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Mah Shehrevat-Meher-Avan 1372 YZ (Kadmi)

**Zarathushtra's
Vision in a
Lifetime's
Learning**

Also inside:
Vision of the Visionaries
The Magi at Christmas

FEDERATION OF ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA (FEZANA)

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ON THE COVER: Shah Nameh mural at
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VISIONS OF THE VISIONARIES

From the forefronts of North America

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By Meher Dadabhoy Amalsad
Westminster, California

The other day, when I told someone that, "I am a Zarathushti", his reflective response was, "All Zarathushtis that I have known in my life have had one thing in common... they are *simple but powerful*."

I wonder if the success of our forefathers' vision had something to do with it being 'simple but powerful'.

So, what makes a simple vision powerful? I believe that is *clarity*.

If clarity is power, then do we have that in our communal vision today?

With that in mind, I wanted to know what the present Zarathushti leadership vision had in store for the future of our youth in North America.

Since FEZANA officially represents the North American Zarathushti community, I decided to acquire individual vision statements from the presidents of each FEZANA member association and from past and present FEZANA presidents. I did this because I see FEZANA as an orchestra with each member association as a unique musical instrument; and I wanted to see if there is a way to tune in the visions of all these leaders so that they could collectively become instrumental for the welfare of our youth in the North American Zarathushti community.

To keep it simple and powerful, I asked myself the following question:

What are the integral elements of a model vision?

To begin with, should customs and traditions have any place in a vision? Our visionary leader of the leaders – **Rohinton Rivetna**, the founder president of FEZANA (1988-94) insightfully shares: "The future is ours to make. If we badger the daylight out

of the whole system of beliefs, traditions and customs that have been developed carefully and wisely over the centuries to make us a model community that has the respect of all, we will be left with nothing but its carcass. However, if we nurture, sustain, understand and learn them and then evolve forward, we will make it a golden age."

So, what else is required for a vision to evolve? **Dolly Dastoor**, PhD, the first lady and second president of FEZANA (1994-98) masterfully indicates: "Each generation stands on the shoulders of its forefathers and hopes that they can contribute more to life. If my generation has set a good example of living by the principles of *Humata, Hukhta and Huvaresha* and has followed the path of *Asha* and righteousness, I can only dream that the youth of tomorrow will rise to all challenges and move the community forward."

So how can we rise to acquire a wise vision? **Framroze Patel**, the third president of FEZANA (1998-2002) wisely guides in his vision: "There will be an Athornan madressa in North America with qualified young mobedyars, who will preserve our traditional religious practices and will continue to perform our age-old rituals because without the priest class there will be no Zarathushti religion."

So, is there a key that opens the door for building such a vision? **Firdosh Mehta**, the present president of FEZANA eloquently unlocks this mystery by stating: "We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can always build our youth for the future ... by providing them with opportunities and infrastructure that promotes religious education and social interaction."

Now, sometimes while trying to promote religious education, we come across indifference among the various viewpoints of different generations. So, is there any room for indifference in a vision?

Daryoush Jahanian, MD, president of the Zoroastrian Association of Kansas (ZAKA) addresses it compassionately: "The worst act is to write off the new generation by having an attitude of indifference toward them. It is our utmost duty to instill the Zarathushti faith in our youth by making them aware of their rich culture, history and the sacrifices our forefathers made to preserve our religion."

Preservation seems to be at the heart and spirit of all religions. So, how can we incorporate preservation in a vision? **Ervad Kobad Zarolia**, president, Ontario Zoroastrian Community Foundation, provides some guidance by stating: "If our youth adhere to Zarathushti values which made the Parsi community a formidable force in India and abroad, then they will have no problem of repeating the same achievement in North America."

Khushru Daruwalla, president, Zoroastrian Association of Florida, dovetails on this advice by re-affirming: "The Zarathushtis have come to America for reasons comparable to their original migration to India. Following the tenets of our religion, and standing united to meet the challenges that come, there is no reason why we cannot reach to greater heights."

So, what does it take for a vision to be guided by the core tenets of our Zarathushti faith? **Jamshid Gosh-tasbi**, PhD, president, Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington, Inc. (ZAMWI) wisely states: "Information age provides Zarathushti youth with such unprecedented resources and opportunities for education and dialogue with scholars of the Zarathushti religion and culture that would mold their future into a life guided by the tenets of Zarathushtra's religion and teachings, in its purest form."

Now, I believe that *information*, like clarity, is power. But the strength of this power will depend on how and what information is transferred to the next generation when the torch is passed on to them.

When it came to passing the torch, two promising women leaders in our North American Zarathushti community share a synonymous vision:

Arnavaz Elavia, president, Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago (ZAC) firmly believes that “Our youth will carry on the torch of our ancient religion because they present a very bright future with goal oriented leadership abilities.”

In order to do so, “We must invite our youth to actively participate in our community because they must carry the torch in order to preserve our religion. Unity is very important, even when our cultures vary,” stresses **Fereshteh Yazdani Khatibi**, president of the board of directors of the California Zoroastrian Center (CZC).

So, how can an environment of different cultures be conducive for a successful vision?

The vision of **Kourosh Dinyari**, president of the Persian Zoroastrian Organization (PZO) of Northern California contributes: “To create an environment where our youth have ample exposure to culture and values that differentiate our religion from others, so that they can internalize the three mantras that should be part of everything we do in life.”

Now, it is of vital importance that when we choose to differentiate our religion from others that we do that with unconditional love in our vision.

Rumi Engineer, president, Zoroastrian Association of the Rocky Mountains (ZARM) lovingly expresses this aspect of the vision: “The youth of today learn awareness and love for all human beings transcending parochialism, prejudice and fear and they live in freedom, wholeness and inclusivity according to the teachings of Zarathushtra.”

Now, I believe that *freedom* comes when we *free* ourselves from dominating others. With that in mind, how should freedom be incorporated in our vision?

Ness Lakdawala, president, Zoroastrian Association of Quebec (ZAQ) enlightens us: “May they have the fortitude and intelligence to accept and permit their brethren to practice ‘liberal’, ‘conservative’ or ‘ultra conservative’ paths. Thus in diversity, create a unified harmonious Zarathushti community.”

This, I find to be a challenging endeavor. Two bold leaders (both from Texas) have taken the challenge to creatively handle that in their vision.

“In order for our vision to be ‘clear’ it is important to recognize that sometimes, we may not be on the same page but we are all a part of the same book. So, let us at least open our minds even if we choose to close our eyes, on someone else’s vision.”

“The FEZANA leadership will be challenged to create an atmosphere which will foster intellectual growth and harmony amongst our youth and at the same time reinforce their religious unity, values and traditions”, emphasizes **Kersi Engineer**, chairperson, Zoroastrian Association of Houston (ZAH). **Mehraban Roshanravan**, president, Zoroastrian Association of North Texas (ZANT) takes it one step further by providing an insightful avenue in his vision: “The future leadership for Zarathushtis will depend on the present leadership. We all need to work harder to pay attention to the concerns of our community. If we do not take seriously the relationships we forge right now with both old and young, then there is no way that a solid sense of who we are and what we want to become can be generated and sustained into the future.”

Talking about the future of our youth, two ‘Homis’ from opposite coasts of

North America share a common vision of affirmative hope.

“It is my vision that our Zarathushti youth will lead a unified Zarathushti community in the future by savoring their similarities rather than focusing on their cultural or social differences,” says, **Homi Gandhi**, president, Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York (ZAGNY) because “In every organization, youth are the pillars of the future. Ours is no different. So, let us support our present youth leadership and equip them with the strength to handle the challenges of tomorrow,” adds **Homi Italia**, president of the Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia (ZSBC).

One of the prime challenges that we Zarathushtis presently face in North America is the development of a close working relationship between the Parsis and the Iranis. **Arman McCleary**, president, Zoroastrian Society of Washington State (ZSWS) intuitively addresses this aspect: “I believe that by organizing cultural and religious events we can create a closer community among our Iranian and Parsi friends. We should also educate our youth with the teachings of Zarathushtra by offering them regular classes supplemented with resource materials from websites, books and tapes.”

Along with this education, “It is important to provide an infrastructure that supports our youth because they represent our future,” says **Khushroo Lakdawalla** PhD, president, Zoroastrian Association of California (ZAC), and “if we want them to feel proud of our community, then we need to support activities that promote youth interaction.”

Now, my daughter Anahita is presently taking a class on world religions in high school. On the first day of class the teacher asked the children to introduce themselves.

When Anahita said: “I am a Zoroastrian” the teacher remarked:

"Anahita, we are truly blessed to have you in our class."

I believe that so far our Zarathushti community has been a blessed community. So, what will it take for us in the future to continue being blessed in the same manner?

Ervad Jal Birdy, vice president, Traditional Mazdayasni Zoroastrian Anjuman (TMZA) shares a vision with a guided perspective: "Our future youth have realized that in the North American 'salad bowl' each ingredient can exist separately while still making up a most delectable dish. They have taken a lesson in survival from their forebears and are actively practicing selected rituals, customs, and a disciplined Zarathushti way of life allowing them to live as a distinct and respected entity. Most significantly, they have come to realize the importance of marriage within the fold and are actively promoting it."

Shirin Kiamanesh, president, Iranian Zoroastrian Association (IZA) compliments this perspective with a blessed solution in her vision. "The timeless essence of Asho Zarathushtra's message endorses harmony, unity, respect for one's freedom of choice, equality, and striving towards perfection. We are awarded *Vohu Manah* (the good mind) to achieve *Asha* (the ultimate right) and to make the responsible choice to follow the ethical and righteous path."

So, how is a righteous path carved in a vision? **Pervin Irani**, president, Zoroastrian Association of Alberta, Canada (ZAA) believes "It takes place when we approach the faith with an open mind and a fresh vision, so that our youth can have a more promising future. This is the key to strengthening the faith and unity in our community."

I believe that it is not the faith we follow but the faith that follows us, which sometimes determines the direction of a viable vision.

To further strengthen the conviction of this faith, **Houtoxi Contractor**,

president, Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania (ZAPA) says: "I am very optimistic about the future of our community because I believe in the sincerity and strength of our youth. I am confident that as capable future torch bearers of our community, they will be instrumental in spreading the message of Zarathushtra."

Finally, here is another affirmative outlook from our dynamic veteran leader **Sam Vesuna**, president, Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO): "Seeing the enthusiasm and interest of our youth, I feel confident that the Zarathushtrian torch will continue to burn brightly. Our youth have the wisdom, courage and conviction to ensure Zarathushtra's message remains spiritually and culturally, inspiring and dynamic."

In spite of the fact that we have seen multi-faceted attributes, it is apparent from the vision of our visionary leaders in North America that success of a vision hinges on our **commitment** to nurture and structure it.

Sherazade Mehta, president, Zoroastrian Association of Greater Boston (ZAGBA) and co-chair, Zoroastrian Youth of North America (ZYNA) is asking for a commitment of recognition and support for our youth when she emphatically states: "Being actively involved with 'youth', and facing the age debate; I envision FEZANA to have another committee for Young Adult Zarathushtis of North America (YAZNA?) for Zarathushtis from 20 to 36 years of age, and maintain the Zoroastrian Youth of North America (ZYNA) committee, for 12 to 19 year olds, to be more in-tune with the North American way of recognizing the term 'youth'".

In other words, our youth need a vision of recognition.

It is interesting that **Bomi Patel**, president, Zoroastrian Anjuman of Northern California is providing that in his vision by stating: "Our youth is active, strong and united. Being born in this

country and understanding the great history of our religion they will maintain the balance of tradition and changes and lead our religion well into the next century. Youth is our future."

In a nutshell, **VISION** to me is a **Valuable Insight Sown In Our Nature**.

A kindergarten teacher asked her kids to confer with each other and come up with **one** color that best describes her, and collectively the kids came up with the color "**clear**".

In order for our vision to be 'clear' it is important to recognize that sometimes, we may not be on the same page but we are all a part of the same book. So, let us at least open our minds even if we choose to close our eyes on someone else's vision. It is because by nature each individual is blessed with a different vision; but I believe that "**What nature divides, the spirit unites.**"

Let us support a vision that promotes the spirit of unity within diversity in our community. ■

Meher Dadabhoy Amalsad

[see biodata on page 42] is the author of **Bread for the Head**™. To subscribe to his free **Bread4theHead.com** newsletter visit: www.bread4thehead.com.

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From the President

"Welcome" and "Thanks" to the FEZANA volunteer effort

I wish to dedicate this message to the folks who comprise the structure of FEZANA that makes the various projects and tasks possible. The FEZANA committee chairs for standing and ad-hoc committees for the 2002 - 2004 term, have now been appointed and have begun or continued their assigned work.

Please join me in welcoming them to the FEZANA volunteer effort and please extend your cooperation and support to them to make their efforts successful. As we all know, FEZANA achieves most of its objectives and successes through the dedication, hard work and consistent effort put in by its committees of volunteers. We can never thank them enough. They are the real *stars* in our galaxy called "*FEZANA-Way*".

We are pleased to inform you of the accomplishments of some committees as follows:

With the successful *Congress in Chicago*, the *Congress Committee*, then chaired by **Rustom Kevala**, and the *Awards Committee*, chaired by **Dinshaw Joshi** completed their assignments in an exemplary manner. Thanks to all the volunteers who looked after the sales and promotional material at the FEZANA display tables during the congress.

Behram Pastakia and **Homi Gandhi** accomplished the revitalization of FEZANA's *NGO status* at the United Nations. Five Young Zarathushtris represented FEZANA at the 9/11 Peace Seminar in New York [see page 15].

The *Welfare and Critical/Medical Assistance Committee*, co-chaired by **Houtoxi Contractor** and **Hosi Mehta** have taken on the difficult task of

evaluating appeals for assistance and eagerly worked on helping baby Nazneen Kolah's parents in Helsinki, Finland to bring her to New York for a very critical medical procedure. **Homi Gandhi** is also coordinating this effort as a local contact with the hospital in New York.

The *Academic Scholarship Committee* has announced five winners of the 2002 *FEZANA (Mehraban Dorab Kheradi) scholarships* [see page 91].

We acknowledge the textbook style of **Dolly Dastoor** and her team.

Through the *Historical Research and Preservation Committee* chaired by **Er. Jehan Bagli**, FEZANA is supporting the *North American Mobed Council* in hosting a one-day *Seminar on Rituals* in Toronto. This is the first time FEZANA and the NAMC have come

together on a project of this nature.

The *Zarathushti Sports Committee*, chaired by **Artemis Javanshir**, successfully completed the *8th North American Zarathushti Games* in Los Angeles. FEZANA will continue to support the ZSC to increase the level of participation and scope of the Games.

The *Zoroastrian Youth of North America (ZYNA) Committee*, co-chaired by **Armaity Bamji**, **Morvarid Behziz** and **Sherazade Mehta** have completed a *youth camp* in Yosemite National Park in Northern California, and are organizing a *ski trip* to the Canadian Rockies between Christmas and New Year. ZYNA is continually working to support the organizers of *NEXUS*, the next *North American Youth Congress* in Toronto, Canada in July 2003.



The *Funds and Finance Committee*, chaired by **Jerry Kheradi** is actively conducting fund raising activities on many fronts. Jerry and his committee deserve our deepest gratitude – we all understand that funds are the lifeblood of all successful achievements.

FEZANA is pleased to announce the *Moobed Faridoon Zardoshty Religion Education Scholarship* [see page 91] which will be conducted by the *Religion Education Committee* chaired by **Kayomars Mehta**.

Rohinton Rivetna, chair of the *External Affairs Committee*, continues to strive at the difficult task of bringing all the Regions together to further develop International dialogue between Zarathushti organizations all over the world. His efforts in the area of Interfaith dialogue are tirelessly ongoing.

After completing a monumental task of publishing the very popular introductory volume, "*Legacy of Zarathushtra*", **Roshan Rivetna**, our *FEZANA Journal* editor-in-chief, never ceases to amaze us by publishing the *Journal*, which is a showcase product for FEZANA, for exchange of information and ideas with our community all over the globe. This is done under the auspices of the *Publications Committee*, chaired by **Khorshed Jungalwala**.

The *World Body Working Group Ad-Hoc Committee*, chaired by **Khorshed Jungalwala**, is burning away the midnight oil in detailed analyses of documents received and is engaged in continued dialogue around the Zarathushti world. They have presented their Interim Report.

We encourage you to visit our website www.fezana.org, as often as you can. The site is designed and updated by **Zubin Medora** under the direction of our *Webmaster*, **Farrokh Mistree**.

I would like you all to join me in extending our vote of thanks to all our committees for their achievements. ■

Firdosh Mehta,
President, FEZANA



New Board of Directors at ZAC (Chicago)

New board members of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago, elected for the 2002-2004 term, are [standing l. to r.] Dara Elavia, Roshan Patel, Kayomارش Mehta, Dilshad Antia, Hosi Mehta, Arnavaz Elavia (president), Farida Sharyari, Adil Pooniwala, Dinaz Weber; seated, Anahita Dua, Freya Dhunjisha and Cyrus Rivetna. Missing from picture: Er. Kersey Antia, Niloufer Darukhana-wala, Rashna Ghadialy, Keikhoshrow Mobed and Minoo Press.



"Cyrus the Great" at ZAH Navroze function

On August 21, ZAH (Houston) members celebrated Shenshai Navroze with a *humbandagi* at their Center. Over 150 members gathered and prayed *fakras* (verses) from the *Khordeh Avesta*, followed by a *boi* ceremony by Er. Sanjana.

On August 24, the community gathered for a dinner-entertainment evening and enjoyed "Cyrus the Great", a play by Shahnaz Sidhwa, which cleverly brought out the story of Cyrus the Great, the world's first human rights activist. The multimedia presentation held everyone's attention. Eric Engineer did wonders with technical effects, making it a near-professional production.

A video of the play is available for \$10 plus postage from Arnavaz Sethna at ahsethna@yahoo.com.

Retreat in California

The 12th Religious Retreat, on *Iranian History, the Shah Nameh and Avesta* taught by Er. Kaikhushroo N. Dastoor of Mumbai, was held at Canyon Country, California in August. Billed as "seven golden days of a spiritual feast that will make a difference in your life", the retreat was organized by *Mazdayasnie Connection*. Contact Silloo Mehta at (714) 995-8765.

Parsi Navroze celebration with Indian ambassador

Some 200 guests celebrated Shenshai Navroze on August 18th, at a glittering function, in the spacious Washington, DC residence of Indian Ambassador to the USA, Lalit Mansingh. Guests included Zarathushtis from ZAMWI (about 120) as well as government dignitaries, members of the diplomatic corps, multi-cultural, interfaith leaders and the media. Two special guests were Ayesha Nariman (candidate for US Congress) and Dr. Behruz Sethna (president of the State University of West Georgia).

Ambassador Mansingh praised the Parsi community as being the most minuscule of the Indian communities but standing tall in its contributions and achievements in India. The evening's entertainment included a wonderful Iranian TumBak dance by the Feroudis and a colorful Tableau by Zenobia Panthaki, on "The Parsis of India" – a portrayal of Parsi history, culture, tradition and religion, and a fashion show of Parsi sarees, exotic *kors* and *garas*. Guests were served a traditional Parsi feast, courtesy of Nainshad Manekshaw of *The Palace*, in Mercerville, NJ, brought to Washington in a refrigerated van.

The event, one of a series of celebrations initiated by the Indian Embassy, to showcase festivals of different faiths of India, owes its success to meticulous organization by Brig. Behram Panthaki and his committee – Kashmira & Hoshang Daruwalla, Feroza Fitch and Zenobia Panthaki. [By Jimmy Dholoo]

Muktad prayers in Toronto



The community participated in record numbers at the *Muktad* observance at the Mehraban Guiv Darbe Mehr in Toronto

last August. For five Gatha days, prayers were offered at an early morning *satum*, *aftringan* and *far-rokshi*, an afternoon *satum* and an evening *satum* and *humbandagi*. About 415 names of departed loved ones were remembered. Meals were cooked for over 200 persons each day. Over 900 *divas* were lit.

The mobed in charge this year was Er. Nozer Kotwal. Other resident mobeds were Boman Kotwal and Minoo Kanga. Other mobeds who prayed through the 5 days were Ervads Yezdi Antia, Jehan Bagli, Firdosh Bulsara, Mehsad Dastoor, Darayus Kanga, Daraius Panthaky, Jal Panthaky, Hoshang Udwadia, Kobad Zarolia and the 3 youngest mobeds: Zaheer Bulsara, Farhad Bulsara and Cyrus Panthakee.

For the last 3 years, **Putli Mirza**, assisted by Roshan Davar and Betty Madon, have led the massive effort of planning, administrative work, shopping, organizing, cooking and cleaning, along with a large number of youth, adult and senior volunteers. Putli writes:

"The generosity of our beautiful community is overwhelming, not only in cash (donations this year towards the Muktad Fund, totaled \$15,000) but also of sukhad, loban, flowers, food and their time ...

"The beautiful muktad observance gives comfort and solace to many of us and helps expose our children to our ancient rites and rituals.

"The coming together of the community brings new immigrants new friends. There is fellowship and community spirit all around, as enthusiasm, unity and readiness to help, is radiated during these five days. Our community is truly blessed."



Bringing heritage and culture to Houston's ZHCC. In fulfillment of its goals – to make the Zarathushti Heritage and Cultural Center (ZHCC) of Houston, a place where art, history and heritage are nourished, ZAH members approved (at a general body meeting in March 2001) to Meher Rustomji's proposal to commission artist Audi Tubbe to create a large mural for the atrium. The mural was unveiled on the occasion of the Mehrgan gahambar in October [photos above and on the cover of this FEZANA Journal].

Entitled "*Persian Garden Dream*" the mural is a vivid oil canvas measuring 19 feet by 11 feet depicting a court scene inspired by the *Shah Nameh*. Meher also plans to commission 'archers' for the main entrance, which will add a stunning effect to the atrium in which the World Congress 2000 time capsule is buried and the Unity Quilt displayed.

Another ZHCC project to enrich the members of the Zarathushti community is the **Library Project**. The Library Committee plans to have a multipurpose room with a children's reading section, a section where members can relax and read the latest *FEZANA Journal*, *Parsiana* or *Hamazor*, and view the Dhalla memorabilia or check the on-line catalog of books. The committee is also planning events that include discussion with authors, interfaith gatherings, and strategies for parent education. Contributions are being solicited. A plaque or a bookplate will acknowledge all donations. Contact Aban Rustomji at aban@coatingengineers.com.



ZYNA summer youth camp. For 4 days last August, 23 Zarathushti youth enjoyed the ZYNA (Zoroastrian Youth of North America) Summer Camp at Yosemite National Park. They made new friends, took in the beautiful scenery, hiked through Yosemite, spent time at Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco, and ended the memorable trip at the Pateti function at the San Jose darbe mehr. Photo shows the youth with ZANC president Bomi Patel [in suit] at the entrance of the the darbe mehr. The trip was hosted by ZYNA with a generous contribution from the Zoroastrian Association of Northern California (ZANC), which brought the cost down to just \$70 per person, including transportation to and from the campsite, lodging, most meals and the pateti function. For future programs, contact ZYNA co-chair Morvarid Behziz at mbehziz@hotmail.com.

New Immigration Rules impact visitors to US

A new rule requires citizens of Iran, Iraq, Libya, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen to be registered upon entry to the US, report to a local INS office for further registration within 30 days of entry and thereafter report to the INS in person every change of address and/or employment within 10 days, plus report once a year in person to be further interviewed.

Further, only certain ports-of-entry have been designated to be used by

these individuals to depart the US. Some international departure ports are not "authorized" and thus a departure through such a port will be illegal and the individual will thereafter be barred from returning to the US. Failure to comply with both the internal reporting requirements or the departure requirements makes the individual inadmissible to the US. These rules do not apply to US green card holders or citizens. For further information see www.ins.gov/graphics/lawenfor/specialreg.

Iranian Americans are among highest educated minority group in US

According to the Persian Students Association of MIT and Iranian American Medical Association, "The Iranian-American community is about 1 million individuals. According to the 1990 census, 56% hold bachelor degrees and 26% hold graduate degrees, making them the highest educated minority group in the US. They are founders of some 280 major national firms, and CEOs of over 400 national companies."

Parsi natak in Houston

After months of planning, coordinating and organizing by the Natak Committee of the Zoroastrian Association of Houston (ZAH), **Nozer Buchia** and his natak troupe finally arrived from Chicago.

Nozer offered the services to the ZAH to bring his troupe from Chicago and perform a natak as a fundraiser event. ZAH gratefully accepted Nozer's offer and the Natak Committee took up the challenge. Expecting to attract non-Zarathushti Gujarati-speaking public, an auditorium with good acoustics and lighting system was rented.

At 8:00 pm on September 21, after a brief introduction in a real dramatic manner, the natak "**Vari Banna Paachal Thi**" (From Behind the Doors) started. The play takes place in a Parsi living room and the story is about a typical Parsi family. It is filled with episodes of confusion and misunderstandings arising out of the eavesdropping habit of the mother.

The second half of the program was a Gujarati *qawali* "**Matida Baira Ni Takkar**" highlighting the age-old controversy surrounding men and women, both claiming superiority over each other. It was thoroughly enjoyable and kept the audience entertained.

Prior to performing in Houston, the troupe had given one show in Indiana. In the next few months, they will be performing in Toronto, New York and Los Angeles. All the performers are professionals in their own field and have taken up acting as their hobby to which they did full justice.

This was truly a win-win enterprise – ZAH made a profit of \$5000, the audience enjoyed the evening, and Houstonians made new friends. This is Nozer's way of helping associations raise funds and spread goodwill around. He is a true ambassador of his association. Nozer is available at (847) 420-6860 in case other Associations want his assistance for their fundraisers. With a little bit of extra work, this venture is a very profitable one. - By Arnavaz Sethna ■

COMING EVENTS

Indian Diaspora Day

All members of the Indian diaspora are invited to a conference in New Delhi, January 9-11, 2003, to be inaugurated by the Prime Minister of India, to commemorate the declaration of January 9th as "Bharatya Pravasi Divas" (Indian Diaspora Day). Register at www.indiaday.org.

WZCC inaugural conferences in India

Inaugural conference for the New Delhi chapter of the World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce will be January 11 - 12, 2003. Inaugural conference for the Mumbai chapter will be January 18 - 19, 2003 [see page 81].

Economic/Cultural delegation to Iran

The World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce is planning an economic/cultural delegation to Iran and inaugural conference for the Tehran chapter of WZCC, in May 2003 [see page 81].

FEZANA AGM 2003

The 2003 FEZANA AGM will be held in **Boston**, Massachusetts, on Memorial Day (in May), hosted by ZAGBA, sherazadem@yahoo.com.

Next NA Youth Congress

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

Youth Interfaith Program

Youth between 19-21 are invited to the 10-week Youth Interfaith Peace Ambassadors Program, June-August 2003. The first 4-week "Learning Period" will be in Honolulu, HI. For the remaining time, the group will tour selected cities in USA. Visit www.humanityunitedglobally.org, email: jrchang@hawaii.rr.com.

Unity Cup Soccer - 2003

The Third Unity Cup Soccer Games will be held on Labor Day weekend, Sept. 2003. Contact zsc@fezana.org.

Iranian Studies conference in Ravenna, Italy

The 5th European Conference of Iranian Studies, sponsored by Societas Iranologica Europaea (Rome) will be held, October 6-11, 2003, in Ravenna, Italy, at the University of Bologna. Contact Prof. Antonio Panaino, president, tel: 0039-0544-484729, panainoa@alma.unibo.it.

Parliament of Religions in New Delhi, India

A Parliament of Religions, on the theme of Reviving the Culture of Healing, Harmony and Peace, will be held in New Delhi, October 21-24, 2003. This event will be held in partnership with the Parliament of the World's Religions. Contact Rohinton Rivetna at rivetna@aol.com.

World Youth Congress

The *Third World Zoroastrian Youth Congress*, will be held in December 2003. It will be hosted by the Federa-

Zarathushti immigrants from Vienna, now in USA

Fellow Zarathushtis who were stuck in Vienna due to the September 11 events, are now admitted to the US and have arrived at their destination. The immigration process is now almost back to normal, but at a slower pace and fewer numbers are admitted. CZC and PZO (California) have been helping these newcomers through their own resources, for which the Zarathushti community is very appreciative.

These newcomers to the US would be very grateful to local Zarathushti associations to help them find suitable jobs and welcome them and make them proud and valuable members of our Zarathushti community.

Rashid Mehin, FEZANA Public Relations Committee

Yalda		
<i>Mah Daye, Roj Hormazd</i>	Mon Dec 16	(F)
Death Anniversary of Zarathushtra		
<i>Mah Daye, Roj Khorshed</i>	Thu Dec 26	(F)
Maidhyarem Gahambar		
<i>Mah Dae, Roz Meher -Bahram</i>	Tue Dec 31 - Sat Jan 4	(F)
Jashan-e-Daegan		
<i>Mah Dae, Roz Daepdin</i>	Tue Jan 7	(F)
Jashan-e-Bahmangan		
<i>Mah Bahman, Roz Bahman</i>	Thu Jan 16	(F)
Paitishem Gahambar		
<i>Mah Sheherevar, Roz Ashtad</i>	Mon Jan 13 - Fri Jan 17	(K)
<i>- Aneran</i>	Wed Feb 12 - Sun Feb 16	(S)
Jashan-e-Sadeh		
<i>Mah Bahman, Roz Meher</i>	Thu Jan 30	(F)
Meher nu Parab		
<i>Mah Meher, Roz Meher</i>	Tue Mar 4	(S)
Ayathrem Gahambar		
<i>Mah Meher, Roz Ashtad - Aneran</i>	Wed Feb 12 - Feb 16	(K)
	Fri Mar 14 - Tue Mar 18	(S)
Fravardegan/Panjeh/Hamaspathmedayem Gahambar		
<i>Five Gatha days</i>	Sun Mar 16 - Thu Mar 20	(F)
Char-Shanbe-Soori (Heralding the New Year)		
<i>Tuesday prior to Nouruz</i>	Tue Mar 18	(F)
Nouruz or Jamshedi Navroz (New Year)		
<i>Mah Fravardin, Roz Hormazd</i>	Fri Mar 21	(F)
Khordad Sal (Birthday of Zarathushtra)		
<i>Mah Fravardin, Roz Khordad</i>	Wed Mar 26	(F)
Pir e Herisht Festival		
<i>Mah Fravardin, Roz Amardad-Khorshed</i>	Thu Mar 27 - 31	(F)
Ava Ardavisoor nu Parab		
<i>Mah Avan, Roz Avan</i>	Wed Feb 26	(K)
	Fri Mar 28	(S)
Fravardegan (Remembrance of the departed)		
<i>Mah Fravardin, Roz Fravardin</i>	Tue Apr 8	(F)
Jashan-e-Ardibeheshtgan		
<i>Mah Ardibehesht, Roz Ardibehesht</i>	Tue Apr 22	(F)
Atash-nu-Parab		
<i>Mah Adar, Roz Adar</i>	Thu Mar 27	(K)
	Sat Apr 26	(S)
Maidyozarem Gahambar		
<i>Mah Ardibehesht, Roz Khorshed - Daepmeher</i>	Wed Apr 30 - Sun May 4	(F)
Zarathusht-no-Diso (Death anniversary of Zarathushtra)		
<i>Mah Daye, Roz Khorshed</i>	Mon Apr 28	(K)
	Wed May 28	(S)
Daye Mas nu Jashan		
<i>Mah Daye, Roz Fravardin</i>	Tue May 6	(K)
	Thu Jun 5	(S)
Maidhyarem Gahambar		
<i>Mah Daye, Roz Meher-Behram</i>	Sat May 3 - Wed May 7	(K)
	Mon Jun 2 - Fri Jun 6	(S)
Homaji Baj		
<i>Mah Daye, Roz Govad</i>	Sun Jun 8	(S)

DISCOVER YOUR LINK

NEXUS 2003

ZOROASTRIAN SOCIETY OF ONTARIO
PROUDLY HOSTS

The 2003 North American Zoroastrian Youth Congress

July 24-27, 2003

Toronto, Ontario
Canada

www.nexus2003.com

Email: nazyc2003@yahoo.com

Co-sponsored by FEZANA

ZYNA
Zoroastrian Youth of North America



Zee-Ski December 2002

When: Dec 26 to January 1

Where: Banff National Park, in the scenic Rocky Mountains, in Alberta, Canada.

Cost: \$220 US, \$330 Cdn. plus skiing cost.

Age: 16 - 35 years.

Will also include sight-seeing at Lake Louise, Banff Hot Springs, Winter Olympic Park and Calgary. Many activities for non-skiers also. Contact Sherazade Mehta at: sherazadem@yahoo.com.

Calendar of Festivals, at left for Fasli (F), Kadmi (K) and Shen-shai (S) religious festivals for December - June 2003

tion of Zoroastrian Youth of India, FOZYA, with due sponsorship from the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, and will, most likely, be held in Pune. Contact FOZYA president Sarosh Palkhiwalla at sarosh64@hotmail.com.

NA Congress 2004

The *13th North American Zoroastrian Congress* will be held in the San Francisco Bay area in 2004. Contact Bomi Patel at bomip@yahoo.com.

2004 Zarathushti Games

The next Zarathushti Games will be held around 4th of July, 2004. The location is to be confirmed. Contact zsc@fezana.org.

Parliament of Religions, Barcelona 2004

The 4th Parliament of the World's Religions will be held July 7-13, 2004 in Barcelona, Spain. This event follows five years after the 3rd Parliament in Cape Town, South Africa. Registration is \$375 (before December 30, 2002), \$425 (before June 30), \$495 (after June 30). Family/group rates available. Visit the Parliament website at www.cpwr.org or contact Rohinton Rivetna at rivetna@aol.com.

Next World Congress

The 8th World Zoroastrian Congress will be held in the UK, in the summer of 2005. Please contact ZTFE president at godrej@globalnet.co.uk. ■

NAMC (North American Mobeds Council) and FEZANA are jointly sponsoring a one-day seminar



Zarathushti Rituals Past, Present and Future

Toronto, April 19, 2003

Speakers: *Er. Parvez Bajan* (India), *Prof. Michael Stausberg* (Heidelberg), *Prof. Almut Hintze* (London), *Dr. Pallan Ichaporia* (USA), *Er. Kamran Jamshedi* (Sweden) and others.

Topics: This unique seminar will explore the history, practice, understanding and future of Zarathushti rituals, and views of the clergy and community alike on the bearing of inner and outer liturgical rituals on perpetuating of the religion of Asho Zarathushtra.

Donations: We appeal to all North American Zarathushtis and associations to look within their heart to extend their generosity to support this effort to perpetuate the religion of Zarathushtra. All donations over \$100 will be acknowledged publicly.

Registration: Please send your name, address, telephone and email, with your check, payable to NAMC, marked "seminar" to: Er. Gev Karkaria, 38 Brome Street, Kirkland, QUE H9J 2N3, Canada.

Before Feb 15: US\$50 CDN\$70

After Feb 15: US\$70 CDN\$95

(Fee in Canadian currency is for Canadian residents only. 7% GST is included)

Lodging: Ramada Hotel, Toronto Airport, tel: 1-877-388-1888 or (416) 621-2121. CDN \$89 + 12% tax for 1 to 4 persons. Ask for special "NAMC Seminar" rates.

Host family: To arrange stay with a Zarathushti family, please call Er. Kobad Zarolia, (905) 542-9885 (H) or (416) 745-4622 (W).

Information: Contact Er. Jehan Bagli at (905) 855 1132, email: jbagli@rogers.com, website: www.persiandna.com/namc



Science and Technology Conferences and Competitions for Girls

As part of a community outreach effort, *Dr. Aban Daruwalla*, a Weapon Systems Scientist at Naval Surface Warfare Center in Corona, California, helps organize science and technology conferences and competitions for girls. These programs have a heavy concentration on space exploration and the Mission to Mars program, and provide wonderful opportunities for students to participate hands-on in some exciting NASA-sponsored programs. Aban writes:

"I would be so happy if I can find just one Zarathushti name among the 3,000 participants at the Science and Technology Education Partners III conference, or the 1,000 participants at the Sally Ride Festival for Girls (Sally Ride is the first female astronaut). I do wish that Zarathushti parents become aware of science education for girls, and realize its importance in the life of their daughters." To learn more about these exciting opportunities, you are encouraged to visit www.myscienceeducation.com or www.sallyridefestivals.com or contact DaruwallaAN@corona.navy.mil.

**IN COMING
ISSUES OF
FEZANA
JOURNAL**

Spring 2003:

Zarathushtis in Sports

Guest Editor: Porus Cooper
poruscooper@hotmail.com

Summer 2003:

Treasures from the Avesta:

Daily Prayers

Guest Editor:

Sarosh Manekshaw

Fall 2003:

Aging

Guest Editor: Dolly Dastoor

Winter 2003:

Treasures from the Avesta

Guest Editor:

Jamsheed Choksy



In this 1920s drawing by J. R. Flanagan, the magi are dressed as Parthian Persian nobility. On their chests is a symbol of the fravahar. [FROM "FROM ZOROASTER TO THE THREE WISE MEN" BY KEN R. VINCENT.]

The Magi

One of the most enduring and endearing images of Christmas is that of the Magi. Have you ever wondered who the Magi were...?

The search for the identity of these Magi is the key to opening a startlingly refreshing insight into our Christian “roots”, little-known and unappreciated except by scholars. Although the language of the religion of the Magi echoes brilliantly throughout the New Testament, most Christians remain woefully ignorant of its source.

Once the most wide-spread religion in Western civilization, Magian ideas lie only vaguely concealed under subsequent Western religious thought from the first century to the present.

According to Joseph Campbell, the obscure religion of the Magi, known as Zoroastrianism, is the “primary religious heritage of the Western world.”

[From the Introduction in "From Zoroaster to the 'Three Wise Men'", by Ken R. Vincent, Bibal Press].

The Magi at Christmas

The world's greatest interfaith meeting

By Ken R. Vincent

For years, I have been acquainting modern Christians with the tenets essential to their own religion that were preached by Zarathushtra hundreds of years before Jesus. Although some in my audiences have heard the name “Zarathushtra” or “Zoroaster”, most are unaware that the religion of the magi was dominant in the Middle East at the time of Jesus.

From the first century to the present, Christians have been enchanted by the story of the magi and their magnificent gifts to the infant Jesus found in the Gospel of Matthew of the new testament. In my lectures, these beloved priests become ambassadors who help Christians understand the profound connections between the two religions.

Why, I ask, would Matthew include these “wise men from the East” in his nativity story and ignore other first century astrologers who certainly would have also observed such an extraordinary guiding star? I explain that these widely-respected priests who followed the highly ethical teachings of the Prophet Zarathushtra brought credence to Matthew’s claim that Jesus was both the anticipated savior (messiah) of the Jews and a savior (saoshyant) from “other lands” prophesied by Zarathushtra [Ys. 48.12].

In my experience, liberal Christians find this information very helpful in placing the teachings of Jesus within a broader framework of western religious thought. They are often amazed to learn that, in addition to

the Christmas magi, the bible is full of Zarathushtis (Cyrus the Great, Darius, Xerxes), Zarathushti concepts (God and satan, heaven and hell, angels and archangels, judgment, and resurrection of the body), and beautiful Zarathushti imagery (light and heavenly hosts).

“ These beloved priests [magi] become ambassadors who help Christians understand the profound connections between the two religions. ”

Occasionally, I will be asked if the magi “converted” to Christianity (since the translations of Matthew state that the magi “worshipped” or “paid homage” to the baby Jesus). This tips me off that the questioner is probably a moderate or fundamentalist Christian who interprets the bible literally and who has been taught that belief in Jesus is the only path to God. I tell them that Christianity was primarily adopted in the west where the people had outgrown the Greek and Roman gods and were more amenable to the teachings of the new faith, but Christianity was less successful in the east where people had long practiced the highly ethical religion of Zarathushtra. By the time of the Muslim conquest in the 7th century, only about 10% of the Middle East had converted to Christianity with small percentages of Judaism and paganism persisting. The large majority remained Zarathushti. Christian legend tells us that one of Jesus’ original disciples, St. Thomas,

was responsible for spreading Christianity as far east as Persia and India. Hymns and apocryphal gospels of the Syrian Christian church express a long history of their belief that Zarathushtra predicted Jesus. In the Roman Catholic church, the magi were proclaimed saints.

These Christmas magi, despite their imaginative metamorphosis in popular art from priests to opulently-clad kings, possess a remarkable power to inspire interfaith dialogue, tolerance, respect, and understanding – gifts that our modern world needs more than gold, frankincense or myrrh!

For me, one of the most impressive aspects of Zarathushtra’s revelation is his understanding that the people of the world will require saviors “from the nations” [Ys. 48.12] who will guide them toward a victory of good over evil! Prophets may differ, but the Light they reveal is the same.

Dr. Ken R. Vincent recently retired from teaching psychology, including the *Psychology of Religious Experience*, at Houston Community College. He is a member of the *Society for the Scientific Study of Religion and the Foundation for Contemporary Theology*. Dr. Vincent’s articles on religion have appeared in several national and international magazines. His books include: *Visions of God from the Near Death Experience* and *The Magi: From Zoroaster to ‘The Three Wise Men’*.



PHOTO: JASHNE SADEH CELEBRATION IN HOUSTON

Jashne Sadeh

By Massoume Price

Sadeh meaning ‘hundred’, is a mid-winter feast celebrated with grandeur and magnificence in ancient Iran. It was a festivity to honor fire and to defeat the forces of darkness, frost and cold. Two different days were observed for its veneration. One celebration marked the hundredth day before the religious Nouruz, on the first day of the month Fravardin (the religious Nouruz is different from the spring Nouruz). The other one was the hundredth day after the gahambar of Ayathrem (one of the six feasts of obligation) regarded as the beginning of winter. This day coincides with the 10th day of the month Bahman.

The calendar. It is not clear why there are two Sadeh festivals. Many Zarathushti holy days were, and still are celebrated twice – caused by the calendar reform in the 3rd century.

Since Achaemenid times the Iranian year had 360 days. Ardeshir the first Sasanian king reformed the calendar and added 5 days at the end. The new calendar receded slowly against the solar year, and the holy days, which, with their symbolism were closely linked with the seasons, became gradually divorced from them. The months moved and so did the holy days. Both the old and the new dates

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were celebrated. The festival celebrated in Yazd is according to *Fasli* calendar and in a few villages it is called *Hiromba*. Other Zarathushtis celebrated Sadeh in the month of Bahman. Most Zarathushtis have adopted this date.

The celebration. In Sasanian times huge bonfires were set up. Priests led the *Atash Nyaesh* prayer and performed the rituals before the bonfire was lit, at sunset. People danced around the fire. Wine, an expensive luxury, was served communally, and like all Zarathushti festivals, the occasion would end with fun, merriment and feasting.

The most elaborate report of the celebration comes from the 10th century reign of Mardavji Zeyari, ruler of Isfahan. Huge bonfires were made on both sides of the Zayandeh Rood, the main river dividing the city. The fires were contained in specially built metal holders. Hundreds of birds were released carrying little fireballs which lit up the sky. There were fireworks, clowns, dance and music with lavish feasts of roasted lamb, beef, chicken and other delicacies.

The tradition was virtually lost even amongst the Zarathushtis. In the Pahlavi era it was revived and adopted as a major celebration by the whole Zarathushti community and is becoming known and increasingly popular with the rest of the Iranians as well.

Gathering of wood. In preparation of Sadeh wood is gathered the day before the festival. Teen-age boys accompanied by a few adult males would go to local mountains and gather camel's thorn, a common desert shrub in Iran. For most it will be the first time they are away from their families. Wood is a scarce commodity in Iran and the occasion resembles a rite of passage, a noteworthy step for boys on the way to manhood.

The gathered wood is taken to the local shrine and on their return home,

if it is their first time, there will be a celebration with friends and relatives. However this practice is becoming more difficult these days though attempts are made to preserve it. Massive emigration to the cities or outside the country has significantly reduced the number of boys willing to participate.

“ Hundreds of birds were released carrying little fireballs which lit up the sky. There were fireworks, clowns, dance and music with lavish feasts of roasted lamb, beef, chicken and other delicacies. ”

Traditionally young boys (before the revolution in 1979, girls had started joining the boys, but that practice has since stopped) would go door to door and ask for wood and collect whatever they could get, from a broken spade-handle to logs and broken branches. While knocking on doors they would chant simple verses like, “If you give a branch, God will grant your wish, if you don't, God won't favor your wish”. All wood collected would be taken to the local shrine. Before sunset all would gather outside the temple to torch the wood with prayers and chants, while remembering the great ones of the faith and the deceased ones.

Significance. In ancient times the fires were always set near water and temples. The great fire originally signified (like winter fires lit at other occasions) helping revive the declining sun, and bring back the warmth and light of summer. It was also designed to drive off the demons of frost and cold, which turned water to stone, and killed the roots of plants beneath the earth. The fire was therefore lit near and even over water and by the shrine of Mehr, lord both of fire and the sun. Biruni in 1000 CE has very accurately described all these traditions of the Sadeh festival.

The fire is kept burning all night. The day after, first thing in the morning, women would go to the fire and each one will carry a small portion back to their homes and new glowing fires are made from the ritually blessed fire. This is to spread the blessing of the Sadeh fire to every household in the neighborhood. Whatever that is left of the fire will be taken back to the shrine to be piled in one container kept at the temple.

The festivities would normally go on for three days. The wood gathering by the boys door to door and blessing of the departed ones, happens every night and evenings are spent eating and giving away ‘*khairat*’ (the good deed of giving and charity). Food prepared from slaughtered lamb and ‘*ash e khairat*’ are distributed amongst the less fortunate.

Sadeh today. Today, Sadeh is mainly celebrated on the 10th of Bahman. The fires are not lit outside and all activities take place inside the shrines. The wood gathering activities are reduced, though there are some efforts to preserve them. Fortunately, most Iranians are now becoming more familiar with the festival and there are gatherings and celebrations outside Iran as well.

Fires are lit, music, dancing and merriment of all kinds go on for the rest of the evening. The occasion for the majority of Iranians has no religious significance and no specific rituals are involved other than torching bonfires at sunset and gathering with the community to have a merry time. ■

Massoume Price is a social anthropologist and human ecologist from London University, Kings and University Colleges. She specializes in ancient Mesopotamian studies. Currently living in Canada, she works with a number of women's organizations and is a free lance writer.

UN conference. *Zarathushti participants representing FEZANA at the 55th Annual United Nations DPI/NGO conference in New York City, in September, at the receiving line with Ms. Sherrill Kazan Alvarez de Toledo, chair of the conference planning committee [far left]. Pictured are [l. to r.] Mitra Mehr, Homi Gandhi, Mehr Pastakia and Suzie Karani. Ms. Sherill Kazan represents two international organizations at the UN. She is president of the World Council of Peoples for the UN and vice-president of Academia Mexicana de Derecho Internacional. She is founding member of the Turkish American Journalist Association, based in New York.*



By Susan Karani
New York, New York

From September 9 to 11, 2002, the FEZANA-UN team, consisting of Tenaz Dubash, Homi Gandhi, Mitra Mehr, Jehan Panthaki, Behram Pastakia, Mehr Pastakia and myself, attended the annual United Nations Department of Public Information /Non-Governmental Organization (DPI/NGO) conference entitled “*Rebuilding Societies Emerging from Conflict: A Shared Responsibility*,” held at the United Nations in New York City.

