a life-time, and would mean only a small contribution and hospitality, possibly by a group of 3-4 people in a community.

ZWIN is also looking at other projects, particularly in the area of mentoring and professional networking. We hope to connect as many Zarathushti women world-wide as possible, as we look ahead at several other innovative ideas and projects to support our youth, women and the community at large.

We would also like to hear about, and help highlight throughout our network in 16 countries, the achievements of Zarathushti women in your community and any support, connections, publicity or guidance we can offer. So please keep us informed.

To join ZWIN, email ZWIN3-subscribe@yahoogroups.com; or write to zareen@managingcultures.com. ■

health & healing

GUEST EDITOR DOLLY DASTOOR

Carpet design, photo courtesy "Iran" by James Waite and Jamileh Heydari

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.

Good health is one of the most cherished gifts every human being aspires for and the promotion of health has been pursued by all through various modalities, be it exercise, diet, vitamins, clean living etc. This issue of FEZANA Journal invoked a lot of thought and discussion as to what we should include under “Health and Healing”. Finally we decided to look at health from a broader holistic perspective, as we believe that to improve health of individual human beings, be it physical or psychological or social, is to improve the health of all people and the health of our society which in the end adds to the sum total of human happiness, a truly Zarathushti concept.

But health sometimes does fail, which makes us look to different modalities to start the restorative and healing process. We looked at the concept of healing in our scriptures, and were surprised to find it resplendent with information on healing through herbs, medicinal plants and prayers by priest-physicians. The Vendidad mentions several diseases like leprosy, epilepsy, fevers, skin ailments, the blind, the deaf and the deformed, and it mentions strict laws of cleanliness to maintain health. Together with this the tariff to be charged for the services rendered according to the means of the client, is specified in the Vendidad.

In this issue you will be reading about the different ways we can promote, preserve and take responsibility for the health of our bodies which also include our teeth, the different ways we can empower ourselves to preserve our psychological and social health, and the different modalities we can use to heal our bodies and our psyche. It is especially pertinent that at the time of Nouruz, we reflect on the role and responsibility of human beings in the ‘healing’ process, not only of our own bodies but also of the world. Frashokereti to all!

Dolly Dastoor, Guest editor



Dr. Dolly Dastoor was born in Mumbai, and has lived in Montreal, Canada since 1973. She is a clinical psychologist and assistant professor in psychiatry at McGill University. She obtained her doctorate in psychology in 1997 specializing in the assessment of dementia and is currently co-director of the program in Dementia with Psychiatric Co-Morbidity at Douglas Hospital, Montreal. Dolly was president of the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec, and secretary and then president (1994-98) of FEZANA, responsible for developing the Strategic Plan for the North American Community. She was co-chair of the very successful 7th World Zoroastrian Congress (WZC 2000) and recipient of the Outstanding Zarathushti Award in 1994. She has presented papers at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago and Cape Town, and at the 4th and 6th World Zoroastrian Congress in Mumbai and Tehran. She is Governor-elect of District 2, Zonta International, a service organization, promoting the Status of Women worldwide. Dolly is married with three children and two grand-children.

A note on the illustrations

The ‘Tree of Life’ and the ‘Circle of Life’, are familiar motifs in Persian art, crafts and architecture. Ornate designs of trees with abundant vegetation, flora and fauna signify harmony among God’s creations, rejuvenation, life and growth. These motifs, from Persian paintings, manuscripts, carpets, sculptures and tile designs, were selected to illustrate the articles on “Health and Healing” in this Spring issue of FEZANA Journal. Grateful acknowledgements to Aban Rustomji for the idea and to the following sources for the illustrations: “Persian Painting” by Basil Gray; “Royal Persian Manuscripts” by Stuart Cary Welch; “Iran” by James Waite and Jamileh Heydari; “Fabulous Land of Iran” by Javad Yassavoli; “A King’s Book of Kings” by Stuart Cary Welch.



medicine in avesta and ancient iran

A historical review of medicine and the art and science of healing in ancient Iran, through the ages from pre-Gathic times through the Islamic era

By Daryoush Jahanian
Kansas City, Kansas

One of the earliest lawmakers in the history of civilization is the Babylonian king, Hammurabi (1728-1686 BCE). A total of 282 laws known as the code of Hammurabi have been recognized [1]. The code clearly illustrates its influence in the Judaic and Islamic laws.

Law No. 218 states: "If a physician performed a major operation on a seignior with bronze lancet and caused the seignior's death, or he opened up the eye-socket of a seignior and has destroyed the seignior's eye, they shall cut off his hand".

This law demonstrates how much the generations of medical professionals have sacrificed to bring the science of medicine to our modern time. Physicians have lost lives when the result of treatment has been less than satisfactory. Even though they had no control over the course of events physicians in advanced countries have lost court battles and good reputation for a poor outcome.

Law No. 218 as well as Nos. 194, 195, 205, 226 and 282 recommend amputation of a limb or an organ as punishment for various crimes, and they vividly indicate the influence of Babylonian legal texts on the Islamic code.

Science and medicine in the Gathas. The teachings of Zarathushtra are general. He neither comes forward with commands and taboos, nor does he set up legal code. Laws have to change according to the times and needs of society. Religious laws however are regarded as divine and immutable, consequently although in the beginning they improve society, over a long period of time they can become a source of stagnation. In recent years some societies have attempted to revive and practice the old religious code, but they have faced a dilemma. On the one hand those statutes are divine and immutable and on the other, they are not practical in modern times. It is worthwhile mentioning that although Zarathushtra in the Gathas alludes to the Law of Asha, nevertheless this law is not a specific one, rather a general term implying cause and effect, action and reaction:

"Happiness comes to the person who radiates happiness to others..." [Ys. 43.1-51.8]

From the text of the Gathas we learn that the prophet is in search of knowledge and truth, and the means of approaching it is wisdom. The wise should spread the knowledge [Ys.31.17]; the wrongful should be guided and delivered in the hands of righteousness [Ys.44.12]; a clean

environment and health are the best for living world [Ys.48.5]. "Purity for man from birth is best"; consumption of substances that cause drunkenness and loss of wisdom is prohibited [Ys.32.14, 48.10].

We can conclude that the Gathas emphasize acquiring science and knowledge; science should be disseminated and not monopolized. Health and sanitation are important and intoxicants – wisdom wasting substances – ought to be avoided.

The other aspect of the teachings of Zarathushtra is attainment of spiritual perfection (*Haurvatat*) and immortality of the soul (*Ameretat*). He inculcates in his listeners how to achieve serenity (*Armaiti*). This final goal can be fulfilled through the power of mind (*Vohu Manah*) and acquisition of spiritual strength (*Khshathra*, to overcome vices), in order to discover the truth (*Asha*) and realize God. Zarathushtra in Ys. 43.15 discovers that silent meditation is the best for attainment of spiritual enlightenment at which point one can envision the Light of God [Ys.43.4, 43.9].

The prophet introduces the concept of two mentalities, and freedom of choice to choose between good and evil through the wisdom of the good mind. In some religions the 'heart' is considered to be the organ of think-

ing, but in the doctrine of Zarathushtra the ‘mind’ is the center of thoughts. Even heaven and hell are two states of the mind; heaven is equated with spiritual relief and hell is the inner torment.

Zarathushtra also presents the terms: conscience (*daena*), voice of conscience (*sraosha*), soul (*urvan*) [Ys.51.13] and bliss (*ushta*) or absolute happiness, spiritual relief, ecstasy. In the Gathas, the mind sets the conscience and conscience guides the soul. The separation of the souls (good or evil) poetically is called the sorting bridge (*Chinvato Pereto*).

These profound spiritual words, along with the extent of serenity that readers find in the Gathas, may make them wonder if aside from being a prophet and spiritual leader, was Zarathushtra a soul healer or in contemporary term psychotherapist? Although the Gathas teach that the followers of Asha (*Ashavan*) should enjoy happiness in this world and improve the living world, nevertheless the spiritual aspects of the book always prevail as this goal is achievable by attaining spiritual excellence.

What about the later Avestan Books? In Vendidad [fragard 20, 1-14] all the herbal plants that remove sickness have been praised.

The Avestan scriptures present the importance of two items for therapy or sanitation:

● **Haoma** (*Soma* in the Hindu Rig Veda). This small plant with yellow flowers is indigenous to the Iranian plateau and its scientific name is *EphedraVulgaris*. Haoma contains large dose of ephedrine, which is effective in the treatment of cardiovascular and respiratory diseases. Conceivably due to various therapeutic effects, it was consecrated and entered the rituals of the pre-Zarathushti faith, and a yasht was composed and devoted to it. Haoma, however, was not only used in herbal medicine but soon another effect was recognized. A

juice made of haoma (*prahum*), was intoxicating and caused drunkenness. Some authors maintain that Ephedra Vulgaris and the intoxicant haoma are two different plants [2].

The text of the Gathas clearly indicates that in the rituals of the pre-Zarathushti faith it was consumed by the princes (*kavis*) and priests (*karpans*) and caused them to behave irrationally. Zarathushtra has derided and condemned the haoma ritual by

“ These profound spiritual words, along with the extent of serenity that readers find in the Gathas, may make them wonder if aside from being a prophet and spiritual leader, was Zarathushtra also a soul healer, or in contemporary terms, a psychotherapist? ”

mentioning its epithets as invincible and wisdom wasting (*dura osham*) [Ys.32.14] and intoxicant (*madahya*) [Ys.48.10].

● **Bull’s urine** in the book of Vendidad. Vendidad is mainly a sanitary dispensation to prevent the epidemics of infectious disease. Composition of this book was initiated in the era of Xerxes (486-465 BCE) son of Darius, and completed during the reign of Mithradates of the Parthian dynasty [3].

Bull’s urine contains a large concentration of urea and in ancient times it was used as an antiseptic agent for the treatment of infection and for the prevention of epidemics. Apparently due to its effectiveness in preventing the dissemination of deadly contagious diseases, it was later consecrated and entered into the rituals. In Vendidad it has a prominent place in sanitation and prevention of infections. Utilization of bull’s urine by different Hindu tribes and camel’s urine by Moslems has been reported [4]. In Vendidad [fragard 5: 54,56] bull’s urine and fresh water were used equally for purification.

Generally preservation of a clean environment or in contemporary terms – ecology – has been strongly emphasized. In particular pollution of the four elements of nature: water, soil, air and fire are to be avoided. Based on this concept, Vendidad suggests that the land where the corpse was laid will be clean after one year, and the land where the corpse was buried will be pure after fifty years [Fragard 7: 46,48]. In olden times

some lands were known to cause infection (the ‘cursed lands’). People, by walking there or by bringing the injured there, would develop anthrax. After the discovery of bacteria it was determined that these lands were old burial grounds of the corpses contaminated with the disease.

Proof of proficiency or medical license. According to the Vendidad for proof of proficiency, physicians had to cure three patients from the followers of *divyasnan* and if they failed they could not practice medicine. At first glance this recommendation may appear discriminatory and based on human experimentation; but some authors have construed that from the beginning physicians were taught to remove the mental barrier and treat adversaries as well as friends [5], [6].

The next stanza, [fragard 7: 40], exerts a positive balance toward their opinion as it suggests: “afterwards at his wish he may give medicine to a Mazdayasnan to restore to health, at his wish operate on a Mazdayasnan, at his wish operate to cure”.

An important observation is that nowhere does the Vendidad recommend that physicians, after proof of competency, should exclusively treat patients who were Mazdayasnan. In fact none of the Avestan scriptures make any discriminatory recommendations in regard to treatment of patients. In general, science and medicine in Avesta transcend the barriers of class, ethnicity, nationality,

race and religion. The Vendidad recommends: "If a stranger, friend, brother or coreligionist came to you for education, receive him and teach whatever he asks" [*fragard* 4: 44].

It is interesting to note that a physician's fee for service is based on the patient's income and the fee for treating a priest is his pious blessing [*fragard* 7: 41].

Classification of physicians. Vendidad [*fragard* 7:44] discusses meeting and consultation among the three groups of physicians: those who operate (surgeons), those who treat by herbs (internists) and the ones who cure by holy words (psychiatrists). This may indicate a form of medical association of its time.

In the *Ardibehesht Yasht* the classification of physicians is even more advanced:

- **Asho baeshazo** (sanitary physician) who prevents dissemination of contagious disease.
- **Urvaro baeshazo** (herbal physician) or internist, who treats the patients by herbal medicine.
- **Karato baeshazo** (knife-physician) or surgeon.
- **Dato baeshazo** (law-physician) equivalent of a coroner or the one who practices forensic medicine.
- **Manthra baeshazo** (holy word-physician), who cures by holy words, equivalent of a psychiatrist. Manthra physician has a very prominent place among the physicians.

Famous physicians in the Avesta. It is interesting that Fravardin Yasht, [*karda* 25:97] reveres the fravashi of Saena a knowledgeable physician with hundred pupils that suggest the existence of a medical school. It is said that **Saena Poure Ahumstute** was a student of Zarathushtra who founded the school of Okbatan. Plutarch writes that he personally studied in the university and various topics of philosophy, astronomy, medicine and geography were taught and hundred pupils studied there. Also Vendidad [*fragard* 20:2] names

Thrita as the first man skillful in the art of healing wounds who was also acquainted with how to prevent sickness and repel disease and fever.

“ In some religions, the ‘heart’ is considered to be the organ of thinking, but in the doctrine of Zarathushtra the ‘mind’ is center of thoughts. Even heaven and hell are two states of the mind ... ”

Fravardin Yasht [*karda* 131] reveres the fravashi of **Thraetona** (Thrita) **Freidoon** of the Athwya (Abteen) house for offering resistance to itches, fever, ague, treating snakebite ... Also according to tradition, **Yama** was able to isolate patients suffering from skin, bone and dental diseases.

Caesarian Section or Rostamian Operation? Throughout the world, delivery of a newborn baby through abdominal operation is called Caesarian Section. It is named after Julius Caesar who, it is believed, was born through the abdominal route. But this view has been contested, because long after Caesar's era no woman survived the operation. However, there is evidence that his mother lived for long after giving birth to Julius. In another version, *Lex Caesarus*, the ancient Roman Empire code of law required the surgical removal of a baby from the abdomen of its dead mother, thus giving us the term, Caesarian Section [7].

Long before Julius Caesar, according to Shah Nameh, Rostam was delivered by abdominal surgery. Ferdowsi skillfully explains how Rostam's mother, Rudabeh underwent the operation:

“An expert mobed arrived.

By the wine made the moon-faced (beautiful) Rudabeh drunken (anesthetized).

Without pain her side was cut open. He brought the boy's head in view (delivered the head).

It was done so harmlessly, that no one had seen such a marvel.”

In ancient Iran anesthesia was delivered by administration of wine or a mixture of wine and bhang orally. *Bangha* (bhanga or hashish) has been named in Avesta. It is extracted from the seeds of *Canabis Indica* (hempseed or *shahdaneh*) [8], [9]. Shah Nameh and the events of Rostam's delivery indicate that mobeds were also practicing physicians.

Najmabadi suggests that delivery of an infant through the abdominal route should be renamed 'The Rostamian Operation' [10].

Science in Avesta and the later era.

The 21 books of the Avesta during the Achaemenians encompassed 815 chapters, thus by volume, it was three times larger than the compiled books of the Sasanian era. These books in effect were the encyclopedia of science consisting of medicine, astronomy, law, social science, philosophy, general knowledge, logic and biology.

Science (*chista*) and knowledge occupy a prominent place in the Zarathushti doctrine. Yasht 16, *Din Yasht* [*karda* 1:1] is the best witness:

“We revere the most righteous, true knowledge created by Mazda, the holy, leading to righteous path, quick progressing in the best manner, bringing righteous dedication, morally good, purifying the self ...”

With these words only the sciences that promote the living world toward perfection are revered, not the ones that annihilate man's civilization. In Yasht 16 [*karda* 1:2] Zarathushtra's love for science and knowledge is declared with poetic elegance:

“Zarathushtra revered science, rise from your seat, come forward from your abode, you most righteous true knowledge, created by holy

**Mazda ... If you are before me,
there wait for me, if you are behind
me, there overtake me”.**

By studying Din Yasht and other Avestan scriptures, one can conclude that based on Zarathushti tenets, science and religion know no border, as they belong to all humankind, beyond class, nationality, race and creed. Din Yasht concludes with the following words:

**“May the knowledge as extent and
fame of commandments of the
Mazdayasni religion ever increase
over the world, over all the seven
regions”.**

According to the Avestan texts, men and women have an equal responsibility in disseminating knowledge:

**“Whatever a man or woman knows
that is good and right, not only
should practice but inform others
to perform accordingly ...”**

The same equality exists in regard to propagation of the religion. In Yasna 68.12, an expression of good wish and support is made for all the women and men, girls and boys who strive for good deeds and propagation of the Path of Truth.

The first medical school. Considering the teachings of Zarathushtra, it is not surprising that the first historically documented medical school was founded and financed by Darius the Great (522-486 BCE) in Egypt. It was located next to the temple of Neith and named *Saiis*. Its graduates lived all over the empire. The Egyptian director of the school, Ujahorus, a scientist whose statue is maintained in the Vatican, has the following words inscribed:

**“Darius the great king ordered that
I shall return to Egypt and rebuild
the Neith Temple ... I provided
books and educated the youth and
brought them instruments. The
King realized the value of medical
science and for every patient that I
saved, he reveres and prays to
God” [11].**

It is interesting that on a papyrus uncovered in Egypt, the following words are written, indicating the

pride a physician took in the university from which he graduated:

“I have come out of the Saiis”.

Saiis was regarded as one of the most important scientific centers of the ancient world. Other universities of the Achaemenids are recorded as *Borsipa*, *Arshoi* and *Militus*. There was another school for the training of bureaucrats. It is noteworthy that simultaneously two academies of science were operating: first the *Academy of Hamadan* (Hegmatana), consisting of one hundred scientists who were introduced or approved by the king, the second was the *Academy of Ardeshir* (Artha-khshathra) in the city of Sardis in Asia Minor.

“ ... the first historically documented medical school was founded and financed by Darius the Great (522 - 486 BCE) in Egypt. ”

University Of Gondishapour. This international university was founded in 250 CE, during the Sasanian era by Shahpur I, in the southwest of Iran. Medicine and other sciences were taught here. Professors and students came from different countries. During the reign of Khusrow Anoushiravan (531-579 CE), seven Roman scientists who had been driven out of their country by emperor Justinianos came to Iran [12], [13]. They were welcomed and well received by Khusrow and were assigned to university posts. This was the glorious era of the scientific center. Scholars and the graduates were later appointed to important governmental positions. For instance, the minister of health (*Iran Dorostbod*), was usually chosen from the best physicians, and the minister of education (*Iran Farhangbod*), was a scholar of philosophy, logic, mathematics or psychology.

Physicians had to obtain a license to practice medicine [14]. To advance the science of medicine, Khusrow dispatched the famous Iranian physician, *Borzoya* (Borzouyeh) to India, who brought medical and scientific books, chess, herbal plants and Indian doctors with him. Because of the reputation of Iranian physicians, during the reign of Khusrow-Parviz (590-628 CE), a physician named *Khordad-Barzin* was invited to China and successfully treated the daughter of the queen who suffered from rapid heart beat (tachycardia).

In Iran at this time the sciences of pharmacology and alchemy were considered “the most advanced in the world”, with a total of five thousand students educated in Gondishapour and five hundred scholars teaching in different scientific fields. The library of the university consisted of eight floors, 259 halls containing an estimated 400,000 books.

It is worth mentioning that Anoushiravan himself had a profound interest in philosophy and science. His questions and conversation with a Greek scholar, Prissin have been recorded in a book titled: “*Answers to the challenges raised by Khusrow, the King of Iran to the Prissin’s philosophy*” [15].

The Islamic era. Iranian science was interrupted by the Arab invasion (630 CE). Many schools, universities and libraries were destroyed, books were burned and scholars killed. Due to the extent of this cultural calamity the Khwarezmians, after one generation became illiterate [16]. Nevertheless, Iranian scientists carried on, and the science of Persia resurfaced during the Islamic period. To save the books from Arab carnage, many Pahlavi writings were translated into Arabic, and Iran produced well-known physicians and scientists like Avisina and Rhasis and mathematicians like Al Kharazmi and Khayyam.

The first direct communication between the university of Gondishapour and Islamic Baghdad, took place during the reign of the sec-

ond Abassid Caliph, Abu Jaafar Mansour (136-154 Hijri, 755-774 CE), when the director of the university, Jirjis, was summoned to treat the Caliph. Many Gondishapour physicians exerted important roles, particularly in the development of Islamic medicine and pharmaceutical science.

“... pharmacology and alchemy were considered “the most advanced in the world”, with 5000 students educated in Gondishapour and 500 scholars teaching in different scientific fields ... the library consisted of 259 halls containing an estimated 400,000 books.”

Many of the herbal plants named in Islamic books of medicine are in fact the ones used in Gondishapour.

In 190 Hijri (810 CE), the Abassid Caliph, Haroon el Rashid ordered the construction of a hospital in Baghdad to match the famous Gondishapour hospital, and physicians from the latter center were brought to serve in the new hospital. From then on the Iranian university began to decline. The Iranian physicians even in the Caliph's court conversed in Pahlavi and they were undaunted by his anti-Iranian sentiments.

During the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, the new university of Gondishapour was built and it is operating today. It is interesting that even in our modern times, herbal medicine is practiced in Iran. There are Iranian herbal physicians who have their own books inherited from generations ago. Regrettably they do not pass information to outsiders. ■

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By Kersey H. Antia
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In no other religious system do health and healing occupy such a central and integral role as in the religion of Zarathushtra. The human body is regarded as so important a link to the soul, nay, rather as the very counterpart of the the soul in the physical world. A neglect of body and health therefore will retard the progress of the soul. A long and healthy life is always prayed for in our scriptures, and health of the body is prized for the health of the soul as well – the two are inextricably intertwined as in no other religious philosophy. According to our Pahlavi scriptures, Ahura Mazda created the physical world in the image of the spiritual world, and the mission of man and woman on this earth is to bring about Frashokereti (renovation) in this world by eradicating all evils including diseases, ill health and death.

Keeping good health therefore becomes an important religious duty. Indeed one of the attributes of Ahura Mazda is *Haurvatat* (wholeness, perfect health) and another is *Ameretat* (immortality), attributes that God wants us to emulate in order to become his *hamkar* (collaborator). It is not surprising therefore that the Visperad exhorts us to keep our feet, our arms and our intellect in good shape so we can perform all good deeds and fight all evil. One of our most common prayers says:

“A thousand times health unto you. Ten thousand times health unto you.”

***Hazangrem baeshezanam
Baevare baeshezanam!***

When we realize that most other religions of the time, including early Christianity, looked down upon the body as demonic, we can very well appreciate the beauty and originality of Zarathushtra's theology, a theology that is relevant to our modern times.

Taking care of our health in order to serve Him as long, and as well as we can, is as essential a virtue as emulating God's other characteristics,



TREE OF LIFE

health & healing in the religion of zarathushtra

The close link between mind and matter – the effect the body has on the mind and vice versa, has been expounded in the teachings of Asho Zarathuhstra thousands of years before the concept became acceptable in recent times

namely, developing Good Mind, attaining Best Righteousness, establishing God's Kingdom on this earth and maintaining a Benevolent Right-mindedness.

Emphasis on health in our scriptures. Taking care of our health is therefore highly emphasized in our scriptures. Even as they denounce laziness, they emphasize the need for eight hours of sleep. Various research has now proven that sleep is very important for building immunity against various viruses and diseases.

While meat and wine are not prohibited, our scriptures regularly remind us not to overindulge in them. All good things the Good Lord has created is for enabling man and woman to fight against all the evil in the world and root it out altogether, and bring about the Kingdom of God on this earth so that the physical (*geti*) world will merge with the spiritual (*menog*) world ultimately. But such a mission cannot be carried out by us without taking utmost care of our health. In Atash Nyaesh, the body is regarded as a 'walking friend' of the soul, which cannot perambulate. As the soul is locked in the body and cannot walk around, it depends on the body to fulfill its wishes. Body is thus an extension of the soul, meant to be a vehicle for Goodness and Righteousness.

The *nahan* prayers represent this notion very well – the cleansing of

the body leads to the cleansing of the soul. Also a healthy mind needs a healthy body. "*Man sana in corpore sano*" – as the Latin proverb says. This idea seems reflected in the Bible, which says, "Know ye that ye are the temple of God and the spirit of God resideth in ye."

This emphasis on health is well reflected in our practices to this day. Every town in Gujarat had a gymnasium or *akhado* (wrestling ground) with an *ustad* (teacher) who was treated with utmost respect for his

“ Any habit that impairs health such as smoking, drugs, over eating or over indulgence of any kind is a thoroughly non-Zarathushti act as it impairs our ability to be our best self and work for Ahura Mazda ... ”

uncompromising zeal for promoting perfect physical health. There were not only many *pahelvans* of heroic strength in ancient Iran, but up to my own times there were many Parsi gymnasts in Bombay and elsewhere, well-known for their strength.

Such an emphasis on health led to strict hygienic practices, which in times of epidemics resulted in fewer fatalities among the Parsis in Bombay and Gujarat than among other communities. Our funerary practices, disposal of the dead, *bareshnum* of

nine nights etc., are also based on hygienic principles.

Any habit that impairs health such as cigarette smoking, drug usage, over eating or overindulgence of any kind is a thoroughly non-Zarathushti act as it impairs our ability to be our best self and work for Ahura Mazda as hard and as long and as best as we can.

Methods of healing. It was therefore imperative to resort to various methods of healing in order to restore health whenever health was impaired. Ardibehesht Yasht is often cited for describing various methods of healing prevalent in the Avestan period:

- Healing by Asha (righteousness, purity).
- healing by the observance of (religious) laws.
- Healing by *manthras* (prayers, meditation), which is maintained as the best healing

of all healings.

- Healing by plants (herbal cure).

Healing by prayer and positive thinking. In our times it is not uncommon to find well-documented individual cases of miraculous cures by positive thinking and prayers. Nowadays major cancer treatment centers emphasize mind-body forms of treatment and regularly conduct research on it. There are many authentic scientific research studies that have conclusively proven the efficacy of prayers and meditation in

alleviating the symptoms of many diseases if not completely eradicating them (as mentioned in my article in an earlier FEZANA Journal).

A few months ago, American evening TV news found it fit to report nationwide, a study that showed significant improvement in blood pressure etc., simply by praying, chanting or meditating with a rosary.

Over the years, our priests practiced various forms of healing – praying and offering consecrated food or *Haoma* juice, performing jashans for restoring one's health, giving amulets, prescribing certain prayers such as Ardibehest Yasht, Tandarosti prayers, etc. I found one such amulet in the collection of my grandfather who died in 1917. It has some undecipherable prayers written in Pahlavi on a pure silver plate. Each generation resorted to its own method of healing, as it knew best or as it tried to compete

“ Our own generation lives on the threshold of great discoveries about the uncanny powers of the positive mind and positive thinking ... What our holy prophet taught us about Good Mind as Ahura Mazda's foremost quality is now echoed in modern-day research findings ... ”

with the burgeoning practices of other faiths in order to hold the laity steadfast to our own faith. Such practices reached their epitome in Achaemenian times when our *magis* (mobeds) imbibed the knowledge of astronomy and astrology from the Babylonians and carried it with them as far as Anatolia – modern Turkey. Our calendar and the fertility cult of Goddess

Anahita (*Avan-Ardisur*) are traced by most scholars to this period. However, in most instances the clergy took pains to 'Zoroastrianise' them. Our own generation lives on the threshold of great discoveries about uncanny powers of the positive mind and positive thinking.

In my own clinical practice I often use a particular method for improving the mind-body ratio and functioning, and it has often led to amazing results. What our holy prophet taught us about Good Mind as Ahura Mazda's foremost quality is now echoed in our modern day research findings and medical treatment modalities.

Hail to Asho Zarathushtra! ■



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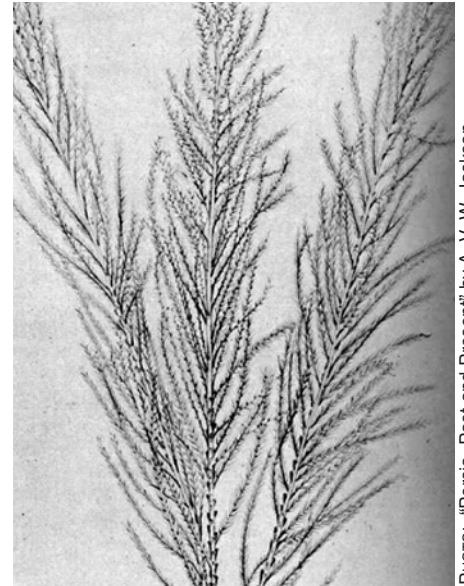


PHOTO: "Persia, Past and Present" by A. V. W. Jackson

SPRAYS OF THE BARSOM PLANT

By Ardeshir B. Damania
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Soma or *Haoma* juice is extracted from the twigs of the Ephedra plant, *Ephedra vulgaris* [Rich.] of the Gnetaceae botanical family. The other species of Ephedra plant are *E. sinica* and *E. gerardiana*. It was known not only to the ancient Aryans, but also to the Persians and the Chinese. The latter called it 'Ma Huang'.

Medicinal properties. Its medicinal properties were well known in Ayurvedic and Chinese herbal remedies. It was treasured for treating allergy, asthma, cold, cough, diarrhea, fevers, hay fever, headache, malaria and rheumatism. In fact it was considered as a panacea by many. The medicinal property of this plant is generally attributed to the alkaloid, Ephedrine, which produces central nervous system stimulation, peripheral vasoconstriction and elevation in the blood pressure.

The Ephedra plant is also known to help in maintaining oxygen supply to the brain at high altitudes. This is done by increasing the number of red corpuscles in the blood. People who inhabit high altitude regions in the Himalayas – the Lepchas of Sikkim, the Bhutias from Bhutan and the Sherpas from Nepal – all use this plant to get over altitude sickness and

the ancient use of ephedra and tamarix

A botanical look at Haoma (extracted from the Ephedra plant) and Barsom (twigs of the Tamarisk plant), used in Zarathushti religious ceremonies

fatigue. There are several mountain ridges to cross in order to go from one village to another. This involves descending three to four thousand feet and climbing back the same again, to travel only a couple of miles as the crow flies. This exercise, together with a load of firewood or produce to be taken to market, requires extraordinary reserves of strength. It is one of nature's gifts to the people of the region that this plant is found at approximately the same altitude where a person would most likely suffer from altitude sickness!

Mountain top habitat. The Rig Veda refers to Soma as the "plant from the mountains", "seated on the mountain top", "born on the mountain top", "grown on the mountain top". This author had observed Ephedra plants on the ridges between 9,000 and 12,000 feet on a trek from Darjeeling to Gangtok (the capital of the former kingdom of Sikkim) in the summer of 1968. The mature plants, brownish in color, are known to be evergreen. They grow to a height of about 1 meter. The plant is dioecious (male and female flowers on the same plant) with the male flowers having prominent, yellow pollen sacks. It prefers stony exposed sun-drenched slopes, and gravel terraces in the drier areas of the Himalayas and elsewhere. The plants are drought and frost resistant. Propagation is by seed.

The Indo-Aryans, having conquered only the valleys, would not have controlled the Soma's habitat. The mountains were held by their ene-

mies, probably the despised Dasyus. With the true Soma lost to the social economy, the priests turned to symbols and substitutes – an antique and popular practice among religions faced with changing circumstances – and went right on worshipping their Soma, without actually partaking of it again. As a late passage in the sacred texts concludes, "One thinks one drinks Soma because a plant is crushed. The Soma that the Brahmins know – that no one drinks."

Barsom or Tamarisk plant. There is another plant used in rituals performed by Zarathushti priests, perhaps when the twigs of Ephedra are not available. It has been so used since time immemorial. This plant is the Barsom (or Tamarisk of the Tamaricaceae family), the twigs of which are tied in bundles at a certain point in the ceremonies, corresponding in a distant manner to the straw, strewn as a seat for the divinities in Vedic ceremonies of old (is Barsom the same as the Baresman shown in the hands of the Zarathushti king on page 267 of Mahdihassan's paper [1]? In ancient Iran, the Tamarisk [*Tamarix aphylla* (L.) Karsten] bush was used to form this bundle, and it is bound with a slender strip of bark from the Mulberry tree, probably in exactly the same manner as it was in Zarathushtra's day (about 3300 years ago).

According to the Avesta, the twigs of the Tamarisk tree were originally spread; then at some point in the ritual, gathered and bound into a bundle [1]. Brass rods are sometimes sub-

stituted for the twigs of Ephedra or Tamarisk, as is done by the Parsi Zarathushtis in India. In Iran, however, this substitution in the religious ceremonies is done only in winter-time, when it is impossible to procure Ephedra or Tamarisk branches, or at some particular time and place when it is impractical to obtain them.

Professor A.V. Williams Jackson, while traveling in Iran in 1903, mentions the large Tamarisk bush from which the twigs were cut by Zarathushti priests for use in the Barsom religious ceremony [2]. The bush from which the twigs were cut was light green in color and 10-15 feet high. The twigs were slender and delicate, covered with downy fibrous leaves, and appear graceful even in the dried form [see photo previous page].



A Zarathushti king, holding a bundle of Ephedra stalks for consecrating a fire (c. 5th to 3rd century BCE) [1].

Note: It is erroneous to use the word "fire-worship", in connection with the use of the Ephedra or Tamarisk plant in Zarathushti rituals [see photo above]. Zarathushtis do not "worship" fire – fire is merely used as a symbol because of its perceived purity – in the same manner that Christians use the cross as a symbol. ■

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249-251. It was inspired by a very interesting and informative paper, "History of Soma and Other Spirituous Liquors" by the late Sarat Chandra Dutta [4].

