

FEZANA JOURNAL

WINTER 2003, ZEMESTAN 1372 YZ



The Fourth Millennium of Zarathushti Culture: A Unesco Celebration

FEZANA JOURNAL

5830 C

PUBLICATION OF THE FEDERATION OF ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA

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ASSOCIATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA

<http://www.fezana.org>

PRESIDENT: **Firdosh Mehta**

951 Jordan Crescent, NW,
Edmonton, Alberta T6L 7A5
fdjmehta@telus.net

WEBSITE MANAGER: **Farrokh Mistree**
farrokh.mistree@eudoramail.com

CHAIRPERSON: **Khorshed Jungalwala**
53 Firecut Lane, Sudbury, MA 01776
(978) 443-6858, (978) 440-8370 (fax)
kayj2@earthlink.net

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, DESIGN AND LAYOUT
Roshan Rivetna
5750 S. Jackson St. Hinsdale, IL 60521
(630) 325-5383, (630) 734-1579 (fax)
RRRivetna@aol.com

EDITORS: **Adel Engineer,**
Dolly Malva, Jamshed Udvadia

YOUTHFULLY SPEAKING

Nikan Khatibi
(949) 349-9492, nikan2@aol.com
Ushtavaity Davar
Ushta@aol.com

BUSINESS MANAGER / ADVERTISEMENTS
Rusi Gandhi

56 Ridge Drive, Montville, NJ 07045
(973) 263-9619, Rusi@garden.net

SUBSCRIPTION MANAGER

Kershaw Khumbatta
9714 Deverell Drive, Sugar Land, TX 77478
(281) 564-8004, (281) 564-8036 (fax)
kershawkhumb@att.net

MAILING DAY CREW

Dilshad Antia, Bachi Damkevala,
Sunny Deboo, Freya Dhunjishaw, Adel Engi-
neer family, Rashna Ghadialy, Dilnavaz
Irani, Zarine Karanjia, Hosi Mehta, Roshan
Patel, Rivetna family, Farida Shroff, Edul
Udvadia, Aban Vazifdar, Zarine Weil...

COVER DESIGN
Zenobia Damania

ON THE COVER

*Detail from a mid-nineteenth century
Chinese, hand-embroidered gara sari
[see page 65].*

COLLECTION ROSHAN RIVETNA,
PHOTO CYRUS RIVETNA.

Fezana Journal, Vol.16, No. 4, ISSN 1068-
2376, published quarterly by FEZANA,
5750 S. Jackson St. Hinsdale, IL 60521-
5109. Periodicals postage paid at Oakbrook,
IL 60523. Annual subscription \$15(US);
\$20(Canada); \$24 (surface) and 50(air) for
other countries; details on Subscription
Form. POSTMASTER: send changes to
Fezana Journal, 5750 South Jackson Street,
Hinsdale, IL 60521-5109.

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The Fourth Millennium of Zarathushti Culture

By Khorshed Jungalwala
Chair, FEZANA Publications

The tiny Central Asian country of Tajikistan, which until 1991 was part of the former Soviet Union for 80 plus years, recently took the initiative of approaching UNESCO to declare the year 2003 as the year for celebration of the 3000th anniversary of Zarathushti culture. The world Zarathushti community is thankful to Tajikistan for initiating, and UNESCO for pronouncing this historic declaration. Tajikistan lies in the cradle of Zarathushti civilization where although conquerors have pillaged and ruled through the centuries, the will and determination of at least half of the six and a half million total population to bring back the culture and religious identity of its heritage is indeed commendable.

Cultural celebrations around the world. FEZANA hopes that all Zarathushtis will take pride in their heritage and celebrate this occasion. Zarathushti communities and associations in North America and other parts of the world, like India, Iran, UK, Australia, Central Asia and Europe, are organizing a variety of events, many of which are open to Zarathushtis and non-Zarathushtis.

These events have taken the form of conferences, jashans, exhibitions, food and film festivals, displays of artifacts and books, commemorative coins and poems, CDs on the Gathas, music, opera and stage performances.

The Tajik Ministry of Culture organized a conference on Zarathushti Religion and Culture on September 5, 2003 at which several international non-Zarathushti scholars were also invited. Dr. Meher Master Moos of India was a prominent Zarathushti speaker at the conference, where she presented gifts and a donation for



building a Zarathushti Cultural Centre in Dushanbe.

Cultural Heritage. This FEZANA Journal issue displays and highlights, in pictures and articles, some of the aesthetic architectural beauty of our ancient buildings and monuments;

the artistry depicted in the paintings, miniatures, carpets, literature and poetry; the stirring quality of music and dance; the sartorial splendor and delicious cuisine; and the contributions of many who have enriched our cultural heritage.

The cultural identity of any community is determined by a multitude of factors, such as ethnicity, religion, language, geographical surroundings, political and sociological changes. These influences are particularly felt in areas of religious practices, socio-economic development, food, fine arts, music, literature, sport, science and the overall development of the community.

The Zarathushti cultures have had to deal with political and geographical constraints, exposure to the cultures of the countries in which they exist

and the degree of freedom to maintain their cultural identity. The impact of western culture is already being felt today among Zarathushtis residing in the new world countries. These influences have existed at all levels in all areas of family and community existence throughout our history.

For centuries, Zarathushti culture has been influenced by the diasporic movement of its people to other areas of the world. The quiet imbibing of the indigenous ethos of other cultures has had an overall positive effect on its own culture. It is our duty to maintain the cultural traditions in the modern world without compromising our identity.

Are we committed to protect, preserve and enrich this heritage which will continue to ensure our place in the civilizations of the world that have contributed in no small measure for posterity? ■

IN COMING ISSUES OF FEZANA JOURNAL

Spring 2004:

Strategies to Perpetuate the Zarathushti religion and communities

Editor: Jamshed R. Udvadia

Summer 2004:

Treasures from the Avesta – Yashts and Nyaeshs

*Guest Editor:
Jamsheed Choksy*

Fall 2004:

Death and the Hereafter

*Guest Editor:
Farrokh Mistree
Co-Guest Editor:
Khojeste Mistree*

Future topics in the works:

- Daily rituals and customs
- Good and Evil
- Vegetation on Earth
- Focus on Youth

From the President

Jasa me avanghe Mazda!
(O Wise Lord, come to our guidance!)

Zarathushti culture – a resurgence of our identity

During 2002 and 2003, UNESCO will be associated with the celebration of 47 anniversaries of

significant events and personalities, as submitted by Member States and subsequently approved by the General Conference of UNESCO.

The oldest of these is the celebration of the “3000th Anniversary of Zoroastrian Culture”. This request was submitted by the State of Tajikistan and seconded by the State of Uzbekistan. The governments of these Central Asian countries, very concerned about their Zarathushti heritage, and eager to safeguard the memory of their ancestral religion and culture, took this initiative to propose this celebration. For this we, Zarathushtis in North America, applaud and thank them.

Another important organization of our community is the *World Zarthushti Cultural Foundation* (founder and president Dr. Homi Dhalla) of Mumbai. They have been involved in various projects to preserve Zarathushti culture and heritage [see page 21]. I invite all FEZANA Member Associations to view the complimentary copy of the DVD-CD “Zarathushti Culture - a Revival” sent by them (via Rohinton Rivetna) which showcases their various activities, and make a generous contribution to WZCF.

The FEZANA UN-NGO Ad-Hoc Committee co-chairs Homi Gandhi

and Behram Pastakia, immediately contacted authorities at the UN and other agencies to confirm the details regarding the UNESCO-associated celebrations.

At the May 2003 FEZANA AGM in Boston, it was decided that FEZANA take the lead to promote and assist in organizing appropriate events to celebrate the “3000th Anniversary of Zoroastrian Culture” throughout Canada and USA. A sub-committee,

co-chaired by Dolly Dastoor and Homi Gandhi, was appointed to undertake this assignment, with a budget of US \$2,000.

Since then, many North American Zarathushti associations have stepped forward with innovative ways to celebrate this anniversary, including associations in Alberta, California, Chicago, Houston, New York, New Jersey-Pennsylvania, Toronto, and Vancouver. FEZANA would like to encourage *all* Member Associations to undertake any activity to show-case our culture to our own community and to bring awareness of our way of life to the community-at-large.

Culture can mean many things. It could be the sum total of human social behavior, including religious beliefs, traditions, ethics, art, architecture, cuisine, fashion, music, dance and all other aspects of human

[Continued on page 95]

Strategies to Perpetuate the Zarathushti Religion and Communities

Zarathushtis all over the world are looking for ways in which the religion and communities can flourish and prosper without having to compromise our theological, ethical and cultural identity which has been preserved for more than 3000 years! Our Spring 2004 issue of the Journal will focus on “*Strategies to Perpetuate the Zarathushti Religion and Communities*”, which affects us all, particularly in North America.

Readers views. *Jamshed R. Udvardia* will be editing this special issue. There will be researched articles from knowledgeable authors who have observed the trends and changes that will help perpetuate and unite, rather than leave us sadly divided. Jamshed will also be gathering readers’ views on this vitally important topic.

Sponsors and donors. This critical subject affects every Zarathushti and could be of great consequence for our future generations and their existence. The Journal appeals to all individuals and associations to make this issue truly worthwhile by co-sponsoring or donating (in any amount) towards its publication:

Individual Sponsors: \$100 +

Association or

Corporate Sponsors: \$250 +

Please send your sponsorships or donations to Khorshed Junglawala [address on page 1] by **January 15, 2004**. All sponsors and donors will be suitably recognized in the journal.

THANK YOU!

Khorshed F. Junglawala
Chair, Publications Committee

Roshan R. Rivetna
Editor-in-Chief, FEZANA Journal

Highlighting the work of FEZANA's volunteer base - the committees

Mentioned below are current activities of some of FEZANA's eleven ad hoc committees. Other projects (of other ad hoc committees, and the standing committees) will be featured in future issues.

● **UN-NGO Committee** (co-chairs **Homi Gandhi** and **Behram Pastakia**) has been instrumental in mobilizing a growing number of Zarathushti youth and adults to participate in events at the UN in New York: the 55th Annual DPI/NGO conference in 2002; the 47th session of the "UN Commission on the Status of Women" and the "Religious Faith and International Humanitarian Action" meeting in March 2003; and the 56th Annual UN/NGO conference in September 2003 [see page 10]. Visit www.fezana.org/UNNGO_Genesis.pdf

● **The UNESCO celebrations committee** (co-chairs **Dolly Dastoor** and **Homi Gandhi**) is coordinating activities to celebrate 2003 as the "3000th anniversary of Zoroastrian Culture" as declared by UNESCO [see cover story in this issue]. Visit www.fezana.org/UNNGO_Celebration.pdf.

● **Academic Scholarships Program** (chair **Dolly Dastoor**). This year the scholarship program was allocated \$10,000 from FEZANA and \$5000 from the Mehraban Kheradi Endowment fund. Scholarships were awarded to nine students [see page 99]. Visit www.fezana.org/about.scholarships.htm.

● **Congress Terms of Reference Review** (chair **Rustom Kevala**). The committee has distributed revised Terms of Reference for the Congress, to FEZANA Members for review. Once feedback is received, the committee will start incorporating those guidelines in upcoming congresses. Contact Rustom@aol.com.

● **External Affairs** (chair **Rohinton Rivetna**) is urging Zarathushti participation at two major upcoming interfaith events: a "Peace Summit" in New Delhi, December 7-10, 2003 to be graced by the President of India and the Dalai Lama; and the "Parliament of World's Religions" in Barcelona, Spain, July 2004. Contact Rivetna@aol.com.

● **Research and Preservation Committee** (chair **Jehan Bagli**). In recent months, committee members have published (in collaboration with NAMC) "Understanding and Practice of Jashan Ceremony" by Ervad Jehan Bagli and Ervad Adi Unwala, and "Religion of Asho Zarathusht and Influence of the Ages" by Ervad Jehan Bagli. The second book in the series "Understanding and Practice of Zarathushtrian Obsequies" is underway.

● **World Body Working Group** (chair **Khorshed Jungalwala**) has completed its three mandates and has not sought a mandate for continuance. The outcomes of the meeting in Mumbai on January 21, 2003 were very positive: there should be one world body with two independent arms.

The WG has developed the constitutions and bylaws for all three entities presenting pertinent features, namely, functions, composition of executive boards, terms of officers, definition of regions, representation, voting schedule, etc.

The WG has recommended that this draft be used as a starting point for further discussions by the elected leadership. For the full report, visit www.fezana.org/wbwg, or contact kayj2@earthlink.net.

[Excerpted from the August 2003 FEZANA News Bulletin by FEZANA vice president Mahrukh Motafram]

Thoughts on Nexus

Ervads Darayus Bajan and Ardeshir Hormozyari, two of three young mobeds (the third was Er. Mehernosh Bhada of Karachi) sponsored by FEZANA and ZYNA to the Youth Congress, NeXus 2003 in Toronto in July, speak of their experiences.

Mobedyar Ardeshir Hormozyari, who has undergone training in California to become a mobedyar, writes:

"We spoke on different aspects of the youth priesthood: what it takes to become a mobed, our individual paths to becoming priests, and our perspectives on the future. Although people had differing views, it was a positive experience because of the high level of respect maintained by all."

Er. Darayus Bajan (whose family has served the Mevawala Agiary in Mumbai for over 150 years) writes:

"Unlike in North America, Pakistan and other places, being ordained for priesthood was more common and less difficult in Mumbai, where we have two institutes which provide complete priestly and academic training. I spoke on the significance and importance of *navar* and *martab*, qualifications required to become a priest and the future of priests.