The conference was a success for our team in making relevant contacts, meeting Zarathushti members Rozy Rustomji and Jim Rustomji of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and Noshir Nalavala of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and learning more about what Zarathushtis and FEZANA can do in terms of humanitarian work and projects with the United Nations.

New program. Members of the 2002 FEZANA-UN conference team were enthusiastic about an idea for a youth summer program which has a lot of

UNITED NATIONS DPI/NGO CONFERENCE Zarathushti Youth Involvement

“We must put the best interests of our children at the heart of all political and business decision-making, and at the center of our day-to-day behavior and activities.”
-United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan

potential. Such a program would allow high school and college/university-level students to travel abroad to do humanitarian-type work with the help of a grant. Certain foundations can provide grants for youth to travel abroad, and a joint project with the UN seems an interesting opportunity.

Our focus is currently in India, which provides a safe place for youth to get involved in humanitarian issues, and which would also fall under the mandate of UNICEF, where there are already two Zarathushti members at the New York headquarters. FEZANA has just teamed up with the Children’s Program at Gram Seva Trust hospital in Gujarat, led by Dr. Roda Patel, and Dr. Patel has agreed to take a couple of interns for the summer of 2003. Please contact Dr. Behram Pastakia of Washington, DC

(at bpastakia@aol.com) for more information on this youth summer program.

Future Program: In addition, another area where we hope to focus is the environment, as Zarathushti scripture emphasizes purification and preservation of the earth. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is also interested in establishing and sponsoring specialized programs with religious NGOs. We hope that these sorts of ideas will stimulate a dialogue among youth members for related ideas and other possible focus areas.

Susan Karani is honored to have represented FEZANA as a youth participant in the 2002 UN conference. Also see her article “*Humanitarianism and Gathic Education*” on page 62.



Remembering September 11

A year later, Zarathushtis
participate in prayers of remembrance and hope.

Representatives from Buddhist, Sikh, Jewish, Zarathushti, Hindu, Muslim and Christian religions, in that order, recited passages from their holy texts at the interfaith prayer service at St. Elizabeth Church in Northern California. **Maneck Bhujwala** of ZANC, the Zarathushti representative, was introduced with: "The Zoroastrian religion believes in one good and just God, Ahura Mazda (Wise Lord), His law of Righteousness, freedom of choice, and equality of all human beings. It was founded by Prophet Zarathushtra 4,000 years ago in ancient Iran ..." Maneck recited the Yatha Ahu Vairyo prayer, with a translation.

Khushroo Mirza of ZAQ (Montreal) joined members of the Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Baha'i faiths at a multifaith devotional commemoration of 9-11, featuring prayers, readings from a variety of sacred writings and choral music. Khushroo recited Ys. 51, verses 1,2,3 and 7, ending with Ys. 43.1.

ZAC (Chicago) opened the darbe mehr all day, starting with an early morning ceremony, and ending with a prayer service and candlelight vigil in the evening. At mid-day, several members participated in the "Chicago Remembers" commemoration at Daley Plaza in downtown Chicago, organized by NCCJ and the Mayor's office.

Er. **Peshotan Unwalla** of ZAH (Houston) represented the Zarathushti community at a "remembrance emphasizing healing, hope and a shared humanity" hosted by the Menil Collection and the Rothko Chapel in Houston. Participants placed floating candles in the pool, by the Broken Obelisk, and representatives from various religious traditions offered prayers. The program ended with church bells ringing throughout the city.

In New York, **Lovji Cama** spoke at an interfaith gathering, and recited the Kemna Mazda prayer which speaks of the concept of evil and how to deal with it. ■

Unity in diversity prayer meeting at UCLA. To help heal the wounds of September 11, 2001, "America United", held a Unity in Diversity prayer meeting on September 9, at UCLA, attended by over 500 participants from various religious faiths. It was a distinct honor when **Nosh Vadoli** of Southern California was chosen to be the official spokesperson for America United. **Mobed Zarir Bhandara** [at left in photo, with Meher Amalsad] represented the Zarathushti community of Southern California. He chanted the Ashem Vohu prayer as the audience closed their eyes and meditated on spreading love and peace in the world. The essence of his message (which was televised on the CBS, FOX and KCAL networks) accentuated that devotion toward God is meaningless unless it encourages compassion towards humanity.

Zarathushtis were also invited by the archdiocese, to the September 11th commemoration at the new LA cathedral.

- By Meher Amalsad

Pan European Multi-religious leaders Council

Senior European religious leaders announced the launching of the first Pan European religious leaders council, the WCRP/Europe Religious Leaders Council. **Jehangir Sarosh** will be one of the members of the Executive Committee of the Council.

The Council will engage relevant European social and political bodies regarding major social changes confronting Europe and help to establish multireligious action projects.

Mr. Sarosh, who also serves as Moderator, WCRP/Europe Governing Board, noted that the new Council and the existing WCRP national chapters would provide complementary and reinforcing approaches to multireligious cooperation. WCRP is a worldwide multireligious coalition based upon the principle of acknowledging and respecting differences in religious belief and worship. Visit www.religionsforpeace.org, or contact Mr. Sarosh at wcrp@mrj.co.uk. ■



Karen Warren/Chronicle

Bapsi Sidhwa is a Houston-based author who wrote *The Crow Eaters* and *Cracking India*, which was made into the film *Earth* by Deepa Mehta.

Essay by author Bapsi Sidhwa of Houston as it appeared in the special September 11th edition of the Houston Chronicle [also see page 109]

Putting a face on the characters

By BAPSI SIDHWA

Houston, Texas

The Twin Towers stood tall as modern marvels – beacons of our hope for the future, of our faith in a New World in which races and religions are defined by tolerance. In attacking them, the terrorists destroyed more than just a miracle wrought of glass and steel; they undermined our trust in American ideals and alarmed us with the realization of how fragile our freedoms are.

The measures Homeland Security has adopted, and is contemplating, such as Operation Tips with its 10 million spies, will turn us into a police state. Anyone who does not think exactly as the captains of the universe do is "evil" by the standards of the comic-strip language used by our leaders.

Except for a brief visit to Soviet Russia, I have never felt the need to glance over my shoulder or mind what I say. Now I do. Last week an Indian friend, a delegate to the Human Rights Commission in Geneva, called to say hello. The talk turned to politics and suddenly he cautioned me to speak in Gujarati; didn't I know how many people had been spirited away from their homes and locked up?

U.S. human rights activists had supplied the information. On Aug. 2, U.S. District Judge Gladys Kessler directed that their identities be revealed. A few days later she issued a stay to give the government time.

Does anyone believe war will stop acts of terror? Even if we hide every plastic knife in America, will it stop an attack from a man who is desperate enough to commit suicide? Isn't it time we addressed the grievances that are generating so much anger and hopelessness – the suffering of the larger world community, many of whom have so accommodated themselves to their dire straits that we tend to shrug off their misery, or to take it for granted? Who ordained that we may pamper ourselves in Victoria's Secret underwear, while millions can't even procure ill-fitted artificial limbs?

We think of people from faraway cultures as being somehow inferior. Our superficial differences strip foreigners of their humanity, and we perceive them not as individuals but as faceless blobs: Chinese, African, Asian, American, Arab, blobs. The most frightening aspect of this is that blobs are easy to bomb.

In my writing class, I say: "Name your characters right away so that they are not just a 'he' or a 'she', but individuals. Describe the texture of their hair, the timbre of their voices, and state on the very first page where they come from. This gives the reader a hint of the forces that have shaped Sita or Adina or Abdul or Bill or Achebe."

If the reader is not aware of these particulars, the characters become faceless and the reader won't care what happens to them. Do we care much if some Lebanese, Afghans, Angolans or Sri Lankans die? But once our emotions are engaged by a character from Vietnam or Ghana or Pakistan, these people develop faces, they begin to bear worth. They become humanized.

And that is what we need – more humanity, and less Big Brother.



Kersi Rustomji at multifaitth prayer in Albury, Australia. The flag on the wall is of the Australian Aboriginal people, who became "refugees" in their own country after the arrival of the white settlers. The UN flag is in front and the barbed wire represents the symbol of Amnesty International, which is concerned with global human rights. Kersi is wearing a cap and shawl from Africa (Kersi lived in Kenya before he migrated to Australia) to highlight the plight of the millions of refugees in Africa. [PHOTO: COURTESY, THE BORDER MAIL, ALBURY.]

Multifaith prayer in Australia. In August, the city of Albury in Australia, marked the first anniversary of the refugee problems and status in Australia, with a multifaitth prayer gathering. **Kersi Rustomji** [above] the only Zarathushti in the city, gave a brief address.

"Why is it that of all the beings on this planet, the most intellectually developed and technologically advanced specie, which is in the process of landing on planet Mars in a few approaching years, is the only being capable of such terrorizing and even heinous acts," said Rustomji, "To me it appears that the two greatest driving forces behind this abominable, misery-imparting behavior towards other members of our species are greed, and lack of universal, unconditional acceptance and love, for all and every being." Kersi recited two Zarathushti prayers. ■



Interfaith gathering at Claremont Graduate University. From left, Arthur Perlstein, Mobed Zarir Bhandara, Shahriar Shahriari and Arman Ariane.

Claremont Graduate University seeks to add course in Zoroastrianism

A letter from Karen Torjesen, dean of the School of Religion at Claremont Graduate University in California, states:

"The School of Religion has set as its goal to become a center for the study of the world's religions. Its newly constituted Board of Visitors are respected leaders within their religious and/or cultural communities who are also committed to building an academic community that is devoted to understanding religions and religious diversity. Claremont is proud to have the Zoroastrian religion represented on the Board of Visitors.

"The School of Religion offers master and doctoral level training in textual and historical studies ... The teachings and tenets of Zoroastrian-

ism, one of the world's oldest religions, have influenced the development of Judaism, Christianity and Islam in the West and Hinduism and Buddhism in the East.

"The School of Religion is eager to offer courses in the Zoroastrian religion to highlight the importance of Zoroastrian teachings and their influence on later religions. The plans are to begin seeking funding for a course, \$7,000, and then work toward an endowment that would make Zoroastrianism a regular part of the religion curriculum. The donor will be listed on the Claremont University Honor Roll and be a special guest at School of Religion events."

For information, contact Arman Ariane at xerxes4gents@earthlink.net. ■

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Jashne Sadeh celebration in Iran

For the first time in history, more Muslims than Zarathushtis attended the *Jashne Sadeh* celebration last January, in *Kooshk Varjavand* (a large plot of land donated by the late Dr. F. Varjavand, 10 miles west of Tehran).

A 60-member band from the Police Academy of the Islamic Republic played folk songs, while mobeds dressed in white, lit the huge Sadeh bonfire at sunset. A crowd of over 5,000 enjoyed the festivities, despite the freezing weather. *Aash* and other traditional foods were served.

The first time elected board of Zazman Javanan Fravahar (Youth Organization) headed by Rustom Vahidi had adapted a new and more open approach. Mr. Rustom Abadian, newly elected head of the Tehran Anjuman opened the program, followed by Mobed Oshidari and several government representatives.

- By Mehran Sepehri

In an API story, Associated Press writer Ali Akbar Dareini writes:

"Dressed in white to symbolize purity, the priest carried a torch down the steps of the *Pir-e Herisht* temple and set fire to a pile of wood to close the celebration of one of the world's oldest religious rites.

Sadeh, or the feast of creation of fire, has been observed by Zoroastrians since ancient times, when their religion was the State belief of the powerful Persian empire. This year, it took on new vigor in Iran, thanks to a growing enthusiasm among the now-minority religion's members ...

"For centuries, Zoroastrianism was the main religion of what is now Iran ... Although Islam has been dominant for centuries, some Zoroastrian rituals have survived as national holidays. ■



Zarathushti women in traditional dress at a celebration in Kerman.

Celebrations in Kerman

By Mehran Sepehri
Kerman, Iran

New atash kadeh. On October 4, the Zartoshty Anjuman of Kerman lighted the new *atash kadeh* (fire temple) in Kerman, Iran, with fire from the old atash kadeh. The two atash kadehs (the modern and the historical) will co-exist side-by-side as a symbol of co-existence of two generations and two schools of thought!

Despite some opposition the new temple was built using a new design (circular instead of the usual square) and will be the only contemporary temple where the fire is fueled with natural gas. (Natural gas/oil was used as a fuel in ancient temples. The temple of Baku, Azarbaijan, bears testimony to that fact).

The idea of using natural gas as a source of fuel was suggested by the late Mobedan-e-Mobed of Iran, Rostam Shahzadi, and was fully supported by the current board of Council of Mobeds of Iran. The new Anjuman executive board, elected last summer, has moved aggressively to bring about changes, to keep up with the reality of the times, and to represent the best interest of people.

Mehergan celebration. Over 500 people attended the Mehergan celebration on October 2, at the *Baghcheh Bodaghabad*, a Zarathushti community center, just outside Kerman, in the outer perimeter of what used to be the old *Gaber Mahalal* (the Zarathushti neighborhood). A traditional Zarathushti dish, *balghoor*, was served for dinner, prepared by Kerman's Zoroastrian Women's Association.

The most delightful part of the evening was a touching 2-hour theater program of Sasanian King Ardashir and his Mobed-e-Mobedan Kartir. There is a special bond between Kerman and Shah Ardashir, as witnessed by the ruins of the almost 2000 year old fortress of Shah Ardashir still keeping watch over the city of Kerman. Traditional music and live disco music provided entertainment past midnight!

Conference at Kerman University. Over 400 students and scholars attended a 3-day conference "Early Iranian Culture" focussing on the culture and civilization of Iran before the Arabs. It was organized jointly by the University of Kerman and the Zarathushti Anjuman of Kerman. ■

ZWIN

Women's Network

ZWIN Zarathushti International Student Hospitality Program:

Student hospitality reps. With the goal of helping to connect and support Zarathushti students world-wide, ZWIN (*Zoroastrian Women's International Network*) has started a network of representatives in 22 cities in various countries to help and extend hospitality to Zarathushti students, who are studying away from home.

If you know Zarathushti students in your city who have come from other cities or if students from your city are in other cities, please let us know. We will try and reach out to them and help them and also connect them with one another on an 'e-group'. To get a list of the Student Hospitality Representatives in each city visit **www.ZWIN3.net**. To volunteer to serve as a representative, contact Dr. Zareen Karani Araoz at **zareen@managingcultures.com**. To join the student network, Zarathushti students may send an e-mail to **zwinzish-subscribe@yahoo groups.com**, and send your city and email address to Dr. Araoz.

Home-stay program. ZWIN is also continuing to plan to bring deserving young women (18-25 years) from India and Pakistan to the US next July for a home-stay and to attend the youth congress in Toronto, through the generosity of many. Offers to host or contribute to "make a dream come true" would be very welcome. Checks (tax-deductible) can be made out to "ZAGNY-critical assistance fund" and sent to Yasmin Ghadiali at 2686 Belcher St., Baldwin, NY 11510.

For information contact **zareen@managingcultures.com**. To join ZWIN, send an email to **ZWIN3-subscribe@yahoo groups.com**. ■



Phiroze Dalal is presented to Her Majesty
Phiroze Dalal [far right], an established consultant civil engineer in London, UK, was presented to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II during the Queen's Golden Jubilee celebrations on June 3rd. Dalal was responsible, as senior engineer, for the design of the reinstatement of the old iron bridge across River Thames. The Queen and Prince Phillip met and chatted with the five senior personnel involved with the refurbishment of the famous bridge.

Phiroze has followed in the footsteps of his father, Rusi Dalal, in pursuing a successful engineering career. They also become possibly the first Zarathushti father-and-son pair to be greeted by Her Majesty in a short span of time.

“The Zoroastrian Tapestry”-symposium at SOAS



About 325 academics, students and interested persons (about half were Zarathushtis) overfilled the Brunei Gallery at London University's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) for a symposium “The Zoroastrian Tapestry” on October 17th. People were standing and sitting in the aisles. Extra sandwiches had to be brought in for lunch! An SOAS professor said “We have never seen anything like it; normally such lectures attract between 50 and 100 persons.” This was the first ever symposium at SOAS on a Zarathushti subject. Dr. Sarah Stewart, SOAS and its London and Middle East Institute (LMEI) are to be congratulated for organizing the event so beautifully. Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE) was

the co-sponsor. President Dorab Mistry was invited to chair a session. He reiterated ZTFE's strong commitment to the **Zartoshty Brothers Chair in Zoroastrianism** at SOAS. ZTFE has undertaken to raise funds to provide scholarships to Zarathushti as well as non-Zarathushti students to study this course, and announced a donation of £3,000 towards the Fund.

The new director of SOAS, Prof Colin Bundy, received a ZTFE delegation in his office, and expressed his delight and gratitude at the support of the Zarathushti community.

ZTFE's long-standing links with this prestigious educational institution have been further strengthened; and what is more, Zarathushtis at large have demonstrated their pride and their interest in such programs.

Thanks are in order to all who participated: particularly to Malcolm

Deboo who worked tirelessly for its success; to guests from overseas – Dasturji Kotwal, Khojeste and Firoza Mistree, Pheroza Godrej, Professors Philip Kreyenbroek, Albert de Jong, Frantz Grenet; to local guests – Professors John Hinnells, Alan Williams, Almut Hintze, Vesta Curtis and Shirin Simmons; to the Iran Heritage Foundation for their co-sponsorship; and to our two representatives on the Zartoshty Brothers Chair, Rusi Dalal and Shahrokh Shahrokh.

Philanthropist Mehraban Zartoshty sent a message to the symposium: “... I wish to applaud the vision and the sentiments of the donors whose very large bequest will ensure that Zoroastrianism is taught at SOAS in perpetuity ...”

By Paurushasp Jila
Joint Hon. Secretary, ZTFE
www.ztfe.com



Gold bracelet from the Oxus Treasure, Achaemenid period, 5th-4th c. BCE, British Museum. PHOTO COURTESY "ANCIENT PERSIA" BY JOHN CURTIS.

"Treasures from the Zoroastrian World" – seminar at museum in Mumbai

A remarkable seminar, *"Treasures from the Zoroastrian World"* was held at the Chhatrapati Shivaji (formerly Prince of Wales) Museum in Mumbai, in October.

The seminar, organized by Firoza Punthakey Mistree and Pheroza Godrej, for the Museum Society of Bombay, opened on October 24th, with a keynote address by the distinguished scholar, **Dr. John Curtis**, Keeper, Department of the Ancient Near East, British Museum, UK, and welcome addresses by **Dr. Kalpana Desai**, director of the Museum and **Mrs. Arti Mehta**, chair of the Museum Society.

The ensuing 2-day seminar featured notable scholars and researchers: **Dr. Albert de Jong** (University of Leiden), **Dr. Vesta Curtis** (curator, British Museum), **Dr. Almut Hintze** (Zartoshty Lecturer, SOAS), **Dr. Kaikhushroo Jamasp Asa** (high priest), **Dr. Sarah Stewart** (head of programmes, SOAS), **Dr. Alan Williams** (University of Manchester) **Khojeste Mistree** (Zoroastrian Studies), **Prof. Adi Doctor** (Goa University) and others.

On October 27th, participants enjoyed a walking tour led by Khojeste Mistree, "A Parsi Heritage Trail" from Bhika Behram Well to Wadiaji Atash Behram. ■

many faces of zarathushtis



Dolly Dastoor with Michael Chistiakov of St. Petersburg, Russia

Learning about the pockets of Zarathushtis in Europe and especially the former Soviet Union, who are practicing the faith with devotion, dedication and scholarship.

**By Dolly Dastoor
Montreal, Quebec**

In the last few years we have all been hearing and reading about pockets of Zarathushtis in different parts of Europe specially in the countries of the former Soviet Union. We have also heard of the quest of the people of Iranian ancestry wanting to claim back their religion. Some of us have tried to ignore this information, hoping it will go away, and some of us try to learn more of the present day realities. I chose to do the latter because whether we like it or not this reality is here to stay.

Knowing I had to be in Gothenburg, Sweden, June 28-July 4th 2002, to

attend a *Zonta International* convention, a service organization, promoting the status of women worldwide, I let it be known to my friends in London and my internet friends in Sweden and Russia that I was interested in visiting with them. I received invitations from both Dorab Mistry, president of ZTFE and Rumi Sethna, chairman of WZO, to visit London, from Mobed Kamran Jamshidi, of Gothenburg, from Khorshed Banoo in Moscow, and Tatyana Furman and Michael Chistiakov in St Petersburg. Except Dorab and Rumi, I did not know any of the other players on the Zarathushti scene so it was with great anticipation that I set out on my trip. I was accompanied by

my young niece Shehnaz Pardiwala, in my Russian leg of the journey.

London

My first and last stop was London. On Tuesday June 18th the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe had a jashan to celebrate the Bahman Roj and Bahman Mah *parab*. Zoroastrian House was packed with British Zarathushtis, a well established community of over 100 years, originating from India, Pakistan, Iran and Africa. I had the privilege of attending their jashan and witness the strength of their devotion and fervor in the practice of their faith.

I also had the privilege of visiting the Bailey Library in Cambridge, which houses some rare books on religion, a collection of Sir Harold Bailey and gifted to the Ancient India and Iran Trust. It was here that Dasturji Kotwal, of Mumbai, the strong pillar of fundamental Zoroastrianism, spent five months studying the avestan manuscript E1 containing the end of the *Brahman Yasht*, in Pazand with sanskrit translations and working on an edition of five Avestan prayers, the *gehs*. On the last stop I met the members of the dedicated WZO executives who work for the betterment of the world community. *All showing devotion, dedication and scholarship.*

“ All these fine people want to go back to their roots and practice the religion of their ancestors. ”

Moscow

On Thursday June 20th, I arrived in Moscow where a group of Tajiks, a Russian, an Afghan and a young man from Azerbaijan greeted me at the Moscow International airport with flowers. It was a wonderful feeling to be greeted in Russia! They were all ethnically Iranian and have been stay-

ing in Russia for several years. They are all studying the religion of Zarathushtra under the training of Mobed Kamran Jamshidi of Gothenburg in Sweden. Khorshed Banoo, an ethnic Tajik, has had her Sedreh Pushi performed by Mobed Kamran. She said that ever since she was an adolescent she wanted to practice the religion of her ancestors, and she even changed her name to Khorshed Banoo. *She is devoted and dedicated to the practice of her faith.*

All these fine people want to go back to their roots and practice the religion of their ancestors. They have heard of Ali Jafarey but have no contact with him. Their main and only contact is Mobed Kamran.

Tajikistan

There is a *Zoroastrian Center* in Tajikistan which the government wants to support. In 1994 UNESCO supported the Firdausi Shah Nameh Conference and in 2001 released the UNESCO CD on Zoroastrian Bactrian Civilization at the 3rd Avesta World Conference in Tajikistan. Rudaki Samadi had been training Tajiks in the Zarathushti religion but he unfortunately was killed in 2001. Mobed Kamran has gone twice to Tajikistan to initiate 22-24 people with Sedreh Pushi. I was told that after the fall of the Taliban government in Afghanistan, some Tajiks in Afghanistan also wish to practice the religion of their ancestors.

St. Petersburg

My next stop was St. Petersburg, where soft spoken Tatyana Furman and gentle Michael Chistiakov came to see me at the hotel. On Wednesday June 26th they arranged a small gathering in the premises of the St. Petersburg Zoroastrian community where we met 16 white Russians (one of them was a Tajik). These professional and business men and women practice the Zarathushti faith in their daily lives, and wear the sudreh and kushti. They have found spiritual comfort in the Zarathushti religion after the break up of the

Soviet Union. Four years ago they had heard a talk on the Zarathushti religion given by Pavel Globa, a Russian. Tachmine, the great grandmother of Pavel Globa was a Zarathushti from a priest family of the Tabriz Zarathushti community in Iran. She had married a Russian but continued to practice her religion, passing it on to her son and grandson and great grandson Pavel.

“ They read the books and felt that the religion of Zarathushtra inspired them and answered their spiritual needs. ”

After hearing Mr Pavel, the group got books from the Department of Iranian Studies at the University of St. Petersburg. They read the books and felt that the religion of Zarathushtra inspired them and answered their spiritual needs.

In 1994 they registered the group as the *Zoroastrian Community of St Petersburg* and are now an authentic and legitimate minority religion of Russia. This was done just in time as at present, the Russian government, under pressure from the Russian Orthodox church, is getting strict about recognizing minority religions for legal status.

The St. Petersburg community had been a larger group of over 80 people, but some dropped off and this group of 43 has been practicing the religion for 4 years. There are several sets of families – husband and wife with their children, who make up this community.

They meet twice a week in a rented room, where they have their library, an “*afargan*” (an urn in which they keep an oil lamp burning) where they say their communal prayers, hold discussions, have held a conference

and print a quarterly newsletter called *Mithra*. They each pay annually \$3 for the activities of the community. Michael Chistiakov, their spiritual leader, has translated the Avesta in the Cyrillic script, they hold Avesta classes as well as a summer camp for the children. They say their kushti prayers at least once a day – with *devotion, dedication and desire to learn more*.

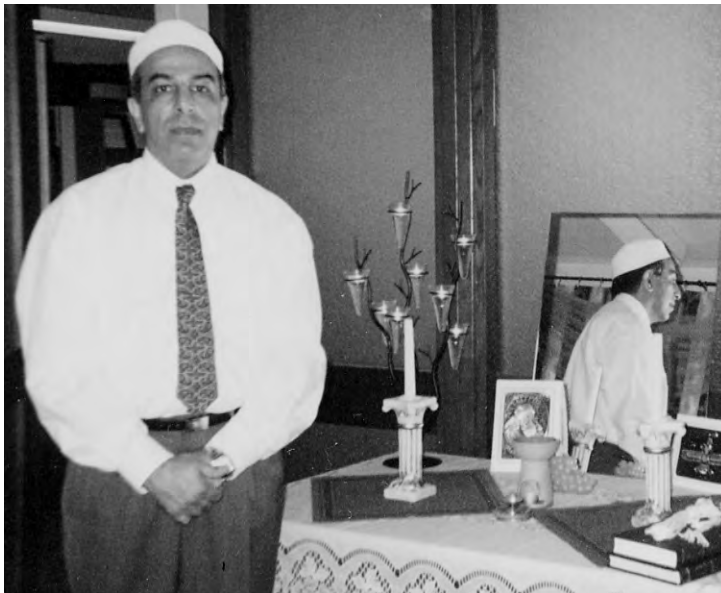
What attracted them to the religion was the philosophy of 'freedom of choice' and the injunction to *do goodness for the sake of goodness*. We had a long and frank discussion on many issues and subjects. They asked Shehnaz my young niece about the role of religion for young people in North America. And we asked Larisa Zaharova, their youngest member the same question. Larisa said "At first I was very critical of my mother following this religion. So I started reading about it, so that I can argue with my mother and convince her that what she was doing was wrong, but I soon realized that this was the religion for me as well."

We asked about the colored kushti we had heard about on the Internet. One of the members was wearing the colored kushti which she showed to us, a finely woven kushti of red, blue and white. The lady who had woven the kushtis was also present and we asked her if she knew how to weave them and she said, "Yes, I am a weaver, by profession, I took 72 strands and prayed continuously while I wove." They explained that they wore the colored kushtis in the beginning as they had nothing else to wear, but now they have received white kushtis from India and most of them own one.

We expressed our concern about their emphasis on astrology, as the Zarathushti religion did not empha-

size that. They said that astrology and mysticism helped them get deeper into the religion.

They said they had heard of the Zarathushtrian Assembly and Ali Jafarey but had no contact with him.



Mobed Kamran Jamshidi in Gothenburg, Sweden, at the Center of the Zoroastrian Community of Sweden.

Michael Chistiakov is their spiritual leader in St Petersburg, but Global Pavel is their overall leader. Burzin Atashband, the grandson of Sarosh Atashband (who used to serve *Seti Pir* in Yazd, Iran), also a priest trained in India, has lived in Russia for five years and has had an influence on the group as well.

They also understood that if they went to India they would not be able to enter the fire temples. They wanted to know what rules they would have to follow if they wanted to establish a consecrated fire in Russia; they were interested in buying land and to build.

We ended the evening, standing with covered heads and reciting two *Yathas* and one *Ashem*, with Michael leading us – with *devotion, dedication and determination*.

Dr Alexander Nikitin, of the Oriental Department, of the Hermitage Museum and Dr Valentin Shuoda gave us a private tour with background information on each piece of

the Sasanian silver at the Hermitage Museum. The silver plates depicting various aspects of our history covered the period from the 3rd to the 8th century CE, is the largest collection in the world. There was also a collection of Royal seals and coins from the Parthian and Sasanian times. I have been given a video of these collections.

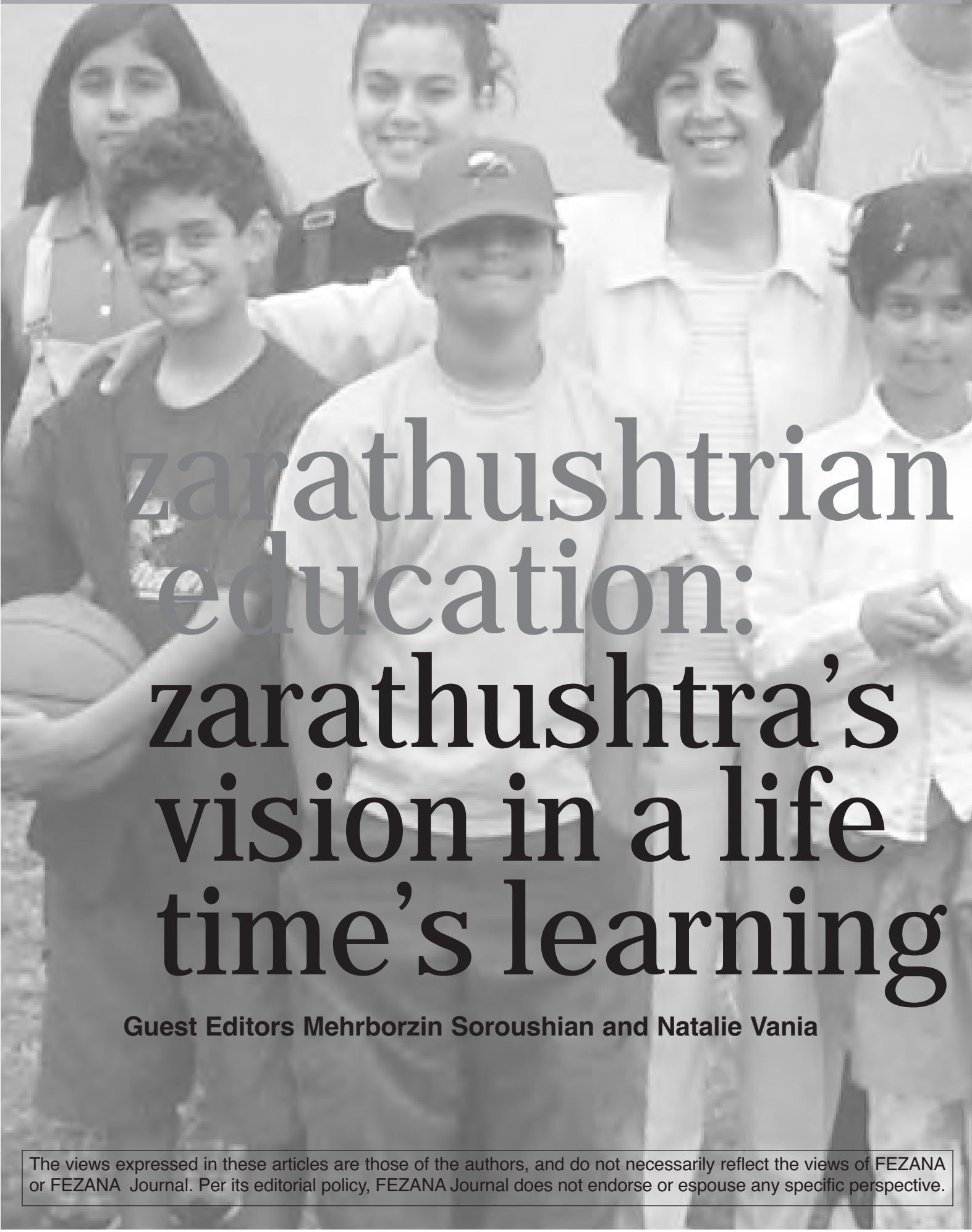
Sweden

The *Zoroastrian Community (ZC) of Sweden* is a registered body since 1999 (as a non-profit organization). The goal and vision of ZC is the dissemination of Zoroastrian philosophy, ideology and religion based on the prophet's teachings – the Gathas. They have a membership application form and a fee of \$23. They also have a membership category of "Friends of Zarathushtra". In the form it is stated, "I wish to join other

Zarathushtis in spreading the good religion, as defined in the Gathas, worldwide." They have rented an apartment where they have an office, a library, a conference room and a prayer room where you enter after removing your shoes; white caps and scarves are available outside.

Mobed Kamran Jamshidi, an engineer by profession, and the grandson of Mobed Feroz Azargoshasb of Iran, is the main moving force for this community. Mobed Kamran has been living in Sweden with his wife Homa and their two children for over 14 years. He has now given up his profession and devotes his time and energy completely to the "controlled" promotion of the Zarathushti religion worldwide. Mobed Jamshidi holds public lectures on the religion of Zarathushtra at their Center. After hearing these lectures, people want to learn more. Some Swedes of Iranian origin want to go back to their roots, while others of Nordic origin want to know more.

[Continued on page 68]



zarathushtrian education: zarathushtra's vision in a life time's learning

Guest Editors Mehrborzin Soroushian and Natalie Vania

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

This issue of FEZANA Journal advances themes and inquiries raised in the Winter 2001 issue, “Dawn of a New Era, Reunion in the Western Diaspora”. In this latter issue, we advocated a commitment to Zarathushtra’s Vision on behalf of our future advance in the North American context. Readers were invited to carry out a ‘thought experiment’ asking, *Who is the future Zarathushtrian prototype and what would he or she value? How do we get value now from devoting ourselves to the future prototype?* We offered many practical avenues for developing our future in North America and expressing our vision.

Our new issue focuses on an area of vital concern for our commitment to this vision: education. Education is one of the strongest preparations for life. Further, the unique reflective nature of Zarathushtra’s vision, and commitment it calls for, lends urgency to the educational task. Commitment to a Zarathushtrian life incorporates each person in a lifelong educational process of growth and renovation.

Such a process assists each adherent in better realizing and cultivating Kshathra Vairya and Vohu Manah. Ongoing re-making and renewal towards frashokereti has a hopeful component for the cosmos and for our world. Frashokereti has a hopeful component for individuals as well. Continuing to learn, sustained exercise of the mind, provides an aspect of growth on an individual scale to match renewal in the wider world.

In North America, we find resources for ongoing lifetime learning. This learning is flexible: the Good Mind is used in both one’s formal education and one’s other activities. In our first three sections, we look at the vision’s application for set educative work. We survey core outlooks on education and Zarathushtra’s vision, education before eighteen (kindergarten through high school) and after eighteen, (college and adulthood). Zarathushtra’s Vision extends widely. We can employ an ethic of learning and cultivating a Good Mind (and with this, the distinct outlook of Zarathushtra) in all our walks of life beyond formal education. In the fourth section, we illustrate how our ancient and reflective religion pertains in life’s active spheres such as business, Youth leadership, and the Post September-11 world. ■

Mehrborzin Soroushian, PhD

was born in Kerman, Iran, where he undertook his schooling at the Kaviani and Iranshahr Zarathushtrian elementary and high school for boys. He completed his BSc studies in physics at the University of London, and his MSc and PhD at UCLA, the University of California at Los Angeles. A founding member of the <http://www.vohu-man.org> Zoroastrian Educational Institution, he selects all articles to be posted and featured on this web-journal of Zarathushtrian heritage. He is currently engaged in telecom-

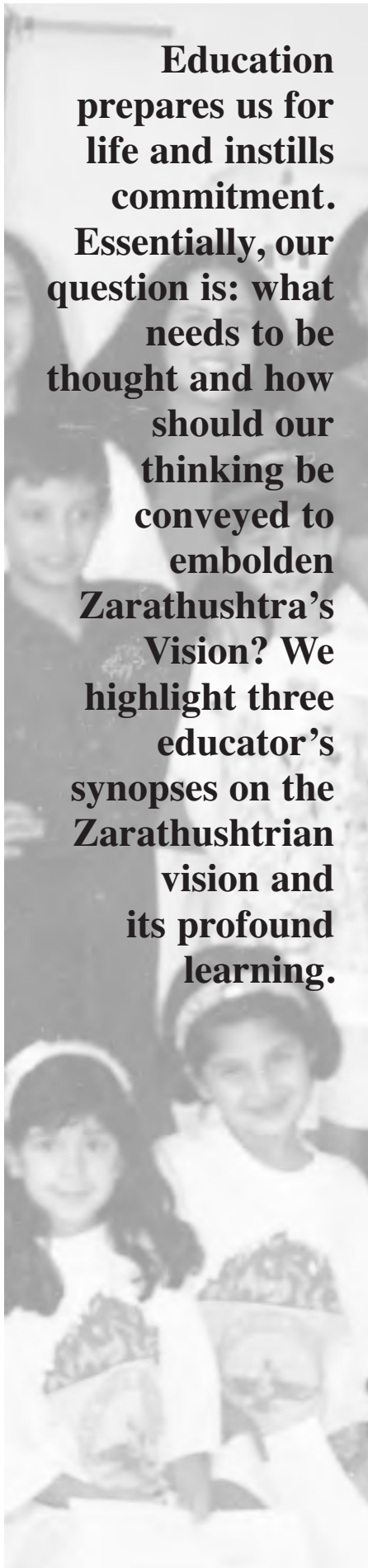


munication engineering and lives in San Diego with his wife Mehrbanou and their sons Vishtasp and Viraf. ■

Natalie Vania, PhD, has worked to assist entrepreneurs in meeting investors as the founder of



Arshiya Ventures. She is a Doctor of Philosophy and has taught in nearly ten universities, including Stanford and a White House agency. Nationally awarded for Culture and Values Leadership as a Charlotte W. Newcombe Fellow of the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, her other degrees include a BA in physics, with concentration in philosophy from the University of Chicago and an MA in philosophy. She is completing an MS in Financial Markets and Trading. She enjoys fabric, textile, and literary arts and is one of the first Parsis born in the Land of Lincoln – Springfield, Illinois. ■



Education prepares us for life and instills commitment. Essentially, our question is: what needs to be thought and how should our thinking be conveyed to embolden Zarathushtra's Vision? We highlight three educator's synopses on the Zarathushtrian vision and its profound learning.

what should zarathushtrian education be?

Regardless of the context of the educational situation, the religious teaching of Prophet Zarathushtra must be the central focus. The religious vision we find in the Gathas must be presented with a minimum of interpretive gloss and no novel doctrinal creations such as those generated by deviant contemporary groups.

By K. D. Irani
New York, New York

It must be observed that Zarathushtra's is not a mythological religion, and it is certainly not magical; it is what may be called a '*Reflective Religion*'. Zarathushtra calls upon the prospective believer to reflect on the vision he offers and come to his or her own conviction. It is therefore not a prescriptive religion, contrary to the notion of some of our teachers. The religious vision Zarathushtra offers is a fusion of a *View of the World* and a *Way of Life*. This is generally the form of enlightened religions. This is the form of the religion.

The View of the World is given in terms of an ideal, the ultimate truth, called *Asha*. The material world was supposed to evolve progressively to realize it. There are two moral polarities in the material world; one vector moving the world toward *Asha*, the other, in opposition, moving the world toward disorganization and destruction. This is the dualism in the religion. The world we live in is meant to evolve toward perfection, but is contaminated and its progress impeded.

The Way of Life is to work toward the actualization of *Asha*, the divine plan. This we do because we are endowed

with *Vohu Manah*, the Good Mind, an aspect of the Divine Mind, which enables us to see, regarding any situation, what it ideally ought to be, i.e., according to *Asha*.

Thus the way of life is not an ethic of prescription, but one in which a person is required to take the responsibility of making righteous decisions, articulating and implementing them, i.e. Good Thought, Good Word, Good Deed. This is the content of the doctrine and must be disclosed in an adequate education.

This life of reflective righteousness is what a human being offers to Ahura Mazda as religious offering. Such a life provides self-justifying existence leading to perfecting integrity – *Haurvatat*, and becomes the basis for final bliss – *Ameretat*.

This moral vision is the religious teaching of Zarathushtra. One sometimes hears the complaint that this is just ethics, or that it is indistinguishable from contemporary humanist ethics. Such views emerge from two misconceptions:

(i) This is not an ethic based on social norms, it is rooted in an ideal

Social practices which have emerged must become known, but their continuance must be evaluated in terms of the coherence with the doctrinal core. This is a faith of reflective commitment not a religion of blind obedience! ■

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Philosophy
at the City
College, City
University of
New York. In
1996, the
North Ameri-
can
Congress
awarded*

Prof. Irani with the "Lifetime Achievement Award". In 1998, his students and peers endowed the "K. D. Irani Chair of Philosophy" at City College.

*Wish not so
much to live long,
as to live well.*

- Benjamin Franklin

learning religiously

Whereas education was formerly indoctrination, it is today aiming at the liberation of the mind. To keep refreshing Zarathushtra's vision, then, Zarathushtrians must keep Learning Religiously.

By Yezdi M. Rustomji
Houston, Texas

Zarathushtra thought about human affairs critically, he addressed them forthrightly, and lived a principled life. Nevertheless, he experienced such grievous evil in his society, he felt the Soul of the Earth crying. Yet, never did he believe it was God's will. Instead, he sought greater wisdom – to become wiser, to teach humanity to save itself, from itself when in error, and to make the world better. Although he was a prophet, yet, to promulgate the Good Religion that would stir humanity to work for a perfected world, he had to learn much about how people affected society, and how society affected people.

When we study the *Gathas* – his discourses on religion, ethics, society – we recognize that Zarathushtra's Good Religion and worldview encompassed proto-sociological, psychological and philosophical thought. Indeed, he is recognized as the first theologian who, nearly four millennia ago, governed by Asha, questioned authoritarian mentalities, prohibited idolatrous customs, and did away with prejudicial traditions in his society. Thus, early in human history, Zarathushtra struck a blow that was to continuously broaden human freedoms.

Nowadays, a prime route to the essence of Zarathushtra's progressive

wisdom can be found in studying the humanities and the social sciences. A modern scholar, Erich Fromm, advises that intellectuals must have an attitude of humanistic radicalism about them – questioning every idea and every institution from the standpoint of whether it helps or hinders man's capacity for greater aliveness and joy. Certainly, Zarathushtra's Gathas – Questions to Ahura Mazda – was humanistic radicalism practiced.

When Vartan Gregorian, an intellectual, declares hell is where nothing connects with nothing ... and concludes that education has to connect everything with everything in order to make an individual free, he echoes Jacques Duchesne-Guilliman's view that Zarathushtra, thoughtfully, established the necessary link which unites the end of things with their beginning and the future existence with the present, being that his cosmogony is followed by an eschatology.

It is compelling revelation that an ancient prophet and modern intellectuals agree that humanity's capacity for greater aliveness and joy, or hellish existence, has to do with being liberally learned or not. Many educators argue that the high purpose of academe is to educate citizenry to pursue happiness. Their view is insightful, for when societies are technologically dependent, educators

It is most vital that the religiously educated are also, liberally learned. Otherwise, as the world keeps progressing, unable to connect the dots, those priests (clergy) and the lay (non-clergy) who assume the mantle of authority, who have not arrived at the good fortune of a kind and tolerant flexibility or a learned mind, will fight progress, as much as they are 'religiously' intractable. They will become societies' reactionaries, and will espouse superstitious, authoritarian and violent dogma to hold up progress. They will create hell for many, as violent acts will be perpetrated out of religious conviction; and those who have to live under imperialistic theocracies, will suffer greatly. Yet, an institution that has always claimed to be of good intentions, is religion. However, Joachim Wach warns that "the influence of religion, sociologically speaking, then, is twofold: there is a positive or integrating influence; and there is negative, destructive, disintegrating influence." Thus, Zarathushtra con-

To keep refreshing Zarathushtra's vision, then, Zarathushtrians must keep learning religiously. ■

Houston since its inception and also participates in various Interfaith Group events. He has been a speaker at Zarathushtrian conferences and also writes on various aspects of the Zarathushtrian religion.

Zarathushtra did not just speak of a message. Rather, his own actions, con-

My experience with zarathushtrian teachings

The foundation for the teaching of the religion of Zarathushtra is built on respect for the freedom of choice for all. Zarathushtrian values should never be imposed on a person. One can only give guidance, the values are cultivated internally by the individual.

duct and behavior provided the greatest message. In this same way, with our actions, we can give our messages. Thus, we may teach more people through our behavior than by reading the Gathas to them. Our behavior is sometimes the most powerful motivation that leads people to be curious and take up reading the message.

According to my own vivid experience in Venezuela, a person does not become a Zarathushtrian instantly. Of course not! I do not think anybody does! I think that to become a Zarathushtrian is a life-long commitment. What often happens is that we decide to become Zarathushtrian, and then our 'training' takes all the years of our lives.

Everybody is born with freedom of choice. Regardless of what they believe, in all cases I love my parents, my family and my friends just the same. Every person has the right to choose his own thinking. This reminds me of a passage in the Gathas [Song 3.2]:

*"...each man and woman,
for his or herself, selects either
of the two principles."*

Suppose hypothetically the world were divided in two: Zarathushtrians and non-Zarathushtrians (or righteous and not-righteous). Even in this case, Zarathushtra would alert us so [Song 4.2]:

*"... I, whom the Wise Lord knows,
come to you all as the leader of the
two parties, so that we may all live
in accordance with righteousness."*

The Gathas state with clarity the condition of free-will as established since the beginning of creation [Song 4.11]:

*"O Wise One, at the beginning,
You, through Your mind, fashioned
for us the living world, conceptions
and intellects, put life in the physical
frame, and gave deeds and
words, so that one makes his choice
through free will".*

The foundation for the teaching of the tenets of Zarathushtrianism is built on respect for the freedom of choice for all. Based on this freedom, the traditions, the culture, the values, the customs, the beliefs and the feelings of every person are treated well and with respect. Zarathushtrian values should never be imposed on a people or persons because these values are cultivated internally by the individual. Without this internal cultivation, a person would immediately reject the imposition. Externally, we can only give guidance to a person. This is the reason that made Zarathushtra say these words to Ahura Mazda [Song 11.7]:

*"... Do enlighten my inner-self
with this doctrine."*

The person who spreads the message of Zarathushtra will find different types of people, different profiles. They should be ready to plant the seeds under favorable conditions and also under adverse conditions. Planting the seeds should be a natural process instead of an aggressive one. The process of teaching lies in our words and actions. If our external behavior,

our words and actions, are wise; some seeds will find a place in the mind of the people surrounding us.