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Superior doctors
prevent diseases

Mediocre doctors
treat diseases

Inferior doctors
treat complications of diseases.

- submitted by Dr. Mehroo Patel
attributed to a 2600 BCE Chinese saying

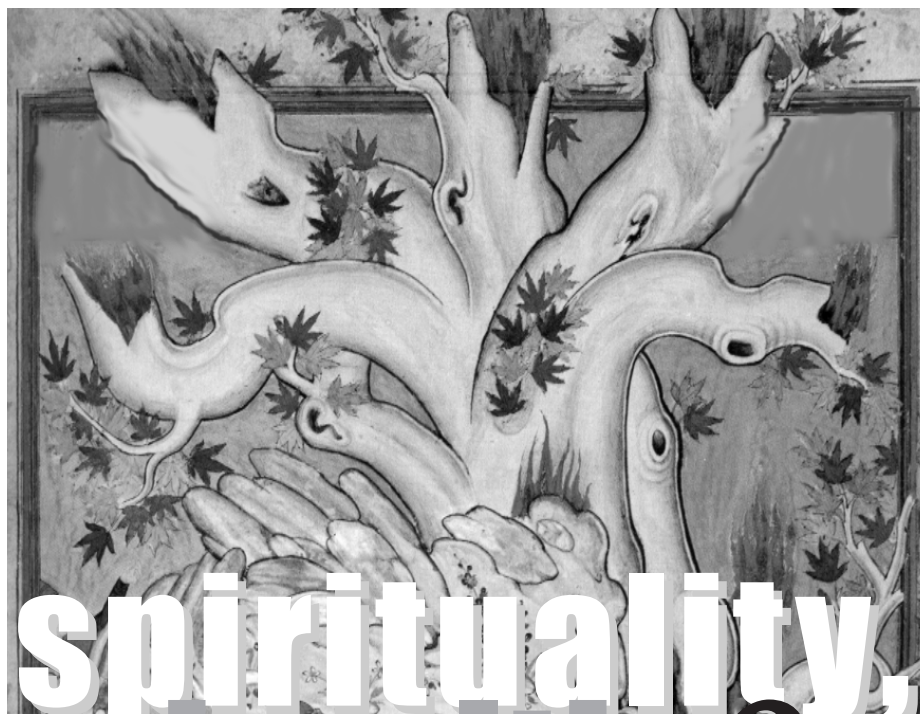


PHOTO: ROYAL PERSIAN MANUSCRIPTS BY STUART CARY WELCH

spirituality, health & healing

a zarathushtrian perspective

Zarathushtra was the first prophet to reveal the crucial nature of 'manah', the mind, and its importance, for it is only through a peaceful mind, free of chaos of worldly disorder, that the brain can transmit signals to generate a physiological response to well-being

By Jehan Bagli
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Healing and God. The word 'to heal' is derived from an Old Saxon root meaning 'whole'. A person who is healthy is generally accepted as a 'whole person'. The 'wholeness of health' of an individual is a summation of several integrals. They are the physical, the intellectual, the emotional and the mental/spiritual. Hence any discussion on health and healing must necessarily include a careful consideration of all these components. While the physical and

intellectual health can be manipulated by external powers such as diet, drugs and study, emotional and the spiritual healing is strongly influenced by the state of mind.

Zarathushtrian theology invokes *Haurvatat* as 'wholeness or completeness'. What is Asho Zarathushtra trying to convey? He is teaching us about a state of integrity that one can reach through serenity or 'right-mindedness' (*Spenta Armaiti*).

Integrity of what? The integrity of one's inner self with one's physical self, unity of the spiritual with the

material, oneness of the mind and the body. “The appropriate sense of Haurvatat would be well-being including health and happiness” [1], wholeness and perfection through Good Mind – Vohu Manah [2].

For most traditions, the entire cosmos, spanning from the recent findings of the galaxies by the Hubble telescope in space above, down to human consciousness within, is an incarnation, that humanity recognizes as the supreme intellect – *The God*. The infinite massive glow that we often term divine enlightenment ramifies to points of sparks and pervades through the animate and inanimate creation. Every single human being regardless of their physical, emotional or intellectual level is believed to have the divine spark within, waiting to be discovered. Zarathushtis recite in the Atash Nyaesh [3]:

**Yesnyo ahi vahmyo
Yesnyo buyao vahmyo
Namnahu mashyaknam
ushta buyat
Ahmai naire yase
Thva badha frayazaite**

The above lines are addressed to *fire*, the fire that our prophet has given to us as the physical incarnation of Mazda, the fire that is the essence of Mazda – literally called son of Mazda. This essence we are told, in the above verse, is worthy of adoration and reverence, and more particularly “may it adore the house of man, and bring happiness to him who reveres it.” The ‘house of man’ referred to here, must metaphorically refer to the human body.

The message here is that the divine essence of Mazda adores the body of man. This is in full consonance with what we read in the Older Avesta [4] about the soul, fravashi and consciousness as the divine elements of the human constitution. The human body therefore is the house of divinity and it is incumbent upon us to learn how best to treat it with care, respect and reverence.

Studies at University of Miami conducted by Dr. Antoni, and at UCLA

school of medicine by Dr. Fawzy have demonstrated self-care as an essential component that helps improve coping skills in certain illnesses [5].

Self-care is emerging in western medicine as an essential component to surgical intervention and drug therapy. Learning muscle relaxation, assertive skills and stress management techniques can induce positive thinking that can markedly improve health benefits.

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A patient Tom Long, who was stabbed in the heart, stomach and spleen, returned to Georgetown University Hospital for more surgical intervention after having undergone seven surgical treatments. When asked by a first year intern during an interview, “How did you find your source of strength?” answered that there is something beyond the excellent medical care he received that he credits for his life, It’s God. [6].

Mind and Body. Unfortunately in recent history, it was the pioneering but erroneous work of the 17th century French mathematician and philosopher Rene Descartes, that inseminated the two-substance view of duality of mind and body. As Dr. Damasio in his book on Descartes error says, “the abysmal separation between the sizable, dimensioned infinitely divisible body stuff, on one hand, and unsizable, undiminished, non-divisible mind stuff might exist separately” is fallacious.

With time however, mind and matter came to be regarded as complexes of a common theme, that are only structured differently. Spinoza rejected the

Cartesian view in favor of the idea that mind and matter are finite entities of the single infinite substance God, that is the universal essence or nature of everything that exists.

The attitude of mind/spirit is inextricably related to body and therefore to health and sickness. Consequently, the spirit-body relationship should also be a concern for health care and health-care providers. Dr. Herbert Benson, a researcher at Harvard Medical School and founder of the Mind/Body Medical Institute at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, is among the major contributors to bring spirituality within the sphere of global therapy. In his books *Your Maximum Mind*, *Beyond Relaxation Response* and *Timeless Healing* he brings forth sufficient evidence to demonstrate how he has worked with patients through trying times, to open the doors for spiritual component as a complementary part of holistic therapy.

To one of his female patients undergoing the trauma of a recent surgery, Benson advised about the way in which relaxed physical condition can be elicited. He says, “I explained that she needed to focus silently on a word for a period of 10 to 20 minutes gently brushing aside any thoughts that distracted her. This was the mental exercise to ease the body’s usual alert mode, letting it calm down and rest.” As a point of focus for their mind, many of his patients choose a religious word or phrase. These little prayers acted as an effective balm to calm down the chaos within. The patients emerged from this mental focusing with a clearer mind and sharper thoughts. In calming down the brain, the lowered metabolic response slows down the overall function of the body, and restructures the negative thinking, to interpret the events more positively.

From a vantage point of Zarathushtrian theology the relaxation response as Dr. Benson calls it, is resetting the mind in a state of *serenity* or *complete mindfulness* – *Spenta Armaiti* – to refresh and renovate it to the state of Vohu Manah.

When practiced daily with ‘complete mindfulness’, either in the form of silent meditation or through chanting of holy mantras, it can have profound influence on mental and physical activities. Healthy individuals through this exercise can benefit, to sustain harmony between the physical and the spiritual, that in turn will reflect into physical health and facilitate the revelation of Asha in day-to-day activities.

Spirituality. The term Spirituality is derived from the Latin word spiritus meaning the breath of life. The book of Genesis [8] affirms breath as the divine spirit when it says, “God proceeded to blow into his (man’s) nostril the breath of life and the man came to be a living soul”. Asho Zarathusht in his Gathic hymns, made a similar assertion [9] when he said, “Wise Lord, you fashioned this world for us ... and put the vital life-breath (*ushtanem*) into the physical body.” Several traditions have focused on that rhythm of human respiration, as the invisible yet palpable entity that distinguishes the living from the dead as the manifestation of divinity in the human.

Despite this evidence, western medicine has until recently, considered the spirit and spirituality as a concept, out of their domain, based on an erroneous notion, that the idea, is synonymous with religion.

According to Brian Seaward [10] spiritual development is an expansion of the conscious to the unconscious mind, which occurs through the relationship of our self with the divine. Acts of prayer and meditation stimulate one’s imagination, creativity, and synthesis of ideas. This internal relationship of wholeness and well-being in turn paves the way to the sense of love and interconnectedness, within a spiritually healthy person, for creation and for human fellowship. Seward’s analysis resonates the Zarathushtrian teaching that a calm and peaceful Vohu Manah, in a devotional state of Spenta Aramaiti, permits one to tap the creativity, not only to shape one’s

own life, but also to touch and affect that of the living world around, to reveal the path of Asha. This harmony of the physical and mental/spiritual health that brings forth the attainment of Haurvatat, transcends a human, bringing the person closer to the likeness of Ahura Mazda.

The guarded approach of western medicine to spirituality is best summed up in the words of Esther Sternberg of National Institute of

“Every single human being, regardless of their physical, emotional or intellectual level, is believed to have the divine spark within, waiting to be discovered.”

Mental Health who says, “The person in me says ‘Of course, I believe emotions have something to do with the disease,’ but the scientist in me says ‘Prove it to me.’” A major barrier to the acceptance of spirituality as a part of healthcare is its unpredictability. Science demands that prayer, if it heals one terminally ill patient, should heal all. Reproducibility is a crutch that science has used since time immemorial, to bring acceptance of a concept. It is a fact that mind, human consciousness, will, imagination and thought, are entities that cannot be apprehended by senses or by sciences.

In their efforts to explain mind in terms of biology and neurology, the professionals have simply uncovered their own limitations. Little worth reading, has been written about it.

It is important to understand that prayers are not magic potions, that can produce their effect upon recitation, and translate into cures. The results of this phenomenon are markedly dependent on the sensitivity of the state of mind under which the offering is made.

The term ‘extra sensory perception’ invented by J. B. Rhine, the pioneer in scientific paranormal research, includes the faculties of telepathy and clairvoyance. These notions have

also failed to gain full acceptance of the pure sciences, due mainly to their non-reproducibility. The results of the experiments designed to prove their validity, also have a strong bearing on the mental receptivity of the subject at the time of their performance. It is easy to question the intervention of prayers, on behalf of some innocent suffering humans. However one often overlooks the fact that the suffering also provides means through

which humans can express moral qualities of care, kindness, compassion, tolerance and unconditional love, and be more God-like.

It is of interest to note, that from among the diverse spiritual traditions existing in the

world today, it was Zarathushtra, the first prophet of the Aryan society, who revealed the crucial nature of ‘manah’ (the mind) and its importance to maintain it best (*‘vahishta’*) at all times. In the teaching of Asho Zarathusht, Vohu Manah is the closest cohort of Ahura Mazda, through the control of which flows values such as Asha and Khshathra Vairya.

It is only through the peaceful mind, free of the chaos of worldly disorder, that the brain can transmit signals, to generate a physiological response of well-being. The result of concentration of the mind, is the same, regardless of a person focusing one’s devotion using a prayer, or cherishing a masterpiece of art or music. Prayers thus represent the means to penetrate the barriers between the spiritual and the physical, to bring forth the harmonization of the two, leading to the value that Zarathushtra defines as Haurvatat – perfection or completeness.

Benson’s relaxation response, mentioned above, is one such technique that aids calming of the mind, by focusing on a theme, religious or otherwise, to ease the physical tensions caused by physiological disorders ranging from headache to hypertension. Since most patients choose a religious prayer as means of devotion,

the resulting physical well-being is often attributed to divine intervention; a consequence of spiritual healing.

Psychologist Joseph Rychlak of Loyola University, Chicago, explains [11] the phenomena of spiritual healing by interpreting it as an effect of the immaterial entity, the mind; on the material entity, the body. He further elaborates, "What is physical and what is non-physical is an arbitrary distinction." This differentiation of the physical and spiritual is relative, depending upon the level of spiritual attitude of the person.

Spirituality, in a most general sense, involves positive directed thinking by and for human beings.

Intercessory Prayers. Prayers involve a sort of thinking for the spiritual fulfillment of mankind. It is that intensely passionate thinking that touches the sentiments of the world, and searches for values among facts. It is established that under appropriate conditions, telepathic transfer of thoughts from one mind to the other can occur through space. Consequently intercessory prayers for others, are no more mystical a phenomenon, than an expression of transfer of one's thoughts of renewed health for others, to their mental receptors, that could lead to appropriate wellness. Among the most recognized scientific studies of such prayers is the one carried out by Dr. Randolph Byrd [12], [13] at San Francisco General Hospital. Almost 400 patients of the coronary care ICU were party to this study. About half of them received the benevolence of intercessory prayers. Religious groups were given the first name and brief description of the condition of the patients.

The experiment was conducted following strict scientific code, randomized, and double-blind, in which neither the patients, nurses nor doctors knew the identity of the group under study. Each person in the experiment had five to seven people

praying for the individual. The results for the prayed-for group were so positive that even the skeptics, in the medical community acknowledged their acceptance with remarks such as "this study will stand up to scrutiny."

The most striking example of intercessory prayer in Zarathushtrian scriptures is in the Vohukhshathra Gatha [14] where the prophet venerates, not only the Wise Lord, but also the righteous persons who existed and those who are alive, in the following words:

**Ta yazai kha-ish namenish
pairicha jasai vanta**

*I shall worship them all with
their own names and shall
lovingly serve them. [Ys. 51.22]*

“ Prayers are not magic potions, that can produce their effect upon recitation and translate into cures. The results of this phenomenon are markedly dependent on the sensitivity of the state of mind under which the offering is made. ”

In the later Zarathushtrian tradition, the prayers of Afringan, Afrin and Tandarosti are some of the outstanding prayers where the names of the living as well as the deceased souls are memorialized and blessed.

Conclusion. Despite a loose acceptance of a life force or spirit that breathes life into the body, western medicine, by and large, does not acknowledge human energy, a concept that nurtures the foundation of holistic healing.

The mysterious healing energy spoken of as 'prana' by Indians, and 'chi' by Far Easterners, has thus far escaped all efforts to measure it using scientific methodology.

Zarathushtrian theology recognizes fire as the energy of life (*ahu*) that pervades the human body. Among the Younger Avestan prayers, Ardibehesht Yasht is the worship and praise asso-

ciated with fire. The liturgy is dedicated to smite all evil and restore the good, including mental and physical health. Verse 6 of this litany describes five different types of healers, including a surgeon who heals with a knife. However, the worship goes on to elaborate that the most potent healer of all, is the one who heals with Holy words (Manthrem spentem baeshazyo) of the prayers.

Health is an aggregate of body, mind and spirit. In the event of a disorder in health, it is important to determine which of these components is out of sync. A belief-based calming of the mind, holding respect for diverse ways of attaining it, must make humanity more respectful of the spiritual quality of life. Such an understanding of health through spirituality can go a long way to demonstrate the notion of God, so badly needed in this world torn apart by discord in the name of religion.

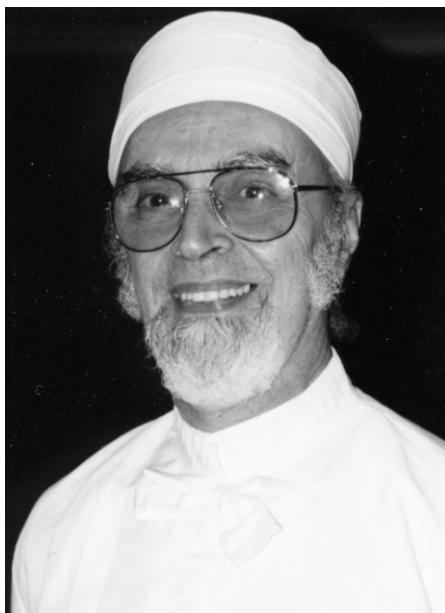
"Your body is nothing more than an energy system. The energy that is life is coursing through your body. You can direct this energy. You can control it."

"If you imagine that you are a body, you will experience life as an expression of the body. When you understand that you are a soul, then you will experience life as an expression of the soul. When you acknowledge that your soul and God's are one, then you will experience life as an expression of one spirit," and your oneness with God and with the human race [15]. ■

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domestic violence and mental health

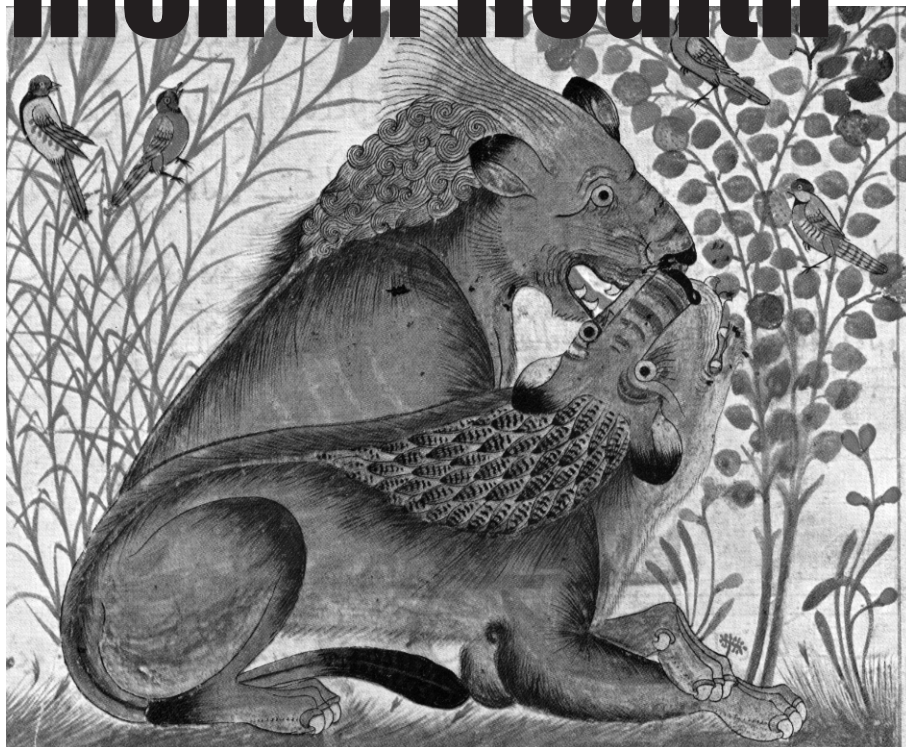


Photo: courtesy "Persian Painting" Basil Gray.

Each year approximately 25 million women suffer from domestic violence globally and we think it does not happen in our community!

By Narges Kakalia
New York, New York.

Perhaps the most dangerous myth about any kind of abuse is that "it doesn't happen in our community," and "it couldn't happen to us." Believing that we are immune from danger and evil is comforting for the moment, but like all false senses of comfort, denial only makes an abusive situation more dangerous, as it causes friends, relatives and neighbors to assume safety where none exists.

By far the leading cause of women's deaths around the world is spousal abuse. In the United States alone, the FBI estimates that every 18 seconds a woman is beaten within her own home. Approximately 25 million

women suffer from domestic violence globally each year. And despite many preventative measures instituted by governments around the world, statistics indicate that each year the problem gets worse.

Domestic violence has traditionally been defined as violence in the home, or between family members. It includes a pattern of abuse that results from the efforts of one partner in a relationship to maintain power and control over the other. Domestic violence includes controlling behaviors that manifest themselves as physical, sexual, psychological and emotional attacks and economic deprivation by an abuser. It is deadly, often fatal, and sadly, much too common. Con-

trary to popular belief, domestic violence occurs in all elements of society, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, socio-economic background, education-status, employment status or sexual orientation.

Global statistics give the lie to most people's assumption that domestic violence is only a problem for others. Domestic violence is so pervasive that even in a society as socially progressive as the United States, one in four women claims to have been abused by a husband or boyfriend at some point in her life. According to an FBI report from the 1990s, almost half of all female murder victims are killed by their own husbands or boyfriends. The World Health Organization estimates that one in every three women in the world is abused by her partner.

Domestic violence occurs in many shapes and forms. The traditionally "recognizable" forms include verbal abuse, blatant disrespect such as public displays of anger, and physical assaults such as hitting, beating, hair-pulling, punching and the use of weapons. If public displays of anger do not seem particularly egregious, consider the case of one of my former clients, who will be referred to simply as Jane.

Jane had just left her abusive husband after a particularly nasty physical incident during which he threatened to kill her with a knife. Jane sought refuge with her mother, but her husband began stalking her and begging her to come back home to him. She tried to ignore him for the most part, until she was tired of his persistence and finally turned around and quietly told him to leave or she would call the police. In broad daylight, at a busy New York intersection, he yelled at her loudly, called her a few nasty names, waited for onlookers to gather around them and then spat on her loudly and repeatedly. Jane was so humiliated that she was unable to ask for help. Despite feeling tremendously violated she was unable to report the incident to

the police, fearing that she would either be laughed at or disbelieved.

In struggles for power, batterers also use several tactics to erode the self esteem of their victims. Most batterers are emotionally cruel, constantly belittling their partners and making them feel insignificant, and unworthy. The most common way of doing this is by calling them names and constantly telling them that they are bad mothers, unfit wives, poor workers, fat, ugly, stupid, an embarrassment etc. Such a constant barrage of criticism usually leads women to believe their abusers, and the resulting lack of self-esteem inevitably means that women are disempowered from leaving the men that make their lives so hellish. They simply assume that their batterer is correct when he inevitably tells them that they couldn't possibly make it on their own, and that no one else will want them or take them in.

In addition to hitting, name-calling and abusing, batterers also maintain power over their partners by keeping a vice-like grip on the financial status of the family. This has a potentially lethal effect on a woman's ability to leave an unhealthy or abusive relationship. Many women derive their financial stability from their male partners while they remain at home to raise and manage children and households. Batterers often discount their work as the care-givers within the family and refuse to share income with them. Financially dependent, emotionally exhausted and riddled with problems of self-esteem, these women rarely ever identify a viable way out of the abusive relationship for themselves. The intervention of concerned friends, family and loved ones can be crucial to help battered women become independent and free of abuse.

Immigrant women are particularly vulnerable to the pressure of remaining in an abusive relationship. In the United States most foreign women derive their legal immigration status from their green-card or citizenship-

bearing spouses. Abusive husbands use their power of sponsorship as a pawn in their struggle for control by threatening to either withdraw their sponsorship or report their wives to the INS unless all of their demands are met. Ignorant of the law and faced with separation from their children and the internationally humiliating prospect of deportation, most women choose to remain with abusive husbands.

The problem is so widely acknowledged that the drafters of the Violence Against Women Act in the United States specifically provided for a means by which women can separate from their abusive husbands without suffering immigration-status consequences. Even women whose spouses do not have immigration privileges will sometimes use the scepter of law-enforcement in order to subdue their abused partners.

One of my undocumented Pakistani clients left only after her husband almost killed her infant son during an attempt to shoot and kill her. When asked why she waited so long to seek help, she explained that one of her husband's constant threats was that he would report her to the US government and have her deported back to Pakistan. Once deported, my client felt that she would be treated as badly by her in-laws as her husband treated her in the US, and so she just remained with him, continued to endure his abuse and bided her time. The emptiness of his threat was only revealed to her after she decided to risk deportation in order to save her son's life.

For a variety of reasons, battered women become isolated from their loved ones and are unlikely to ask for help. Common forms of domestic abuse include dictating where and with whom a spouse may go, monitoring phone calls etc., often for seemingly-logical reasons such as conserving gas, keeping the phone bills down, etc.

During the initial interview of a client I asked her why she had stayed

with her batterer for so long. She described how her husband never left any gas in the car on the rare occasions that he left it in the garage. She also told me that her husband never allowed her to do any grocery or domestic shopping because he claimed she always bought the wrong brands, insisting on doing it himself. As a result, she never had any access to money. Without money or transportation she never saw any way of leaving her abuser. It was only when her mother wired money to a friend of hers who in turn brought it to her, was my client able to leave the home that had become her prison. Another immigrant client's husband wouldn't let her go anywhere without him, not even to church. As a practical result of his restrictions, she had absolutely no contact with anyone other than her abuser, and was consequently unable to leave him.

Abused women whose mobility and contacts are not monitored by their spouses nevertheless find it difficult to confide in their friends and family because they often fail to recognize a problem. Those that do, may be unwilling to risk asking for help and being turned down, because that can inevitably lead to humiliation and greater risks for them at home. This is particularly true for women from historically patriarchal backgrounds, whose families would rather that they remain in abusive marriages rather than bring the unwanted stigma and social disgrace of divorce upon the family.

Finally, women whose self-esteem has been eroded usually assume that no one will believe their story, and very often may even blame themselves for the problem. They usually withdraw from social interactions, often for seemingly legitimate reasons such as health concerns, busy schedules, etc that simply serve as a

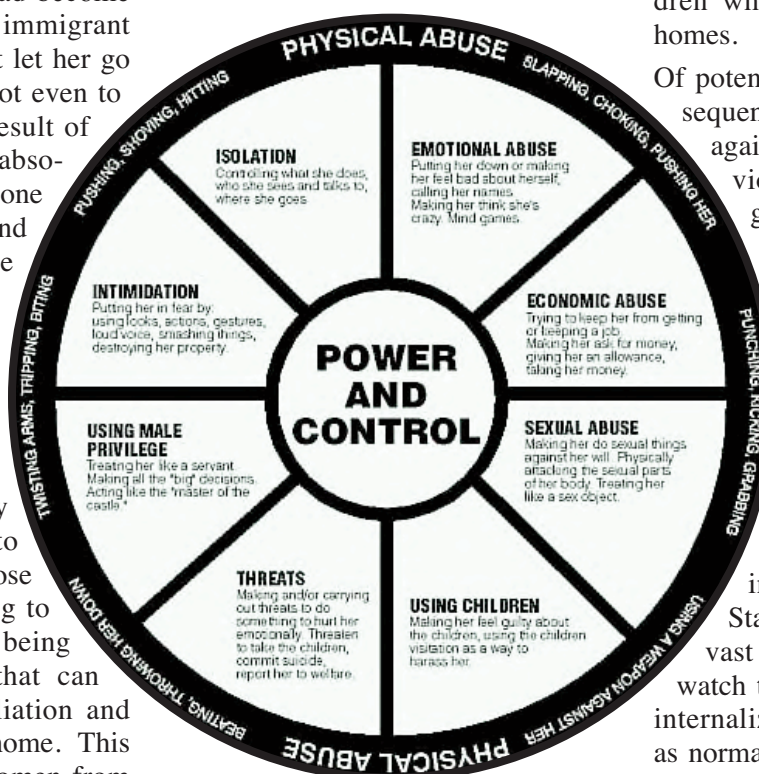
disguise for the depression they suffer from. In addition to injuries and physical marks such as bruising etc., isolation and withdrawal from social interactions are among the most prominent and readily recognizable symptoms of domestic violence. Others include low-self esteem, frequent self-deprecation and/or self-blaming, a propensity for emotional distress, paranoia, nightmares, absences from work or school, personality changes such as wariness, fear of conflict, and being non-assertive. While none of these symptoms are necessarily indicative of

According to experts, approximately 50% of men who abuse their wives also abuse their children. Thus, an abused woman who doesn't seek help for herself, very often puts her own children in harm's way.

Children who witness abuse internalize what they see reflected in their own family lives, and then victimize others in the playground, classroom etc. Not surprisingly, the Survey of Massachusetts Department of Youth Services estimates that children who grow up in violent homes have a 74% higher likelihood of committing criminal assaults as adults, than children who grow up in non-violent homes.

Of potentially farther-reaching consequence is the fact that violence against a spouse usually begets violence within successive generations of the family. According to the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, Division of Women, an estimated 81% of boys who witness domestic violence within their own homes and families, learn abusive behavior as 'normal' and end up becoming abusive spouses in their own adult lives. Statistics also indicate that the vast majority of little girls who watch their mothers being abused, internalize abuse and victimization as normal, and end up being abused in their own adult lives.

Many abused women have a lot of trouble recognizing that their suffering is abnormal or out of the ordinary precisely because abusive families are the only kind of families they have ever known. It isn't surprising then, that domestic violence is steadily on the rise and each year more women are subjected to the cruelty of spousal abuse, intimidation and terror. In light of these statistics, denying the reality of familial violence is particularly troubling, as timely interventions might



The "Power and Control Wheel" that is used to identify and analyze different kinds of abuse. Source: www.geocities.com/Wellesley/Gazebo/1601/w

domestic violence on their own, the greater the number of symptoms present, the greater the danger to the victim.

Children are the greatest casualties of domestic violence. Those that witness the abuse of their mother, suffer from emotional and behavioral disturbances as diverse as withdrawal, low self-esteem, nightmares, self-blame and aggression against peers, family members and property.

The many reasons why these crimes against women seem to go unnoticed and unaddressed is a topic for another time. What remains inescapable is the fact that domestic violence is on the rise and is already alarmingly prevalent among all communities. We need to work globally, nationally, locally and communally to address it. The first step in the battle against the continuing victimization of women within their own families is acknowledging that the problem exists even in our Zarahushti community, within our back yards, in our communities, in our families and in our own relationships. ■

Narges Kakalia, 28, originally from Karachi, graduated from Oberlin College in Ohio, and is presently a third year law student at Fordham Law School, hoping to graduate in May 2002. Her main area of legal interest is immigration and women's rights issues. She is planning to work as a civil litigator for several years before devoting her attention to women's rights issues.

A horizontal line of 18 small, dark, diamond-shaped decorative elements.

I try to take one day at a time, but sometimes several days attack me at once - Jennifer Unlimited

women's
health
time to break the silence

Women's health is more than an absence of detectable disease, it is the promotion of "social health" and the promotion of empowerment, because whether it is a physical bruise or bruise on our souls and spirits, all are to be avoided to promote a healthy community

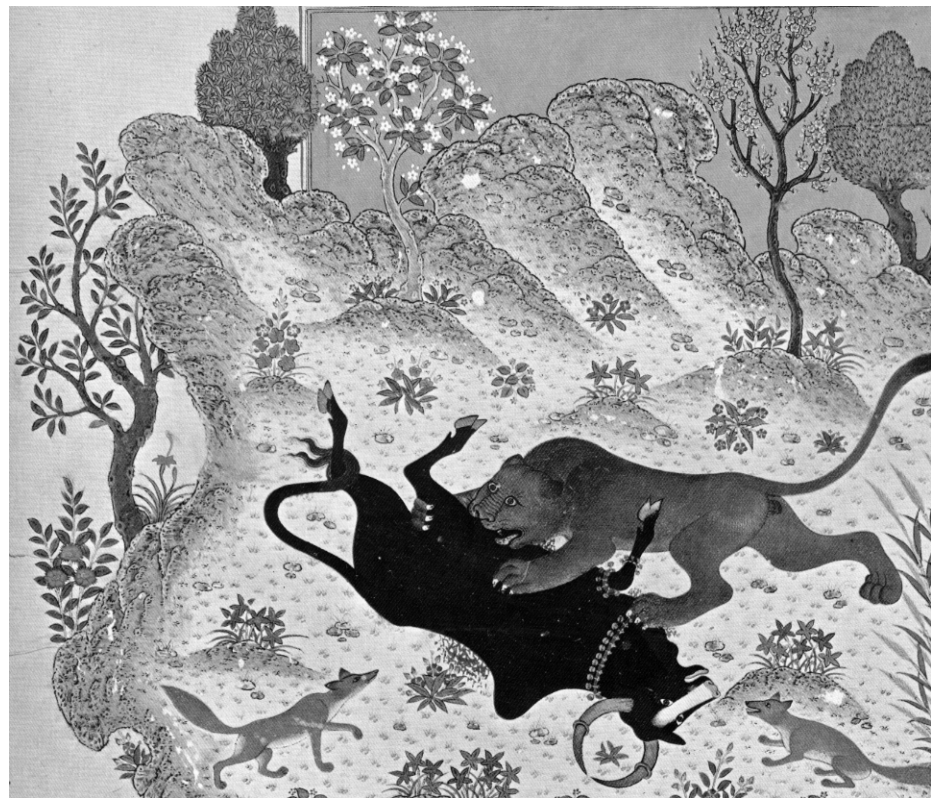


PHOTO: courtesy "Persian Painting" Basil Gray.

By Trity Pourbahrami
Vancouver, British Columbia

As an advocate for women's health and empowerment, I would like to share some of my thoughts and experiences on the subject of women's health. Do we feel healthy when the mammogram results come back negative? Do we

feel healthy after having completed all our chores around the house, fed and put the children to bed, and thrown a successful dinner party? How does our society define women's health? How do we as women define women's health? I will focus on two specific women's health issues: *child brides* and

domestic abuse. I will challenge you to examine your attitudes and values about women and offer some suggestions on how we can address them towards the ultimate goal of health and empowerment for all women.

In developed countries, we often associate health with an absence of detectable disease. We conclude that a woman with a negative pap smear is healthy because no abnormal cells were detected during her examination? We are all familiar with the many studies on stress levels and their negative impact on the immune system and general physiological function. Yet how often do we consider our 'social-health' needs?

Most women associate being healthy with having good relationships with their family and friends. Our need to be supported and nurtured is as strong as our desire to support and nurture others. How healthy does a little girl feel when she sits at home alone, counting the minutes till Mom and Dad get home from work? How healthy does her mother feel when she is asked to stay an extra hour at work with no prior notice? Is health only a physical state? How about our emotional, psychological, social and spiritual needs?