"In response to why women cannot become priests, the panel explained that the efficacy of all our ceremonies is built upon the founding stone of purity – physical, mental and spiritual. Any man or a woman (even belonging to a non-priestly family) can perform most of the ceremonies like the *Afringan*, *Farokshi* and *Stum*. Even the *Gehsarna* can be performed in case of non-availability of priests. Only the higher liturgical ceremonies like *Nirangdin* and *Bui* require priests with rigorous training and purity at the highest levels.

"Overall, the days at the congress were filled with joy. We were glad to appreciate that the thread of the Zarathushti religion helped our brothers and sisters from North America to maintain their distinct identity and spirit of bonding."

ZSO's Building Capital Campaign off to a Flying Start



Farokh and Dhun Noria donate over \$250,000 to building campaign

Above, Noria family - major donors - \$250,000. l. to r., Dr. Sabrena Noria, Dr. Dhun Noria, Mr. Zubin Noria, Mr. Farokh Noria with ZSO president Mr. Sam Vesuna.

Right, event leaders and project leaders of the Building Capital Campaign Committee at the official launch on May 9.



On Friday May 9, 2003 over 350 of Toronto's prominent Zarathushtis gathered at the Woodbine Banquet and Convention Center in Etobicoke for the official launch of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario's (ZSO) Building Capital Campaign (BCC). An ambitious three-year initiative, the goal is to raise \$2.2 million to expand the darbe mehr (Center) on the existing beautiful private property in North York. These premises were a benevolent donation to the burgeoning immigrant community in 1979 by the Guiv Foundation donated by the Late Arbab Rustom Guiv.

The ZSO appointed the eminent Dr. Dhun F. Noria as chair of the BCC. Dr. Noria assembled her committee in August 2002 and an energetic plan of action was put in place to forge ahead to realize this vision.

The glamorous event's chief guest was His Excellency Mr. Divyabh Manchanda, consul-general of India. The ambience was uplifting, as guests including several non-Zarathushti friends and supporters, mingled during the cocktail hour, sipping drinks and enjoying delicious snacks.

The evening's MC was Ms. Phee Vania, a talented member of the com-

munity, who controlled the flow of the evening with style and grace. The formal part of the evening commenced with a benediction by Er. Boman Kotwal and Er. Yezdi Antia, accompanied by our most recently initiated young priest, Er. Pirhan Dastoor.

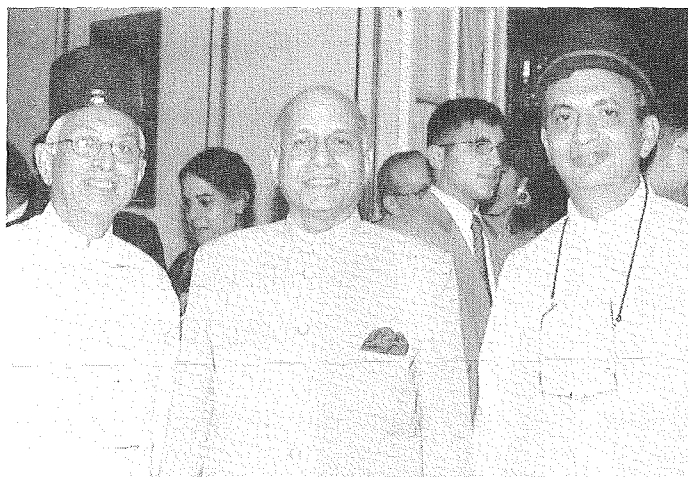
Mr. Manchanda recalled the role of the Parsis in India and their valuable contribution to industry, trade, commerce and politics. This was followed by a gripping and inspiring multimedia presentation by chairperson Dr. Noria, who outlined the role

[Continued on page 6]

Parsi New Year

Zoroastrians celebrate Navroze at ambassador's residence in Washington, DC

PHOTO: AHAMED NAZAR



Co-chairs of the FEZANA UN-NGO Committee Homi Gandhi [left] and Behram Pastakia [right] with India's ambassador to the US, H.E. Lalit Mansingh, at the Parsi New Year celebration at his residence.

[Excerpted from "Parsi New Year" by Vasantha Arora, News India Times, September 5, 2003].

WASHINGTON: For the second consecutive year, Navroze, the Parsi New Year, was celebrated at the residence of India's Ambassador to the US, Lalit Mansingh, in Washington, DC, on Aug. 24 ...

The occasion, attended by more than 400 people from the Greater Washington area, provided an opportunity for the community to showcase their ancient history and cultural traditions ... There was a slide show on a big screen to emphasize the life and times of the Parsis, a joint effort by Brig. Behram Panthaki and the embassy staff ...

Ambassador Mansingh spoke of how the Parsis assimilated with quiet dignity into India's history and contributed their extraordinary genius in every walk of life. As intelligent refugees, while guarding their ethnic, cultural and religious identity with fierce pride, they were always mindful of their status and made friends wherever they went.

He said Parsis have excelled in a way no other community has and it would seem that their upbringing and strong religious belief may have been the reason for this.

India, Mansingh emphasized, is richer today due to the "tallest" contributions from a tiny community – in science, the arts and industry. They have also left an indelible imprint on India's cultural and social ethos.

Mansingh underlined "... the message that we have is the essential unity of India, not in spite of its diversity but because of its diversity.

"Now the question you may ask: Why make a fuss over a community which is so tiny? But the fact is we think this is very important because that is what India is all about. When we say '*sarva dharma samgram*,' it means that all religions have to be treated with equal respect. It is not just a slogan, we have been practicing it in India for 3,000 years.

"India, which saw the growth of four major religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism) on its land, has been a sanctuary for all religious groups ... as four more great religions took root in India – Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Zoroastrianism. India is not only the largest democracy in the world, India is the biggest joint family of religions and we are proud of it.

"What is really significant is that the Zoroastrians did not come as economic migrants looking for better

opportunities," Mansingh said, "they came in search of a land which would allow them to practice their faith without repression and without molestation. This is why it is so significant."

"It is not that just a few Zoroastrians migrated to India, but the Zoroastrian religion migrated to India." ... Mansingh then spoke about the contributions of the Parsis ...

The guests were treated to a feast of Parsi dishes prepared by chefs from New Jersey ...

ZSO Building Campaign

[Continued from page 5]

of the BCC, achievements to date, and a clear and realistic financial plan to make this dream a reality. Dr. Noria's stunning personality shone through during her articulate and passionate appeal. She unveiled the artist's rendering of the proposed plans and explained that the architectural inspiration for the new building came from the Apadana Palace in Persepolis.

Dr. Noria announced that in a short span of seven months her committee had raised over \$660,000 through fundraising events and personal donations. A dedicated group of professionals and business owners from the community have formed a **Support Alliance Group** to promote the cause and have pledged 10% of their income from Zarathushti clients.

Dr. Noria and her committee presented a 'check' for **\$660,000** to ZSO president, Sam Vesuna, which was followed by a deafening applause. Mr. Vesuna thanked Dr. Noria for spearheading the BCC, and congratulated her on her outstanding leadership, dedication and generosity.

At this point, Mr. Vesuna revealed the magnanimous personal donation of **over \$250,000** made by Mr. Farokh Noria and Dr. Dhun Noria to this cause. This gesture of heartwarming generosity by the Noria family came as a complete surprise

to the audience, and the Norias received an overwhelming standing ovation for their benevolence.

Dinner and Dr. Noria's rallying for spontaneous donations followed the formal part of the evening. An additional **\$52,000** was generously added to the funds bringing the grand total to **\$712,000!**

As this exciting evening came to a close, the Zarathushti community was left buoyant with every indication that their collective dream will soon become a reality, especially with Dr. Noria's charming smile and mantra "Keep Smiling, we are almost there" ringing in their ears.

In June, the BCC organized the "First Zoroastrian Golf Classic" where 137 golfers enjoyed a brilliant summer

June afternoon at the Kleinburg Golf Club. An informal enjoyable dinner followed by prize distribution and speeches.

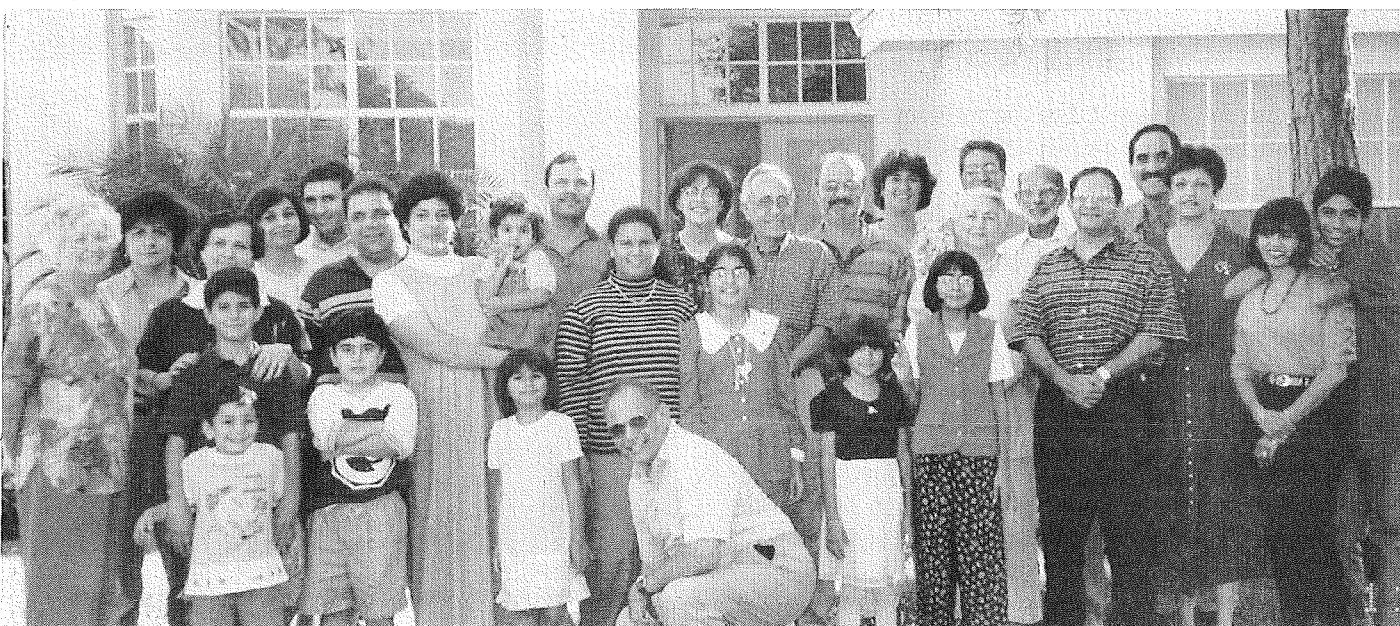
Ontario Zarathushtis are enjoying several events organized by the BCC and at time of writing over **\$850,000** has been collected, which is 37% of the target. ZSO "Fun-raising" has a whole new meaning and the overwhelming success is due to Ahura Mazda's blessings and the passionate participation of over 30 event and project leaders who meet every fortnight and keep the momentum of this noble task moving along.

[Submitted by Nilufer Mama, BCC Committee Member, email: nilufer@attglobal.net].

POPULATION OF INDIANS IN USA

The top metropolitan areas in the US by size of populations of Indians *[based on US Census 2000]:*

New York	400,194
San Francisco	144,231
Chicago	116,868
Los Angeles	104,482
Washington, DC	88,211
Philadelphia	52,380
Houston	51,959
Dallas/Ft. Worth	45,732
Boston	43,732
Atlanta	37,162



Zarathushtis of the Tampa Bay area in Florida at a recent gathering. Photo by Soli Dastur. [kneeling in front].

Tampa Bay Zarathushtis give birth to ZATAMBAY

At the Navroze jashan/lunch on August 17, at the home of Tehmi and Firdaus Dastoor, in Seminole, Florida, Hoshedar Tamboli, chair of the FEZANA Small Groups Committee, called a meeting to discuss whether the Tampa Zarathushtis should organize into an association. There was general agreement to form a "Small Group" and call it "Zarathushti Association of Tampa Bay (ZATAMBAY)". Tehmi Dastoor was nominated and unanimously approved to be the group representative for FEZANA. ZATAMBAY is not a registered association yet, and therefore will not be a FEZANA Member Association for now.

Tehmi Dastoor writes: "Everyone present at the Navroze jashan at my home (where ZATAMBAY was officially born) seemed very excited to finally have an official organization of our own. Our group is small, but a lively one, and I am happy to serve as its representative." FEZANA president Firdosh Mehta sent a congratulatory message welcoming ZATAMBAY to the FEZANA Small Groups family. ZATAMBAY is already planning its first major project – hosting the next FEZANA AGM, in Tampa, in May 2004.

Karkaria visits North America to research book on Zarathushtis

Noted Indian journalist **Bachi Karkaria**, spent a month in the US researching her book on the current status of the Zarathushti community in India and the diaspora. The book is commissioned by Viking-Penguin. She interviewed Zarathushtis of different generations, country and



professional backgrounds – in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, New York and Boston – hopping across to Montreal, Canada before returning home, which is currently New Delhi.

Bachi Karkaria, on North American tour researching her upcoming book.

Ms. Karkaria, associate editor of *The Times of India*, is currently assigned to the influential New Delhi edition and also writes a satirical weekly column, *Erratica* for *The Sunday Times of India*. Her earlier job as Group Editorial Director, *Mid-Day Multimedia* was a pioneering position in Indian media.