To respect other religions and doctrines, I will not mention their names in this writing; but let's say that a friend belongs to another religious group. What do we do to encourage their interest in Zarathushtrianism? Well, the first thing is to act righteously (*Asha*), with a good mind (*Vohu Manah*) and with serenity (*Armaiti*), and of course reflecting radiant happiness. With these ingredients taught by Zarathushtra as necessary for our mission, people will have an open mind and open hearts to listen to what we have to say.

Let's see how God considers a good mind and serenity gives people their freedom of choice, and gives us a simple formula for teaching by us setting an example [Song 4.9]:

*"... Serenity is Yours, ... wisdom of
mind is Yours, which has given the
world the choice (freedom of choice)
to go either to a settled person, or to
the one who is not."*

It is necessary to first accomplish an inner understanding, by cultivating Zarathushtrian seeds with success within ourselves. Only then can we move on to educate others. Once we realize and respect the laws that govern the universe, then we can learn to transmit our insight to others by using the right means (good communication, for example). It is in the Gathas, and it is not a strategy we need to invent [Song 4.19]:

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

Thus, from Song 4.9, we may infer that we realize the truth ourselves first, and then we can heal other people's lives, using good and gentle words, and without bias.

In the message of Zarathushtra, we can find a plan for the promotion of the good conscience, and also the means to accomplish the plan. This is revealed by the Gathas in a beautiful stanza [Song 7.14]:

“Indeed, Wise One, this reward is given to those, who, in their choice of physical life, truly serve the community of the fruitful world with their deeds of good mind, and Wise One, promote Your plan of wisdom through communal righteousness.”

The stanza can be complemented by another stanza that explains the means for promotion [Song 12.6]:

“Wise God, You grant good to both these parties through the progressive mentality by means of fire – light, warmth and energy – because with the growth of serenity and righteousness, it shall convert many a seeker.”

There is more information about the means of promotion in the following stanzas, where the three principles of good mind, serenity and righteousness are considered important [Songs 7.10 and 16.21]:

“The person of good intellect says that the deeds of good mind must be maintained. He knows that progressive serenity is the true product of righteousness. All these, Wise One, are means of promotion in Your dominion.”

“The person who belongs to progressive serenity, promotes Righteousness with his intellect, words, deeds, and conscience.”

When I get to the matter of obstacles, I always remember what Ahura Mazda told Zarathushtra, and it is just as if I were hearing it from ancient times [Song 8.11]:

“I realized You, God Wise, to be progressive when I was encircled by it through good mind, and when I first learned from Your words that it would be difficult for me to teach people the devotion to practice what You told me is the best.”

Regardless of obstacles, as Zarathushtrians we have a responsibility for rehabilitating the world, for rescuing the world from wrong dimensions. This is the justification for our work in the promotion of the message.

It is necessary to stress that violent behaviors and polemical discussions will lead nowhere in our promotion of the good conscience. No one will listen to the message if we try to deliver information in an aggressive way. It is amazing to see how Zarathushtra also warns us on this delicate point [Song 13.7]:

“Put down fury, check violence, you who wish to strengthen the promotion of good mind through righteousness, because a progressive man is associated with this ...”

We should not look at the names of people or the names of their former organizations. Instead, we start to promote the concept of the Good Conscience. We look at people as human beings, and we look at the human side of organizations. We look at the people in their organizations, and we look at their eyes, hug them and call them friends. When this authentic friendship is established among us, then we introduce our friends to another fine friend – Zarathushtra.

We do not look at another's traditions, cultures, values, and beliefs as obstacles. We look at a person's infinite potential for learning about

and practicing the pristine Gathic concepts.

A solid educational institution where we can teach the universal values of the doctrine of wisdom is most essential. As stated in the Gathas [Song 16.3]:

“Let those, who have joined You in action, assemble to hear You, because You are the Lord of true speech with words of good mind. Of these words, Wise One, You are the foremost promulgator.”

By the way ... whoever is evil, he/she still has the potential to become a true Zarathushtrian! This statement was formulated by Zarathushtra, who said [Ys. 3.8]:

“Mazda, they shall be taught how to deliver the wrong into the hands of righteousness.” ■

Dr. Jose Luis Abreu was born in Venezuela in 1956. He has a masters in agriculture (California State University) an MBA (Rafael Urdaneta, Venezuela) and a PhD in Management



(URBE University, Venezuela). Dr. Abreu has been attracted to the Zarathushtrian religion and is the current director of Latin America Spenta University Foundation and a member of the California-based Zarathushtrian Assembly. In 2000, Dr. Abreu published “The History of Ethics and Its Zarathushtrian Origins” in English and Spanish.

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Our community has shown great effort to self-educate the young about an old religion even while launching ourselves in a new land. In surveying our active initiatives from early childhood through high school, we see the range of what is offered.

instilling zarathushtrian pride in our youth

How do we pass on to our children who are born in North America, the desire to continue to be Zarathushtrians and cultivate those traits – hard work, honesty and charity – that Zarathushtrians are known for in India and Iran?

By Lovji Cama
Tenafly, New Jersey

We Zarathushtrians of North America, live in a sea of other religious communities, which in numbers and infrastructure outweigh us many times over. We face a challenge of survival and growth that no other religious community in North America faces. The primary reason why we have this unique burden is that our small numbers are scattered all over the continent.

How do we pass on to our children who are born in North America, the desire to continue to be Zarathushtrians and want their children to grow up as Zarathushtrians. How do we live by our ancient faith, which has been preserved under the most difficult of times in the last thousand years by immense sacrifices of our forefathers both in Iran and in India? How do we make sure that the generation growing up here will also believe in hard work, honesty, living by their word, and charity? These are

the traits that Zarathushtrians are known for both in India and in Iran. These are traits that we have cultivated over our long history, not by chance but because we have followed the teachings of Zarathushtra. These are the traits that help to establish *Kshathra Vairya*, the kingdom of heaven on earth, the ultimate goal of our creation.

In order to respond to this challenge, every Zarathushtrian child must be made aware of the two factors that, make us what we are:

- (1) The unique teachings of our prophet, Zarathushtra; and
- (2) Our long history from pre-Zarathushtrian times to the present.

History. Let us take history first. Why should we teach our history to young Zarathushtrians? First because it is part of our identity and secondly, because it is intimately intertwined with our religion. There are lessons

to be learned from our history from the great times, which should inspire us, and the difficult times that have challenged our survival. Another very important reason to teach our history is that the history of the pre-Islamic Iranian empires is either not taught in North American schools or our children receive a garbled version from the western point of view and the record has to be set straight for young Zarathushtrians. Here are some salient points in our history which must be taught.

If we consider the *Shah Nameh* as a documentation of our mythical history then it is a record of our people starting with the stone-age. The record goes on through the migration from *Aryana Vaeja*, the advent of the age of heroes leading to continuous wars between Iran and Turan to the new message of rationality and peace brought by Zarathushtra. No other



Top, the legendary Arbab Kaikhosrow Shahrokh, teacher, with Zarathushtrian school boys at one of the earlier Zarathushtrian schools in Kerman in the Qajar era (late 19th century). Below, Zoroastrian schoolboys in Tehran with their teacher; early Pahlavi era (first half of 20th century).

[TOP PHOTO COURTESY RUSTAM IRANI MOBARKEH; BOTTOM, POSTCARD COURTESY FAROOKH ISSA, PHILLIPS ANTIQUES, PHOTOGRAPH NOSHIR GOBHAI. BOTH PHOTOS COURTESY "A ZOROASTRIAN TAPESTRY" BY PHEROZA J. GODREJ AND FIROZA PUNTHAKEY MISTREE.]

people have such a rich tapestry of their ancient history.

Hundreds of years after Zarathushtra, Cyrus the Great, founder of the Hakhamanian (Achaemenian) empire, conquered a large number of countries and molded them into the greatest empire known up to that time. Unlike his contemporaries, he showed a respect for the nations he conquered, by not destroying them but allowing them to govern themselves and follow their own beliefs. This tolerance was in direct accordance with his Zarathushtrian faith.

Darius I, the next great king, put into place a common set of laws, which were respected for their universal application throughout the empire sparing neither noble or slave, in their enforcement. In addition, the institution of a common set of weights and measures, a uniform tax code and the king's road system led to an immense increase in the standard of living throughout the empire. These Kshathra Vairya-establishing institutions sustained the empire even though Cyrus and Darius were followed by many lesser kings.

There are five original ideas that arose from Zarathushtra's teachings: (1) the concept of a universal God; (2) the concept of existence of the soul after death; (3) judgement of the soul after death; (4) the idea of a future teacher who is a savior who might hasten the world towards its final renewal; and (5) the idea of the final renovation of creation.

These concepts, absorbed into Judaism, during the Hakhamanian period when the Jews were subjects of the Hakhamanian empire, were imparted through Judaism into Christianity and Islam. These are fundamental contributions of the Zarathushtrian faith to the western world's religious ideas.

The invasion of Alexander ended the Hakhamanian dynasty, but it provided another route of Zarathushtrian influence of western philosophy. The Greek philosophers came into con-

tact with Zarathushtra's teachings and adopted many of the ideas of our religion. The Parthians, who threw out the Greeks from Iran, were strong enough to keep the Greeks and the mighty Romans from invading Iran and the eastern world as did the Sasanians after them.

The Sasanian period of our history was unique. It was the only time that a major unification of the Zarathushtrian religion took place. It was an honest attempt to rid the faith of heresies, foreign modes of worship and differences in religious practice that had accumulated over nearly 2000 years. It was also the only time that the rituals and practice under-

“ We must teach our children that the most important thing is to develop Good Thinking, that is, the ability to develop a discerning mind. ”

went a controlled change resulting in a faith that suddenly became alive, as its rituals, ceremonies and prayers became understandable in the language of the day. Under the Sasanians the literature of the faith was written down in an alphabet that did not require oral transmission. Finally, it was a Sasanian form of the Zarathushtrian faith that stood up to the missionary zeal of Christianity and Buddhism and later was able to survive the holocaust of the Islamic invasion. Perhaps without the unification imposed on it by Sasanian monarchs, the Zarathushtrian religion may well have disappeared under the onslaught of Christianity and Islam.

The Islamic invasion of Iran started the decline of Zarathushtrians in numbers and power. The survival of Zarathushtrians under the most tyrannical conditions in Iran and the sacrifices made by our forefathers to keep the religion alive both in Iran and in India, to which some fled to save the religion, must be taught to every generation. Their ultimate success in India

during British rule and in Iran under the Pahlavi dynasty is a testimony to the adaptability of the religion.

Our history teaches us how deep our roots are, how varied our experience as a community has been, from compassionate and just rulers of a vast empire to a small community whose future is by no means assured.

Teachings. How do we teach our religion to our children so that it is not only relevant to their lives but instills a passion for it into their lives?

Let us start with the *core beliefs* which are the unique vision of Zarathushtra. We must teach the concept of the *Amesha Spentas* as Zarathushtra did.

Ahura Mazda's creation is good but not yet in a state of perfection. Man's role and responsibility is to move it towards the perfect state, that is, along the path of *Asha*. Mankind is made responsible by the ability to make choices in thoughts, words and actions. We must teach our children that the most important thing is to develop Good Thinking, that is, the ability to develop a discerning mind. Ahura Mazda has given us the gift of the Good Mind, it must be used to differentiate between good and evil. With the help of the Good Mind one perceives the path of *Asha*. Acting, by making the right choices, creates a society that is just and brings about the happiness of all good people. This is the establishment of Kshathra Vairya. A person who lives such a life finds happiness in this world and immortal bliss in the next.

This is the simple and powerful message of Zarathushtra. This is a message of hope, for a morally and materially perfectible world, a message that promises happiness for all of creation if the right choices are made. No other religion places such a great responsibility on human beings. No other religion shows such a high respect for mankind, because in our religion, mankind is the co-worker of Ahura Mazda.

The basic story of Creation, the concepts of soul, body and *fravashi*, the concept of evil according to the Zarathushtrian religion, death and the afterlife, together fit beautifully into the message of Zarathushtra. These should be taught to show the thoroughness and consistency of Zarathushtra's teachings.

Similarly, our *ceremonies and rituals* must make sense and come to life, by making them understandable to everyone. The *navjote* formally makes us the responsible co-workers with Ahura Mazda. The daily ritual of the *sudreh-kushti* affirms this. The wedding ceremony demands that the two who are joined together work as a team to help propagate the Good Life and establish Kshathra Vairya. The *jashan* ceremony establishes the communion of all good souls with the living, and celebrates their good deeds, so that the good souls are never forgotten and by their example, help the living.

The *yazeshne* ceremony that is only performed in a consecrated fire temple is a ceremony performed for the perfection of the material and spiritual world. This ceremony has served the additional purpose of orally preserving the *Gathas* and much of the extremely important part of the *Avesta*. As such, these ceremonies cannot be dismissed as irrelevant in today's world.

Our daily prayers integrate well into Zarathushtra's message. The problem with them is that they are not understandable. We should take a lesson from our Sasanian forefathers and provide ourselves not just with English translations, but actual prayers in English which follow the original in content and spirit. That is exactly what many of our *Pahlavi* prayers are, with respect to the *Avesta*. They made the *Avesta* relevant to Sasanian times and ways of thinking. We have to do the same with the present.

Making our religion alive now, at this yet another critical juncture in our community's history, is an invest-

ment for our future. Only then can the survival of our religion and the religious community of Zarathushtrians in North America be assured.

If it takes a whole village to bring up a child then we must create a Zarathushtrian village for our children. They must be able to socialize with other Zarathushtrians to teach and learn from each other. It is all right to feel unique as a Zarathushtrian but it is not all right to be a lonely Zarathushtrian.

Every family has to make the effort to maintain a *Zarathushtrian home* and to be part of the Zarathushtrian society around them. There are many simple ways of maintaining a Zarathushtrian home. A designated place with a lamp signifying the presence of Ahura Mazda in the home, and insistence on the daily ritual of the *sudreh kushti*, go a long way towards creating a special Zarathushtrian atmosphere in the home. Religion class is not only a time to learn but also to socialize, which is just as important both for parents and children.

If we teach our religion to the young based on the teachings of Zarathushtra as outlined above, they will realize its relevance to their lives. We can then stress its high demands of responsibility on each individual, the personal choice that each person must make between good and evil. We have to point out the religion's contribution to western religious thinking and the historical contributions of Zarathushtrians to society both ancient and modern.

We must make our children proud to be Zarathushtrians and not make them feel that they are part of some arcane old-world religion that is about to die out. If we succeed in instilling this pride, then they will make the right choices in their lives. They will make the very important decision to bring their children up as

Zarathushtrians by bestowing their children with the same fire that is in their hearts.

The best way to get young Zarathushtrians involved in our religious community is to treat them as capable, responsible thinkers and decision makers. This may require that the older generation take a back seat earlier than they are willing to. While the older generation can guide and mentor the younger generation, it is only when the new generation makes their own decisions and tries out their own ideas that they will buy into the success of Zarathushtrian society.

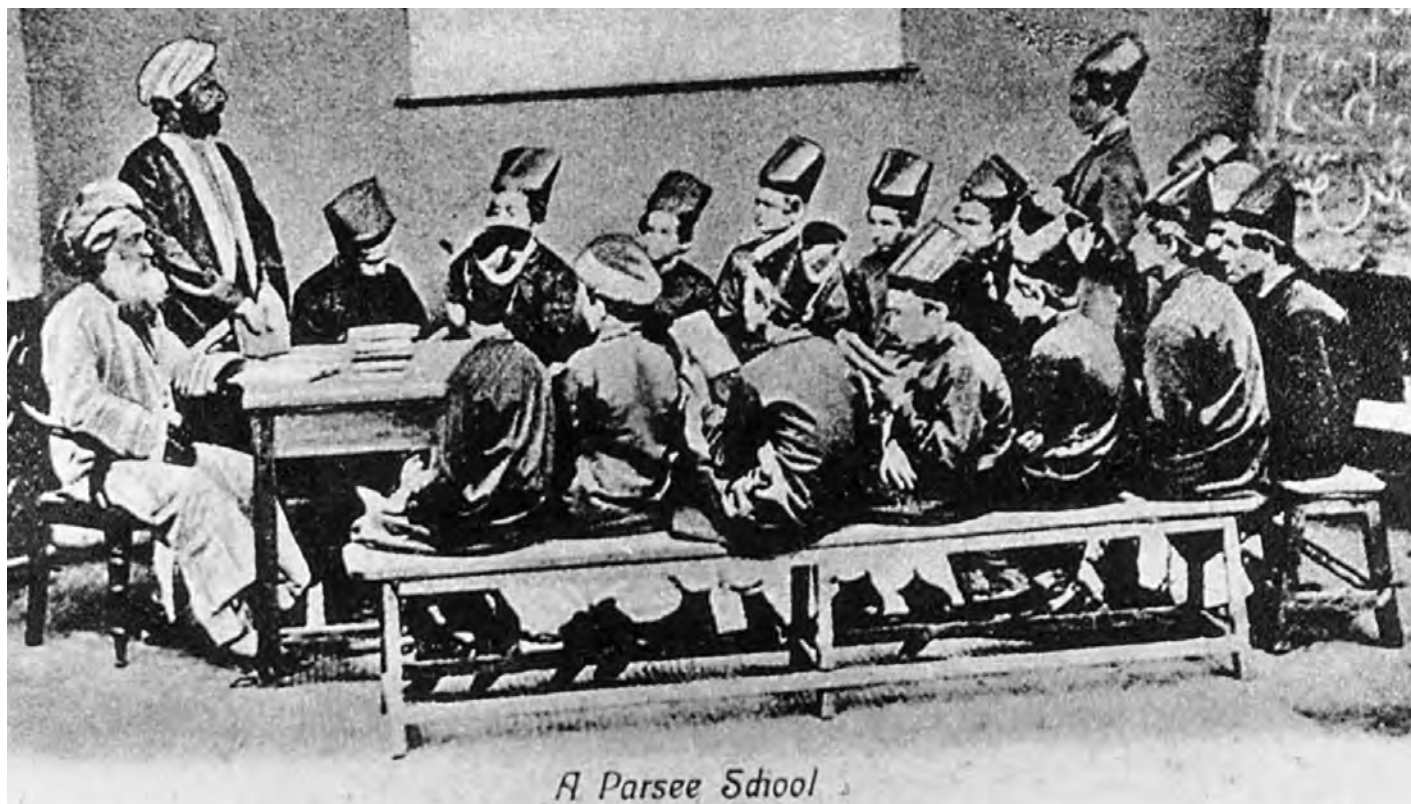
Our younger generation is not out to destroy Zarathushtrian society; we must trust them to make sensible, progressive decisions. They have been brought up in a different way from the immigrant generation, so their views will be different. If the younger generation makes decisions based on a proper knowledge of our history and the teachings of our religion, they can be trusted to take the right steps for the future. ■

Dr. Lovji D. Cama, *Senior Investigator with Merck and Co, has a masters in Pharmacy and a doctorate in Chemistry from Columbia University. A trustee of the Darbe Mehr in New York*



and founding member and past president of ZAGNY, Lovji has taught children's religion education classes, organized youth summer camps and lectured and written articles on Zarathushti religion, history and culture.

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A Parsee School



Top, a Parsi school in Mumbai, nineteenth century [PHOTO COURTESY "A ZOROASTRIAN TAPESTRY" BY PHEROZA J. GODREJ AND FIROZA PUNTHAKEY MISTREE]. Below, students at the Dadar Athornan Boarding Madressa in Mumbai [PHOTO BY HOMYAR MISTRY/HOMZ PRINTS, COURTESY PARSIANA, MARCH 1996].



We cannot say tomorrow parents' role in spiritual education

Though there is much to be said for Sunday Schools and the fact that it takes a village to raise a child, parents are the primary role models in their children's lives.

By Farishta Murzban Dinshaw
Toronto, Ontario

Our religion has survived 4000 years (give or take some years) and it will survive till the end of time. Ah... can't you just see Zarathushtrians doing the *kushti* on Mars?

But comforting though this image is, it is also misleading. Nothing survives in a vacuum. The truth is that as far as our community is concerned most of our children are growing up in a vacuum of spiritual ignorance. Gabriela Mistral, a Chilean poet said, "Many things we need can wait, the child cannot. Now is the time his bones are formed, his mind developed. To him we cannot say tomorrow, his name is today." So, if we want Zarathushtra's message to survive in the next millennium as cement binding a group together as well as an accepted individual code of ethics, we need progressive, focused, and above all, realistic strategies.

In Karachi, Pakistan I was a volunteer at the Friday School for Little

Zarathushtrians for over twenty years, and worked with children from five years to fifteen years. If I had to list what lessons parents need to pass on to children, I would stick to the 3 R's — **Respect for Self, Respect for Others, and Responsibility for Our Actions** — because they neatly encompass Zarathushtra's teachings. Why do I pinpoint parents? Because even though there is much to be said for Sunday Schools and the fact that it takes a village to raise a child, parents are the primary role models in their children's lives.

1. RESPECT FOR SELF

The sense of self is an essential concept in human growth. When developed, our sense of self becomes a reference point from which we relate in harmony to ourselves, to others and our world.

Live with courage. "A No uttered from deepest conviction is better and greater than a Yes merely uttered to please, or what is worse, to avoid trou-

ble." Mohandas Gandhi said that and he could have been explaining the Gathic concept of *Kshathra Vairya*. If you want your children to embrace the Zarathushtrian way of life, it is important that they understand moral courage. This means standing up for what is right under all circumstances even if it means being unpopular.

Converse with Ahura-Mazda. One of the problems facing us today is that we have no problems talking about Ahura Mazda but we get uncomfortable when someone starts talking about experiencing Ahura Mazda. It seems too 'new age-y', too esoteric. Yet that is the true essence of religion, the term derived from the Latin word *religare*, meaning 'to bind together . . . to unite with Ahura Mazda'. Each one of us needs to find a way of doing this — through meditation, daily prayers, any form of spiritual communication. Just let your children see you do it, and then they will too. "Families that pray together, stay together" is a cliché for a reason; it's true.

Honor your body. The media portrayal of an ideal body image is unrealistic. Children need to feel comfortable about their height, weight and body shape, so avoid comparisons and jokes. Children will imitate what you do, not what you say. This ranges from not abusing your body with overeating, crash diets, tobacco and alcohol to taking medicines on time. If you want children to eat broccoli, guess who will have to eat it first?

Zarathushtra recognized this link thousands of years ago, long before it was fashionable to be green. According to the Gathas [Ys. 34.15], the

Another thing you can do for your children is to laugh with them and encourage them to laugh at themselves. A shared sense of fun and the ability to see humor in difficult situations are vital for increasing one's enjoyment of life.



Karachi, Pakistan, and is a recipient of the Eve Bunting scholarship awarded by the Highlights Foundation for her writing for Children's Press, USA. She also writes for *Funline*, Pakistani magazine for children. She migrated to the United States in 1995. She has coauthored books for teachers, and is a practicing Muslim.

instilling zarathushtrian ideals in today's youth

How do we show our children that being a part of this amazing religion is a privilege, an honor, and a great legacy?

By Sanobar C. Mistry
Blue Bell, Pennsylvania

In this ever-changing world, especially so in America, less time is spent with our children. They seem to grow up faster, and move away from home earlier. In the short time parents have with their little ones, how do they instill in them more than a millennia's worth of history and wisdom of the Zarathushtrian faith?

Once that child does leave the nest, is that the end of their religious education? No. The parent's role does start to diminish; however, it is the time when the youth's curiosity and general wants become stronger. They begin to want to be a part of something greater than themselves, something bigger, but also something that is truly unique.

How do we show our children that being a part of this amazing religion is a privilege, an honor, and a great legacy? Start young. Always remember that actions speak louder than words. Say your prayers and live like a true Zarathushtrian. Incorporate Zarathushtra's teachings into your everyday activities. Be a part of your child's life, and allow them the freedom Ahura Mazda gave us to experience life for ourselves.

It is never too late to spark an interest or love for the religion of Zarathushtra. This is where parents come in again. They must support the youth, in all their endeavors and graciously guide them towards their perfection. The youth are the future of our community in the 21st Century.

One important and helpful step is to *form a youth group* in your local community. Allowing the youth to get to know one another in a social setting creates a sense of belonging and camaraderie. From here we begin to realize there are others like us who face the same struggles and questions growing up in America.

“ We need to look at the beginning of the 21st century as a time of renewal and change ... Do not stifle us, do not brush aside our thoughts, questions or our worries – instead help us find our way. ”

One must first form a sense of community before one can start to demand expectations from people. Once that is formed, we can bring in the more educational aspects of the religion.

For example, in the ZAPANJ community we have formed our own youth group. We started with a few social events here and there, with a good turnout; each activity increasing in size as word of mouth spread that these activities were quite fun. We then planned a weekend away, a type of retreat into the mountains. It was beautiful, away from civilization with only ourselves to amuse us. The thirteen of us were able to get to know one another especially well.

We had fun, discussed our religion, our thoughts and fears, and came up with an action plan to make a change in our community, which we took back to our board. The words others used to describe their experience were “amazing”, “fabulous”, and “wonderful”.

From that point, one energetic young Zarathushtrian had an idea to start a *religious class for young adults* and professionals. This included everyone between the ages of 17 to 35, and targeted a group of people who normally would have graduated from the classes or for those whom a class would not exist.

This is where we are losing most of our youth. They leave religious classes and never come back. What we want to do is to have them want to come back, to love it so much that they never want to leave their Zarathushtrian community. They need to feel a part of it, growing and changing, with and for them. Think about the future, where the religion is headed, then try to understand the mindset from which our youth are coming. They are born and raised Americans, with a small amount of knowledge about where they came from or who they are. Parents and elders need to help and guide them, but still allow them to be themselves.

The religion has survived as long as it has because we have had the ability to

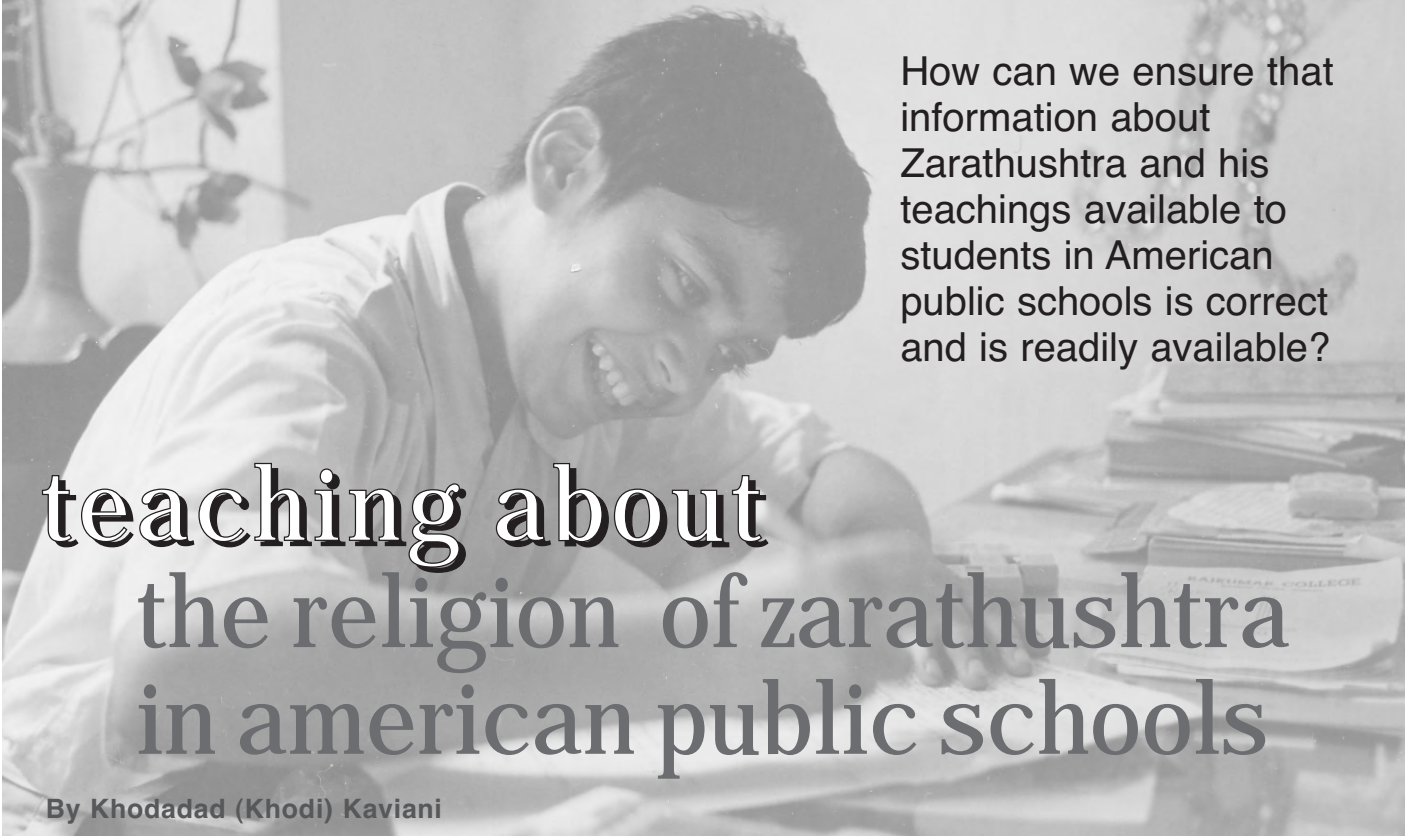
adapt. We have always changed with the times and the circumstances in which we've been placed. Now, we need to look at the beginning of the 21st century as a time of renewal and change and allow the youth and future of the Zarathushtrian religion to grow and flourish with it. Do not stifle us, do not brush aside our thoughts, questions or our worries – instead help us to find our way. You are our role models and while following the path is OK, making your own path and leading the way is even better. ■



Sanober C. Mistry, 25, was born in Blue Bell, PA, outside Philadelphia. She has a bachelor of Business Administration in Management Information Systems and International Business from Loyola College in Maryland. She currently works at The Vanguard Group. Sanober is a member of ZAPANJ and received her religious education through the community's monthly classes. Contact sanober at: smistry@loyola.edu.



Above, Zarathushtrian youth of San Diego gathering at a community park for their monthly Avesta classes, with instructor Homa Zartoshty. These monthly classes have been sponsored in San Diego and Los Angeles for the past 6 years by the Council of Iranian Mobeds of North America.



How can we ensure that information about Zarathushtra and his teachings available to students in American public schools is correct and is readily available?

teaching about the religion of zarathushtra in american public schools

By Khodadad (Khodi) Kaviani

In a conversation I had with one of my colleagues, I asked the question, “How can we expect our students to know about Zarathushtra and his teachings, if the information they can get in our library is limited and in some cases inaccurate?” Imagine teaching about mathematics or geography and giving wrong answers to students. What would people say about our schools? Becoming a life-long learner is one of the major goals of education. As educators, we are responsible for making sure all students learn and succeed and we take this challenge very seriously.

I teach seventh grade social studies World Cultures class, in Kent, Washington. I have been teaching math and social studies in this district for the past ten years; as well as teaching special cultural diversity classes through Kent’s Staff Development program for district employees.

Four times during the academic year, I take my seventh graders to the library and assist them in their

research of influential world leaders or other cultural issues. Students can find information about Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism in most of the textbooks that are used at junior high level. However, when it comes to the religion of Zarathushtra, one finds very short and often vague or incomplete information about this ancient religion.

Most of my colleagues and people that I come into contact with are surprised to find out that ours is a living religion. Some of them know about Zarathushtra’s influence on other religions and regard him to be a pioneer in his progressive moral teachings; they acknowledge his contributions to other religions and to the development of human civilizations.

Other teachers send their students to me when they have questions about Zarathushtra and ancient Iranian traditions. I am their ‘resident expert’ when it comes to these topics. They have the *Ancient Whispers* [1] CD and have played the songs therein when teaching about the Middle East.

I have found that just having the information is no guarantee that people will use it. So, I started developing easy and ready-to-use lessons that teachers could copy and give to their students. These lessons are aligned with the Educational Assessment for Learning Requirements, which are clear academic guidelines and standards for teachers and students.

I am also working on a resource book that includes a comprehensive set of lessons and topics to give the reader an accurate and objective picture of the religion of Zarathushtra and its influence in Iranian culture and beyond. It is written for educators and parents who want to teach Zarathushtrian principles to their children. Primary and secondary sources are used for this resource book that is rich with information.

At a recent Washington State social studies conference, I presented these lessons and talked about the fundamentals of the Zarathushtrian religion and Iranian traditions. What

made this presentation useful for the educators, were the ready-to-use lessons and delivery of the educational materials. They also appreciated Zarathushtrian music [1].

Later, I was asked to present these “Z-lessons” again at next year’s conference. Other educators and social studies teachers in Kent school district have also requested them. I have sent out over 60 packets to my colleagues. Hopefully, a publication of all the lessons will be available for all interested persons. Some of these lessons, modified, can be found at <http://rozanehmagazine.com>.

The Zarathushtrian religion is alive and well. We have the choice of how we promote it. With its progressive message of a good mind and a good heart in the service of humanity, it belongs to all humankind. ■

[1] *Ancient Whispers, Songs of Persia I* and *Amordaad, Songs of Persia II*. Both CDs have an accompanying booklet with all the lyrics and meanings of each song. Contact khodi@aol.com or visit www.khodi.com.

Khodadad (Khodi) Kaviani



was born in Tehran in 1961. He has a master's in International Studies from the University of Washington. He has earned his teaching and administrative cre-

dentials, and teaches social studies and cultural diversity in the Kent school district of the State of Washington. Khodi is also an avid musician and has produced three music CDs and written a book inspired by Omar Khayyam's poetry. His future works include a collection of Persian poems and a book on the Zarathushtrian religion for public schools.

edge on knowledge education through inspiration not indoctrination

By Meher Amalsad and Shahriar Shahriari

Laguna Beach, California, Sunday 5 pm. Meher and Shahriar are walking along the beach and talking with each other:

S: Meher, this is a tall order. I mean talk about effective techniques for religious education ... Here in North America, we are trying the same things as the home countries ... And even though our teachings may seem the same, they really are not, are they?

M: Shahriar, a little boy who lost his father asked another boy who had lost his father a few years before: “How does Nouruz look to you after your father died?” The other boy replied, “It looks the same, but it does not feel the same.” Likewise, our teaching style may look the same but it does not feel the same. The question is *why*?

S: Actually, it doesn’t matter why. The old style was something that worked before, but it no longer does. If we try to find out why and then modify the old style, we are still trying to force something. What’s important is to form a teaching style that could be relevant and also ‘feel’ right. It could be similar to the old style, or it could be completely different.

I think this is a good exercise for us to do. Let’s assume we were going to impart our religious teachings to our children today, and let’s assume this was the first time anybody ever did

that. In other words, assume we would have no models to go by, and we had to start from scratch. So, how would you go about teaching?

M: Now we are talking about a teaching project. I believe how we “*project this project*” to our children will determine the success or failure of our endeavor. In other words, the *form* in which we use our knowledge will determine the strength and longevity of its *plat-form*. Do we *inform to trans-form or de-form their spirit*? Are we addressing this *form* at a *spirit* level, what we call Simple Perspectives Intuitively Resulting In Transformation?

Furthermore, I want to emphasize here that the old style also has some inherent merits. It’s like *whole wheat bread* with all its built-in natural nutritional properties. The problems were cultivated, when we started using unnatural means to *refine that bread* and added unnecessary preservatives to prolong its life.

S: Ha ... preservation for the sake of preservation, prolonging for the sake of longevity, regardless of the deterioration in the quality. That makes sense.

But back to teaching, how can we inspire our children to bite into the

butter and jam of the *spirit* that we spread on the whole wheat bread of education? We can't just put the bread in front of them and ask them to eat, can we? That would be like telling them what they should believe – and even though it may work in the short term, in the long term it will give them indigestion, or worse yet, anorexia.

M: Since you talked about *butter* and *jam*, I like to correlate them with the *smooth* and *jammed* aspects of communication. We can provide the *smooth* substance without getting them *jammed* in the mere existence of information.

People say: "We can take the horse to water but we cannot make it drink." I believe, however, that we can create the thirst that will make the horse drink.

Likewise, we can create an appetite for learning in our children that will make them eat the bread without causing any physical, emotional and spiritual hiccups.

That comes by making it palatable with what our children are interested in listening to, and then gradually enveloping the basics we would like them to learn. It's like shaping the will without shaking the *spirit*.

S: I get it. What our children are interested in listening to. That I suppose, we can only find out if we are interested in listening to our children, rather than assuming that we already know what they want to listen to.

M: So now we are entering the dimension of expectations.

The other day, I took my 5-year old nephew Omead to see the Christmas lights in an area that was heavily patrolled by police.

He asked me: "Amoo Meher, what is the police doing over here?"

I said: "They are here to make sure that everyone behaves properly."

He said: "If I misbehave, what are they going to do? Take me and make me do homework!"

You see, sometimes interesting expectations sprout out of policing and so we as parents need to do our homework properly before we decide to guide our children.

As we do, we need to operate from the dimension of *Unconditional Love*. Only then our children will be receptive in sharing their heart and spirit with us.

However, I do want to emphasize here that unconditional love does not mean unconditional acceptance of bad behavior.

We can always criticize the *doing* and still recognize the *being* of our children. We can shrug their doing and still hug their being – because they are human beings and not human doings.

S: So in the case of Omead, for example, if we want to impart some of our Zarathushtrian teachings to him, we must try to stay away from homework in its traditional sense, since he is associating that with punishment. In other words, we don't need to do away with homework. We must recognize that in its usual sense, homework will become counterproductive. Then if we must give him homework, we had better get creative and structure it in a way that is inspiring to him.

M: Yes. In order to do those with our children we must work with love so that they can love their work.

S: OK. Now where does that leave us? We are talking about educating our children through inspiration not indoctrination. We are also talking about listening to our children, or having a dialogue with them – much like you and I are having right now. And we are also talking about getting creative in response to the dialogue to find the means to inspire our children. Is that pretty much it? Am I missing anything?

M: Yes, it's like a pencil sharpener telling the pencil: "Stop going in circles and get to the point." The point we are trying to get across is on

developing an *Edge on Knowledge* – an edge whose sharpness is used to thrill, not drill the human spirit, and whose sharpness is used to carve a path of inspiration through trust instead of indoctrination with thrust.

S: That's all very well, but what happens to religion?

M: It will stride with pride, if we allow our children to abide, by their inner guide. ■

Meher Dadabhoy Amalsad



lives in Westminster, California with his wife Katayoon and daughter Anahita. He is listed in Who's Who in the World 2000, 2001 and 2002. He

is the author of "Bread for the Head".™ His life's work is focused on Creating Unity within Diversity in Humanity. For subscribing to his free Bread4theHead.com Z-inspirational newsletter visit:

www.bread4thehead.com

Shahriar Shahriari *was born in Iran and educated in England and Canada.*



Married to Mahboobeh they live in Los Angeles, California. Shahriar has been an active member of the

Zarathushtrian community, and has authored the books "Thus Spake the Real Zarathushtra" and "The Z Factor", both of which deal with the spiritual philosophy of Zarathushtra. He is creator of the web-site:

www.Zarathushtra.com.

Empowering Generations

By Farida Bamji
Ottawa, Ontario

Ours is a Universal Religion
Meant for one and all,
No matter who we be
Whether great or small
He gave us no Do's or Don'ts
"The choice is yours" He said
"Follow the Path of Good
and reap the rewards"

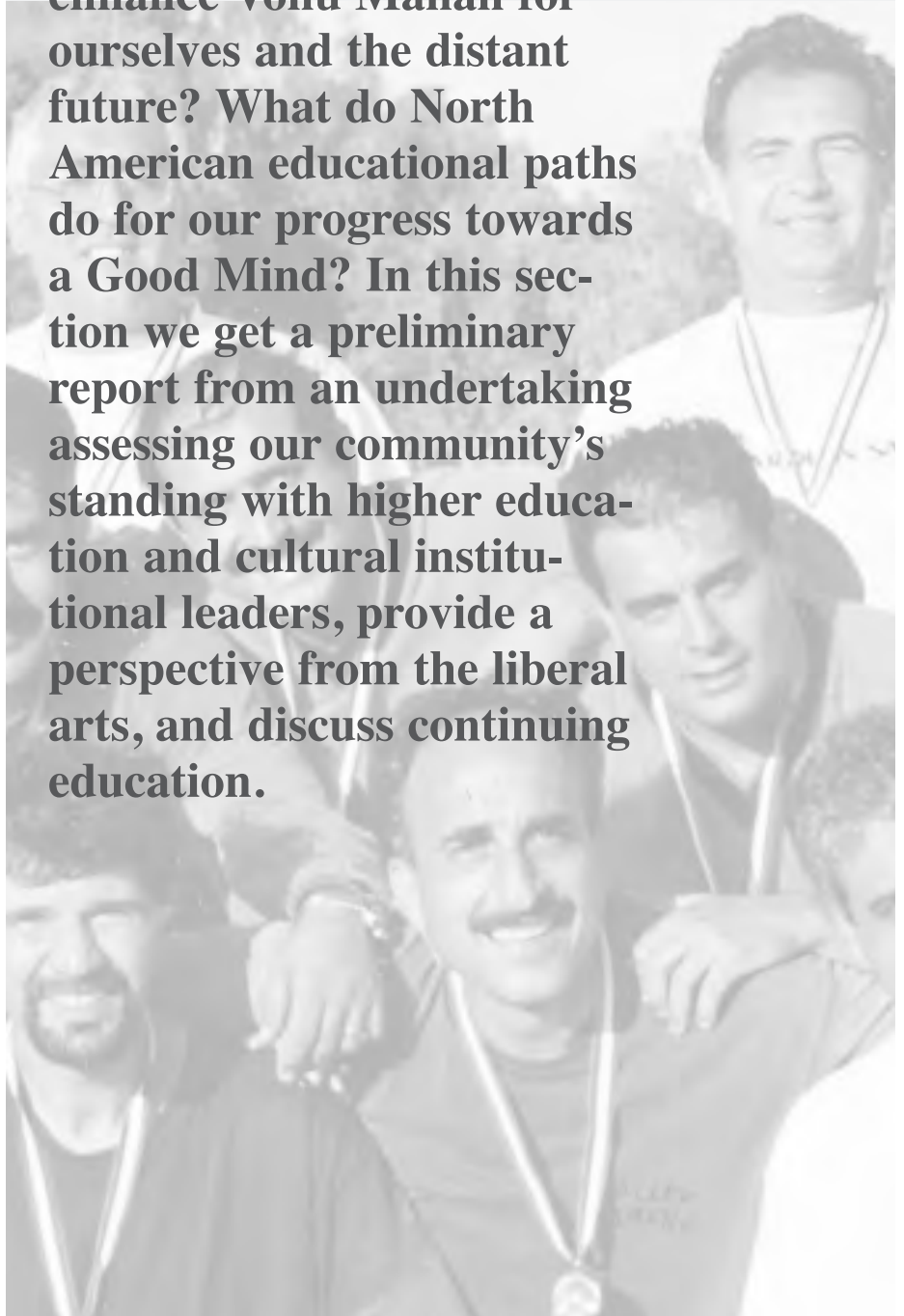
I say once more:
To old customs
Practice or habits
Please *do not* cling
To Advance Communities,
And Empower Generations
May I remind you:
"Times They Are Changing"

[Poem submitted for the poetry contest at the Twelfth North American Zoroastrian Congress, in Chicago in July 2002].



Farida Bamji was born in Mumbai, India in 1948. She has an MA in sociology and education. Farida is committed to putting the religion of Zarathushtra on the world map by following the three-fold path of Humata, Hukhta and Huvareshtha.

Whether arriving upon the threshold of adulthood or well into life's game, the responsibilities and pleasures of educating ourselves continue and make a crucial contribution to a Zarathushtrian life. How do we enhance Vohu Manah for ourselves and the distant future? What do North American educational paths do for our progress towards a Good Mind? In this section we get a preliminary report from an undertaking assessing our community's standing with higher education and cultural institutional leaders, provide a perspective from the liberal arts, and discuss continuing education.



zarathushtra's vision

in institutions of higher education, arts, culture and society in north america

Khorshed Jungalwala
Sudbury, Massachusetts

Today we are all challenged to claim for a new age the very principles of religious freedom that shape our North American Zarathushtrian community. The framers of the Constitution and Bill of Rights of USA and the Constitution and Charter of Rights and Freedoms of Canada could not have envisioned the vast scope of religious diversity in North America at the beginning of the 21st century. Religious tolerance has bred religious pluralism.

Prof. Diane L. Eck, Harvard University and director of the Pluralism Project declares, "the religious landscape of America has changed radically in the past thirty years, but most of us have not yet begun to see the dimensions and scope of that change, so gradual has it been and yet so colossal." She maintains that exposure to religious pluralism should be viewed not as a threat to one's own religious identity but as an opportunity to broaden and deepen one's own religiosity by interactions with other faiths.

On June 25, 1991, a Muslim *imam* stood in the chamber of the US House of Representatives and offered brief prayers as the chaplain of the day. The day a Zarathushtrian mobed proudly recites verses from the Gathas on such an occasion is the day we will surely have arrived.

Zarathushtra's vision. We have demonstrated degrees of reservation when it comes to revealing fundamental doctrinal aspects to those who earnestly inquire about our faith. Is it

fear of conveying the wrong information? Is it fear of unwelcome conversion to our religion? Or is it simply our lack of knowledge or interest? This hesitancy has created a mystique around us as a community and around Zarathushtra's message. Can the North American society appreciate who we are and our rich heritage if we do not remove this confusing mystique?

Our ancient faith has an astoundingly rich history and tradition, but the non-proselytizing aspect has held us back from talking, discussing and dialoguing with our non-Zarathushtrian neighbors. We readily adopt the history and traditions of our American neighbors, but do we offer the same reciprocity when explaining Zarathushtra's vision to them?

During the 1999 Parliament of World's Religions meeting in Cape Town, South Africa, I was approached by the leader of the Witches delegation from Upstate New York, inquiring, "I am amazed at the similarity between our two religions. We worship in secret, pray in a secret language and practice rituals such as worshipping the fire, and exclude non-believers from participating." I was amazed at this total misconception of our religion and lost no time explaining the facts.

Political perspective of Zarathushtra's vision. Some political leaders voiced opinions similar to Senator Edward M. Kennedy when he commented to the author, "In my interactions with Zarathushtrians in US and elsewhere I am struck by their zeal to better themselves and those around them while maintaining the highest

standards of ethics in work and social interactions. I perceive the practice of the Zarathushtrian religion as a pure enrichment of the mind and soul." Both Senator Kennedy and current US Ambassador to Canada Paul Cellucci strongly urge the community to take a more active role in the socio-political causes of their states and nations, and stand for political offices, as Cellucci put it, "your high code of ethics can provide a refreshing impetus to the current political system."

Understanding of Zarathushtra's vision by arts and cultural bodies.