In developing countries, women's health is often associated with her ability to carry out her daily duties. In a recent survey funded by the World Health Organization (WHO) in three developing countries, a healthy woman was defined by community members as 'a hard worker, early riser', one who does not 'think too much', one who has an 'attractive body, fresh, shining, smooth skin', and is 'entertaining'. How often is a

woman's educational level associated with her health? Is a woman entrepreneur less healthy than a homemaker? How does a woman's culinary skills affect her health? When working with women in developing countries, it becomes evident that empowerment plays a very important role in their health status.

A healthy woman is one who is allowed to make decisions about her body, her family, and exercises some control over the family resources such as money.

Child brides.

Recently the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), WHO, and the World Bank have joined forces to address a common and very tragic health issue in the lives of many women in the developing world – *vesicovaginal fistula* (VVF). This is a medical condition that affects child brides who get pregnant before their bodies are fully developed. During labor the tissues of the birth canal can get damaged, leading to breakage between the female sex organ and the bladder or rectum. In such a case the young girl is unable to control the passage of urine and feces. This condition persists for the rest of her life or till the tissue is repaired surgically. As a women's health issue, VVF is much more than a physical disorder as is illustrated below.

Aisha, a fifteen year-old girl, was returning from school one day when she was spotted by a rich, elderly man who took an interest in her. Soon after, the rich man approached her father for her hand in marriage. Her father arranged her marriage even though Aisha was very upset. Her mother was powerless to prevent the marriage. The marriage took place and Aisha was taken to the rich

man's home to live with him and his three wives. Not long after marriage, she was pregnant with her first child. She had a very difficult labor, and after three days, she gave birth to a dead baby. She was told that she was injured during the birth and that she would have to live with urine trickling uncontrollably down her legs until she had surgery. Because of her illness and the bad smell coming from her, the rich man sent her away from his home. She went to the city to find medical help, but ended up begging on the street.

Physiologically we know why VVF occurs and in most cases early and proper surgery can repair the damage, but how can we prevent it from happening to young girls like Aisha? While the high rates of VVF are an easily identifiable women's health issue facing this community, other women's health issues are not. When are we going to realize that society's belief that women are not capable of making their own decisions in regard to education, marriage, pregnancy, and many other things is a women's health issue. Furthermore, women like Aisha have no support system once they are diagnosed with VVF.

Domestic abuse. Aisha's life may be very foreign to many of us living in developed countries. However just as her health is intricately woven into the views and practices of her community, our health as North American women is also closely connected to our society views. One in every four of us will experience some form of abuse by an intimate partner at some point in our lives. Domestic abuse as a women's health issue is far more than a bruise, or a broken bone. Domestic abuse is any exploitation or threatening behavior(s) intended to harm or exert power over another family or household member. Abuse can be emotional, psychological, verbal, physical, sexual, or economic. Except for a few changes to protect confidentiality, here is a true story of Amy. As you read Amy's story please keep in mind that the Zarathusti community is not immune to domestic abuse.

Amy was in her mid-twenties when she met him and they had a fairy tale romance. They had a beautiful wedding ... He was charming and very attentive to Amy's needs. Amy was pregnant with their first child when he started to pay even more attention ... He asked her to call him every two hours to check in. She was six months pregnant when he accused her of cheating on him with one of her co-workers, and slapped her. Immediately afterwards, he was horrified and begged her to forgive him. He bought her a dozen roses the next day ... She never told anyone about the incident and covered the mark on her face with an extra layer of make-up.

After the birth of their first child, he insisted that there was no need for her to work ... When she expressed her desire to return to work because she enjoyed her work, he got upset, smashed a glass on the counter and pushed her into the wall, causing her to break her nose. At the hospital he begged her to forgive him.

Over the next few years the abuse got worse and worse ... She once tried to tell her mother about the situation at home. Her mother advised her to make it work for the children...

After her leg was broken she confided in one of her co-workers that her husband did not know how to control his anger. When Amy was pregnant with her second child and was in the hospital for a broken collarbone, she decided to go and live with her parents for a while. A few weeks later, he drove to his in-laws' house with a gun. Amy and her unborn child were buried a week later.

We ask ourselves, how could the tragedy of Amy's life have been avoided? After the bruises and the broken bones healed, was Amy healthy? Every time Amy's story is told, someone asks, *"Why didn't she leave him?"* There are a number of very good reasons. Amy loved her husband and believed she could help him deal with his anger. She wanted her children to have a father, and strongly believed in traditional family values. She was encouraged to stay by her mother and to try and work out their differences.

The cycle of abuse. In most abusive relationships, a cycle [see diagram previous page] can be observed where the violent explosion is followed by a stage of manipulative kindness when the abuser tries to regain the trust and affection of his victim. In this phase, which is also called the honeymoon phase, the abuser often buys gifts for his victim, apologizes, and makes promises of things changing for the better. Most victims of domestic abuse find it very difficult to leave at this stage and believe that this was the last violent explosion. The third stage of the cycle is the tension building phase, which intensifies until the next violent explosion occurs, and the cycle repeats itself. Central to the cycle of abuse is the victim's denial of what is really happening.

When addressing the question of "Why doesn't she leave?" it is also important to note that the most dangerous and life-threatening time for the victim is when she decides to leave her abuser. All through the relationship the abuser has used power and control tactics on his victim because he is unable to let her go and hence once he realizes that she has left him he becomes extremely unpredictable and very often violent. He wants her back or he wants her dead.

“ Get involved and act as advocates for those women who have temporarily lost their voice and are being choked. ”

As is evident from the tragedy of Amy and Aisha's lives, women's health is a multifaceted issue and hence requires a multifaceted approach. The first step involves recognition of the many factors that affect the health of women in our society. The next step is to start

talking about these different factors and how they affect our health. We need to speak out about taboo subjects such as domestic abuse and child brides. We need to form support groups where we feel comfortable enough to discuss our dark secrets, whether they are physical bruises or bruises on our soul and spirit, such as sexual abuse. Audre Lorde states: "Silence chokes us, speaking to each other about our experience breaks the silence and bridges some of the difference between us. It is not fear that immobilizes us, but silence. And there are so many silences to be broken ... Look for those things that silence basic human rights and break the silence."

We also need to get involved and act as advocates for those women who have temporarily lost their voice and are being choked. Unless we build trust with our co-workers and ask them about their bruises or low self-esteem, we will never know what it is that is choking them. We need to advocate not only for women in our own community, but also for women in the developing world. A very successful approach to health and empowerment of women in developing countries has been helping them establish grass roots credit funds to pay transport fees and medical expenses for women. These credit funds help in the costs of medical treatment as well as in hiring temporary aides to take over the woman's household chores while she is seeking medical care. We must also address the long-term health needs of women in developing countries. These include addressing the factors that underlie the tragic reality of child brides like Aisha. How can we empower not only Aisha but also her mother? How can we address the financial needs of Aisha's family such that her father is not forced to marry her off to a rich older man?

When viewing women's health in the context of a physical, emotional, psychological, social and spiritual reality, the challenges may seem

insurmountable. You may be thinking, "How can we ever address all these issues and stop and prevent child marriages and domestic abuse?" I would like to reassure you that we have already begun. By having taken the time and interest to read this article, you have begun to see women's health as more than regular mammograms and pap smears. It is time to take the next step and view your health in a holistic way. Find the power within yourself to break the silence. Then get involved in the lives of your co-workers, friends, family, and other women who may have temporarily lost their voice, help them break the silence. ■



Trity Pourbahrami *Trity is an advocate for the health and empowerment of women and children. She has worked in Canada, the United States, and the South Caucasus. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in physiology and physics and is working on an interdisciplinary masters in the social sciences. She has been active in the local, national and international Zarathushti community as a youth speaker and leader. Trity was recently engaged to Peter who shares her passion for renovating and renewing the world. She is interested in hearing your thoughts and concerns in regard to this article and her other passions. She can be reached at [trityp@saturn.vfx.com].*

Unmarried Motherhood

What does the Avesta Say?

Strict as the law of chastity is, a great spirit of tolerance is shown in the Avesta writing in reference to an unmarried woman, who happens to fall victim to the charms of an insidious man. True, it is a punishable sin, yet the Almighty, in His mercy, has taken due notice of such a misfortune happening in a household.

In the poetic language of the Avesta, it is laid down that a virgin, who whilst under the protection of her parents, either bethrothed or not bethrothed, is in a way to become a mother, should not for the very shame of the act attempt to destroy herself. She must not add to the sin already committed, a further and more heinous crime of self-destruction.

Further, she is forbidden, under the penalty of a grave sin, from seeking to destroy the fruit of her body, either with the assistance of her partner in the guilt or that of her parents, in order to hide her shame from the world. She must not seek, at the instigation of her betrayer from the path of chastity, the assistance of "an old woman" versed in herbology. The putative father must protect the unfortunate partner of his guilt and the child.

Here is a tragic drama of the twentieth century, so often enacted in our criminal courts, written and commented upon by Zarathushtra in his gospel, in the primitive pastoral age, at the beginning of the history of the world. What thoughts, what deep moral philosophy, what superhuman knowledge, must have been invoked by the great Iranian sage, to soften the hardships of life, by introducing a ray of heavenly mercy, of which Tom Hood sang centuries after:

**"Take her up tenderly, Lift her with care;
Fashion'd so slenderly, Young and so fair.
Touch her not scornfully;
Think of her mournfully,
Gently and humanly; Not of the stains of her –
All that remains of her, Now is pure womanly."**

[Submitted by Dr. Kersey Antia, from "The Teachings of Zoroaster and the Philosophy of the Parsi Religion" by S. A. Kapadia, MD, LRCP, 1908]

Health and Wellness at Congress 2002

Healthy Living - Our Right Our Responsibility

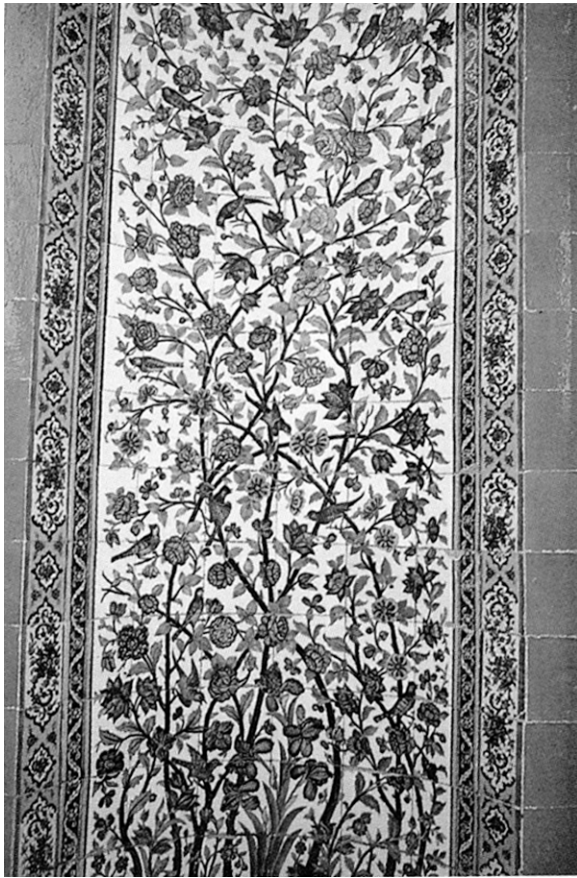
In keeping with the theme of Congress 2002 [see pages 7-9] in Chicago, July 4-7, 2002 the Health and Wellness program will attempt to empower the community through practical education for healthy living:

Wellness exhibits in the Marketplace on Nutrition, Disease Prevention, Early Detection, Reiki and Yoga demonstration and more.

Nutrition & Diabetes workshop by Board-certified diabetes and nutrition educator, Kharmeen Kulkarni is planned for the July 5th lunch break.

Session on July 6th (4:00 - 6:00 PM) chaired by Mehroo Patel M.D.F.A.A.F.P, with an elite panel of physician specialists.

A Physican and Healthcare Professionals' Mixer on July 5th, 6:00 pm, to bring professionals together to network and increase awareness. Students and to-be-professionals welcome. Call Mehroo Patel at (708) 409-9361.



"Tree of Life" design in ornate, painted tile work on a monument in Shiraz.

taking care of your ticker

A look at heart disease (which is so prevalent among Zarathushtis) and some important risk factors. The author also discusses some practical suggestions for prevention of heart disease and maintaining healthy functioning of the heart.

By Jimmy Ghadiali
Montreal, Quebec

I schemic heart disease is still the single most important killer in western populations, claiming 25% of all lives. The ICES group in Toronto reports the Canadian rate as 37% [1].

The cost of cardiovascular disease (CVD) in Canada is approximately \$20 billion a year [2]. With the aging population, we can expect an increase in the prevalence of CVD.

This article looks at heart disease and some important risk factors and discusses primary and secondary prevention.

Progression of heart disease. Heart disease generally starts with build-up of 'plaque'. Plaque is made up of cholesterol and platelets. The inside 'lumen' of the blood vessel is reduced and free flow of blood is restricted (atherosclerosis).

Ischemic heart disease means starvation of the heart tissue with nutrition and oxygen, resulting in a build-up of impurities. This is called '*coronary artery disease*' (CAD) and leads to chest pain, called '*angina pectoris*'.

If the plaque ruptures, it can totally block blood flow to the heart tissue. This leads to a heart attack, or '*myocardial infarct*' (MI).

There are situations (due to risk factors) where the heart becomes enlarged. This is called '*myocardial hypertrophy*'. This can also lead to failure of the '*pump*', or '*congestive heart failure*'.

If ruptured plaque or a '*thrombus*' lodges itself in a fine blood vessel in the brain, the result is '*stroke*'.

Primary prevention. Preventing that first event is called primary prevention. It could be preventing a myocardial infarct (heart attack), or angina pectoris (chest pain, without damage to the heart, related to starvation of oxygen to the heart tissue).

Even prevention of stroke (for the first time) is primary prevention.

Very few doctors focus on primary prevention. Most people take it very lightly and often skip their pills. Generally speaking they feel good, they are not sick. With a little bit of self-discipline, this is where most benefits can be obtained.

In the next decade we will see a special focus, from doctors and governments, in primary prevention.

Secondary prevention. This is preventing your subsequent event, i.e. preventing your second heart attack, or preventing your second stroke. Here the person is not healthy. Very often, after the first event, the patient is 'shaken up'. They are more willing to modify their life-style. In general, the entire family is a positive influence on secondary prevention.

Key risk factors for coronary artery disease (CAD) are:

- (1) Elevated blood pressure

- (2) Elevated cholesterol
- (3) Diabetes Mellitus (DM)
- (4) Smoking.

It is important to note that despite these risk factors, a person can feel good and healthy (asymptomatic). However, the injury process to the heart is in progress – silently.

(1) Elevated Blood Pressure (Hypertension), i.e. SBP (Systolic Blood Pressure) is greater than 140 mm Hg. It affects one in five adult Canadians. The Canadian Heart Health Survey revealed only 16% of Canadians with hypertension had adequate blood pressure management [3]. Uncontrolled hypertension can lead to ischemic heart disease, stroke, peripheral vascular disease and renal failure.

Prevention of Hypertension

- Medication is the cornerstone to keeping your SBP under 140 mm Hg.
- Lifestyle modification for control of hypertension is very important but often unaddressed. Factors that play a key part in hypertension, that we have total control over, are:
 - Sedentary lifestyle
 - Excess body weight
 - Excess alcohol consumption
 - Excess salt intake
 - Stress.

The damaging effects of uncontrolled hypertension are reversible:

- Proper medication to control it is very important.
- Physical activity for 50 to 60 minutes, 3 to 4 times per week.
- Weight loss should be encouraged for all overweight people.
- Healthy adults should limit alcohol consumption to under 2 drinks per day.
- Processed food is often responsible for 80% of your salt intake [4]. Restricting salt can have a noticeable positive impact on your BP.
- Strategies to reduce stress include: Increasing awareness of what is

responsible for the stress; working on your communication skills, if necessary; management of anger or anxiety; and relaxation exercises.

(2) Elevated Cholesterol, i.e. greater than 5.2 mmol/L (greater than 200 mg/dL in the US). LDL is the bad cholesterol and HDL is the good cholesterol.

High LDL can lead to myocardial infarct (heart attack), angina, stroke, and peripheral vascular disease.

Prevention of high cholesterol

- Medication plays a very important role in lowering cholesterol. A group of drugs called “STATINS” have clearly shown in the WOSCOP [5], CARE [6], 4S [7], and other studies that death, myocardial infarct and stroke can be reduced significantly.
- The key problem with cholesterol lowering drugs is compliance. It is a silent disease, and often people feel healthy. As a result, they do not take their medication regularly.
- Diet is also important, e.g. eggs are bad for you. Nuts, for example, increase your HDL and are considered to be very good.
- Exercise is also very good for you.
- Excessive body weight is harmful and calorie restriction is also advisable.

(3) Diabetes Mellitus (DM). The prevalence of diabetes in our society is reported to be around 5% [8], [9]. It is estimated that about one-half of cases actually go unreported. This brings the incidence to 10% [8].

Certain groups, like the North-American Indians (aboriginals) have a much higher incidence – as high as 40%.

Zarathushti communities, too, have a much higher incidence than the general population (the databases available have several limitations in knowing the true incidence).

Just ten years ago, adult diabetes (Type II) would be seen in adults over the age of 35. Since the past two years, it has not been uncommon

to see a 23-year old with adult diabetes.

Uncontrolled diabetes mellitus can lead to blindness, diabetic ulcers – sometimes resulting into amputation, myocardial infarct, coronary artery disease, peripheral vascular disease and renal failure.

Control of Diabetes

- Medication plays a very important role in the control of blood sugar.
- In advanced stages, daily insulin use is often required.
- Diet control and consultation of a qualified dietician is strongly recommended.
- Regular checking of the blood sugar is important.
- Exercise often leads to better control of diabetes and in the pre-diabetic, IBT (impaired glucose tolerance) can delay use of medication.
- With excessive intake of alcohol, stabilization of blood sugar is a problem; hence it should be avoided.
- Finally, if a member of the immediate family has diabetes, blood sugar should be checked every 6 months to a year (depending on the age).

(4) Smoking

Lung cancer is the No. 1 type of cancer in the male. 87% of lung cancer is a direct result of smoking [10].

In the Nurses Health Study, in over 84,000 nurses (age 30-55 years) followed for 14 years, 41% of the nurses developed coronary artery disease, which was directly attributed to smoking [11].

Even governmental health departments have lately been giving much attention to the harm related to smoking. A recent major step was taken by the Quebec and Canada governments to pay for nicotine patches and gums, for anyone wanting to quit smoking. **HELP YOURSELF QUIT SMOKING. QUIT WHILE YOU ARE AHEAD!**

Other prevention strategies in the news

● **Homocystine.** This is an amino acid made by the body during normal metabolism. An elevated blood level of homocystine has been associated with CAD.

Vitamins B6, B12 and folic acid are known to breakdown homocystine. This debate is not over as yet; studies are underway to prove/disprove this. Before you dash off to have your homocystine levels checked, it is generally wise to eat green vegetables and fruits.

● **Vitamin-E.** Antioxidants were considered to be protective for the heart. The recent HOPE Study (Heart Outcomes Prevention Evaluation Study) in 10,000 patients treated with 400 mg of vitamin E for 4-5 years showed no benefit, as compared to the placebo arm [12].

In the study of people over the age of 55 years with two risk factors (e.g. hypertension, smoking, diabetes, prior stroke, prior MI, etc.) the ACE inhibitor *ramipril* at 10 mg was shown to have significant benefit in preventing death, MI, and stroke, but vitamin E did not [12].

● **Aspirin.** Aspirin keeps the platelets from joining together in a cluster, thus preventing a thrombus (blood clot). 80 mg a day is proven to prevent stroke. (Dosage for headaches is 325 mg and greater). It has also been shown to reduce angina attacks and to prevent MI.

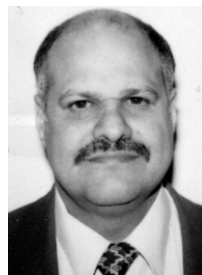
Conclusion.

- Yes, prevention is better than cure.
- Take medication only under the guidance of your physician
- Don't wait for a first cardiac event to change your lifestyle. If not for you, do it for your loved ones.
- If you are concerned about your heart, but have the attitude "let's wait and see", I suggest you try only the following three:
 - Walk for an hour, 3 times a week
 - Reduce your daily calorie intake (diabetics, consult a dietician).
 - Stop smoking (if you do). ■

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Jimmy H. Ghadiali was born in Bombay, India and immigrated to Canada in 1974 with his wife Roshan and daughters Delna and Carmin. Jimmy obtained a Bachelor's degree in Chemistry in 1971 and has ongoing Pharma training programs. Since 1971 he has been employed by Aventis Pharma and its prior companies, such as Roussel, Hoechst, and Hoechst-Marion-Roussel. Currently he is the Director, Hospital and Specialty Sales. He can be reached at ghadiali@colba.net.



Organized Religion Can Be Good Medicine

Personal spirituality (which is a belief in God or a greater power) is known to have a positive effect on health and healing, e.g. enhancing the quality of life and survival rates in cancer patients [Creagan, Mayo Clinic Proc, 72(2):160-5, 1997]. But a series of new studies indicate that participation in organized religion appears to offer distinct benefits as well [Mitka, JAMA, 280(22): 1896-7, 1998].

Elderly people who attend church services at least once a week were found to have healthier immune systems, being half as likely as non-attendees to have elevated interleukin 6. Researchers hypothesize that religious involvement lowers stress levels, suppressing the release of cortisol and other stress hormones that impair immune function [Int. J. Psychiatry Med, 27:233, 1997].

Another study found that regular church-goers 60 years and older, are significantly less likely to have been admitted to the hospital, had fewer acute-hospital admissions, and overall spent fewer days in the hospital than less regular church-goers [South Med J, 91:925, 1998].

People who attended religious services at least once a week and prayed or studied the bible at least daily had consistently lower blood pressure than those who did so less frequently or not at all. Interestingly, this study also noted that people who regularly tuned into religious TV or radio had higher blood pressure than those who did so less frequently [Int. J Psychiatry Med, 28:189, 1998].

On the other hand, of patients diagnosed with depressive disorder, the more personally religious or spiritual the patients were, the speedier their remission from depression [Am J Psychiatry, 155:536, 1998].

[Submitted by Dr. Mehroo Patel from AAEM Medical Digest, 1999]



Four of the ten leading causes of death in North America as well as among the Zarathushtis are associated with improper diet. Food choices and lifestyles largely contribute to healthy living.

eat well live longer

By Dinaz Italia
Washington, DC

Most Zarathushtis, if given one wish, would choose a long and healthy life. The best approach to promoting health and preventing disease is living a healthy lifestyle from the start. It may be surprising that four of the ten leading causes of death in North America are associated directly with diet. These include heart disease, cancer, diabetes and stroke, all of which are prevalent among Zarathushtis. Most health problems don't occur with a single incident in life. Instead, they are the result of a combination of factors, some of which you can't control, such as family history, age and gender. In the long run though, your food choices and lifestyle largely contribute to healthy aging.

Our food choices have been influenced by many factors, including our culture, surroundings, the foods available to us, and the people around us. Food is a source of pleasure, so it's no surprise that Zarathushtis entertain and celebrate with food or look forward to a special dish. Good nutrition can add pleasure to eating, especially as you increase the variety of foods in your diet and learn how to include your favorite foods into a healthy eating style. There is no secret to healthful eating. The key is to obtain most of your calories from grain products, fruits, vegetables, reduced-fat dairy prod-

ucts, lean meat, fish, poultry and legumes. Fats and sweets need to be restricted. This is summed up in the seven statements provided in the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and illustrated by the *Food Guide Pyramid* [next page] and *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating*.

Guideline 1: **Variety is a priority**

In order to provide your body with the essential vitamins, minerals and nutrients it requires daily, it is essential to consume many different foods. Most foods and beverages contain more than one nutrient, but not one food contains them all. The *Food Guide Pyramid* provides guidelines for the recommended number of servings that should be consumed each day from the different food groups. It is important to note the serving sizes in order to maintain reasonable portion sizes.

Guideline 2: **Physical activity**

The typical adult gains weight as they age. Excess body fat increases the risk for many health problems, including those previously mentioned. Weight should be managed with a combination approach – balancing the energy you take in with at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity 3-5 times a week.

Guideline 3: Enjoy grains, fruits and vegetables

As these foods are located at the base of the Food Guide Pyramid, they are required in greater quantities than others. These foods are good sources of vitamins, minerals and fiber, and can be key in lowering the risk of developing heart disease and certain types of cancer. Complex carbohydrates such as whole wheat breads, brown rice and legumes are nutrient dense foods compared to refined white breads and white rice. The recommended daily fiber intake is 25-35 grams. Fiber provides different health benefits, depending on the type consumed.

Insoluble fiber, also known as 'roughage', adds bulk and softness to stools, promoting regularity and preventing constipation. This action helps waste materials pass through the gastrointestinal tract more quickly and easily, preventing gastrointestinal problems such as hemorrhoids and diverticulosis. This process of speeding up the time it takes for waste to pass through the digestive tract may reduce the risk of developing colon and rectal cancers.

Foods high in insoluble fiber include whole-wheat products, wheat bran and many vegetables. Looking at the nutrition facts label on a food package tells you the quantity of fiber in the particular food. For example, being 'brown bread' or 'wheat bread' doesn't make bread whole wheat. In many instances, brown bread contains food coloring that gives it the appropriate appearance. It is important to make sure that the package states that the bread is made from whole-wheat flour and this should be the first of the ingredients on the list.

In order to obtain the most out of fruits and vegetables, it is important to consume the skins. For example, a medium potato with the skin has 3.6 grams of fiber. Skinless, it has 2.3 grams. Fruits contain an average of 3 grams of fiber per serving, compared to only a trace in juices after the peel and pulp has been removed.

Soluble fiber dissolves to become gummy or viscous in the gastrointestinal tract. It binds well to fatty substances, promoting their excretion. This action helps lower blood cholesterol levels by helping the body absorb less dietary fat. In addition, soluble fiber may help lower blood sugar levels in diabetics. Fiber is indigestible plant material that slows the emptying of the stomach. Blood sugar levels may be curbed by slowing the time it takes for the glucose in food to be released into the blood stream. In addition, this slowing action makes the stomach feel full for a longer period after meals, and could avoid overeating. Soluble fiber is found in foods such as oats, dry beans, peas and legumes.

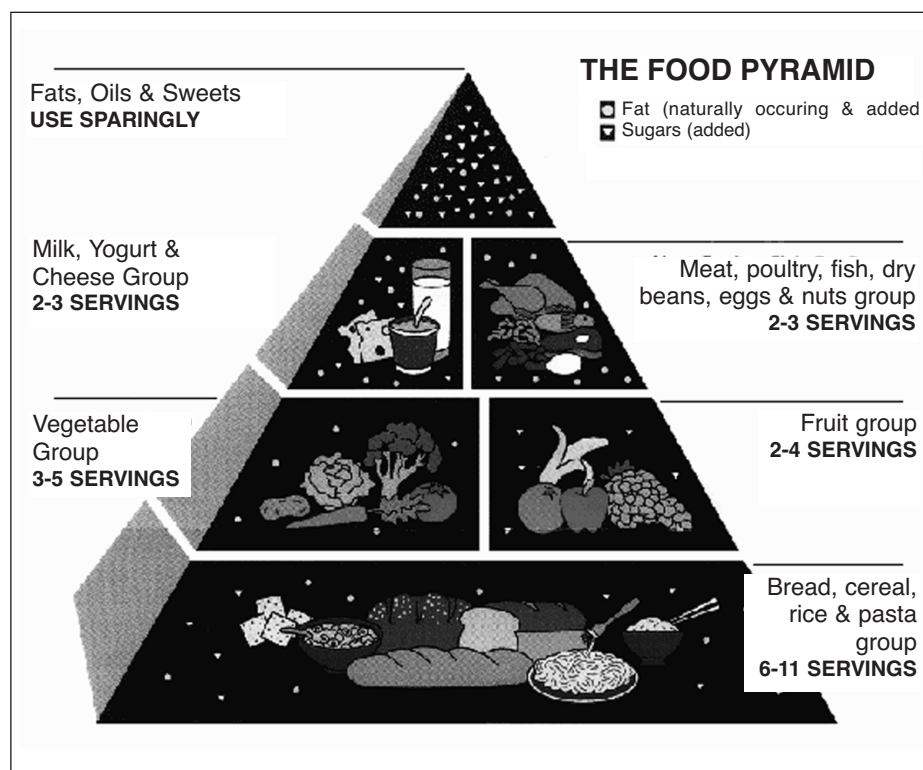
Guideline 4: Cut the fat

The majority of North Americans consume too much fat. The statistic has been repeated numerous times; heart disease is North America's number one killer. It's a disease that affects both men and women and accounts for about 40% of deaths annually in the United States. We now know that the higher the blood cholesterol level, the greater the chance of developing heart disease.

From a nutrition standpoint, a diet high in fat, especially saturated fats, has the most significant effect on raising blood cholesterol levels. Fats that consist largely of **saturated** fatty acids are usually solid at room temperature. For example, butter, lard and tropical vegetable oils (coconut and palm) are composed mainly of saturated fat. On the other hand, fats that contain mostly **monounsaturated** and **polyunsaturated fats** will not raise blood cholesterol levels to the same extent. Canola oil, olive oil, safflower oil and sunflower oil are much healthier alternatives.

Recently there has been interest in omega-3 fatty acids and their link to heart disease. These are one form of polyunsaturated fatty acids that are found mostly in fatty, cold-water varieties of seafood, such as mackerel, albacore tuna, salmon, sardines and lake trout. The recent research has shown that omega-3 fatty acids have the potential to prevent platelets from clotting and sticking to artery walls, which in turn may help lower the risk for blocked vessels and heart attacks.

Guideline 5: Restrict sugar intake



Foods that contain large quantities of refined sugar, as opposed to natural sugar found in fruits and vegetables, contain a significant number of calories without providing other significant nutrients. One teaspoon of table sugar contains fifteen calories, which can be termed “empty calories” because apart from the simple carbohydrate, they provide no other essential nutrients, vitamins or minerals that are beneficial to good health. In addition, when bacteria in your mouth mix with simple carbohydrates, acids are formed, which eat away tooth enamel, causing dental caries. This action continues for 20-30 minutes after you eat something sugary.

One widespread myth related to sugar is that it causes diabetes. Consumption of large quantities of sugar does not cause diabetes. People with diabetes are unable to use the carbohydrates they consume, either because their pancreas does not produce insulin, as in Type I diabetes, or because the insulin that is produced is not used effectively because the insulin receptors are not functioning, which is the case in Type II diabetes.

Guideline 6: Restrict salt intake

Salt is the common name for sodium chloride. Table salt is 40% sodium and 60% chloride. Sodium is a mineral that is found as a natural part of many foods, and helps the body maintain fluid balance and blood pressure. However, about 30% of the population is salt sensitive, and for these people, a high intake of sodium can contribute to high blood pressure, which in turn, is a major risk factor for heart disease, stroke and kidney disease.

It is recommended that daily sodium intake be less than 3000mg. One teaspoon of salt alone contains 2300mg of sodium. In North America, only about 25 percent of sodium intake comes from the salt we add to food or the saltshaker. The main source of sodium in our diets is processed foods such as canned and pre-pre-

pared foods that add to our convenience. The sodium in these foods acts as a preservative and increases the shelf life of the product. If you use canned beans or vegetables, rinsing them in a strainer under cold water will reduce the sodium content by 40 percent. Using fresh or frozen vegetables reduces sodium intake.

Guideline 7: Drink alcohol in moderation

Alcoholic beverages supply calories without additional nutrients. Drinking larger than recommended quantities of alcohol could contribute to high blood pressure, stroke, heart disease, certain cancers, birth defects, and diseases of the liver and pancreas.

In conclusion, the message that the above guidelines are relaying is that eating a variety of foods within a balanced diet is the basis for healthy eating. It is important to remember that “all foods can fit” and if eaten in moderation, your favorite foods can be included in your diet. Hopefully this information has provided you with some “food for thought”. ■

SOURCES:

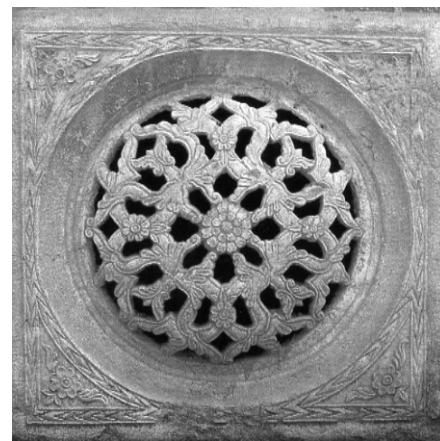
Two good sources for information are American Dietetic Association (www.eatright.org) and Dietitians of Canada (www.dietitians.ca).

*Born and raised in Hong Kong, **Dinaz Italia***



graduated with a BS in nutrition from Penn State University, and received her masters at Case Western Reserve University in

Cleveland, Ohio. Dinaz is currently a clinical dietitian at Georgetown University Hospital in Washington, DC. In summer 2002, she will be moving with her husband to Richmond, VA. For information, contact Dinaz at: dinazitalia@hotmail.com.



FREIZE IN SHIRAZ

By Shahnaz Jangi
Sechelt, British Columbia

My journey towards chiropractic began in 1993. I was a full time student at the University of British Columbia pursuing medical school prerequisites. I had been suffering from chronic headaches, lower back pain and stomach problems for the past three years. One day a friend suggested I see a chiropractor. “A chiropractor? What is that?” I thought. I did not know what the word meant nor did I know what they did. Needless to say I was extremely apprehensive but finally decided to give it a try. All the pill popping I was doing was not getting me anywhere.