A third-generation journalist, Ms. Karkaria is a recipient of the US-based Mary Morgan-Hewitt Award for Lifetime Achievement in Media. In 2002, she became the first Indian appointed as board member of the World Editors Forum.

Karkaria's latest book deals with the twin threads of survival and identity – the double helix which formed the DNA of the Zarathushti community right at its genesis, and has returned to haunt it 12 centuries later. The book hopes to study the issues that concern Zarathushtis as individuals and as communities across the world, see how they integrate into their different environments, and yet retain their core Zoroastrian-ness.

"Indeed, one of the challenges of the book," says Bachi, "is to define what exactly this identity is."

"The big discovery on this trip is the wider network spanning Americanized Parsis and the 'Persians' who have come directly from Iran without the Indianizing influence that has so impacted the Parsis and Iranis I have known back home."

For Bachi, the North American research was "eye-opening and energizing", lifting the Zarathushti experience out of the narrow confines of the Indian community, and providing "a global dimension to the adventure which has always been part of the Zarathushti story". ■

Preeta Bansal appointed to US Commission

A former solicitor general of New York state, **Preeta Bansal** [below] has been appointed to the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) last May.



This is the first time an Indian American will occupy such an eminent position on the six-member USCIRF, which advises the president, the secretary of state and congress, on how best to promote religious freedom in other countries.

Prior to her appointment as New York solicitor general, Bansal served in the Clinton Administration as counselor in the US Justice Department and as special counsel in the Office of the White House counsel.

Bansal was born in Roorkee, India, and came to the US with her family at the age of three. She is a magna cum laude graduate of Harvard-Radcliffe College and a magna cum laude graduate of Harvard Law School. ■

INTERFAITH-INTERALIA



Library of Congress lecture series. *Adi Davar* [center] presented a talk last year on *Zoroastrian Fire Temples*, as part of the lunchtime talk series at the Library of Congress, arranged by *Kersi Shroff* [right]. At left is an official of the Library of Congress.

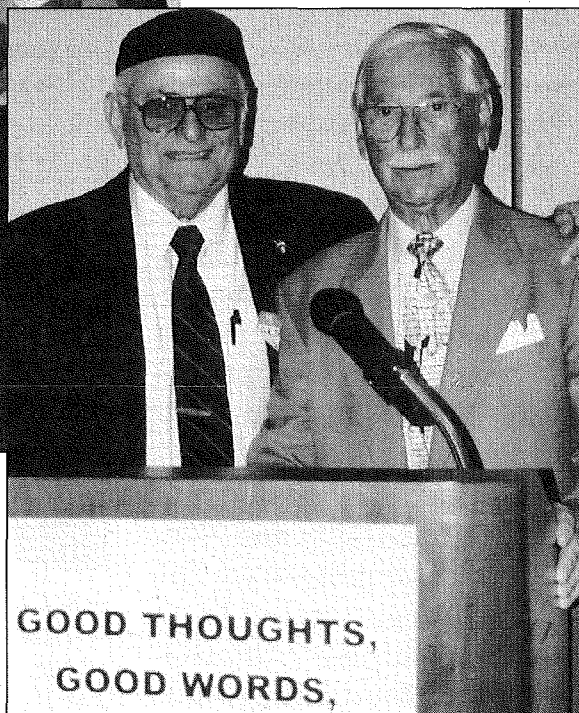
WSIS Summit in Geneva

Jenny Presswalla from Tampa, FL, will represent FEZANA at the "World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)" in Geneva, Switzerland, December 10-12, which aims to develop plans to "shape the future of the global information society". Jenny's participation is made possible on account of FEZANA's NGO status. The second section of WSIS is scheduled for November 2005 in Tunisia. Visit www.un.org.

Youth interested in participating in future UN events contact bpastakia@aol.com or Homi_Gandhi@usa.net. ■



Below, Shapur Irani and P. E. MacAllister, Indianapolis. Left, section of the audience.



Israel's Faith and its Debt to Zarathushtra

Over seventy persons (mostly non-Zarathushtis) listened with interest to a presentation "*The Origins of Israel's Faith – and its Debt to Zarathushtra*" by P. E. MacAllister, hosted by Shapur Irani (owner of the 'Irani Tea' business) and his wife Judith, in Indianapolis on August 17. Shapur gave a short but inspired introduction to the history, doctrine and traditions of the religion.

Mr. MacAllister, a prominent civic leader, and an authority on the Old Testament and the Ancient World, traced the development of religion through the sweep of history, the origins of the Hebrew religion and the stormy history of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, until Jerusalem fell in 586 BCE.

"Religion, then, was about obedience, subservience, fear ... it had nothing to do with morality."

"The period of the exile and metamorphosis brings us to a new element: an Aryan presence into the long history of the Semitic world. The Medo-Persian suzerainty was a refreshing breath of air in the Fertile

Crescent. In the monarch Cyrus the Great, we encounter a warrior, conqueror, and manager without the need to visit devastation on conquered peoples ..."

"There are corroborating references to the Persian record in the Books of Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther. The former tells us that ... Cyrus freed the Jews, encouraging a return to their homeland when they might rebuild their nation ..."

"Maybe Cyrus – and the Persians – showed a remarkable tolerance and magnanimity because of their religion, Zoroastrianism ..."

Mr. MacAllister then recounted the "astounding amount of material derived from ancient Zoroastrianism transplanted to other religions:

"Christmas, the *25th of December* may be aligned with Roman Saturnalia and coincident with winter solstice. But it also happened to be the birthday of Mithra.

"The most striking contribution was one which rejected the Hebrew premise that imputed all powers to Yahweh, a bizarre premise that

makes God the source of wickedness ... Judaism revamped its thinking, and *Satan* became the source of evil.

Other theological innovations ascribed to Zarathushtra was the concept of *heaven* and *hell*, the *moment of accountability*, and the millennial age to be brought about by *the Messiah*. The *final judgement* and *after-life* drifted into Christianity out of those faint echoes and suggestions of Judaism, borrowed from Zarathushtra. The *spirit of God* is similar to the amesha spentas, the immortal holy ones. We recall the element of *free will* and saw it represented very early in the Garden of Eden. The *Eden story* is there, as is *The Flood* and *The Temptation*. Elijah swept to heaven in a *fiery chariot*, similar to the bolt of lightening which swept up Zarathushtra ...

"We (Christians) are legatees of that ancient journey ... ancient wisdom coming down from the sages of the east, primarily in Palestine and in Ancient Persia ..."

[For the full text of this paper contact Shapur Irani at (317) 894-9290, iranitea@msn.com]

Poised for international, UNESCO initiated, celebrations of the “3000th Anniversary of Zoroastrian Culture,” FEZANA sent a 10-member delegation to the UN’s 56th Annual NGO conference.

Taking place at the UN in New York City, in September, the conference explored diverse sources of human security, focusing on policies and programs that emphasize economic and social development, human rights and environmental protection. The UN’s foremost annual NGO event, in 2002, the NGO conference drew 2,000 people from 70 countries, representing 760 NGOs.

FEZANA’s participation for the second year marks a new frontier for the Zarathushti community as it pursues philanthropic and social traditions in a global arena.

The FEZANA delegation seeks to further UN humanitarian initiatives and forge ties with other NGOs, to strengthen the organization’s continuing commitment to promoting peace, social justice and dignity for all.

Their objective is to also learn how to translate individual achievements of Zarathushtis, in the promotion of human security and dignity, into more systematic and unified efforts.

- Behram Pastakia



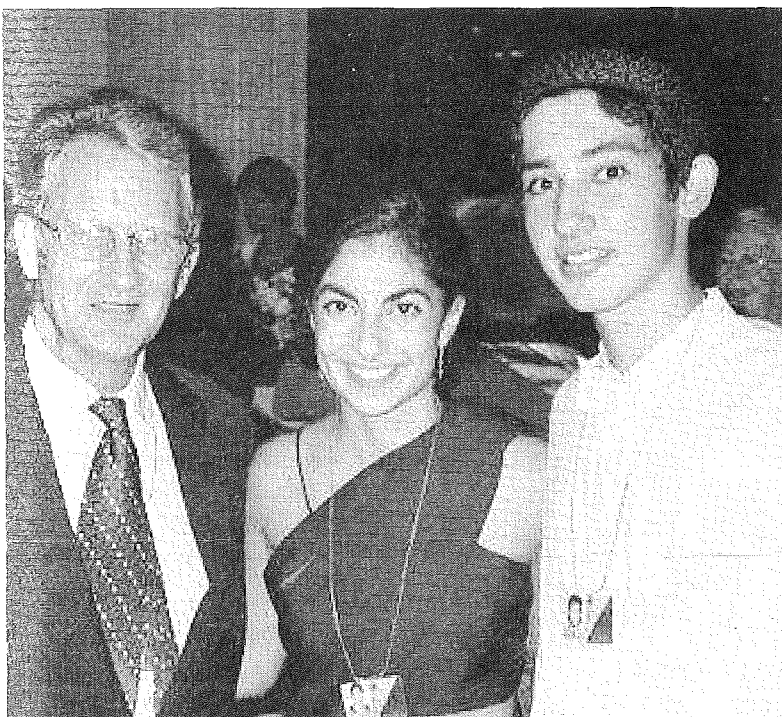
Ashok Khosla [5th from left] with FEZANA delegates at the UN grounds, l. to r., Trita Parsi, Suzie Karani, Behram Pastakia, Shanaya Mistry, Mr. Khosla, Neville Antia, Dr. Roda Patel, Homi Gandhi, Aysha Ghadiali, Rohan Vilms and Freyan Bilimoria. Mr. Khosla is president of Development Alternatives Group, an Indian organization promoting sustainable development, and winner of the prestigious 2002 Sasakawa Environmental Prize of the United Nations Environmental Program (www.deval.org/sasakawa.htm)

Zarathushti delegation at UN NGO conference

By Shanaya Mistry and Neville Antia
Photos by Freyan Bilimoria

For the second consecutive year, FEZANA participated at the United Nations’ Fifty-sixth Annual Conference for Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) with a team of ten representatives. Our UN team brought together Zarathushtis from all across North America and from all walks of life. The group was led by Homi Gandhi (president of ZAGNY and co-chair of the FEZANA UN/NGO committee) and Behram Pastakia (president of ZAMWI and co-chair of the FEZANA UN/NGO committee). Other team members

included **Susan Karani** (pursuing her masters in Human Rights Studies at Columbia), **Aysha Ghadiali** (Peace Corps volunteer in Jordan, currently on the staff of the Council on Foreign Relations, NYC), pediatrician **Dr. Roda Patel** (who is spearheading a program for impoverished children through the Gram Seva Trust in Gujarat), **Trita Parsi** (PhD student at Johns Hopkins and part-time policy advisor to Robert Ney (R-OH)), **Neville Antia** (masters in Public Health from the University of Michigan, currently in medical school in



Above, Paul Hoeffel, chief, NGO Section, UN Department of Public Information, and co-chair, Organizing Committee of the 56th DPI/NGO conference, 2003, on "Human Security and Dignity: Fulfilling the promise of the UN" with Freyan Bilimoria and Rohan Vilmus, FEZANA youth delegates from California, at reception on 8th September, at UN Headquarters, New York. Right, in the General Assembly hall with the logo of the UN. Below, delegates in the conference room.



England), **Rohan Vilmus**, (senior at Palo Alto High School), **Shanaya Mistry** (who was recently called to the Ontario bar and plans to practice law in Toronto) and **Freyan Bilimoria** (senior at Casillega School in Palo Alto, CA).

The conference on "Human Security and Dignity: Fulfilling the Promise of the United Nations" took place from September 8 - 10, 2003, at the UN headquarters in New York City. This conference was successful in highlighting one fundamental message: global discourse on security issues cannot focus on military security alone, but must be defined in terms of 'human security' which requires policies and programs that emphasize sustainable economic and social development, human rights and environmental protection. Recognizing NGOs as agents of change, the conference brought together 2000 individuals representing 600 UN-related NGOs from 65 countries to discuss successful strategies in advancing human security and dignity. Empowering youth and women through education was identified as a key strategy in achieving these goals.

Being the foremost NGO event at the UN, the conference received wide media coverage including three press conferences and featured keynote speakers like Danny Glover, Kingsley Moghalu of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and Roland Wiederkehr, a member of the Swiss Parliament. Interactive internet webcasts of the conference also allowed NGOs unable to attend to participate in panel discussions. [To page 13]

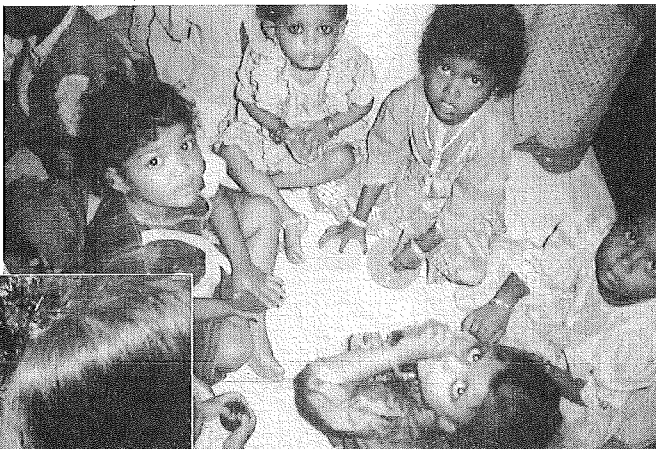


"Every child comes with the message that God is not yet discouraged of Man"

- Rabindranath Tagore

*Right, children
at an 'angan-
wadi' class*

*Below, Dr.
Roda Patel, at
a home visit
with villagers*



With the Gram Seva Trust, of Kharel (in Gujarat) pediatrician Dr. Roda K. Patel of Chicago has made it her life's mission to provide a holistic approach to health care for malnourished children in the villages of Gujarat.