Dr. Susan Bean, curator of the Peabody Essex Museum of Salem, Massachusetts voiced the opinion of most arts and cultural entities about lack of artifacts, literature, art, music and dance material for displays and promotion; also noting, "a strong adherence to the moral tenets of the faith by its practitioners, which distinguishes them for their willingness to accommodate without compromising their values." [The museum has ample displays of cultural and trade interactions of the Parsis with westerners. See "*The Yankee Connection*", *FEZANA Journal*, Spring 1997].

Institutes of higher learning in North America. Many universities that were founded and funded by religious groups in times prior to the 19th century made a strong case for religion to be part of the daily campus environment of the time. Those that did not have an ecclesiastical foundation showed a reluctance to emphasize the study of religion, citing separation of state and religion till the early 1920s.

Today, 22 universities and 42 colleges have undergraduate courses that include some aspect of the study of the Zarathushtrian faith; 15 universities and 37 colleges have graduate courses; and 9 universities and 7 colleges have doctorate or post-doctorate studies. Of the students of all religious studies at 22 universities and 42 colleges about .04% specialize in Indo-Iranian. More than 97% of the researchers and students in the study are non- Zarathushtrians. Very little subject concentration at all levels is doctrinal. As of today, there is no chair established in any institute of higher learning in North America strictly for study and research of the Zarathushtrian faith.

- The fundamental ‘reflective’ element of the message of the prophet.
- The freedom to think and act without the encumbrance of a set of rigid rules.
- The ease of adjusting the ceremonial aspects to suit the exigencies of life in the new world.

A cursory study of comments by Zarathushtrian and non-Zarathush-

The governing bodies of our two nations in North America do not profess to favor certain faiths to the exclusion of others. We Zarathushtrians, have an obligation to ourselves and to our respective countries to continue educating ourselves, as we venture to educate our children, our neighbors, our community, and our fellow human beings. ■

- Submitted by Farida Bamji

Cultivating a Good Mind coheres with the Greek playwright Ovid's thought that, "A faithful study of the liberal arts humanizes character and permits it not to be cruel" [*Ovid, Epistolae ex Ponto, c. A.D. 10*]. Here we see the reflective concerns of a youth making her way in the liberal arts.

the liberal arts and a zarathushtrian vision of ethics

By Nerina Rustomji
New York, New York

The Zarathushtrian ethic affirms the humanizing principles of choice and education, and so, it is no surprise that inner examination of self is a process shared by the liberal arts tradition. If the liberal arts free us to explore all realms of thought and challenge the parameters of our world, it is a tradition that has long ago been supported by the Zarathushtrian injunction to think with a clear mind.

What is the relationship between the liberal arts and Zarathushtrian ethics? In European tradition, the liberal arts formed from the dual purposes of general education and biblical education for men. In Roman classical antiquity, 'liberal' referred to a system of education for free men. In medieval Europe, church leaders adopted the idea of general education for men using the liberal arts primarily as a way in which Christians learned how to read, understand, and internalize the bible. At universities, the 'arts' themselves numbered seven and were grouped under two categories: the *trivium* included grammar, logic and rhetoric, and the *quadrivium* encompassed arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and musical theory.

We have inherited the legacy of the trivium and quadrivium in the form

of our universities. Yet, over centuries, we have altered that legacy. Liberal in 'liberal arts' has come to mean that which frees us from authoritative thought, allowing us to think and choose for ourselves. The liberal arts symbolize the form of education, opposed to technical specialization, and are foremost the way of life of educated, free thinkers.

I remember my first introduction to Zarathushtrian ethics and liberal arts as ways of life. At a Zarathushtrian youth camp in Houston, Magdalena and Yezdi Rustomji distributed a sheet with a quote from then Brown College president Vartan Gregorian: "Hell is where nothing connects with nothing. I have always believed everything must connect with everything in order to make an individual free." In Zarathushtrian cosmology, heaven is a "good mind" and hell is its opposite so the quote made perfect sense: to think with constraints was hell on earth.

If the Zarathushtrian ethic supported the process of the free thought, what about the idea that education ought support textual interpretations based on religious doctrine? The Zarathushtrian ethic enjoins us to be free to think and expects us to affirm a moral order of good and evil. What happens when reasoning does not affirm the black and white order of the world at the heart of Zarathushtrian theology?

Can everything be reduced to categories of 'good' and 'evil?' [**Editorial Note:** Zarathushtra's Gathas give us no specific moral stipulation. They give us a moral vision which is to realize Asha, which according to Zarathushtra we can do through the faculty of *Vohu Manah*. Centuries later various moral stipulations were formulated by the Sasanian theologians much of which was influenced by Zurvanite thought [1] and people have been living according to them since.

[1] According to Zurvanite view, Zurvan the father of time gave birth to twins, Spenta Mainyu and Angra Mainyu who came to define the world. Ahura Mazda became identified with Spenta Mainyu, considered to be in constant battle with Angra Mainyu. Knowledge of the Gathic language and Gathic vision scant, the Zurvanite ideology dominated the Sasanian understanding of Zarathushtrianism. The Zurvanite mistaken identity of Zarathushtrianism has been the reason for the detractors of the religion to label it dualistic. Such mistaken notions are being perpetuated to this day, probably for the sake of tradition. [*As an example refer to pages 18-20 and 265 of the recently published book "A Zoroastrian Tapestry" compiled in Mumbai*]. There is no cosmic dualism in the Gathas, only the path Asha.

However, these are time bound with changing circumstances, and need to be evaluated in accordance with Asha.]

This is what the liberal arts and Zarathushtrian ethics share – the possibility to allow our minds to be unconstrained to transform our lives and worlds beyond parameters that a Zarathushtrian tradition has delivered to us. ■



Nerina Rustomji is a PhD candidate at Columbia University where she is finishing her dissertation “*The Garden and Fire: Materials of Heaven and Hell in Medieval Islamic Culture.*” Presently, she teaches a course at Columbia University and seeks to pursue a career in academia. An avid reader and intrepid traveler, Nerina is always happy to go back to her home in Houston, Texas.



Above, graduating class of the American Boarding School, also known as the Alborz College, for boys, in Tehran (late 19th - 20th century). One of its most illustrious pupils was Arbab Kaikhosrow Shahrokh. Left, Anoshirwan Dadgar High School in Tehran. [TOP PHOTO COURTESY FAROOKH ISSA, PHILLIPS ANTIQUES, PHOTOGRAPH NOSHIR GOBHAI, LEFT PHOTO COURTESY FARHANG MEHR. BOTH PHOTOS FROM “A ZOROASTRIAN TAPESTRY” BY PHEROZA J. GODREJ AND FIROZA PUNTHAKEY MISTREE.]

education for the diaspora generation



In the old worlds, our cultures and our ways were more set and established than in the new world. Our people have made the tremendous journey to North America, where everything seeks a rationale and where new ways are triumphed. Oftentimes, the very first pioneers in North America are bearing the change in mixed astonishment, bewilderment, and concern. What basic religious education can best assist the older immigrant generation to acclimate, understand, appreciate, and use the North American context in a full and enjoyable way? How is an older generation's continued education throughout life partaking of the North American experience many peoples have experienced? We hear (below) from participants in a study group and (next page) a teacher of continuing education.

ATTENDING A GATHAS STUDY GROUP

Once every month, Yasmin and Hormaz Vania drive an eight hour round trip to attend a two hour Gathas class. What motivates them and what can study of the Gathas bring to the older, first generations who settled in North America? Here they give voice to the many ineffable and joyous aspects of our tradition and its vision.

Yasmin Hormaz Vania
Springfield, Illinois



Attending the Gathas (Zarathushtra's own words!) Study Group for over two years now has given me a deeper understanding and appreciation

of our sublime ancient religion. Each time our group reads and discusses a paragraph of the Gathas, I get a clearer vision of the beautiful life enhancing precepts of our beloved prophet.

Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds, so simple to say, and yet so difficult to follow at all times! But no matter how difficult to live by, Oh what peace of mind and joy these eternal teachings bring to an adherent!

The Gathas readings teach me to try and be a better person. Continuing to attend and reviewing the Words of Zarathushtra reinforces my appreciation for the value of Truth, so dear and revered by all Zarathushtrians. I hope these venerable values will forever shine in the heart of every Zarathushtrian.

Many thanks to Dr. Kersey Antia for starting this study group and getting us interested in attending. During the group's formation, Dr. Antia gave his

valuable and exact interpretations of the Gathas until ill health limited him. Our faithful members, Kay-omarsh Mehta (who assembles the study materials and lends us many insights), Drs. Minoo and Mehroo Patel, Spitama Tata, the ZAC (the group's host) and other attendees have our many thanks for their devotion and insights.

Hormaz Minoocher Vania
Springfield, Illinois



About two years ago I joined a Gathas Study Group. Expecting to attend a serious religious class, the informal nature of the class, with participants taking an active role in all the discussions, pleasantly surprised me.

Several Gathic passages state Zarathushtra's desire for his followers to spread his message to all the people in the world. I feel that we should take this message to heart and start working hard to meet this goal!

I WON'T - 0%

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CHART I: TASKS AND CONTINUING LIFE EDUCATION

TASK or GLOBAL OBJECTIVE	REFERENCE FOR TASK	PRACTICAL APPROACH TO TASK
To collaborate with Ahura Mazda in bringing about continued refreshment and progression of the world, through goodness of thoughts, words and deeds.	So may we be like those making the world progress toward perfection; May Mazda and the divine spirits help us through truth; for, a thinking man is where wisdom is at home. <i>[Ys. 30.9 - D.J. Irani]</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strengthen the world with righteousness ● Work for the welfare of creation ● Be among those who make life fresh ● Volunteer time talents for the betterment of humanity ● Be munificent ● Spread Ahura Mazda's Blessings ● Create awareness of goodness
To contribute to bringing about the victory of good and defeat of evil, through the goodness of thoughts, words and deeds.	<p>"Resist evil is the clarion call of Zarathushtra to humanity."</p> <p>"Man's duty is to commend good and cooperate with it; to condemn evil and enter into conflict with it."</p> <p><i>[Dr. M.N. Dhalla]</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be a leader of the lawful ● Act through righteousness & Vohumana ● Work for the betterment of others ● Struggle to remedy the wrong and evil ● Seek to comfort others ● Rescue the helpless ● Crusade against superstition and bigotry (According to Dr. Dhalla, this is to combat mental evil) ● Fight and route the forces of evil
To seek ways to grow in wisdom and to share and use that wisdom and experience for the progress and renovation of household, village, province, country, and all the land (world).	<p>The person who belongs to 'progressive serenity', promotes righteousness with his intellect, words, deeds, and conscience. The wise God grants him dominion through good mind.</p> <p><i>[Ys. 51.21- A. A. Jafarey]</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Acquire and promote wisdom ● Be ever wise in dedication ● Be ever wise in action ● Enlighten and inspire ● Ennoble and uplift mankind ● Teach others the righteous path of truth and happiness ● Be a generous, enlightened helper ● Direct teachings based on Gathas ● Strive for elimination of darkness of the mind

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versy. We would rather have others do the fighting. However, as Zarathushtrians, if we ignore evil or turn from it, we are turning away from our responsibility.

Dr. Dhalla states that we are called to adjust social wrongs, regenerate society, and that we are to do it individually and collectively. Actively working for righteousness and fighting against wickedness, is absolutely one of our guiding principles and so one of our tasks.

● **Grow in wisdom.** The third task is, to grow in wisdom. According to Dr. Jehan Bagli "Aging is a harvesting time of wisdom." He says that, "We work in partnership with the source of wisdom, Ahura Mazda." It is our duty to become wise and to act through that wisdom. We can all think of times when we have gone to elders of our community to seek advice and gain insights to dilemmas or to have a dialogue about the important questions of life.

As Zarthushtis, we are charged with the responsibility of growing in wisdom through our thought, word and deed. We attain this wisdom through righteousness [Ys. 51.16] and the words of Zarathushtra, prayer, contemplation, and actively seeking enlightenment and wisdom from Ahura Mazda.

With these tasks in mind, we consider ways and means for continuing life education, conceptualizing within a chart [see previous page].

In closing, as Dastur Dhalla said, "Free minds are communicating with the great minds, uniting with living minds to form community of minds upon earth. Knowledge knows not national frontiers, nor recognizes difference of caste, creed." So true, now more than ever, as we communicate electronically in a matter of seconds.

Progress is a fact, and it is Ahura Mazda's plan. It is our duty to collaborate with Him ethically, mentally, socially, physically, responsibly, indi-

[Continued on page 52]

The love of learning we find in Zarathushtra's vision and the reflective good mind it gives a person, provide a base. A person takes this core underpinning into the world of action, beyond the academic and educational spheres of life.

Paradigms of active spheres include business and commerce, youth leadership, and a new post Sept-11 global era. In these active spheres of human activity, seeming to allow little room for religious and reflective thought, we must still be guided by what is wise and good. How does Zarathushtra's vision, and the capacities it gives us as thinkers, matter in spheres that are not religious, but are vitally shaping and making our world? How do we employ a Zarathushtrian ethos, our insight and learning, in active arenas? How do we convey Zarathushtra's vision, with its sublime message and values, throughout North American life?

- By Natalie Vania

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Towards Right-mindedness ...

[Continued from page 51]

vidually and collectively. We can do it with the *best serenity, using the Gathas as our guide.*

"Indeed, Wise One, this reward is given to those who in their choice of physical life, truly serve the community of the fruitful world with their deeds of good mind, and God, promote your plan of wisdom through communal righteousness."

[Yasna 31.14 -Jafarey]

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Magdalena Rustomji is a



licensed professional counselor (psychotherapist) working with immigrant and refugee high school students. She is a founding member of the

Zarathushti Study Group. Magdalena is the coordinator of an annual high school writing festival that celebrates Poetry Month and has also developed modules for using poetry and journal writing in group therapy. Her writing was selected as the winning poem to celebrate the North American Zoroastrian Congress in Chicago in July 2002.

zarathushtra's vision in commerce

The life of the business person is an active versus contemplative one. Zarathushtrians enjoy a heritage in which excellence in entrepreneurship, industry, and commerce set the community in distinction. As seen in FEZANA Journal [Fall 2002], the North American community is taking the record of Zarathushtrian entrepreneurship forward through The World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce (WZCC). Zarathushtra's vision provides clarion insight and sustenance to our business leaders.

By Natalie Vania
Mountain View, California

Homi Patel is president and

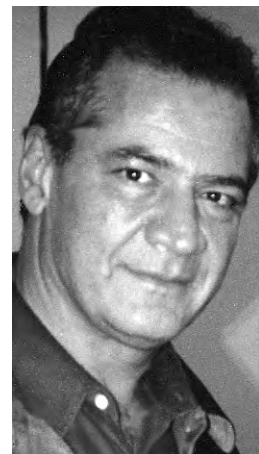


CEO of Hartmarx Corporation, Chicago, the global apparel retailing corporation. He is also president of the Clothing Manufacturers of America.

As Homi Patel elucidated at the WZCC Conference in Chicago on July 4 [FEZANA Journal, Fall 2002], integrity and honesty in business is crucial. No system of enterprise can hope to work long without integrity as a guiding force. Mr. Patel testified to the basic honesty and decency of North American corporate leadership. Perhaps it is part of Mr. Patel's Zarathushtrian background and percepts that provide his unflinching outlook upon recent scandals in which top leadership has shown itself amiss. The moral concern to avoid

fraud at the heart of fair business rivets our audiences.

Manou Mobedshahi's ele-



gant Sherman House hotel in the ritzy Pacific Heights district of San Francisco, was named among the top 20 US city hotels by Forbes magazine in 1995. Another ven-

ture, the 170-room Hyatt Sainte Claire became the first ever Hyatt franchise to be owned and managed by a private party.

Strong enthusiasm for Zarathushtra's Vision in the very heart of business resides with Mr. Manou Mobedshahi of San Francisco. As the owner of a chain of hotels and, as awarded by the Mayor of San Jose for excellence in business, Mr. Mobedshahi has a firm take on what makes for strong entrepreneurship.

He attributes business success very strongly to the basic core principles around which Zarathushtrian life is organized. The ideals of *frashokereti*, the wisdom of the good mind, proactive orientation by way of good thoughts, words and deeds, the moderate balanced life, and contribution to the community, all comprise successful leadership ideally set for entrepreneurial engagement.

Mr. Mobedshahi sees our ideals as principals giving us a special way of thinking. The ideals widen in his mind as he offers his insight. *Frashokereti*, progress in making and renewing the world, is creative and this creativity is needed in the value good businesses produce for people. Wisdom, Mr. Mobedshahi thinks, entails the mind's reality meeting with external reality. Good thoughts, words and deeds are a pro-active enjoiner rather than a mere negative prohibition.

In endeavoring for *frashokereti*, one's leadership qualities are brought into play and one improves oneself, as the world and even God improve. The beneficence in making others happy is integral to successful business. Yet in all of these ideals, moderation, a balanced life, is vital. Zarathushtrians take education a step farther in both their formal pursuit and in their practical know-how. Contributing back to community as one excels gives a fullness to the whole picture of Zarathushtrian life

and business success. WZCC chapters, such as San Francisco's, being organized by Jamshed Gandhi, find a great deal of inspiration here.

Rustom Lalkaka is president of Business and Technology Development



Strategies LLC, New York, a consulting group specializing in technology management and small enterprise support services. The company has

been active in 40 industrializing and transition countries. Over the last four decades, Lalkaka has advised the private sector, governments and multi- and bilateral organizations on business incubators, technology parks, enterprise creation, and industrial development.

With the family of Rustom Lalkaka in NYC, we found another aspect for Zarathushtra's vision. The Lalkakas have traveled the globe, establishing business and technology incubators in seven countries. As a young couple, the Lalkakas became established in an entrepreneurial way: keeping all their shipping crates at hand, they camped

out in Calcutta and worked with M.N. Dastur to establish the world's leading steel engineering consultancy with over 3,000 engineers. Mr Lalkaka and his son Dinyar are currently involved in setting up 86+ incubators the world over including China and India.

As a thinker of the larger picture of *frashokereti*, of re-making and renewing the world, Mr. Lalkaka is concerned with the effectiveness of incubators as a tool for rapid economic development and the tremendous uplift this can bring to entire societies. He trains and leads others throughout the globe to manage business incubation with excellence.

In explaining why entrepreneurship matters, Mr. Lalkaka says, "Today, there is also increasing recognition worldwide of the important role of market-based entrepreneurship as an engine of job creation, income and economic development ... one billion new jobs that will be needed worldwide by the year 2005 will have to come from the creation and growth of new businesses, almost always starting small ... technological entrepreneurship is expected to be the significant source of good jobs" [Lalkaka, Rustom, "Global Developments in Technology Business Incubation," IIM Metal News, August 2002]. ■



The sense of the goose

In the fall when you see geese heading south for the winter flying along in the "V" formation, you might be interested in knowing what science has discovered about why they fly that way. It has been learned that as each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird behind it. By flying in a "V" formation, *the whole flock adds at least 70% greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own.*

Whenever a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to go through it alone and quickly gets back into formation *to take advantage of the power of the flock.*

When the lead goose gets tired, he rotates back in the wing and another goose takes over. *It pays to share leadership.*

The geese honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep their speed. *Words of support and inspiration energize those on the front line, to keep pace in spite of pressures and fatigue.*

Finally, when a goose is wounded, two geese fall out of the formation and follow him down to help and protect him.

If we have the sense of a goose, we will stand by each other. By being a contributing member of a team, we will all get their quicker and easier.

- Submitted by Rusi Sorabji



accelerating youth leadership

By Natalie Vania

What of the new generation as it comes into life's action-oriented spheres? North American Zarathushtrian Youth have special cause to take leadership to heart for several reasons. We will explain why, share insights on the nature of leadership, discuss accelerated cultural entrée, professionalizing our not-for-profit structures, and gather input from youth oriented leaders.

Our special cause for taking leadership to heart

Our youth comprise a wide span. The youth range inclusively from children and adolescents to young professionals, first or second generation immigrants, the youth-favorable, and those intent on bridging generations and distances using the fresh spirit of youth for enjoying our traverse from older to newer times. We have a special concern with leadership as the new youth generation comes to the forefront of guiding the community.

Zarathushtrians in North America can take leadership much to heart for the following reasons:

- (1) Our social identity in North America is coming into being and we are making a first impression for later North American Zarathushtrian people. Whatever the first impression formed, it will shape the treatment and regard of future North American Zarathushtrian generations. The first impression leads in establishing a social groundwork for future generations.
- (2) Our heritage is one of leadership (a) in our being holders of a great world tradition of thought and spirit

and (b) in the historical record established by Iranians and Parsis (so vital in India's industrialization).

- (3) The community at hand in North America needs community building effort.
- (4) Our emphasis on a Zarathushtrian way of life, conduct, and valuing of Truth predispose us as fit for leadership and as contributing towards it.
- (5) Leadership is a challenge for using, and application of, inherently valuable virtue (which aims at cultivating admirable human traits or excellences).

(6) It is actually hard not to be a leader, as we each enjoy the leading responsibility for our lives and choices.

Now that we see why leadership concerns us, we can ask what it means to lead. What is its nature?

A baker's dozen on the general nature of leadership

Discussions of what leadership is can be as extended as Plato's *Republic* and insightful about a good human life as the *Nicomachean Ethics*. But what teaches many of us is everything we see personally as the North American Zarathushtrian community is established. Some of us have seen a generation arrive here as virtual pilgrims in areas with no other Zarathushtrians. From our start in this new terrain, we learn as we see our organizations, buildings, and institutions developing in North America. Our experiences help to make the general nature of leadership familiar, as we see in gathering some of its best aspects.

I. Everyone has some capacity for leadership. (As Pope John Paul II says [1], "the human being by nature is a philosopher", a point to consider alongside Plato's view that philosophers vie with kings.)

II. A leader serves objectives of his or her group and the world. (One is not alone, there are groups, bigger groups, even bigger groups, even the world.)

III. A leader accepts challenges and risks.

IV. A leader knows when to cede leadership to others. (The first FEZANA president built an organization for another to assume the leadership role, knowing it was important to the strength of FEZANA.)

V. A leader perseveres. (And perseveres. And perseveres.)

VI. When folks like you, the job is easier.

VII. Truth is a guiding ideal for a leader. (Don't we wish the rest of the world understood at least that much!)

VIII. The buck stops with the leader.

IX. A great leader builds leadership in others. (Another leader is your collaborator, not your threat.)

X. A leader motivates others towards purposeful objectives.

XI. Executive capacity is part of leadership. (Make sure the job gets done.)

XII. Leadership calls for acute understanding and appreciation of political thought. (Game theory, psychology, and so many areas of study, also help.)

North American Zarathushtrian youth already enjoy insight into leadership, revealed through the active, productive lives they are constructing: in Boston, the local association is headed by a North American youth, *Sherazade Mehta*, and our last Congress was skillfully led by a youth, *Rashna Ghadiali*.

With much of the youth exhibiting leadership, we can benefit by looking at two themes in more depth. We consider prospects for accelerating our leadership in the wider culture and for professionalizing our internal nurturing on a community-level scale.

Facilitating accelerated entrée by youth into North American leadership venues

While being high achieving and directed to make positive contribution in North American society and culture, the youth do not enjoy as great an access to significant reaches or echelons as they may enjoy. After lengthy education, young adults invest energy in careers as rather single, and often, isolated, parties. If we

could facilitate assertive entrée into higher echelons of social and cultural life for each other, we would achieve benefits of solidarity and accelerated scale. We might consider our young adult population not only as a group of highly promising individuals, but explicitly consider them as a cadre for pursuit and attainment of advanced social position in North America. As our community develops from a position of social obscurity, this aware cadre is part of the visible impression we will create in North America.

We do have supportive networks of young professionals, such as with the *Zarathushtrian Young Professionals of North America*. Beyond mutual support, young adults in early career stages hope and often plan for advancement. What if we organized resources for learning the ambitions and dreams of a twenty-five year old person, and understood how that person's entire career could be aggressively accelerated to insure, or at least substantially enhance, prospects for serious regard in the wider culture's most serious positions of authority? Could we develop our aware cadre as a community project, going beyond familial and individual resources?

The youth were excited at the Seventh North American Zoroastrian Youth Congress by the idea that in fifty years perhaps the president of the United States would be a Zarathushtrian. What facilitation for accelerating our promising cadre can move that idea towards reality? Should we think it possible in fifty years or possible much sooner? With Zarathushtrians running for congress and other political offices today, can we accelerate?

And, when the president of the United States is a Zarathushtrian, will the world find that *Asha* and *Truth*, with associated virtues of forthrightness, non-duplicity, and openness, are no longer a suspect part of political life but instead their vital and energizing core?

Leadership is needed in all venues of society. If the presidents of the

[1] Pope John Paul II *Fides et Ratio* Encyclical Letter, September 15, 1998, The Vatican, Rome.

Museum of Modern Art and the Getty Museum were Zarathushtrian, would a life-affirming ethos reshape the North American aesthetic landscape? If the Zarathushtrian voice were heard, what leading inspirations would derive for the wider culture? How does our professional core now advance a record worthy to a Zarathushtrian orientation in the wider culture? Accelerated entrée and an aware cadre involve our relationship to the external culture and *to bringing the Zarathushtrian ethic to it*.

Concern with leadership guides us to a second inquiry in an internal direction about our community. Private volunteer initiative and association are used to organize our community activities in North America. This works to give us outstanding beginnings. As our communities develop and grow, how should we plan beyond this initial scale?

Pro or con: professionalizing our internal not- for-profit leaders and workers

We know that our communities need to communicate, coordinate activities, protect and grow their finances, utilize the capacities of community workers, work transparently, and avoid needless enmity.

We also know that our most careful and thoughtful formal organizational structures face implementation challenges. National office facilities and staff are an explicit acknowledged need at FEZANA and our most engaged leaders can be encouraged to move forward vigorously in all they may be doing.

We know too that our North American communities must prepare themselves for an increase in scale as generations develop in this new land, as the external culture draws towards us, and as globalization or shifting geo-politics open new opportunities here for people from other lands and in other lands.

These factors make it important for the coming youth generation, soon main leaders of the North American Zarathushtrian community, to consider resources and means used by other not-for-profit groups which Zarathushtrians have not fully used, asking if and when these become appropriate for our community.

“...when the president of the United States is a Zarathushtrian, will the world find that *Asha* and Truth, with associated virtues of forthrightness, non-duplicity, and openness, are no longer a suspect part of political life but instead their vital and energizing core?”

Would it be an advantage to the North American Zarathushtrian community, FEZANA, and future FEZANA youth leadership to build relations in the non-profit sector? Do other philanthropic organizations use means that could help us or that we should emulate? If a skilled philanthropist such as Claude Rosenberg of *Newtithing.org* made a professional appraisal of the not-for-profit aptitude of our community, what kinds of things may he ask and what may he recommend?

Would non-profit management consultation enable significant development and protect us from the strife that arises by our own insularity? Could we use external non-profit management for operational functions and procedures, looking to advanced strategic input as appropriate relationships develop over time? How indeed do we build and enhance the transparency of our organizations and protect sensitive parties? How do we keep the tradition and spirit of volunteerism while professionalizing and scaling our operations?

We should weigh such pros and cons, learning from others in the North American not-for-profit sector for our community's internal organizational strength.

Insights on Zarathushtrian youth leadership

Thinking about leadership is something each Zarathushtrian can do and in which we can value one another. While so many of the youth (and the youth-favoring) are engaged in remarkable activity, we grasp hold of the insights of a few parties on the topic of leadership. We survey **Jim Engineer**, a Zarathushtrian youth from Chicago, **Xerxes Wania**, a pro-youth Canadian showing real acumen in business leadership, and **Mehrdad Banki**, dedicated to bringing together business and community. Using a simple questionnaire to provoke their reflection, we explored their outlook on leadership. We summarize their contribution and give the same questionnaire [see page 58] for you to develop ideas on the topic of Zarathushtrian youth leadership with parties you know.

Jim Engineer has been actively involved in the development of our North American Zarathushtrian infrastructure for more than ten years. In 1999, Jim started his own public relations consulting practice, **e-Rainmaker.com**, focused on promoting emerging companies in the information security industry. Contact Jim at jim.engineer@e-rainmaker.com.



Founder and principal of the growing high-tech public relations firm, **e-Rainmaker.com**, Jim Engineer knows that a crucial step for the youth is in cultivating info-structures for communication. Information tools, such as e-groups, assist in pro-



Armaity Homavazir [far right] runs the popular “Camp Pardis” summer camp in Toronto.

gramming and event coordination. Jim finds that role models we aspire to be like in the community help us learn about leadership. The strongest aspects of leadership are its capacity to empower people and knowing when to step aside. It is important to start people in an activity, to teach them something, and to allow others the space to assume management of activity themselves. Jim says we have a great deal of change to handle and must be empowered for managing change. Without leadership and organization, Jim believes that no Zarathushtrian community would survive and that matters would stagnate rather than thrive [2].

With e-Rainmaker.com, Jim is poised to bring a record of leadership and building communication from success within the Zarathushtrian youth into the North American culture. Hence, the strengths he has used with

us are now a contributing force in the wider North American context. Jim credits his clients’ long-term reliance on e-Rainmaker’s high-tech public relations upon the honesty and proud heritage of Zarathushtrians. Youth building activities in the community equipped Jim to take ownership of entrepreneurial risk and manage the risk in being a business owner.

Xerxes Feroze Wania



was president of inSilicon Canada and vice-president of Mixed Signal Business for inSilicon (Nasdaq: INSN) worldwide. inSilicon was purchased

by Synopsys (Nasdaq: SNPS) and Xerxes is now a director there. Prior to that, Xerxes was the founder and CEO of Xentec Inc., which was featured in the top 50 profitable Canadian start-ups for 1997-2000.

Our second profile gives us a fascinating instance of a Zarathushtrian whose initiative directly sets a remarkable course in North American culture. Ontario’s Zarathushtrian youth-favoring business leader, Xerxes Feroze Wania, is cutting a strong path. Through the 1990s, Xerxes founded Xentec Inc., specializing in semiconductor design technology and grew the company. In November 2000, inSilicon (www.insilicon.com) acquired Xentec. The acquisition positioned Xentec’s, (now inSilicon’s), twenty-seven person, highly-skilled engineering and technology team as the driving force for expansion into the communications mixed-signal market. Xerxes, President and CEO of Xentec, now serves as president of inSilicon Canada. *ProfitGuide.com* ranked inSilicon among “Canada’s Hottest

[2] As we talked, three people Jim credited in their work for Zarathushtrians included **Mazda Antia** (“he knows everyone and does whatever it takes for them”), **Rohinton Rivetna** (for phenomenal efficacy in the physical and social building of a community) and **Armaity Homavazir** who runs summer camps in Toronto run “all day and every day” [see photo above].

Startups for 2001” and says inSilicon’s best advice is to “be very open with customers and employees”. Recently, inSilicon has been acquired by Synopsis for \$69 million. Xerxes acts as a director for Business Development for a growing office.

“Your business has a great chance of doing well as long as you set your goal and have a strategy to achieve it.”

Xerxes promotes Toronto’s chapter of the World Zarathushtrian Chamber of Commerce (WZCC). He finds that leadership is innate in people rather than (merely) learned. In his view, “Zarathushtrians don’t lack entrepreneurship, but leadership (a subtle difference)” and this explains why fewer are leading companies than could be. As Xerxes says, “In my mind leadership is vision. A short sighted person cannot be a leader. Leadership is also about direction, quick decision making (right and wrong can matter less when the worst thing you can do is to drag along a decision and have an opportunity pass by you), courage, and empowerment. The worst thing you can do to your employees is not to empower them.”

Xerxes explains, “Some of the leadership examples I have faced were during my boy-scout days and I would say that a captain of any team (soccer, cricket, etc.) faces similar issues as presidents and CEOs of today. The consequences may be different, but in both cases you need quick decisions, team building (empowerment is part of team building) and courage. If a youth is making decisions it is a good sign for his or her being a leader.

“Zarathushtrian families tend to be overly protective of their youth and don’t give them opportunities to

make decisions on a day to day basis. We need to let them make decisions, wrong or right. One of the biggest reasons for my success is that I am a person who believes in the Nike motto ... ‘Just do it’. People are too scared to make decisions since they are scared of failure.”

Xerxes continues, “I am very much in my comfort zone making various decisions. I took a lot of risks when I first started but I don’t think I lost too much sleep over any of the decisions that I made. Don’t get me wrong, I will make calculated decisions, not flip a coin. As I look back, it seemed to be a lot of hard work but I know at the time I thought it was interesting and fun.

“Your business has a great chance of doing well as long as you set your goal and have a strategy to achieve it. Along the way there are ups and downs. The ups make you feel good about yourself and the downs are a vehicle of learning and maturing.”

Mehrdad Banki *who resides in San Diego, grew up in Tehran, where he attended the Alborz High School. After graduating with a BS in computer engineering from the University of*



California San Diego, he worked for four years at Hewlett Packard and then started his own software company in Colorado.

Mehrdad Banki is currently starting a new Internet business and relying on Zarathushtrian engineering, marketing and other resources for the business. He sees that common goals in business and among Zarathushtrians bring the community closer together.

Mehrdad was born in Iran into a priestly family. He enjoyed the *sedreh pushi* at the age of twelve. Since then he has been inclined towards business with the ambition of running businesses together with

Zarathushtrian people. Mehrdad says, “I want to help create wealth and strength within our people – knowledgeable people. I came to US before the Iranian revolution. Like every other immigrant, I have been working hard in this country to survive. I am a proud American Zarathushtrian and I want my children and their children to bear the torch of our religion and enlighten the world.”

Mehrdad sees that the best paths for youth leadership depend upon involving them with strengthening our religion and culture across all borders. He says,

“... The youth [should know] the elements of our religion and culture, and ... the importance of leadership in keeping our religion current with the times. As well, the youth should know historical facts, the tough and difficult times our forefathers have had, and how our forefathers strived to bring us to this point.

“Leadership requires good understanding of the surroundings and the atmosphere in which we are all living. ... A true leader builds on unbiased information. ... Cyrus the Great was a true leader. Bush’s message on the floor of Congress after the September 11 attacks showed leadership! If our seniors inspire the message about love for the community and its people, looking out for those who are weaker ... and work together with one another, then we have good seeds for leadership. The time is now to bring us closer together and strengthen our beliefs – Show me the way!”

Questionnaire - Youth leadership and Zarathushtrianism

As you see, the great spirit of the North American Zarathushtrian Youth is available for leading and for developing leadership by action and reflection. Our simple questionnaire

[Continued on page 60]

Because Zarathushtrians value Truth, we are given by that value, an education for leadership. Leaders in all walks of life can set a standard and implement a vision by honoring Truth.

Independently of our individual perspectives about the war on terror, Donald Rumsfeld, America's Secretary of Defense, provides a case study on the social role of Truth in North American society in one of civilization's most embattled moments. A Zarathushtrian cannot help but wonder if this leader would find inspiration in Zarathushtra's view that Truth be upheld.

This case study on the social role of Truth arises in the context of the war effort. It is useful to first understand basic themes regarding morality and war as we pursue this case study. When it comes to war, one must contend with the *rules of war* and also the *rules in war* [1]. The first matter is about reasons *for war* – *the cause of war, whether and how war is justified*. The second matter deals with *what is permitted while at war or in war* – for example, the idea that civilians are not a legitimate target in a battle is a rule we accept in prosecuting a war (and also has implications for “of war” issues ...).

War is the ultimate expression of human conflict. As such, discussions of the morality of war can be felt to be perplexing. Actually, whether there are indeed rules in war can be fraught. It is said, in war, “Anything goes”. That is, as the ultimate expression of human conflict, war exceeds assessments of rightness and wrongness; thus, there are no rules in war. The conclusion from this line of thought would be that war is about lawlessness writ large.

However, we do accept rules in war and think some things are beyond the pale of any legitimate political or other grievance. There are numerous examples and our governments see

extending the vision in a post september-11 world

QUESTIONS FOR RUMSFELD

As bearers of Zarathushtra's vision in a post September-11 world, we must understand the value we offer in a fraught world context and know how to do our bit of what is positive in the present making of the world. We present a case-study arising from the post September-11 context and express our hopes for the contribution of Zarathushtra's vision in a future harmonious geo-political terrain.

terrorist action itself as violating legitimate warfare. The rules in war apply not only to individuals, but to governments and other social entities.

Whether we believe him (or the Washington administration) or agree with current policies, Rumsfeld set a vital standard at the beginning of the war on terror in saying that his office would only deal in truth. If there were not rules in war, it would be permissible for a government to use any means, including lying, propaganda and sabotage, to persecute war. Rumsfeld claimed the opposite terrain, a highly principled stand, to operate ‘truthfully’.

In the Zarathushtrian tradition, Truth is the highest virtue [2]. To claim it as the highest entails that other virtue derives from it [3]. This derivative efficacy of truth has many implications for a social order.

Rumsfeld's record with the press is indicative of what must be done if a value is set on truth. For example, he declines to answer a question if he cannot answer truthfully. As another derivative implication, he closed an

office (The Office of Strategic Initiatives) rather than be mistaken as endorsing any legitimacy to lying. The derivative effect of truth may impact the course of war at strategic and operational levels; and may provide indictment of wider political processes where overt clarity cannot be viable.

Adhering to truth in war or otherwise can be a challenge. Difficult questions arise about the permissibility of lying when doing otherwise causes (or allows) harm. War especially makes for many questions and cases on this concern. Life does place us in compromising situations where it can seem not telling the truth seems the thing to do rather than cause harm. Life can present us with a dilemma. Sometimes one has to choose between two principles or values (tell a lie or do harm) and cannot hope for perfection.

Also, Truth is a virtue of moderation: To tell the truth means avoiding the extremes of timidity and brashness [4]. Excessive stridence, gracelessness in revealing truth, decisive confrontation, can abuse truth.

Questionnaire ...

[Continued from page 58]

is a small tool to assist readers' reflection and to develop profiles of the leadership in those around you.

- (1) What are the best ways for establishing youth leadership and youth involvement in community activities? Can youth activity help establish seminars and forums for leadership?
- (2) Can you tell us what you'd say leadership is, or give us input or an insight about leadership?
- (3) What is special about the two things together, leadership and Zarathushtrianism?
- (4) Would you have an example of a youth exhibiting leadership in a challenging situation?
- (5) What do you think is important for us to ask, see, or know about the youth and leadership?

Get together, print out the questionnaire and leave plenty of white space, brainstorm with each other and build our future! ■



*Rather than love, than money,
than fame, give me truth.*

- Henry David Thoreau

Truth is tough.

- Oliver Wendell Holmes

Who dares

*To say that he alone
Has found the truth.*

- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

*Most of the change
we see in life,
Is due to truths being
in and out of favor.*

- Robert Frost

***Truth is what stands the
test of experience.***

- Albert Einstein.

***When in doubt
Tell the truth.***

- Mark Twain

Rumsfeld set a remarkable standard [5]. His popular acclaim with people and press may reveal how hungry people are for an advocate for truth. Indeed, Rumsfeld's leadership of the war effort and his department is not simply functional. Rather, he places the crucial value front and center of what he's doing, and re-makes society by reference to the value.

Questions for Rumsfeld

To better understand Rumsfeld's valuing of Truth, where his inspiration for it springs, and whether he knows or appreciates the Zarathushtrian position on truth, we are inquiring as to interviewing him and have been invited to attend his press briefings with our inquiries. What would we wish to know in a one-on-one discursive format and where can the conversation lead? Demonstrating one Zarathushtrian's outlook that a Zarathushtrian ethic and vision contribute to the forefront of the world circumstances and our North American society, our questions in this case study would include these:

- (1) Mr. Rumsfeld, how long have you been of the view that the Department of Defense needs to adhere to the truth? Were you offering a singu-

[1] Readers may wish to refer to Michael Walzer's *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*, Basic Books, April 1992 as one primer on the topic of the morality of war.

[2] See *The Love of Truth in Ancient Iran*, Professor Stanley Insler, Vohuman.org, Fall 2000 for a fuller elaboration, *The Vision of Zarathushtra*, Professor Kaikhosrov D. Irani, Vohuman.org, Fall 2000, and *The Freedom to Choose and the Moral Responsibility to Make the Right Choice*, Dr. Mehrborzin Soroushian, <http://www.vohuman.org>, Fall 2000, page 1.

[3] The virtues of truth, goodness and beauty deriving from the ancient Greek tradition are also sometimes thought to cohere into a whole whereby all are encompassed in the first virtue (of truth).

[4] This moderate aspect is not unique to the virtue of truth. The Aristotelian moral outlook, pre-eminent in offering a virtue conception of moral life, construes all the virtues as moderations between opposing extremes. Courage, for example, lies between the cowardly and the rash.

[5] Earlier, we qualified veraciousness regarding Rumsfeld and truth, but in this paragraph we take his advocacy for truth at its face value.

[6] *A Healing Vision*, Vohuman.org.

[7] Sakhai, Kambiz, *Communicative Reason and Medieval Iranian Thought*, ISBN 1-58820-502-9, 2000.

lar position or continuing a tradition that existed before your leadership?

- (2) How does your adherence to truth derivatively impact other of the Department's policies?
- (3) How does your adherence to truth impact your leadership and its effects at the Department?
- (4) Do you see your position on truth affecting the allies and enemies to a good effect?
- (5) From what spiritual and moral sources does your position on truth spring?
- (6) Are you aware of the Zarathushtrian view that Truth is the highest virtue?
- (7) What challenges exist in adhering to truth in the face of effectively confronting the enemy? Can deception be a proper tool of war or only a second-course measure of poorer resort?
- (8) After the war on terror, do you think that a strong value will be placed on truth in the new world order?
- (9) Does truth straddle both – things as they are and also things as we are committed to making them?
- (10) What examples of truth and truthfulness have given you inspiration in life?

Zarathushtra's vision in the geo-politics of the future

Each of us knows Zarathushtrians who have and who will live through moments of extreme political and social upheaval. The challenge encountered in life through its changes often strengthens the resolve and commitment of a person. Indeed on the spiritual score, the capacity to retain hope and not succumb to despair mark a distinct outlook by which we can keep our good minds active and purposive towards bettering the world.

We meant to discuss what a future North American Xerxes or Shirin might be like or what they may do, and what it should mean to us now if in fifty years new Zarathushtrians, alike and unlike us, are born.

We find ourselves faced with shifting global geo-politics. At the moment of our discussion, the US and UN are discussing, likely preparing, to use military means to remove a dictator from power. Is an ancient, reflective religion as ours helpful in this immediacy? How do we search for *Asha* or cultivate *Vohu Manah* when war erupts? What does our Post September-11 situation portend for the new Zarathushtrians born fifty years from now? Should we have hope for an ultimate world harmony?

Consider the inspiration Timothy R. Smith [6] finds in Zarathushtra's vision, "Terrorism is not alone in its quest for gain at the expense of others. Many other interests have plans to add more for their members at great expense to others ... Left unbridled, entire governments, nations, and communities are prone to do the same in a nightmare of contradictions. ... the entire world has a lot of building and rebuilding to do. ... Order will someday be restored, justice will prevail, and we will be happy again.

"The souls lost on the tragic day of September 11th and since were not

lost in vain. Rather, new beginnings have been catalyzed for a fresh, new world. ... let us listen to the soul of Mother Earth. For, in spite of our dreadful failings of the past, we have every reason to be cheerful and optimistic about the future to come."

No less can be expected from the religion of a pre-eminent singular type "... revolutionary, emancipa-

tory, and life-oriented", promoting "life affirming and rational conduct", from a religion working for "... a radical transformation of reality" towards an ideal and actual world of harmony and happiness. The Xerxes, Shirin and Spithrodates of the future with their kindred fellows of the human family will inherit this world of shining hope. ■

Concluding remarks

Guest editors Mehrborzin Soroushian and Natalie Vania

Zarathushtra's vision being a fusion of a world view and a way of life requires learned contemplation and action. Educating and bettering ourselves as a life-long commitment is required for realizing *vohuman* and *Armaity* (rightmindedness) in practice and for comprehending *Asha*.

Human societies so far evolved to their present state are in need of an enlightened world-view that can move them beyond their present point. Zarathushtra's world-view, emphasizing self-enlightenment, moral choice, personal responsibility, environmental care is best suited to be the vision that can help the evolution of humanity's morality beyond this point.

To be agent of change and refreshment of life requires that we constantly renew ourselves. In that context, the question of adherence to established traditions and the need to embrace change must be considered. The gauge for the value proposition of any tradition or religion should be how it helps us live more effective and productive lives and become better humans [1]. If tradition becomes only the end in itself, that could easily degenerate into a cause for regression. Well-rounded education and a Gathic orientation are the key to a discerning mind capable of differentiating the subtleness involved in going forward.

One tradition worth cherishing, attributable to Zarathushtra, is the relentless search for truth and instilling the righteous order. As such we cannot package ideas under the name of Zarathushtrianism if such ideas are at variance with the Gathic vision. We need to understand that beliefs in such things as invisible people, the so-called spiritually advanced, intermediaries and *gurus*, notion of having to be born into a religion (rather than individual's freedom of choice in such matter) all fly in the face of the Gathic vision. Allowing concepts such as *karma* and the caste-class mindset define our perception of the Zarathushtrian religion is in complete opposition to Gathic thought.

Zarathushtrian education in the Gathic vision can help us realize a more ideal existence and bring about renewal of creation, *frashokereti*. ■

[1] Religion can never be a substitute for a happy and fulfilled life. Wrapping oneself in the banner of religion and acting obnoxiously towards others is a clear sign of a life that did not measure up.

humanitarianism & gathic education

a call to zarathushti youth

By Susan Karani

The real triumph of any religion comes from an ardent commitment to faith and education. What our faith needs today is fiery enthusiasm: the flame of our afargan will fade if our youth do not kindle it.

HUMANITARIANISM AND GATHIC PHILOSOPHY

*“Happiness comes to those who
bestow happiness upon others.”*

[Ys. 43.1]

Through Zarathushti philosophy, it is implied that all Zarathushtis must participate in humanitarianism at some level. The core of our religion emphasizes humanism, which is chiefly concerned with the interests, values and potential of all human beings, and hence requires our societal involvement as humanists and as humanitarians in putting our beliefs as humanists into practice. Our religion is based on a philosophy that expects the conversion of Zarathushti theory into practice, e.g. the metamorphosis of humanism as a notion into humanitarian action.

Our religion is highly individualistic, rendering us so successful, yet also setting us apart from others. As successful individuals, we are also—or else must be—participatory individual members of a community; for we are all part of a religion that teaches *Asha* and *Vohu Manah*, which lead us in a lifelong quest for the love and acceptance of all Zarathushtis—and of all people. As individualists, our personal or private views often conflict with other members of our religious community; we need to coalesce this individualism as a collective society, with *one* voice (not

many), that can answer to other religious communities in the world. Our religion is both powerful and important; it is the oldest of all monotheistic religions and, influential and authoritative in its practical and succinct philosophy, is an essential model for some of the most widely-practiced Western religions in the world.

As members of an ancient faith, we have a unique duty to our history, our legacy and our ancestors, far different from the duties of our Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu neighbors, and others. Because we are a small, very old religion, we must strive and struggle more vigorously than other religious communities to impress ourselves with the importance of our own ancient beliefs, the instruction and pedagogy of Zarathushtra’s teachings, and an understanding of how we as Zarathushtis fit into the context of international society, as an open community and by revisiting our religion.