My introduction to chiropractic care. My first chiropractic visit was a long one. I met with Dr. Bird, the chiropractor and discussed in detail my present health, past health problems, and any falls, accidents or surgeries that I may have had. She also asked me questions about my family’s health history; she was in particular looking for chronic diseases like cancer, diabetes, heart problems and arthritis that might run in the family. I was quite impressed with the detailed picture my chiropractor acquired.

Once the consultation was completed I underwent a thorough examination, consisting of a postural exam, muscle strength testing, neurological exam, and spinal range of motion tests.

FROM “The Fabulous Land of Iran” by Javad Yassavoli

Chiropractic health care

Safe, efficient and cost effective, chiropractic is a way of managing and treating problems as diverse as back pain, asthma, heart burn, menstrual pain, sinus pain and migraines, without the intervention of drugs or surgery

Even though my lower back and neck were the main source of my complaints, my chiropractor evaluated the joints and muscles in my feet, knees, wrist, elbows and hips. She explained that the relationships between these structures are very important in evaluating the structure and condition of the body.

Functioning of the nervous system.

After the examination, Dr. Bird went on to explain that the spinal column is a series of movable bones which begin at the base of the skull and end in the center of the hips. Thirty-one pairs of spinal nerves extend down the spine from the brain and exit through a series of openings called the *intervertebral foramen*. These nerves leave the spine and form a network, which influences every tissue in the body. She explained accidents, stress, tension, over-exertion, the birthing process, improper nutrition and countless other factors can result in abnormal structural relationships in the body, which can affect the functioning of the nervous system.

Dr. Bird explained that chiropractors work to establish and maintain optimal function in the body by correcting these abnormal structural relationships. They use postural alignment, vertebral adjustments and the self-regulating physiological control systems of the body. They also

work with the spinal column and the nervous system because it is the nervous system that integrates and coordinates all major functions in the body in response to internal and external change and stress.

Chiropractic treatment. I was quite apprehensive about what an adjustment was, as I had heard stories of chiropractors ‘cracking’ people’s backs. An ‘adjustment’ Dr. Bird explained was the specific manipulation of joints in the body, which have abnormal movement or fail to function normally. She reassured me that chiropractors spend years learning motion palpation (the art of examining by movement and touch) and other forms of examining procedures, so that they can administer specific and appropriate adjustments. The adjustment is usually given by hand or in some cases with an adjusting instrument, especially for babies and the elderly.

My first chiropractic adjustment did not hurt at all. I was adjusted in the upper back, the lower back and neck. In addition, my feet and knees were also adjusted. She explained that because the arches in my feet were not supported, my knees were compensating for them by turning in. This in turn, put stress on my hips and lower back, causing the pain that I was feeling. She recommended I consult with a podiatrist in regards to

better supportive footwear and possibly arch supports. I was also given a prescription for a stretching and exercise program to strengthen my spine and extremities.

After an initial amount of mild soreness, I could not believe how much better I was feeling. I remember feeling like I could breathe more deeply than I was able to before. I had no headaches for the next few days and my lower back was less sore. I could actually sit longer while studying. What surprised me the most though is that after I started chiropractic treatments, the constant stomach problems that I had for years went away and have stayed away. My chronic menstrual cramping and irregular cycles were also improved.

I received a treatment schedule of twice a week for two weeks after which a re-evaluation was done to monitor my progress. At that time, my headaches were almost non-existent and my lower back pain had dramatically improved. I was quite concerned about the number of treatments, since I had heard rumors that once you go to a chiropractor, you have to continue going forever.

When I asked Dr. Bird about this, she explained that chiropractic works in three stages of care: the first stage of care is decreasing the pain and discomfort a patient feels; the second is making a therapeutic structural change and the final stage of care is to maintain this structural change with a minimum amount of treatments. She explained that the time spent within each stage of care was dependent on the patient’s current condition.

Some factors affecting care might be: how long the problem had been an issue, and what the current aggravating contributors were (like the type of occupation, emotional stress and nutrition). She explained that once we reach the third level of care, patients can maintain this level with a healthy lifestyle, but she stressed the importance of regular check-ups

to help maintain this progress. It is very easy for individuals to slip into old habitual patterns that might re-aggravate the current problem.

A career in chiropractic. Gauging by how much better I felt, I contemplated a change in my career goals. I looked into what it took to become a chiropractor and was not surprised to find that entrance into a school required at least three years of pre-medical undergraduate level courses. Once admitted into chiropractic college, students were extensively trained in anatomy (including a whole year spent on a cadaver), biochemistry, microbiology, physiology, pharmacology and pathology. Chiropractic studies included motion palpation, x-ray techniques and diagnosis, laboratory techniques and diagnosis, diagnosis and treatment of neurological and musculoskeletal conditions. Differential diagnosis was also included.

“ Chiropractors work to establish and maintain optimal functions in the body by correcting abnormal structural relationships ... they also work with the spinal column and the nervous system ”

After graduating from chiropractic college I have never looked back. Chiropractic is a great way of managing and treating the human body without the intervention of drugs or surgery. There are cases that are beyond the scope of chiropractic care, but chiropractors are trained to recognize this and make referrals to an appropriate health care practitioner.

Effectiveness of chiropractic care. Numerous studies have been conducted regarding the effectiveness of

chiropractic care. One of the most comprehensive was the 216-page *Manga Report*, conducted by three health economists led by the University of Ottawa Professor Pran Manga, PhD. This report overwhelmingly supported the efficacy, safety, scientific validity and cost-effectiveness of chiropractic for low-back pain. Additionally, it found that high patient satisfaction levels were associated with chiropractic care than with medical treatment alternatives.

The RAND study conducted by one of America's most prestigious centers for research in public policy, science and technology found spinal manipulation to be of benefit for some conditions.

The New Zealand Commission Report (1978-80) was a particularly significant study. The Commission entered the inquiry with "the general impression...shared by many in the community that chiropractic was an unscientific cult, not to be compared with orthodox medical or paramedical services." However, in the 377-page report the commission concluded "that modern chiropractic is a soundly based and valuable branch of health care in a specialized area."

In 1990, a controlled trial conducted by British Medical Research Council (BMRC) compared chiropractic and hospital outpatient treatment for managing low back pain of mechanical origin. They concluded that chiropractic treatment is worthwhile, with long-term benefit in comparison to its counterpart and recommended

that consideration should be given to providing chiropractic coverage within the National Health System. [*BMJ, Vol. 300, pp. 1431-37*].

Although the majority of scientific studies conducted have been in regards to the effectiveness of chiropractic treatment for musculoskeletal problems, these problems are not the only reasons why patients seek out chiropractic care. They seek it out for problems as diverse as asthma, heartburn, menstrual pain, sinus pain, headaches and migraines, as well as a variety of childhood ailments.

I hope that the information I have shared with you regarding my personal experiences with chiropractic has been useful. Chiropractic is a wonderful alternative to help many conditions without the use of drugs or surgeries. If you have questions you can contact the local chiropractic association for your state or province to get more information. ■

Dr. Shahnaz Jangi, B.Sc., D.C., has a family-based chiropractic practice in Sechelt, British Columbia. She received her chiropractic degree from Western States Chiropractic College in Portland, Oregon. If you have any questions in regard to chiropractic health care, please feel free to contact her at (604) 885-7124 or at sjangi@hotmail.com.



Asked, "What surprises you most about mankind?" God answers:

"That they lose their health to make money and then lose their money to restore their health.

"That by thinking anxiously about the future, they forget the present, such that they live neither for the present nor the future.

"That they live as if they will never die, and they die as if they had never lived ..."

- Author unknown



you can have a million dollar smile

Aesthetic or cosmetic dentistry was practiced by the Egyptians thousands of years ago. Today it is available to all, to create a pleasing appearance which often makes the difference between success and failure in the lives of many people.

By Porus S. Turner
Mumbai, India

In an age when everyone wants to look beautiful displaying an even row of pearly white natural teeth, '**Aesthetic Dentistry**' has become very popular and necessary. Twenty years ago, only film stars whose smiles were important on the big screen, underwent cosmetic changes of their teeth. Today, thanks to the small screen when every day we are exposed to beauty queens, models, and advertisements extolling the importance of beautiful smiles, aesthetic dentistry is sought after, from teenagers to housewives to aspiring models and film stars.

All these people want a change in their smile fast. They do not have the time to wait for months or years to undergo orthodontic treatment (braces) to correct their crooked teeth, although it is still the best way to do so. Many also have chipped, discolored, fractured teeth that cannot be corrected by orthodontics but by modern aesthetic dentistry.

In our modern competitive society, a pleasing appearance often makes the

difference between success and failure in the lives of many people. A captivating smile can open doors and remove obstacles that come between you and a fuller, richer life.

Aesthetic dentistry is not new. It was practiced thousands of years ago by the Egyptians as seen from the excavations of ancient Egyptian pyramids. However, we are fortunate that today we have advances in dental science to make today's procedures, not only painless but with a high degree of success.

Aesthetic or cosmetic dentistry strives to achieve both health and beauty with the needs of each patient. It is expensive and takes time. It is not advisable to seek short cuts and select discount dentistry. You should also remember that our teeth are covered by gum tissues and it is important to have healthy, pink, firm gums which do not bleed on pressure. A good aesthetic dentist first treats the gums before embarking on any cosmetic procedures on the teeth.

Discolored teeth are a social embarrassment and can lead to psychological trauma for an individual. Today, with the help of modern cosmetic

dentistry, we can predictably achieve brighter, whiter teeth and these results can be expected to last a long time. Basically, there are two types of staining of the teeth. The first is a **superficial staining** that occurs due to coffee, tea, tobacco and pan chewing, or from improper oral hygiene leading to plaque and tartar formation. It can be easily managed by thorough scaling and polishing of the teeth by the dentist combined with proper brushing and flossing at home by the patient. The second type of staining is **internal**, caused by color changes of the inside of the teeth. They are caused by faulty development of the teeth or by disturbances in calcification of the teeth due to ingestion of certain drugs like tetracycline in childhood. These discolorations are usually yellow, brown or gray blue in colour. Teeth can also stain internally as age advances and such stains besides polishing by the dentist, require to be bleached.

Bleaching. Discolored teeth that do not respond to professional scaling and polishing need to be bleached. Your dentist can either recommend in-office or at-home bleaching. In-office bleaching is done at the clinic

and requires 2-4 sittings lasting for 40-60 minutes.

The more recent method is at-home bleaching. It is fast gaining popularity both with dentists and patients. It can be accomplished at the convenience of the patient and is less costly. Numerous studies have shown it to be very effective and safe. The dentist takes an impression of your jaw and makes a soft plastic tray that intimately fits your teeth. He also supplies you with the bleaching gel to be put in the tray and wear it for a few hours during the day or overnight. There is an appreciable change towards whiteness, usually within 10-14 days of treatment. Although there are many home bleaching kits advertised in the lay press and on the television, they are not effective or safe.

Bonding is indeed a revolution in dentistry and is a one step transformation for unsightly teeth. It offers a quick and easy way to mark discolored or stained teeth and is an excellent alternative for patients who are not willing to undergo bleaching. Direct bonding is a process in which tooth colored moldable composites (plastics) are sculpted onto the front surfaces of the teeth and then cured (made hard) with a high intensity light. The process is completely painless, safe, fast and long lasting. However, one problem with direct composite bonding is that they tend to chip while biting on hard foods like bones, hard candy etc. They also tend to stain more readily than natural teeth and therefore, heavy coffee or tea drinkers, smokers and pan chewers are better treated with porcelain laminate veneers which do not stain.

Porcelain Laminate Veneers. The slight risk of discoloration or chipping can now be removed with one of bondings newest cousins – porcelain laminate veneers. They are fabricated in the laboratory and are subsequently bonded with special plastic cements to the teeth. The advantages are excellent aesthetics because the laboratory

can incorporate special stains and colors, greater opacity and surface characteristics that allow an almost perfect match to the natural teeth. They are also stronger than composites and therefore, less likely to chip or fracture. They do not discolor, are wear resistant and are extremely smooth. Bacterial plaque do not accumulate on them with the result that the surrounding gum tissues remain healthy and good looking. If cost is not a factor, porcelain laminate veneers are the ultimate for aesthetics, longevity as well as for health of the gingival tissues.

“Aesthetic dentistry is not new. It was practiced thousands of years ago by the Egyptians ... we now have advances in dental science to make today's procedures, not only painless, but with a high degree of success.”

Replacing old silver fillings. Old silver fillings that have chipped or deteriorated can now be replaced with tooth colored reinforced plastics that not only look aesthetic but which also reinforce the tooth because they are bonded to it. However, silver amalgam (a mixture of silver and mercury) is not toxic to the body and if aesthetics is not a concern and if they are intact, should not be replaced especially those in the back teeth.

Fractured teeth. When teeth break, they should be repaired as soon as possible, since there is a possibility that bacteria can travel through the exposed tubes of the dentin and infect the pulp (nerves and blood vessels present in the innermost portion of the tooth). Even if there is no pain, you must visit your dentist who will evaluate whether the pulp is damaged.

In the past, broken teeth could be repaired only with a crown. The disadvantage of crowning is that a lot of tooth structure (about one-third size) has to be ground away in order to create space for an aesthetically looking

crown. A more conservative approach is **bonding** which has revolutionized the entire concept of repairing broken teeth. We can literally form a new tooth by adding moldable plastic paste, sculpting it and then making it hard by means of a high intensity light. It is done very quickly (less than one hour) and in one sitting, rebuilding the tooth to its original shape, size and color. Many times, the results are even better than the original tooth. Whenever possible, bonding should be preferred instead of crowning, especially for the front teeth.

Crowning. When teeth are excessively broken down or are destroyed by ‘caries’ (cavities), **crowning** is a more permanent solution than bonding. The entire tooth structure must be reduced to one-third its original size and replaced with full porcelain or a combination of porcelain and metal (ceramo metal). For the front teeth, full porcelain crowns are generally preferred to ceramo metal crowns, because of their translucency which allows it to very closely mimic the natural tooth. They are also kinder to the surrounding gums and keep them pink and healthy.

Spaces between front teeth. Orthodontics, if possible, would be the best way to close the spaces. However, it takes about six months to two years and regular visits and checkups during that period. In some cases, the dentist may select a combination of orthodontics and bonding to close the spaces and improve the smile. In the majority of cases, however, direct composite bonding or porcelain veneers are usually the preferred treatment of choice.

Replacing missing teeth. A permanent, more aesthetic and healthier way to restore missing teeth is by means of a **fixed bridge**. In a bridge, two caps are made on the teeth adjoining the missing teeth and the missing tooth is joined to them. The whole unit is then permanently cemented on the prepared teeth.

The fit and the margins of crowns and bridges are of utmost impor-

tance, both from the point of view of aesthetic as well as health of the surrounding tissues. It is mandatory not to leave spaces between the tooth and the cap (crown) because such spaces harbor bacteria (plaque formation).

Dental condition of Parsis in India.

The state of dental health of Parsis in India, as far as cavities and gum disease is considered, is not very good. This is more so in the lower socio-economic group of patients. However, their oral condition is still better than the average Indian adult especially those living in the rural areas of India.

On the positive side, most Parsis, because of their religion, fortunately do not smoke. Smoking has been documented to severely compromise the health of the gums and the bone which support our teeth. It also causes coating and staining of the teeth which in turn leads to increased plaque accumulation which further propagates periodontal disease.

Smoking and chewing of tobacco which fortunately, again is not prevalent in the community has also been proved to cause pre-cancerous and cancerous lesions in the oral cavity. The incidence and prevalence of oral cancer amongst Parsis is insignificant.

Tips for prevention of oral disease

- Avoid frequent snacking of sugary foods and drinks.
- After any challenge by sugar, rinse the mouth with water and still better, brush with a fluoride containing dentifrice.
- Twice daily brushing and flossing with a fluoride copolymer and antimicrobial toothpaste like Colgate Total is extremely important. Proper method of brushing and for a minimum period of two minutes, is important. Electric toothbrushes have been known to be three times better in removing plaque than the best ordinary tooth brush.
- Visit the dentist twice, or at least once a year, for checkup and cleaning.
- Do not neglect the first signs and symptoms of cavities, e.g. pain on cold or sweets, and lodging of food

in teeth. Spontaneous or severe pain especially at night without provocation is usually too late to save a tooth except with endodontics (root canal treatment) which is expensive and best avoided unless there is no choice.

- Avoid completely the obnoxious habit and addiction of tobacco, be it by smoking or chewing.
- Chewing of sugarless chewing gum especially the ones containing Xylitol are good for stimulating saliva which in turn neutralizes acids and acts as an antibacterial agent to prevent cavities.
- Do not ignore the first signs of gum disease such as bleeding of the gums. ■

Prof. Dr. Porus S. Turner is professor of post graduate studies in



prosthodontics at the A.B. Shetty Institute of Dental Sciences, Mangalore. He has contributed to two books and has recently written a book on "Art & Science of Aesthetic Dentistry." He lectures in India and abroad on restorative and aesthetic dentistry and is the past president of the Indian Academy of Aesthetic and Cosmetic Dentistry. He is also president of the Sir Ness Wadia Club in Rustom Baug, Mumbai.



A dentist's epitaph in a cemetery:

***"When on this tomb
You gaze with gravity,
Cheer Up! I'm filling
My Last Cavity."***

- Fed Newsletter

Ode to a Tongue Cleaner

"I want a tongue cleaner" I asked,
Of all the folks I met.
But nobody ever grasped
What really I meant!

They wondered what kind of animal
A tongue-cleaner was.
Perhaps one as dull
As I to them was.

"Hey, where are you from?"
"India, of course, why ask me that?"
"Oh, No! Does it grow in full form?
And is it common over there?"

"Do you eat it ripe or raw?
Do you fry it or bake?
Do you cook it on a stove?
Just wonder what you make?"

People in the business
Didn't know a thing
It is none of my business,
Though it came to me as a sting.

At least the learned professors,
Dentists, psychologists and what not
Might give me some particulars,
At least, that's what I naively thought.

Alas! They too could not grasp
"How is it operationally defined?"
That's all they could ask.
I said, "It is too deified

For us Indians to define.
Yes, it's half a foot in length
Made of plastic fine
And a one-fifth inch in width."

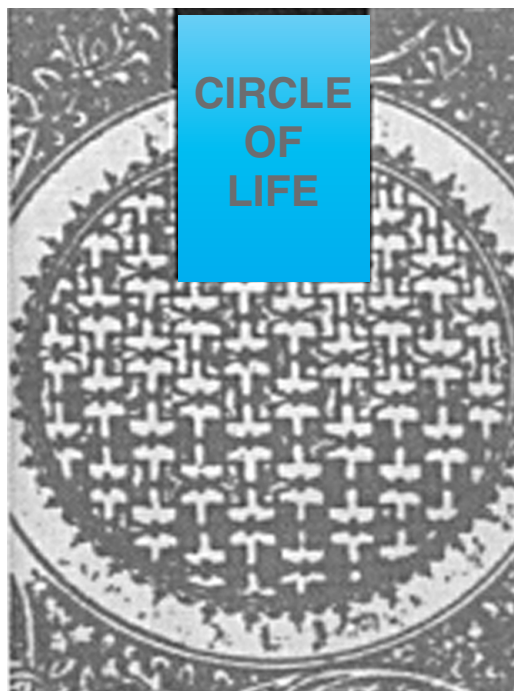
They ask "What do you do with it?"
"What a question, we clean our tongue
Withal to keep it fresh and sweet
And stimulating as a song."

The word spreads quickly around,
"Do you know what a tongue cleaner is?"
Why the Indians do abound
In strange things like this.

However much I here may change,
I will not call it a day,
Until I get my precious tongue
Cleaned every day.

To those who venture to the west
And have the tongue cleaner habit
May I from my experience, suggest
Do not leave home without it!

[This lament was written by Dr. Kersey Antia, in 1965, when he arrived in the USA, as a student].



dentistry and the zarathushti community

There is a significant decline of Zarathushstis entering the dental profession. This should be of concern to the community.

Yasmin Ghadialy
Baldwin, New York

The last 20 years have brought enormous changes to the dental profession. The most significant change is in the scope of clinical dental practice. This is largely due to shifts in patient demographics, provider availability and changing role for the dentist in the health care community. Some of the significant issues facing the Zarathushti community include (i) changing demographics (ii) financing and access to dental services, and (iii) declining number of Zarathushti dentists.

Changing demographics. A significant change is in the growth of the elderly population, much of which comes from aging baby boom generation. The elderly of the future will have needs different from today's seniors. Studies suggest that older people will retain more teeth and the future dentist will devote more time caring for intact dentitions than replacing missing teeth. Older Zarathushstis are more likely to suffer from chronic systemic diseases such as arthritis, osteoporosis, cardiovascular disease and diabetes. All these diseases can directly or indirectly affect oral health. Diabetes has been

associated with an increased prevalence and severity of periodontal disease. Oral health care needs of children must also be addressed. Dental cavities remain one of the most common diseases among Zarathushti children. The children most affected are from low socio-economic backgrounds with limited access to care.

Financing and access to services. Another issue that affects dental care is the patient's ability to afford treatment. The urban, educated, affluent Zarathushstis can afford to pay for the treatment, but in certain villages in India and Iran, Zarathushstis receive either minimal or no dental care.

Declining numbers. The number of Zarathushstis entering the dental profession has significantly fallen, perhaps due to the steep rise in the tuition of dental schools.

What needs to be done?

- Zarathushti organizations must provide for annual dental check ups by Zarathushti dentists in areas where there is limited access to care or to individuals in economically challenged areas.

- Zarathushti dental professionals, working with Zarathushti organizations should provide funding and encouragement to Zarathushti youths to enter the profession.

Changing role of the dentist in the health care community. As cancer greatly affects the Zarathushti community, we must not overlook the serious threat which oral cancer diseases pose. In the dental community, oral cancer screening has now been aggressively promoted. One American dies every hour from oral and pharyngeal cancer. Five year survival rates approximate 50% primarily because the disease often is diagnosed late in the process. However, if the disease is diagnosed early, while the lesion is still localized, the five year survival rate is increased to 80%. A routine oral cancer examination is a pivotal component of the care we must provide to all, including Zarathushti patients. ■

Dr. Yasmin Ghadiali has been in private practice for the last 25 years.



She is past president of the Indian Dental Association (USA), NY, and is now a trustee of the same. She was secretary of

ZAGNY and is now trustee of the Darbe Mehr Zoroastrian Temple in New York.

Music, Sound and Healing

Many cultures believe that sound is a link between all things and their creator. Ancient philosophers believed music's healing influence greatly affected health and behavior. Western musical healing philosophy, ideas and writings go back to the Greek philosophers Aristotle and Plato. In eastern philosophy, the idea goes back to Sarasvati, the Hindu goddess of music and the sciences as well as god of the ancient Egyptians ...

Music's powerful creative and healing force can transform body, mind and spirit, affecting people in profound ways, including bringing tears, invoking memories or giving pleasure. As our bodies are made of mostly water, every cell in our body can be envisioned as a sound resonator enabling a separate pattern and pulse for every organ and cycle in our bodies. These various systems in our bodies respond to sound/music vibrations, mental and emotional consciousness.

Music's sensory and intellectual stimulation may increase or maintain a senior adult's level of physical, mental and social/emotional functioning, helping to maintain a high quality of life. A child's first development and learning experience may be enhanced through the addition of music.

In general, music alleviates pain when used with anesthesia and pain medications. Music in the operating theater relaxes the autonomic nervous system, quieting involuntary muscle spasms. Music is also used to elevate the patient's mood and counteract depression, promote movement for physical rehabilitation, calm or sedate, induce sleep, counteract apprehension or fear and reduce muscle tension.

[Excerpted from Informal Religious Meetings, December 2001. Source: Exploration Place, Wichita].



Photo: Parsiana March 1995

B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital Catapults Itself into the 21st Century

The newly renovated wing of the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital [photo above] in Mumbai, was inaugurated on January 3, 2002. Renovation of each floor of the hospital (A Wing) has been carried out through donations from the **Zartoshty Brothers – Mehraban and Late Faridoon** (for the ground floor), the **Incorporated Trustees of the Zoroastrian Charity Funds of Hong Kong, Canton and Macao** (for the first floor) and **Mr. and Mrs. Keki Jokhi** (for the second floor). Each floor has about 20 beds and ancillary areas.

The external facade of the 85-year-old building, a protected structure under Heritage Legislation, has been carefully preserved, while carrying out a total internal reconstruction. The renovated wing has catapulted the hospital into the 21st century, putting it on par, if not better, than other leading hospitals in Mumbai.

The hospital supports a large volume (71.5% of the total beds) of charity care. Last year, the hospital spent Rs. 10 crores, 16 lacs, out of which Rs. 7 crores, 27 lacs was spent on charity care. "This is the magnitude of the service rendered to the poor and needy of the community," said Mr. Homa Petit, president of the hospital.

Musing on the essentials of a full and contented life, he quoted Goethe:

HEALTH enough to make
work a pleasure,
WEALTH enough to
support your needs,
STRENGTH enough to battle with
difficulties and overcome them,
GRACE enough to confess your sins
and forsake them,
PATIENCE enough to toil until
some good is accomplished,
FAITH enough to make real
the things of God,
HOPE enough to remove all anxious
fears concerning the future,
CHARITY enough to be useful and
helpful to others.

The hospital is, indeed, an edifice of compassion and hope for the hopeless. For nine decades, it has served the community's needs from the proverbial "cradle to the grave". The visionaries who created this fine institution had laid the foundation on the solid rock of sincerity, service, progress and charity. Those who have walked in their footsteps have indeed taken the hospital to greater and greater heights. ■

[Excerpted from "The B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital" by Noshir H. Dadrawala, Jame Jamshed]



Practicing the art of healing. The illustrious Soonawala family of doctors in Mumbai, seated from left: Fardoon (urologist and andrologist), Jamshed D. (physician), Jamshed P. (physician), Rustom (obstetrician and gynecologist), Soli (dental surgeon). Standing from left: Feroze (obstetrician and gynecologist), Goolu (pediatrician), Darius (orthopedic surgeon), Ayesha (medical student), Rustum (physician), Arnaz (ENT surgeon), Phiroze (urologist and andrologist) and Burjor Banaji (ophthalmic surgeon).

When Dr. Pheroze Soonawala began his practice in 1926, little did he know that his legacy would be so rich, so gifted and so focussed. His four sons, Jamshed, Fardoon, Rustom and Soli, followed in his footsteps. So did his grandchildren. "All of us became doctors out of choice," says Dr. Rustom. "It wasn't a career decision that was thrust on us," adds Dr. Darius, "When we were growing up, dining table conversation usually revolved around anesthesia, surgery and x-ray reports. When you are exposed to medicine in your impressionable years, it sort of starts to rub off on you." Most of the Soonawalas have studied overseas, but chose to settle down and practice in Mumbai. What the Tatas and Birlas are to business, the Soonawalas are to medicine: Medicine's first family.

[Excerpted from "Soonawalas and the art of healing" by Vivek Kamath, *Bombay Times*, *The Times of India*, August 19, 2000; photo Pradeep Chandra]

Some Noted Parsi Medicos and Educators ...

- Dr. Rustomjee Billimoria was the "Father of Tuberculosis Medicine East of the Suez."
- Dr. Bomi R. Billimoria, India's first cardio-thoracic surgeon and Rustomjee's son, was the youngest ever FRCS (London) at age 21. He saw action in World War II.
- Bombay (and perhaps India)'s first successful open heart surgery was performed by a team of 3 Parsi surgeons: Dr. Bomi Billimoria, assisted by Drs. Jer Lashkari and Mehroo Kanga (now Patel) in 1958.
- India's first successful cardio-pulmonary resuscitation was performed by Dr. Mehroo Kanga (now Patel) at St. George's Hospital, Bombay, in 1958.
- India's first woman orthopedic surgeon was Dr. Perin Mullaferoze.
- India's first orthopedic surgeon with M. CL.(Eng) was Dr. Rustom Katrak.
- Dr. Sheroo Bharucha (now Kohli) was the first woman ever to merit M.CL (Liv.) as orthopedic surgeon.
- Dr. Keki Batliwalla was the first Parsi vice chancellor of Bombay University.
- Dr. Mehroo Bengalee, PhD, was the first Parsi woman vice chancellor of Bombay University.
- Dr. Rustom Jal Vakil was the first to introduce Ayurvedic medicine – *Rauwalfia Serpentina* to the western world. Its product Serpacil ruled the treatment of hypertension in the 1950s, 60s and 70s.
- Surgeon Dr. Rustom Cooper, was among the group who defected from the British Grant Medical College and developed the G. S. Medical College, the first institution "by the Indians for the Indians," and the premier medical college in Asia in the 1950s and 60s. ■

- By Mehroo M. Patel, M.D.



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.

Budee Jum jumavee Aspandiyar

“There is a certain blend of courage, integrity, character and principle, which has no satisfactory dictionary name but has been called different things at different times in different countries. Our American name for it is ‘guts’.

- Louis Adamic(1899-1951), A Study in Courage

One of my mamaijee’s(maternal grandmother) favorite expressions was “*Budee jum jumavee Aspandiyar!*”, roughly translated from Gujarati, “Great job. Great show, Aspandiyar!” For the longest time I had no idea who Aspandiyar was and what great things he had accomplished. All I knew was that my mamaijee, voiced this with great pride to whomever she thought deserved her praise; that would be for a job well done, showing oratory, physical or spiritual bravery, defending or praising our faith or any righteous show of gall, gumption or punk.

Much later, when I started my unbelievable journey toward my enlight-

enment about our faith through books (that I had no idea even existed), I understood.

Exploits of Aspandiyar. Aspandiyar, the valiant son of King Vishtaspa of Bactria, fought against Iran’s many enemies and led his people in their first victory against the evil Turanians. He loved and championed Zarathushtra and his teachings and preached the message of the prophet with eloquence and passion. Even when he was falsely imprisoned by his own father, at the behest of his enemies, Aspandiyar never lost his faith. His valor in the face of adversity was exemplary and his allegiance to his God, king, father and country was unsurpassed. His

*Come with me now
through time and mind,
for the past beckons
to be known.
And the future
Crouched like
a panther on the
bough of a tree,
Waits to see if we ...
if we
have truly
grown
while it grows
impatiently.*

- White Deer of Autumn

father, King Vishtaspa and his queen were the first initiates in the Zarathushti din, and he, Aspandiyar was next. The prophet presented him with a silver chain as a talisman that he was enjoined to wear around his neck at all times, but in battle, around his wrist.

Later, Aspandiyar was to battle Arjasp, his nemesis, avenge the murder of Zarathust and his grandfather Lohrasp and rescue his kidnapped sisters, Homai and Bahafrid, from the Turkomans. With his valiant knights and his white steed, he marched onto Turan and using wisdom and wit he managed to overcome seven obstacles, from slaying wolves, dragons, sorceress, phoenix, to taming and overcoming wild weather and treacheries of man.

In the accomplishment of these above tasks, we see the true character of this remarkable Iranian. He always took the responsibility of leading his brave and fearless knights into dangerous territories to face unseen foes. He did not shirk from insecurity and possible pitfalls, or relegate dangerous tasks to others. At the end of a day, whether hard or easy, he would pause to give thanks to Ahura Mazda’s power that



was employed through him to destroy evil.

Aspandiyar's ingeniousness, when facing the fire-breathing dragon was to trade his iron chariot in favor of one made with freshly cut green wood, with a wooden chest in the middle, in which to bar and protect himself. His intention was to enter the fire-breathing beast and destroy it from within. He had swords fixed all around this special vehicle and, to further ensure safety from the fierce heat, he replaced his traditional heavy coat of arms for a lighter and fireproof one. Once inside, thanks to the jutting multitude of swords, the chariot got stuck in the dragon's throat, choking its flames and cutting off its air supply and leaving the monster in pain and further weakening it. Aspandiyar then managed to get out of the chest and thrust a sword through the dragon's palate and kill it.

Now just think who would be so courageous and resourceful to enter

the mouth of a fire-breathing dragon, kill it and come out unscathed ...? Only my mamaijee's *Aspandiyar* – the one with the brains and brawn. I wonder if she knew his exploits as I do now.

Then of course, 'aapro' Aspandiyar, fought a herd of unnaturally large and ferocious wolves with his sword, bow and poison-tipped arrows, but in the frenzied battle, his horse, trying to help and defend his master, was killed. True to his kind nature and love for his noble steed, Aspandiyar grieved deeply.

As if the ferocious and firebreathing beasts were not enough – there was the human element, that this young prince had to deal with. In order to distract the valiant young prince, a sorceress, turned her hideous looks into that of an enticing young Turkish maiden. About to succumb to the allure of this young enchantress, Aspandiyar's intuition warned him otherwise and, with the help of the talisman that Zarathushtra had given

him, he managed to destroy this embodiment of evil.

Now that Aspandiyar, with the help of Ahura Mazda, had successfully dealt with the seven tasks put before him, he was ready for the next and the greatest of all confrontations – to make way to and penetrate Arjasp's impregnable lair at the top of an almost inaccessible mountain.

Once again, using his intellect and charm, disguised as a merchant, he made his way into Arjasp's inaccessible kingdom. Aspandiyar and his hundred camels loaded with brocades, jewels and other fabulous valuables entered the forbidden kingdom, but unknown to his enemy, eighty of his camels carried chests, each hiding a well-armed warrior. Needless to say, after lulling Arjasp into false security with his brilliant strategies, Aspandiyar, at an opportune moment, managed to vanquish a formidable foe and liberate his sisters.

Evolution of the adage. This expression, "*Budee jum jumavee Aspandiyar*", shows the magnificent thread of continuity, in all the aspects of the 'Parsi Life' that started well over a thousand years ago, and stayed alive in such oral adages.