"I have been going to India since 1995, when I spent 9 months surveying the condition of the children in and around the village of Kharel in South Gujarat," says Dr. Roda Patel, a pediatrician from suburban Chicago, "To my dismay the most pressing need I found was malnutrition. This retards not only their physical growth but also their mental and emotional development." Since then, providing a holistic approach to health care in these villages, has become a passion for Roda and her husband, cardiac surgeon Dr. Khushroo Patel.

Roda first started a pediatric clinic at the Gram Seva Trust hospital in Kharel, where a dedicated couple, Drs. Harsha and Ashwin Shah, had made it their life's mission to uplift this community of 40 villages with a population of 70,000. Prior to 1994, these villagers had no recourse to any medical help. Most children do not go to school. In addition, unemployment coupled with addiction to alcohol and tobacco takes a toll on some communities.

In 1997, they started two 'anganwadis' – child health and education centers. They have since 'adopted' 62 of the 300 government anganwadis, and now care for over 3,000 children. The health workers also visit remote areas with medical supplies. A new "Adolescent Girls Project" aims to educate and empower girls by introducing them to income-generating activities; and the "Antenatal Care Project" is a training program for safe motherhood and newborn care.

Your donations will help this worthy cause! Results have been most encouraging but much work remains to be done. **100% of donations received will go for the welfare of the children.** Please make your checks to "India Development Service", a non-profit charitable organization, earmarked for "Gram Seva Trust" and mail to Dr. Roda Patel, 2030 Post Road, Northbrook, IL 60062, tel: (847) 564-2030, rodak@aol.com.

- Roshan Rivetna

Zarathushti Youth Service Opportunity

An item listed in 1997 for FEZANA's ten year vision – to establish a community service program, a Zarathushti Youth Service – is now a reality. The suggestion, by Mitra Mehr, a youth participant at the UN DPI/NGO conference in 2002, to find a suitable site where Zarathushti youth from North America can volunteer, led to the **Gram Seva Trust**, Kharel, Gujarat. Here malnourished children are cared for in 'anganwadis'.

A voluntary Non-Government Organization (NGO), the Gram Seva Trust, started with a few children in 1994, now covers over 3,000 children (only 15% of the target population) in 41 villages with a population of over 71,000. There is room to grow!

Pediatrician Dr. Roda Patel of Illinois, who spends four months every year in Kharel, encourages Zarathushti youth to join her in this humanitarian work, "My trips to Kharel have always been very rewarding ... It is an extremely heartwarming experience for me, as in this 'business': (a) there is no competition, (b) there is no recession, and (c) the rewards are beyond imagination.

Dr. Patel has made arrangements for food and lodging at site for volunteers. A stay of 4 - 6 weeks is recommended. Jehan Rivetna of Chicago and Mehr Pastakia of Bethesda, MD are among the volunteers who have spent time at Kharel, and found it to be a most meaningful and inspiring experience.

The World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce (VP Homi Davier, davier@capricorntravel.com) has offered to provide subsidized airfare to volunteers. To learn more about this opportunity, contact Dr. Roda Patel at (847) 564-2030, rodak@aol.com.

*By Behram Pastakia
bpastakia@aol.com*



UN NGO Conference ...

[Continued from page 11]

This conference enabled FEZANA to have a voice in a world forum whereby it can offer a Zarathushti perspective on global issues. It represented not only a remarkable opportunity to promote awareness of the Zarathushti community and its activities, but also the ability to forge ties with other NGOs.

The team's success in networking with other organizations is a crucial step taken in identifying the type of future projects in which FEZANA can get involved. We also generated a lot of interest in FEZANA's efforts to promote youth volunteers at the Gram Seva Trust in Gujarat, India, where Dr. Roda Patel, a FEZANA representative at the conference, oversees a health and nutrition project for children *[see page 12]*.

This was truly an enriching experience for us as 'youth participants'. In a political environment where issues of human security and dignity are more pertinent than ever, the opportunity to participate in these discussions inspired us to follow the well-entrenched Zarathushti ethos of promoting peace and social justice. FEZANA's continued commitment to encourage youth participants to attend this conference is a memorable educational experience that we are not likely to forget.

Inter-religious prayer service in New York. Er. Rohinton Dadina of ZAGNY in white jama and paghri, to the left of this year's president of the United Nations General Assembly, His Excellency Julian Hunte *[center, in suit]*, represented the Zarathushti community at a prayer ceremony, held on September 11, 2003, at St. Bartholomew's Church in Manhattan, to mark the opening of this year's session of the UN General Assembly. In this, the seventh annual interfaith event, the focus of the clergy was on "fresh water" reminding us to preserve this resource for posterity. UNESCO has designated 2003 as the "International Year of Freshwater."

In 2003, FEZANA, for the first time became an official sponsor of this event. Six Zarathushti representatives from the team participating in the UN DPI/NGO (Department of Public Information/Non-Governmental Organizations) meeting, held at UN Headquarters September 8-10, 2003), took part in the processional prior to the recitation of prayers. Zarathustis resident in New York were in the audience. The morning provided opportunities for networking with key figures from the World Conference of Religions for Peace (www.wcrp.org). FEZANA intends to continue participation in this annual event in the years ahead.

Interfaith in LA

Dolly Malva of Los Angeles attended the "Unity in Diversity" meeting organized by the local interfaith group and a pre-Parliament event organized by the LA chapter of the Parliament of the World's Religions. She was instrumental in making sure that the Zarathushti symbol was included in the flyers for both events.

Habitat for Humanity frame raising ceremony

Kersi Shroff and **Shara Godiwalla** of ZAMWI participated in an interfaith house frame raising ceremony in Washington, DC, on Sept 16.

Representatives of many faiths came together to build a home for a family

in need. The house is a project of Habitat for Humanity in partnership with the DC United Religions Initiative (URI) Cooperation Circle and the Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington (IFC).

The ceremony began with the faith leaders, led by banners of many faiths, in procession to the concrete pad of the future house. Charles Gibbs, executive director of URI and Clark Lobenstine, executive director of the IFC stressed the "power of this moment of hope – hope for a better future for a family; hope for a new level of interfaith cooperation in Washington; and hope that this project might serve as a model for similar cooperative efforts elsewhere."

COMING EVENTS

Parliament of Religions convenes Peace Summit in New Delhi

The president of India, Dr. Abdul Kalam, will inaugurate the *Parliament of Religions* – an international summit promoting harmony and peace among India's diverse religious communities, in New Delhi, December 7-10, 2003. His Holiness the Dalai Lama will be a featured speaker. The event is organized in partnership with the Parliament of the World's Religions. Contact Rohinton Rivetna, rivetna@aol.com.

World Youth Congress

The *Third World Zoroastrian Youth Congress*, will be held in Pune, India, from December 27 - 31, 2003. [See ad on page 18].

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas

The Government of India and FICCI will celebrate the Second Pravasi Bharatiya Divas January 9-11, 2004, in New Delhi, aimed at networking of the Indian diaspora, NRIs/PIOs and creating a framework for a sustained and productive interaction. Visit www.indiaday.org, or send email to indiaday@indiaday.org.

World Social Forum

The *World Social Forum*, will be held January, 2004 in Mumbai, with participation by the World Council of Churches. It will be an "open meeting for reflective thinking, a democratic exchange of ideas, a place for formulating proposals and for inter-linking people of goodwill for common action to building a society centered on the human person." Visit www.wsfindia.org.

ZSO Champagne Cruise

The Zoroastrian Society of Ontario's Building Capital Campaign Commit

Calendar of Festivals,

December to May. (S) is Shenshai, (K) is Kadmi and (F) is Fasli.

Yalda	<i>Mah Daye, Roz Khordad</i>	Sun Dec 21	(F)
Death Anniversary of Zarathushtra	<i>Mah Daye, Roz Khorshed</i>	Fri Dec 26	(F)
Maidhyarem Gahambar	<i>Mah Dae, Roz Meher -Bahram</i>	Wed Dec 31 - Sun Jan 4	(F)
Jashne Daegan	<i>Mah Dae, Roz Daepdin</i>	Wed Jan 7	(F)
Jashne Bahmangan	<i>Mah Bahman, Roz Bahman</i>	Fri Jan 16	(F)
Paitishem Gahambar	<i>Mah Sheherevar, Roz Ashtad</i> <i>- Aneran</i>	Tue Jan 13 - Sat Jan 17 Thu Feb 12 - Mon Feb 16	(K) (S)
Jashne Sadeh	<i>Mah Bahman, Roz Meher</i>	Fri Jan 30	(F)
Meher nu Parab	<i>Mah Meher, Roz Meher</i>	Wed Mar 3	(S)
Ayathrem Gahambar	<i>Mah Meher, Roz Ashtad - Aneran</i>	Thu Feb 12 - Feb 16 Sat Mar 14 - Wed Mar 17	(K) (S)
Fravardegan/Panjeh/Hamaspathmedayem Gahambar	<i>Five Gatha days</i>	Tue Mar 16 - Sat Mar 20	(F)
Char-Shanbe-Soori (Heralding the New Year)	<i>Tuesday prior to Nouruz</i>	Tue Mar 16	(F)
Nouruz or Jamshedi Navroz (New Year)	<i>Mah Fravardin, Roz Hormazd</i>	Sun Mar 21	(F)
Khordad Sal (Birthday of Zarathushtra)	<i>Mah Fravardin, Roz Khordad</i>	Fri Mar 26	(F)
Pir e Herisht Festival	<i>Mah Fravardin, Roz Amardad-Khorshed</i>	Sat Mar 27 - 31	(F)
Ava Ardavisoor nu Parab	<i>Mah Avan, Roz Avan</i>	Thu Feb 26 Sat Mar 27	(K) (S)
Fravardegan (Remembrance of the departed)	<i>Mah Fravardin, Roz Fravardin</i>	Thu Apr 8	(F)
Jashne Ardibeheshtgan	<i>Mah Ardibehesht, Roz Ardibehesht</i>	Thu Apr 22	(F)
Atash-nu-Parab	<i>Mah Adar, Roz Adar</i>	Fri Mar 26 Sun Apr 25	(K) (S)
Maidyozarem Gahambar	<i>Mah Ardibehesht, Roz Khorshed - Daepmeher</i>	Fri Apr 30 - Tue May 4	(F)
Zarathusht-no-Diso (Death anniversary of Zarathushtra)	<i>Mah Daye, Roz Khorshed</i>	Tue Apr 27 Thu May 27	(K) (S)
Daye Mah nu Jashan	<i>Mah Daye, Roz Fravardin</i>	Wed May 5 Thu Jun 4	(K) (S)
Maidhyarem Gahambar	<i>Mah Daye, Roz Meher-Behram</i>	Sun May 2 - Thu May 6 Tue Jun 1 - Sat Jun 5	(K) (S)

ZSO Champagne Cruise

[Contd from previous page]
tee has organized a 7-day "ZSO Champagne Cruise" to the Eastern Caribbean on the cruise ship, "Golden Princess" of Princess Cruise Lines, leaving from Fort Lauderdale, FL on January 31, 2004. Contact Dela Kooka at (905) 468-0405.

NA Congress 2004

The XIII North American Zoroastrian Congress will be held in the San Francisco Bay area December 29, 2004 to January 1, 2005. Contact Publicity chair Nazneen Spliedt, nazeher@aol.com [see page 18].

2004 Zarathushti Games

The next Zarathushti Games co-sponsored by the Zoroastrian Sports Committee (ZSC), FEZANA and ZSBC, will be held at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, July 1-4, 2004, zsc@fezana.org.

Parliament of Religions, Barcelona 2004

The 4th Parliament of the World's Religions will be July 7-13, 2004 in Barcelona, Spain. This follows 5 years after the Parliament in

Cape Town, S. Africa. Join with thousands of people of spirit, faith and goodwill, for inter-religious encounter, dialogue and creative

engagement with the critical issues facing our world. This exciting gathering will be the signature event of a 141 day Forum of Cultures, co-sponsored by the Universal Forum of Cultures Barcelona, with the support of UNESCO. Registration is \$495. Family/group rates are available. Visit www.cpwr.org or contact Rohinton Rivetna (rivetna@aol.com) who is coordinating the Zarathushti participation.

Next World Congress

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

The Ninth Zarathushti Games

● July 1- 4, 2004 ● Vancouver, BC ●

*The legend continues ...
Live it! Experience it! Be part of it!*



For information please contact
your local Zarathushti association
or visit

www.zsbc.org

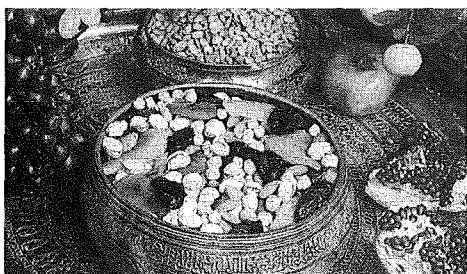


For the experience of a life-time, visit Planetfest04

Pasadena Convention Center
Pasadena, CA
January 2 - 4, 2004

www.planetary.org/planetfest04

Planetfest04 will be an experience of a life time, specially for students of all ages. Here scientists are gathered under one roof, eager to talk to students looking for direction in their careers and education. Scholarship opportunities may be available. Astronauts, astronomers, physicists, space explorers, architects, biologists, artists, science fiction authors, are all there ready to help. The three-day festival is sponsored by The Planetary Society, assisted by NASA and JPL, and volunteers like Dr. Aban Daruwalla, a weapons systems specialist at the Naval Warfare Center in Corona, CA. Dr. Daruwalla also helps organize the Sally Ride (the first female astronaut) Festival for Girls. To learn more about these exciting opportunities, contact Dr. Daruwalla at DaruwallaAN@corona.navy.mil.