In so doing, we—all of us—need to re-examine the Gathas, for they are our tenets – they are what essentially *construct* our creed, and they are what define us as Zarathushtis. Translations of our core religious texts in our native languages should be available (within arm’s reach) to all Zarathushtis. Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Baha’is, Buddhists and other religious peoples all have this

advantage which we do not match. Few copies of the Gathas are scattered at libraries around the world; as our basic religious documents, we need the Gathas readily accessible in printed form at our temples and for home use. In an effort to reeducate ourselves about our religion, I feel this is the most vital of our concerns and must be taken up as an urgent project.

‘ZARATHUSHTI YOUTH FOR INDIAN YOUTH’

*“Let us reverently give an offering to
Thee, Lord, and to truth, all of us
creatures under Thy rule whom one
has nourished with good thinking.
Indeed let salvation be granted to
the beneficent man by all those
among your kind.”*

[Ys. 34.3]

Within the Zarathushti community there is a great concern for youth, and there is already quite a bit of Zarathushti involvement in children’s rights issues in India. As briefly mentioned in the article “The Annual United Nations DPI/NGO Conference,” [see page 15] a project centered on children’s rights in India would fall well under the realm of Zarathushti thought, as well as under the mandate of the UN.

My idea is for a program with the proposed title, “Zarathushti Youth for Indian Youth,” which would enable North American and other

Zarathushti youth to participate in humanitarian efforts and aid victims in India of their own age group. The program is also integrative in nature; as Zarathushtis living amongst other peoples in many different parts of the world, we must be concerned not only for members of our own faith and culture, but also for others who share our sense of community and mother countries.

FEZANA has teamed up with Dr. Roda Patel (of Northbrook, IL) at the Children's Program at the Gram Seva Trust hospital in Kharel, Gujarat, to send a couple of youth interns to that organization for a humanitarian-focused internship. This program will in time, branch out to other organizations in India, focusing on humanitarian and human rights issues. At the core of this idea is to promote Zarathushti humanitarianism on a wider scale, drawing Zarathushti youth involvement into India youth (or children's) rights.

Current Zarathushti involvement in this children's issues area (and conveniently *in* India) ranges from putting into practice the child's right to health and well-being at the Gujarat-based *Gram Seva* children's program led by Dr. Roda Patel of Northbrook, Illinois, to children's legal rights involving AIDS and against abuse advocated by the prominent Mumbai-based human rights lawyer, Adv. Maharukh Adenwalla at the India Centre for Human Rights and Law, to providing attention to social, economic and other abuse and poverty issues facing street children.

The very issues associated with these programs and the already-active Zarathushti involvement in them also fall perfectly in line with United Nations Children's Fund's (UNICEF) priorities: eliminating poverty and malnutrition in children, fighting HIV/AIDS in youth, and protecting children from violence, exploitation and abuse. I have worked briefly in this field with Adv.

Adenwalla on child sexual abuse and Indian legislation in Mumbai; I would be willing to help provide any service that I can render to get this program on its feet, and I am also willing to commit time to organizational duties necessary for the program's initiation.

“ The ideas I have presented above cannot be passively approached. A few people cannot carry these ideas off alone; *real* youth interest and involvement is needed on a humanitarian level. ”

HUMANITARIANISM AND GETTING ZARATHUSHTI YOUTH INVOLVED

*“Lord, let wisdom come in
the company of truth across
the earth!” [Ys. 50.5]*

Our faith is as important in the current era as it was in ancient times, if not more so now. Americans and the world need the benefits that Zarathushtis can provide; we are resourceful through our various successes, we are often philanthropic towards members of our community, and we are courageous, having fled religious persecution in Iran over 1,300 years ago. But we need to be more in terms of spiritualists and activists.

As spiritualists, we need to “put truth to power”: our philosophy needs to speak within ourselves, and we need to feel impressed by the power of Ahura Mazda and our beliefs. In short, we need to feel motivated enough to let our religious beliefs seep into our identities and our daily lives. As activists, we need to allow our individual spiritualism to speak through self-motivated behavior. The ideas I have presented above cannot be passively approached. A few people cannot carry these ideas off alone; *real* youth interest and involvement is needed on a humanitarian level.

We are needed now more than ever to help our neighbors—the neighbors

that Zarathushtra once distinguished as our friends, those of different creeds and different cultures—those that welcomed us into their homelands as refugees and immigrants: the Indians, the Americans, the Australians, the East Africans, the British and other Europeans, etc. Zarathushti philosophy is integrative; and so must we be as Zarathushtis. As elders and *especially as youth*, we must increasingly integrate our religious philosophy into our daily lives and our prayer; ritual and custom must remain secondary only to that. Again, I want to reemphasize the importance

of the Gathas, for without avid attention to them, our religion loses its very meaning. Our humanism must shine to ourselves, to each other, and to the world, or we are not Zarathushtis of the type initially intended by our prophet and by Ahura Mazda. *Asha* is righteousness, *Vohu Manah* is the Benevolent Mentality and *Spenta Armaiti* is Beneficence Incarnate – the source of our humanism, which must guide us all. “I wish enduring strength to come, in order to uphold the truth” [Ys. 43.1]. My prayer for the Zarathushti youth community is that we have the wisdom and energy to give fire and life to Zarathushtra's meanings and our own beliefs in the form of humanitarian action. ■

Susan Karani is currently pursuing a master's degree in Human



Rights Studies at Columbia University in New York City. She has been active in various humanitarian efforts in India, the

United States and France. Susan may be contacted at karani_suzie@yahoo.com.



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: droger-sor@msn.com.

School Fees and Poor Fund

"I am content with what I have, little be it or much
And Lord contentment still I crave, because thou savest such."

-Author Unknown

One of the most attractive aspects of the teachings of our Zarathushti din is moderation. Taking extreme views on any aspect of life was not ever taught to us. Instead, we were taught to choose wisely, and then blend the spiritual with the material and to enjoy life to its fullest potential without forgetting where it all came from.

One of the oft-quoted expressions in our home was "*pehle pate noo, pachi seth-noo*"; roughly translated from Gujarati, "take care of your own before you take care of others," or "charity begins at home."

I remember well the words from one of my aunts – "We are one of the most charitable and giving people in India. There always seems to be a guaranteed annual catastrophe like floods or draught; and guess who is

the first to respond with financial assistance – our Parsi charities!"

In my alma mater, Girton High School, this virtue was practiced at the beginning of every month when we paid our school fees. "Anything for the Poor Fund?", our class teacher would ask as we handed in a few rupee notes. The girls, ranging from extreme poverty to moderate middle class would proudly plunk down anything from a mere 25 paisa to a couple of rupees. No matter what the amount, it was always a personal sacrifice on the part of the parents and all the children were aware of that hardship.

None of the girls thought any less of those who had nothing or hardly anything to contribute to the "Poor Fund", nor did we hold the rich contributors in any special awe. The only

feeling as we walked away from this monthly ritual, was that we had done something special for our poorer Parsi brethren.

We were all often reminded of one of the compliments that the British had paid our Parsi community, "Parsi, thy name is Charity." To our young and impressionable minds, at the beginning of each month it felt good to live up to this reputation of generosity.

I knew this sense of duty toward our fellow humans, Parsi or otherwise, had been taught well to our children by example and 'osmosis', when one of our daughters asked me to double her lunch allowance for a band trip. "It's for so and so – her parents are too poor to give her any lunch money for the trip, and she cannot go hungry." Such requests to help others, and other charitable actions on my daughters' part have continued throughout the years.

Maybe in this culture at this time, it might not be politically appropriate to call this a "Poor Fund", but I know that such small, life-lessons, taught a long time ago, have never been forgotten, nor their power diminished. For impressionable young girls like us, the temptation to buy a lollipop or *channa-sing* with that 25 or 50 paisa piece was always there; but that wonderful prayer-expression of ours – *Humata, Hukhta, Huvaresha* – Good thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds, was never too far from our consciousness and kept us on the straight and narrow. ■



***In faith and hope
The world
Will disagree.
But all mankind's
concern is
charity.***

Essay on Man
Alexander Pope
(1688-1744)

Tea without Biscuits

Behram Contractor ("Busybee") was one of India's premier columnists, known for his quintessential wit, humor and insight, that were superbly manifested, in his column "Round and About" that debuted in 1966. On my visits to Bombay, during late afternoon tea time, my brother would thrust the *Afternoon Dispatch and Courier* at me. "You must read Busybee. Without him, this paper is nothing, it's like tea without fresh, crisp biscuits."

One of my favorite Busybee columns is reproduced below.

I wonder how my brother is coping with his afternoon Busybee-less tea? I am sure he is not the only Bombayite sipping his tea without "fresh, crisp biscuits". [Read Mr. Contractor's eulogy in *FEZANA Journal*, Summer 2001, p. 85].

So enjoy this deliciously, hilarious biscuit, as you sip your afternoon brew.
- Dinaz Rogers

The first Parsis I knew were statues. There were scores of them, all over Bombay (now Mumbai), most of them wearing glasses: Dadabhoy Naoroji, Pherozeshah Mehta, Jamshedji Tata, Cowasjee Jehangir, Bomanji Petit, the Khada (standing) Parsi at Byculla Bridge. Later, I met other Parsis, at the Central Bank, Cusrow Baug, Godrej Company (find me a Parsi house and I will show you a Godrej steel cupboard in it), Colaba Agiary, Bombay House, piano recitals by Austrian pianists at the NCPA, Ripon Club.

Most of the Parsis I know are Bombay Parsis, the older ones born at Dr. Temulji's lying-in hospital for Parsi ladies, the younger ones delivered by Dr. Rusi Soonawala (aapro Rusi). But there are also Delhi Par-

My mother used to say...

"The old forget. The young don't know." - Japanese proverb

"Ek kartaa be bhalaa"

Instead of one two are better. Two heads (hands) are better than one.

"Tarat daan, mahaa poon"

Immediate charity, great(er) the reward. The rewards of anything given away to others, without any selfish motives of a personal payback, are many.

"Daan kartaa dayaa bhali"

More than charity, kindness is better. An offer of kindness, in certain circumstances is better than an offer of wealth.

"Nahi bolyaa naa nav goon"

There are nine qualities in not saying anything. Nine qualities are attached to silence is golden. At times keeping your mouth shut has its own rewards.

"Kamlaa ne ankh saoo piloo dekhaaye"

The jaundiced eye sees everything yellow. The biased mind may see things distorted. The perceptions and opinions of a prejudiced mind are not accurate.

"Garaje ghadheraane baap kahevo pade"

When in a dilemma, one might need to call even a donkey, one's father. Necessity might force one to call a silly person "father."

"Gher, gher maati naa choolaa"

House after house, the cooking stoves are made of mud. In every house, every family, every nation, every system thought to be perfect, has some kind of defect. What seems to be perfect on the outside has some hidden flaws.

"Dookh vinaa sookh nahi"

Without pain, there can be no happiness. There can be no gain without pain.

"Jungle maa mungle"

A festival in the forest. Remark made towards someone who shows delight in someone else's misfortune.

"Baare divus kai sarkhaa jayye?"

Can all twelve days remain the same? Can all the days of our lives be full of joy? In every life a little rain must and will fall. Life is full of ups and downs.

"Dhiraj naa phal mitthaa"

The fruits of patience are sweet. Patience has many virtues. All things come to those who wait.

"Naadaan nee dosti, ney jaan no jokham"

Friendship with the inexperienced might bring jeopardy to your life. Blind reliance on the inexperienced can be hazardous.

"Boley teynaa bor vechaaye"

One who talks about his bor (small fruit with stone) is able to sell them. The person who speaks out, gets things done.

"Utaavaley, aambaa nahi paakey"

Mangoes do not ripen in a hurry. Some things have to take their course. Haste makes waste.

[Submitted by **Sam Kerr**, a consultant surgeon and lecturer in Sydney, Australia. He initiated the formation (in 1969) and was founder member of the Australian Zoroastrian Association of NSW. Author and lecturer on the religion of Zarathushtra, he has well over 200 publications.]

sis, Calcutta Parsis, Toronto Parsis, one or two Mhow Parsis, Karachi Avaris, etc. They are spread all over the world. Whoever says that the Parsis are a dying community does not know what he is talking about!

The Delhi Parsis are mainly Bombay Parsis now settled in Delhi, such as Soli Sorabjee and Fali Nariman. The Bombay Parsis themselves may be divided into further categories: there are Colaba Parsis, Tardeo Parsis and Dadar Parsi Colony Parsis. The Colaba Parsis work in advertising agencies, act in Hosi Vasunia's plays and have relations in Toronto. The Tardeo Parsis would like to be Colaba Parsis. The Dadar Parsi Colony Parsis are Dadar Parsi Colony Parsis.

Their language is Gujarati, with a generous mixture of English or English with a generous mixture of Gujarati. Some people say that they

borrowed the language from the Gujaratis, others that the Gujaratis learnt it from them. I have not resolved that point yet. But the Parsis have certain Gujarati words that are exclusive to their language.

Putting aside the abuse words, I refer you to '*phregat*'. It is what a Parsi does when he returns home after a hard day at the office. He has a wash (with Godrej or Tata soap), removes his clothes, gets into a 'sadra' and 'lengha' and settles down in the easy chair with his legs stretched along its extended arms, sipping *phudina* tea. That is being '*phregat*', changing into *sadra-lengha* and relaxing. Say the word slowly and gently extend it: '*phre-gaaat*'.

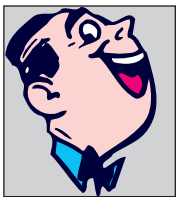
There are several other such words and phrases ('*kit-pit bandh ker*', '*dahi na kar*', '*doodh pau*'). *Doodh pau* is a somewhat goody-goody person, a bit

of a sissy. I invite the members of the community to add to my collection.

That takes care of the language, though most of them use English. They are very fond of things English and particularly the English royalty ... When I first visited London, a Parsi friend took me to see Buckingham Palace - from outside naturally, in those days they did not issue tickets to wander around the palace. We stood at the gates, he pointed at the palace, and said, "*Aapri rani no mehel*".

A lot of things are *aapri* or *aapro* or *aapru*. For instance: "*aapro Zubin Mehta, kevoo majehnu conduct karech*". *Aapro* Sam Maneckshaw. *Aapri* Sooni Taraporevala ... *Aapri* Princess Street ni Parsi Dairy Farm, *aapri* Meher Moos, world traveller, *aaproo* Taj, *choro Oberoi*, and *aaproo* Baliwala & Homi, Bombay's opticians

[Continued on page 68]



Laugh and be Merry

By Jamshed Udvadia



A woman and a man are involved in a car accident; it's a bad one. Amazingly neither one is hurt. As they survey the damage, the woman says, "Wow, our cars are in bad shape but we're unhurt. This must be a sign from God that we should meet and be friends". The woman is good-looking, so the man readily agrees with her.

"Here's another miracle," the woman continued. "The contents of my grocery bag spilled to the floor but this bottle of cognac didn't break. Let us drink to our good fortune." She opens the bottle and hands it to him. Not willing to spoil this promising friendship, the man takes a swallow and hands it back to her. The woman takes the bottle and immediately puts the cap back on, and hands it back to the man.

"Aren't you having any," he asks. "No" she replies, "I think I'll just wait for the police."

After the September 11, 2001 attack, a Bible teacher decided to start a class for children to teach them tolerance for differing cultures and religions. She opened with an attention grabber.

"Who was the first person to preach peace and goodwill to all? I have a candy bar for the first correct answer."

"Mohammed" said a Muslim boy.

"Gautam Buddh" said a Buddhist girl.

"Jesus Christ" said a Hindu boy.

"Correct" said the teacher, ignoring the mispronunciation and handing him the candy bar.

Later his friend asked him "I am surprised that you did not say Rama".

"Oh, I know it is Rama" said the boy, "but as my father say: "Bijness is bijness".

"Laugh and be Merry" (from the title of a poem by John Masefield) is compiled from various public sources as also personal experiences and stories submitted by our subscribers and others. ■



King Jamshid

[PICTURE COURTESY "SHAH NAMEH OF FIRDAOSI BY DR. BAHMAN SOHRAB SURTI]

SUNDAY STORIES

2. King Jamshid

By Shazneen Rabadi Gandhi

Here is the next installment in our series of stories from the Shah Nameh. I continue to instill these stories with the spirited dialogue with which our neighbor, old Mr. Dhunjishah related them to my friends and me, when we were growing up. We hope you enjoy sharing these stories with your children, for they have been written with them in mind.

In all the history of the world there had never been a king as great as Jamshid, who was crowned, with great splendor, after Tehmure died. Ahura Mazda had bestowed on Jamshid a divine *farr* more splendid than that of any king who went before him.

Jamshid's rise to power

Jamshid was no ordinary king. He built weapons so that his people would be safe. He organized his kingdom by dividing all the people into four large groups: the *priests* who were devoted to praising God, the *warriors* who fought any evil in the kingdom, the *farmers* who ploughed the land so there would be enough to eat, and the *craftsmen* who built beautiful and useful artifacts with their hands. He conquered many of Ahriman's demons and made them slaves so that they could work for humanity.

He mined precious stones like sapphires and rubies from the earth so that his people could wear jewelry that made them look beautiful and prosperous. Then, he created perfumes and scents that gave the kingdom a beautiful aroma.

Jamshid had a great desire to travel through the world so his craftsmen

built him strong sailboats and Jamshid sailed the world. Wherever he went people looked at him in awe, for his glory and power, through the divine *farr*, could be seen by one and all.

On the first day of the month Fravardin, the people gathered together to have a great feast in his honor. From then on, this day was celebrated every year as the festival of *Nouruz* (also called *Jamshedi Navroze* by the Parsis).

Jamshid's Pride

No one doubted Jamshid's power and glory. For three hundred years, Jamshid ruled gloriously and mankind knew neither suffering nor death. The entire world danced to pleasure's tune and God was Jamshid's guide and teacher.

After many long years, Jamshid looked around the world and saw no other human being as great as himself. Although God had taught Jamshid everything he knew, Jamshid became proud and thought he himself was God.



Welcome to



Youthfully Speaking

'the mouthpiece for the next generation'

The Smaller Picture.

By: Nikan Khatibi

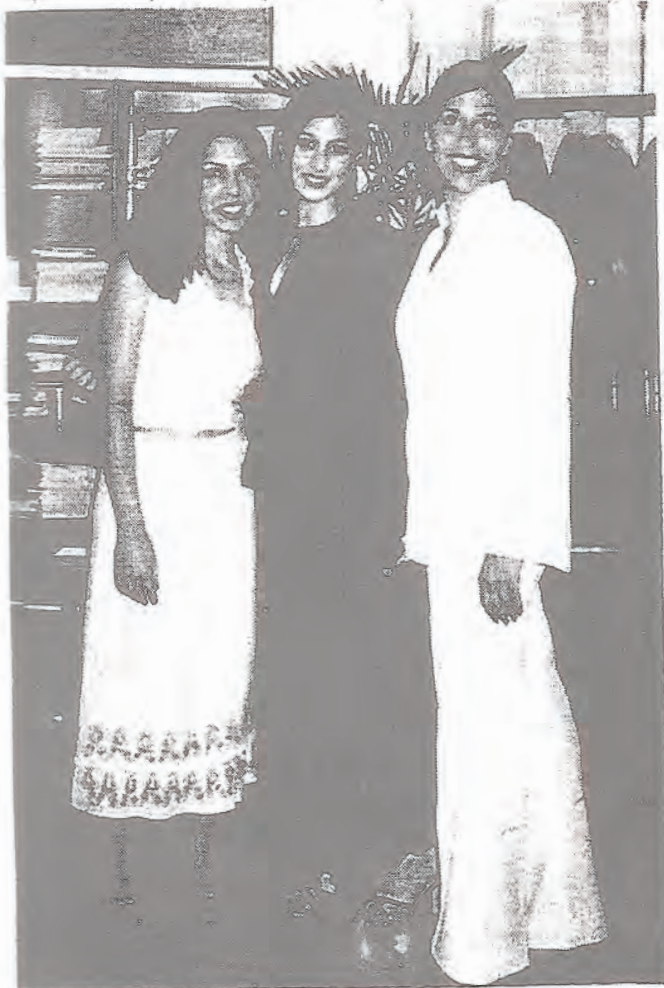
Everyone has heard the phrase, "it's the little things that count." I could not agree more. We the youth of tomorrow are growing up in a society where we must relate to two different cultural identities; one being the fact that we are Zarathushtis and the other as Americans. That's what makes us so unique: The fact that we are learning and interacting with both communities. Some people believe that we feel so much pressure and are under a great deal of stress and anguish because we are torn between two identities. Well, you know what? I love the fact that we are different and have the privilege to grow in a diverse nation. We should not simply tolerate the fact of our diversity, but celebrate it!

The fact is, we are 'citizens of the world' and must do our best to let our voices be heard. But before we can educate others, we must educate ourselves. You just can't wake up one morning and refuse to learn something new or teach another person something they did not know before hand. That's what makes life so fascinating. We are learning from each other on a daily basis, and that new ideas learned will be put into action in life. I love going to a gathering with friends or going somewhere new, where people don't know your ethnicity or really not too educated about who and where you came from. That's just a bigger reason for me to make conversation with that individual or group of individuals for that evening and share my thoughts about my culture and most important, my Zarathushti religion. That's one of the keys to be successful in life: Listening, Learning, and Educating others. I'm not an individual who can stand back and ignore the fact that someone doesn't know about my heritage. You shouldn't either.



Don't ever feel left out of a group or conversation because of who you are. Be proud of your heritage and definitely let others know where you come from. Because it is our new ideas, our different views and perspectives on life that makes this country what it is. Our ability to add flavor and spice to every city that we live and work in that makes this country a 'Melting Pot'.

All in all, the message I'm trying to get out to you, the youth of tomorrow, is enjoy being rich in culture and the fact that you have more knowledge of other cultures. This should give you the utmost reason to share your views with others and give somewhat of a history lesson to all your friends. But at the same time, be sure to respect the views of others and have the courtesy to listen to others. You'll find that truly, going the extra mile to explain your heritage to someone instead of sitting quiet will make all the difference. Educating people about our religion starts with you and me. Like I said before, "It's the small things that count."



On Saturday September 21st, ZAGNY members Jennifer Sethna, Ushtavaity Davar and Usheen Davar participated in New York's Fashion Week. The private trunk show was held at the Indian Embassy where India's top designers, Vivek Narang and Tarun Tahiliani dressed the models in their Spring 2003 fashions. As the models walked the runway, Press from various news stations and print publications were present to snap photographs, conduct interviews, and get a glimpse of the latest designs for 2003. A thanks goes out to Spenta Bharda for organizing this opportunity for our three ZAGNY members.



~ The Bigger Picture ~

By: Ushtavaity Davar



The need to succeed and accomplish our goals is prevalent amongst most of us. I don't think I have met many Zarathushtis who lack this constant drive to "be better". In every issue of this journal, there are excerpts of exemplary students and youth throughout our community. At congresses we see talents and motivation come to life. Even in my daily encounters I am constantly reminded of the "Zarathushti way of life" by those around me. However occasionally in our lives we may lose sight of what our eventual goals are and as a result are engulfed in the immediate outcome or satisfaction of our actions. Sometimes the balance between family, work, school, and social life don't always concur as harmoniously as we'd like them to. In such instances when I feel overwhelmed with my responsibilities, I start to realize the significance, and relevance of the prayers that I recite each day. For example, when I think of the Ahuna-Vairya prayer, it reminds me of the simplicity of life and why I strive to be better. Knowledge and success should not remain merely an achievement resulting in the satisfaction of one particular individual, but rather should be translated into daily life with the intentions of reaching out to those in need, or simply brightening someone's day along the path towards attaining our goals. It doesn't matter as much what you do, but how you do what you do. Keeping the meaning of this prayer in mind definitely aids me through some rough times and helps me see the bigger picture. With each action that you do for yourself, realize that there is probably something one-step further that you could do for some one else. Let's make sure we don't lose sight of what is most important and use our knowledge and talents to make sure that we've said a kind word, thought a good thought, and done a good deed.

"Youthfully Speaking" would like to hear from you! For the next issue we'd like to discuss if certain traditions should be challenged to accommodate Zarathushti culture and society as it stands today. Please submit your thoughts and views to Ushta@aol.com

~Z-Contacts~

Each year around this time prospective university bound students are consumed with applications, visiting schools, and making the most of their last few months in high school. Six years ago, I was in that same position, thinking of the future school where I would like to spend the bulk of my next four years. I was fortunate to have an older brother and sister who went through the same process a few years earlier, but there really was no one person I could talk to specifically about what I wanted to major in or the schools that I was considering. Understanding that sometimes students need more comprehensive information than can be received through a brochure or tour, I decided to contact various Z students throughout the US and Canada to see if they would like to participate as a contact person for their respective university and area of study.

The benefits of this list are two fold. The obvious, prospective students can have a contact person to ask questions to. And, two, it may help create awareness of other Zarathushti students attending the same university. This is an ongoing list, and hopefully by the next issue we can have many more participants. If you would like to be a contact for your current or past university, please let us know!

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چگونه رهبری جهانی را ایجاد نمائیم ؟

قبل از اینکه رهبری جهانی را شروع نمائیم باید رهبری را از مراکز و انجمنهای زرتشتی محلی شروع نمائیم . چرا ما (من زرتشتی) در انجمنهای موجود شرکت و فعالیت نداریم ؟ چرا ما زرتشتیان علاوه چندانی به کار مفوم اجتماعی نشان نمیدیم اما ما در گروههای خارج از دین خودمان داوطلبانه تمامی زحمات را بدوش کشیده و با خوشحالی و اختلاص همکاری با گروههای غیر زرتشتی را به رخ میگذاریم . آیا عیب و نقصی در بین ما زرتشتیان است که حاضر به همکاری با یکدیگر نیستیم ؟ چرا ما حاضر نیستیم رهبر پذیر باشیم . باید پذیرا باشیم اگر همه باهم نشینیم و کسی با کسی را به رهبری انتخاب نکنیم و توان خود را در اختیار رهبری قرار ندهیم اوضاع به همین احوال بی سروسامان خواهد ماند .

اگر کسی با کسانی آشنای اعتماد بنفس و همت دارند که مایلند خود را رهبر اعلام نمایند و قطع جملات زرتشتی گام بردارند چرا مایلید بگوئیم رهبر لازم نداریم ((مگر فلان کسی چه منعی بر من دارد تا رهبر شود)) البته خودمان هم قبول نمی کنیم که همکاری داشته و زحمات و مسئولیتها را متحمل شویم نداشتن رهبر و رهبری یک حسن و مزیت نیست بلکه برعکس نداشتن رهبر ایجاد آسیبهای جدی و تشدید بی جاسات میکند . ما زرتشتیان باید کوشش نمائیم مانند سایر ادیان و گروهها روحیه رهبری را در خود ایجاد نمائیم و کسانی را به رهبری خود بپذیریم و پلوه ای از اختیارات و توان خود را در اختیار او قرار داده تا او با قدرت ، اقتدار و توانایی بیشتر بتواند به نفع جامعه زرتشتی بهره برداری نماید .

ما باید یاد داشته باشیم کسانی که رهبری را می پذیرند بهیچ وجهی زرتشتیان اطفال کرده تا این امرت و بار سنگین را که ما بدوش آنها نهاده ایم با موفقیت تمام به مقصد برسانند . حادتها را کنار گذاشته از خرده گرفتن و دشمنی بپرهیزیم . هدف ما پیروزی دین زرتشتی است ، از رقابت نافرجام خودداری فرمائید با خرده گرفتن و دشمنی و زمین و تاختن به حرف مدعی نداریم جزه او را از میدان خارج کنیم . در حقیقت نمیخواهیم که برنده شویم بلکه میخواهیم جلوی برنده شدن رقیبان را بگیریم و این راه هرگز به نتیجه نخواهد رسید . قلب خود را جایگاه مهر اهورامزدا سازید . حادتها را کنار گذاشته دست در دست یکدیگر بگذارید تا رهبری صالح برای جامعه کوچک خود انتخاب نمائید . در آن صورت رهبری جهانی بین زرتشتیان به حقیقت خواهد پیوست .

سازماندهی و خوب به پیش بردن آرمانهای انشور زشت وظیفه تمامی انجمنهای زرتشتی میباشد . باید حسن از خود گذشتگی را بین اعضاء مراکز زرتشتی گسترش داده و از هرج و مرج طلبی که بعضی ها آن را آزادی بیان میکند بپرهیزیم . هرج و مرج طلبی و نداشتن رهبری یک سم مهلک برای جامعه ما میباشد . از بی هدفی ، بیکاری و بی رهبری بپرهیزید . بجای بنادهای باشکوه و عظمت بگذارید استقامتی زشت دوست و از خود گذشته تربیت کنیم . به امید آن روز





فرشته یزدانی خطیبی
Fereshteh Yazdani Khatibi

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لزوم ایجاد رهبری جهانی بین زرتشتیان

تفاوت میان رهبر و دیکتاتور

رهبر به کسی گفته میشود که از تمام اختیارات - امکانات - قدرت و نفوذ خود بمنفع بهبود و پیشرفت جامعه خود استفاده کند. رهبر هرگز امکانات و توانائی هائی را که جمع در اختیار او قرار داده برای منافع و اغراض شخصی بکار نمی گیرد. به رهبر باید قدرت و اقتدار داد تا بتواند بدروستی امور را اداره کند.

دیکتاتور :

دیکتاتور کسی است که آنچه مردم در اختیار او گذارده اند بمنفع خود و دوستانش استفاده می کند و همواره منافع خود را بر منافع جامعه و دیگران ترجیح میدهد.

تا چندین سال قبل اکثریت جماعت زرتشتی جهان در دو کشور ایران و هند زندگی میکردند و احتیاجی به ایجاد رهبری جهانی بین این دو دسته احساس نمی شد. اما اکنون با پراکندگی زرتشتیان در تمام جهان و همچنین سست شدن بسیاری از ارتباطات سنتی میان زرتشتیان ایجاد رهبری جهانی برای زرتشتیان لازم و ضروری میباشد.

همانگونه که آگاه هستید سایر ادیان همیشه در حال تبلیغ هستند که بتوانند افراد جدیدی را به گروه خود اضافه نمایند و وقتی می بینند که زرتشتیان بدون هیچگونه تبلیغ طرفداران فراوانی دارند بوحشت افتاده و منافع خود را در خطر می بینند و سعی بر آن دارند که نفاق را بین جامعه گسترش دهند. ایجاد رهبری جهانی مابین زرتشتیان نگرانی بس عظیم در دل این گروهها ایجاد خواهد نمود. در نتیجه زرتشتیان باید از خواب برخیزند و سازمان رهبری جهانی خود را ایجاد نمایند. در غیر اینصورت خطرات زیادی دهن زرتشتی را تهدید خواهد نمود که مهمترین آن پراکندگی جغرافیایی و عدم ارتباط با سایر زرتشتیان می باشد که در نتیجه به مرور زمان زرتشتیان جذب محیط پیرامون خود شده و هویت دینی خود را از دست داده و جذب سایر ادیان می گردند.

ایرانی ،

زرتشتی ،

به ایرانی بودن خود افتخار کن

به زرتشتی بودن خود افتخار کن

Days of the Zarathushti calendar

Understanding the Zarathushti calendar days, dedicated to the Yazatas.

30 Days of the Month

Avestan Names	Pahlavi Names	Gujarati Names
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1. <i>Dadvah Ahura Mazda</i>	<i>Ohrmazd</i>	<i>Hormazd</i>
2. <i>Vohu Manah</i>	<i>Wahman</i>	<i>Bahman</i>
3. <i>Asha Vahista</i>	<i>Ardwahisht</i>	<i>Ardibehesht</i>
4. <i>Kshathra Vairya</i>	<i>Sharewar</i>	<i>Sherevar</i>
5. <i>Spenta Armaiti</i>	<i>Spandarmard</i>	<i>Aspandarmad</i>
6. <i>Haurvatat</i>	<i>Hordad</i>	<i>Khordad</i>
7. <i>Ameretat</i>	<i>Amurdad</i>	<i>Amardad</i>

8. <i>Dadvah Ahura Mazda</i> (day=Creator, pad=before, adur=Fire, i.e. Creator before Fire)	<i>Day pad Adur</i>	<i>Daepadar</i>
9. <i>Atar</i>	<i>Adur</i>	<i>Adar</i>
10. <i>Apo</i>	<i>Aban</i>	<i>Avan</i>
11. <i>Hvar</i>	<i>Xwar</i>	<i>Khorshed</i>
12. <i>Mah</i>	<i>Mah</i>	<i>Mohor</i>
13. <i>Tistrya</i>	<i>Tir</i>	<i>Tir</i>
14. <i>Geush Urvan</i>	<i>Gosh</i>	<i>Gosh</i>

15. <i>Dadvah Ahura Mazda</i> (Creator before Mihr)	<i>Day pad Mihr</i>	<i>Daepmeher</i>
16. <i>Mithra</i>	<i>Mihr</i>	<i>Meher</i>
17. <i>Sraosha</i>	<i>Srosh</i>	<i>Sarosh</i>
18. <i>Rashnu</i>	<i>Rashn</i>	<i>Rashne</i>
19. <i>Fravashyo</i>	<i>Frawardin</i>	<i>Fravardin</i>
20. <i>Verethraghna</i>	<i>Wahram</i>	<i>Bahram</i>
21. <i>Raman</i>	<i>Ram</i>	<i>Ram</i>
22. <i>Vata</i>	<i>Wad</i>	<i>Govad</i>

23. <i>Dadvah Ahura Mazda</i> (Creator before Den, religion)	<i>Day pad Den</i>	<i>Daepdin</i>
24. <i>Daena</i>	<i>Den</i>	<i>Din</i>
25. <i>Ashi</i>	<i>Ashishwang (or Ard)</i>	<i>Ashishvagh</i>
26. <i>Arshtat</i>	<i>Ashtad</i>	<i>Astad</i>
27. <i>Asman</i>	<i>Asman</i>	<i>Asman</i>
28. <i>Zam</i>	<i>Zamyad</i>	<i>Zamyad</i>
29. <i>Manthra Spenta</i>	<i>Maraspand</i>	<i>Marespand</i>
30. <i>Anaghra Raochao</i>	<i>Anagran</i>	<i>Aneran</i>

Each day of the Zoroastrian calendar is dedicated. This is seen for the first time in Yasna 16 where the *yazatas* are venerated during the great Persian offering of *Yasna*.

The Avestan names of the first 23 days (except the 19th day) are dedicated to *yazatas* and the last 7 days (and the 19th day) are dedicated to spiritual entities as shown at left.

Days 1, 8, 15 and 23 are dedicated to the Creator (*Dadvah*) Ahura Mazda.

In Yasna 16, the 30 days are arranged in 4 groups. Each group begins with a day dedicated to *Dadvah Ahura Mazda* (Ahura Mazda, the Creator).

First Group: In the 3rd paragraph of Yasna 16, we find the seven Amesha Spentas being invoked and the first 7 days are dedicated to Ahura Mazda and the *Amesha Spentas*.

Second Group: In the 4th paragraph, days 9 to 14 are dedicated to *yazatas* of nature, which are fire and water, sun and moon, and star.

Tishtrya together with the 15th day dedicated to *Geush Urvan* (soul of cow) which is linked to the Moon [see *Mah Yasht*: “*maonghem gao.chithrem*”]. These dedicated days reflect the Zarathushti veneration of the physical world created by Ahura Mazda.

Third Group: In the 5th paragraph, days 15 to 22 are dedicated to Ahura Mazda, *Mithra*, *Sraosha*, *Rashnu*, *Fravashyo*, *Verethraghna*, *Raman* and *Vata*. This shows that *yazatas* *Mithra*, *Sraosh* *Rashnu* who judge souls at death have connection with *Fravashyo* (*fravashis*). The *yazata* of victory *Verethraghna* removes evil on the path of departed soul's journey. *Raman* is the *yazata* of peace (necessary for departed souls) and *Vata* is the *yazata* of “breath of life” which is given by Ahura Mazda to immortal souls. It must be noted that the great *yazata* *Mithra* stands in the 16th place which is the middle of the month.

Fourth Group: In the 6th paragraph, days 24 to 30 are dedicated to *daena*

(religion), *ashi* (reward/recompense), *arshtat* (justice), *asman* and *zam* (heaven and earth), finally to *manthra spenta* (holy manthra) and *anaghra raochao* (endless light).

Zarathushti calendar days are uniquely arranged. Most probably it is the work of Prophet Zarathushtra and was introduced with the calendar reform during the Artaxerxes' rule.

The last extra five days dedicated to the Gathas of the prophet were added to the Zarathushti calendar during the Sasanian calendar reform. This second reform came into vogue during Shahpur's reign.

Pahlavi names. The language of the Sasanians was Pahlavi (Middle Persian), and the calendar days in Pahlavi are as shown in the previous table.

The Persian/Gujarati names of the Zarathushti calendar days are also shown in the table.

Epithets. Since we have to take the name of the day (*roz*) in our prayers "*Roz nek nam, roz pak nam roz mubarak* [name of the day of prayer]" Parsi Zarathushtis have added epithets to the names of the day as a sign of respect. Thus we have '*mino*' (spiritual, *Phlv. menog*) as a prefix in *mino ram* (spiritual peace), *mino maraspand* (spiritual holy manthras), *mino ashishwang* (spiritual rewards) and *mino asman* (spiritual heaven). They are not yazatas except Ashishwang, a female yazata with "*mino*" as a prefix.

As far as '*farrokh*' (blessed, fortunate) is concerned, *farrokh fravardin* is glossed as "blessed day of *fravashis*". We may safely say that all the days are venerated. In a technical sense *Fravardin* is not a yazata.

Rejection of Yazatas. Of special interest is the so called "rejections of yazatas" by Zarathushtra. This idea was introduced by Haug in the late 19th century and Parsis unfortunately welcomed it. Nowhere in the Gathas, has Zarathushtra rejected the Yazatas. Just because the names of

some Yazatas are not mentioned in the Gathas, one cannot accept this faulty premise. On the contrary we have *Sraosh*, and *Ashi* in the Gathas.

The very first opening paragraph of Ahunavaiti Gatha begins with "*ahya yasa nemangha, ushtanazasto refedhrahya*" translated as "In reverence to Him, with hands outstretched, I entreat **you all**." Zarathushtra addresses in plural. Who are "**you all**"? The answer is found in Ahunavaiti Gatha Ys. 30.9 and Ys. 31.4, where Zarathushtra

“*Ahuraongho*” is in plural indicating other Ahuras which have Ahurian concepts and include all the amesha spentas and other spiritual entities which in the later Avesta are called the yazatas, worthy of veneration.”

speaks twice about "*mazdaoscha ahuraongho*" or "O Mazda and other Ahuras". Here the word "*Ahuraongho*" is in plural indicating other Ahuras which have Ahurian concepts and include all the amesha spentas and other spiritual entities which in the later Avesta are called the yazatas, worthy of veneration.

On the same faulty premise, can one say that since *Humata, Hukhta and Huvareshtha* are not mentioned in the Gathas, Zarathushtra rejected good thoughts, good words and good deeds?

Finally the question of asking for 'boons' from the Yazatas. The reason for this flawed understanding lies in the 200 year-old translations of Yashts where the word '*ayapta*' was wrongly translated as 'boons'. The word *ayapta* must be correctly translated. The most correct meaning of *ayapta* is 'blessings' as seen in the *Ahunavaiti Gatha* [Ys. 28, 2-7] and *Vahishtoishiti Gatha* [Ys. 53.1] where Zarathushtra asks for blessings (*ayapta*) emanating from truth [See Humbach and Ichapo-

ria, *The Heritage of Zarathushtra*, 1994, Germany].

The same meaning of *ayapta* as 'blessings' must be applied to the great *yashts* to make it clear that the *yazatas* are revered and their 'blessings' (rather than rewards or boons or benefits) are asked for. Yazatas are *Ahurian* and not *Daevic* so it is ludicrous to equate asking for blessings from Ahurian entities as a sort of *daeva* worship.

As far as "invoking" of *haoma*, Ardivisur Anahita, one must note that the Avesta word for 'invoke' is '*zabaya*' which is not found in any *yasht*. There is a difference between '*yazmaide*' (revere) and '*zabaya*' (invoke).

The word '*haoma*' does not occur anywhere in the Gathas so one cannot say with certainty that Zarathushtra rejected *haoma*. There is a reference to an intoxicating drink but the latest research has revised the opinion and it is no longer taken as *haoma*.

Haurvatat is glossed as 'integrity' in the Gathas. In later Avesta, it has suzerainty over water. *Spenta Armaiti* is translated as 'holy right mindedness' in the Gathas. In later Avesta it has suzerainty over mother earth. Since Ardivisur Anahita is the yazata guarding rivers, and seas, it becomes a '*hamkar*' (helper), to *Spenta Armaiti*, mother earth, as in the material world the earth and sea/rivers are closely connected. ■

Pallan R. Ichaporia, PhD, has a BA in Avesta Pahlavi from Bombay University and attended Columbia University for post-graduate studies in Iranian languages. He has a doctorate in Business Administration. He is currently CEO of Pharmaceutical Marketing Network, Inc. He has published widely – his forthcoming books include *Concise Modern History of the Parsis*, *The Concordance of the Gathas* and *The Gatha Dictionary*.

READERS 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

We really enjoy reading *FEZANA Journal* – what a wealth of knowledge of our religion, written in simple and understandable language.

It should be given as a gift by all parents to their children.

*Russi Ghadialy
Singapore*

Your coverage of “Fire and Fire Temples” [Fall 2002] was truly a phenomenal work – a MUST KEEP issue. We must impress upon our young and old the spiritual role of *Atash*, which is the very essence of a Zarathushti’s life. So appropriately called Ahura’s ‘*puthra*’, *Atash* is life, divine motion and primary energy in everything and everyone – the source of all energies in nature.

Your dedication is admirable. Thank you for the Journal, and for always stretching a helping hand to bring Zarathushtis together such as your “Matrimonials” column.

*Mehernaz Irani
Chula Vista, California*

Why not “Asho”?

Why do we Zarathushtis forget to put ‘*Asho*’ before the name of our prophet? Even mobeds and dasturs forget to do so, most of the time. I urge the Journal to always do so, even if the author forgets.

*Rostam Rostami
Centerville, Ohio*

Prayer with understanding

Recently I came across an old issue of *FEZANA Journal* [Winter 1997] in which you have given articles on our *kushti* prayers. I would like to congratulate you on this publication.

I believe that these basic prayers should be preserved; but unless we know the meaning, young people will stop practicing the ceremonies.

Let us realize that our prayers are not in one language, but come from different sources, composed centuries apart by different people; hence we must realize that all languages are sacred.

Our *Kemna Mazda* prayer is from the *Gathas*, while the para commencing “*pata-no tbishyantiat pairi ...*” is from *Vendidad*. The *Hormazd Khodai* recitation during the *kushti* prayer is in a much later language, closer to Sasanian times, in Pahlavi-Pazend. In the *Yatha Ahu Vairyo* prayer, we tie the *kushti* and promise to obey God’s rule, help humanity and give to the poor. While reciting *Ashem Vohu* as we tie the final knots of the *kushti*, we promise to practice goodness. Then we recite *Jasa me Avanghe Mazda*, which emphasizes peace, disarmament, self-dedication and holiness.

The *kushti* prayer is a fine, practical reminder of our faith, and if one can perform the ceremony reciting the prayer even in English or Gujarati, it will inspire our people. Let us help our young people appreciate and practice with understanding this short but fundamental ceremony of our faith.

Your Winter 1997 Journal gives good explanations of the *kushti* prayers that are worth spreading widely. Along with tape recordings of the same, we should give it very wide publicity to our co-religionists all over the world.

*Behli Rustomji
Bandra, Mumbai*

Jesus and the magi

The magi were Zoroastrian priests of ancient Persia. About 1,600 BCE, Zarathushtra (known in the west as Zoroaster), founded a monotheistic religion based on *Asha* ...

According to Johannes Kepler, there was a conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter over the area near Bethlehem

some time around December and January 1 CE. The planets were so close to each other that their reflective illumination gave out a bright light which appeared as one big luminous star. The people called it the Star of Bethlehem.

The magi and learned Babylonian astronomers must have correctly interpreted this rare conjunction of major planets as exceptionally auspicious for a great event to happen, and thus hurriedly traced their steps towards Bethlehem, where they reverentially presented to baby Jesus frankincense, myrrh and gold – royal gifts fit for a God-like angel ...

*Jehangir Medora
Toronto, Ontario*

[Excerpted from a letter submitted by Mr. Medora to various newspapers for publication. The full text is available from him at (416) 751-9199].

Experience at LAX

After a long journey through tiresome time zones, I arrived at Los Angeles International Airport in July 2002. The tragedies of 9-11 had made air-travel a series of body frisks and microscopic rummaging through every item in the hand baggage. As the screener was giving the contents of my hand bag a thorough visual and manual inspection, she came upon 10 pocket-sized books I was carrying for my Parsi and Christian friends – *Thus Spake Zarathushtra* and *Thus Spake Christ*.

She looked at the picture of Zarathushtra and asked me, “Whose picture is that?” I made a mistake by blathering out, “Prophet!” and upon seeing her befuddled and suspicious expression, I regretted my outburst, and hurriedly added “Zoroastrian Prophet.”

Never having heard of Zarathushtra or his religion, she exclaimed “Islam?”

Knowing the history of Iran and the religion of Zarathushtra, and having Parsi friends and relatives, I smiled

inwardly and shook my head vigorously and exclaimed “No Way!”

Pulling out a copy of *Thus Spake Christ*, I told her “Zarathushtra is not Islam, just as Christ is not. The religion of Zarathushtra is as distinct as Christianity, yet much older and supposedly the mother of other revealed religions.”

I was relieved that I did not have to surrender my *Thus Spake Zarathushtra* books or be under any further screening, questioning or harassment.

But I felt profoundly sad that so little or nothing at all is known about this great religion or its people. ■

A. Shankar Bansal
Chandigarh, India

We Goofed!

FEZANA Journal regrets the following inadvertent errors in past issues.

● The medical degree of Dr. Rustom Katrak and Dr. Sheroo Bharucha (Kohli) was printed incorrectly [Spring 2002, page 56]. It should be “M. Ch. (Liv)”.

● To order *Jashan and Afringan for Beginners* [Summer 2002, page 38], Er. Yezdi Antia’s correct address is: 85 Thorncliffe Park Drive, Apt. #3802, Toronto, ONT M4H 1L6, Canada, Tel: (416) 429-6151.

● In “Zarathushti Migrants from India to America – How do they Live?” by Jasmine Chapgar [Summer 2002, page 17], the date of the diaspora to India was incorrectly printed as 1910-1950. It should be 910-950.

● The seminar on the Zarathushti faith by Firdosh Mehta [Fall 2002, page 18] was held in Edmonton (not Calgary).