Even though slowly evolving, from Farsi to Gujarati; from Iranian modes of dress to the Indian sari; from Iranian foods and culinary arts to an unbelievably delicious and exotic blend of Indo-Iranian, better still, typical Parsi dishes; from true Iranian names to, at times, an unusual Parsi-Irani-Indian-Anglo admixture – we have essentially remained true to the original spirit of our brave pioneers.

Our religious ceremonies, stories, folk tales and legends that must have been orally handed down from one generation to the next have remained intact. What we were told by our elders is to be found in scholarly books, thus verifying the tenacity with which 'the truths' were transferred over the centuries.

For all that, *we salute you*. You all who have been, over all these intervening centuries, in the hospitable land of India, so far away from our ‘*maddar vattan*’, Iran, have indeed been Aspandiyars!

ADDENDUM

On a spring day in 1996, I attended a lecture by the eminent professor Houston Smith at the La Salle Center, OSU, in Corvallis, Oregon. After the lecture a small group gathered around the professor for autographs and informal talk. When I managed to draw his attention, I waved my copy of his “The Religions of Man” [first published in 1958 by Harper Brothers] for his autograph, but not without this comment:

“Sir, you mention man’s seven religions in your book, but you omitted one of the world’s most ancient and influential religions – one of the first, or *the* first to espouse monotheism. Not even a passing footnote, a paltry few lines about the religion of Zarathushtra? I stand before you sir, as the daughter and grand-daughter, of Zarathushti priests, to remember us in your next book.”

After profusely apologizing for his oversight this wonderful, delightful gentleman wrote in my copy:

For Dinaz,

*With apologies for
omitting Zoroastrianism.*

Houston Smith

I was not looking for an apology, only an acknowledgment of the ancient religion of Iran, before its mass conversion to Shite Islam, so that the world would be cognizant of us and the significant role the teachings and the message of Zarathushtra have played in other faiths.

As I drove home that night, I smiled and remembered my grandmother’s “*Budee jum jumavee Aspandiyar*.” I felt great! My grandmother would have been proud of her Aspandiyar.

What have you done lately to evoke my mamaiji’s acclaim? ■

My mother used to say...

“The old forget. The young don’t know.” – Japanese proverb

We are delighted to present some Persian sayings, for the first time, in this column.

“Az Rubah porsidand shahadat kok, koft dombam”

A fox was asked who can confirm your testimony; he wagged his tail.

When a person endorses someone’s position more on the basis of the person, rather than on the merit of the argument. Do not believe everything you hear; examine the evidence and question the motives.

“Doshman dana beh az nadan doost Doshman dana bolandad mikonad bar zaminat mizand nadan doost”

An intelligent adversary is better than a dunce of an ally.

That adversary will hoist you,

That ally will cause your downfall.

Avoid an ally who is easy to come by, but of little substance.

“Persian version of this saying is unknown”

Those who think they know it all, they are fools. Avoid them.

Those who are wise and know a lot, realize they may not know it all,

And so they keep an open mind. Emulate them.

Keep an open mind (as distinct from a vacant mind) and entertain different points of view. If any reader remembers the Persian version, please let us know.

“Nakhostin badeh kandar jam kardand Ze chashme muste saghi vam kardand”

The first wine, when poured in the chalice

Borrowed something from the drunken eyes of the wine-pourer.

The great poet Hafez, describes his vision of God in this verse. In Farsi, the ‘drunken’ eye of the ‘saghi’ (or beloved) who pours the wine, is a sign of her great beauty. Here Hafez says that something of the drunkenness of those eyes went into that first wine. We do not know what it is, but it makes us drunk, and when drunk, we feel it. When Mehr Izad comes to you, you are in a state of love-drunk awareness that is more powerful than the cold, calculating rationalization of a sober and somber mind.

“Az tou harikat, Az Khoda (Ahura Mazda) barikat”

Your simple steps to gain success

Is the best cause for God (Ahura Mazda) to bless.

God blesses those who take steps for their own success.

“Tavana bovad har key dana bovad Ze danesh deleh peer borna bovad”

Able the one, whose wisdom is truthful

For in wisdom lies the heart that is youthful [Firdowsi].

“Hameh cheez ra ham-e gan danand Va ham-e gan hanoz az madar”

Everyone knows everything

And everyone is not born yet.

Acknowledgements: First three sayings were sent by Mehrborzin Soroushian (mazda@att.net); the following ones were posted on the zoroastrians e-group by Parvez Varjavand (solvolant@yahoo.com), Orang Demehry and Khodi Kaviani (khodi@aol.com). **Invitation:** Farsi-speaking readers are invited to comment on the above sayings, and also submit their favorite Persian sayings, along with the literal translation as well as the meaning. Send your submissions to Dinaz Rogers [see previous page].

The Kem na Mazda Prayer

In the aftermath of the tragedy of September 11, the ideas of the Kem na Mazda prayer take on heightened relevance.

By Erach D. Tarapore
Lafayette, California

The Kem na Mazda prayer is especially appropriate as a basis for discussion of the evil events of September 11. I have chosen to use Taraporewala's translations of the Gatha passages, because of their approachable language. Two verses in particular spring to mind. They are verses 7 and 8 of Yasna 46, part of the Ushtavaiti Gatha. The first of these verses is also the opening verse of the *Kem na Mazda* prayer:

*Kem na Mazda, mavaite payum
dadat, hyat ma dregvao didareshata
aenanghe, anyem thwahmat
athrascha mananghascha?
yayao shyaothnaish ashem
thraoshta. Ahura; tam moi dast-
vam Daenyai fravaocha. [Ys.46.7]*

Taraporewala's translation:

**Whom shalt Thou send, O Mazda,
to protect Us all, when Untruth
threatens us with hate, Other than
Thine own Fire and Thy Love?
When both these are aroused
within our hearts, Asha shall be
fulfilled, O Ahura; May my Soul
realize this Sacred Truth.**

The question of Yasna 46.7 was asked of Ahura Mazda by Zarathushtra more than 2500 years ago. The answer was so powerful, that the priests who compiled our daily prayers during the Sasanian era a thousand years later, selected that verse for the opening lines of the *Kem na Mazda* prayer. They thought that verse strong enough and pertinent enough to place it at the very front of the prayers we recite every day.

In our comfortable, civilized lives today, we may have had trouble understanding the gravity and rele-

vance of these opening lines. Not any more. The events of September 11, so alien to our world today, but so common in historical times, show the full force of the question and the power of the answer.

Zarathushtra's question: "Whom shall You send, O Mazda" (*Kem na Mazda*) "to protect us" (*payum*) "when Untruth" (*dregvao*) "threatens us" (*didareshata*) "with hate" (*aenanghe*)? What forces do we have to protect ourselves against lies and aggression?

The immediate answer: ... what will protect us is His "Holy Fire" (*athrascha*) and "Love" (*manangascha*). Here His Holy Fire represents His life force within us. His Love is manifest through His gift to us of Good Mind. So He has equipped us with *life* and *thinking* to protect ourselves against lies and aggression. With thinking we have the power to recognize Evil so we can act against it. With life, we have the power to act, to fight against Evil. So these are the forces Ahura Mazda has given us to protect ourselves.

Once we recognize these forces, we have the power to protect ourselves against lies and aggression. "When both these [forces] are aroused within our hearts, Asha shall be fulfilled", that is, His divine law of Asha (righteousness) will progress and thrive. The verse closes with the invocation, "May my Soul recognize this Sacred Truth" (*tam moi dastvam Daenyai fravaocha*).

The next verse [Ys. 46.8] is not part of the *Kem na Mazda* prayer:

*Ye va moi yao gaethao dazde
aenanghe, noit ahya ma athrish
shyaothanaish frosyat, paity-aoget ta
ahmai jasoit dvaeshangha; tanvem a*

*ya im hu-jyatoish payat noit duzh-
jyatoish kashit, Mazda dva shangha.*

Taraporewala's translation:

**But surely, if one seeks to injure
Life, His deeds of flaming hate
shall touch me not; On his own
head this hatred shall recoil; His
deeds of hatred shall prevent his
Self From knowing Perfect Life;
but this same hate Shall nowise,
Mazda, guard him from False Life.**

Here Zarathushtra says that once I have learned about my inner power, "his deeds of flaming hate will touch me not". The perpetrator "seeks to injure Life" but I have learned the power I have to avoid injury (by not accepting and internalizing his hate); therefore, he cannot touch me. In other words, by knowing what motivates the perpetrator, I can rise above the expected response and not let his actions influence me or inflame me into an inappropriate response.

What happens to the perpetrator of the "deeds of flaming hate"? We are told that those deeds will recoil on to his own head. There they will rest, preventing him ever after from achieving the Good Life, on Earth or in the hereafter.

The second portion of *Kem na Mazda* is taken from Yasna 44, also part of the Ushtavaiti Gatha.

*Ke verethrem-ja thwa poi sengha yoi
henti? chithra moi dam Ahum Bish
Ratum chizdi; at hoi Vohu Sraosho
jantu Manangha, Mazda, ahmai
yahmai vashi kahmai-chit. [Ys.44.16]*

Taraporewala's translation:

**What Hero will protect us with Thy
words? Show me the Wise Soul-
healing Guide and Friend, Filled
with Obedience and with Love of
Man; May he get both, O Mazda,
through Thy Grace, For those who
win Thy Love are rich in both.**

Here Zarathushtra tells us the qualities of a true protector. He is wise (*dam*). He is a guide who heals the soul (*ratum*). He is a friend. He knows and can use the words of Ahura Mazda to protect us. Such a person is obedient (*sraosho*) of Mazda and filled with His Love

(*manangha*) for Man. These qualities come to a person through the grace of Ahura Mazda. What a beautiful image this passage gives of a true protector – one who supports the spirit of his fellow men.

No mention is made of physical support, here or anywhere in Zarathushtra's Gathas. And that is appropriate because the battle is between **good and evil**, two ideas. As ideas, they reside in the *mind*, so the battle can only be fought, and won, in the mind. No amount of physical conflict can get you victory, because, by definition, the battle is not physical. This is a 2500 year old idea of such extraordinary simplicity, yet so extraordinarily different, that we still really have to think about it.

The third part of the prayer is taken from the Vendidad [fragard VIII: 21]. It is therefore in Pahlavi, rather than the language of the Gathas:

Pata-no tbishyantat pairi Maz-daoscha Aramaitischa spentascha. Nase daevo druksh, nase daevo chithre, Nase daevo frakarashte, nase daevo fradaite, apa druksh nase, apa druksh dvara, apa druksh vinase, apa khedre, apa nasyehe ma merenchainish gaethao astavaitish ashahe.

Framroze Rustomji's translation:

Protect us from those that do harm, O Mazda and Spenta Armaiti! May wickedness perish, may the seed of evil perish, May the progeny of evil perish and may the fruit of evil perish. May wickedness entirely disappear, into the North, whence it came. So that it can never more threaten the living creations of Asha.

Here Ahura Mazda and Spenta Armaiti are invoked to protect us from Evil. Armaiti is the *amesha spenta* of **devotion**, so by including her we recognize that devotion will help to bring about the destruction of evil here on earth. We pray for evil (*daevo*) to be utterly vanquished (*nase*) and disappear (*vinase*), so that never again will it threaten Ahura Mazda's good creation (*gaethao astavaitish ashahe*).

I find it interesting that the passages taken from the Gathas deal with ideas such as God's Fire and Love (as the forces that have been given us in our fight against Evil) or the qualities of a true protector. In the passage from the Vendidad, we list the manifestations of evil and invoke Mazda and Armaiti's help to banish them, so that the good creation can be safe. This is representative of the shift in emphasis that occurred in the thousand years after Zarathushtra's life time.

The prayer closes with a salutation to Armaiti:

Nemascha ya Armaitish izacha.

Salutation and devotion to Armaiti!

Here we can recognize the words *Nemascha* (*namaste*, salutation) and *izacha* (root = *iza* or devotional).

The Kemna Mazda prayer teaches us about the power that Ahura Mazda has given us to protect us from evil. In the first section, Zarathushtra tells us that our strength is the power within us to think and act upon our thoughts, and that these powers were a gift to us from a wise and loving Ahura Mazda. Zarathushtra then tells us the qualities of a true protector – he is wise, he is a guide and a friend who heals the soul. He is one who supports the spirit of his fellow men. Next, the prayer asks the help of Ahura Mazda and Spenta Armaiti in protecting us from evil and vanquishing evil in whatever form it takes. Because of the important role played by devotion in the battle and ultimate victory over evil, the prayer closes with a salutation to Armaiti, the *amesha spenta* of devotion. ■

REFERENCES

- [1] Taraporewala, Iraj J. S., "The Religion of Zarathushtra", Bombay, 1965.
 - [2] Rustomji, Framroz, "Daily Prayers of the Zoroastrians", Colombo, 1976.
- Erach Tarapore prepared this discussion of the Kem na Mazda prayer for the Sunday School class in the week following September 11th. He can be reached at (925) 284-2719 or etarapore@bigfoot.com.*

Kem na Mazda is recited at the beginning of the kushti prayers.

THE PRAYER

Kem na Mazda, mavaite payum dadat, hyat ma dregvao didare-shata aenanghe, anyem thwamat athrascha mananghascha? yayao shyaothnaish ashem thraoshta. Ahura; tam moi dast-vam Daenyai fravaocha.

Ke verethrem-ja thwa poi sengha yoi henti? chithra moi dam Ahum Bish Ratum chizdi; at hoi Vohu Sraosho jantu Manangha, Mazda, ahmai yahmai vashi kahmai-chit.

Pata-no tbishyantat pairi Maz-daoscha Aramaitischa spentascha. Nase daevo druksh, nase daevo chithre, Nase daevo frakarashte, nase daevo fradaite, apa druksh nase, apa druksh dvara, apa druksh vinase, apa khedre, apa nasyehe ma merenchainish gaethao astavaitish ashahe.

THE TRANSLATION

Who will, O! Wise One, lend me protection if the wicked one threatens to hurt me? (Who) other than Your Fire (God's eternal, cosmic energy) and Your (Good) Mind? (It is) through the actions of these two that, O Lord, the truth (righteousness) thrives. Do reveal unto me that (beautiful) knowledge of this religion.

Of those who exist, who is the victor who protects the world with Your teachings? (Zarathushtra, of course). Reveal unto me a world-healing prophet so that obedience (to God) comes to him through Good Mind as well as to whomsoever You, O Wise One, wish!

Protect us from those that do us harm, O All-wise Lord and Spenta Armaiti (the beneficent holy mentality). Perish thou, evil wickedness. Perish thou, the source of evil. Perish thou O progeny of evil. Perish thou, product of evil. Utterly perish O wickedness. Utterly disappear and perish in the North. Do not destroy the living creation of Asha.

[Translation by Dr. Kersey Antia. For the full kushti prayers and their translations see FEZANA Journal, Winter 1997]

READER'S FORUM

This column is a forum to present information and opinions. Letters (under 250 words) may be submitted to the Editor. The Journal reserves the right to edit all materials for clarity and space.

On FEZANA Journal

I find FEZANA Journal a very interesting and useful publication. It is well balanced in covering different areas of interest. Since our Zarathushti community is geographically so spread out and far apart, and we have such small groups in some places (like ours in Nova Scotia), we need something like your Journal to keep us in touch. My admiration and appreciation is extended to the dedicated and long-time serving Zarathushtis who put it together. Thank you for all your hard work and dedication.

*Shirin Jagosh, Secretary,
Zoroastrian Association
of Atlantic Canada
Bedford, Nova Scotia*

[We applaud the Zoroastrian Association of Atlantic Canada (Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and New Brunswick) – for their initiative to provide every single Zarathushti home with a subscription to the Journal - Ed].

The Winter issue was great as usual – a great tribute to you. You have indeed done an excellent job. There were some excellent suggestions in “Telling Others Who We Are” [pages 64-68], a few of which I have “practiced”. My piece on “Aspandiyar” [page 57 this issue] speaks to some of those suggestions.

I have a suggestion for Sam Kerr [Fall 2001, p. 53] who “circulates” his copy. Whenever and wherever I can, I encourage everyone to get a subscription of their own. That way they don’t have to wait for months for the copy to come around to them; it further shows community support and gives strength and encouragement to one and all – the journal, our faith and our people.

*Dinaz Rogers
Albany, Oregon*

I do anxiously await the arrival of each issue. It gives a lot of information

regarding the Zarathushti world. If more people subscribe, then perhaps an even better Journal can be produced, and the frequency increased to monthly instead of quarterly ...

The Journal must be read by all Zarathushtis, at least to help out the cause of integration ...

*Maneck Daroowala
New Hyde Park, New York*

FEZANA Journal has reached its pinnacle and has become a household word in many a Zarathushtrian home. All credit goes to you ... I enjoy reading the sayings in the “My Mother Used to Say” column. It’s a good effort to keep our Parsi Gujarati and Iranian tradition alive.

*Virasp Mehta
Wichita, Kansas*

Congratulations on a great edition of the Journal [Winter 2001]. Many people have remarked on how professional it is becoming, especially the cover. It was very appropriate and professionally done. Please congratulate Zenobia Rivetna for her cover design work. Thank you for inviting me to write my views for the next century. It was an honor.

Keep up the good work!

*DhunMai Dalal
Los Angeles, California*

The Winter issue is excellent. Natalie Vania and Kaikhosrov Irani’s articles were especially good. Keep up the great work.

*Jimmy Dholoo
Gaithersburg, Maryland*

I heard lots of compliments on the cover of the last Journal [Winter 2001]. Really wonderful – slick and colorful. Super.

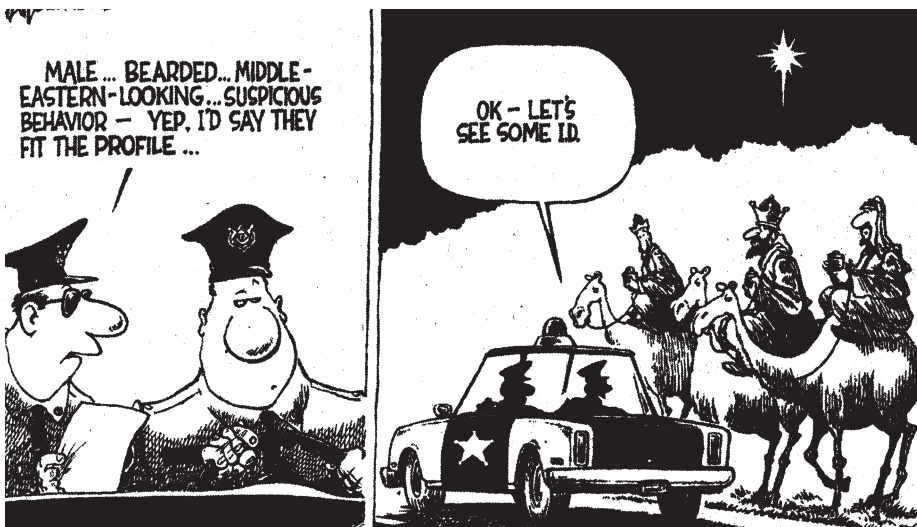
*Dolly Malva
Downey, California*

When the Journal arrives in my mailbox, all other work stops. The Winter 2001 issue truly excited me. It is superb. I always read it from cover to cover, but this one has truly caught

Jokes and Humor section

I hope this cartoon [by Arial, 2001, in Chicago Tribune, Dec 20, 2001] will inspire you to start a selection of Parsi and Zarathushti jokes, and appoint a panel of judges to select the best 5 or 10 for each issue of FEZANA Journal. This will be very much in keeping with the Parsi and Zarathushti spirit.

*Kersey H. Antia
Orland Park, Illinois*



my attention. The historical articles, and especially the family photographs, made me feel linked to the Zarathushti past.

I found the article "Telling Others Who We Are" compelling and crucial. I am sure that individuals and associations will be inspired by the article's dynamic blueprint for action.

*Aban Rustomji
Houston, Texas*

FEZANA Journal is an excellent communication channel for our community worldwide, and we will certainly continue to support it.

*Russi Ghadialy
Singapore*

Our numbers

The number of Zarathushtis in Iran [Spring 2001] is all incorrect, because there is no real consensus. Many years ago, the government said there were 90,000, but about three years ago, our anjumans, mobeds and leaders neglected to inform Zarathushti individuals, at the time of registering, to reveal their faith and religion, so we do not have a correct list.

I am very sad that Dr. Jafarey was not allowed to speak at the Zarathushti congress. That is against Asho Zartosht. It would be better if everyone reveal their thoughts and views, and if there is something incorrect, our mobeds and scholars can reply to it.

We Zarathushtis are alive by the literature of the likes of Poure Davoud, Hosein Vahid, Dr. Jafarey, Shariati, Sepenta, Faravashi and others.

Opening only the exit door and closing the incoming door, every year our community gets smaller and smaller.

*Rostam Rostami
Centerville, Ohio*

Why so anti-American?

Generally I find "India Current" editorials anti-American, to a point that makes me wonder if you were dragged to this great land kicking and screaming against your will, or your every waking moment in this

Remembering 9-11

While first generation US immigrants professed that they were indeed US citizens and should not be a subject of hate crimes after 9-11, I felt not many of them professed what really America means to them as their own country. The tie seemed to still lie with their former country, thereby referring to themselves as Indian-Americans or Iranian-Americans, and not simply Americans. Maybe that's just how I saw it. I may be wrong; but, I felt the statements were made more for protecting themselves than this country.

We, of all communities and religions out there, must surely understand the cowardly and grotesque acts of 9-11, for (1) Zarathushtis did not leave Persia and travel to India out of choice; and (2) even when Zarathushtis settled in India, it was not without **conditions** set forth by the welcoming country. These great United States of America of whom we are all now citizens or residents, has given to us and our generations to come, a future. The US constitution, particularly the First Amendment, has guaranteed us a right in the freedom of exercising our speech, practicing our religion and living our way of life. Isn't it remarkable that this right, to which we are all privileged is **unconditional!** I have expressed my feelings in the poem below.

*Homeé F. E. Shroff
Chicago, Illinois*

You are beautiful,
You have given to me my life,
You have given to me my freedom,
And, you have done more,
You have guaranteed it

You are beautiful,
Your love for me is timeless,
Your love for me is indestructible,
Your love for me is unconditional

You are beautiful,
I see you in the rain,
I see you in the sunshine,
I see you all day long,
I see you all night long,
I see you every second of every
minute of every hour of every day,
I see you all the time and still cannot
get enough of you

You are beautiful,
I see you in the mountains,
I see you in the valleys,
I see you in the desert,
I see you in the great plains,
I see you everywhere and still not
see enough of you,
I can see you forever and still not see
all of you

You are beautiful,
You are strong,
You are impregnable,
Even when demons took away your
towering twins,
You stood tall,

Even when you were in pain,
Your soul was impenetrable,
Even when you were shaken,
You remained unscathed
You were unshakable then,
You are invincible now

You are beautiful,
You protect me,
You shelter me,
You comfort me,
You breathe life into me

You are beautiful,
I love each moment I spend with you,
I thank God for all that you are,
I thank God for all that you have
given to me,
I am honored to be a part of you

You are beautiful,
You are my dream,
You are my goal,
You are my ambition

You are beautiful,
I salute you,
I respect you,
I would give my life for you

You are my life because you have
created it for me,
You are my love because you have
given it to me,
You are America!

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War

When the sky is the darkest, the stars sparkle even more brightly.

War is arguably the darkest side of humanity, yet it could inspire us to be the most humane we can be.

Yes, war is dark and ugly. War sets a chain of events into motion that is both destructive and unpredictable. It creates pain and horror beyond imagination – a reality that is much stranger than fiction.

War brings about a backdrop of darkness, a blanket of ugliness that covers humanity. And we, as individuals, have the option to acknowledge war for what it is, or go into denial.

When the blanket of war covers nations, fear and hate and revenge rule the choices and the lives of the people of those nations. The majority of the people buy into the notion of the ugliness and blend into the backdrop of darkness, while defending war as a necessary evil.

Yet there are always the few who transcend the horror and overcome the fear. Who recognize their surroundings for what it is. Who look the ugliness of pain and destruction in the face, dive head-on into the situation, and regardless of the bigger picture, do what they can to heal the smaller picture.

Yes, soldiers and civilians are killed and maimed in war, yet the Red Cross was born in a war. Yes, the World War destroyed millions of individuals and countless property, yet gave birth to the United Nations.

Florence Nightingale was an angel who came to open her wings during the darkness of a war of many years bygone, yet her legacy endures and resonates at times of peace and war. Yes, the more recent terror destroyed numerous lives and brought down skyscrapers, yet the heroic firefighters went up the stairs of those same buildings, while others were coming down.

The trick to facing a war is not to moralize it, else we too become part of the backdrop of darkness. The most constructive and progressive approach is to become small, to look at the small picture, and then contribute what we can, to heal the little wounds, one person at a time, one place at a time.

It is easy to generalize and neatly classify dead sons and brothers, maimed sisters and mothers, and destroyed homes and livelihoods as “collateral damage” and “casualties of war”. But it is infinitely more difficult to be the one telling a mother that her son has just become a “casualty of war”. It is simply heroic to forget about the terror and the evil, while climbing stairs of a skyscraper, with only one thought in mind: “Who’s life can I save up there?”

It is easy and tempting to look at the blanket of darkness and become a speck of dust, lost in the fabric. But it takes a lot of courage to shine our light and be that small radiant diamond that sparkles against the dark blanket.

Our humanity can display itself more humanely when we face our darkest side, just as the stars shine more brightly when the sky is the darkest.

© Shahriar Shahriari
Los Angeles, California

country had been subjected to unspeakable torture, discrimination and condemnation ...

... I am confounded by the fact that if it is so bad, why do they keep on coming to America? I know and understand that there is a tremendous amount of resentment in Third World countries toward their former colonial masters, yet there is a massive influx, legal and illegal, into those very countries from the former colonies.

Exposing and speaking out against legitimate, valid concerns and abuses, is a God-given right in this country. I have personally exercised it. We must keep in mind how much “a new pilgrim” accomplishes in these United States of America, where patriotism is not based on blood ties, race, ethnic or clan lines, but on shared democratic principles and egalitarian values and beliefs.

I strongly believe in “When in Rome, do as the Romans do,” but without sacrificing one’s soul. I can best express my love and gratitude to both, motherland and adopted country, by saying, “Thank you, America, for permitting me to be your daughter, but most of all, thank you, India, for being my mother!”

Dinaz Kutar Rogers
Albany, Oregon

[Excerpted from a letter by the author, to the editor of *India Current magazine*].

A tribute to Cowasjee

The religion of Zarathushtra teaches us to stand up and fight actively for what is right for mankind, so the good can ultimately prevail in the world. The example of Behramji Malbari, fighting Hindu fundamentalists for the emancipation of Hindu women and incurring their wrath, stands out as a great example.

But I find an even greater example in the bravely penned comments by Ardeshir Cowasjee, year after year, in the columns of *DAWN*, Pakistan’s most widely read English newspaper. A few years ago, I met a Pakistani psychiatrist who told me the first

Kersey H. Antia
Orland Park, Illinois

Stand on abortion?

An Iranian gynecologist friend working in India would like to know, for a talk she is to deliver, if there has been any official Zarathushti stand vis-a-vis medical termination of pregnancies/abortions. Is there anything in our religious scriptures for or against it? Have any of our Chief Dasturs, Zarathushti associations, assemblies, anjumans, panchayats or organizations ever expressed their views on it?

May I, through your columns, request researchers, scholars, dasturs and presidents of organizations to share their findings to enlighten the lay Zarathushti on this subject. ■

Rusi Sorabji
rusi@sorabji.org

[See page 42 for a reference to this topic in the Avesta]

■ ERATTA ■

The city of Lahore was inadvertently omitted from the list of Pakistan's Zarathushti population figures [*Winter 2001, page 13*]. There are 72 Zarathushti individuals (32 families) in Lahore. ■



Swallowing angry words is a lot easier than having to eat them
- Ushao 2001

- Ushao 2001

On Ahura Mazda, the Fravahar and the Amesha Spentas

Ahura Mazda is imageless and not anthropomorphic. The fravahar (elderly winged man) does not represent God. The Amesha Spentas, or holy immortals, are attributes and part of Mazda, not separate entities.

**By Borzoo Nadjmi, M.D.
Lincoln, Rhode Island**

I am writing to respond to two matters in the Summer 2001 issue of FEZANA Journal. The first concerns the two figures on page 16 [*figures 2 and 3*] which have been incorrectly presented. Dr. Katrak has briefly explained the figures on page 18. I believe, however, we need more clarification in regards to the figures, specifically on the subject of Ahura Mazda and the fravahar. The second matter concerns presenting [*page 95*] the Amesha Spentas with an image, for commercial use. I respectfully request the editor not to print anything which is not validated or offensive to Zarathushtra's teachings.

Ahura Mazda. As Dr. Katrak stated on page 18, the figure of an elderly man with wings represents the guardian spirit, or '*fravahar*'. The figure does ***not*** represent Ahura Mazda as depicted and claimed by G. E. Cameron and the British Museum picture.

‘Mazda’ and ‘Ahura’ are the names Zarathushtra gave to God. At the time of migration, the Aryans (Iranians) had brought to their homeland many nature gods of Indo-Iranian origin. Zarathushtra does not mention these several gods of Indo-Iranian origin in the Gathas. This omission is not an accident; it is deliberate. Zarathushtra’s religion is altogether different from the ones subscribed to by the Aryans.

Zarathushtra tells his listeners that he speaks to them words which have not been heard before [*Gathas, Yasna 31.10*]. It is knowledge or wisdom that creates, shapes and guides every-

thing. Zarathushtra, therefore, associates the concept of a godhead with wisdom. He names his God, Mazda, the wise lord which he uses over 200 times in the Gathas. The other word, Ahura, is one of the Indo-Iranian generic forms of godhead and Zarathushtra confers upon it the epithet of Mazda, or wise. [*Gathas, Yasna 31.1*].

‘Ahura Mazda’ which appears thousand years after Zarathushtra at a rock carving at Naqsh e Rostam and at the time of the Achaemenian dynasty, was never a nature god and had no image (was not and is not ‘anthropomorphic’), had no gender and was invisible. Ahura Mazda is what it was, the highly spiritual being (pure light). Ahura Mazda’s body is light and its spirit is truth [*Fravardin Yasht*].

Zarathushtra used the term Mazda variously as the metrical composition of the Gathic hymns require. He used the composition of 'Mazda', 'Ahura', 'Mazda Ahura' and 'Ahura Mazda' stating God in all cases.

Fravahar or elderly man with wings. Who is the fravahar representing? The Gathas don't mention the fravashi. (Fravahar is a Pahlavi word, fravashi is an Avestan word.) Yasna Haptanghaiti and Fravardin Yasht mention the fravashi [*Yasna* 37.3, *Yasht* 12.143]. We revere the fravashis of righteous men and women. Fravashis are a class of higher intelligence prominently projected in the Mazdayasnan pantheon and represented as guardian spirits and divine prototypes of mankind, in its purest creation. The fravashis serve as man's ideal and the soul has to strive and realize that ideal through emulation and guidance, ultimately becoming one with its fravashi.

The Amesha Spentas. Zarathushtra states that there are six essential virtues of Mazda. Primarily, the virtues are pure abstractions, moral concepts and symbolic ideals. Contrary to the Indo-Iranian divinities, they have no individuality, no characteristics, no mythology. Zarathushtra strives to replace the divine beings that owe their origin to some nature phenomena and later rise to moral stature, by spiritual ideals. Zarathushtra substitutes for these concrete beings his worshipful attributes of Ahura Mazda. Zarathushtra names these divine attributes as *Vohu Manah* (good mind), *Asha* (righteousness), *Khsha-*

In summary, according to the Gathas and even the Avesta, Ahura Mazda is

Vera S. Katrak, Ph.D.
Karachi, Pakistan

This article from The New York Times, December 16, discusses "good-vs-evil" and its origins in the religion of Zarathushtra. Only excerpts are given below.

Fantasy's Power and Peril

By Marina Warner

MYTHS in which heroic figures are pitted in mortal combat against diabolical enemies have gained fresh energy in popular culture since September 11. The enormous success of the Harry Potter franchise and the drumroll for the imminent release of the film version of J. R. Tolkien's Lord of the Rings, suggest the strong consolatory power of such starkly drawn tales of good conquering evil ...

The strength and familiarity of the good-vs-evil tale can make the narratives seem inevitable or natural ...

Fantasies of evil and dreams of victory over its agents are increasing in voltage, needless to say, in response to the terrible events of recent times. Osama bin Laden, in fact, appears eerily to be continuing the legacy of Sauron (named after the dragon in "The Lord of the Rings") and Voldemort (whose name means Will-to-Death) of the Potter series ...

These ideas have roots in the history of ancient religions. It was in the Middle East, in the thought of the prophet Zoroaster, that the gods worshiped by the ancient Persians were declared to

be devils. The prophet Mani, in the middle of the 3rd century in Persia, expanded this ethical interpretation of the continuing struggle between light and dark into a strong form of religious dualism; Manicheans envisaged the clash of forces as a personal, eternal struggle between divine powers of good and evil.

Both Zoroastrianism and Manicheanism have profoundly influenced the extreme warrior visions of Islamic and Judeo-Christian thought – St. Augustine, for example, was a Manichean in his youth and its philosophy colored his deep commitment to the notion of original evil.