Yalda and Yuletide

The common thread

The festival of 'Yalda', also called 'Shab-e Cheleh', is celebrated on the winter solstice, the longest night of the year, around December 21 (*Mah Daye* and *Roz Khordad* in the Fasli calendar). In the Persian calendar, this falls on the last day of the month Azar (Azar 30, ZRE), with the next day being the first day of the month Daye (Daye 1, ZRE).

Origins. The festival has roots going back over 3,000 years. Life in ancient times was closely tied to the seasons of nature and climactic changes. In Northern climes, ancient man feared as the days got shorter and shorter. Would the dark night and winter cold annihilate the sun and the warmth of the sun? Soon, he discovered that the process reverses on a certain day – the sun was staying in the sky longer and longer; and warmth and renewal of the life cycle of animals and plants would soon return as the dark days of winter led to the rebirth of spring. The winter solstice thus became a time of rejoicing.

On this night, the ancients believed that Mithra (or Mehr), the sun god, was reborn. Light, day and sunshine were signs of order and the creator, Ahura; whereas night, darkness and cold were signs of Ahriman. The 'growing' sun, signifying the victory of light-goodness over darkness-evil was celebrated in many ancient cultures, including Persia and Egypt and in ancient Rome as the festival *Saturnalia* (god of agriculture, Saturn) and *Sol Invictus* or rebirth of 'the unconquerable sun'.

Ancient man, searching the ends of the earth to see where the sun came from, believed the sun arose from the sea and set in the sea; the goddess of waters, Anahita was thus believed to

be the mother of the sun god Mithra. It is of interest to note that the earliest Madonna and Child icons depict a baby Mithra with a halo of sun's rays, in the arms of his mother, Anahita [1].

December 25th as Christmas. With the spread of Christianity, celebration of the birth of Christ became the most important festival. In the third century, various dates, from December to April, were celebrated as Christmas. January 6 was the most favored (and is still observed by the Greek Orthodox church) because it was thought to be Jesus' baptismal day. In 350 CE, December 25th was adopted in Rome and gradually almost the entire Christian Church agreed to that date, which coincided, with the winter solstice and the festivals, *Sol Invicta* and *Saturnalia*. Many of the rituals and traditions of the pagan festivals were incorporated into the Christmas celebration and are still observed today.

Yalda and yule. Varjavand [1] derives 'Yalda' or 'Yalza' from 'yal' (pronounced 'yule' and 'joul' in Scandinavian lands) which means 'the strongest warrior' or the 'great one' and is the title of Mithra. 'za' means birthing, and this word has been corrupted to 'da'. Philologist Moghadam describes the word Yalda as related to the word 'yara' from which we have the word 'year' [1].

Price [2] describes Yalda as a Syriac (SoriAni or Assyrian) word imported into the Persian language by the Syriac Christians, and meaning 'birth'. The word entered the Persian language when the massive persecution of the early Christians in Rome brought Christian refugees into the Sasanian empire.

According to Jafarey [3] 'yule' of the Germanic people stands for the win-

ter solstice. Yule and yuletide meant the re-death and re-birth of the Sun god. Some scholars of Nordic studies think that yule means 'wheel' and that it stands for the 'wheel of the Sun' and the solar cycle. The terms yule and yuletide traveled to the eastern Mediterranean. Meanwhile, the First Ecumenical Council held in Nicea in 325 CE under Emperor Constantine (about 274-337 CE), himself an overt convert from solar henotheism to Christianity, made Christianity the state religion of the Byzantine Empire and yuletide was declared to become the birthday of Jesus. Yuletide, connected to the 'rebirth' sounded to the Semitic ears of the Syriac people so similar to yalda, the word for 'birth'; and yalda easily replaced yuletide.

The winter solstice was also celebrated by the Assyrian and Chaldean Iranians as Yalda. We have Iranian astrologists, historians and poets of the early 10th century CE mention "Yalda, 25th December," as the birthday of Jesus [3].

The evergreen tree. When Mithra was born (on Yalda), most trees had shed their leaves. Only the evergreens were still wearing their festive garments – which is why evergreens and the myrtle, as also the mistletoe and the oleander, have a special place in Mithraism.

When Iranian Zarathushtis give gifts on occasions such as births and weddings, they exchange branches of freshly cut Cypress (*Sarv*). The evergreen symbolizes 'amordad' (eternal life); and the custom was to tie a piece of cloth to the branch of an old Cypress and make a wish.

Yalda traditions. On the winter solstice, the Persians would burn fires all night to ensure the defeat of the

forces of Ahriman. There would be feasts, acts of charity and prayers to ensure the total victory of the sun, so essential for the protection of winter crops. Prayers would be offered to Mithra (Mehr). It was believed that Ahura Mazda would grant one's wishes, if all the rites were properly performed.

These Persian traditions merged in ancient Rome, in a festival to the god of agriculture, Saturn. The Romans exchanged gifts, partied and decorated their homes with greenery. The usual order was suspended. Masters and servants reversed roles. A mock king, the Lord of Misrule, was crowned. Grudges and quarrels forgotten, wars would be interrupted or postponed. Rich and poor became equal. Masquerades and merriment prevailed. Candles and lamps chased away the spirits of darkness.

Today, Iranians of all religious backgrounds, as well as Armans, Kurds, Baloochs, Azari Turks, Tajiks, Afghans, Assyrians, Iranian Russians, and other ethnic groups of Persian origin, all celebrate this winter festival. In addition, Iranian Jews, also celebrate the festival of 'Illanout' (tree festival).

In recent years, Zarathushti associations in North America are reviving this ancient tradition.

Common threads. Through the ages, thus, common threads may be found in the origins and traditions of yalda and yuletide – proximity of the date, and the customs of gathering around the fire, lighting candles, decorating evergreen trees, giving of gifts, singing and dancing, eating special foods, and celebrating the season with family and friends.

[1], [2], [3] Compiled by Roshan Rivetna, from articles on Yalda by [1] Parvez Varjavand, [2] Massoume Price and [3] Ali A. Jafarey, posted on creatingawareness@yahoo.com by Jamshid, info@avesta.org.ru. Photos from "New Food for Life" by Najmieh Batmanglij.

Celebrating Yalda Night

The festival of Yalda is celebrated with family reunions, prayers and feasting, playing of musical instruments, singing, dancing, the telling of stories and the reading of poetry.

In the evening of Shab-e Yalda, bonfires are lit outside, while inside family and friends gather in a night-long vigil around the 'korseh', a low, square table covered with a thick cloth overhanging on all sides. A brazier with hot coals is placed under the table. All night family and friends sit on large cushions around the korseh with the cloth over their laps, or around a fireplace.

On this winter night, the oldest member of the family says prayers, thanks God for the previous year's crops, and prays for the prosperity of next year's harvest. Then with a sharp knife, he cuts the fruit – cutting symbolizing the removal of sickness and pain. Summer fruits and vegetables were carefully saved for the occasion – grapes, honeydew melons, watermelons, pears, oranges, tangerines, apples and cucumbers – and shared by all.

Snacks are passed through the night: pomegranates with angelica powder (*golpar*) and a mixture of nuts and dried fruits (*Ajeel-e shab-e yalda*), symbolizing prosperity. More substantial fare for the night's feast include eggplant stew with plain saffron-flavored rice; and rice with chicken; thick yogurt, saffron, and carrot brownies (*halva-e haveej*).

On into the night of festivities, the family keeps the fires burning and the lights glowing to help the sun in its battle against darkness.

[From *New Food of Life, Ancient Persian and Modern Iranian Cooking and Ceremonies*, by Najmieh K. Batmanglij, Mage Publishers, 1996]

Recipe for Aash-e-Reshteh (Noodle Soup) Serves 6

Nothing forges the bonds of friendship like sharing a bowl of hearty soup.

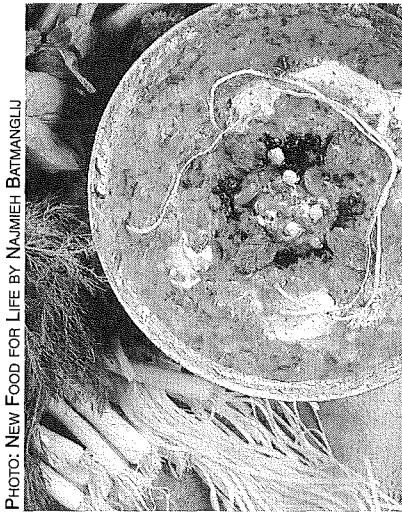


PHOTO: NEW FOOD FOR LIFE BY NAJMIEH BATMANGLIJ

- 1/4 cup each, dried red kidney beans, pinto beans and chickpeas
- 1/2 cup lentils
- 3-4 onions, thinly sliced
- 2 whole garlic, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup oil
- Seasonings, salt, pepper, turmeric
- 2T dried mint
- 1/2 cup each, chopped chives, green onions, Italian parsley and cilantro
- 2 cups fresh chopped spinach
- Reshteh* (Persian noodles or linguini)
- 1 cup *kashke* (or vinegar and sugar)

Rinse and soak the dried beans and chickpeas for several hours.

In a large pot, brown onions in oil. Add garlic. When golden brown, add salt, pepper, turmeric and other favorite seasonings. Add dried mint. Add the soaked beans and 10 cups water. Bring to a boil. Cover and simmer for 45 minutes. Add the lentils. Cook for another 30 minutes. Add chives, green onions, parsley, cilantro and spinach. Continue to simmer for another 30 minutes. Add *reshteh* and cook for another 20 minutes. Stir in the *kashke*. Adjust the seasonings to taste.

[Recipe from Gitty Hormuzdiaran-Darayan of ZANT, Dallas area]

XIII NORTH AMERICAN ZOROASTRIAN CONGRESS



BEING ZARATHUSHTI:

Looking
at Issues,
Searching
for Answers

XIII North American Zoroastrian Congress

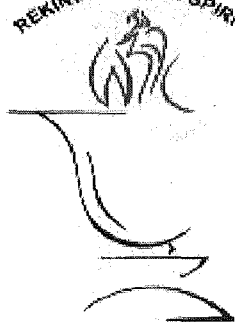
December 29, 2004 - January 1, 2005
Santa Clara Marriott Hotel - Silicon Valley
in the San Francisco Bay area

Congress chair: Bomi Patel
Program chair: Erach Tarapore, etarapore@bigfoot.com
Publicity chair: Nazneen Spliedt, nazehler@aol.com
Website: www.zanc.org/congress2004

Theme: "Being Zarathushti: Looking at Issues, Searching for Answers"

Hosted by ZANC in association with FEZANA

REKINDLING THE SPIRIT



The 3rd World Zoroastrian Youth Congress

The ZYA (Pune) and FOZYA (India), with the Bombay and Pune Parsi Punchayets are proud to host this mega event for youth (18 - 40 years) of the worldwide Zoroastrian community.

"Rekindling the Spirit"

An opportunity to voice opinions, interact with and get to know one another, and focus on "Rekindling the Spirit" for generations to come.

VENUE: The five-star Taj Blue Diamond Hotel, Pune, India

PROGRAM: December 27 - 31, 2003

Main conference program at Taj Blue Diamond,
Evening program and dinner at other venues.

December 30 - 31, 2003

Home stays for overseas delegates.
Sight-seeing and visits on the 31st.
New Years' Eve dinner and dance.

January 1-3, 2004

Pilgrimage tour to Iranshah Atash Bahram, Udvarda, Sanjan and Bahrot.

ACCOMMODATION: Five-star (Taj Blue Diamond) or basic (Nagarwalla School Hostel)

INFORMATION: Congress chair Sarosh Palkhiwala (sarosh64@hotmail.com, tel: 020-687-5456)

WEBSITE: Visit www.wzyc.org or send email to info@wzyc.org

Shirin Ebadi wins 2003 Nobel Peace Prize

Ebadi becomes the first Iranian and the first Muslim woman to receive this accolade

Iranian lawyer Shirin Ebadi won the Nobel Peace Prize for 2003 for her work on human rights, especially her struggle for the rights of women and children in Iran.

Ebadi, 56, was selected to receive the 10 million Swedish kronor (\$1.3 million) prize, from a list of 165 candidates, including Pope John Paul and president George Bush. Last year's winner was former US president Jimmy Carter.

She is the first Iranian to receive the honor in the 102-year history of the prize, and the third Muslim (after Egyptian president Anwar Sadat in 1978 and Palestinian president Arafat in 1994).

"We hope the prize will be an inspiration for all those who struggle for human rights and democracy in their country, in the Muslim world, and in all countries," said the 5-member Nobel selection committee.

In a statement to Reuters, Iranian president Khatami's government praised Ebadi: "This is an honor for Iranian women and shows that Iranian Muslim women have gained a positive atmosphere for their activities." But hardliners viewed it as a political move.

In a news conference, Ebadi said: "In my view there is no difference between Islam and human rights."

"As a lawyer, judge, lecturer, writer and activist, she has spoken out clearly and strongly in her country, Iran, and far beyond its borders," said the Nobel Committee in its citation, "She has stood up as a sound professional, a courageous person, and has never heeded the threats to her own safety."

Ebadi received her law degree from the University of Tehran and went on to become the first female judge in Iran, but was forced to step down fol-



PHOTO: CNN.COM

lowing the Islamic revolution. She was involved in several controversial political cases, and has been imprisoned by Iranian authorities on numerous occasions. She now works as a lawyer and also teaches at the University of Tehran.