● The reference to Mehraban Oshidari’s publication *Rah-e-Asha* [Fall 2002, page 31], should read: “The positive response he is receiving from some of his **non-Zarathushti** readers has been overwhelming.”

● The item “Zarathushtra in Japan?” was from a posting on *creatingawareness@yahoo.com* (and not from the *zoroastrians* e-group)

● The man [third from left] in the photo of the *Gram Seva Table* at the Congress 2002 Marketplace [Fall 2002, page 39] is Andrew Francisco (and not Nicholas Bonaventura). ■

Zarathushtra and his message By Dr. Daraius Panveliwalla, New York

The date of birth and his place remain obscure,
The message in the Gathas weights his magnitude,
Over the millennia they have survived, teaching others,
What is expected in life and how to attain.

The Rigveda and the Avesta were scripts used then,
Ancient languages kept emotionally alive.
Comprehend the Gathas in today’s thoughts
This will enable one to digest and nourish the mind.

Consider not the teachings as mantras or prayers,
In the understanding, is the essence of living.
Blind repetition of words deludes the mind,
Leaving the individual to stagnation.

Ahura Mazda was the singular force he embraced [Ys.45.8]
No idols, caste or sacrifice would he consider,
Self-knowledge is pre-requisite to understanding the world,
Start within for the journey to follow.

Good and evil in thoughts, words and deeds, [Ys. 53.2]
Will develop consequences accordingly.
The wise who will follow will tread His path,
Those who ignore have still to learn.

Let the Ashem Vohu whisper gently [Ys. 27.14]
In simple words it says:
“Abide by truth, at all times,
For it is the righteous thing to do.”

Adhere to the truth, however difficult, [Ys. 46.7]
This will furnish the strength to move.
The latent spark will ignite the fire,
To remove the darkness from our lives.

Respond to the voice of your conscience, [Ys. 53.3]
Vohu Manah is what he meant.
It is the link that binds with the Infinite,
To provide the knowledge and the wisdom we can find.

The pundits may live with their conscience,
Do not sacrifice your religious intent to others.
The Gathas are the teachings for all humanity, [Ys 46.5]
Self-knowledge will make the journey easier. [Ys. 51.2]

Zarathushtra’s offering of the Amesha Spentas [1],
Seven virtues to be incorporated in our lives.
Every Gatha enriched by these elements,
Providing the verses with religious strength.

It is hard to be a Zarathushti with a conditioned mind.
What deceit could be greater than to hide our weakness.
Let not his religion be a blind repetition of prayers,
That will cheat us from this profound heritage.

If Asha and Vohu Manah you can harvest,
Kshathram and Armaiti are yours to stay.
Let Ameretat be your guiding star,
Then Seraoshem and Haurvatat are your reward.

[1] Asha (piety, moral integrity); Vohu Manah (conscience, good mind); Kshathram (nonchalance, strength to overcome desire, fear, weakness); Armaiti (faith, faith in one’s potential); Haurvatat (spiritual growth, self-knowledge); Ameretat (to believe in Ahura Mazda); and Seraoshem (love).

References of Yasna are from the English translations of Gathas by Irach J. S. Taraporewalla.

No Religion is Monolithic

Many Zarathushtis and some foreign scholars accept the form of the religion of Zarathushtra we inherited from Sasanian times as the only true form of the religion. They recognize the Pahlavi scholars as genuine interpreters of our prophet's teachings, and maintain that their writings are in line with the Gathic tradition; in short, there has been continuity of tradition and no real changes through the centuries [see Dr. Kersey H. Antia's review of *Zoroastrian and Parsi Studies* by John R. Hinnells in *FEZANA Journal*, Winter 2001]. Such a viewpoint ignores the ravages of time, the frailty of human memory and the propensity of political forces to shape religion to meet its own ends.

Diversity in religions. No religion is monolithic, all have changed through time branching forth in various directions, modifying the original doctrine and borrowing from various sources. We may be able to better understand this process if we considered religion as a whole, rather than the religion of Zarathushtra on its own.

Within *Hinduism* there is tremendous diversity; from the lofty heights of the *Upanishads* and *Bhagavad Gita* that stress study, meditation and yoga, to the worship of various deities and performance of *pujas*.

Buddha's teachings were purely ethical, enjoining the practice of the noble Eightfold Path, leading to Nirvana. However, a few centuries after his death, the *Mahayana* form of Buddhism preached salvation through faith, rituals and prayers and Buddha was deified as God, which he had specifically forbidden. *Hinayana*, the older form and the various sects of Mahayana have, and continue to co-exist peacefully.

The simple *Gospel of Christ* which preached love, forgiveness and egalitarian values, changed radically after the Roman emperor Constantine adopted Christianity as his State reli-

gion. It became hierarchical, authoritative and dogmatic, and adopted all the pomp and splendor of Imperial Rome. Protestantism was a radical break from this centralized powerful church that dominated Europe. It, in its own turn broke up into various sects and denominations. All these diverse churches are recognized as legitimate forms of Christianity.

Even *Islam*, the most structured of all religions, embodies diversity and flexibility. On the one hand there are the *Wahabi* teachings, extremely fanatical rigid and aggressive, as followed by the Taliban, and on the other extreme there is Sufism, mystical and philosophical.

Diversity within the religion of Zarathushtra. The religion of Zarathushtra too, has undergone changes. A few centuries after Zarathushtra's death, the practice of the worship of pre-Zarathushti deities in the form of *yazatas*, was revived, and the great attributes of Ahura Mazda, the *amesha spentas*, were worshiped as protectors of various aspects of creation. Zarathushtra had preached the worship of Ahura Mazda solely.

Another major change was shaped by history. In 522 BCE, Gaumata, a powerful magian usurped the throne. Fortunately for our faith, Darius decisively defeated him, much to the rejoicing of the people, who thereafter celebrated the fall of magian power in an annual holiday, *Magophonia*. Darius proclaimed the religion of Zarathushtra as the State religion and commemorated his victory in the Behistun inscription.

The magis, formerly powerful non-Zarathushti priests of Media, finding themselves discredited and powerless, expediently, over a few years, adopted the religion of Zarathushtra, and introduced many magian concepts into the ancient religion. Under the Sasanians they wielded both religious and political power.

"The group that exerted great influence on the course and contents of the religious evolution during all this period seem to have been the magi." [The *Zoroastrian Tradition* by Farhang Mehr]. Our burial practices, the Vendidad and the anti-demonic laws, the concept of cosmic dualism Hormazd versus Ahriman, may be attributed to their influence.

The religion from Sasanian times, with its elaborate ceremonies, rich symbolism and strict edicts is the one we inherited, and practiced over the centuries after the fall of the Persian Empire. It has seen us through great vicissitudes, been the source of our strength and is enshrined in the hearts of many. It is obviously the right form of religion for them.

On the other hand, a growing number have found our religion to be archaic and have become indifferent and secular. Some have chosen to go to the very source, the teachings of Zarathushtra as embodied in the Gathas. They have found the concepts expressed there to be inspiring, rational and relevant to our times. Undoubtedly, this is the right form of the religion for them.

We, as a religious community have shown understanding and respect for people of other religions. Surely, we should end the ongoing confrontation between the orthodox and liberals and show the same understanding and respect to our co-religionists, and happily accept diversity in our midst. ■

Soonoo Engineer taught



English and History at Vancouver Community College for twenty-five years. She is active in peace and inter-faith organizations and was president of the local chapters of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and the former WCRP.

Excerpted from a 2-page article in
THE EDMONTON SUNDAY SUN,
May 5, 2002.

Ancient religion 'facing oblivion'

By Erik Floren

When Sherazade Mehta left Edmonton to study in Kamloops, her college professor caught her by surprise in class one day when he mentioned Zoroastrians.

"He was talking about how there were so-called cult religions coming into Rome before Christianity became the national religion. One of them was Zoroastrianism, which he said no longer exists.

"And I went, excuse me! But I'm a practising Zoroastrian!"

Then the professor went on about how Zoroastrians believe in two gods, the god of good and the god of evil.

"And I raised my hand again and said that's not true. We believe in only one God. There is no such thing as a god of evil to us," she said ...

Ironically, although Zoroastrianism is one of the world's oldest religions, it is also one of the least known ...

According to the history books, Zoroaster – also called Zarathushtra – was an ancient Persian prophet who founded the first world religion. Indeed, many historians believe Zoroaster influenced the development of three other major religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam ...

*Article at right,
excerpted from the
Religion section,
PRESS PUBLICATIONS,
The Weekend
Edition, May 24, 2002.*

Dwindling numbers



Dressed all in white to symbolize purity, young Zoroastrian girls hold candles during the Sadeh festival in Yazd, south of Tehran, Iran. [AP photo]

World's oldest monotheistic religion lives

By Romi Herron

CORRESPONDENT

Sometimes people who live a world apart discover they share a common thread. Their differences in views or lifestyle, once thought to be so striking, turn out to bear some resemblance to each other.

Members of Southminster Presbyterian Church, Glen Ellyn, learned April 28 their Christian beliefs share some likenesses with the world's oldest monotheistic religion, Zoroastrianism ...

A dozen members of the church's Bible study group welcomed Hosi Mehta, president of the Zoroastrian Association of Chicago, Hinsdale, as part of a discovery process that began last fall to increase the group's awareness on various topics.

"I'm amazed at the universality between what Mehta said about Zoroastrianism and what we talk about in our Bible study discussions," Lynn Rumbaugh of Wheaton said.



[STAFF PHOTO BY DAVID EWART]

Hosi Mehta speaks to a group of Southminster Presbyterian parishioners in Glen Ellyn about the many facets of his religion.

"Zarathushtis are encouraged to use their freedom to think and act wisely ... People are responsible for their own deeds and the consequences of their actions ... Everything starts with thoughts. If we can control our thoughts, then we can control our actions, and that will make the world a better place," Mehta said.

World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce

India Chapters Inaugural Conferences

New Delhi, Jan 11-12, 2003

Mumbai, Jan 18-19, 2003

All business persons and professionals invited

WZCC Conference in New Delhi will be held immediately following the Government of India External Ministry "Pravasi Bharatiya Divas" (on January 9-11. All POI – People of Indian Origin are invited):

Date: Sat. Jan 11 - Sun. Jan 12

Place: Bhiwandiwalla Hall,
Delhi Parsi Anjuman

Speakers will include:

Mr. Fali Nariman, recipient of the prestigious Peter Gruber Foundation Justice Prize, and Mrs. Vasundra Raje, the Indian Minister for Small Scale Industries.

WZCC Conference in Mumbai:

Date: Sat. Jan 18- Sun. Jan 19

Place: Western Hotel, Mumbai

Speakers: To be announced.

For information, contact:

Dadi E. Mistry, New Delhi
mistry@del2.vsnl.net.in

Minoo Shroff, Mumbai
mrshroff@raymondindia.com
Rohinton Rivetna, Chicago
rivetna@aol.com

Delhi Dharamshala

Visitors to Delhi are invited to stay at the Delhi Parsi Anjuman Dharamshala, centrally located on beautiful grounds in the heart of the city. Excellent lodging and boarding facilities are available at very reasonable prices.

For reservations, contact Mrs. Dhun Daraius Bagli, tel: 3231228, email: bagli_dhla@hotmail.com.

ZARATHUSHTI ENTERPRISE ■ PRODUCTS AND SERVICES ■

WZCC Business Digest

In Memoriam. WZCC deeply grieves the sudden and untimely passing of **Sam Motasha** [see obituary p. 100] a long-time supporter, since the idea of a Chamber of Commerce was first floated (at the Las Vegas conference in 1997). Sam was appointed Regional Director for Europe at the Business Conference last July [see page 100 and Fall 2002 FEZANA Journal, page 103.]



Establishing infrastructure. The fundamental building blocks to establish infrastructure for WZCC are now in place. Not unlike most human endeavors, it is now up to the citizenry of the organization to make the organization flourish and grow. We have the 'tradition' – business is our heritage – and we have the 'vision', which is to energize the entrepreneurial spirit through a networking of businesses and professionals. What we need now is 'action'. Comments and suggestions for improvement will be most welcome.

Website and Directory. The new website managed by Homi Davier, is www.wzcc.net (not .org). Efforts are under way to allow entry of business information to serve as a Directory, indexed by business category.

E-group. The e-group (zchamber@yahoogroups.com) coordinated by Zareen Karani Araoz (zareen@managingcultures.com), is available now, for business persons

to network and post business announcements and opportunities. To subscribe, send email to: zchamber-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

Brochures and Annual Report (including a directory of WZCC members) and transcripts of some presentations from the 2002 **Business Conference and Breakfast** and the **First Annual General Meeting and Directors Meeting** last July are available upon request.

Inaugural conferences. 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. Inaugural conferences are planned in January, for chapters in New Delhi, chaired by WZCC director, Mr. Dadi E. Mistry; and in Mumbai, chaired by Mr. Minoo Shroff. [see announcement at left].

Delegation to Iran. The WZCC economic/cultural delegation to Iran, is planned for May 2003. Those who wish to experience Iran and explore possibilities for business ventures are encouraged to join this tour.

Efforts are underway to initiate a **Business Forum/Business Advisory Board** in each Chapter location, with the aim to gather the wealth of local talent to serve as a resource pool to advise and mentor new business initiatives. A sample plan, is available upon request.

[Continued on page 83]

WORLD ZARATHUSHTI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

All business persons and professionals are invited to join. Visit:

www.wzcc.net

(Website designed, maintained and hosted by Avesta Computing Service of New Jersey)

To join the Zarathushti business email group, send an email to:

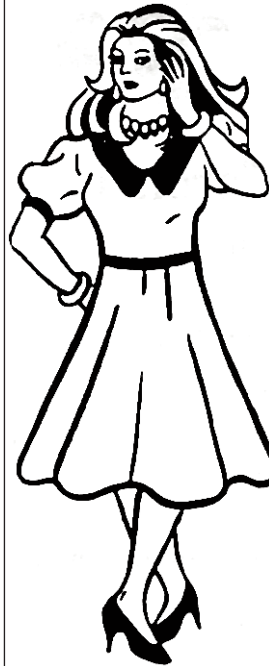
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Contact:

Khursheed Bapasola

7 Fox Hollow Road, Voorhees

New Jersey 08043

(856) 768-8351

A draft charter has been written for a **Zarathushti Limited Partnership (LP)**. This would be a separate cooperative that would make loans to Zarathushti businesses on a profit basis, ploughing the profits back into the LP to make it grow and eventually become a cooperative bank.

Visit www.wzcc.net, or contact WZCC 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 NY chapter meeting

The New York chapter of WZCC, chaired by Rusi Gandhi, held a meeting at Namaskar Restaurant in Paramus, NJ. Sherry Amici, vice president of First Morris Bank & Trust gave a presentation on Commercial Loans for Investment Properties, and discussed various guidelines for loans. Edul Davar gave a presentation on the Zarathushti Limited Partnership, which created interest and raised a lot of questions. Framroze Patel explained the benefits of such a partnership.

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Aadil Palkhivala-star yoga teacher

Palkhivala quit a successful law career and rose to become an internationally acclaimed “teacher of teachers” of Iyengar yoga.

By Roxanne Patel
Philadelphia, PA

Aadil Palkhivala [right] has been practicing some form of yoga for 44 years. That the Bombay-born yogi is only 43 is a minor point. “My mother did yoga while I was in her womb,” explains Palkhivala.

Still, the soft-spoken Parsi didn’t always expect to become known as one of the world’s best masters of Iyengar yoga, a meticulous practice that focuses on posture and breath. He started out as a math and physics student from St. Xavier’s College. With his wife, Mirra, Palkhivala moved to the U.S. 25 years ago, and quickly became a successful lawyer in Seattle. (The couple now has a 9-year-old daughter, Zenia.)

He started teaching yoga soon after, but it wasn’t until a student decided to set up a studio—with Palkhivala as the star teacher—that the guru considered yoga as a career. By the time he quit law in 1992, Palkhivala had a sizable local following, and in the years since, he’s toured the world from Vienna to Hawaii to demonstrate the power of Iyengar yoga. (He says it’s yoga that helped his mother conceive after seven years of trying.)

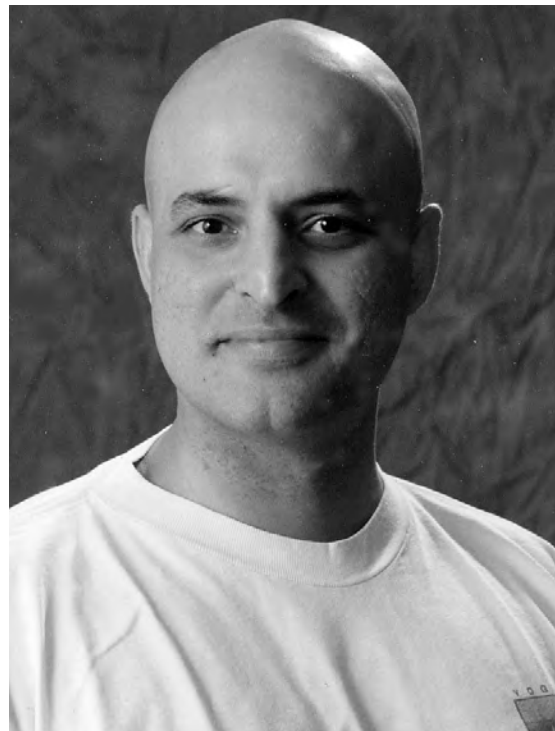
Now he also offers classes in Chinese food herbs, and has started importing organic Indian food through his company, *Eastern Essence Foods*, which is available online at www.easternessencefoods.com. “My philosophy is that we need to take care of ourselves first, find peace inside, find

strength inside, find power and humility inside,” Palkhivala says, “and then that will automatically filter out to everybody else.”

[In a directory of yoga schools, published in the *Yoga Journal*, the prime magazine for the yoga industry in USA, there is an entry for “Yoga Centers” run by Aadil Palkhivala in Bellevue, WA. It lists Palkhivala as “Internationally renowned” and “acclaimed as ‘teacher of teachers’ who holds rare advanced certification from B. K. S. Iyengar.” Visit www.yogacenters.com, or contact Aadil at (425) 746-7476, Email: yoga@oz.net.]

Roxanne Patel is a senior staff writer for Philadelphia Magazine. Her articles have appeared in national publications such as *Good Housekeeping* and *Cosmopolitan*.

PHOTO: C. R. BELL



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



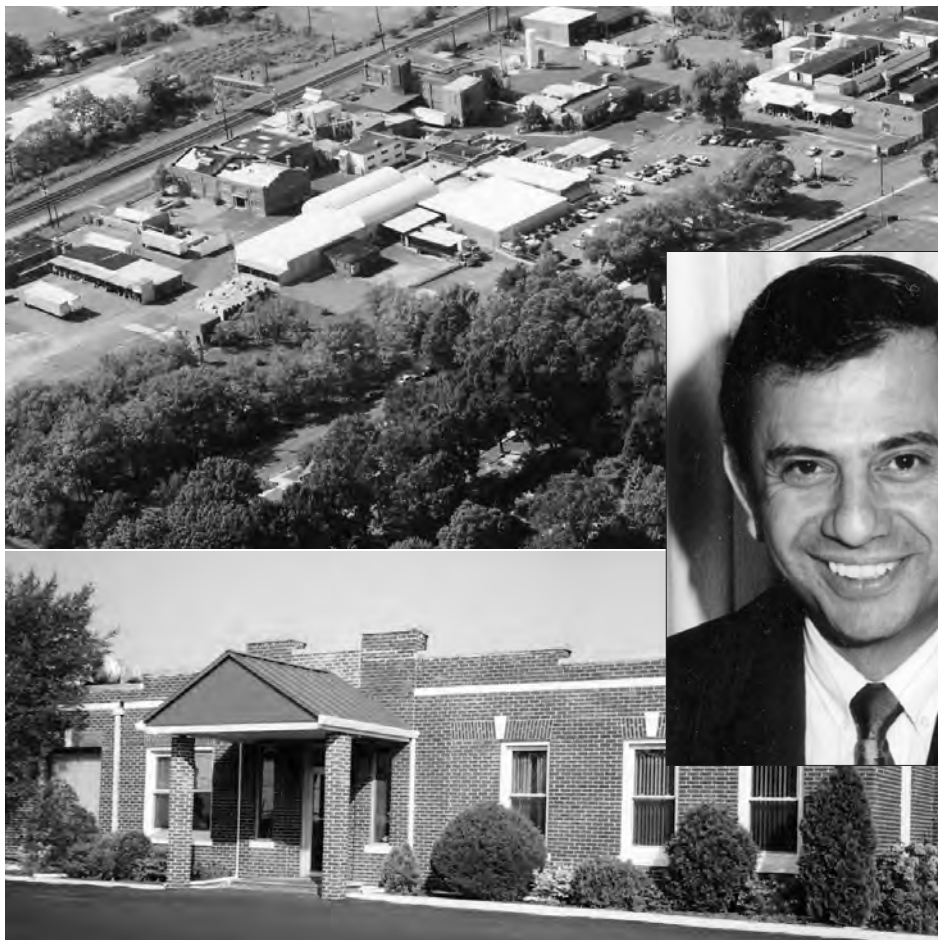
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Left, ACuPowder International, LLC office building and aerial view of the 10-acre site, in Union, New Jersey. [PHOTO: NATIONAL AIRVIEWS].



“America is a great country if you are willing to work hard,” says Edul M. Davar, president of ACuPowder International, LLC. He

means it because he is part of the American dream.

Edul Davar-rising through the ranks

Edul Davar recalls his first job, in 1967, as a metallurgist at Alcan Powders and Pigments, fresh out of the University of Wisconsin with an MS degree in metallurgical engineering. A newly-wed, he had only \$27 in his pocket and an empty apartment. “It was absolutely bare,” he recalls. He rode a bus to work because he couldn’t afford a car.

Today, Davar is president of ACuPowder International, LLC, in Union, New Jersey, which has 130 employees at its two plants. With annual sales of \$50 million, it has the dominant North American market share for copper-based powders.

Through the ranks. Davar rose through the ranks in various positions at Alcan. In 1976, after obtaining an MBA, he moved into manufacturing management. He became plant manager of the Union, NJ plant in 1980,

and the Joliet, IL plant in 1982. In 1985 he returned to New Jersey as operations manager and then became president of Alcan in 1988.

By this time the company produced a full range of metal powders: copper, tin, bronze, brass, antimony, bismuth, chromium, manganese, nickel, silicon and silver. Applications for these powders include powder metallurgy components such as bearings, filters, gears, friction components, carbon brushes, diamond tools, thermal spray coatings, composite materials and in sculpture and fine arts.

Buying the company. In the early 1990s, Alcan started divesting downstream companies and decided to sell its nonferrous powder operation in New Jersey. Edul’s entrepreneurial juices started flowing. He, along with his management team, approached Alcan about buying the business. “I

had no idea where I would get the finances,” he said.

Edul was relentless in contacting 30 financial institutions and investment banks for financing. He learned quickly about asset-based financing and finally purchased the company, along with seven other key employees. “It was a big risk,” he said, “Our debt to equity ratio was 60:1. We were a highly, highly leveraged company.”

Management. Edul had strong feelings about giving employees a stake in the business. His management team decided to share 20% of pretax profits with all employees, and implemented the “open book” policy – the management team gives financial information to employees who attend classes to understand business concepts.

The employees responded well and the results were better than his wildest

expectations. The 10-acre site in Union, NJ, operated with 80 employees and was running 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. ACuPowder's market share increased sharply. Although its major market is North America, it also sells in Mexico, South America, Taiwan, Korea and India.

An opportunity to purchase a competitor, Pyron Metal Powders in Tennessee, was pursued aggressively and the deal consummated in 2000.

Quirk of fate. Edul recalls a remarkable coincidence in his career. In 1900, a 23-year old young man, Everett Hall, sailed on the SS Maria Theresa to see the world. Having run out of money half-way, he found a job as an assayer with Tata Iron Works in Hyderabad, India. He later returned to the US, became a professor at Columbia University, and went on to found, in 1916, the Metal Disintegrating Company, Inc., which today is ACuPowder – the oldest, continuously operating metal powder company in North America.

By an amazing coincidence, Edul's childhood was spent in Secunderabad-Hyderabad, he came to the US on a Tata scholarship, and finally ended up working for and eventually owning the company founded by Professor Hall.

Education and family. Edul went to Doon School, Dehra Dun, received his B. Tech from IIT, Mumbai and MS from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. His wife Niloufer, is a teacher and volunteer at a local hospital. They have two daughters, Zaneeta, an administrator at the University of Florida, and Farzana, a physical therapist. Edul and Niloufer are actively involved in Zarathushti community affairs. Edul served as joint secretary when ZAGNY was first formed, in the 1970s, and currently serves as corporate secretary of WZCC. ■

- By Roshan Rivetna

ACuPowder International, LLC is at 901 Lehigh Avenue, Union, NJ 07083, Tel: (908) 851-4500, Email: daver@acupowder.com.

FINANCIAL CORNER

Financial Progress Report The Joy of Giving



Dr. Jerry M. Kheradi chair of
FEZANA Funds and Finance

In spite of this difficult economic climate, FEZANA still continues to make slow progress towards the **Thousand Points of Light** campaign. With your continued support towards the FEZANA funds, the North American Zarathushti community is helping deserving organizations and individuals throughout the world.

The holiday season is the time of year when we think of our family and loved ones and thank God for all the blessings He has bestowed upon us. We also think of those less fortunate and try to help in whatever small way we can. By sending a donation to the FEZANA funds, you are helping to support not only a few but many in our community.

Make FEZANA your charity of choice. Budget for philanthropy just as you do for your rent or mortgage and other expenses. You are likely to find that you can afford to give more than you thought. It has been reported that 69% of American households make a contribution to one or more charitable organizations. The average gift of contributing households is \$1,017 or 2.2% of income per annum. Individual Americans give a total of almost \$120 billion to charitable and community causes per year. It would be nice to see our North American Zarathushti community follow the US population by making FEZANA their charity of choice. People who have spent time volunteering for a cause or have contributed money to a charity, report that they get back satisfaction and joy more than they ever expend in inconvenience or effort. What you get back is immeasurable!

Please continue to support our community by sending in your contributions to the FEZANA funds – **General Fund, Religious Education Fund, Scholarship Fund, Welfare/Critical Assistance Fund and Journal Fund.** Kindly make your check payable to FEZANA, indicating which specific fund you are contributing to and mail to: **Rashid Mehin, FEZANA Treasurer, 583 Beverly Place, San Marcos, CA 92069.** All charitable donations to FEZANA are tax-deductible for US federal tax purposes. Donors of \$250 or more will receive a confirmation letter for their tax records.

Thank you and God bless you,

Jerry M. Kheradi, MD, chair, Funds and Finance Committee

Rashid Mehin, treasurer; Committee: **Rustom Kevala, PhD, Mitra Rashidi, Esq, Rita Engineer, Celeste Kheradi**

"Thousand Points of Light" donors are shown on the next page. Each \$100 counts as 1 Point of Light. Help us reach our goal of 1000 points. Donations received last quarter, through September 30, are shown in bold.

FINANCIAL CORNER

	2001	2002	Total						
Anonymous, FL		Med	5	5	Celeste Kheradi, RI	Sch	15		15
A Wellwisher, MI		Sch	1	1	Dr Jerry Kheradi, RI	Sch	15		15
Dr Babak Abadi, PA	Sch			1	Kershaw & Nazneen Khumbatta, TX			Gen	1
Parviz & Simin Ardesheirpour, NC		Gen	1	1	Jasmin & Maneck Kotwal, NJ	Wel	1	Wel	1
Dr. Cyrus F Austin, AZ	Wel	9	Wel	3	Borzoo Kushesh & Mahindokht	Gen**	1		2
Porus Austin, CA		Gen	2	2	Zenobia & Shahrookh Lala, MI	Gen	1		1
Thritee, Soozan & Trista Baxter, NY		Sch++	1	1	Dolly Malva, CA	Gen	1		1
Zazu & Tinaaz Bhandara, CA		RE	1	1	Mehran & Dr. Mitra Mazdyasni, CA			Gen	1
Firdaus & Jasmin Bhathena, MA	Gen	1		1	Noshir & Yasmin Medhora, TX			Sch	2
Rustom & Sheroo Bhathena, OH		Gen	1	1	Farahnaz Mehdiabadi, TX			Crit	1
Homi & Ellen Byramji, NJ	RE	1		1	Hosi & Kim Mehta, IL			Gen	1
Dr. Lovji D. Cama, NJ		RE/Gen	7	7	Noshir & Yasmin Medhora, TX			Sch	2
Dr. Nadir Camay, CA		Gen	1	1	Merwan and Rukshana Mehta, MO			Sch	1
Homiyar Choksi, VA		Crt	1	1	Shahrokh & Gool Mehta, NY			Wel	2
Cyra & Lyla Contractor, PA	Gen	1		1	Hoshi & Nawaz Merchant, NJ			Gen	2
Hutoxi & Dr Farhad Contractor, PA	Gen	1		1	Pesi Mistry, NY			Gen	1
Katy & Farrokh Cooper, CA	Wel	1	RE	1	Tehmtan & Aloo Mistry, MO	Crt	1		1
Tommy and Nairika Cornett, GA		Gen	1	1	Jehangir and Olive Mobed, IL			Sch	1
Tammy & Behram Dalal, NC		Gen	1	1	Rumy Mohta, VA			Crt	1
Dr Ardesheir & Parvin Damania, CA	Crt	1	Crt	1	Nesh Inc.			Gen	1
Diana Damkevala, CA	Wel/Crt	1		1	Minoo Netervala, CA			Gen	2
Maneck Daroowalla, NY		Gen	1	1	Percy K Nikorawalla, NJ	RE	1		1
Adil Daruwala, CA		Wel	1	1	Jamshed & Farzana Palsetia, MA	Gen	1		1
Farrokh N Dastur, CA		RE	1	1	Farhad & Firoza Panthaki, MA	Sch/Wel	11		11
Meher N. Dastur, CA		Wel/Crt	2	2	Drs. Khushru & Roda Patel, IL			Wel	1
Nari & Dinoo Dastur, CT		RE	1	1	Mr & Mrs Randolph Paulling, GA			Sch +	1
Erv Soli & JoAnn Dastur, FL	Gen	2		2	Yasmin & Shapur Pavri, TX			Gen	1
Edul & Niloufer Daver, NJ		Gen	1	1	Dr Parvez Pohowalla, OR	RE	1		1
Homi & Nargish Davier, TX	Gen	1		1	Dr. Minocher Reporter, OR			RE	1
Jimmy & Freny Deboo family, MI		Gen	1	1	Jamshed & Tamara Rivetna, TX			Gen	1
Yezdi N Dordi, CA		Gen	5	5	Rohinton & Roshan Rivetna, IL			Gen	2
Jimmy Dubash, VA		Gen	1	1	Dinaz & Dan Rogers, OR			RE	2
Manek R. Dustoor, MI		Wel/RE	2	2	Villoo & Solee Rudina, TX			Gen	1
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Tony & Swati Elavia, MA		Gen	1	1	Neville Sarkari, WY			RE	1
Freddy Engineer, CA		Cr/Sch	1	1	Nargesh & Aspi Sethna, TX			Gen	1
Adil Feroz, GA		Med	1	1	Prochy Sethna, CA			Wel/Cr	10
Rusi D Gandhi, NJ		Med	1	1	Dr Burjis & Hovi Shroff, FL			RE	5
Sorab Gandhi, CA	Wel	2	Wel	3	Dr Nariman & Parrin Shroff, FL			Sch	2
Eugene Gauger, MI		Gen	1	1	Zubeen Shroff, NY			Gen	1
Jamshed & Yasmin Ghadiali, NJ		Crt	2	2	Nazneen & Ehler Spliedt, CA			Sch	1
Rashna Ghadiali, IL	Gen	1		1	Bella Tata, BC			Sch	1
Mr. & Mrs. Sorab K. Ghadiali		Wel	3	3	Khurshed M Tengra, ID	Gen	1		1
Soonu & Jal Godiwalla, TX		RE	1	1	Jamshed Udvadia, MI	Crt	5		5
Noshir L Hansotia, MO	Gen	1		1	Perry Unwalla, FL			Sch	1
Behram K & Farieda Irani, TX	Cr/RE	3	Wel	1	Rayomand J Unwalla, PA	Wel	1		1
Hormuz & Shahdookht Irani, GA	Gen	1	Gen	5	Dick & Sheroo Vazir, FL	Wel	1	Wel	1
Mervan and Katayoun Irani, MD		Wel	1	1	Jer Vijan, AZ	Wel	1		1
Rustam H. Irani, MA		Sch	1	1	Parviz & Parvin Yeganegi, BC	Sch/Jour	1	RE	3
Jim & Homai Jagus, PA	RE	5		5	ZAPANJ, DE, PA & NJ	Gen	1	Gen	1
Iraj Jahanian, MD, MO		Gen	1	1	Farangis Zardoshty & family, AZ	RE***	10	RE	250
Khurshid & J.J. Jamadar, TX	Crt	1	Wel/Cr	1	Mehraban Zartoshty, B.C			Gen	25
Rumi & Kashmira Jamsetjee, IL		Wel	1	1	Z Assoc of Alberta, Canada	Crt	3		3
Dinshaw & Goolcher Joshi, MD		Gen/Cr	2	2	Atlanta Z Anjuman, GA	Wel/Sch	1		1
Khoshred & Dr Firoze Jungalwala, MA	Sch +	1		1	Z Assoc of N Calif, CA	Gen	1	Gen	1
Jamshed & Rita Kapadia, MA	RE	1		1	Z Assoc of N Texas			Gen	2
Homi & Shireen Kapadia, PA		Gen	5	5	Total Points		124		414 538
Dr Natasha Karanjia, PA		Gen	1	1					
Dolly Kerawalla, CA		RE	1	1					
Mr & Mrs K.S. Kermani, NY	Med	* 5		5					
Dr Rustom & Yasmin Kevala, MD	Wel	1		1					
Delara Kheradi, NY	Sch	1		1					

* in memory of Dr. Keikhosrow and Morvarid Harvesf

** in memory of Irandokht Ezzati

*** in memory of Mobed Faridoon Zartoshty

+ in memory of Nargesh Mistree

++ in honor of the 70th birthday of Dr Jehangir Kotwal ■

Victim Justice System

Does this sound familiar to you? Probably not! How about the Criminal Justice System? We have all heard this at one time or another but would you be surprised to learn that victims of crime really do have rights? In Florida there are 26 pages of rights for victims of crime.

The truth is that every state has a victim advocacy program that assists victims of crime, free of charge. They are under the auspices of the Attorney General's office and are usually found in law enforcement departments, the State Attorney's office and other state agencies.

Other entities that may offer a victim advocate are domestic violence shelters, non-profit agencies, religious organizations, hospice, and others.

The range of services cover learning your legal rights and options, assistance through the judicial process, medical assistance, victim compensation, and a host of other services.

The crimes covered are numerous and cover assault, DUI crash, elder abuse, sexual violence, terrorism and more.

There are criteria that must be met, including law enforcement must be notified within 72 hours, you must be an innocent victim of the crime, and others.

Cynthia Henderson-Holden is an Independent Victim Advocate, a Guardian ad Litem, a Florida Supreme Court Certified Mediator, and holds a Criminal Justice Degree. She can be reached at advocate4victims@aol.com for information on where you can locate an advocate in your area anywhere in the United States or elsewhere in the world. Cynthia is also available to present a program on victim rights to organizations, community groups, schools, churches, Chamber of Commerce, and any other group in need of an informative speaker. ■

A Few Estate Planning Basics

By Mitra Nadjmi Rashidi, Esq.
Toronto, Ontario

Most people need a will or an effective will substitute, such as a revocable trust to protect their family and to preserve wealth. People often refuse to make wills or sign them once they are written for various reasons, including superstition and fear of death. As the saying goes, however, death and taxes are inevitable so it is prudent to keep your affairs in order and plan for the unavoidable.

The basic item in all estate plans is a **will**. A will is a legal document detailing your wishes as to the disposition of your assets after your death. Dying without a will is termed 'intestacy'. Intestacy means that state laws determine the estate's distribution, quite often with results opposed to what the decedent would want. Intestacy usually causes heirs to incur needless legal expenses and extra death taxes, among other things.

A **trust** is a legal document by which one person (the trustee) holds property for the benefit of another (the beneficiary). A trust, unlike a will, is not filed in probate court and need not be made subject to public scrutiny.

The three most important estate fiduciaries are executors, trustees and guardians. An **executor** is the person or institution named in a will to carry out the terms of that will. The executor offers the will for probate in the relevant court. Probate is the legal process of proving before a judge that a will of a decedent is genuine and valid.

A **trustee** is the fiduciary who holds trust property and administers it for the benefit of the trust's beneficiaries. An executor or trustee need not be an expert investor. The most

important qualities are integrity and wise judgment. When a parent dies with minor children, the **guardian** is a surrogate parent with whom the child will live. Parents who do not name guardians are leaving the choice to the local court having jurisdiction over such cases.

A **revocable trust** is created by an individual (grantor) during his or her lifetime containing instructions about the management and distribution of assets and the income from such assets during life and at death. The grantor can act as his or her own trustee, with a successor to serve in the event of death or incapacity. A revocable trust can be revoked or amended, in whole or in part, by the grantor at any time. When the revocable trust is created, title to the grantor's homes, bank accounts, securities, businesses and other investments are transferred to it.

A **charitable trust** lets you donate generously to charity and provides both you and your heirs a large tax break. The most typical type of charitable trust is called a charitable remainder trust. You set up a trust and transfer to it the property you want to donate to a tax-exempt charity, such as FEZANA. The charity serves as trustee of the trust, and manages or invests the property so it will produce income for you. The charity pays you (or someone else you name) a portion of the income generated by the trust property for a certain number of years, or for your whole life. You specify the payment period in the trust document. Then, at your death or the end of the period you set, the property goes to the charity.

You can take an income tax deduction for the value of your gift to the charity. Also, once the trust property eventually goes to charity, it is no longer in your estate, so it is not sub-

ject to the federal estate tax. (In 2001, Congress passed legislation to repeal the federal estate tax over the next ten years. However, Congress conceivably could revive the tax in some form before then. Also, in 2011, the entire tax bill will expire unless Congress votes to renew it.)

One of the most beneficial aspects of a charitable trust is that you can turn appreciated property into cash without paying tax on the profit. If you sold the property outright, you would have to pay capital gain tax. But charities, unlike individuals, do not have to pay capital gain tax. Thus, if you give the property to the trust and the charity sells it, the profit remains in the trust and is not taxed. In this way, both parties benefit: the individual by receiving income from the trust, and the charity by investing appreciated property, such as stock, without paying any capital gain tax.

A **living will**, also known as a Directive to Physicians or Healthcare Directive, sets out your wishes about what medical treatment should be withheld or provided should you become unable to communicate your wishes. The living will creates a contract with the doctor, whereby he or she has a duty to honor the instructions in a properly signed and witnessed living will.

A **durable power of attorney for healthcare**, sometimes called a healthcare proxy, gives another person authority to make medical decisions on your behalf if you cannot. Unlike a living will, a durable power of attorney for healthcare does not necessarily state what type of treatment you wish to receive. You can leave those decisions to your proxy if you feel comfortable doing so. Preferably, however, these two documents should work together.

If you do not have either a living will or a durable power of attorney for healthcare, then the attending doctors will use their own discretion in determining your medical care. Doctors may ask family for consent, however, problems may arise if family mem-

PLEASE GIVE FROM YOUR HEART

FEZANA DONATIONS AND APPEALS

Donations. Unless specified otherwise, all donations should be sent to: **Rashid Mehin, FEZANA Treasurer, 583 Beverly Place, San Marcos, California 92069, tel: (760) 891-0699, Email: rmehin@yahoo.com.**

Please make donation checks payable to "FEZANA", specifying the fund name (General, Welfare, Critical Assistance, Religious Education, Scholarship and Fezana Journal). For specific earmarked donations, please also include the recipient's name, e.g. "Nazneen Kolah", on the check. All charitable donations to FEZANA are tax deductible in USA. Donors of \$250 or more will receive a confirmation letter for their tax records. For donations under \$250, please use your canceled check as a receipt.

Appeals. All appeals for community welfare, medical, social and critical assistance should be sent to the FEZANA Welfare Committee: chair – **Houtoxi F. Contractor, 2301 Colony Court, Pittsburgh, PA 15237, tel: (412) 367-2948; HPMC31@aol.com.**

For more information, visit the FEZANA website: www.fezana.org

bers disagree as to treatment, conceivably leading to painful and time-consuming legal disputes.

The above are some basic estate planning concepts to hopefully get you thinking about organizing your affairs. The process need not be depressing. There are numerous ways to leave bequests to loved ones and charities, making the process of estate planning an empowering endeavor. ■

Mitra Nadjmi Rashidi, Esq. lives in Toronto with her husband, Rashnavad. She can be contacted at msn5@hotmail.com.

Acknowledgments

FEZANA gratefully acknowledges donations received from August 1 through September 30. Only donations over \$50 will be acknowledged here. Donations to "Thousand Points of Light" are listed on page 87.

General Fund

Alayar and Gitty Dabestani, WA have donated \$1,000 in support of the seminar on Zarathushti Rituals (Toronto, April 2003); Najoo

Daroowalla, NY (\$50); Burzoe Gandhi, WI (\$61).

FEZANA has received a check for \$2,900 from the **Congress 2002** chairperson, Rashna Ghadialy from ZAC (Chicago). This is FEZANA's share of \$5 per person, based on the banquet count of 580 persons.

Journal Fund

Mrs. Coomi Bhathena, ONT has donated \$350 for the Journal's "Adopt-a-Reader" program.

Welfare/Critical Assistance Fund

As of October 27th, the FEZANA treasurer has received a total of \$18,744.39, for baby Nazneen Kolah's surgery [see next page] broken down as follows: Zoroastrian Association of Chicago (\$150); Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia (\$2,483); California Zoroastrian Center (\$1500); Zoroastrian Association of Alberta (\$400); Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York (\$1,354); Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania (\$200); FEZANA (\$1,000); Zoroastrians of Muscat, Sultanate of Oman (\$315).

About 100 individuals and families contributed the balance, in amounts ranging from \$5 to \$3,000. Of these,



Nazneen [left] a few months before the neuroblastoma was diagnosed, in March this year; and [below] Nazneen after surgery at the University Hospital in Helsinki. Surgeons in Finland were unsuccessful in removing the tumor, since it engulfs major blood vessels.



three contributions were from outside North America – two from Australia and one from UK.

Disbursements

On October 22nd, FEZANA transferred US \$20,000 via bank wire transfer to Nazneen's account at the Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, NY.

FEZANA has contributed \$1,000 to NAMC for the seminar on Zarathushti Rituals (Toronto, April 2003); and contributed the equivalent of \$500 for medical assistance to a needy person in India, via Mr. Dinshah Tamboli of WZO (India). ■

Rashid Mehin
Treasurer, FEZANA

Giving baby Nazneen a chance at life

It is sad but true that in the advanced world we live in, one needs money to buy health and life.

The Terrible Two's. That age is not terrible for the child, it is terrible for the parents as the child begins exploring the world and gets into anything and everything and drives the parents crazy.

That is a great age for the child as finally after getting over the trauma of birth, there is so much of external stimulation and exposure to this whole new world and existence. Some parents would love to be in a situation where they get a chance to complain about the routine problems of a child that age. But the Kolahs are facing other terrible problems.

Nazneen Kolah is over two years old. She has a stage III Neuroblastoma tumor (a rare form of childhood abdominal cancer). Her parents Jasmine and Aspi Kolah, originally from Mumbai, are now living in Finland where Aspi, a chemical engineer, is on temporary assignment with the Helsinki Technological University.

The Kolahs have tried all treatments since the cancer was diagnosed, in March. The tumor has responded well to chemotherapy, but surgeons in Finland have been unsuccessful in removing it surgically, since it engulfs major blood vessels.

Nazneen's only hope is to have the surgery done at the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York, by noted surgeon, Dr. Michael LaQuaglia, who has a proven track record in this type of surgery.

The Kolahs need about \$210,000 to make this happen. "We are selling our house, our car, jewelry, gathered all the money we had back in India, from family members and others," says Aspi. They have raised part of this amount through personal/family funds, donations and loans.

"She is our only daughter," writes Jasmine, "Please do not allow her to die. She has a chance to live if we can arrange for the money."

It is sad but true that in the advanced world we live in, one needs money to buy health and life. Please give whatever you can to help the Kolahs keep their beautiful daughter and also to prove a very important point – when there is an equation of money versus life, *LIFE* will always prevail.

Please send your donation checks marked "Nazneen", to FEZANA.

Hosi Mehta and Houtoxi Contractor
FEZANA Welfare Committee

Update on Nazneen. Nazneen's story has touched the hearts of Zarathushtis around the world. Funds are being raised by ZTFE (UK), and Zarathushtis in Hong Kong, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, Australia and others. Arnaz Framji of Karachi led a drive, and received an outpouring of support from the Zarathushtis of Pakistan.

FEZANA treasurer Rashid Mehin, served as the central point for collecting donations. ZAGNY president Homi Gandhi coordinated efforts in New York. NY Zarathushtis, especially the Ghadialis offered hospitality to the Kolah family. The ZWIN network coordinated prayer circles, and distance healing with Reiki.

As of going to press in November, the Kolahs arrived in New York, and are staying at Ronald McDonald House across from the hospital. On November 1, a surgery of many hours was done. It went off well, and much of the tumor was removed. We wish Nazneen a full recovery. ■

Mehraban Dorab Kheradi 2002 Academic Scholarships

The FEZANA Academic Scholarship Committee is happy to announce winners of the *Mehraban Dorab Kheradi Academic Scholarships* of \$1,000 each for the 2002-2003 academic year:

- **Zal Karkaria**, Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec. Zal is studying for a Master of Arts in History (Human Rights issues).
- **Naushad Edibam**, Loyola University Medical Center, Chicago, IL. Naushad is studying Dentistry and Oral Surgery.
- **Jehangir Bhada**, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL. Jehangir is studying for a Master of Science with a major in Geological Sciences and minor in Environmental Engineering.
- **Vispy Bharucha**, University of Oklahoma, OK. Vispy is studying for his Masters degree in Petroleum Engineering.
- **Zarin Behramsha**, University of Texas, Austin, TX, is studying Business and Computer Sciences.

(Information about 2003 scholarships will be in the Spring 2003 Journal)

Medical assistance

Among medical assistance appeals received by FEZANA in the last few months are the following:

- **K.R. Khambata**, a 75-year-old gentleman, desperately needs a right knee replacement.
- **Kapadia family** of Vishakhapatam are 3 generations living together with only one person supporting the entire family. The family is plagued by several medical problems.
- **Zarir C. Gonda** of Mumbai, suffers from chronic renal failure and undergoes dialysis. Medical costs are over Rs. 22,000 per month. Doctors have advised a kidney transplant, which may cost between Rs. 5 to 6 lakhs. Mr. Gonda, who works in a textile mill, writes: "With two children and a family to support, and my life's

Moobed Faridoon Zardoshty Religion Education Scholarship

FEZANA announces the establishment of a new Religion Education Scholarship fund in memory of Late Moobed Faridoon Zardoshty. We are grateful for the munificence of Zardoshty sisters, Pari, Homayoun, Iran and Farangis and their families for their generous donation to FEZANA in memory of their beloved father to set up this scholarship fund.