The Christian devil, though a bright angel in his beginnings, became a vehicle of irreversible wickedness: the great philosopher Origen is neither a saint nor even a father of the church because he held that the devil could be converted. This was heresy. Wagner's Ring cycle, a direct progenitor of Tolkien's myth, was forged in the same crucible. *In many ways, the century that has just ended and the one that has just begun have not experienced the rise of Christian or Islamic fundamentalism so much as the revival of Zoroastrianism.*

But this tradition assumes there is only one way to view the world: as a titanic battle between good and evil, with the triumphant goals of destruction, extermination and annihilation. Mythology and history suggest alternatives: fantasies of reconciliation and redemption, for example ... ■

The preceding article prompted Mazda Antia to write the following letter to New York Times:

... Marina Warner's article referred briefly to the Zoroastrian religion and its notion of dualism; however, I thought your readers might appreciate some further background on the basic tenets of the religion. The religion, founded by the Prophet Zarathushtra ('Zoroaster' in the West) close to four thousand years ago, is the world's oldest monotheistic religion. The Zoroastrian scriptures are known as the Gathas, which contain Zarathushtra's communication with God. They are composed in prose form, containing approximately 6,000 words.

In his message, Zarathushtra proclaims that there is one God, Ahura Mazda (literally 'Wise Creator'), who is the creative and sustaining force of the Universe. In addition, Zarathushtra contends that each individual human being has the attributes of God within them and can be a co-creator with God.

By correctly exercising our reason and moral freedom to choose between good and evil, each of us has the capacity to perfect God's intrinsically good creation.

Four thousand years ago, Zarathushtra challenged his followers to banish evil from the world through their good minds, their good words, and their good deeds. Now, as then, Zoroastrians continue to strive to be among those who renew the world ... to make the world progress towards perfection in each thought, word and deed.

Sincerely,
Mazda K. Antia

The writer is a Zoroastrian priest, and currently serves as a judicial law clerk to a Federal Judge in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. ■

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With new postal regulations, FEZANA Journal may not be forwarded to your new address automatically; and the Journal office may not be notified of your address change. If we are notified, the Post Office charges us several dollars per copy. ***So please send all address changes*** (including your old and new address, telephone and email) promptly to Subscriptions Manager Rustom Kevala by mail, email, phone or fax [see front cover].

World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce

Business Conference and Business Breakfast

hosted by the
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An excellent opportunity for Zarathushti businesses, professionals, entrepreneurs and those wishing to support the Zarathushti entrepreneurial spirit, to network and showcase your products, services and businesses.

Youth and 'would-be' entrepreneurs are especially welcome. The Conference will precede the Zoroastrian Congress in Chicago from July 4-7, 2002.

Business Conference:

Wednesday, July 3, 2002,
10 am - 5 pm, Hyatt Regency,
Chicago. Program includes presentations, panel discussions, keynote speakers and lunch.

Fee: Conference registration is free; for lunch, there is a charge of \$15 for WZCC members and spouses, and \$30 for non-members.

Business Breakfast:

Thursday, July 4, 2002,
8 - 10:30 am at Hyatt Regency,
Chicago. Program includes keynote speakers, recognitions and showcasing of businesses.

Fee: \$25 (Congress registration required).

Exhibit Space:

Exhibit tables will be available during the Congress, July 4-6.

Fee: \$50 per table (Congress registration required).

To register: Registration information is at the Congress website:

www.zac-chicago.org

and at the WZCC website:

www.wzcc.org

or contact: Sarosh Khambata, WZCC (Chicago Chapter) chairperson, at (708) 460-4247, email:

ZARATHUSHTI ENTERPRISE ■ PRODUCTS AND SERVICES ■



WZCC Business Digest

Steady progress is being made in establishing the infrastructure of the World

Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce. The WZCC is unique in its mission to promote the economic wellbeing, not only of businesses and entrepreneurs, but also of professionals and the Zarathushti community at large. For, when our businesses prosper, our community prospers too. Our motto could very well be:

"You Prosper, We All Prosper"

The WZCC envisages growth of a network of local chapters in all locations where Zarathushtis reside, with the aim of encouraging networking locally and globally.

Director positions. Terms of office of the current WZCC directors will continue until December 2003. Area director positions are open, for coordinating WZCC activities in Australia, Europe, Iran, Middle East and Pakistan. Nomination and ballot forms for these positions will be sent to all WZCC members shortly.

WZCC Flyer. A flyer and membership form, describing WZCC's mission, objectives and history, has been distributed to Zarathushti associations in North America and worldwide, for dissemination in their areas.

Membership invitation. All business persons and professionals are invited to become members of WZCC. All members will receive a frame-able Certificate of Membership.

Business e-group. An internet newsgroup (wzcc@yahoogroups.com) is under development, and will be available shortly. This will allow WZCC members to network, post announcements and business news.

The WZCC Chicago Chapter is busy planning the **Zarathushti Business**

Conference and Business Breakfast to precede the North American Congress in Chicago [see at left].

WZCC recognitions. In its quest for promoting entrepreneurship among Zarathushtis, WZCC will annually recognize the following:

Outstanding Zarathushti Entrepreneur

Outstanding Zarathushti Professional

Outstanding Young (35 and under)

Zarathushti Entrepreneur/Professional Nominations are due to WZCC secretary by October 1.

Delegation to Iran. WZCC is contemplating an economic/cultural delegation to Iran, for those who wish to experience Iran and explore economic opportunities and possibilities for economic aid to our Zarathushti brethren.

Visit **www.wzcc.org**, write to PO Box 3384, Hinsdale, IL 60521; or contact Secretary Edul Daver at 17 Geiger Lane, Warren, NJ 07059, tel: (732) 469-1866, daver@acupowder.com. ■

Rohinton Rivetna, President, WZCC
Rivetna@aol.com, (630) 325-5383.

WZCC Southwest (Houston) Chapter Gala

The Houston chapter of WZCC held a "Grand Gala Function" in November at the Sweetwater Country Club. Dynamic motivational speaker Michael Hick, impressed on an audience of business owners and professionals that it is a Zarathushti's duty to wake up and become entrepreneurial adventurers, for therein lies our success as a person and a community.

Chapter chair Kaemerz Dotiwala presented the vision and goals, emphasizing that, "If we fail to plan, we plan to fail." A banquet of Cajun and Indian foods and music and entertainment by Ivan Bawa, with English, Indian and Country Western songs rounded out the eclectic evening. Quoting Hicks, "It was an evening which only the Zarathushtis could carry off." ■

Firdaus Bhathena – High-Tech Success Story

Winning MIT's \$50K "Entrepreneurship Competition" as a graduate student in 1996, spurred Firdaus Bhathena to found the startup "WebLine Communications" which Cisco bought out in a \$325 million deal in 1999.

By Roshan Rivetna

Yes, winning first place in MIT's \$50,000 Entrepreneurship Competition in 1996 for their "WebLine" business plan, certainly opened a lot of doors for graduate student Firdaus Bhathena and his partner Pasha Roberts. But it was his sheer passion for "building great software and making our customers 100% satisfied and happy" that has led to Bhathena's high-tech success story.

Early startups. Bhathena, who has a Master of Science degree (1993) from MIT, had qualified for the Ph.D. program, but decided to take a break to join his first startup venture, *Mule Automation*, as a founding engineer. This startup failed after two years of very hard work because of poor management. "I learned a tremendous lesson in what *not* to do in a small company," reminisces Bhathena.

For his second startup, Bhathena was hired, again as a founding engineer, by inventor-entrepreneur *Ray Kurzweil*, to design and build advanced reading systems for students and adults with learning disabilities. "This was very satisfying", recalls Bhathena, "and a moderate success," but he left, ten months later, to found "*WebLine Communications*".



It was "a combination of wanting to create something from nothing with your own hard work and creativity," says Bhathena,

"and a desire to control your own destiny in a very direct way" that drove 25-year-old Bhathena and his partner Roberts, in 1996, to take the winning business plan and go searching for venture capital.

By December 1996, they had raised \$500,000 in seed money from a number of angel investors. In September 1997, the company shipped their WebLine 1.0 software. They had grown from 2 to 20 employees. Later they raised three rounds of venture capital funding totalling over \$25 million.

"A startup is like a roller-coaster ride," says Bhathena, "There are lots of low points and lots of high points. For me, most of them have to do with customers – low points occur when customers are unhappy and angry, and high points are when they say good things about the company, especially to other customers."

"A dogged, sometimes bull-headed determination to succeed and prove that our team could do it," keeps him going, "Startups are not for people who give up easily when times get tough."

WebLine built a number of software products that helped large enterprises provide state-of-the-art customer services to their on-line customers. The "e-commerce Collaboration Suite" allows on-line shoppers to seek help over the Web. By clicking on a button, the shopper would get a return phone call from a customer service representative. The "Media Blender" software allows the on-line customer to automatically connect to an available customer service rep sitting at



After selling his startup "WebLine" to Cisco in 1999 in a \$325 million stock deal, in November 2000, high-tech entrepreneur Firdaus Bhathena started a new enterprise software company "Relicore, Inc." that is about to release its first product.

massive phone switches inside the call centers of the company. WebLine also developed an "Email Manager" to handle large volumes of email.

A small company Course Technology, in Cambridge, MA, became their first customer. Within two years, WebLine had grown to 150 employees, and their software was shipped to over 100 big companies, including Dell, MCI/Worldcom, British Airways, Fidelity Investments, GTE, John Hancock, Compaq, Cisco, Oracle and others.

There was tremendous excitement at WebLine and in the Bhathena household when the retailer Lands' End decided to use WebLine services as

the centerpiece of their advertising campaign for the 1999 Christmas shopping season. "They ran TV ads at prime time featuring our software. That was very exciting. All our friends and family finally understood what we were doing at WebLine."

The Cisco deal. In late 1999, Cisco, who had been a WebLine customer, announced it was going to buy WebLine. At that time, WebLine had four companies trying to acquire them and two of the biggest investment banks competing to take them public. "We had lots of choices when it came time to creating liquidity for employees and shareholders, and we picked what we thought was the best choice."

It was an all-stock transaction. WebLine shareholders (including investors and employees) received \$325 million worth of Cisco stock in exchange for the entire company. A few months later, before the Nasdaq crashed in 2000, the value of these Cisco shares had more than doubled.

Cisco integrated the WebLine team and product line into their "Internet

Communications Software Group" in Lowell, MA.

Latest new venture. The Cisco acquisition could very well have been the "happy ending" of Bhathena's success story, but his "urge to create a successful company from scratch" was beckoning him again. In November 2000, Bhathena left Cisco to start a new company called "**Relicore, Inc.**" Relicore is building application management software for e-Business infrastructure. "We help large corporations manage the overwhelming complexity, constant change and people/process issues that are inherent to global e-Business initiatives."

Relicore started with \$11 million in funding from a venture capital firm, a corporate investor and a very successful entrepreneur. In one year, they have gone from one to 32 employees, and are close to releasing their first product. Bhathena hopes to build Relicore into an even more successful venture than WebLine.

On starting a venture. To budding entrepreneurs, Bhathena offers these words of wisdom:

- Start a company or join a startup for the **right reasons**. Don't do it because you hope to get rich quick – those days of hype are over. Do it because you like the lifestyle and the kind of people who work at startups; because you like to create something new and innovative from nothing.

- Surround yourself with good people. **The team** is the most important thing, so be very picky about whom you hire. The right people are not just the brightest or most technically adept; they also have to be humble and work well with the team.

- Focus on your **customers**. Talk is cheap, advice is plentiful, competition is always out there. Listen to your customers. Create a culture where all important decisions are customer-focused.

- **Company culture** is critical. Create an environment where your people support each other and where there is respect for a healthy balance between work and personal life. Try to achieve a steady, sustainable work

[Continued on page 75]

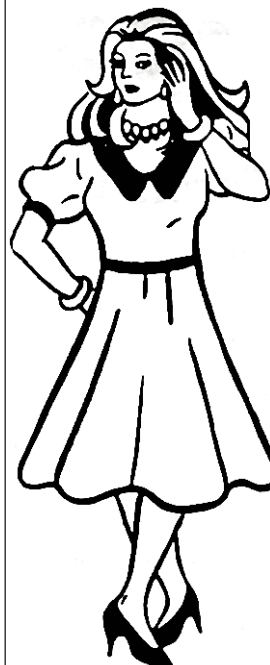
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FEZANA Financial Progress Report



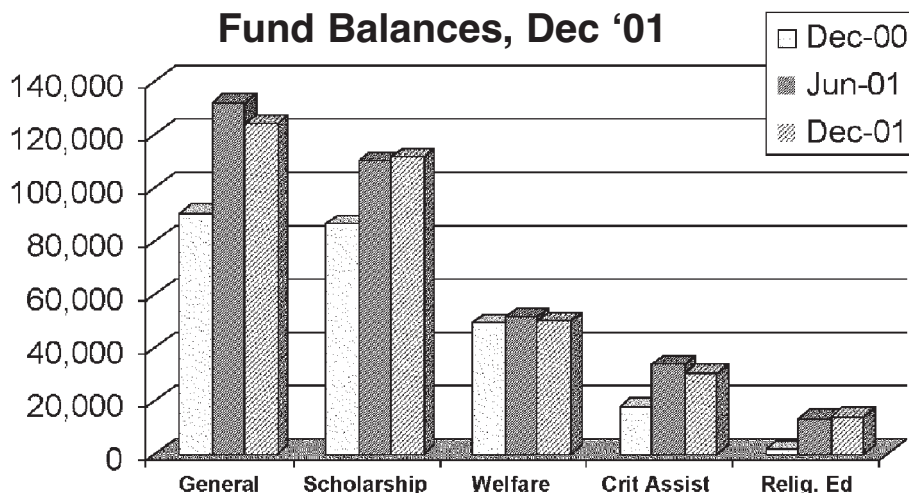
Dr. Jerry M. Kheradi *chair of the FEZANA Funds and Finance Committee.*

Navroze Mubarak! Nouruzetan Pirooz Bad!

We would like to wish all our readers a very happy Navroz and a healthy, safe and prosperous New Year. As you know, Navroz rings in the New Year at the birth of spring. The weather should be improving, the trees springing and the birds chirping. Hopefully the financial market and our FEZANA funds should also be springing and prospering in this year to come.

We give below some highlights of FEZANA's finances for 2001.

Fund Balances, Dec '01



As can be seen from the Fund Balances chart above, FEZANA encountered a speed bump during the second half of 2001. The accounts are not final yet, but it looks like FEZANA's asset balance, which had increased from \$266,700 to about \$349,400 in June, shrank back to \$336,800 in December. This shrinking is in part due to a net decrease in the paper value of our investments after September 11.

Receipts and Disbursements. The table below gives a summary of the revenues and expenditures during the first and second half of 2001. Total revenues were significantly short of the \$200,000 projected at the AGM in May 2001. Total expenses for the year came to \$62,100, against a budget of \$95,000. Please note that these figures are preliminary. The accounts will be finalized and presented for approval at the AGM in May 2002.

During the past quarter (October to December 2001), FEZANA sent \$ 4,500 to various charities in India through the WZO Trust, including: funds for repairs and renovation of the Panchgani, Saronda and Delhi dar-e-mehrs; medical expenses of four individuals; the WZO Mobed Welfare scheme; and for scholarships to poor students at the Sir Behramji Jeejeebhoy Boys' School in Mumbai. A portion of these funds was on behalf of various donors. FEZANA acknowledges with thanks the personal attention of the Managing Trustee of the WZO Trust, Mr. Dinshaw Tamboly, towards promptly disbursing these charities in India on our behalf. Funds were also sent to the Fravahar Sports Club in Tehran, Iran. In addition, funds were provided to a deserving Zarathushti family in the USA. \$3,000 were awarded for FEZANA Scholarships for the 2001-2002 Academic year. Other expenses included website development, server rental fees and postage and delivery over the 6-month period.

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FINANCIAL CORNER

	JAN-JUN 2001	JUL-DEC 2001
Total assets at beginning of period	\$266,700	\$349,400
Revenues		
Membership	4,800	600
Journal subscriptions	7,500	7,800
Donations	83,600	25,400
Investment income	14,200	– 11,700
Expenses		
Welfare	– 9,500	– 8,200
Critical assistance	0	– 2,900
Scholarships	– 2,000	– 3,000
Journal	– 7,600	– 15,700
Other	– 8,300	– 4,900
Net change	82,700	– 12,600
Total assets at end of period	\$349,400	\$336,800

In closing, we would like to thank you all in advance for your help and continued support of FEZANA.

Jerry Kheradi, MD, chairperson,
Funds and Finance Committee

Rustom Kevala, PhD, treasurer

Committee: Mr. Manoucher Mobedshahi, Dr. Borzoo Nadjmi, Dr. Meherwan Boyce, Mr. Alayar Dabestani.

“Thousand Points of Light”

We, the Zarathushti community, have the brainpower to accomplish anything we set our minds to do. But without the finances to support the concepts, the ideas will not become a reality. The *“Thousand Points of Light”* campaign was started to build the financial foundation needed to fund the concepts and carry out these ideas. The concept we are aiming for is to establish endowment funds of \$100,000 for each of the FEZANA funds, the reason being that they are perpetually there and only the income and dividends received from the total amount is distributed during that fiscal year. For a start, we can raise \$100,000 from only \$100 donations from 1,000 Zarathushti families. So kindly help us to achieve our goal to help our community.

Many of us would like to have our Zarathushti religion and culture be more publicized and be made known to other people in North America. This would make it easier for us, but especially the next generation of Zarathushtis, to explain our religion to others. To accomplish this we need to spend money and develop our goal. It would be a good idea to take a more active part in various interfaith activities throughout the country. We should also consider distributing our emblem or motto at these interfaith

conferences so that our Zarathushti community gets to be better known. We need high quality literature, books and multi-media presentations about our religion, ceremonies and culture. FEZANA would like to contribute towards this cause if we have the funds.

Our hope is to increase the amounts distributed in the scholarship funds and make it available to a larger number of recipients. This, of course, will involve collecting more money in the Scholarship fund to achieve that goal.

We receive many appeals from Zarathushti families and individuals who have had major illnesses or accidents needing major surgery, chemotherapy or other expensive treatments. These appeals have come not only from our continent but also from India and Iran. Last year the catastrophic Gujarat earthquake was a very sad incidence and FEZANA was right there to aid them. We have sent money to Zarathushti organizations in Iran. We have, of course, helped in the past but we realize that the amounts have not been enough to fulfill their needs, and to be more generous in giving out funds we have to build up our coffers in the Welfare and Critical Assistance funds.

Our community needs to concentrate more on teaching our religion to our children as well as the adults. FEZANA would like to assist the various associations by developing courses and distributing pamphlets or books on the Zarathushti religion. Also, the Religious Education committee would like to give a scholarship to a Zarathushti student to pursue studies and/or research in religion, leading to an undergraduate or post-graduate degree at an accredited university anywhere in the world. This scholarship, starting at \$5,000 per year, will supplement other stipends or funds that are becoming available at many universities. For these reasons, your donations are desperately needed.

For all the above reasons, we once again stress the need to appeal to our community to achieve the goal of \$100,000 for the “Thousand Points of Light”. We can all achieve this by just donating \$100 per family and that, of course, is not asking for too much. Please take this appeal seriously and let your conscience speak for itself and send your donations payable to FEZANA, specifying any of the above FEZANA Funds and mail to: **Rustom Kevala, PhD, Treasurer, 8812 Tuckerman Lane, Potomac, MD 20854.**

The “Thousand Points of Light” campaign, started in 2001, is directed at the future of FEZANA and the future of our youth. Each *unrestricted* \$100 donated to FEZANA funds qualifies as *1 Point of Light*. Names and points will be added as more donors join this elite group, until our goal of a Thousand Points of Light is reached. *Donors and/or points added in the Sep-Dec 2001 quarter are shown in bold italics.*

FINANCIAL CORNER

Dr Babak Abadi, PA	Schol	1
Dr. Cyrus F Austin, AZ	Welf	9
Firdaus & Jasmin Bhathena, MA	Gen	1
Homi & Ellen Byramji, NJ	RelEd	1
Cyra & Lyla Contractor, PA	Gen	1
Houty & Dr Farhad Contractor, PA	Gen	1
Katy & Farrokh Cooper, CA	Welf	1
Dr Ardeshir & Parvin Damania, CA	Crit	1
Diana Damkevala, CA	Welf/Crit	1
Er. Soli & JoAnn Dastur, FL	Gen	2
Homi & Nargish Davier, TX	Gen	1
A.D. & G.A. Dutia, AL	Sch	2
Sorab Gandhi, CA	Welf	2
Rashna Ghadialy, IL	Gen	1
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Behram K & Farieda Irani, TX	Crit, RelEd	2+1
Jim & Homai Jagus, PA	RelEd	5
Khurshid & J.J. Jamadar, TX	Crit	1
Khorshed & Dr Firoze Jungalwala, MA	Schol	1
Jamshed & Rita Kapadia, MA	RelEd	1
Mr & Mrs K.S. Kermani, NY	Med*	5
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Delara Kheradi, NY	Schol	1
Celeste Kheradi, RI	Schol	15
Dr Jerry Kheradi, RI	Schol	15
Jasmin & Maneck Kotwal	Gen	1
Borzoo Kushesh & Mahindokht Yazdani-Bioki	Gen**	1
Zenobia & Shahrookh Lala, MI	Gen	1
Dolly Malva, CA	Gen	1
Tehmton & Aloo Mistry, MO	Crit	1
Percy K Nikorawalla, NJ	RelEd	1
Jamshed & Farzana Palsetia, MA	Gen	1
Farhad & Firoza Panthaki, MA	Sch, Welf	10+1
Dr Parvez Pohowalla, OR	RelEd	1
Purvez & Aban Rustomji, TX	Schol	1+1
Khurshed M Tengra, ID	Gen	1
Jamshed Udvadia, MI	Crit	5
Rayomand J Unwalla, PA	Wel	1
Dick & Sheroo Vazir, FL	Wel	1
Jer Vijan, AZ	Wel	1
Parviz & Parvin Yeganegi, Vancouver, Canada	Schol, Jour	1
ZAPANJ, DE, PA & NJ	Gen	1
Farangis Zartoshty & family, AZ	RelEd***	10
Z Assoc of Alberta, Canada	Crit	3
Atlanta Z Anjuman, GA	Wel, Schol	1
Z Assoc of Northern Calif, CA	Gen	1

Total Points, Jan-Dec 2001 **120**

- * in memory of Dr. Keikhosrow & Morvarid Harvesf
 ** in memory of Irandokht Ezzati
 *** in memory of Mobed Faridoon Zartoshty

Acknowledgments

FEZANA gratefully acknowledges donations received in the last quarter through December 31, 2001. (Note: unrestricted donations listed in the "Thousand Points of Light" list are not repeated here).

General Fund. Dr. Ardeshir & Shida Anoshiravani, CA (\$44); Dr. Darius E. Antia, NY(\$40); Tahamtan & Godi Aresh, CA, for National Union Catalog Project (\$10,000); Meher N Dastur, CA (\$72); Nargish S Jambuserwala, London, U.K. (\$20); Adi & Persis Kasad, PA (\$20); Dr. Aspi & Meher Patel, DE (\$22); Minoo & Arnavaz Pithawalla, NJ (\$15); Sheroo M Rusby, VA (\$10); Rohinton and Sanobar Shroff, BC, (\$30); Rustom K Vaccha, CA (\$10).

Welfare. Beach Cigar Group, FL, for Panchgani Dar-e Mehr (\$250); Beach Cigar Group, FL for Gram Seva Trust (\$225); Firdaus & Jasmin Bhathena, MA (\$500); Maneck & Mahrukh Bhujwala, CA, for WZO Farmer's Assistance (\$100); Mezdi & Meena Birdie, FL, for medical assistance of Zarathushtis and Dadar-Matunga Parsi Assoc. (\$101); Behram K & Farieda Irani, TX for WZO Mobed Scheme (\$100); Behran K & Farieda Irani, TX for Delhi Parsi Anjuman (\$50); Behram K & Farieda Irani, TX for Saronda Dar-e Mehr (\$50); Firoza & Farhad Panthaki, MA for Saronda Dar-e Mehr (\$100); Dick & Sheroo Vazir, FL (\$50).

Critical Assistance. Beach Cigar Group, FL (\$225); Firdaus & Jasmin Bhathena, Andover, MA (\$500); Behram K & Farieda Irani, TX (\$150); Homi B Minocher Homji, ONT (\$43); Yezdi & Maria Rustomji, TX (\$10); Zoroastrian Assoc of Alberta, (C\$500).

Journal. Navroze C Chenoy, ONT. (\$20); Noshir & Ketyun Daruwalla, IL (\$11); Sunnu Golwalla, Karachi, Pakistan (\$20); Rohinton & Mickie Katgara, ONT. (\$31); Nazneed Spleidt, CA (\$10).

Religious Education. Tehmasp & Zarine Dotivala, NJ (\$21); Kaezad J. Mehta, CA (\$75). ■

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Be informed. Be inspired. Be educated.
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FEZANA SCHOLARSHIPS (2002-2003)

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 learning (accredited degree-granting colleges or universities) in USA or Canada.

Scholarships. Scholarships for the academic year 2002-2003 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 Need (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, 2002** to:

**Professor Mehraban Khodavandi, Chair, FEZANA Scholarship Committee,
P.O. Box 359, Sheboygan, WI 53082-0359 • email: khodavandim@lakeland.edu**

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**

Success Story ...

[Continued from page 70]

pace. Failed marriages are too high a price to pay for financial success.

● Set the right expectations, and then deliver on them. This is true for everything in life. Setting the right expectation is winning more than half the battle.

● Don't be too greedy. The CFO at WebLine used to keep a plastic pig on his computer monitor to remind us all that "bulls will win sometimes, and bears will win sometimes, but pigs always lose." Sometimes the right decision may not be the one that makes you the most money.

Early years. Bhathena was born and brought up in Mumbai, with his sister, Maharukh, by his mother (to whom he owes a "tremendous amount") in a lower middle-class, single parent home. He attended Campion School and then Ruparel College. He stood first in India at the All-India ICSE 10th grade matriculation examinations, and went directly from 12th grade to MIT for his undergraduate studies in 1988, on a full \$25,000 per year scholarship/work program. He received his bachelor's degree in 1992, and masters in 1993, both in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science.

Bhathena lives in Massachusetts with his wife Jasmin, son Darian and daughter Zenia.

"My family is the center of the world and the source of my happiness," says Bhathena, "I am also taking pride in doing what I can to help less fortunate people, with the resources that I am lucky to have."

"I thank Ahura Mazda every day for my good fortune and consider it a privilege and an honor to help others who are in need for no fault of theirs." ■

[Firdaus Bhathena is founder, president & CEO, Relicore, Inc., 50 Cambridge Street, Burlington, MA 01803, Tel: (781) 229-1122, x222; email: firdaus@relicore.com].

PLEASE GIVE FROM YOUR HEART

Donations may also be made by Visa/Mastercard. Use the Subscription/Donation Form on the last page or from www.fezana.org. 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].

Second oldest agiary in Mumbai

The Maneckji Nowroji Sett Agiary, at 158 Bazargate Street, in Mumbai, is 268 years old and the second oldest agiary in Mumbai. The agiary building, a Heritage Structure, is now in a very poor state and needs immediate extensive repairs, renovation and painting, at an estimated cost of Rs. 21 lakhs (\$45,000). Trustees have made a fervent appeal to all Zarathushtis for donations to "give a new lease of life to this heritage structure. Please send donations to FEZANA [see above] marked "Sett Agiary".

WZO Trust - Athornan Mandal full-time mobed welfare scheme

Recognizing that the development of an educated, knowledgeable and articulate class of mobeds, is essential for the spiritual needs of the community, the WZO Trust Funds and the Athornan Mandal, launched a joint project four years ago, to transform thought into reality. Rs. 9 million have been raised and presently, 31 young athornanzadas are availing of monthly stipends and other benefits to encourage them to make *mobedi* (priesthood) a viable full-time profession.

The revival of *mobedi* as a profession, where the income is in tune with the times, is well under way. This is a win-win situation for the community as well as for the athornans. Donations for this noble cause, may be sent to FEZANA [see above], marked "Full-Time Mobed Scheme".

Urgent need for Navar Fund

Parsi charities cover almost everything but enabling the sons of its under-paid priests to go through the expensive, 30-day navar ceremony to attain priesthood. Many mobeds cannot afford the Rs. 30,000 cost. Of course, it would be nice if a generous donor gave the full expense for a navar ceremony; otherwise, donate what they can from time to time, as I have done with my ashodads. The ever-helpful trustees of WZO-India will properly arrange for the disbursement of funds and selection of worthy candidates.

Our scriptures exhort that whatever good we help to bring about, will become an intrinsic and eternal part of us. So whenever your *navaria* will pray as a priest, some benefit will accrue to you. I, on my part, will be glad to say prayers at my place for any donors needing such a service. God Bless. Please contact Dr. Kersey H. Antia at (708) 460-6585 or antia@juno.com.

WCRP project for African children

In Africa, more than 12 million children have lost one or both parents to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. These children are made vulnerable to all forms of deprivation and loss and pose overwhelming challenges to society. A whole generation of children – Africa's future – is in jeopardy. Realizing that religious communities possess the moral authority to address a catastrophe of this magnitude, the World Council for Religion

and Peace has embarked on a joint initiative to support a multi-religious response to this tragedy.

WCRP (Europe) member Jehangir Sarosh, is appealing to philanthropic Zarathushtis worldwide to donate for this worthy cause. Please send donations to FEZANA, [see above] marked "WCRP Africa Fund".

Thanks for earthquake relief

Principal Emeritus of Rajkumar College, Miss Rati F. Cooper and Director KS Ayaaz Khan write: "... how grateful we are for the timely assistance FEZANA has rendered us ... towards the repair and restoration of Rajkumar College's greatly cherished, 130 year old heritage buildings, all but one severely damaged when the quake struck on January 26, 2001 ... Your assistance, at this time of crisis has strengthened our resolve to rebuild, restore and forge ahead as never before! We would appreciate our gratitude to be conveyed to FEZANA Journal readers and contributors ..."

OPERATION EYESIGHT

Do you have old eyeglasses to give away?

Participants at Congress 2002 in Chicago, are urged to bring old eyeglasses. These will be sent to Mombasa, Kenya, by the Lions Club, which has been very active in reversing preventable blindness. A similar drive at the last world congress in Houston was very successful – about 500 pairs of eyeglasses were sent to Kenya. Contact BPastakia@aol.com.

FEZANA JOURNAL invites you to Adopt-a-Reader

Please consider donating to the "Journal Subscription Fund" for interested readers in India, Iran and elsewhere, who would love to read Fezana Journal, but cannot make the payment; and for complimentary copies to libraries.

PERSONALS

Have you had a near-death experience?

Zarathushtis who have lived through a near-death experience are invited to share their experiences with Dr. Ken Vincent, professor of psychology at Houston Community College. Vincent has been researching near-death experiences and has published a book "Visions of God" describing the experiences of Christians, Jews, agnostics, atheists and one Hindu. He is particularly interested in including the experience of Zarathushtis in this study. Contact Vincent_prof@yahoo.com or tel: (713) 668-8305. [Fed Newsletter, 2001].

Adoption information needed.

Persons willing to share their personal experiences or any information about adoption of a child, please send your contact information to Roshan Rivetna (RRRivetna@aol.com) for passing on to other Zarathushti couples interested in adopting.

Navsari Atash Bahram gets facelift with help of donors and volunteers

[Ardeshir Damania (abdmania@yahoo.com) has forwarded this heart-warming report by a devotee, "Adil", about a facelift for the Anjuman Atash Bahram in Navsari, which was consecrated in 1765]



"... extensive repairs of the Padshah Saheb, including painting of the hall outside the Padshah throne, were carried out by a team of very dedicated true Parsi volunteer boys.

"Donors from London, UK, have given a very substantial donation (over Rs. 10 lakhs) for purchasing the best-in-the-world carpet known as Palace Velvet. It was transported from UK to Mumbai and then to Navsari ... Mr. Jehangir Dordi and Mr. Noshir from London specially flew in, with special tools, to install this carpet, with the help of the volunteers ... I must thank these volunteers who work after office hours on repairs and maintenance of various atash adaran and atash bahram, not only in Mumbai, but all over India."



Nathan Paris, a boy, to Anaita and Flavian Paris, brother to Zara, in Mississauga, Canada, on December 12.

Arman Rohinton, a boy to Farah Shroff and Roozbeh Mehrabadi, on April 27 [ZSBC].

Vahishta Suntoke, a girl, to Lily and Kaiomarz Suntoke, granddaughter to Jeroo and Hoshang Suntoke and Shirin and Dara Wadia, in Toronto, on November 3.

Ryan Cyrus Washer, a boy, to Tinaz and Glen Washer, brother to Kai, in Montreal, Canada, on June 29.

Navjote, Sedreh Pushi

Natasha Behrana, daughter of Jamshed and Spenta Behrana, in Scottsdale, AZ. Dastoorji Jehangir N. Sidhwa, Panthaki at Sardar's Hirjika J. Behrana Agiary in Karachi, who was visiting in summer of 2001, performed the auspicious ceremony.

Danish Bhandara, daughter of Tinaaz and Mobed Zarir Bhandara, at



the California Zoroastrian Center in Westminster, CA, on December 29. The officiating mobed was her own father, Mobed Zarir Bhandara. A celebration luncheon followed for about 200 family members and friends from India, California, North Carolina and Oregon.

Jehan and Zubin DeVitre, children of Hector and Zomrod DeVitre, in Albuquerque, NM, on December 30. Mobeds Kersey Antia and Mazda Antia officiated. Mobeds Kersey and the newly initiated Mazda had also performed Hector and Zomrod's wedding ceremony 14 years ago.

Shernaz and Anita Dossabhoy, daughters of Nasswan Dossabhoy of Cambridge, MA, on June 29.

Arya Zartosht Iranpour, son of Manoucher and Mahnaz Iranpour, in Tehran, on September 2 [ZSBC].

Ryan Xerxis Holt, son of Kashmira and Malcolm Holt, in Surrey, BC, on August 18.

Rushan Machi, son of Kaizad and Jinoby Machi, of Germantown, WI, at the Saher Agiary in Mumbai, on January 18.