Nobel experts said the Nobel committee probably chose Ebadi as a way of promoting change (towards more democracy) in Iran.

"The fight for human rights is conducted in Iran by the Iranian people, Ebadi said, "we are against any foreign intervention in Iran."

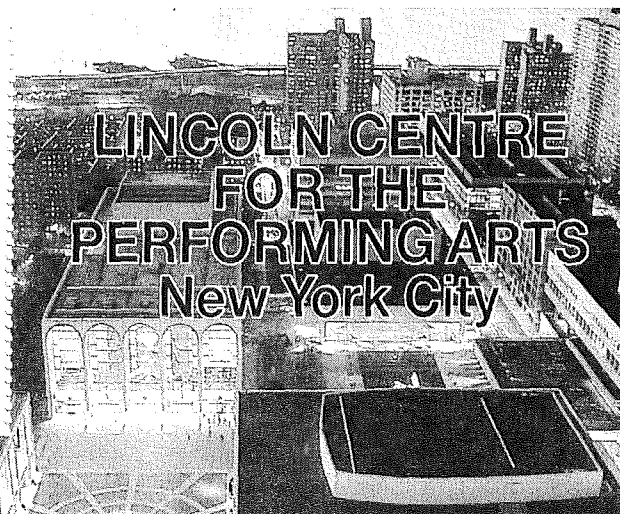
[Excerpted from reports on the internet at CNN.com and Reuters]

ZUBIN MEHTA, MUSIC DIRECTOR
NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
150TH ANNIVERSARY



مالديف MALDIVES Rf20

LINCOLN CENTRE
FOR THE
PERFORMING ARTS
New York City



Maldiv Islands issues Zubin Mehta postage stamp.

Maldiv Islands, a group of islands west of Sri Lanka, off the southern tip of India, recently issued a souvenir sheet and postage stamp of Zubin Mehta. The multicolored Rufiyaa 20 stamp, and the souvenir sheet showing Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York City, were issued to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the New York Philharmonic. *[By Noshir Lam, Mumbai]*

New office for Zoroastrian Studies in Brussels

The new office of the European Centre for Zoroastrian Studies was inaugurated on September 6, in the historic and prestigious section of Brussels. Our members have worked night and day to refurbish and furnish this new office.

Since 2000, thousands of young Iranian refugees have come to this tiny country and are thirsty to learn about their authentic culture.

We are in need of books on the Zarathushti religion, for our library. Donations will be gratefully accepted. Contact khparadis@hotmail.com, www.gatha.org, European Centre for Zoroastrian Studies, Galerie de la Reine, 7, 1000 Brussels, Belgium, tel/fax 32/2/374.92.60.



Tirgan Camp in Gothenburg, Sweden. Over 100 persons from countries in Europe converged at the lovely setting near Gothenburg, Sweden, July 18-20, for the annual meeting of Zarathushtis in Europe and the Tirgan celebration. This has become a popular annual gathering, since 2000, when the Swedish Zoroastrian Society (SZS) first invited Zarathushtis from Germany to the Tirgan camp. More and more Zarathushtis are now making their way to Gothenburg and feel a part of this growing family. This year we had friends from France, the Netherlands, Germany, Iran, Canada and Sweden, ranging from 5 months to 80 years, come and enjoy games from backgammon to volleyball, and enjoy the Tirgan tradition of splashing one another with water, reminiscent of the celebrations at Kooshk-e-Varjavand in Iran. SZS and the organizers Bahram Mandegari and Farangis Idelchi invite all Zarathushtis to next year's event. "I specially thank Bahram for his huge effort," writes Armin Djamashb, "and we love this event because he organizes it with so much love that you can feel it." Contact Armin at arminjan@yahoo.de. ■

On Sunday October 12, BBC 1 TV featured Zoroastrianism in their "The Heaven and Earth Show".

Filming for this program was done at the Zartoshty Brothers Hall in the New Zoroastrian Centre for Europe in Harrow on Thursday 2nd October at the Mehrgan jashan and gahambar.

Compere of the show, well-known TV personality Dominic Holland was shown in conversation with Zarathushti actress Nina Wadia. ZTFE secretary Malcolm Deboo was also interviewed. The BBC team filmed the jashan as well as the Mehrgan gahambar.

The Mayor of Harrow and several prominent councillors attended the function, at the newly refurbished Zartoshty Brothers Hall. Nearly 300 Zoroastrians participated in gahambar sponsored by an endowment

ZTFE Mehrgan function on BBC TV

from Mrs Goli and the late Mehraban Farhangi.

The highlight of this year's function was the special Mehrgan Song composed and set to music by Shahrokh Shahrokh and sung to thunderous applause by the children. Special Persian costumes were prepared for the children by Mahnaz Jafrabad. This was preceded by beautiful instrumental pieces by Roxana Zomoroddy.

At the function, 3 students of Zoroastrianism at SOAS, London University (The Zartoshty Brothers Chair) were awarded the Moobed Faridoon Zartoshty Education Scholarships on behalf of FEZANA. Checks of 1,000 each were awarded to Mandana Moevenat, Burzine Waghmar and Zartosht Atropatene [see page 99].

Malcolm Deboo spoke on the significance of the study of Zoroastrianism and Shahrokh Shahrokh explained the background of the festival of Mehrgan.

Hosi Khambatta of the ZTFE who has given many years of voluntary service as the Association's sound engineer was felicitated and thanked.

The Mayor spoke warmly of the Zoroastrian community's contribution to Harrow and Deputy Leader Navin Shah expressed great interest and satisfaction in the refurbishment of the beautiful art deco building by the ZTFE. Andrew Fenner of the BBC complimented the participants on a great function mixing worship with history, entertainment and excellent food. ■

By Paurushasp B Jila. ZTFE

Homi Dhalla – Reviving the Culture

World Zarthushti Cultural Foundation aims to preserve the Zarathushti cultural heritage



Left, singing groups at Zarathushti schools are reviving the Parsi musical heritage. Right, rare manuscripts are being preserved on CD-Rom.

Dr. Homi Dhalla [below, in Chicago] founder and president of the World Zarthushti Cultural Foundation in Mumbai, spoke to audiences at the darbe mehrs in Chicago and New York, last September, on “Revival of Zarathushti culture” – an appropriate topic, as Zarathushtis around the world gear up to celebrate the “3000th anniversary of Zarathushti Culture”.

Dr. Dhalla, who is a noted figure in interfaith circles, was in Chicago at the invitation of the Council for a Parliament of the World’s Religions. He has an MA in Near East Languages and Literature from Harvard and a PhD in Avesta-Pahlavi from Mumbai University.

“With increasing urbanization and western migration,” said Dr. Dhalla, “customs are gradually vanishing and our unique culture is slowly dissolving into the urban melting pot.”



This is what prompted Dr. Dhalla to establish the WZCF, in 1998 and launch projects to preserve and protect the various faces of Zarathushti culture. These are showcased in a DVD film.

Among the projects are: **conserving historical sites** (the *Sanjan* excavations and *Bahrot* restoration was undertaken with funding mostly from the Government of India) [see *FEZANA Journal*, Fall 2003]; **restoring rare books and manuscripts** (placing priceless collections in libraries, reprinting important works and chronicling history); **reviving language and crafts** (Gujarati classes, kushti-weaving, poetry, Avestan calligraphy); **exhibiting art works** (Portrait of a Community exhibit and book); **reviving the musical heritage** (chants, gathas set to music, folk songs and monajats), and more. ■

What is Culture?

Culture is the personality of nations. Its manifestations tell us more about the character, aspirations and collective consciousness of peoples than formal histories or scholastic analyses ... Dancing, painting, sculpture and music are outward manifestations of culture.

“Culture is a totality of the past and present. It is the substance of our lives and values. Culture is the soil, which must nourish education. It is the way in which you relate to the earth, to the trees, to plants, to the air and water, to your fellow human beings” [Pupul Jayakar].

The roots of our culture, which have developed over centuries, are deep and resilient... Our culture exhibits distinctive characteristics of its own. Various elements of culture are interconnected, and a great many small pieces go to make up the whole, which is complex but nevertheless possesses some sort of unity as a system, which we call Zarathushti culture.

Again as there are Zarathushtis today in areas such as Tajikistan and other regions of the world, we shall certainly have a rich cultural tapestry, in the years to come.

I see cultural activities as a focal point of integration for the entire Zarathushti community. Culture will not be a cause of conflict, but an agent of redemption from conflict; because culture transcends the narrow religious identities that have unfortunately disunited us. I see the significant role of our culture as that which shall bind Zarathushtis together, through our diversity and various perspectives. ■

[From Dr. Dhalla’s presentation on “Revival of Culture”]

How you can help revive our Zarathushti cultural heritage ...

- The DVD video is \$12 ● The “Portrait of a Community” book (with full color plates) is \$45 ●

Prices include shipping in USA/Canada. To order the DVD, the “Portrait of a Community” book, or to make a donation to WZCF, contact Dr. Dhalla at wzcf@bom8.vsnl.net.in or RRRivetna@aol.com.



Welcome to Youthfully Speaking



'the mouthpiece for the next generation'

~ Our Genes and Culture ~

This past September, I commenced my graduate education in Genetic Counseling. After two years of didactic education and clinical rotations, I will be qualified (hopefully!) to educate individuals about various genetic conditions, and discuss testing options and their repercussions; and, after giving all possible options and information, facilitate an individual or family to make decisions that are best for them. The teachings of Zarathustra have taught me many things, but two of the most outstanding lessons and concepts are to wholeheartedly help others and that we as humans are given the ability to make choices.

There are many theories about genetic similarity amongst ethnic and religious groups, but one of the most prominent is that those within a particular group have a greater genetic similarity. Oftentimes, certain disorders are indigenous to particular ethnic groups. For example, individuals from an European Caucasian background are at a higher risk for Cystic Fibrosis (a respiratory disorder); and those from a Mediterranean, South Asian, Middle Eastern, Indian, and African have a higher incidence of Thalassemias (a form of anemia). It is important that we educate ourselves on the risks of ailments that frequently afflict members of our community. Recent congresses have begun to make an effort to promote health education in general and I sincerely hope that this trend continues and expands. Although there hasn't been much structured research on the prevalence rates of disorders afflicting the Zarathushti community, a few ailments that are predominant in the Parsi Zarathushti community are heart disease, breast cancer, and G6PD deficiency.



As Islam advanced, with its burdensome 'Jezia' tax, Zarathushtis living with their cows, sheep and goats on barren rocky mountain slopes, fled and retreated into higher and remoter mountains, inaccessible save by donkeyback and foot.

Gradually in the course of 800 to 1000 years, Islam spread in this region. There also existed some Christian, Buddhist and Jewish settlements, mostly of traders. During the 80 years of communist regime, no religion was allowed and churches, masjids and fire temples were closed down.

Now in 1991, jubilant that they were having the freedom to do so, intellectuals and academicians of the Tajik Academy of Sciences quickly set about to revive their ancient glory.

Ties with Mazdayasnie Monasterie. The deep ties between Mazdayasnie Monasterie/Zoroastrian College and Tajikistan commenced with a delegation of 7 academicians visiting India in 1992.

In 1992, to celebrate the first anniversary of the Republic, the Academy of Sciences organized the 1st Avesta World Conference, in Dushanbe. I took a delegation of 8 persons. Thereafter every year, in 1992, 1993, 1994 and 1995 a Tajik delegation was invited to India to attend the Zoroastrian College World Congress annually held in Bombay.

In December 1992, the Tajik prime minister visited India with a planeload of 39 officials. At a speech in Mumbai he said: "I could have taken my *first* official visit to any country in the world ... I brought them to India because our Zoroastrian brothers and sisters live here".

Help needed. The Tajiks are in need of books and materials and liturgical supplies. They have asked for support to build a fire temple complex in Tajikistan. Prof Dr. Pulatov, Rector of Tajikistan Technological University was willing to provide land in his University grounds in Dushanbe, but funds have not been forthcoming.



Dr. Meher Master Moos [right] with the deputy prime minister of Tajikistan, Madame Nigina Sharopova.

[PHOTO COURTESY DR. MEHER MASTER MOOS]

Meanwhile, hundreds of masjids and mosques have been constructed with funds from Iran and the Aga Khan.

They also asked for Zarathushti businesses to come in as entrepreneurs to develop factories, industries, trade and commerce. To date there has been little interest.

The Tajiks have also asked for Zarathushti mobeds from India and Iran to come there to teach and perform navjotes, as they had no mobeds in the country. No mobeds from India have been able to go.

Between 1992 and 1996 a civil war was raging within Tajikistan.

In 1996 Emomali Rahmonov became president, and for the 5th Republic anniversary celebrations, organized the 2nd Avesta World Conference in Dushanbe. I took a delegation of five Zarathushtis.

In 2001, for the 10th Republic anniversary, the 3rd World Avesta Conference was organized. I took a delegation from Zoroastrian College. For the first time two mobeds attended and Mobed Jamshidi Kamran performed navjotes of those who were ready and wanting to have their navjotes done.

In 2002, Prof. Fuzylov of Khujand Technological University came to

India, stayed at Zoroastrian College and co-authored with me, the historic *Khordeh Avesta* in Tajik Cyrillic script with explanations.