The Moobed Faridoon Zardoshty Scholarship(s) is to be awarded to selected Zarathushti individual(s) for higher studies and research in Zarathushti religion at a recognized institution of higher education *anywhere in the world*. Current Plans are to award these annual scholarships for a period of five years starting in 2003. An amount has been budgeted for each academic year and may be divided amongst one or more selected individuals. The Religion Education Committee of FEZANA will manage the eligibility and selection of awards of the scholarship(s). Selected individuals will be required to agree to allow FEZANA and/or the Zarathushti community to receive a tangible benefit from their study and/or research.

All interested Zarathushti individuals can request an application for scholarship by providing their contact information, including an email and phone number to:

Chair of FEZANA Religion Education Committee, Kayomars P. Mehta, 8122 Circle Drive, Palos Hills, IL 60465, USA. Email: kayomehta@aol.com, Tel: (708) 974-1238.

Deadline for receiving the completed applications with all attachments is **January 31, 2003**.

For further information, visit FEZANA website www.fezana.org.

savings exhausted, I am completely at my mind's end."

● An elderly lady, **Maharukh Dara Patel** lives in Mumbai with her amputee diabetic sister. Ms. Patel herself has acute asthma requiring costly medications and is financially unable to support herself and her sister on an 800 rupees a month income by stitching sudrehs and making candle accessories at home.

Please send contributions for the above appeals as well as for other worthy medical appeals that FEZANA receives on a continual basis, to FEZANA, marked "Medical Assistance" [see page 89].



PHOTO: "GLOBAL DIRECTORY OF ZOROASTRIAN FIRE TEMPLES, MARZBAN, GIARA"

Tarapur Agiary and dharamshala

The agiary [above] was built by Seth Viccajee Taraporewalla in 1820, and rebuilt at the same location by Bai Dinbai Petit in 1895. In 1950, Seth Framji Sidhwa constructed a dharamshala. Today, both the agiary and dharamshala face severe financial constraints and urgently require donations for roof repair, painting, and other general repairs. Please send your donation to FEZANA marked "Tarapur".

Matheran Parsi Aramghar
Set in idyllic sylvan surroundings, the **Parsi Aramghar** at Matheran, is

over a hundred years old. Managing trustee Zenobia Lord is appealing for funds to restore the graves, the 'bungli' and the 'mali's' cottage, which are in a state of disrepair. "The project, started by my husband, Jamshed Lord, is in full swing," she writes, "But due to his untimely demise last year, the responsibility now falls on my shoulders." Please send donations to FEZANA, marked "Matheran Aramghar".

Funding for Sports

Kyra Firdaus Shroff is 10 years old, a budding tennis player with the potential to reach international levels. She is Maharashtra's No. 3 in her age group. She has the opportunity to train in the US, but costs for a 3-week program are over \$10,000.

Kyra's father is appealing for generous Zarathushtis to "please take up my crusade and help me collect funds so that I can give my daughter the opportunity she deserves to make it big, which I know she will."

Persons interested in helping Kyra achieve her goals in sports, please contact Mr. Shroff in Mumbai, at 91-22-267 9612, email: sdk@vsnl.com or send donations to B. Framjee & Co., Mehta Building, Nagindas Master Road, Fort, Mumbai 400 023, India.



PHOTO: "GLOBAL DIRECTORY OF ZOROASTRIAN FIRE TEMPLES, MARZBAN, GIARA"

Sodawaterwala Agiary

The J. D. Amaria Sodawaterwala agiary [above] at Marine Lines, Mumbai, is in need of heavy repairs, renovation, extensive plastering, painting and tiling work. Old electrical wiring has to be redone and broken wooden doors and windows have to be repaired. A prolonged litigation lasting for over a decade, has further drained the finances of the agiary.

The trustees have made a fervent appeal to extend a "helping hand in this noble cause of saving our sacred agiary from extinction." Please send your donation to FEZANA, marked "Sodawaterwala Agiary".

Bravery Shield

To commemorate 150 years of the legendary Maneckjee Limji Hataria's visit to Iran, his great grandson, Tehmtan M. Davar has donated a rotating shield and memento to be awarded to any Zarathushti anywhere in the world for an act of bravery or any exemplary act in the arts, science and academics. The award and its fund is managed by *The Iran League* of Mumbai. Donations for this fund will be greatly appreciated. Please send your donation to Mr. Tehmtan Davar, 692 Chinoy Building, Dr. Dinshaw Master Road, Parsi Colony Dadar, Mumbai 400 014.

HEALTHY LIVING



*This new column on living a healthy and balanced Zarathushti life, is brought to you by **Mehroo M. Patel, MD, FRCS(Ed.), FAAFP.** Questions and suggestions for future topics will be welcome. Dr. Patel has a family practice in Chicago since 1978 and practiced as a cardiothoracic surgeon in Mumbai and UK. A fellow of the American Academy of Family Physicians, she was nominated twice as Illinois Family Physician of the Year.*

Stress: how does it affect us? how can we manage it?

The 'Gift of Health' comes with the responsibility to 'Handle with Care.' Our environment and extraneous influences tempt us to fall short of this responsibility, and face consequences. We are endowed with our heredity, longevity and genetics which we cannot change; however, there is a lot we can do for ourselves to enjoy a healthy life.

We tend to assign stress in the same basket with age, genes and heredity, and thus absolve ourselves of the responsibility to manage stress optimally. Stress is the response of all living beings – plants, animals and

humans to our environment, which is not always friendly, and often challenging. One without stress is the one without life itself!

How does stress affect us?

Stress is the emotional and physiological response of our body to adjust and adapt to changes occurring around us – the 'stressors'. Our emotional response to these stressors activates physiological processes within our body and our life. Acutely occurring short-lived stress evokes changes within our

body to disturb its homeostasis (equilibrium). Such short spurts of stress are generally healthy. They keep our body well tuned in high gear, which is followed by a period of relaxation, exhilaration, and advancement. Examples are: getting ready for a test, competition, speech or performance. Physiologically, it evokes a surge of hormone 'epinephrine', increases heart rate, breathing, oxygenation to the brain, accelerates thoughts, and performance levels.

Prolonged and sustained stress evokes a different physiological response activating 'hypothalamic-pituitary-suprarenal axis' and outpouring of another hormone 'cortisol'. As stressors continue, a sustained plateau response may eventually cause exhaustion (depression). Some such stressors are prolonged ill health, loss of job, delay in employment or down spiraling economic status.

All of us confront stressors of both types, but process them differently, which determines the outcome. Hence what matters most is how we prepare ourselves to confront them and react to them. Some of us face challenges head-on and thrive and benefit from them. Others loathe them and wish they would go away;

Dr. Roda Patel pursues mission of "Total Health" for village children in Gujarat

Pediatrician Dr. Roda Khushroo Patel discontinued her practice in Chicago to devote herself to the project of "Total Health" for children in the villages of South Gujarat. In 1995 Roda started a pediatric clinic at the Gram Seva Trust, a voluntary NGO hospital in Kharel (near Navsari) where a few dedicated medicos have made it their life's mission to uplift the community in the area, consisting of 40 villages with a population of 70,000.

The major need here is to combat the high rate of malnutrition with its grievous repercussions of fatal infections such as T.B., gastroenteritis, anemia and retardation of physical and mental growth. In 1997, Roda helped start

two *Anganwadis* (Child Health and Education Centers). The number has grown, and they have now "adopted" 40 more government centers where they carry on their mission of good 'total health'.



Roda will be in Kharel again from October through February developing various projects. All are invited to visit the hospital and see the projects at work.

Any and all contributions will be deeply appreciated. Please make checks (tax-deductible) to India Development Service, marked "Gram Seva Trust" and mail to Dr. Patel, 2030 Post

Road, Northbrook, IL 60062. Tel: (847) 564-2030, email: rodak@aol.com. IDS has adopted this project and will match every contribution. **THANK-YOU!** ■

which, if they don't, make us ill and unhealthy. We try to evade them, but failing this, succumb eventually.

Mental and physiological instability leads to affective disorders and physical illnesses. The body's immune system gets over-stimulated and malfunctions. Allergies, asthma, rheumatoid disorders, fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue syndrome are some of these illnesses. They wax and wane but do not go away. Long term, they affect other organ systems of the body and bring about end-organ damage, and chronic ill health.

How can we manage stress?

Modern scientific medicine is ill equipped to tackle these stress-activated illnesses adequately. Treatments for systems and organs damaged by the changes within the body do a poor job, since they neither remove the stressor nor equip us with strategies to manage our responses. Medicines like anti-allergics treat the hormone balances, pain relievers relieve the pain, but they all come back repeatedly. Thus long-term illnesses, and dependence on medications ensue. Recent treatments have aimed at modulating the immune system and inflammatory cascades with limited success.

Alternative systems of healing provide hope and help. ***Religiosity and spirituality*** are effective weapons in stress management. They can be self-managed at various comfort levels of the individual – ranging from ethical, philosophical to ritualistic.

Others derive comfort from assistance provided by practitioners of rituals and techniques. Chanting, ***yoga***, ***Reiki*** and many such practices fall in to this category. ***Biofeedback***, ***hypnosis***, ***acupunctures*** (acupressure), ***psychoanalytic techniques*** have their place and following.

Other treatment modalities employ our ***sensory organs*** as agents of treatment based upon color-schemes, music, smell, aroma and taste. All

these modalities show improvement in early and acute stages, though effectiveness wears off gradually or as intervention stops. They require sustained active participation of the sufferer and eventual acceptance and learning of self-management disciplines. Self-discipline, introspective analysis and lifestyle optimization provide long-term benefits. ■

Coming in the next issue: *Lifestyle*

Followup on Health and Wellness sessions at Congress 2002

We present below, an analysis of the feedback on the session: "*Healthy Living – Our Right Our Responsibility*" at Congress 2002.

The educational session on health was undertaken as an experiment at the Congress, and therefore it is important to assess how it was received, and the level of interest in our community for education on a topic as personal as our own health.

24 responses were returned. Almost all agreed that the session was "well organized", "informative" and "enjoyable"; that their "attitude towards my health changed for the better"; that they would "incorporate education from this session in my daily life"; and would "like to have such seminars in future congresses." Some indicated interest in attending a similar, independent seminar of one to two days. The comments were likewise, very positive: "Perfect", "Very well organized" and even "Best session in the Congress."

Although there was a consensus among respondents that they would like to attend similar seminars, the preference was for one or two short sessions, rather than 1 or 2-day long ones. There were suggestions to make this activity a part of future congresses, and another one to form a network of physicians and health professionals across the country. We may tackle some specific questions in a future "Healthy Living" column in FEZANA Journal. ■

- Mehroo M. Patel

Physician and healthcare professionals database

During the mixer of physicians and healthcare professionals at Congress 2002, the idea of forming a database and loose network was floated. Such a database is now being created.

All physicians and healthcare professionals interested in being a part of this database and network are requested to forward their business card/information to Porus Dadabhoy, tel: (630) 960-2425, email: porusdad@yahoo.com. ■

Survey on Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis is a common disease where bones lose mineral and become thinner. As a result, they become more brittle and prone to fracture. Fortunately today, excellent treatments are available to prevent and treat osteoporosis.

Incidence of osteoporosis in Zarathushtis is said to be higher than the general population. Very few details are available related to exact incidence and causes in this subset of population. We need your help with this research.

As part of the Authentic Science Research Program at my high school I have chosen to study the incidence of osteoporosis among Parsis.

I have designed a survey with questions about your diet and lifestyle. By analyzing the responses, we hope to be able to find out more about osteoporosis among Parsis, and spread awareness so people can take precautions to prevent it.

I will appreciate if you will fill out this survey questionnaire. It will take only a few moments and will help in our understanding and prevention of this disease. My findings will be presented in the next FEZANA Journal.

Please request an email copy of the survey from me at rclubwala@yahoo.com. ■

Rashna Clubwala
Valley Central High School
Montgomery, New York

MATRIMONIALS

FEZANA will coordinate initial contacts between interested parties; we do not assume any responsibility for verifying credentials. Contact Roshan Rivetna.

**Attractive and slim
Parsi female, 22,
B.S. Business,
currently
pursuing MBA.**

Seeks well-educated gentleman with a caring nature, good personality and sense of humor.

Please contact:
MyFairLdy@aol.com

[F02-28]

Male, 30, high school graduate, working at fast food store, born in USA, fun-loving, family-oriented. Call (619) 421-5625. [M02-30]

Female, 27, 5' 6" tall, slim, beautiful, medical professional, born in USA, speaks Gujarati and Hindi fluently, loves to travel and watch Hindi movies. Seeks tall, professional, 28-33 years. Contact parsiprincess@hotmail.com. [F02-34]

Male, 34, 5' 7", Commerce graduate, working as hotel manager in southern California, invites correspondence from suitable girls. Contact Mobed Zarir F. Bhandara at (949) 551-1936, zbhandara@hotmail.com.
[M02-36]

Seeking alliance for **two Sisters, 32 and 29**, presently working and studying in the US. Request only Zarathushti citizens please contact Sherrazade at raghanis@aetna.com or (972) 221-6047. *[F02-37, 38]*

Male, 32, caring, good-looking, family-oriented, well-educated, MBA, in the US, would like to meet caring, kind, cheerful and good-hearted, slim woman (24-30 years old), preferably with ties to India, with good family values. A wide variety of interests, including travel. Please email: parsi2002@hotmail.com. [M02-39]

Female, 27, B.Sc. in finance and marketing, working in a leading healthcare corporation, interested in meeting an educated, professional gentleman. kmd2175@yahoo.com. [F02-40]

Parsi Singles of North America

PSNA is a new free club for all single Parsi and Iranian Zarathushtis 21 and over, throughout the world, who are interested in traveling to various scenic and fun destinations, and in the process, having an opportunity to make new acquaintances and friendships in a relaxed atmosphere, without the formalities, complications and distractions of congresses.

This year, the club is organizing an outing December 29 - 31 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

If you would like to be informed about future outings, please contact the club administrator at:

ParsiSinglesNA@msn.com



The Fair Sex

In the beginning,
God created earth and rested.
Then God created man and rested.
Then God created woman.
Since then,
neither God nor man has rested.

Understand the man a lot and love him a little. Love woman a lot – do not try to understand her at all.

- The Fed Newsletter

PERSONALS

A legal firm in Mumbai is trying to trace a **Mr. Malcolm M. Dalal**. He was last known to live in Springfield, Massachusetts. If you have any information, please contact zareen@managingcultures.com.

MILESTONES

BIRTHS

Kati Kashmira Clark, a girl, to Yamin and Randy Clark, granddaughter to Khushroo and Perin Katrak, and to Shirley and Dale Ramer, and niece to Armaity Katrak, in Ontario, on August 1.

Zane Dastoor, a boy, to Zubin and Jasmine Dastoor, brother to Jehan, grandson to Dolly (of Montreal) and Phiroz (of Toronto) Dastoor and Katy Cooper of Mumbai; fifth great grandchild to Shirin Dastoor of Toronto, in Virginia, on September 7.

Farah Desai, to Bakhtavar (nee Rao) of Nagpur, India and Fred Desai of Mumbai, in Cincinnati, OH, on August 19.

Zal Dholoo, a boy to Kaynaaz and Neville Dholoo, in Vancouver, on April 11.

Anosh Irani, a boy, to Gulnar Surveyor and Shahrukh Irani, grandson to Nargis and Aspi Surveyor and Freni and Late Adi Irani, in Columbus, OH, on April 25.

Zara Italia, a girl, to Sohrab and Arzin Italia, in Houston, on October 2.

Arya Izad, a boy, to Shirin and Arman Izad, in Houston, on February 22.

Triplets, Arya and Kourosh Jam, two boys, and **Tina Jam,** a girl, to Manoochehr and Sima Jam, grandchildren to Parvin and Jamshid Jam, and Simin and Khordadad Dehghanian, in Ontario, on July 22.

Mehershad Jamshidian, a boy, to Mehran and Mehernaz Jamshidian, in Vancouver, on August 14.

Sima Kootar, a girl, to Aspi and Maharukh Kootar, sister to Cyrus and granddaughter to Jal and Viloo, and Gertrude Martins in Mississauga, Ontario, on October 3.

Zenia Masani, a girl, to Adil and Nivedita Masani, a sister to Rohan, in Pennsylvania, on June 21.

Natalya Mehta, a girl, to Natasha and Naushad Mehta, in Houston, on September 1.

Cyrus Mistry, a boy, to Jasmine and Yazdi Mistry, in Houston, on May 25.

A son, to Eata Namdaran and Russel Mitchuk, in Victoria, BC, in August.

Jordan Ranji, a boy, to Viraf and Jennifer Ranji, grandson to Freny and Jamshed Ranji of New Jersey, in April.

Karl Sanjana, a boy, to Shernaz and Hormazd Bomanshah Sanjana, grandson to Ervard Bomanshah and Freny Sanjana, in Midland, TX, on July 8.

Darius Kaezad Setna, a boy, to Phiroza (nee Bamjee) of Karachi and Kaezad Jal Setna of Lahore, Pakistan, in Cincinnati, OH, on September 26.

Kashmira Sidhwa, a girl, to Shahroukh and Riah Sidhwa, sister to Jahan, granddaughter to Nani and Roshen Wadia, and Bejan and Dinoo Sidhwa, in Oakville, on September 10.

Farhad Taraporevala, a son, to Navaz and Zubin Taraporevala, in northern California, on June 27.

Sam Ross Vatcha, a boy, to Sorab and Persis Vatcha, brother to Amy, grandson to Scylla and late Rustom Vatcha of Mumbai and Dr. Jamshed and Perviz Madan of Mumbai; in Mountain View, CA, on September 7.

NAVJOTES, SEDREH-PUSHI

Hazel and Joanna Antia, daughters of Maharukh and Noshir Antia, in Toronto, on August 10.

Zal and Shayan Bhathena, children of Ava and Noshir Bhathena, of Houston, on June 22.

Cyra and Cyrus Byramji, children of Bakhtavar and Kershaw Byramji, of Houston, on July 21.

Peter Capak, son of Hilda and Larry Capak, in Vancouver, on May 19.

Kevin Daroga, son of Dawn and Farhad Daroga of Oklahoma, and **Emily Daroga**, daughter of Jeannie and Jamshed Daroga of Massachusetts, in Dallas, on July 5. The ceremony was performed by Ervads Poras Balsara and Ratansha Vakil.

Jasmine P. DiLucci, daughter of Neenaz and John DiLucci, in Dallas, on October 20.

Sam and Alysia Dubash, children of Rayomand and Anahita Dubash, in Houston, on July 13.

Urvashi Firozi, daughter of Karen and Pervez Firozi, of Houston, on July 14.

Fram and Natalya Haveliwala, children of Yasmin and Sheroy Haveliwala, on June 29 [ZAH].

Arshan Irani, son of Behramjee and Niloufer Irani, in Toronto, on September 28.

Nasha and Narisa Jijina, daughters of Tehmuresp and Shehnaz Jijina, in Toronto, ON, on October 13.

Karina Pooniwala, daughter of Firuzee and Parvez Pooniwala, in Toronto, on July 6.

Farokh Sidhwa, son of Phil and Marook Sidhwa, in Oakville, ON, on September 1.

Daryus Rustom Vania, son of Rustom Ardeshir Vania, in Mississauga, Ontario, on May 11.

WEDDINGS

Danny Aga, son of Ruby and Rohinton Aga, to **Lyla Bharucha**, daughter of Vera and Adil Bharucha, in Houston, on July 13.

Shanaz Khambatta of Sacramento, CA, and **Alex Hazel**, on September 7.

Nadir Irani, son of Meherwan and Late Yasmin Irani to **Tanya Hansotia**, daughter of Zubin and Mehra Hansotia, in Mississauga, Ontario, on July 26.

Narius Irani, son of Noshir and Dinaz Irani of Karachi, to **Soha Chaudhry**, daughter of Anwar and

Tahera Chaudhry of Karachi, in Houston, on July 20.

Jahangir Kamdar, to **Behnaz Yazdani**, in Vancouver, on July 19.

Cyrus Khory, son of Pervin and Fereidoon Khory to **Anahita Bozorgi**, daughter of Dilnavaz and Rustom Bozorgi, in Vaughan, Ontario, on July 13.

Firdosh Laher, son of Parvez and Goolcher Laher, to **Kashmira Sepoy**, in Mississauga, ONT, on June 7.

Khashayar Sharvini to **Anahita Behramshahri**, in Vancouver, on August 16.

Xerxes Surkari, son of Eruch and Katy Surkari, to **Jasmine Sapurji**, daughter of Aspi Sapurji, in Thornhill, Ontario, on August 4.

Tanaz Wadia, daughter of Maneck and Yasmin Wadia to **Mohammed Hajjani**, son of Madatali and Mariam Hajjani, in Scarborough, Ontario, on June 22.

Viraf Zack, of San Francisco, to **Shahnaz Jangi**, in Vancouver, on July 5.

ANNIVERSARIES

Fali and Perin Engineer, parents of Kersi Engineer, Nina Challa of Houston, and Jimmy Engineer of Karachi, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

RECOVERING

DhunMai Dalal is recovering after a serious car accident in Los Angeles on October 7. She has undergone several surgeries for broken bones in the leg and shoulder and is still (as of mid-November) in hospital, with a long period of therapy ahead.

DEATHS

Gohar Pirian (Behziz), mother of Keikhosrow Behziz. Porseh ceremony was held at the San Jose dar-e-mehr on March 30.

Russ Byrom Dhondy, 72, husband of Betty, father of Sherry (Peter) Sabbagh of Ann Arbor, MI, and Charmaine (Davashish) Roy of Mumbai;

brother of Homi (Silloo) Dhondy, Khorshed Dadachanji and Nergish Patel; grandfather of Elliott, Robin and Blake; in Chicago, on October 23.

Pouran Eslami, wife of Dr. Khalil Andacheh, mother of Iden, in California, after a battle with cancer, in September [see obituary].

Dasturji Kekobad Dastur Firozji, father of Khushru (Dastur Khurshed) and Zenobia Sidhwa; in Udvada, on January 25 [see obituary].

Keki Homi Gandhi, husband of Gool, father of Farida Patel and Meher Gandhi, father-in-law of Pervez Patel, grandfather of Rohan and Sarosh, in Mumbai, on September 25.

Iran Bahramipour (Hemati), in Northern California, on April 21.

Nergish Marzban Irani, mother of Zarina Homi Irani, grandmother of Shiraz Arman and Sharlene Ferzandi, in West Vancouver, on August 14.

Shapur Irani, brother of Irandokht Keki Kianipour, uncle of Farida Shar-yari and Farokh Kianipour of Chicago and Sharokh Kianipour of Vancouver, in Mumbai, on September 8.

Banoo Samya Kalantari, wife of Khosrow Namiranian of Shiraz, mother of Esfandiar, Shirin and Shahnaz of Shiraz, Meherangiz of Tehran, and Iraj and Mehrnaz Mehrshahi of USA, after a battle with cancer, in Shiraz, Iran, on February 20.

Cursethji Kharas, husband of Perin, father of Aban, Zenobia, Ron, and Zarine, in Karachi, on August 3.

Shahryar Khodayari, in Tehran. Porseh ceremony was hosted by his children and their families, at the dar-e-mehr in San Jose, on February 24.

Perin Mathur, wife of Dr. Parshotam, mother of Ashok and Anita, of Calgary, Alberta, while on vacation in China, on October 7.

Shirin Mehrabanipour, in Northern California, on October 21. Condolences to her children, grandchildren and all family members.

Morvarid (Keshvar) Mehrshahi, wife of Shah-Keikhosrow Mehr-

shahi, mother of Hooshang, Farokh, Shahnaz and Fariborz, in Northern California, on April 27.

Mehli Mehta, 94, husband of Tehmina, father of Zubin (Nancy) Mehta and Zarin (Carmen) Mehta; of heart failure and other causes associated with aging; at Santa Monica-UCLA Medical Center, Los Angeles, on October 19 [see obituary].

Sam Motasha, brother of Dr. Nargish D. Motasha of Mumbai and another sister; from a massive heart attack, in Petersfenn, Germany, on October 6 [see obituary].

Faridon Namdarian, husband of Zarin Namdarian, father of Ardeshtir and Susan Namdarian, of Houston, on September 29.

Curset Patel, a Kshnoomist, author and editor of *Dini Avaz* for 27 years; in Mumbai, on September 11.

Katy Patel, wife of Aspi Patel, mother of Viraf (in Dallas) and Noshir (in Australia), sister of Dorab and Bakhtavar Daruwalla (of Mississauga), in Karachi, on September 22.

Bahram Ardeshtir Radpour, brother of Houmayoon Vafadari, uncle to Darioush, of Houston, on September 16.

Ravanshad Laal Jahanian (Sorou-shian), in Tehran, on October 7. Porseh ceremony was held at the dar-e-mehr in San Jose, on October 27.

Mehrangiz Goshtasp (Firoozgar) Vafadari, 84, of Tehran, mother of Dr. Kasma Vafadari of Paris, Goshtasp Vafadari of Los Angeles, Kaveh Vafadari of Tehran and Mrs. Kateh Vafadari of Oakton, VA; in Maryland, on October 29. Mrs. Vafadari was a renowned philanthropist, supporting many community causes, including Tehran's Grande Adrian project. Her father, the late Arbab Goshtasp Firoozgar, was a prominent real estate developer, and founder of Tehran's famed Firoozgar Hospital.

Julie Vakil, mother of Betty Daruwala, and sister of Aimee Karanjia, in Toronto, on July 22.

Tehmina Wadia, 93, wife of late Dhunjishah Wadia, mother of late Rusi Wadia, Baji Wadia of Pune, and Khorshed (Firoze) Jungalwala of Boston area; mother-in-law of Viloo Wadia of Mumbai; grandmother of Mahrugh, Khurshid Sethna, Tehmurasp, Ferzin Patel and Jehangir Jungalwala; in Pune, India, on November 9. ■



If Tomorrow Never Comes

If I knew it would be the last time that I'd see you fall asleep,
I would tuck you in more tightly and pray the Lord, your soul to keep.

If I knew it would be the last time that I see you walk out the door,
I would give you a hug and kiss and call you back for one more.

If I knew it would be the last time,
I could spare an extra minute or two to stop and say "I love you,"
instead of assuming you would know I do.

If I knew it would be the last time I would be there to share your day,
Well I'm sure you'll have so many more, so I can let this one slip away.

For surely there's always tomorrow to make up for an oversight,
And we always get a second chance to make everything right.

But just in case I might be wrong, and today is all I get,
BI'd like to say how much I love you and I hope we never forget.

Tomorrow is not promised to anyone, young or old alike,
And today may be the last chance you get, to hold your loved one tight.

So if you're waiting for tomorrow, why not do it today?
And if tomorrow never comes, you'll have no regrets about today.

- Author unknown



Patriarch of the illustrious Mehta family

Mehli Mehta was born in Bombay, on September 25, 1908, the youngest of five sons of Nawrowji and Piroja Mehta. He lived with his wife of 67 years, **Tehmina**, in Los Angeles. She will also be 94 years old in November.

Mehli's son, the world-acclaimed maestro **Zubin Mehta** (former conductor of the Montreal symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic and New York Philharmonic, and current conductor of the Israel Philharmonic and Bavarian State Opera) and wife **Nancy** live in Europe and USA. Zubin's daughter **Zarina** lives in Montreal with her daughter **Shenaya**. Her son **Daniel** goes to school in Buffalo. Zubin's son **Mehrvon** is director of the Kimmel Center for the performing arts and lives in Philadelphia with his spouse.

Mehli's other son **Zarin Mehta** and wife **Carmen** (a voice teacher) live in New York City, where he is Executive Director of the New York Philharmonic. Zarin's son **Rustom** lives with his spouse in Vancouver and daughter **Rohanna** lives with her spouse in Chicago.

[Continued on page 100]

Maestro Mehli Mehta (1908 - 2002)

VIOLINIST, CONDUCTOR, TEACHER, MENTOR, PATRIARCH

IN MEMORIAM

Mehli Mehta, accomplished violinist, conductor and educator, discarded the shackles of his mortal frame on October 19, 2002 at the age of 94. Born in Bombay on September 25, 1908, Mehli championed the life of an artist until his retirement from the American Youth Symphony over ninety years later.

Founder of the Bombay Symphony Orchestra in 1935, Mehta's ambition to be a world-class violinist led him to study with the renowned pedagogue, Ivan Galamian, in New York and then serve as assistant concertmaster and concertmaster of the Halle Orchestra under Sir John Barbirolli from 1955-1960.

Regaining entry to the US in 1960, Mehta joined the Curtis Quartet in Philadelphia and four years later commenced upon his new life as conductor of the American Youth Symphony and director of orchestral studies at UCLA.

Though never having the opportunity to meet Mehli nor see him in performance, the maestro's protégé's piquant observations, in words and actions, have instant appeal to my sensibilities. Passion and fire is of little use unless there is an outlet to transform that energy within to move, touch, and inspire those around you. There are no greater attributes a leader can possess.

Mehli's talents as a musician notwithstanding, the excellence displayed by his children and other noted members of his clan is as much a testament to the patriarch's pedagogical prowess as the latent talent dwelling within the neophytes themselves. Suffice it to say that Wolfgang Amadeus' climb to success may well have been tempered were he not the son of Leopold Mozart, an accomplished musician and educator in his own right.

Certainly, the greatest accolade a parent can receive and a child can bestow is to transcend in ability beyond the wildest dreams of his mentor. The hand that rocks the cradle indeed rules the world, and for the elder spokesman to see both of his sons rise to the pinnacle of success is truly to be twice blessed. ■

Farobag Homi Cooper
Conductor and Music Director
Chicago Philharmonia

EULOGY

My earliest recollection of Mehli Uncle was at the age of five when I heard him play Mozart's *Rondo Alla Turca* on violin with piano accompaniment by a Parsi lady named Bapai. From then on, every time I heard the sonata, I referred to it as "Mehli Uncle's *geet*" (song) as if it were composed and always played only by him.

Mehli Uncle to me was more than my father's youngest brother. From my early childhood, I looked up to him as a role model, someone I strived to become in life, not necessarily in a musical sense, but in his wisdom, endless energy and enthusiasm, worldliness, western leanings, and in his immense love of classical symphonic music which he introduced and inspired in each and every Mehta family member. Mehli Uncle was the first pride and joy of the Mehta family until his illustrious son Zubin joined the conducting ranks some 25 years later.

Mehli Uncle's active career in classical music spanned seven decades on four continents. He founded and led the American Youth Symphony (AYS) in Los Angeles for an amazing 33 seasons as its Conductor and Music Director. He retired as Conductor Laureate in 1998, however two years later, at the age of 92 he came out of retirement to conduct a special all-Tchaikovsky charity concert.

In November 2001, 75 devoted AYS alumni donated their time under the baton of their ailing master Mehli Mehta for a special tribute recording of Richard Strauss' *Transfiguration* – the final journey to its eternal place of everlasting Rest, Peace, and Love – *Nirvana*. This recording was played at his funeral on October 22.

Mehli Uncle donated 50+ years of musical scores with hand written notes and markings to the UCLA music department, a treasure of symphonic repertoire, a legacy for generations of future musicians to study and play.

Mehli Uncle's loving relationship with Tehmina ("Bhulki Aunt"), his life partner of 67 married years and 7 'courtship' years serves as an inspiration to all.

May his soul radiate *USHTA* to all of us as it has to countless musicians and music lovers all over the world. ■

Shahrokh Mehta

Syracuse, New York

[I am writing this eulogy not only because he was my uncle and I admired him and followed his long and brilliant career, but also because I loved the music he made and was privileged to attend his many concerts. He used to refer to me as "my favorite nephew" and historian of the Mehta family archives! Given the space restrictions in this journal, it is almost impossible to do full justice to the man I loved and admired so dearly. - SM]

MR. MEHLI MEHTA

A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

"No Crossing legs! In my orchestra nobody crosses their legs – and *NO TALKING!*" If you attended any rehearsal of the American Youth Symphony you were bound to hear Mr. Mehta say that.

If a player missed a rehearsal the poor players already there would get a lecture. As Danny Kaye once jokingly remarked, the definition of terror was to see Mr. Mehta rehearse.

He had an uncompromising attitude when it came to music. He often mentioned that he had no time for second-rate music, as he put it, and he only concentrated on performing the great masterworks of the standard repertoire.

Being truthful to the composer's intentions was the most important thing. He knew precisely how he wanted a piece to sound and would not be content until he got that sound. He would often berate and cajole the players:

"*YOU, MY DEAR*, have a wonderful teacher, but you play like a mouse."

The title 'Youth Orchestra' sometimes misleads some people. These were not children, but players in their teens and 20s, studying with renowned teachers at some of the finest music schools around, and Mr. Mehta knew what they were capable of and pushed them to their limits.

The main purpose of his orchestra was to train young people in orchestral playing and familiarizing them with the great symphonic repertoire. His efforts undoubtedly paid off because quite a few of his players went on to join some of the finest orchestras in the country.

The AYS itself has the reputation for being a very fine orchestra, and it is one of the largest orchestras anywhere, with around 110 players. Virtually all the major soloists of our time have at one time or another performed under Mr. Mehta's baton, donating their services to the AYS, a remarkable sign of the high esteem the music world had for him.

When he resigned from the position of concertmaster of the Halle Orchestra under Sir John Barbirolli, the Queen Mother herself took him aside and asked him to reconsider his decision.

People that really knew him realized he was a compassionate man, with a soft side. He would rehire the players he had fired earlier, usually for missing rehearsals. Many of his players would come up to him after rehearsals

and have their pictures taken with him, and once he let Yours Truly conduct his orchestra, something that was unheard of, until he, years later, started the search for a successor.

He always conducted every single piece on the program from memory, a remarkable feat. As he once remarked to me, one can do so much more with the music, when one knows the music intimately.

He imparted his love and passion for music to countless generations of young musicians and he will be missed. ■

Adil Mehta

*Music Director and Conductor
California Chamber Ensemble
Los Angeles, California*

"Everything I knew about music was from my father ..."

... Zubin Mehta said that his father had been his first teacher, that he had grown up listening to his father's symphony and quartet rehearsals and that, until he was 18 and went to Vienna to study, "everything I knew about music was from my father."

The younger conductor echoed others' appraisal of Mehli Mehta as a strict disciplinarian, but kind and a universally adored teacher.

"He had two loves – his family and his music," Zubin Mehta said. "This was his entire life ..."

Violinist-conductor Alexander Tregar ... who took over the AYS in 1998, said of Mehli Mehta:

"His musicianship and his love of music are the first things that come to mind, and his total dedication. Music was totally his love. His knowledge of music, of certain phrasings, bowings, just name it, it's amazing. I call it the Mehta genius. They see the page one time, and its there. It's amazing ..."

*[Excerpts from LOS ANGELES
TIMES, October 20, 2002]* ■

Dasturji Kekobad Firozji

DASTUR, IRANSHAH ATASH BAHRAM



Dasturji Kekobad Dastur Firozji

was one of the two dasturjis of Udvada Iranshah Atash Behram belonging to the Sanjana sect. (The other is Dastur Dr. Hormuzdiar Kaiy-oji Mirza). He was born on June 11, 1926 and appointed Dastur in 1971. On the day of his *uthamna* ceremony, his son Khushru (now known as Dastur Khurshed) was appointed Dastur by the Udvada Athornan Anjuman.

Dasturji Kekobad being one of the eight respected dasturjis of India was also a member of the recently set up Council of High Priests to guide our Parsi Zarathushti community in religious matters. He resided mostly at Udvada. For many decades he was a familiar figure and led the annual Avan Yazad Parabh jashan at Radio Club in Mumbai, the Fravardian Parabh jashan at Doongarwadi in Mumbai, as also the Sanjan Day jashan on Roz Bahman Mah Tir, where thousands of devout *humdins* congregate annually.

Dasturji also actively participated in the first ever 97 Dasturjis public meeting in April 2001 organized by the Traditional Zarathushtis mailing list where all the eight Vada Dasturjis unanimously supported the system of *dokhmenashini* and called on the BPP trustees to revoke their decision.

- Marzban Giara

Sam Motasha

A LIFE OF COMMITMENT

Though living in Germany, **Sam Motasha** was truly a world citizen, and an active participant in



Zarathushti congresses and organizations. An ardent supporter of the World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce, since the time

the idea was floated at the Las Vegas Business Conference in 1997, Sam was elected Regional Director for Europe in July.

A world-traveler himself, Sam promoted the idea of a lapel pin that WZCC members could wear while traveling, to aid in recognition of fellow Zarathushtis. WZCC is considering such a pin to commemorate Sam's life and works.

His enthusiasm and ready willingness to stand up to support a good cause, is Sam's legacy to the community. He will be missed, but his spirit will live on forever, and continue to inspire us.

- Rohinton Rivetna

Pouran Eslami

SCHOLAR OF PERSIAN CULTURE

In her short but fruitful life of self-sacrifice and dedication, **Dr. Pouran Eslami** was a major voice on a global scale for defending, protecting and preserving the Persian culture and national identity.

As a professor, speaker and author, Dr. Eslami was instrumental in educating people about Iranian heritage and history. Her passionate love for people and her beloved heritage was unmatched. She proved it over and over through major efforts at the United Nations and various governments, over a span of many years.

Pouran Eslami was born in Iran, and has a bachelors in sociology and a

masters in public health from Tehran University; a masters in sociology from Roosevelt University in Chicago; and a PhD in sociology and anthropology from the University of California, Irvine. She worked on the UCI campus researching Native American Indians, Women in Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa; and recently, conducted a study of Azarbaijan and goddesses of ancient Persia.

While maintaining ties with the UCI campus and faculty, Dr. Eslami was a full time professor and chair of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Riverside Community College, Norco Campus.

Her last wish was to be remembered as a true Iranian with no sadness, but with joy and life full of hope. She is survived by her husband, Dr. Khalil Andacheh, himself a University professor, and their young son Iden. ■

[Sources: www.vohuman.org, Khosro E. Mehrfar and Feraydoon Demehri]

Patriarch...

[Contd. from p. 98]

Mehli's nephews are **Dady Mehta**, a concert pianist and on the music faculty at Eastern Michigan University; **Xerxes Mehta**, director of the Maryland Stage Company in Baltimore, MD; **Shahrokh Mehta** in Syracuse, NY; and **Firoze Mehta** in Bristol, UK. Mehli has nieces **Shernaz Mollinger** in NYC and **Avi Mobed** in Karachi, and a sister-in-law **Silloo Mehta** in Conoor, India.

Dady Mehta's son **Navroj Mehta** is second violin and outreach conductor of the San Diego Symphony and principal second violin of the San Diego Chamber Orchestra; and son **Bejun Mehta** is a world-acclaimed 'countertenor', billed by New York Times Magazine as "one of the three best countertenors in the world." ■

[From information supplied by Shahrokh Mehta. Also see "The Illustrious Mehta Family" in FEZANA Journal, Summer 1999].

Coomi Bhathena of Toronto, was among recipients of the **2002 Ontario Volunteer Service Awards**,



presented by the Minister of Citizenship of the Province of Ontario, "in recognition of your commitment and dedication as a volunteer in

Ontario." Mrs. Bhathena, 94 years "young," has devoted a lifetime in community service. Her generous charities for Zarathushti causes in India and North America and around the world, are well-recognized.



Dolly Dastoor of Montreal, was installed as Governor, District 2 (encompassing Quebec and parts of Ontario and upstate New York) of Zonta International, at the 56th Inter-



Good Life Award recipients. At the Nouruz function of the Zoroastrian Association of Houston, 18 outstanding youth were presented with the "Good Life" award: *Justin Mody, Anahita Desai, Cyrus Desai, Burjis Cooper, Ashdin Medhora, Darius Khosravian, Zarin Behramsha, Shara Challa, Natasha Behrana, Kevin Haveliwala, Jasmine Behramsha, Kashmira Behramsha, Delnaz Khosravian, Rehan Kapadia, Nikita Rajkot, Parinaz Firoozi, Dina Collector* and *Zal Sethna*. The youth performed service projects including the American Heart walk, Habitat for Humanity, collecting food-stuffs, and serving food for the homeless at the Star of Hope shelter in downtown Houston. Sarosh Collector supervised all of the participants. [Submitted by *Temilyn Ghadially*, National Coordinator for the Good Life Emblem program. For more information, contact tghad@hotmail.com. Also see p. 109].

national Convention in Gothenburg, Sweden on July 4. She is shown above, carrying the flag of Canada at the opening ceremony where flags of all Zonta countries were posted. Zonta International is a service organization of business and professional people working to improve the legal, political, economic, education, health and professional status of women around the world. Dolly will hold the position of Governor for two years.

Roshan Khurshid Bharucha of Quetta is a provincial minister of Baluchistan, with 11 different portfolios, including IT, Social Welfare for women and children, and Sports. A tireless worker, she has represented Pakistan at the UN in New York. On a recent official visit to Iran, she was honored by Zarathushtis in Kerman and Yazd, and articulated their requests to the Iranian government.

Roshni Cooper, daughter of Ruby and Cawas Cooper of Macungie, PA, received the **Good Life Emblem Award** from ZAGNY for community service in 2001. A semi-finalist for the National Merit Scholarship, Roshni is



president of the National Honors Society, head coordinator of the school's tutoring/mentoring program, and a member of the Spanish National Honors Society, Computer Club and Kid to Kid. This past summer, Roshni was selected to attend the Pennsylvania Governor's School of Excellence for Information Technology. She is also recipient of several awards for piano.

Ervad Kersey H. Antia, head priest, and mobed **Ervad Jamshed Antia** were recognized by ZAC (Chicago) for twenty-five years of selfless dedicated service to the Zarathushti community of Chicago.

Dina R. Mody, MD, FCAP, a professor and director of cytopathology at Baylor College of Medicine and the Methodist Hospital in Houston, received the 2002 CAP (College of American Pathologists) Foundation **Lansky Award** at a ceremony in Washington, DC on October 12, for "significant contributions to the field of pathology." During the last decade, Dr. Mody has emerged as one of the national leaders in cytopathology. She has given workshops and seminars and published book chapters on cytopathology and gynecologic pathology.



Dr. Jamshed J. N. Masani [above] was knighted with the "Order of St. John" at an impressive investiture ceremony at St. Paul's Cathedral on June 23, 2001. He was bestowed this title for his commendable voluntary work with St. John Ambulance, which provides first aid and medical support services, caring services in support of community needs, and education, training and personal development in citizenship to young people. Dr. Masani has practices in Mayfair, Central London and the Wellington hospital.

Fali Nariman awarded justice prize

Noted Indian jurist Fali S. Nariman receives the Gruber Foundation's \$150,000 Justice Prize and gold medal.



PHOTOS COURTESY JIMMY DHOLOO

The Hon. Fali Nariman [above, and at right in photo] at the Justice Prize award ceremony at John Marshall House, in Richmond, VA.

The Honorable **Fali S. Nariman**, M.P. Rajya Sabha, senior advocate, Supreme Court of India, was awarded the Justice Prize of \$150,000 and a gold medal, on September 22, at a ceremony in Richmond, VA, birthplace of John Marshall, Chief Justice of the United States. The selection was made by a seven-member International Justice Advisory Board, on behalf of the Peter Gruber Foundation for being (as the official citation recorded) "an exemplary and principled advocate for Justice."

"What a grand event it was," notes Jimmy Dholoo, who attended the ceremony with his wife, "We were filled with pride to witness this truly global achievement of a fellow Zarathushti. I was the only engineer and my wife the only beautician; the rest of the distinguished gathering was mostly justices from all over the world. At the dinner reception, I presented Mr. Nariman with a copy of FEZANA's *The Legacy of Zarathushtra*. Mr. Nariman and his wife Bapsi were truly gracious, and glad to see us. The only other Zarathushtis there were Nargis Manekji and family from Arlington, VA." Rummy Mohta and the few Zarathushtis of the Richmond area hosted the Narimans for dinner the night before the ceremony.

The Justice Prize is one of three international awards established by the Peter Gruber Foundation to recognize worthy and notable human achievement in the fields of cosmology, genetics and justice. Presented annually, the awards are amongst the highest accolades in each field.

Born in Rangoon in 1929, Fali Nariman's early schooling was in Simla. He has a BA from St. Xavier's College in Mumbai and a Law degree from the Government Law College. He practiced at the Bombay High Court for 22 years, and was appointed a Senior Advocate in the Supreme Court of India in 1961, a position he retains. His other prior Indian government service was as Additional Solicitor-General in the early 1970s.

Among other honors, Nariman was awarded the *Padma Bhushan* by the President of India in 1991 in recognition of "distinguished services in the field of Jurisprudence"; and was named "Living Legend of the Law" and awarded a shield by the International Bar Association in 1995.

- By Roshan Rivetna

By Ardeshir Damania
Davis, California

"All the world's a stage!!!" This famous Shakespearean line specially holds true in the case of **Shahnaz Shroff**, 21-year old Parsi actress from Mumbai. She flew into San Francisco on the evening of September 10, last year. Had she arrived in the US just 12 hours later, her plane could have been diverted to Vancouver! In any case, it was a 'dramatic' start to her new life in the US.

Shahnaz has just completed her first year in a masters degree in Dramatic Art at the University of California, Davis, on a full scholarship, with a GPA of 4.0. In just one year, she has to her credit a number of plays and performances that include working with Kate Whorinski on the *Life and Death of Marilyn Monroe*, Theatre Compositions in *Workshops with Anne Bogart*, and *Kids Write Plays* with Sacramento's very own Peggy Shannon of the Sacramento Theatre Company. Most recently she played the role of Helena in *A Midsummer Nights Dream* directed by England's Peter Lichtenfiels.

On the first page of the entertainment section of the *Sacramento Bee*, Shahnaz was said to have brought "an intelligence to the role of Helena" and the Sacramento News and Reviews section mentioned her as a "high point" to the production, "anchoring a quartet of human lovers". She also adapted and directed *Oliver Twisted* for the Holmes Junior High School in Davis – an entertaining, and an original take on Dickens' *Oliver Twist*. She has been awarded the position of an Arts Bridge Scholar for 2002-2003, where she will be serving the community of Woodland by teaching less fortunate children the importance of drama.

This summer she acted in *Picasso at the La Pi Agile*, directed by Peggy Shannon at the Sacramento Theatre Company – the first production at the newly renovated theatre. She is currently in the play *Silent Tears*, which will also be made into an independent film.

Shahnaz Shroff-actress, director, dramatist



Aspiring young actress and drama student at UC Davis, originally from Tardeo, Mumbai, is getting excellent reviews

Back home in Bombay, Shahnaz had been acting for the past 6 years, and starred in plays *Don't Dress for Dinner*, *The French Cuckoo*, *Once Upon a Time a Telling of Tales*, A Latin American Dance Theatre piece - *Trip the Light Fantastic*, *The Good Doctor – Adapted and Sleeping with Mr. Shakespeare* among others. She also assisted in directing *Tea House of the August Moon*, *The Monkey's Paw* and *A Fly in the Pizza* working with Bombay Theatre veterans.