Benaz Medhora, daughter of Rieana and Hiraz Medhora of Shrewsbury, MA, at PVM Gymkhana in Mumbai, on December 27.

Jamsheed Motafram, son of Feroze and Mahrugh Motafram of Brookfield, WI, at the Saher Agiary in Mumbai, on December 23.

Jillian Linda Elizabeth Nanavaty, daughter of Kershaw and Jane Nanavaty, on July 21 [ZSBC].

Shireen Pourbemani, daughter of Mahshid and Houshang Pourbemani of Newton, MA, in Iran, on August 14.

Magdalena Rustomji, wife of Yezdi Rustomji, at the home of Dr. & Mrs. Meherwan Boyce, in Houston, on September 1. Mobeds Bomanshah Sanjana and Kurush Sanjana officiated. Magdalena, an active member



Navjotes, from left, Jamsheed Motafram, Natasha Behrana with Ervad Jehangir N. Sidhwa officiating, and Danish Bhandara with Mobed Zarir Bhandara officiating [see announcements below].

of the Zarathushti community and a sponsor of the Zoroastrian Youth Group of Houston, has been recognized by the Zoroastrian Association of Houston for her commitment to Houston Zarathushtis. Magdalena writes: "My original involvement in the Zarathushti religion had to do with wanting my son Aaron to grow up within his community. As I accompanied the Youth Group to various conferences, I listened to Zarathushtra's message. It is only natural that all the exposure to His message would lead me to this choice. In happiness, I declare "Fravarane", I choose for myself to be a worshipper of Ahura Mazda and a Zarathushti and hope to be a "beneficent member of the Zoroastrian Fellowship."

Deena and Aria Shahryary, children of Linda and Farhad Shahryary, grandchildren of Irandokht and Gen. Khodarahm Shahryary, in Virginia, on September 9.

Zinnia Sidhwa, daughter of Bhinaita and Sohrab Sidhwa, formerly of Boston, in Islamabad, Pakistan, on October 14.

Kayan Todiwalla, son of Zarir and Hira Todiwalla of Chicago area.

Weddings

Shahnaaz Bharucha and Zubin Balsara, in Mumbai, on October 13 [ZSBC].

Noshir Contractor and Maria Mastronardi, at the Arbab Rustom Guiv Darbe Mehr in Chicago, on July 6. Mobeds Kersey Antia and Jamshed Ravji officiated.

Nooshin Kiani and Kourosh Edalati, in North Vancouver, BC, on September 2.

Binaifer Davar, daughter of Adi and Pervin Davar with **Randy Glantz**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Solarz, on September 22.

Meherbanoo Poulad Noshirvan and Babak Meher-Rostamian, in Vancouver, BC, on November 3.

Kershaw Mehta and Janice Peterson, in Poughkeepsie, NY, on September 29. They celebrated with family and friends at receptions in Poughkeepsie in October and Syracuse in November.

Zahra Sethna, daughter of Rohinton and Mahrukh Sethna, and **Stephen Mostad**, on September 15 [ZAGNY].

Neville Patel, son of Dolly and Late Homi Patel, to **Firoozi Dastur**, daughter of Aban and Dinshaw Dastur, in Toronto, on August 12.

Malcolm Shroff and Dilnaz Kanga, in Mumbai, on October 25 [ZAGNY].

Zubin Talavia of Boston area, and **Nicole Gallant**, at White Point Beach Resort, Nova Scotia, on August 29. The afternoon ceremony was held on the beach with family and friends. Ervad Farhad Panthaki recited Zarathushti prayers, followed by readings from the Bible. A reception followed at the White Point Ballroom.

Jamshed Vakharia and Lisa Fernald, in Warwick, RI, on July 1. Ervad Farhad Panthaki recited Zara-

thushti blessings along with translations. An elegant reception was held at a historic mansion.

Farah Khambatta and Michael Walsh, in Bretton Woods, NH, in June. Ervad Cyrus Karkaria recited Zarathushti prayers for the wedding.

Deaths

Arnavaz (Arni) Adrenvala, 91, mother of Shireen Patton, in Pune, India, in October [ZAGBA].

Framroze B. Anklesaria, father of Gaive Anklesaria of Houston, in Karachi, on December 16.

Doulat Bastanizadeh, 72, mother of Mahnaz Iraj of North Vancouver, BC, in Yazd, Iran, on September 1.

Jolly Dadi Bharucha, sister of Pesu and Villy Engineer of Ontario, in Karachi, on November 6.

Mehli Captain, father of Khushru Captain of Boston area, in India, in October.

Jamshed Colah, husband of Perin, father of Jessy, Eric, Aspi and Percy, father-in-law of Annamarie, grandfather of Perin, Freddy and Zenobia, in Baldwin, NY on October 11.

Sohrab (Soli) Ardeshtir Cursetjee, brother of Mehroo (Keki) Bhote of Glencoe, IL, in Pune, on December 9.

Piloo Darukhanawalla, mother of Jasmin Percy Katrak of Houston, in Mumbai, on December 1.

Shapour Demehry, husband of Shahnaz Gheibi, father of Orang and Negin, on November 4 [ZAMWI].

Dinamai Jalejar Dhabhar, wife of late Jalejar Dhabhar, mother of Roshan, Ruby, Phiroza, Farrokh and Jamshed, in Mumbai, on November 2 [ZSO].

Dina Nadirshah Driver, 91, mother of Zenobia Songadwala, Cawas and Cherag Driver of Toronto, Aban Hakim of Calgary, Dorab Driver of UK, and Adi and Naval Driver of Mumbai, in Mumbai, on November 6.

Homi Driver, 90, husband of Banoo, father of Cyrus, Shiraz and Darius, in Vancouver, BC, on August 18.

Khodaram Falahati, 75, husband of Fardows Baghi of Tehran, father of Parvin (of Isfahan), Parisa (of Tehran), and Darioush, Parviz and Rostam, all of California, grandfather of eight, in Tehran, on January 21.

Morvarid Faroodi, 70, wife of Mehraban Sasani, mother of Rostam Sasani of Burnaby, BC, in Yazd, Iran, on July 14.

Ardeshtir Italia, 80, grandfather of Zenobia Siganporia, of Dallas area, in Mumbai, on November 6.

Lal Jehanian, 80, wife of the Late Dinshaw Jehanian, mother of Bahram, in North Vancouver, BC, on October 22.

Jahanbux Aderji Kapadia, 95, father of Kamal Driver of Toronto, and Yasmin, Lily, Daisy, Zarin and late Mehernosh of India, in Calcutta, on November 26. Just a few months ago, "Uncle Kap", a veteran athlete, won gold medals in sprint events at the International Veterans Olympics in Australia. A resident of Calcutta since 1958, he was a keen athlete and a tennis and yoga enthusiast. He took to serious athletics at the age of 78 (!), when he started winning medals at Veteran's Meets in Calcutta and New Delhi. He then went on to win medals at International veteran's meets in North America, South Africa, Sweden and Australia.

Naju Khariwalla, mother of Rumi (Armaity) Khariwalla of Aurora, IL, in Chicago, on November 15.

Persis Kerawalla, 70, sister of Dr. Sam Kerr of Sydney, Australia, Godrej

[Continued on page 82]

Homi Kapadia and his sister Mahrokh Keyannejad *Reaching out from the heart ... SPECIAL THANKS!*

Life indeed is full of surprises – good and bad. One has to deal with it as they come and to the best of our abilities. Our dear friends, **Homi Kapadia** and **Mahrokh Keyannejad** (our neighbor from Bombay) of Athens, Greece, were like family to us, and our friendship goes a long way. Homi's plan was to leave his sister, Mahrokh with us in Toronto, and proceed to the US for his cancer surgery. When they arrived in Toronto, Homi was apprehensive, and Mahrokh, who was a scholar in her own right, was not her happy and healthy self. She was devoid of her usual enthusiasm. Her health failed and she passed away on March 24, 2001 in our house after praying for two hours. We had her funeral in Toronto.

Homi was heart broken. That afternoon he was not feeling well and so he rested and fell asleep. When he got up he said he had a dream in which Mahrokh said she will be waiting for him in Boston. He left for Boston the same evening for an appointment with his doctor.

Homi was forever praising the Zarathushti families of Boston, and said that he was very happy to be in the midst of Parsis and that they had opened their hearts and homes to him. One evening when I called the Rehabilitation Center where he was recuperating after his surgery, I was told he had been rushed to the hospital. Next morning he had a major

cardiac arrest and was unconscious. My husband, Farrokh, and I left for Boston. Eventually, Homi did not come out of coma and breathed his last on May 9, 2001.

The hospitality of the Jungalwalas' was overwhelming. They accommodated us, Bella Tata, and Homi's dear friends from overseas. Our sincere thanks also go to the Kheradis, Colabewallas, Guzders, Panthakis, Araozs and Jannan Akraavi for their warmth and kindness to Homi. Our special thanks to Ervad Nozer Kotwal, his wife Nergish, and Ervads Yezdi Antia, Jal Panthaki and Xerxes Bamji, who performed the ritual prayers. Prayers continue to be held in our house every month,

Homi was a self made man, a great soul and a glory to his institutions. The more I eulogize him, it will sound hollow and short to me. His soul will never forget the kindness and help genuinely extended to Mahrokh and himself. There must have been an exceptionally close bond between the two, that death could take away Homi within 45 days of his sister's passing. But the carriage that carried them away has left behind the immortality which will go a long way in the wake of their memories.

-
By Tanaz Bhandari, Toronto, Ontario
[See FEZANA Journal, Summer 2001 and obituary by Khorshed Jungalwala in Fall, 2001]



Sedreh Pushi in Belarus. Mobed Kamran Jamshidi from the Zoroastrian Universal Community in Gothenburg, Sweden, performed the sedreh pushi for 5 persons from Belarus, in January. Photo shows from left: Mahpari (Elena Rachickaya), Jamshid (Yuriy Lukashevich), Ariana (Natalya Malahova), Mobed Kamran and Anahita (Anna Alexeeva). The fifth initiate, Mehrdad (Alexey Valyaev) is not in the photo. Yuriy Lukashevich writes: "We live in Minsk (Belarus). We have a small group of about 30 persons who are interested in the Good Religion, and try to establish kind relations with all Zartoshti organizations in the world for spreading the Good Religion in our country." Contact him at info@avesta.org.ru. ■

Nergesh Pudam Mistree (1918 - 2001)

PHYSICIAN, MOTHER AND LOYAL FRIEND, A BEACON OF HOPE AND COURAGE

For the first 13 years of her life, **Nergesh Pudam Mistree** was raised by her maternal grandmother from whom she learned that a woman must be educated and independent. She grew up with a discipline that became the backbone of a strong work ethic that would be demonstrated time and again for the rest of her life.

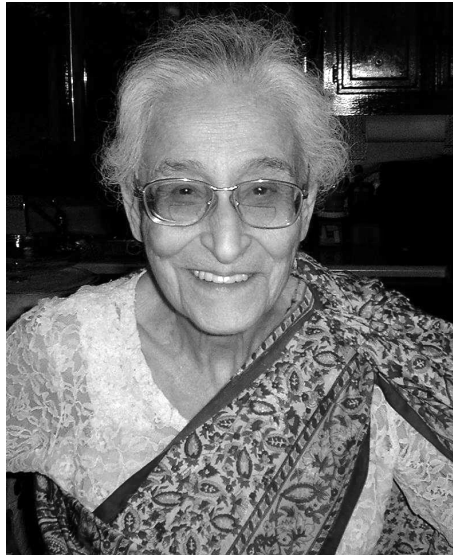
Although it was unusual and difficult at that time for a woman to study medicine, Nergesh financed her own education through scholarships and won 8 gold medals for her studies at the University of Bombay. She was told by one of her professors that he regretted having to give her the medals because she was a woman who was destined to get married, have children and leave the profession. Years later this professor acknowledged his error and complimented her on what she had achieved.

Nergesh enlisted in the British-Indian Army and served in World War II with the American forces on the Burma front and later with the Australian Sappers and Miners in Poona. She owned and rode a motorcycle (that had to be kick-started). This started a long fascination with machines, culminating with her burgundy Toyota Corolla. Nergesh became the first woman in Poona, in the 1960s, to operate a three-wheeled rickshaw.

During World War II, she met and married Pudam J. C. Mistree and had a son, Farrokh. After the war she resigned from the army and opened a clinic in the one of the poorest sec-

tions of Poona City. Four years later they had a second son, Khojeste.

Nergesh estimated that in her 46 years as a physician, she had delivered over 19,000 babies.



Nergesh was known for encouraging those around her to succeed. When Farrokh decided he would leave home at the age of 16 to study naval architecture at IIT Kharagpur and later go to the University of California at Berkeley, Nergesh was his strongest supporter. She encouraged Khojeste at

the age of 15 to pursue his studies in the UK. With her support, Khojeste became a Chartered Accountant in England and went on to study for a degree in Oriental Studies at the University of Oxford. Since her sons were away studying, Nergesh announced that she too would study, and earned a UK diploma in architecture through a correspondence course.

Nergesh was a devout though eclectic Zarathushti. Her commitment was based on faith and over the years she frequently demonstrated the power of prayer. Nergesh did a lot of *pro bono* work amongst the poor, often accepting their gifts of some fruits and vegetables for the services she rendered. She believed in helping the less fortunate people who were going to have families and live ordinary and happy lives. Accordingly, throughout her life she quietly gave to charity. In addition to her own children, we know she paid for the full education of nine children, both Parsis and non-Zarathushtis. She also paid for the navjotes of countless children and was well

known for making the first 'navjote sudreh'. She was equally at home socializing with people of different professions, religions and socioeconomic status. Nergesh was a loyal friend to people from all walks of life and she went out of her way to build wealth for those who had helped her in her career.

In 1983, Nergesh came to live with her son Farrokh and his family in the United States, first in Houston, Texas and later in Atlanta, Georgia. She often observed how lucky she was to have a daughter-in-law (Janet) with whom she had so much in common in spite of their different backgrounds.

Nergesh's guiding principles were a respect for education, learning and wisdom, a love of the Zarathushti religion, looking at issues from another person's perspective, a love for dogs and plants (in particular her curry patta trees), a love of family and a stringent appreciation of neatness and order.

Since her death innumerable people have let us know that our mother was a beacon of hope and courage and a role model for them and we agree with them. Our mother had an iron will and a determination of an unusual order. She succeeded in all that she set out to do with unbounded energy and a focused mind. We, her children, will remember her as a strong woman who lived an unusual life, bringing happiness, joy, light and wisdom to so many. Nergesh will forever be remembered, as her generous deeds and strong principles live on in the countless people whom she helped and most importantly, in our own lives.

Nergesh is missed by her grandchildren, Tashan, Dinsha, Behram and Kaiyan and her daughters-in-law Janet and Firoza and of course the two of us – her sons,

Farrokh and Khojeste

Contributions may be made to the FEZANA Scholarship Fund [see page 74].

Milestones

[Continued from page 80]

Kerawalla of San Francisco, peacefully, in Mumbai, on February 5. In Mumbai, she leaves behind sister Freny Fatakia, brothers Rusi, Soli and Bomi Kerawalla and a host of nephews and nieces around the globe.

Khushroo Lakdawalla, 61, husband of Dinaz, father of Sam, brother of Zenobia (Dorab) Cooper of Mumbai, in Ottawa, on January 10.

Jagabhandu Mohanty, 70, father of Jayant (Shernaz) Mohanty, of Dallas area, grandfather of Shayan and Ahneesh, in Cuttack, India, on November 12.

Dolly Framroze Navroze, mother of Ruby Anklesaria and Yasmin Haveliwala, in Houston, on Jan 11 [ZAH].

Mahabanoo Rivetna, 91, wife of Nariman, mother of Minni (Khushroo) Mirza and Gool (Farokh) Kapadia, grandmother of Dinaz, Rayomand, Firdosh and Sarosh, in Montreal, on January 8.

Khorshed Sorabji, mother of Nilufer Kasnavia, in Houston, on November 8.

Adil Tamboli, 23, son of Cawas and Bina Tamboli of New Delhi, nephew of Nergish Meerza and Rusi Tamboli of Toronto, as a result of a car accident, in Florida, on December 7.

Nadir Wadia, husband of Geraldine, father of Darius [ZAGNY]. ■

Passing of Vada Dasturji Kekobad Dastur of Udvada, Iranshah

Vada Dasturjisaheb Kaikobad Firozji Dastur, 76, died on January 25th, in Udvada. His wife, Bakhtawar had passed away earlier. He leaves behind his son Naib Dastur Khushroo, daughter-in-law, Havovi, and grandchild Parinaz; and his daughter Zenobia Peshotan Sidhwa and grandchildren Rayomand and Jamshed; and brothers Khurshed and Eruch. May his soul rest in peace. ■

EVENTS & HONORS

Judges applaud Farrokh Anklesaria's Enlightened Sentencing Project



Above, TESP executive director Farrokh K. Anklesaria [seated third from left], his wife and TESP project manager Ruffina Anklesaria [second from left], with judges of the Missouri Supreme Court and graduates at the 4th graduation.

There is a trend in contemporary jurisprudence for courts to take a more therapeutic approach to the law and court practice. **The Enlightened Sentencing Project (TESP)**, founded by Barrister-at-Law **Farrokh K. Anklesaria**, is gaining recognition in the judicial system. TESP strives to bring light to the field of rehabilitation by teaching offenders high-quality and holistic self-development, health-promoting and stress-reducing techniques, including and especially the Transcendental Meditation (TM) techniques, based on the teachings of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi.

The TM program has been effectively used within the prison system in California, Massachusetts and Vermont, and there is scientific research documenting the many benefits of the program among inmates.

Mr. Anklesaria has conducted rehabilitation programs in prison systems, schools and governmental organizations in 12 countries, and directed programs for over 30,000 inmates and correctional professionals in prisons in the US, India and other countries. For more information, see www.enlightenedsentencing.org.

Ervad Darayus Parvez Bajan, 26, won the K. F. Parekh Gold Medal for passing the M.A. with distinction, in Avesta-Pahlavi at Mumbai University. Bajan, a *navar* and *martab*, has performed higher liturgical ceremonies like Nirangdin and Boi, for atash behrams and gumbaj consecration, and helps his father and grandfather in running the Mevawalla Agiari at Byculla.

Bajan has also passed Chartered Accountancy, Cost Accountancy and Company Secretary professional examinations, with high rank, and is

presently Assistant Manager at Standard Chartered Bank. With his academic and priestly accomplishments, Bajan is indeed a role model for young athornanzadas.

Anahita Kalianivala, daughter of Nina and Zarir Kalianivala of Dallas, was elected President of the Student Council at Fossil Hill Middle School, comprising of 950 students of 7th and 8th grades.





Actor **Cyrus Deboo** of Los Angeles, son of Behram and Manijeh Deboo of Seattle, will perform the role of guardian of the Queen, in a Gurkha costume, in *Austin Powers #3*. Among his TV roles have been Raj in *General Hospital* and Abdul in *The Bold and the Beautiful* and commercials for *White Rain* and *Grey Dawn* products for Nordstrom, Inc. Deboo, who has extensive training in theater and acting, has also performed in theater productions at the American New Theater in Los Angeles and Strasberg Theater in Seattle. He would love to participate in any Zarathushti productions. Contact Cyrus at (323) 634-7933.

Pakistani social worker and artist **Jimmy Engineer** announced that he would go on a “*Peace Walk*” from Islamabad to New Delhi. He said “Peace could only be achieved if people on both sides of the Indo-Pak border tried to understand each other.” Engineer will be followed by a van bearing peace slogans, with a bed and medical facilities.

Cincinnati’s tennis player **Khushchehr Italia** was named the *Conference-USA “Women’s Player of the Week”* for the period ending January 14. Italia was 15-7 on the season after going 2-2 at the Milwaukee Tennis Classic. She defeated Butler and Marquette, and teamed with Jen Capuzzi in doubles to beat duos from Kentucky and Marquette, WI.

Homi Patel named CEO of Hartmarx

Currently president and COO, Patel will become CEO at the Chicago-based apparel maker, in April.



Homi Patel, currently president and chief operating officer of the Chicago-based apparel-maker *Hartmarx Corporation*, was named to succeed Elbert O. Hand, as Chief Executive Officer on April 11. According to Hand, “Homi and I have worked closely together since we assumed the company’s two top positions in 1992. His promotion is the logical and expected step in the future management progression of the company.”

Patel joined Hartmarx in 1979 as vice president and general manager of the Fashionaire Division (career apparel) of Hart Schaffner & Marx. After leading several operating units, among them Austin Reed of Regent Street and M. Wile & Company, he became head of the Men’s Apparel Group, in 1990, president

of Hartmarx in 1992, COO in 1993, and was elected to the Board of Directors in 1994.

Patel received his BS degree in statistics from the University of Bombay, came to Columbia University in 1972, and received his MBA in 1974. Prior to joining Hartmarx, Patel was director of marketing for Corbin, Ltd. in New York. Patel resides in Lake Forest, Illinois, with his wife Anne, and daughter Natasha, 8; son Neville is doing his MBA at Wharton, and son Cyrus works at Price Waterhouse in Washington, DC.

Abtin Keshavarzian of Tehran, Iran, ranked first in the PhD qualifying examinations for the highly competitive electrical engineering program at Stanford University in California. Of the 194 applicants from around the world, only 79 passed the examination; of these 13 were Iranians, and four of them ranked in the top ten.

Russy D. Sumariwalla was elected to the Board of Directors of the Community Foundation of the Napa Valley, California. Prior to retirement as president and CEO of United Way International, he was senior vice president for research, development and program evaluation at United Way of America and senior fellow United Way Strategic Institute.

Russy has consulted and lectured extensively and is the author of books and papers on nonprofit management, philanthropy, and voluntarism. Russy serves on the Aspen Institute Non-profit Sector Research Fund and Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy at the Urban Institute; and consults with Independent Sector, United Way of America, Asia Foundation, Volunteers of America and others.

Cyrus Toddywala’s restaurant, *The Parsee*, in London, UK, got voted as “one of the five best new restaurants to try in London”. Business is good and the restaurant is gaining popularity. The Parsee is Toddywala’s second restaurant, following on the success of his first one, *Cafe Spice Namaste*, also in London.

Homi K. Bhabha Harvard's prize catch

At Harvard University, the acquisition of Homi K. Bhabha from the University of Chicago last fall is regarded as a major coup.

"It was our dream to get Homi Bhabha," said Henry Louis Gates, chairman of the Afro-American studies department, where Mr. Bhabha will begin teaching in the spring. Reaction in the English department, where Mr. Bhabha will be spending the bulk of his time, was just as enthusiastic. "He's manifestly one of the most distinguished cultural theorists of the postcolonial and diasporic experience in the world," said the department chairman ...

Bhabha is one of the most-sought-after-speakers on the academic lecture circuit. Yet at the same time, he is dogged by critics who say his followers have been bewitched by his indecipherable jargon ... His prose style owes something to the arcane literary theory he studied at Oxford ... But his signature ideas - concepts like 'hybridity,' 'negotiation' and 'in-betweenness' - can just as readily be traced to his experience as a member of an ethnic minority in Bombay.

Mr. Bhabha's family were Parsis, descendants of Zoroastrian Persians who paddled to the west coast of India from Iran in long boats during the eighth century. By the time of the Raj, the Parsis had become prosperous bourgeoisie, a community of

doctors, lawyers and bankers trusted by both Hindus and British alike. They had wealth and status, Mr. Bhabha said, but aside from their religious beliefs, little in the way of distinct culture ... By necessity and inclination, Mr. Bhabha said, Parsis were enthusiastic consumers of borrowed culture ...

... a series of essays written in the late 1980s and early 1990s while he was a professor at Sussex University in England, brought him to the attention of American scholars and helped him land an appointment at the University of Chicago in 1994. His popularity soared ...

Bhabha lives in an elegantly renovated Victorian home near the Harvard campus with his wife, Jacqueline, a human rights lawyer, and the youngest of their three children, a 13-year-old daughter ... ■

Excerpted by Roshan Rivetna from "Harvard's Prize Catch, a Delphic Postcolonialist", by Emily Eakin, New York Times, November 17, 2001. Homi K. Bhabha is the son of Khushedji Bhabha, an eminent jurist in the High Court of Mumbai. Khushedji was the brother of noted statesman Cooverji Bhabha of Mumbai.



Heeraz Marfatia's film is acclaimed.

Twenty-five year old filmmaker, Heeraz Marfatia's debut short film *Birju*, was selected from 2,100 entries in the short film category to premiere at this year's Sundance Film Festival. The Sundance Film Festival is the most prestigious showcase for independent films in the US. Held in Utah and founded by actor Robert Redford, the festival drew over 20,000 people last year.

Marfatia, originally from Ajmer, India, is doing a Master of Fine Arts program at San Francisco State University. He flew to India in his Christmas break, along with his cinematographer, and editor to shoot *Birju*, the

story of a day in the life of a four-year-old boy. A number of Heeraz' pals, Indian filmmakers, a contribution from Kodak India, and donation of much of the shooting equipment, make the film possible. [from www.rediff.com/entertai/2002] ■

BOOKS & SUCH

Dubash's encyclopedia

Naryman Kaikhosrow Dubash's monumental work, "*The New World Encyclopaedia of the Khoorshid Nigirishn*" was released by Dasturji Dr. Kaikhushroo M. JamaspAsa, at the Athornan Mandal in Mumbai in March 2001. Ervad Nirayosang Turel said that the 504-page volume is a collector's item worthy to be in the reference section of any library in the world: "The contents of the book are even more precious than the rich exterior. It is worth its weight in gold." [From *Jame Jamshed*, 2001. For ordering information contact Marzban Giara at giara@bom5.vsnl.net.in]

Architectural heritage of Mumbai

"*Heritage Buildings of Bombay*", with text by **Rajan Narayan** and photographs by **Sunil Vaidyanathan**, is an attractive coffee table volume that provides interesting information and photographs of the architectural heritage of Mumbai. Price Rs. 1950 (approx. \$45). Contact Marzban Giara at giara@bom5.vsnl.net.in.



O'Shihan Cultural Organization announces the **Second Zarathushti International Film/Video Festival**. Films/videos are invited in two divisions: "Competition" and "Non-competition". Both divisions are for non-professionals (amateurs). ZIFF is held bi-annually; films from the first Festival were screened at the World Congress in Houston. The Second Festival is planned for 2002. Contact ziff@oshihan.org and visit www.oshihan.org/Pages/ZIFF.htm.

On Wings of Fire - a rebirth

New and improved version of the historical epic film on Zarathushtra is resurrected in DVD format



Nigel Terry as Zarathushtra in "On Wings of Fire"

After an absence of 16 years the epic film *On Wings of Fire* has been resurrected on to the DVD format. The film stars Zubin Mehta, Nigel Terry, Lewis Fiander and Sir Derek Jacobi with an international cast and hundreds of extras. Shot in India on location and three studios, this scholarly and entertaining film comes alive as never before.

The movie was the brainchild of executive producer and director **Cyrus Bharucha** who produced the film with **Meherji** and **Jamshed Madan**. They have given the DVD rights to Global Movies Direct who in turn asked Bharucha to re-edit the film and re-mix some of the music to come up to the standards of other major DVD productions.

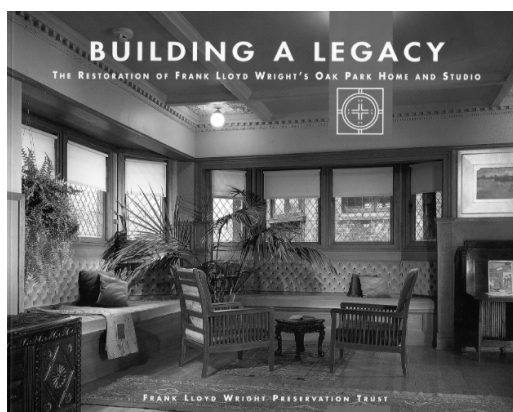
Bharucha has taken out a lot of what he refers to as "the fat" in the original version and added in a few new shots. "The film is now really tight and moves along very well," says Bharucha who is finally happy with this version.

"Originally I had to raise the money and was forced to put in a lot of things that the public didn't like, but that's the price of making these films on a tight budget where one has to raise every penny" said Bharucha recently when he was talking to Fezana. This film should be in every Zarathushti's video library and in colleges and schools as well. The chances are

another film of this epic proportions will not be made again for many years. *On Wings of Fire* is now on sale at the website www.indofilms.com. [See advertisement on inside back cover].

Building a Legacy:

The Restoration of Frank Lloyd Wright's Oak Park Home and Studio



Edited by Zarine Weil

Pomegranate, 150 pages, \$30.

Available from www.amazon.com.

"It's part 'This Old House', part Martha Stewart and part historic documentary" says the book review in The Chicago Tribune [December 23, 2001]. In this glossy, full color volume, Zarine Weil documents the restoration of the architect's Oak Park home and studio. Through the

painstaking, 13-year restoration, a devoted cast of volunteers and professionals discover the architect's early philosophy and aesthetic they find hidden behind years of various paint, plaster and shingles. This attractive volume, the result of an intensive 2-year research project, was compiled by Zarine Weil, publications manager at the Frank Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust, and a freelance writer and editor.

Payk-e-Mehr celebrates 16th anniversary

This spring, *Payk-e-Mehr*, edited and published by **Dr. Mehraban Shahrvin**i of West Vancouver, Canada, will be 16 years old. The goal of this bilingual (Persian and English) publication is to establish a dialog about Persian culture, the religion of Zarathushtra and news about Zarathushtis around the world. To date 115 issues have been published, with contributions from 210 authors, and distributed to 180 cities around the world. Mr. Shahrvin can be reached at (604) 922-3491.

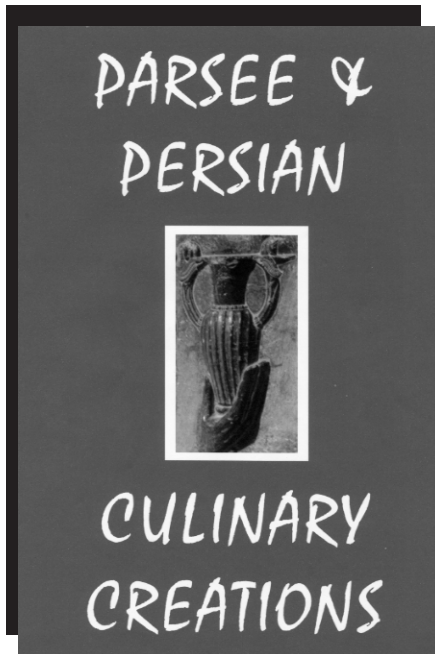
Zarathushti Directory

California Zoroastrian Center announces publication of the **2002 North American Zoroastrian Telephone Directory**. Contact CZC at (714) 893-4737.

Parsee and Persian Culinary Creations

**Exotic Made Easy
the American Way**

*Compiled and Edited
by Mehroo M. Patel, MD*



Yielding to popular demand, the Zoroastrian Association of Chicago is publishing the second cookbook – a sequel to *“Parsee Culinary Artist”*. This 128-page recipe book features 91 recipes by many contributors and an essay “Focus on Nutrition” by Karmeen Kulkarni, a board-certified advanced diabetes manager. A most unique and valuable feature of this cookbook is the complete nutritional analysis given after each recipe.

Only 500 copies will be available for sale. It will be offered for initial sale at Congress 2002 for \$15. Pre-publication price is \$12 if ordered by June 15, 2002. Send check or credit card information to ZAC, 8615 Meadowbrook Drive, Burr Ridge, IL 60521. The book can be picked up at Congress 2002 or mailed (add \$3 for shipping within USA/Canada). After Congress 2002, if copies are still available, the price will be \$20. ■



Bardoliwalla Releases CD

“Some Other Time” is the only straight-ahead jazz CD ever to be released by anyone where one individual plays all the parts (guitars, bass, drums and keyboards).

Nenshad Bardoliwalla of Oakland, CA, has just released his first CD, entitled *“Some Other Time”*. The musical genre is ‘straight-ahead’ jazz, with tunes that are interpreted inventively, yet still easy to hum.

“Jazz is easily the first truly American musical art form, combining the harmonic sophistication of European classical music with the rhythmic sophistication of African-American music in a democratic music-making context,” says Nenshad, “I’m proud to be an American contributing to this vital art form.”

Since late 2000, when he began to make digital audio recordings on his

laptop, Nenshad has immersed himself in digital audio recording, building a studio in his home capable of rendering DVD-quality music, with 6 guitars, 2 basses, electronic drum set, keyboard, sitar and tabla.

“Some Other Time” represents a number of firsts. It is probably the only straight-ahead jazz CD ever to be released by anyone, where one individual plays all the parts (guitars, bass, drums and keyboards) by overdubbing himself. It is also, possibly, the first jazz CD to be released by a Zarathushti. It can be purchased at Nenshad’s website at <http://www/cosmiccontamination.com>. ■

[Also see Youthfully Speaking, p. 16]

Complimentary Subscriptions to FEZANA JOURNAL

FEZANA JOURNAL will be happy to donate one year’s subscription to each North American Zarathushti who has his/her navjote/sudreh-pushhi performed and to each couple announcing their wedding in the Journal. This is an effort to introduce young initiates and couples to the Journal and to FEZANA and hopefully develop a life-long bond. Your donations to “The Journal Subscription Fund” to help support this initiative will be deeply appreciated.

To redeem this offer or to make a donation, please contact FEZANA treasurer Rustom Kevala, 8812 Tuckerman Lane, Potomac, MD 20854, tel: (301) 765-0792, email: rustom@aol.com.

ROHINTON MISTRY'S BOOK REACHES MILLIONS THROUGH OPRAH

Chicago's own TV diva, Oprah Winfrey selects 'apro' * Rohinton's *A Fine Balance* for *Oprah's Book Club*, providing instant mass exposure to millions worldwide

[* 'apro' is the Gujarati word for 'our very own']

PHOTO: GEORGE BURNS © 2002 HARPO PRODUCTIONS, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.