The 3000th Anniversary Celebrations

President Rahmonov, was a strong proponent of the UNESCO declaration to celebrate 2003 as the "3000th Anniversary of Zoroastrian Culture". He requested the celebrations to be held on Nouruz, March 21st 2003. This was not to be, and after many delays and negotiations, the date was eventually fixed for September 5th, during the week of the annual Republic Day celebrations. Somehow, I managed to get a seat at the last minute, on the September 3rd flight to Dushanbe. Groups who wanted to attend from Paris, North America and Sweden could not go at such short notice.

That is why I came to be the solitary Zarathushti representative in this great conference in the Ministry of Culture Hall in Dushanbe. There was not a single other 'Zarathushti' present, not even from among the local anjuman, in the hall that day!

The Conference

The international symposium "Zoroastrian Culture and its Role in

celebration in tajikistan

By Meher Master Moos

guest of Madame Maisara Kolonova, president of the Tajik government Friendship Society. My Moscow-Dushanbe Aeroflot flight landed at Dushanbe airport at noon, and Prof. Mukhtarov, an expert in Pamirian languages, received me at the airport. That day Tajikistan gained independence and I became the first guest of the new government. His words to me at the airport were, "You have brought 'azadi' (freedom) to Tajikistan". They were overjoyed that their first guest was a Zarathushti from India.

In those days there was much hang-over of the old communist regime when "No Religions Allowed" was the official government policy.

The Tajiks are proud of their ancient Persian culture, language and civilization; proud of their poets Firdowsi of the immortal Shah Nameh, Rudaki the father of Persian poetry, and Avicenna, the scientist.

Out of a population of about 6 million, about half are 'original Tajik'. The rest are what the 'original Tajiks' consider 'invaders'—mostly Arabic, Persian and Turkish Muslims who invaded Central Asia and established the Emirate of Bokhara.



PHOTO: DR. MEHER MASTER MOOS



Dr. Moos at the conference in Dushanbe, wearing a Tajik cap presented by the president of Tajikistan. Left, official logo of the conference [Logo courtesy Prof. RAJABZODEH AND FARIBORZ RAHNAMEEN]

How the UNESCO declaration came about

- by Homi Gandhi

One day this past March, FEZANA president Firdosh Mehta, forwarded a letter from Dr. Farhang Mehr, to Behram Pastakia and myself (co-chairs of the FEZANA UN-NGO Committee). It read:

The Executive Board of UNESCO in its 161st and 162 sessions has resolved that UNESCO in association with Member States, will celebrate ... the anniversaries of 47 great historical personalities, who have served humanity ... UNESCO at the proposal of Tajikistan has announced 2003 as the anniversary of the prophet Zarathushtra..."

Behram and I immediately went into action to confirm the report. We searched the UN and UNESCO websites, contacted UNESCO personnel in Paris, sent emails to Zarathushtris in Paris, New Delhi, and elsewhere. In April Dr. Shernaz Cama (of the UNESCO-PARZOR project) sent me a message that Mr. Roni Amelan, UNESCO Bureau of Information, Paris, had confirmed that "the Executive Board and General Conference voted in favor of celebrating the "3000th Anniversary of Zoroastrian Culture" in 2003, and has requested Member States to undertake celebrations locally". This announcement was made by Mr. Perera of UNESCO at the PARZOR exhibition in New Delhi. Dr. Cama also sent me the contact names at UNESCO, in Tajikistan, and Iran to follow up on the planned celebrations.

Through further searches, and exchange of emails with a BBC correspondent in Dushanbe, Mr. Olimov, head of the National Commission-UNESCO, and the Minister of Culture in Tajikistan and others, we were able to unearth a copy of the original proposal, made by Tajikistan to UNESCO, back in March 2001. The proposal reads:

"Zoroastrian culture inaugurated the beginning of great cultural progress of humanity. Spiritual basis of this culture is the teaching concerning monotheism; moral fundament of it is the doctrine on good thoughts, good speeches, good deeds, having promoted the formation of ethics, nonviolence, tolerance, kindness and justice. All this basic principles of Zoroastrian culture in fact are comprehensive to strategic goals of UNESCO on formation of the culture of peace and progress of humanity ... Zoroastrian culture has made great impact on the development of spiritual culture of many peoples and countries. Some of its major doctrines and values have been adopted by Judaism, Christianity, Islam ... [this celebration will] assist to foster revitalization of this Central Asian common heritage and to give high priority to the enhancement and transmission of this heritage. Ideas of Zoroastrian culture might be used as an important measure for development of modern societies throughout the region ..."

At its 161st and 162nd sessions in 2002, UNESCO approved this celebration and another 46 anniversaries during 2002-2003. The "3000th Anniversary of Zoroastrian Culture" is the oldest of the 47 anniversaries. Others include the 300th anniversary of the founding of the City of Saint Petersburg in Russia.

Firdosh Mehta immediately appointed a sub-committee of the FEZANA UN/NGO Committee, with Dolly Dastoor as chair, to mobilize celebrations in North America. Celebrations were also planned in Tajikistan and other countries around the world. Needless to say, we should continue to celebrate our contribution on an ongoing basis and not stop at the end of 2003.

Homi Gandhi [photo p. 6] Principal Examiner in the Regulation Division of the New York Stock Exchange, is president of ZAGNY and co-chair of the FEZANA UN/NGO Committee and the UNESCO Celebrations Committee. He provides pro bono services to a number of non-profit organizations and oversees ZAGNY's active participation in various public service initiatives.

A look at the resurgence of interest in their ancestral heritage in Tajikistan, and celebrations to commemorate the UNESCO-declared "3000th anniversary of Zoroastrian Culture"

Tajik Ancestry

"*Tajiks in the Mirror of History*" is the title of the book [see page 79] by the president of the Republic of Tajikistan, His Excellency, Emomali Rahmonov, in which he has extolled with pride, the ancient history and culture, religion and civilization of his people and his country – the lands of Bactria and Balkh and Sogdia. These are the lands of the Avesta, the sacred books of Zarathushtra, the lands where Cyrus the Great established his Central Asian satrapy; ancient lands steeped in history where archeologists excavate old atash bahrams and palaces of Zarathushti kings.

In his book, the president quotes from the books of the Avesta – the *Vendidad*, *Yasna*, *Yashts*, *Khordeh Avesta*, which contain the Avestan names of these Ariyana Vaeja lands.

How did it come about that of all nations in the world, it is this small country nestled in the lofty snow-capped Pamirs, on the Great Silk Road, that approached UNESCO for a declaration which has benefited Zarathushtris around the world? Are the events that we are witnessing occurring throughout the world all part of His spiritual ministry?

Dushanbe 1991. In September 1991 I was invited to visit Dushanbe as

of Zoroastrian Culture, with a special edition highlighting the universality of Zarathushtra's message and the global impact of Zoroastrianism. Free copies of this issue, courtesy of WZO, are being offered to educational institutions that teach or conduct research on the Middle East, Near East or in Zoroastrianism. Contact Toxy39@attglobal.net.

ZWIN

Zarathushti Women's International Network

ZWIN is sponsoring an *exhibition of Zarathushti culture* on its website at www.zwin3.net. Topics include: a Zarathushti tour, Zarathushti Closet (Gara Gallery and Korr Corner), Zarathushti Traditions, Zarathushti Hall of Fame and Zarathushti Library. Visit the site and reacquaint yourself with 3000 years of Zarathushti culture. Contact rabadis@georgetown.edu. ■

Dolly Dastoor, PhD, is co-chair of the FEZANA sub-committee to celebrate the "3000th anniversary



of Zoroastrian Culture" declared by UNESCO. She has been president of the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec, and of FEZANA and received the Outstanding

Zarathushti Award in 1994. She was co-chair of the 7th World Zoroastrian Congress and is governor of District 2, Zonta International. Dr. Dastoor is a clinical psychologist specializing in the assessment of Dementia at Douglas Hospital, Montreal and assistant professor at McGill University.

FEZANA at the UN - an invitation to join!

- by Behram Pastakia

FEZANA's vision of a well connected, well educated, prosperous community grounded in Zarathushti thought, values and ethics, recognized for its collective contribution to civil society has come a step closer to reality with its active involvement at the UN. Core values of integrity, professionalism and respect for diversity espoused by the UN, resonate with concepts of *Asha* and remind us of the profound impact of Zarathushtra's teachings and philosophy on humanity over the centuries and on our world today. FEZANA was founded with the hope of leaving to our succeeding generations, a legacy of what we value most, our ethics and concern for the communal weal; and in this spirit has chosen to empower youth who share this vision.

We seek Zarathushti youth with leadership potential, good public speakers and writers, willing to pay their own way, and able to work together as a team. There is no place for proselytization in our activities. Participation provides individuals with opportunities to grow intellectually, become world citizens, face the collective challenges and issues of our times, keep abreast of the latest technological changes, and learn first-hand how decisions are made in the corridors of power. This is done by providing access to and networking opportunities with key players representing the 1400 NGOs.

On September 11, 2003, for the first time, FEZANA officially became a sponsor of the annual interfaith prayer which marks the opening of the General Assembly of the UN. More recently, FEZANA was represented at the US Senate in Washington DC when the World Health Organization, released its report on Violence and Health. A donor from the Delhi Parsi Anjuman has offered to make and ship a Zarathushti symbol to be hung in the UN Chapel in New York City (permission pending). In addition to our consultative status with ECOSOC, we plan to develop official affiliation with the Department of Public Information (DPI), in New York and the Conference of NGOs (CONGO) in Geneva, Switzerland. The idea of a "Zarathushti Youth Corps" with individuals from the western diaspora volunteering their time in appropriate locations in the 'global south' is being promoted. The World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce (WZCC) will provide air-tickets at cost, for those who choose to make such a commitment.

At present, our focus is on 'the environment' and on humanitarian work involving public health education in collaboration with like-minded NGOs, interacting with malnourished children, patients with AIDS and diabetes. The scope of these activities has the potential to expand, depending on the skills and talents that future participants bring to the enterprise. The United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) is planning a meeting in late spring 2004 in Connecticut. The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) has a session planned in Tunis, Tunisia in 2005. We are looking for suitable representatives.

WZCC VP for International Affairs, Homi Davier (Davier@capricorn-travel.com) will arrange for air-tickets for the "Zarathushti Youth Corps". For information visit www.un.org or contact FEZANA UN/NGO Committee co-chairs Behram Pastakia (bpastakia@aol.com) or Homi Gandhi (Homi_Gandhi@usa.net).

Behram Pastakia [photo page 6] is president of ZAMWI and co-chair of the FEZANA UN/NGO Committee. He represents Zarathushtis at the Interfaith Conference of Washington DC (www.ifcmw.org) and serves on the FEZANA sub-committee for the UNESCO-declared celebrations in 2003.

At the *interfaith concert* on November 18, at the Washington National Cathedral, members of ZAMWI, under the direction of Fereshteh Farhamand, will highlight the contribution of Cyrus the Great and the stone Cylinder of Cyrus, an important archeological milestone in the history of human rights.

A seminar on *Zarathushtra's Contributions to Humanity*, co-sponsored by the US Library of Congress, UNESCO and the World Zoroastrian Organization, will be held at the John W. Kluge Center on December 11. This is the first significant event of collaboration between UNESCO and the US since the US rejoined UNESCO on Oct 1. Richard Engelhardt, UNESCO states, "It therefore fitting and propitious that UNESCO is able to join with the Library of Congress in co-sponsoring this event to honor one of humanity's seminal thinkers (Zarathushtra)."

The UNESCO declaration is included in recent newsletters of the *Interfaith Conference* (IFC), and broadcast on radio programs locally (Fairfax radio), nationally (interfaith voices) and internationally (Voice of America).

Australia

The Persian Cultural Foundation of Australia, with the University of Sydney and Centre for Millennial Studies, will host the third *Iranian Studies Conference*, November 14-17 at the University of Sydney. Twenty international scholars will present their work in Ancient Iranian Culture and Zoroastrian Studies. Contact bahman@marzbani.com.

England



On Shenshai Navroz 1373 YZ, the ZTFE launched a 2 volume *CD on the Gathas* of Prophet Zarathushtra at the Zartoshty Brothers Hall in London [see p. 109]. This is a professionally recorded CD recited by Ervad Rostam K. Bhedwar, in the ancient Yasna tradition. Contact Malcolm Deboo at www.ztfe.com.

India

Celebrations in India were inaugurated by His Excellency K. Matsuura, director general of UNESCO. He opened the *PARZOR exhibition* "Pictures with a Purpose" in New Delhi, on July 10th. A special *Parsi Food Festival* was also organized. The events were televised on the Doordarshan TV channel, and mentioned along with a glowing tribute to the Zarathushtis of India, by the prime minister of India in his inaugural address to the international conference "Dialogue among Civilizations".



The Indian National Commission for co-operation with UNESCO and UNESCO PARZOR celebrated the anniversary on October 2-4 at the *Tata Theater, Mumbai*.



The Governor of Maharashtra, who presided at the event, said, "Zoroastrian culture had been there for the last 3,000 years and would be there for a long time to come."

The highlight of the celebrations was the release by Jaswant Singh, Union Finance Minister, of the five rupee commemorative, limited edition, *coin of Dadabhai Naoroji*.

Other events included: the Mumbai inauguration of the UNESCO PARZOR exhibition, "Pictures with a Purpose"; a film screening of "In War and Peace", the life of Field Marshall Sam Maneckshaw; a seminar on Zoroastrian eco-ethics and environment; a seminar on demography and health; and a presentation and film on "Zarathushti Culture – A Revival" and the Bahrot caves and Sanjan excavations. The festivities ended with a song and dance performance by Shiamak Davar's dance troupe. Contact Shernazcama@hotmail.com or Homi Dhalla at wzcf@bom8.vsnl.net.in.