In July 2000 Shahnaz co-founded a theatre group, "Act One", in Bombay, which put up innovative plays including performance poetry readings and dramatic book readings for the *Mid-day* newspaper anniversary, *The Tea Centre*, *Fountainhead* and *Crosswords Book Store*, which won them rave reviews.

Shahnaz has also completed her Licentiate Diploma in Teaching Speech and Drama from the Trinity College, London at the very young age of 20 years. She has also completed Part 1 and plans to complete

Part 2 shortly, for the title of Fellow of the Trinity College, London.

When asked who has been an influence in her life, she promptly spurts out, "My Parents! I think they were a great blend of dad (Percy Shroff) being the brain and mom (Zenobia) being the heart. They always reminded me that acting was just a job like any other and that I must always strive to do the best I can. This constant challenge made me take the big step to leave India and come to the US to better my education, and to increase my opportunities in the entertainment industry."

Her first priority lies in bridging the gap between Asian, Indian and American theatre and films by landing herself in roles that breach the barriers of ethnicity. She also dreams of opening a performing arts school and repertory theatre with her theatre group.

"It's actually not just my dream - It's my goal!" asserts Shahnaz. ■

Dr. Ardeshir Behramji Damania is a geneticist at the University of California, Davis.



Screenwriter and photographer Sooni Taraporevala [third from left] received the Heartsong Award at the SAAIDS benefit gala in New York City. Others are, from left, Stefanie Dworkin (director/editor of the tribute), Tamina Davar (producer of the tribute video) and Asha Olivia (SAAIDS director).

Sooni Taraporevala honored in New York

Internationally-acclaimed screenwriter and photographer Sooni Taraporevala was the main honoree at a gala event by South Asia Against AIDS Foundation (SAAIDS), in New York City on Saturday July 27. SAAIDS is a young New York-based foundation which raises awareness around the AIDS/HIV epidemic in South Asia, and is also starting to fund women and children's AIDS/HIV-related health initiatives in India, and soon in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

SAAIDS felt Taraporevala's award was long overdue, considering her prolific career as an internationally-acclaimed screenwriter, and as a photographer. Taraporevala received SAAIDS' *Heart Song Award* – which honored her as a “universal storyteller” and “illuminator of human contact,” whose work has greatly impacted many lives, and who serves as a role model for women and children in South Asia and the world, and whose universalism comes from her deep roots, and pride in her identity as a Parsi Zoroastrian.

Taraporevala has a strong connection to New York, having attended NYU, lived, and written scripts of films *Salaam Bombay* and *Mississippi Masala* while there. Her career has long illuminated communities and themes often considered marginal, but which are critical to the understanding of our world – from writing the screenplays for the Oscar-nominated film *Salaam Bombay*, as well as *Mississippi Masala*, *My Own Country*, *Such a Long Journey* and *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkhar* (not yet released in North America) – to publishing her groundbreaking book of photography, *Parsis: the Zoroastrians of India – a Photographic Journey*.

The highlight of the gala evening was a 16-minute tribute video on Taraporevala, specially commissioned by SAAIDS, and produced by Tamina Davar, along with a team of enthusiastic professional filmmakers (including director/editor Stefanie Dworkin). The film became a labor of love for the crew, who gave endless hours of their time for six months – for free. The video, which featured interviews with film director Mira Nair and others, highlighted

Taraporevala's career, whose work has influenced millions, yet who remains humble and “unsung”. Taraporevala's pride in her Parsi Zoroastrian identity was emphasized both in the video, and throughout the evening by gala organizers.

In fact, Zoroastrian involvement was prevalent throughout the event process: Sam Bhadha, manager of Manhattan's Radisson East Hotel – the official event hotel – gifted Taraporevala's stay. Jehangir Mehta, Pastry Chef at Manhattan's swanky Compass restaurant, gifted Taraporevala a box of fancy pastries on her arrival. ZAGNY allowed a special ad for the event in its newsletter. ZAC (Chicago) placed a message in the Gala program.

Several New York area Zoroastrians attended the event. Several more served as enthusiastic volunteers – including Tenaz Dubash, Zareen Hakim, and Gulnar Mewawala. The event was preceded by an art auction reception earlier that week (with volunteer help from Kayhan Irani), where 3 of Taraporevala's photos (never-before-sold) were auctioned. Some of the art is still available for bidding at: http://www.saaids.org/events/art_of_love.html.

Taraporevala's short but poignant acceptance speech focused on her Zoroastrian identity. A short excerpt follows:

“Some years ago, when I was working on my book of photographs on Parsis, I rediscovered the religion I was born into – Zoroastrianism – and something I read stayed in my mind ... Prophet Zarathushtra, the world's first monotheistic prophet, said, “Happiness unto those who give happiness unto others.” A very simple thought – but so relevant to this crazy world we live in. I do believe it is in our hands to alleviate each other's suffering, and imagine each other's pain. I know you all feel the same way, or you wouldn't be here tonight.” ■

[From material provided by Tamina Davar. Also visit: www.saaids.org/events/july_2002_info.html]

Though not won, a race well run

Two Zarathushti candidates who ran for political office in the November 5th elections [*FEZANA Journal Fall 2002*] did not win, but they ran a great race that all Zarathushtis can be proud of; their pioneering efforts have set the stage for future candidacies.

Ayesha Nariman (Democrat) who ran for US Congress in upstate NY (near Buffalo) writes:



"The results were disheartening, but not unexpected. I garnered 39,459 votes (over 22%) as opposed to the incumbent Rep. Thomas Reynolds who held onto his seat with 129,442 votes (74%). There were two other minor party candidates who got 2% each.

"The Democrats have praised me for running a classy issues-based campaign. They have encouraged me to hang in there and to run for office again. I went into the race fully cognizant that I was running against a high flyer in the republican party – Reynolds is slated to become the chair of the RCCC, and has hinted to the Buffalo News that he may even become the next Speaker of the House. Hence, I started my foray

into politics by taking on a formidable opponent.

"I do plan to give it another try. Next time, I hope it will be with a proper staff of volunteers and over a two year period, instead of a one-woman show and a three month campaign.

"I thank all the kind people who sent contributions to my campaign. It allowed for me to run one TV ad and one radio ad over many stations for the final week of the campaign, which helped me reach many voters."

Nikan Khatibi, FEZANA Journal's youth editor ran for the City Council in



Laguna Niguel, California. He garnered 1,853 votes (8.9%), versus 9,857 for the incumbent Mayor Joe Brown and 9,035 for incumbent Councilwoman Cathryn DeYoung.

Nikan says: "This was an experience

Bella Tata, erstwhile president of the Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia, was selected by Industry Canada to be one the recipients of a Commemorative



Medal at a presentation ceremony in Ottawa, on November 15. This year marks the golden jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's accession to the throne. To commemorate this anniversary, Bella Tata was among Canadians "recognized for their significant achievement or out-

standing contribution to their community or to Canada."

Roxanne Patel, senior staff writer for Philadelphia Magazine, won a



bronze medal for best public service journalism from the National City and Regional Magazine Association

for articles in Philadelphia Magazine entitled "The 100,000 Question" that presented a guide for parents trying to decide whether to send their children to public or private schools. ■

I will never forget. We did not win, but do not count me out yet. We did make a great deal of headway and I look to the future with great confidence. I have now declared my candidacy for the year 2004. So the battle is just starting.

"Keep an eye out for me in 2004!" ■

BOOKS & SUCH

Persian dictionary

A 'talking' Persian-English online bi-directional dictionary is available. Text can be entered in Roman alphabet or UniPers transcription, or in the current (Perso-Arabic) alphabet. Visit <http://iranianlanguages.com/dictionary.php?eng-per>.

Avesta and Gujarati fonts

Noshir Jesung has developed an Avesta font based on Kanga's Avesta grammar for any Windows application. A Gujarati font is also available for writing the Khordeh Avesta as per Kanga. To order, send check for \$30 (US) to Yazdaan Arts, 7121 Nimrod Drive, Huntington Beach, CA 92647, tel: (714) 842-3032, email: njesung@socal.rr.com.

Zarathushti Postage Stamp

The "CreatingAwareness" list serve has initiated a project, spearheaded by Dolly Dastoor, Toxy Cowasjee and Astad Clubwalla, to get a commemorative postage stamp with a Zarathushti motif to be printed by Canada Post. A trial sheet of stamps will be printed first, and then a formal application will be made to the Canada Post Corporation. The process takes upwards of two years.

A stamp design contest was open to all Zarathushtis – the due date was November 15th. For information about the project, contact: Aban@coatingengneers.com.

Meeting Mistry

New York
area
Zarathushtis
meet author
Rohinton
Mistry as he
kicks off his
American
book tour to
promote his
new novel
Family
Matters.



PHOTO: GEORGE BURNS. © 2002 HARPO PRODUCTIONS, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

On September 26, New York area Zarathushtis met Rohinton Mistry, an author who carried himself with such quiet dignity and generosity of thoughtfulness that he won his audience not just by virtue of his latest book but also by his interaction with them. Often labeled as shy, Mistry proved to be intelligent, engaging and witty, spending time with his audience and listening to their questions and comments with an abiding patience.

Having already regaled audiences in other countries, Mistry appeared at the Asia Society to kick off his American tour [1] to promote his latest novel, *Family Matters*, which is a finalist for the prestigious Booker Prize. A tale of family obligations set in Bombay during the 1990s, *Family Matters* is the story of Nariman Vakil, an aged former professor of English, who suffers from Parkinson's disease, and his children who are obligated to care for him in the aftermath of an accident that leaves him bed-ridden.

Mistry thanked the full house for attending the event despite the torrential rain that drenched New York that evening. Reading from the beginning of the book, Mistry took us to Nariman's apartment as the spirited septuagenarian prepared to depart for his daily walk over the strenuous objections of his step-children. Raising his voice to a higher pitch to reflect that of the quarrelsome Coomy and being most soft-spoken in the speech of the more timid Jal, Mistry's reading allowed the mind's eye to view the action as if it was unfolding in the gloom of the bare stage behind him. The audience was delighted to learn that the writer read his work as well as he had penned it. He even sang a bar of the old Ella Fitzgerald classic, *Cheek to Cheek*, when in character as Nariman!

Holding his audience spell-bound, Mistry's well-selected excerpts spoke volumes for the writer's ability to paint true to life characters, facing

realistic dilemmas. Tainted with the subtle humor that infuses most difficult situations in life, and has become Mistry's trademark, *Family Matters* is also touched by a lyricism heretofore lacking in Mistry's writing.

After the reading, Mistry answered questions from the audience in an unassuming, direct fashion, at once charming and honest. Claiming he used a 386 computer, Mistry laughed when asked whether he used the internet to do his research: "I don't have internet," he explained, adding playfully, "I don't think a 386 can take the internet."

Referring to a recent article in the New Yorker labeling Mistry as the "Tolstoy of South Asia", an enthusiastic fan inquired of the writer where he places himself amongst the literary giants of his age. An humble Mistry responded, "I don't. I don't dare do that. I don't have the expertise to. I write instinctively. I rely a lot on intuition. I am not as well educated as one needs to be to make this sort of enormous judgment... and I think its best left to others."

But there was one question that invoked a passionate response from

Mistry. Asked when he intended to write of characters that were happy, Mistry was quick to respond: "But I don't think of my characters as not being happy," he insisted, "I think of them as people who are able to find happiness in the most unexpected of places, with the least at their disposal. Those people are miracles that they can find joy and happiness given their circumstances." Then laughing softly he reminded his New York audience, "Its easy to find happiness on Park Avenue..."

Patiently signing books for over a hundred fans, Mistry seemed most pleased to meet his fellow Zarathushtis, who turned out in significant numbers to see their favorite author, and stayed until the very end for the chance to exchange pleasantries with him. Mistry's book is available in stores around the country and is undoubtedly a good read – but it is even better to have Mistry himself read it to you! ■

[1] At the time of printing, FEZANA Journal learned that Mistry's American tour has been canceled prematurely. See statement next page]

Mistry cancels Tour

Rohinton Mistry canceled the second leg of his US book tour to promote his latest novel *Family Matters* on account of “unbearable humiliation” and racial profiling suffered by him and his wife, at US airports.

In a letter to FEZANA Journal writer Shazneen Rabadi Gandhi [see article previous page] as also to bookstores on the canceled list (in six US cities including Chicago, Boston and San Francisco) Mistry’s US publisher, Alfred A. Knopf writes:

“We are sorry to report that Rohinton Mistry is canceling the second half of his book tour for *Family Matters*. He has been extremely unhappy about the way he has been treated in airports around the US in the first half of the tour. As a person of color he was stopped repeatedly and rudely at each airport along the way – to the point where the humiliation for both him and his wife (with whom he has been traveling) has become unbearable.

“Obviously this has been a difficult decision for Rohinton, and he made it with great reluctance.”

The letter to Shazneen goes on:

“Rohinton asked that I be in touch with you though – he does want to talk with *FEZANA Journal* as we had arranged ... Let me know.” ■

[*FEZANA hopes to publish an interview with Mistry in the next Journal.*]



“Rohinton Mistry is not a household name, but it should be... [he] has long been recognized as one of the best Indian writers; he ought to be considered simply one of the best writers, Indian or otherwise, now alive.”

Brooke Allen
THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY

“So this Mistry novel, like his last one ... will be read by millions.”

Bryan Demchinsky
THE GAZETTE, Montreal

“Some people have even likened him to Dickens or Balzac.”

THE ECONOMIST, April 27, 2002

Family Connections and disconnections in Bombay

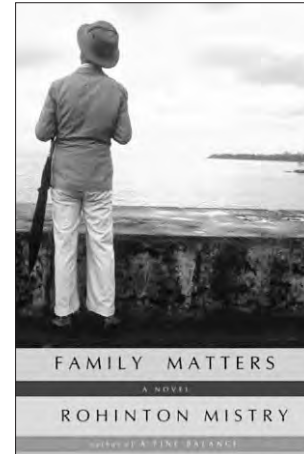
By Boman Desai
Chicago, Illinois

Chicago writer Boman Desai is the author of the novels “*The Memory of Elephants*” and “*Asylum, USA*.”

Rohinton Mistry has followed his epic novel, *A Fine Balance*, with a return to the relatively modest scale of his first novel, *Such a Long Journey*, and its theme of family matters, but make no mistake: *Family Matters* is a big book by any measure, and Mistry a giant among writers. My mother, now 82, recently enjoyed the new novel as much as I at 52, and such is its accessibility that I’d be surprised if it were enjoyed any less by someone of 22. There is little to complain about in this almost-perfect example of the storyteller’s art.

The Parsis, who inhabit this vibrant and full-bodied novel, are Zoroastrians who fled Iran for India to preserve their faith when Islam was being spread at the point of the sword in the 7th century. Nariman Vakeel, a 20th century Bombay Parsi, lives in Chateau Felicity with his stepchildren, Coomy and Jal, the birth children of Palonji Contractor and Yasmin. Yasmin, widowed, marries Nariman, bearing him a daughter, Roxana, the sole blood link between the two families, before Yasmin also dies. Roxana marries Yezad Chenoy, and they have two boys, Murad (13 when the novel opens) and Jehangir (8).

The first fine major set piece (of many) relates the celebration in Chateau Felicity of Nariman’s 79th birthday, attended by his stepchildren and the four Chenoy, during which the boys first learn something of the circumstances alienating the stepchildren from Nariman. Nariman had married their mother after an 11-year relationship with a Goan woman, Lucy Braganza, and as his occasional rants make clear, she, rather than Yasmin, was the love of his life, a detail he is no longer interested in hiding from anyone:



Family Matters
By Rohinton Mistry
Knopf,
434 pages,
\$26.

“In my youth, my parents controlled me and destroyed those years. Thanks to them, I married your mother and wrecked my middle years. Now you want to torment my old age. I won’t allow it.”

“‘Such lies!’ flared Coomy. ‘You ruined Mamma’s life, and mine, and Jal’s. I will not tolerate a word against her.’”

Unfortunately for Nariman, who has Parkinson’s disease, osteoporosis and hypotension, he loses his footing during a walk and is returned with a broken ankle to the spacious flat in Chateau Felicity, where his troubles begin in earnest. He is confined to bed to allow his ankle to heal, a difficult proposition at his age even disregarding osteoporosis. Coomy and Jal are too squeamish to administer urine bottles and bedpans and too cheap to hire a wardboy. They buy a portable commode for his bedside, but even the effort of getting him out of bed and back proves too much for them. Finally, without warning, they hire an ambulance to deposit Nariman in the Chenoy flat in Pleasant Villa, though there is barely space enough for just the four Chenoy.

Nariman is to stay at Pleasant Villa three weeks, but thanks to a subterfuge by Coomy his stay becomes open-ended. So begins the sojourn of the novel.

Money in the Chenoy household is as tight as the quarters. Yezad’s salary as a sporting-goods salesman doesn’t

Readers familiar with Mistry's narratives know that as tight as his plots might be, they are primarily vehicles for developing worlds familiar to few in the West, and poverty is his vehicle for revealing spiritual riches. In the hands of a lesser writer such stories would dwindle to sentimentality, even melodrama; but Mistry accrues detail by detail, scene by scene, character by character, with Jamesian precision, gathering weight in such discrete measures that what begins as a light domestic drama, almost a farce, creeps up on the reader with the power of a juggernaut, presenting a world that, for a while, becomes more familiar than his own. A few plot twists may not be convincing, but the whole is so much more than the sum of its parts that it would be churlish to complain.

Modern Parsi concerns are highlighted, both quantitative (“‘[O]ur dwindling birth rate, our men and women marrying non-Parsis, and the heavy migration to the West ... [make the] experts ... confident that fifty years hence, there will be no Parsis left.’”) and qualitative (“Dr. Fitter ... [grumbled] ... that Parsi men of today were useless, dithering idiots, the race had deteriorated.”).

Parsi Anglophilia, contributing to the problems of the post-Raj community, is also in evidence:

“[Jehangir] wished he could change his own name. Jehangir, Jehangla, Jehangoo. Could be shortened to Jehan. Which was a lot like John. John Chenoy.”

Mistry's prose is solid and functional, never calling attention to itself. In writing about Indian novel-

ists it has become *de rigueur* to cite Mistry's prose as a counterbalance to Rushdie's linguistic effusions, perhaps crystallizing Mistry's resistance to more flamboyance, but an occasional rhetorical flight would be welcome. I know I will read the book again in a few years as I have his other books, but there is one passage I have read repeatedly already for its lyricism alone, an encomium to Bombay. Here it is, and I wish there were more like it:

“This beautiful city of seven islands, this jewel by the Arabian Sea, this reclaimed land, this ocean gift transformed into ground beneath our feet, this enigma of cosmopolitanism where races and religions live side by side and cheek by jowl in peace and harmony, this diamond of diversity, this generous goddess who embraces the poor and the hungry and the huddled masses, this *Urbs Prima in Indis*, this dear, dear city now languishes ... like a patient in intensive care, ... put there by small, selfish men who would destroy it because their coarseness cannot bear something so grand, so fine.”

Bravo!

[First printed in CHICAGO TRIBUNE, September 29, 2002]



“... Mistry has been likened to 19th century novelists – Dickens’ name was invoked ... In *Family Matters*, the interplay of spirituality and familial obligation recalls another writer, Tolstoy.”

Bryan Demchinsky
THE GAZETTE, Montreal

“Never numerous, the Parsis were esteemed by the British during the Raj, particularly for what was seen as their extraordinary skill in the English language. It is a quality that seems to have flourished in the Parsi diaspora; certainly it shines, as brightly as any sacred flame, in this fine but disturbing novel.”

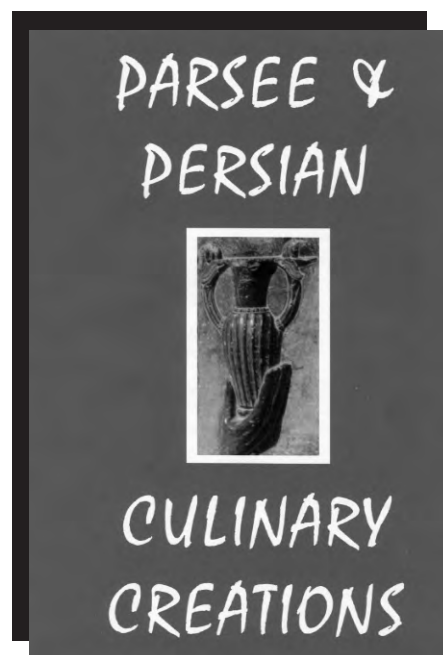
John Sutherland
THE NEW YORK TIMES

Parsee and Persian Culinary Creations

Exotic Made Easy the American Way

*Compiled and Edited
by Mehroo M. Patel, MD*

8.5"x11", 110 pages, 91 recipes



Yielding to popular demand, Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago has published this second cookbook – a sequel to ***“Parsee Culinary Artist”***. Compiled and edited by Dr. Mehroo Patel MD, this book has a foreword by Roshan Rivetna and an essay “Focus on Nutrition” by Karmeen Kulkarni, a board-certified advanced diabetes manager. A unique and valuable feature of this cookbook is the complete nutritional analysis after each recipe.

US\$20 +\$3 S&H

Please send check or money order in
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8615 Meadowbrook Drive,
Burr Ridge, IL 60527

Writer Bapsi Sidhwa

A treasure of the Zarathushti community

By Thrity Umrigar
Kent, Ohio

Bapsi Sidhwa – writer, political activist, social critic, teacher – has long been one of the treasures of the Zoroastrian community. In an essay included in the new anthology, *“To Mend the World: Women Reflect on 9/11”* [White Pine Press; \$17.95] Sidhwa alludes to her Zoroastrian identity as she reflects on the fragmented and malleable nature of human history.

Titled “A Selective Memory for History,” Sidhwa’s cogent essay takes the reader through a tightly-woven narrative of Afghanistan during the era of the Cold War, when the erstwhile Soviet Union and the United States turned that doomed country into a checkerboard for warring interests.

Sidhwa, who at various times has been a citizen of India, Pakistan and the United States, writes with quiet authority about historical *karma*. She shows how the seeds of geopolitical tit-for-tatism, sowed in the 1980s, erupted in a ball of fire over the skies of New York decades later. In devastating detail, Sidhwa points out how the arming of the Afghan *mujahideens* by the US, and the cynical use of religion to fuel Afghan opposition to “their Godless Communist invaders,” unwittingly led to the growth of militant Islam in the entire region.

Sidhwa’s essay also displays her characteristic idealism and humanity. “Nothing exists outside of the cycle of cause and effect,” she writes, trying to explain to a Western audience

how the lethal brew of poverty, humiliation and inequities came to a boiling point on September 11. She takes America to task for continuing the bombing of Afghanistan even after it had destroyed the Taliban. She critiques our political leaders for their “comic-strip” language, which reduces the complexity of the world into a us-versus-them, good-versus-evil dichotomy. And she suggests a prescription for winning the War on Terrorism – by understanding the misery and hopelessness of oppressed people, instead of ignoring or demonizing them.

Bapsi Sidhwa’s righteous anger, her great, big heart come shining through in the following lines: “Who ordained that millions of us may spoil ourselves with Victoria’s Secret underwear while other millions can’t even procure ill-fitted artificial limbs?”

The answer, my friend, is blowing in the wind. ■

Thrity Umrigar is the author of the novel, *“Bombay Time,”* and the upcoming memoir, *“Love and Other Fictions.”*

To Mend the World

Bapsi Sidhwa, acclaimed author of *Crow-Eaters*, *The Bride* and *Cracking India* among many others, read from her essay, “A Selective Memory for History” in *To Mend the World: Women Reflect on 9/11* at the book launch/reception for Sidhwa at The Indocenter of Art & Culture, New York, on September 25. [Also see page 17].



The Good Life

Zoroastrian Emblem

The Good Life Zoroastrian Emblem



program provides an opportunity for youth to learn and live “The Good Life” with an emphasis on *SERVICE* for a civic, church or family institution.

The program is adminis-

tered by the Good Life Religious Emblem Administrative Council of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York (ZAGNY): Framroze K. Patel (chair), Dr. Lovji D. Cama (dean of Zoroastrian religious studies, ZAGNY), Prof. Kaikhosrov D. Irani (advisor), Homi D. Gandhi, (president, ZAGNY), and Temilyn Ghadially (national coordinator).

Enrollment: To achieve the “Good Life” emblem, please request an enrollment form, and return the completed form, with a check of \$12.50, payable to “ZAGNY-Good Life Program”. This amount covers the cost of two books, the emblem (after the program requirements are met) and postage. On completion of the program requirements, please return the completed application for the Good Life emblem. The emblem will be mailed back, upon approval by the Administrative Council.

It has become practice to award the medals at festival functions like *Nou-ruz*. Associations and participants are requested to allow adequate time for processing the applications.

All communication should be sent to: Temilyn Ghadially, 12 Rockwell Circle, Marlboro, NJ 07746, Tel: (732) 972-6527, tghad@hotmail.com. ■

Leafing through *A Zoroastrian Tapestry*: a museum experience

By **Zarine Weil**
Oak Park, Illinois

In *A Zoroastrian Tapestry: Art, Religion & Culture*, the editors, Pheroza J. Godrej and Firoza Punthakey Mistree, have curated a fascinating exhibit of Zoroastrian heritage from ancient Iran to 1947, the year when India, the adopted homeland of the Parsis, gained independence.

The book unfolds like an art show whose curators have selected works of art and architecture to tell the story of a rich and diverse culture. Even the reader who may not wish for the level of detail contained in the oversized volume's 39 scholarly essays, can have a perfectly satisfying experience leafing through its pages as one may meander through the halls of a museum, dwelling on certain art works, passing by others to return to them at a later time.

The lengthy captions serve as this exhibit's wall text, identifying and

explaining the visuals. Moreover, the volume's format – discrete essays, highlighting varied aspects of the faith and culture – invites us to chart our own course through its pages.

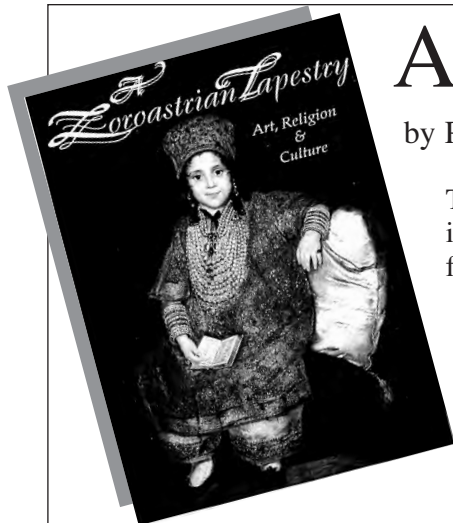
“ The book unfolds like an art show whose curators have selected works of art and architecture to tell the story of a rich and diverse culture. ”

Of all the elements that define a people – religious beliefs, literature, art, buildings, food, dress – it is our faith that defines us as Zoroastrians. Appropriately, the book opens with an essay on Zarathushtra's teachings and goes on to explore the religion in Achaemenian, Parthian and Sasanian

times. From the grandeur of ancient Persepolis to the exquisite detail of manuscripts of the *Shah Nameh*, compelling photography brings alive an incredibly rich heritage. We settle in for a visual feast, and for 700-plus pages to follow, the book does not disappoint.

Far-flung connections with other faiths are revealed. We discover the relation between the Zoroastrians and Greeks, the similarities between Parsi and Hindu sacraments, the contacts between the Persians and the Jews, the influences of the Zoroastrian religion on Christianity. We learn that Shi'ite and Zoroastrian traditions share the attributes of the thirty days of the month; that the Yezidis and Ahl-e Haqq sects of Kurdistan are regarded by some as a branch of Zoroastrianism, and known as People of Truth.

About halfway through this tapestry, the scene changes from Iran to India. The vistas of palaces and bas-reliefs



A Zoroastrian Tapestry

ART
RELIGION &
CULTURE

by Pheroza J. Godrej and Firoza Punthakey Mistree

This monumental work documenting 3,500 years of Zoroastrian history and heritage, is now available. The 10 X 13" volume of 762 pages, is lavishly illustrated with 1250 full-color photographs, printed on matte art paper and individually boxed.

To order "A Zoroastrian Tapestry" enclose check, credit card info or money order in **US dollars**, payable to "FEZANA", and mail to: Roshan Rivetna, 5750 South Jackson Street, Hinsdale, IL 60521. Credit Card orders may be faxed to (630) 734-1579.

List price:

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give way to 18th century engravings of Indian shores, portraits of distinguished Parsi entrepreneurs, and depictions of a distinct lifestyle, captured, perhaps most delightfully, in an 1850 painting of a toddy party.

With the Parsi arrival in India in 960 CE, they developed a cultural ethos that is examined in essays on Parsi theatre, cuisine, commerce, dress, as well as contributions to the Indian press and the Indian freedom struggle.

To visually document more than 3,000 years of Zoroastrian history and culture, the editors procured 1,200 illustrations from museums, other institutions and private collections all over the world.

Of the cultural treasures showcased – paintings, sculptures, photographs, illuminated manuscripts, maps, coins, decorative arts objects, textiles, even cuisine – perhaps the most strikingly distinctive is the architecture. The buildings of the Zoroastrians of ancient Iran are as impressive as those of ancient Greece, Rome or Egypt. Their heritage lives on in the uniquely Zoroastrian form of fire temples in both India and Iran, shrines or pirs in Iranian villages, *dokhmas* of Yazd and Mumbai, and *baugs* where Parsi weddings and navjotes are performed. These buildings house a lifestyle altered from but firmly rooted in its ancient origins.

For a work of this magnitude, the editors surely had to make difficult decisions about what to include and what to leave out. We wonder why, if the Gathas contain the essence of Zoroastrianism and the words of Zarathushtra himself, there is no separate essay on these most important of scriptures. Also, in the array of arts represented, music is conspicuously absent. Does this mean there is no significant musical tradition to present? And as masterfully as the material is presented, would it not have been more user-friendly to produce two slimmer volumes instead of an enormous, unwieldy one? But these are minor points and do not take away from what the publication achieves.

We are fortunate that although *A Zoroastrian Tapestry* may be experienced like an art museum, it is after all, a book. Despite its scope and size, we are not subject to the aesthetic jet lag that comes from visiting too many museums in too short a time. And we can rejoice that the panoramic exhibit the book presents will not be de-installed. ■

Zarine Weil is in charge of publications and communications at the Frank Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust in Oak Park, Illinois.

Zarathushti Poetry Group

Farida Bamji has started a Zarathushti poetry e-group at www.ZoroastrianPoetryGroup@yahoogroups.com. All are invited to post any religious or other poems.

Zarathushti Film Festival



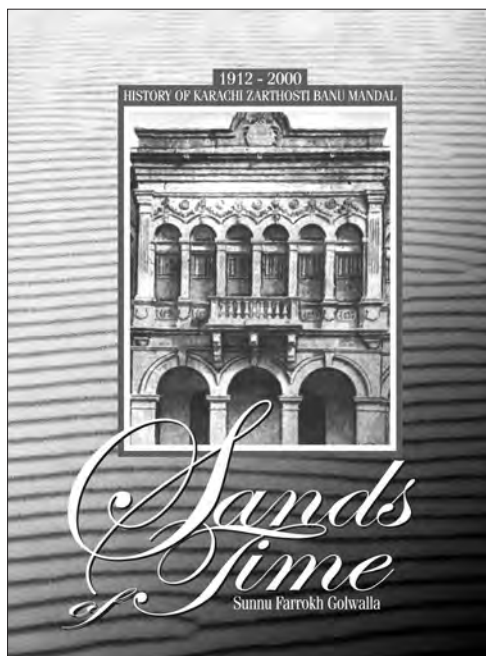
Over 600 persons (20% were non-Zarathushtis) attended the three day *Second Zarathushti International Film Festival*, 25th - 27th October, in North Vancouver. Twenty-six long and short films were shown; *Always with Light*, *On Wings of Fire*, *In the Footsteps of Our Forefathers*, *Paradise* and *People of The Flame* garnered the most interest.

The next festival will be in 2004. All are invited (especially youth) to submit original videos. Also inform me of any films about Zarathushti religion/culture you might see on TV; I will get the permissions to copy/show it at our next festival.

The films are available for viewing in other locations. To arrange a showing in your city, contact me.

Feraydoon Demehri

North Vancouver, ziff@oshihan.org



SANDS OF TIME

by Sunnu Farrokh Golwalla

SANDS OF TIME is the history of Karachi Zarthosti Banu Mandal from 1912 to 2000. With its simple mission of *Seva anay Sakhavat* it has played a role during the two world wars and during national calamities. It has honored poet Rabindranath Tagore, USA's First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, as well as prominent Zarathushtis in the city. It has its own website, book society and workshops, and has retained its care for the elderly, support to education and recreation and the community's medical and income generating needs.

Having interacted with most of the Zarathushti associations in the city, their brief histories are also included in the book. From our agiaries to our schools, and hospitals to literary societies and *moj shok* places – all are woven into this absorbing historical narrative.

Additionally, nearly 200 pictures provide a photo-journey to a casual reader. Available at US \$ 15 or GBP 10 plus shipping charges. Contact: Sunnu Golwalla at sunnu@cyber.net.pk or Aban Rustomji at aban@coatingengineers.com for details.

Light and Shadow

In reviewing Jon L. Berquist's book "*Judaism in Persia's Shadow*" Jehangir Pocha stumbles upon a realization about why the telling of stories and spiritual myth is as important as the research of history. By acknowledging what the book throws light on and what it leaves in the shadows, he gives us insight into a very significant time in ancient Persia – and why it is a time only partially understood by many.

By Jehangir Pocha
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Colloquially, evidence of shared heritage between Jews and Parsis is clearly visible. "What are all these Jews doing here!" Josh Silverman, a friend of mine had said when I took him on a walking tour of Cusrow Baug, a Parsi housing colony in Bombay. To him, the mannerisms, social interactions, famous eccentricities, social tendencies and skullcaps of the Parsis, and not to mention their long noses, invoked a very Jewish sensibility. Within an hour of touring the neat little yellow buildings and speaking with the inhabitants, Josh concluded that Parsis and Jews approached the essentials of life - food, marriage, family, fashion, religion, arguments and their role on Earth – which was of course, indispensable – in very similar ways.

We wondered aloud for a time why and how this could be, but then, some ineffable and common urge drove both of us towards Café Leopold, where we settled down to a cold one and the mystery passed us by.

Jon L. Berquist's book, *Judaism in Persia's Shadow* [Fortress Press] attempts to throw some light on the subject, although it succeeds only partially.

Berquist's book is written to answer a simple question – how did the absorption of Judah (which the Persians called Yehud) into the Persian

Empire affected its ideology, self-understanding and religion?

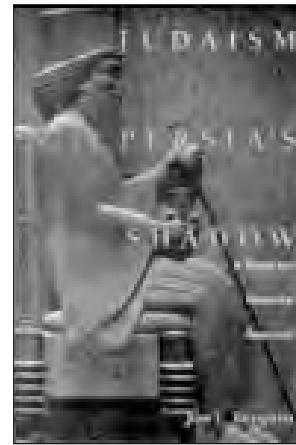
The Missing Prophet

It is not the first book to investigate the issue. Edwin Yamauchi's *Persia and the Bible* and Daryoush Jahanian's *The Zoroastrian Doctrine and Biblical Connections* explore the same realms. But Berquist's book is unique in one significant way: it makes almost no meaningful reference to Zarathushtra or the Zarathushti religion.

“Berquist's book is unique in one significant way: it makes almost no meaningful reference to Zarathushtra or the Zara-thushti religion ... Puzzled, I decided to call Mr. Berquist and seek some explanation.”

Although the book is an investigation into the way the Achaemenian Empire of Cyrus the Great influenced and changed Judaism, Berquist approaches his subject with a minimal consideration of any role the prophet or the religion of ancient Persia might have played in the transformation of Judaism. Instead it focuses on the secular influences – administrative, legal, military and social structures – brought by Cyrus and his successors to Judah.

To be sure, the book is subtitled "A Social and Historical Approach", which clearly indicates that it is not



Judaism in Persia's Shadow
By Jon L. Berquist
Fortress Press, 1995.
ISBN 0-8006-2845-4.

meant to be a religious study. But it still seemed unthinkable to me that Zarathushtra is hardly even mentioned in its 282 pages. After all, could one write a book about the European influence and impact on Latin America without really considering Jesus or Christianity?

Puzzled, I decided to call Mr. Berquist and seek some explanation. When I tracked him down at his office in Flemington, NJ, his clarification was as honest as it was illuminating.

"I did not know much about the religion and could find very few sources," he remarked. "Looking back, I wish I had given it more attention."

I wished it too. But more on that later.

The Practical or the Divine?

Berquist's book begins with a simple premise – that society shapes people, and people create literature. As society changes, so does literature. The drive for his book, says Berquist, came from the radical change Judaic texts underwent between 539 BCE and 333 BCE when Judah was part of the Persian Empire.

"The most important difference is the element of universalism in the post-Persian texts," Berquist explained. "Earlier Judaism was quite particularistic in many ways but the later writing is more embracing of differences."

More significantly, says Berquist, post-Persian Judaic writings reject idolatry and embrace a monotheistic,

priestly form of Yahwism for the first time.

In his precise but uninspiring chronicling of Judah, Berquist tells of how the Babylonians enslaved the Jews in 625 BCE and how Cyrus the Great freed them and returned them to their lands in 539 BCE.

Under the Babylonians, Berquist writes, “the removal (through death or deportation) of the upper strata of Jerusalemite and Judaic society” devastated Jewish life.

“More significantly, says Berquist, post-Persian Judaic writings reject idolatry and embrace a monotheistic, priestly form of Yahwism for the first time.”

In 539 BCE, the return of the Jews to Judah and the re-building of their temples that Cyrus funded and oversaw resulted in a regeneration of the Jewish faith.

“I found a richness in Persian Yehud that bedazzled me,” Berquist writes. “The Persian Empire produced a pluralistic context in which Jerusalem survived, grew and flourished, and the faith of Yahweh was never the same, in any of its expressions.”

The Jewish texts of the time revered Cyrus as a mighty and virtuous Messiah, and called him “the anointed, chosen one” (making him the only non-Jew in the Old Testament to be so proclaimed).

“Thus says the Lord, your redeemer ... who says of Cyrus, ‘He is my Shepherd, and he shall carry out all my purpose ...’

[From Isaiah 44:24-28]

Isaiah 40-55 even invokes the exodus tradition of the Jews to equate Cyrus’ rescue of the slaves from Babylon with Moses’ rescue of the Jews from Egypt.

“Thus says the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and its maker: ... I have aroused Cyrus in righteousness, and I will make all his paths straight; he shall build my city and set my exiles free ...”

[From Isaiah 45:9-13]

But even as Berquist chronicles Cyrus’ munificence succinctly, his explanation for why Cyrus acted as he did is incomplete.

In a section entitled “Cyrus’ Interests”, he offers up ease of administration, economic astuteness, the difficulty in maintaining a large empire, and a desire to focus on conquest, as the primary reasons for Cyrus’ ‘managerial philosophy’.

Of the later king, Darius, he writes that “he was a monotheist, possibly along the lines of Zoroaster” (one of the only times the name is mentioned) but that for political reasons “he maintained a pluralistic polytheistic empire.”

Never for a minute does Berquist conceive that Cyrus’ and Darius’ progressive ideas might have stemmed from their own religious beliefs, which might have shaped their actions as much, if not more, than practical considerations. Though he himself, in later passages, talks of how the Persians introduced the element of universality into Jewish writing, he fails to see Cyrus’ and Darius’ actions as a manifestation of the universal ideal inherent in the religion of Zarathushtra.

Liberty to grow

Berquist also forms the interesting thesis that under secular Achaemenian rule Judaism was free to flourish without political constraints for the first time in its history. This separation of ‘church’ and ‘state’ allowed religious thoughts to thrive without any imperial interference and under the Achaemenians Judaic writing became highly diverse and pluralistic.

The canon of the *Torah* as well as other canonical scriptures developed, setting the stage for formative Judaism. Set off by a more pluralistic and universalist thinking diverse

views of Yahwehism flourished. Monotheism and the rejection of idol worship crept into Judaic consciousness. The role of the temple and the priesthood changed significantly and along Persian (Zoroastrian?) lines.

“Both formative Judaism and nascent Christianity developed within the context of a society and a religion that had been shaped by the Persian Empire,” is his conclusion towards the end of the book.

A book for all reasons

Written in a dense but elegant academic prose, the book covers wide ground and will yield something of interest to almost anyone who can put up with sentences like “apocalypticism’s radicalization of options, often stressing dire ends to human existence, followed this dualistic pattern; if good was not happening in the present, then evil was in charge of human affairs, and this could only lead to increased evil until the world reached its destruction.”

“The Jewish texts of the time revered Cyrus as a mighty and virtuous Messiah, and called him ‘the anointed, chosen one’ (making him the only non-Jew in the Old Testament to be so proclaimed).”

To the historically inclined, the book offers a detailed outline of the history of ancient Middle East.

To people seeking a serious looking book to put on their coffee table with a silver bookmark from Tiffany’s carelessly slipped in, the book offers an appropriately highbrow cover – a grainy gray picture entitled “Darius enthroned, receiving tributes from foreign emissaries”.

To expectant parents the book will yield, at the very least, food for that latest trend in pregnant Parsi suburbia – the quest for a “different” name with which to title sons and nephews unborn. Names like Haggai, Sheshbazaar, Nebo, Udjahorresnet, Nebuchadnezzar, Bardiya, and lastly, my personal favorite, Gaumata, common even in my native Maharashtra, where numerous citizens answer to that antique title. Names that bludgeon friends with their ancient authenticity and re-assure parents that their son will always be regarded as special, and they, as refined, literate folk for naming him so. Women’s names alas, given the gender issues of the day, are sadly sparse.

“ The Persian Empire produced a pluralistic context in which Jerusalem survived, grew and flourished. ”

The only thing missing, as Josh would have been quick to point out, are comparative Jewish and Persian recipes for Matzo Balls.

A place for the Prophet

In his two brief references to Ahura Mazda, Berquist refers to Him as a ‘deity’ and a ‘sky god’, as if he is not quite a real God but an animist abstraction of dubious theological significance.

Looking at his book in the rear view mirror, Berquist says he wishes he had managed to gain a better understanding of Zoroastrianism and included more about it in his treatise.

But how could even a noted theologian like Berquist have been so ill informed about the religion of Zarathushtra?

Perhaps there is an inherited bias in western thinking that relegates the Persian civilization to a lesser standing than its own. With its formative culture being Greco-Roman, both ancient nemesis of the Persians, such prejudice in the West might be entirely possible and obliviously inherited.

This partiality is often illustrated in the works of historians who refrain from conferring the title “The Great” on Cyrus, even as they freely bestow it upon Alexander. This is especially puzzling from writers who, on one hand exalt Cyrus for building the largest empire the ancient world had known and for his rectitude, tolerance and wisdom, and on the other, testify that Alexander willfully and needlessly destroyed much of the ancient world.

After speaking with Berquist I realized how little people know about our faith and that their knowing does matter. Not for narrow reasons of recognition and self-interest. But because truth matters. History is but the subjective interpretation of temporal facts. Yet it molds the way we reason, reflect on our past and build expectations of the future. As we bring truth and understanding to history we free it from old prejudices and we free ourselves to think differently of the past and expect more from the future.

All over the world today, once silent minorities are beginning to tell the story of their race, gender, nation, and struggle to the world. In doing so they are changing the way people conceive of progress, justice, equality and humanity.

For example, for us to tell the story of Cyrus’ obvious ‘greatness’ and Alexander’s recorded brutality does not serve just our own sense of significance or private indignation. It gently changes established notions of what makes a political leader great, particularly at a time when role models for ‘greatness’ need to be much more in Cyrus’ mold than Alexander’s.

If we endeavor to tell the story of our faith, better and wider, it will allow us, and those around us, to see our world just a little bit clearer. ■

Jehangir Pocha [*jspocha@hotmail.com*] is originally from Bombay and now lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

THE OXFORD ANTHOLOGY OF RAJ STORIES

Edited by Saros Cowasjee
Oxford University Press, 1998.
ISBN 019 5658493

Review by Boman Desai



These are tales as such my grandmother told my brother and me, lying one on either side of her in her fourposter bed before retiring to our own beds for the night. They have a similar charm and folksy wisdom, and as might be expected of such tales, a similar sentimentality and supernatural flavor.

They also have the violence of a *Thousand and One Nights*. An estranged English couple reunites over a rag doll they send their son in England. A nasty retired British officer is murdered by his servants, his head covered by the electroplated lid of a serving dish under a halo of flies. A Hindu, pronounced dead by a priest during a sickness from which he recovers, is reduced to serving only the lower castes because he is officially dead to the upper. I could go on, but you get the picture. Many tales depend on a *deus ex machina*, but most are short enough for the contrivance not to matter.

One story in particular, Sara Jeanette Duncan’s “A Mother in India,” doesn’t fit the mold. It is among the longer stories and of Jamesian complexity. An Englishwoman in India, forced to send her daughter to be reared by in-laws in England, finds her grown into a perfectly conventional woman, but not good enough to marry an exceptional man. As she says to the suitor: “Cecily would be happy with anybody who made her comfortable. You would ask a good

deal more than that.” I am not giving anything away. The story holds many surprises, all of them earned.

George Orwell’s stories included in this anthology are more like essays with provocative conclusions. For example: “I perceived in this moment that when the white man turns tyrant it is his own freedom that he destroys” – which is true for tyrants of all colors.

Interestingly, the women tend more often to write about Indians in India, men about the English, the women in a less realistic vein for the same rea-

son, in particular when they put “thees” and “thous” in the mouths of villagers and precise cockney accents in the mouths of the English.

This might have been a convention of the time: Indian English didn’t come into its own until Desani’s *All About H. Hatterr* [1948], and not into force until Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* [1998].

Another Victorian convention, the story within the story, unfortunately places the drama at too great a remove for my taste – but the stories, arranged chronologically, get pro-

gressively less Victorian, the final two the sexiest of the lot.

The introduction by Saros Cowasjee provides an excellent context for the tales, guiding the reader’s attention through aspects of the stories which might otherwise escape his attention, and though each story might not hold its own alone, collectively they make an important contribution to the annals of Anglo-Indian literature. ■

Chicago writer **Boman Desai** is author of the novels “*The Memory of Elephants*” and “*Asylum, USA.*”



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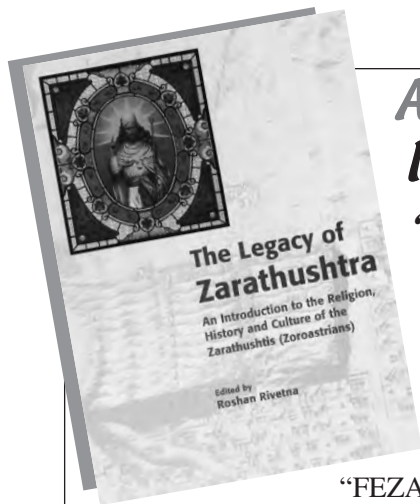
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