Mistry and Oprah on her Book Club show in January.

"Oprah" is broadcast to 26 million US viewers per week, and to 106 countries worldwide.

By Tamina Davar
New York, New York

Oprah Winfrey, host of television's highest-rated talk show, announced in November her latest *Oprah's Book Club* pick: *A Fine Balance*, Rohinton Mistry's award-winning 1995 novel.

Oprah's first Canadian selection – and first by a writer of South Asian descent – made headlines, considering her last pick's fiasco – Jonathan Franzen, author of *The Corrections*, complained of discomfort with her endorsement. Calling Mistry's "one of the most exquisite and moving

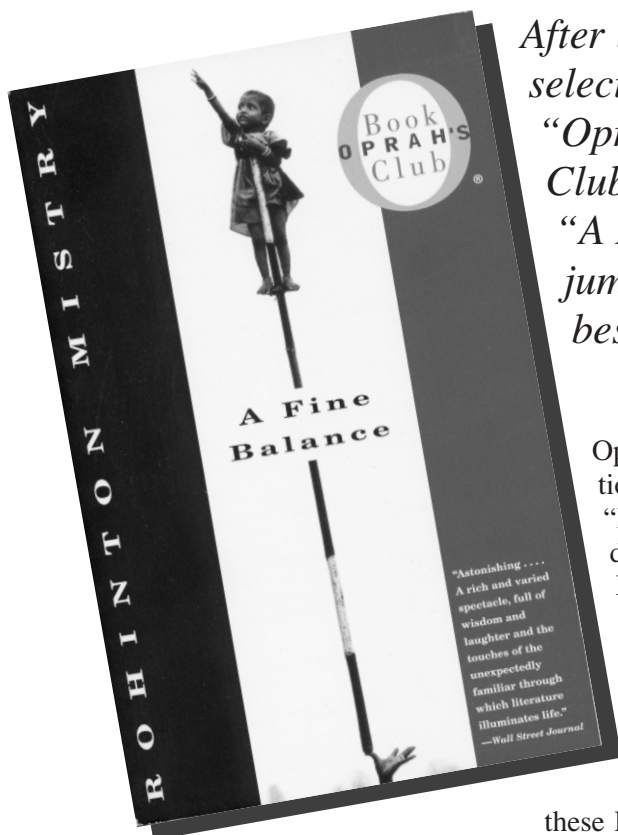
books I've ever read," reflecting her interests in inequality, family and life-lessons, Oprah later stressed its post-September 11 importance. "This will do, in some ways, what September 11 has done – taken us out of our own little shell – expose us to a whole other world out there going on beyond our backyards."

But Rohinton Mistry is no stranger to literary fame. With a string of mainstream literature's highest awards, and praise from every major media, Mistry is also considered Canada's most renowned novelist, and one of

the foremost English-language South Asian writers.

He is also Parsi Zoroastrian. Readers worldwide have long appreciated his explorations of poverty, prejudice, and religious diversity – featuring Parsi main characters and cultural details. In fact, within a day of Oprah's selection, her website's chat room was abuzz with readers talking about – and gaining insights on – Zoroastrianism and Parsi culture.

Oprah has, over five years, influenced millions to read literature, and her selection – entailing special



After being selected for "Oprah's Book Club", Mistry's "A Fine Balance", jumped to major bestseller lists.

Oprah or Mistry would also mention the words "Zoroastrian" or "Parsi" on television. The book discussion often focused on Mumbai's poverty; but religion in general was not brought up, even concerning India's caste system.

However, Mohammed, one of the two guests of Indian origin, foresaw readers asking "What are these Parsis?" "Who are the Zoroastrians?" and "What is the caste system?" and trying, as Americans recently have, to read about "other" cultures and religions.

The soft-spoken Mistry discussed his novel as a "look at history from the bottom up, from the point of view of 'the dispossessed', but with crucial laughter and hope amidst despair. Hoping that readers see 'the human need for family' beyond blood, he emphasized 'it's many 'big stretches' which will reduce the amount of injustice in the world. There is no other way."

Mistry, an intensely private man who avoids the spotlight, lives quietly outside Toronto with his wife, Freny, a high-school English teacher. Born in Mumbai in 1952, the second of four children, he was raised in a lower-middle-class family. He earned a degree in math and economics from Bombay University; but his youthful pursuits in guitar and folk singing also earned him billing as "the Bob Dylan of Bombay." He emigrated to Canada in 1975 and worked in a Toronto bank for 10 years. In 1983, while simultaneously attending Uni-

versity of Toronto for English and philosophy, he finally began writing.

After winning several Canadian literary prizes, he published *Swimming Lessons and other Stories from Firozsha Baug*, followed by his first novel, *Such a Long Journey*. *A Fine Balance* was a finalist for the famed Booker Prize (as was *Such a Long Journey*), winner of the Los Angeles Times Book Prize in Fiction, the Giller Prize, the Commonwealth Writers Prize, and The Royal Society of Literature's Winifred Holtby Award.

A Fine Balance, set during India's tumultuous 1975 State of Emer-

“... 700,000 US, and approximately 700,000 Canadian books were reprinted with Oprah's logo – ironically, many times more copies than there are Parsis, or even total Zarathushtis, worldwide.”

gency, explores the lives of four impoverished strangers – a poor Parsi widow intent on remaining independent, her student nephew, and two 'untouchable' Hindu tailors escaping village caste violence – forced by circumstance to share a cramped apartment. Amidst poverty and an unjust society in turmoil around them, they weave deep family ties despite religious and social status barriers between them, learning the "fine balance" between hope, despair, and survival.

Mistry's next novel, *Family Matters*, will be released in Canada and Britain in April 2002, and in the US this Fall.

Tamina Davar is a New York-based publicist and performance artist, as well as former contributing editor at *A. Magazine: Inside Asian America*.

bookstore displays and discounts, free library and school copies, and guided book club discussions worldwide – provides instant mass exposure. Mistry's book jumped to major bestseller lists across the US and Canada, after 700,000 US, and approximately 700,000 Canadian books were reprinted with Oprah's logo – ironically, many times more copies than there are Parsis, or even total Zoroastrians, worldwide.

A special January 24th *Oprah* show was broadcast to roughly 7 million US viewers and to 106 countries, including India. Featuring footage from Mistry's recent India trip (and later, an Indian dinner catered by New York's Dawat restaurant), Oprah led a discussion with Mistry and four 'regular' readers inspired by the book.

Many viewers, Zoroastrian and non-Zoroastrian, watched the show – broadcast, ironically, from Chicago, the upcoming Zoroastrian Congress city – with anticipation. Knowing that hundreds of thousands of readers were already familiar with the book's Parsi characters and cultural descriptions, many privately hoped that

What the viewers said ...

Rohinton's Mistry's appearance on *The Oprah Show* on January 24th, drew varied reactions from Zarathushti viewers

Oprah could hardly pronounce the name 'Rohinton' at first, but she became so enamored of Mistry's *A Fine Balance*, she called it an "exquisite book" and compared it to Dickens' later works. The only one mention of Parsis or Zoroastrians/Zarathushtis on the show, was by the Indian-born Muslim American, who said: "This novel will inspire readers to find out more about Parsis and Zoroastrians." We hope it does. I was happily surprised there was no mention of the Towers of Silence, which is referred to often in the novel, as that invariably catches the westerner's attention first.

Dr. Kersey H. Antia, Orland Park, Illinois

Neither Oprah nor Mistry touched on the community or religious background of Mistry or his characters. The interview was largely dominated by the Indian professor. The main subject of the novel was covered well, and it was good to see the generous applause he received.

Maneck Bhujwala, San Jose, California

I was looking forward to hearing more from Mr. Mistry on his book. He seemed to be quite introspective during the review with Oprah – I only wished to hear more about his creative process. Yet, I understood his silence to be less reticence than a truly reflective nature; his reflections are likely transcribed into true-to-life characters on the pages of his novels.

Shehnaz Bhujwala, University of Southern California

Congratulations to Rohinton Mistry on airing his eye-opening book on Oprah, the most popular talk show in America! Most authors struggle to find stories of interest to shock. *A Fine Balance* is about the prevalent social injustice in the homeland to which Rohinton returned after living abroad. For Oprah and her audience it was horrific and unbelievable but for every adult Indian it is a known world. One sees it, breathes it, smells it and lives it. Rohinton's bold and brave account of indifference and injustice where easily two thirds of the country's population lives in poverty, despair and hopelessness is long overdue. The villainous **system** must be recognized, attacked and eliminated. I am anxious to read this important book written by a Parsi.

DhunMai Dalal, Los Angeles, California

The community must accept the fact that not every member wants to promote or have feelings for the community. Mistry's interview with Oprah is a case in point, even though Mistry emphasized in the interview "humans need connection with the greater family." The interview may have been an opportunity lost for the community but we must learn not to expect 'mileage' from stars who also happen to be Parsis and Zarathushtis.

Dolly Dastoor, Montreal, Quebec

Seeing a fellow Zarathushti on Oprah was a rare and wonderful treat. Oprah was delightful in her honesty when she stated that during the time the emergency took place in India, she and her friends were "too busy doing their hair and shopping." Her reason for picking this book, after September 11th, to expose Americans to diverse cultures, countries and political scenarios around the world, is a very commendable one.

Yes, I was a little disappointed not to have heard more about Zarathushtis than the fleeting mention made by the wonderfully expressive professor. However, I think it is important to remember that this was not a book about Zoroastrianism, it was a book written by a Zoroastrian.

Tenaz H. Dubash, New York, New York

For the most part, I have heard negative to somewhat bland commentary regarding Mistry's 'performance'. But to be frank, I think it's inappropriate for us to judge him in the traditional 'Parsi' way, i.e. why couldn't he have mentioned the Parsis or Zarathushtis. Folks have to realize his message was profoundly deeper, and extended to the connectedness of our human family and the power of the human spirit.

More important than the plug for Zarathushtis – which I believe was so powerfully represented by his presence on Oprah – was that this author has an incredibly insightful and brilliant mind. I felt more proud than ever to be a Zarathushti, and in particular a Parsi Zarathushti, after watching what felt like a brother of sorts perform and serve as a role model we as a community so desperately need.

Jim Engineer, Aurora, Illinois

The Oprah - Mistry interview strangely gave the viewer little or no background of the author in terms of his faith, community and upbringing. A lost opportunity –

indeed! It amazes one that neither Oprah nor Mistry thought it important to discuss or even mention, the Parsi element of two of the four central characters in the book. It would have been important to show that the author's perspective was drawn from being outside the Hindu caste system, while growing up within the framework of the larger Indian community.

A Fine Balance reveals to the world the horror and devastation wreaked by the 1975 Emergency in India, commenting on the political and social environment. It vividly portrays the hope, despair, frustration and loneliness of the central characters. As Parsi Zarathushtis we can hope that our brethren living in India will not face political and social repercussions after the TV program is broadcast and the book is read.

Khorshed Junglawala, Sudbury, Massachusetts

Rohinton was very mild and softspoken; he could have been more aggressive and outspoken. Oprah and the panel all enjoyed the book stating that it "expanded" their horizons, and they learnt a lot from reading it. Rohinton should have also shown the other 'good' side of Mumbai, and not just the slums. Sorry, but Rohinton did not meet my expectations, as I thought that much more could have been said and done by him.

Dolly Malva, Downey, California

Overall, I got the impression that Rohinton has great talent to portray in words, life in its minutest details, the eccentricities of diverse personalities, and insightful human interactions and connections which he has woven into an "exquisite" story against a historical period of which few outside of India are aware.

How unfortunate that neither Oprah nor Rohinton mentioned that he was Parsi or Zarathushti nor about the character, Dina Dalal, being Parsi. An enormous opportunity was lost in "telling others who we are" on a nationwide TV program, as millions of our North American Neighbors (NAN) watched.

Shahrokh Mehta, Syracuse, New York

We thought Mistry did well in expressing his thoughts; he came across as an intelligent and sensitive individual. But the Zarathushti aspect was very much in the background. We were expecting to hear more about his family and life among Zarathushtis in general. While the emergency in 1975 may have been interesting to the uninformed, from our point of view it was not very revealing or informative. It showed pretty stereotype thinking – that India is trying to get away from.

Jim and Navaz Modi, Arlington Heights, Illinois

I was most impressed by Mistry's poise and soft-spoken presentation. He accepted both praise and criticism of his book with the same quiet reserve. He seems an intel-

ligent and thoughtful person – a good ambassador for the Parsis. I hope Oprah's viewers all rush to the library to read all they can about us!

Zahra Mostad, New York, New York

I was disappointed that Mistry showed *only* the bad and ugly life in India, leaving Oprah and millions of viewers with the impression that all of India was down and dirty and corrupt. I felt very badly that none of the art, culture, higher ideals and deep philosophical thinking of the Indian people was ever mentioned. To balance this, maybe FEZANA can approach Oprah to do a show on the strengths of this great nation and its people, including the Parsis.

Pervize

I wonder if Mistry realized the awesome reach of the Oprah show, and the rare podium it offered? Parsis were so proud to see "Apro Rohinton" being likened by Oprah to "Dickens in his finest years". But did Mistry think to let Oprah and her viewers know that he was a Parsi Zarathushti? And that so were Dina Dalal and other characters? It was a rare opportunity to bring a little recognition to our community – *an opportunity missed*.

And did the entire show have to dwell, for the full hour, on the dirty, poverty-stricken, caste-ridden, corrupt, beggar-infested, overpopulated, vasectomized, child-abused, starving side of India, that is typically perpetuated in the US media? That is a reality, but, surely, not the only reality. Did not Mr. Mistry think to point out that there *is* another side too – the beautiful India – of warm, hospitable, happy, hard-working people; a long and rich history; arts, literature, sciences, growth and industry?

Sadly, there was No Fine Balance on this show.

Roshan Rivetna, Hinsdale, Illinois

It is unfortunate that our community nurtures Zarathushtis, who, when they rise to fame and fortune, at times, forget their roots, and whence they came. Who sometimes don't recognize the opportunity their fame gives them, to give back, in some small measure, to the community that nurtured them. An example that comes to mind, is that of Freddie Mercury. What is lacking in our community infrastructure to make these persons so uncaring?

Rohinton Rivetna, Hinsdale, Illinois

The professor did most of the talking; Mistry was quiet as a church mouse – he was either shy or stagestruck. I was disappointed that Parsis and Zoroastrianism was mentioned only once, not by Mistry, but by the professor, who added that the book would interest people into reading up more about us. Oprah did not introduce him as he should have been – a Parsi Zoroastrian/Zarathushti. It is not often that we get a chance to be center stage. In short, it was a good opportunity, but we missed it.

Dinaz Rogers, Albany, Oregon

Mistry spoke carefully. His soft voice shared his vision for the book with his devoted readers, but he failed to capture the audience! This is the audience that is so enamored of his compelling characters, his sense of pathos, and the magic he weaves on the printed page. Is their disappointment due to the fact that readers turn their favorite authors into deities, and when the mystique is unveiled they find themselves facing yet another human? Is it fair to expect anything else but brilliant writing from our favorite authors? I am not sure of the answers. I do know this – I will still stand in line anxiously awaiting to buy Mistry’s upcoming new novel, but I may skip viewing his next TV appearance.

Aban Rustomji, Houston, Texas

I was looking forward to seeing *A Fine Balance* showcased by Oprah. To be selected by Oprah is quite a win, and I felt proud that a fellow Parsi got this well deserved attention. I was a bit surprised though – I had expected Mistry to be more articulate – he seemed to be at a loss for words. I guess he was nervous. In any event, one prefers modesty to brashness. I wish he had mentioned the Parsis or Zarathushtis even once. Zubin Mehta is widely thought to be Jewish, and as a community we desperately need a higher profile. We have been variously described as ‘a cult’ and even as a Muslim sect by the New York Times. I hope Mistry keeps this in mind for the future. I end by wishing our fine Parsi writer all the very best.

Bapsi Sidhwa, Houston, Texas

It is for the literary pundits to recognize and reward Mistry’s talents as an author. However, he is not known to have done anything as yet for Parsis or Zarathushtis, at least not in North America. If he so wished, Rohinton could have informed Oprah and the show producers, of his religion and community, prior to the show, and ensured some mention during the show. In the opinion of many, therefore, he is not “apro” Rohinton, and he does not merit felicitation by FEZANA or any other Zarathushti organization.

Russi Surti, Toronto, Ontario

Mistry is a very deep-thinking person, who writes with feeling. His characters are very real. Anyone who has lived in India, can closely relate with them. I felt very elated to see a Zarathushti author on TV, being compared to Dickens. Now we can relate with pride to yet another outstanding Zarathushti, not from the past, but of the present.

Sam Vesuna, Unionville, Ontario

I saw the show with my 17-year-old daughter Shireen, who never gets excited or interested in anything that requires concentration. To my great surprise she sat through the entire interview. Maybe she was captivated by the content and perhaps a bit surprised that a simple looking Zarathushti man was being interviewed by ‘apri’ Oprah!

Jimmy Dholoo, Gaithersburg, Maryland

In the following three articles, three US Parsi fiction writers discuss Parsi writing and Rohinton Mistry

rohinton mistry skill & heart

By Boman Desai
Chicago, Illinois

I have admired Rohinton Mistry’s work since I first read his short stories in *Tales from Firozsha Baug* (since retitled *Swimming Lessons*). The stories held their own with the best I had read, but I remember wondering how he would manage a novel. *Such a Long Journey* was that novel, as fine and accomplished a work as the stories in the first book, a novel that could hold its own against the best. Again, I remember wondering how he would manage a second novel, which is often the true test of a novelist. *A Fine Balance* was that novel, his *magnum opus*, and passed the test as easily as an athlete vaulting an anthill.

I do not wonder about his third novel; Mistry has already done so much, he has little left to prove. He is not without flaws: he lacks lyricism, his style is too prosy; the village scenes of *Balance* lack the verisimilitude of his other work; its penultimate scene is unnecessarily melodramatic; and ironically there are more memorable characters in the shorter novel than in the longer, making the latter occasionally claustrophobic, even sentimental; but his strengths are so overwhelming, his skill, ambition, confidence, fictional structures, and sheer heart, that the rest ceases to matter. ■



Boman Desai, author of *Memory of Elephants* [University of Chicago Press, 2001] was born and raised in Bombay, but has spent most of his life in Chicago. He has degrees in Psychology and English, both from the University of Illinois. He has worked in various capacities including farmhand, bartender, dishwasher, short-order cook, secretary, musician, bookstore clerk, telephone operator, auditor, and teacher.

By Sohrab Homi Fracis
Jacksonville, Florida

With the November 2001 selection of Rohinton Mistry's 1995 novel *A Fine Balance* for Oprah's Book Club, fiction by and about Parsis – a tiny minority Zoroastrian (Zarathushti) group within the minority South Asian Americans – is finally receiving widespread mainstream exposure in America. Mistry, Bapsi Sidhwa, and others among a handful of Parsi authors, have been winning literary awards for decades now, but this public recognition by one of the most beloved and powerful media figures in the world (what on earth were you thinking, Jonathan Franzen, when you dished Oprah?), coupled with the several hundred thousand new copies of Mistry's novel that the book club selection is generating, will take the word about our fascinating little community of ancient Persian survivors into the living rooms of more Americans than ever before.

Way back in 1978, **Bapsi Sidhwa's** novel *The Crow Eaters* was published in India and Pakistan. It quickly made its way into Britain and then the USA and is still in print today. Thousands of readers have chuckled at the exploits of the lovable yet scoundrelly Freddie Junglewalla, even as they recognized the more serious, metaphorical, age-old battle between good and evil (a cornerstone of Zoroastrian scriptures) that is waged within the mind of this complex character. Sidhwa had effectively staked out a piece of Parsi territory in the area of realistic fiction with her ground-breaking venture, and other Parsi writers would soon follow in her footsteps.

In 1980 **Farrukh Dhondy** published his slim, raucous collection of stories, *Poona Company*, in Britain. His unruly set of Indian characters was an eclectic one, not only Parsi/Zoroastrian but also Hindu, Christian, Sikh and Muslim. Then in 1987 **Rohinton Mistry's** story collection *Tales from Firozsha Baug* was

parsi fiction comes of age

or, the brief literary history of oprah's latest selection

published in Canada, his new domicile, to much literary acclaim. It remains my favorite among his books, pulsing with immediately recognizable, lovingly detailed scenes of life in Bombay:

On the pavement outside St Xavier's Boys School, not far from the ornate iron gates, stood two variety stalls. They were the stalls of *Patla Babu* and *Jhaaria Babu*. Their real names were never known. Nor was known the exact source of the schoolboy inspiration that named them thus, many years ago, after their respective thinness and fatness.

Before the schoolboys arrived in the morning, the two would unpack their cases and set up the displays, beating the beggars to the choice positions. Occasionally, there were disputes, if someone's space was violated. The beggars did not harbour great hopes for alms from schoolboys but they stood there, nonetheless, like mute lessons in realism and the harshness of life. Their patience was rewarded when they raided the dustbins after breaks and lunches ...

Patla Babu and *Jhaaria Babu* lost some of their goods regularly due to theft. This was inevitable when doing business outside a large school like St Xavier's, with a population as varied as its was. The loss was an operating expense stoically accepted, like the success or failure of the monsoons, and they never complained to the school authorities or held it against the boys. Besides, business was good despite the losses: insignificant items like a packet of *jeeragoli* worth ten paise, or a marble of the kind that

sold three for five paise. More often than not, the stealing went on for the excitement of it, out of bravado or on a dare. It was called "flicking" and was done without any malice towards *Patla* and *Jhaaria*.

I can see the hawkers' stalls arrayed outside *my* South Bombay school, *Campion*, right now, feel the bustle of hungry, white-uniformed boys, and hear the pleas of unimaginably wretched beggars around them.

Those three stalwarts of the new genre—Sidhwa, Dhondy, and Mistry—were then followed by authors such as the U.S.-based **Boman Desai** (*The Memory of Elephants*, 1988) and first Bombay, then London-based **Firdaus Kanga** (*Trying to Grow*, 1990) and **Ardashir Vakil** (*Beach Boy*, 1997). Sidhwa and Mistry continued to write as well, producing such internationally admired novels as Sidhwa's *Cracking India* (1988) and Mistry's *Such a Long Journey* (1991). Both books were, in time, made into movies: *Earth*, based on Sidhwa's novel and directed by Deepa Mehta, became India's nomination at the Academy Awards; *Such a Long Journey* was adapted for film by the talented Parsi scriptwriter **Sooni Taraporevala**.

Awards for the books themselves had begun to accrue. The vivid and eventually heartbreaking *Cracking India*, about a Lahore Parsi family's struggle to survive the bloody 1947 Partition dividing India and Pakistan, won Germany's Liberatur Prize in 1991,

while *Such a Long Journey* was shortlisted for the prestigious British Booker Prize and won the Canadian Governor General's Award. Dhondy twice won the Other Award, for *East End at Your Feet* and *Come to Mecca*, and also the Samuel Beckett Award for television plays he'd written for BBC. Sidhwa was awarded a National Endowment for the Arts fellowship in America and the Sitara-I-Imtiaz in Pakistan, the two countries' highest honors for the arts. Mistry won the Governor General's Award twice and was twice a finalist for the Booker Prize, the second time for *A Fine Balance*, which would go on to become Oprah's selection.

It would seem only natural then, given such impressive models to look up to, that other, budding Parsi writers should benefit from and be influenced by the growing literature of their tiny yet remarkable community. I've been told that *Thrity Umrigar*,

US-based author of the well-received 2001 novel *Bombay Time*, is an admirer of both Sidhwa and Mistry. Like myself, I might add.

To read their books was to know that my own material, so different from the mainstream (whether Indian or American) had relevance. More, that it transferred wonderfully well to the literary form. And to see their fearlessly unromanticized rendering of Parsi existence was to derive courage for my own task of recreating the texture of reality on paper, sans the sugar-coating that I knew would make it more palatable for friends and family. Mistry's material in particular – that of a young male Parsi who came of age in India then moved to Canada – so similar to mine, had the impact of a revelation, no less.

In India I had obtained my undergraduate degree at one of the five Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) in order to fulfill my family's

expectations of becoming the third civil engineer in as many generations, after my maternal grandfather and father, at the time partners in a Bombay construction firm. After following up with the appropriate graduate degree from the University of Delaware, however, much to their understandable consternation and dismay, I eventually decided not to join their company, in order to first work as a computer programmer-analyst contracted to American companies and then (good heavens) to try to make it as a writer! I returned to school for a second master's, at the University of North Florida, this time in English with an emphasis in creative writing.

At around the time of the second transition, a difficult one, I picked up a copy of Mistry's just-released 1991 novel, *Such a Long Journey*. Its central character, Gustad Noble, I found, has a son with my first name, Sohrab

Rohinton Mistry on the set of the film "Such a Long Journey", adapted into a screenplay by Sooni Taraporevala.
PHOTO: SOONI TARAPOREVALA, FROM "PARSIS: THE ZOROASTRIANS OF INDIA – A PHOTOGRAPHIC JOURNEY"



(common enough among Parsis, derived from the c. 3000 BCE Persian legend on which Matthew Arnold based his epic nineteenth century poem "Sohrab and Rustum"). Sohrab's parents, Gustad and Dilnavaz, wish him to join IIT and become an engineer – they had been discussing it endlessly, making plans and provisions. How he would live in the student hostel at Powai, and come home at the weekends, or they would visit him with a picnic lunch, the college was so close to the lake and the scene-scenery was so beautiful. And after he had finished IIT he would go to an engineering college in America, maybe MIT, and ...” But Sohrab has different ideas about what he wants to do with his life and lets them know so on the very night they drink a toast to his future success at IIT: ‘I’m sick and tired of IIT, IIT, IIT all the time. I’m not interested in it, I’m not a jolly good fellow about it, and I’m not going there ... It was never my idea, you made all the plans. I told you I am going to change to the arts programme ...’”

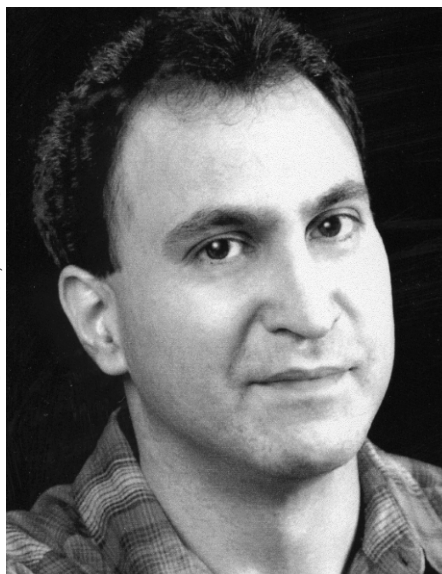
To me, the passage read like an uncanny reflection of the events taking place in my own life and a validation of the decision I had made. I knew, from the author's bio on the book's cover flap, that Mistry himself had worked at a Canadian bank for ten long years while studying English and philosophy at the University of Toronto. Surely he must have made his share of tough decisions and taken his share of risks, and in my hands was the proof that he had pulled it off.

Fired with enthusiasm, I wrote a review of the book that brought me my first publishing credit, at the Florida Times-Union. Other credits, for my own fiction, came along at painfully long intervals across the next decade, while I taught composition and literature as an adjunct at UNF. But at the end of that decade, I was awarded a Florida Individual Artist Fellowship in Literature, and at the start of the new millennium, my booklength story collection, *Ticket to Minto: Stories of*

India and America, won the Iowa Short Fiction Award, 2001, and was published by the University of Iowa Press. I had become a part of the short but already very respectable tradition of Parsi literature.

Just as Irish American writers have been inspired by the successes of their great predecessors or African American authors by theirs, South Asian American writers are being galvanized by the global recognition of Salman Rushdie, V. S. Naipaul, Vikram Seth, Michael Ondaatje, Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri and the like. The emerging crop of Parsi writers such as Thrity Umrigar and myself were doubly blessed in having these brilliant South Asian authors in general, as well as Parsi authors in particular, of the stature of Sidhwa and Mistry, to inspire us toward giving it all we had for as long as it took to make it.

I like to think that, with some luck, there's a youngster out there who's reading my book and saying to him-



PHOTOGRAPH BY IVY BIGBEE C2001, IBIGBEE@AOL.COM

self or herself, “I’m going to be a writer too!” ■

Sohrab Homi Fracis's stories have appeared in *America and Canada*. His book, *“Ticket to Minto: Stories of India and America”* [see *FEZANA Journal*, Winter 2001] won the prestigious Iowa Short Fiction Award, 2001. Soon it will be published in India. Sohrab teaches creative writing at the Uni-

within that quiet is strength

Bombay Time author Thrity Umrigar draws power from Rohinton Mistry's work

By Thrity Umrigar
Kent, Ohio

My first introduction to Indian writers writing in English were the fantastic, fabulist novels of Salman Rushdie. In some ways, Rushdie's large, expansive novels seemed to perfectly imitate the large, dramatic canvas that is India. Rushdie's novels were ego-maniacal, frenzied, the mad chattering of genius.

So that when I first discovered the smaller sweep, and the pinpoint realism of Rohinton Mistry's books, they took some getting used to. But over the years I have come to respect and appreciate Mistry's gift of quiet understatement, and his tight, spare writing. I have also come to realize that despite their domestic locale, Mistry's books are no less political than other, more ideologically flashy novels. *A Fine Balance* is one of those rare novels written by a middle-class Indian writer that deals with the bruising, wretched poverty of India in harrowing detail.

Much has been written about Rohinton Mistry's compassion, but to me, Mistry has a quality that's even more rare in this era of postmodernist, academic writing – he has the gift of outrage. Instead of the navel-gazing, common to so many middle-class writers, he

has the courage to write about things removed from his immediate class background. He is outraged by the barbarities of the caste system, by the corroding effects of public corruption, by the demeaning impact of sexual repression, and by the swaggering might of the powerful. Yet he is not a polemic writer. The narrative heart of his novels is still with his characters and the trials and tribulations they face in their life's journey.

It would be easy for a writer to be cynical about today's India, with its mind-boggling hypocrisies and corruptions, public and private. But Mistry is never cynical. He treats his characters with the compassion and respect that they deserve. His language and tone sometimes sound detached because he describes situations with almost scientific precision but there is an unmistakable affection for his characters that lies just beneath the surface.

I sometimes find Mistry's novels a little too grim in their depictions of the human condition. I find myself yearning for some sense of redemption or hope to grasp onto, some feeling of uplift. But then, I wonder whether this desire for a glimmer of

hope is not simply the result of conditioning by too many novels and too many movies with happy endings? There is also this: there exists an unspoken tradition in art that implies that all art must embody some measure of hope. Yet, one only has to witness the wretchedness of India's poverty to realize what an elitist concept this is. I constantly wrestle with this question when I read a Rohinton Mistry novel and I like the fact that he makes me do so.

In my own novel, *Bombay Time*, I resolved this question by leaving the futures of many of my characters, open-ended. I liked the thought of readers being able to bring their own life experiences into imagining what course the characters would chose. The structure of my novel also made this easier to do than in a novel, like, say, *A Fine Balance*. (Also, I had not anticipated the number of emails I've received from readers asking for a sequel so that they can find out what my characters do next!)

The Parsi community has often been accused of not fully integrating itself with the life of India. So it seems a delicious irony to have a Parsi writer pass such trenchant comments on urban and rural Indian life. Perhaps

[Continued on page 96]

Cut Here



Journalist **Thrity Umrigar's** first novel, *Bombay Time* [see FEZANA Journal, Fall 2001] was published by Picador USA last year. Umrigar, who has a PhD in English literature, is the recipient of the prestigious Nieman fellowship to Harvard. She is currently working on a memoir, an excerpt from which can be read in the Open Books section of USAtoday.com. She lives in Ohio. Her website is www.umrigar.com.

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Dramatic Debuts and Swan Songs

By Kersi Meher-Homji

Contact Kersi Meher-Homji, in Sydney, Australia at 9440 8559.

Noted writer on cricket and author of nine previous books, Kersi Meher-Homji, has brought out *Dramatic Debuts and Swan Songs*, his 10th book on cricket. The Australian paper *The Bulletin* describes Kersi as "that interesting cricket nut", and adds, "he has given me more enjoyment ... than any of the turgid tomes produced by various of our test cricketers." His *Out for a Duck* was mentioned in *Sale of the Century* in 1993 and his *Six Appeal* received 5/5 rating in *The Sydney Morning Herald* in 1996, the highest rating any cricket book has ever received. *The Australian* featured his latest book as the Sports Book of the Week. ■

Communicative Reason and Medieval Iranian Thought

By Dr. Kambiz Sakhai

Available from www.1stBooks.com, www.amazon.com, Barnes & Noble.

Dr. Sakhai examines the worldviews of the Iranian people and compares them to some of western civilization's noted social theorists, Marx, Weber and Habermas. In this context, Islam, Sufism and Zarathushti thought are compared. These three worldviews are among the most important contributors to the social and political milieu that has shaped the fate of people of the Middle East, Central Asia, Asia Minor, India and other parts of the world.

"It is amazing to see how trends of thought that belong to centuries ago determine the day to day life of the

people in this region of the world, today," says Dr. Sakhai, "Even more astonishing is the impact of these apparently abstract arguments on the actual political, social and personal lives of the people."

Dr. Sakhai's scholarly work includes studies in sociology at the University of Rome and Iranian cultural history at Columbia University. This book is his PhD dissertation at Columbia's Department of Middle East and Asian Languages and Cultures. ■

Within that Quiet ...

[Continued from page 95]

it takes a minority writer to be able to critique mainstream culture. In this, we are lucky to have a writer of Mistry's talents and ambitions.

Indeed, Rohinton Mistry is a complicated, even contradictory writer. His is a quiet voice, precise and understated. But within that quiet is strength; within that precision, universality; and in that understatement lies a world of boundless imagination, wisdom and vision. ■

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