Singapore

In May 2004, the Parsi Zoroastrian Association will have a *joint celebration* of the 50th anniversary of the association and the 3000th anniversary of Zoroastrian culture. All associations in Asia, Hongkong, Australia, SE Asia have been invited to join in this celebration. Planning is underway for an exhibition on Zarathushti heritage. The president of Singapore will be guest of honor, along with the Minister of Community Development. Both have accepted the invitation. Contact rghadia1@irf.com.

Sweden

Mobed Jamshid Kamran mentions that preparations are underway but plans are not yet firmed up.

Tajikistan

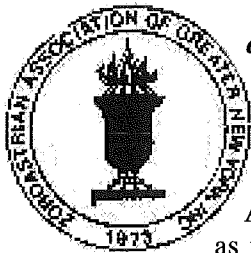
The Tajik Ministry of Culture, the Tajikistan National Commission for UNESCO and the Academy of Sciences organized the international symposium "*Zoroastrian Culture and its Role in the Development of World Civilization*" on September 5th. Zarathushti presence was represented by Dr Meher Master Moos, president of the Zoroastrian College, Sanjan [see page 34].



World Zoroastrian Organization (WZO)

Toxy Cowasjee, editor of the WZO publication, "*Hamazor*" will commemorate the anniversary





and the Influence of Zoroastrianism on Other Cultures", on November 15 at the Metropolitan Hotel in New York. Highlights include presentations by Prof. Kaikhosrov Irani, Dr. Ali A. Jafarey and Dr. Farhang Mehr as well as book displays, musical and multi-media exhibits, invocations, a fashion show and Iranian and Parsi foods.

On November 7 and 8, writer-performer Zazaawar Mistry will present "*Sohrab and Rustom*" as part of the Asiatic Society of New York's fall programs celebrating Persian heritage. Contact homi_gandhi@usa.net.

Pennsylvania and New Jersey

Zarathushtis of Pennsylvania and New Jersey will celebrate the UNESCO-assisted anniversary at the *Evening of Indian Entertainment*, including a *gara* fashion show, on November 8th at Maple Shade, New Jersey. This event is a fundraiser for the planned Zarathushti Cultural Center in New Jersey. Contact noshkaranjia@aol.com.



Toronto

Zoroastrian Society of Ontario will host a series of events from November 28 to January 31, 2004 beginning with "*Showcasing 3000 years of Zoroastrian Heritage*" at Markham Theatre, *Zarthoshti Film Festival* at Albion Cinemas, and a *Youth Open House* at the Mehraban Guiv Darbe Meher. In co-ordination with the Mosaic Multifaith Organizations there will be a *jashan* demonstration. The finale on January 31 will be at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) with an exhibit on Persian artifacts, and lectures on the influence of the Zarathushti religion through the ages. Contact roxanamirza@yahoo.com.



The Ontario Zoroastrian Community Foundation hosted a *Black Tie Gala* on September 27, attended by the mayor of Oakville. Congratulatory messages recognising the UNESCO-associated 3000th anniversary, were sent by the Lt. Governor, the premier, several MPs and the secretary-general of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO. Contact brdavar@rogers.com.

Vancouver

Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia and Ancient Iranian Cultural & Religious Research & Development Centre will celebrate the fourth anniversary of *Iran Zamin* and the fourth millennium of Zarathushti culture with a *cultural program* on November 16, at the H. R. MacMillan Space Center,



on November 16, at the H. R. MacMillan Space Center,

'Shihan non-profit
Cultural Organization **آشیهان** فرهنگی سازمان

Vancouver. The program includes a slide show on Beauty and Gender by Madame Massoume Motamedi, traditional Persian Music by Madame Maral Honarbin and a talk by Dr. Khanak Sanati. Contact HomiItalia@hotmail.com or Fariborz Rahnmoon at ancientiran@hotmail.com.

A *Mehregan Music Festival* was held on October 11 at Capilano College, North Vancouver [see poster above]. Over 350 Zarathushtis and friends, attended, including Barbara Sharp, Mayor of North Vancouver. Seven musical groups showcased the "Music of Ancient Persian Tribes and Nations". Local Persian papers and TV and The North Shore News covered the event. Contact Feraydoon Demehri at oshihan@telus.net; www.oshihan.org/mehregan.htm.

Washington, DC

UNESCO's declaration was highlighted at the *Parsi New Year function* by the Indian ambassador, on August 24th.

On October 10th, Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington organized a program of Dari songs. Plans are to support the *Dari language Project* [see page 108] fieldwork effort for 2004 to preserve a language threatened to extinction.



To commemorate the fourth millennium of Zarathushti culture, communities in North America, and around the world are organizing cultural events to inform their own members as well as neighboring communities of their cultural heritage.

North America



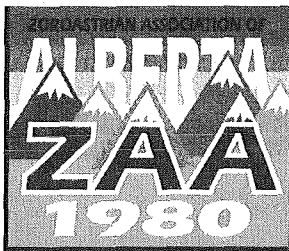
FEZANA is publishing this special commemorative issue of *FEZANA Journal* on Zarathushti culture.

FEZANA has prepared a **power-point presentation** on Zarathushti culture to be used by member associations for their own celebrations.

A **press release** has been prepared which is available on the FEZANA website (www.fezana.org).

Articles in *interfaith journals* are written to sensitize our neighbors, co-workers and the community about the contributions Zarathushtis have made not only to world religious thought but also to enhance the cultural community around the world.

A four-hour interview of **Prof. Kaikhosrov Dinshaw Irani** with Shahriar Shahriari has been put on DVD and is available for purchase [see pp. 110-111]. Prof. Irani discusses various subjects from the influence of Zarathushtra on other religions, to Einstein and the morality of the Theory of Relativity. This DVD can be used to bring awareness of the Zarathushti religion to the local community and the neighborhood. Contact s@shahriari.com.



Alberta

On November 23, Zoroastrian Association of Alberta and the Edmonton Interfaith Centre will showcase Zarathushti culture at the **Main Public Library Theatre**. The CD "Zarathushti

Culture – a Revival" by the World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation will be shown. A mini museum of Zarathushti artifacts, books, pictures and dress will be on display. MLA Gene Zwozdesky (Alberta Minister of Community Development) will be guest of honor and Dr. David Goa, past curator of the Alberta Provincial Museum will deliver the keynote address. A similar program is planned for Calgary on November 29th.

On November 1st an abridged version of this program promoting Parsi Gujarati culture was done at the **Divali program** of the Alberta Gujarati Association. Contact fdjmehta@telus.net.

California

As part of a series of celebrations for this event, the Persian Zoroastrian Organization on September 5th invited **Prof. Farhang Mehr**, former Chancellor of Pahlavi University in Shiraz, and former deputy prime minister in the



Government of Iran, to give a lecture at de Anza college in Cupertino, California.

California Zoroastrian Center (CZC) in association with other organizations is organizing a **three-day festival** December 19 - 21, to celebrate UNESCO's declaration. This international event, "Ancient Persian and Zoroastrian Ethics and Today's World Affairs", will feature a full day conference at the Anaheim Conference Center, with eminent international speakers; a "Day of Heritage" with cultural programs at CZC, and a gala banquet at LAX airport. The president of Tajikistan, UN/UNESCO officials, the governor-elect of California, federal and local government authorities and the press, including CNN and Asian Satellite TV, have been invited. Contact emehrfar@yahoo.com and visit www.californiazoroastriancenter.org.



Chicago

The Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago and the Zarathushti International Film Festival (ZIFF) together with Columbia College Chicago and the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions presented the **First Zoroastrian Film Festival – Chicago 2003**, "Our Beliefs, Our History, Our Culture" in Chicago on October



17-18 [see page 106]. On October 19, ZAC hosted "Windows on the World of Zoroastrian Culture" showcasing Zarathushti religion and culture, at the darbe mehr. Visit www.zac-chicago.org/ziffilmfest2003.

Houston



Zoroastrian Association of Houston

On October 25th the Zoroastrian Association of Houston will have the formal **opening of the Library** at the Zarathushti Cultural and Heritage Center. It will serve as a leading repository of knowledge that fosters the awareness and study of the Zarathushti religion, history and culture. Contact aban@coatingengineers.com.

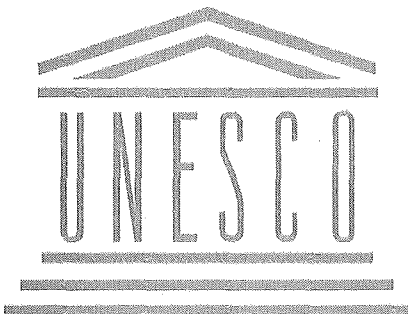
The Interfaith Ministry for Women and the Zoroastrian Association of Houston are planning an event in February 2004. Contact yasmin.pavri@milliman.com.

New York

Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York, in association with The Asia Society and The Middle Eastern American Center at CUNY will present "**History, Beliefs**

celebrating the fourth millennium of zarathushti culture a unesco-assisted event

By Dolly Dastoor



“On behalf of UNESCO, it gives me great pleasure to send this message of goodwill to the Zoroastrian community all over the world to mark and celebrate the 3000th anniversary of the Zoroastrian religion. While this anniversary corresponds approximately to the date when the AVESTA appears to have been written, the religion itself is, of course much older. Vitally important in its own right, Zoroastrianism also occupies a significant place in the development of other religions and cultures. It is, in fact, truly foundational.”

- Message sent by the director general of UNESCO, Mr. Koichiro Matsuura, to Toxy Cowasjee, editor, Hamazor, September 2003

A small land-locked country with lofty snow-capped Pamirs – which in our geography books used to be referred to as “the roof of the world” – called Tajikistan approached UNESCO to declare the year 2003 as the celebration of the “3000th anniversary of Zoroastrian Culture”. Half the population of this small country of six and a half million people is of ‘original Tajik’ descent who have maintained in their collective consciousness the ancient history and culture of the land of the Avesta, where the Shah Nameh of Firdowsi is recited as well as the operas of “Rustom and Sohrab” and the “Life and Message of Zarathush-

tra” are performed; and this after 80 years of religious repression during the communist regime! The thirst for revival is intense but can the rest of the Zarathushti population in the diaspora satisfy this thirst?

This unique act by a small nation state has galvanized the world Zarathushti community in their own quest for reviving and revitalizing their roots, in searching for lost heroes and epics, in claiming a place in the sun of their own culture which became submerged in other dominant cultures. Zarathushtis are claiming back their rich cultural heritage.

This article presents celebrations based on information received as of going to press in early November, and may not be an exhaustive compilation. Further updates will be published if necessary in the Spring 2004 issue of FEZANA Journal. For information or to report updates, please contact dollydastoor@sympatico.ca.

the fourth millennium of zarathushti culture

a unesco celebration

In this issue of FEZANA Journal we celebrate the UNESCO declaration of the year 2003 as the “3000th Anniversary of Zoroastrian Culture.”

We see glimpses of the ‘culture’ – the arts, architecture, literature, costumes, foods and traditions – of a people, from the ancient Persian civilizations down to modern times in Iran and India and the western diaspora.



فرهنگ زرتشتی و جایگاه آن در تمدن جهان

بزرگداشت زرتشت برگزار شود. تعداد زیادی از محققان در این گردهم آیی بین المللی شرکت نموده اند، که از جمله اندیشمندانی از کشور آمریکا، کانادا، فرانسه، بلژیک، هند، ایران و سایر کشورها سخنانی بیان داشتند.

شرکت کنندگان در این همایش و گردهم آیی جایگاه فرهنگ زرتشتی را در تمدن بشری پر ارزش بیان نمودند، و تاکید فراوان برای حفظ فرهنگ اریایی و این تمدن پر ارزش داشتند. همچنین عده ای از شرکت کنندگان در مورد نحوه پژوهش و کوفته های محققان و ارزشیابی در مورد فرهنگ زرتشتی اظهار نارضایتی نمودند و گفتند تا کی میتوانیم ساکت و بی تفاوت بمانیم و اجازه دهیم که فرهنگ باستانی بیاد فراموشی گرفته شود.

شرکت کنندگان و محققان در سخنرانی های خود در مورد افکار و اندیشه های فلسفی زرتشت سخن گفتند و تعلیمات زرتشت را راهنمای دنیای پر تلاطم امروز دانستند. آموزش فرهنگ زرتشتی راه گشا، شادی آفرین و محفل افروز برای جهان امروز میباشد. اگر ما به دستورات گاتها و اوستا توجه نماییم در نتیجه نه جنگی و دعوایی و نه تبعیض و نه شکنجه در جهان خواهد بود.

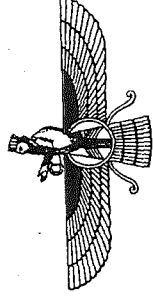
The Zoroastrian Culture & Its Involment in the World

Prior to becoming a country, Tajikistan was originally part of the Soviet Union. There many Zarathushtis lived in fear of practicing their religion and customs. Now at this time, Zarathushtis are able to live without fear of persecution or turmoil when practicing their religion. It is for this reason that President Emomali Sharipovich Rakhmonov of Tajikistan declared the most important prophet of time to be Zarathushtra. The President also supported the principles of Zarathushtra and felt that it was necessary for the people of his country to know and live by these tenets. Interestingly enough, before the country gained its freedom, many of the residents would practice Zarathustrian customs and rituals in their homes. Now with the freedom to practice their religion and customs, the people of Tajikistan are interested to learn more about their roots and heritage.

With his mind set, President Rakhmonov then took his idea to UNESCO where soon it was announced that the year 2003 would be declared as the year of Zarathushtra.

It was a beautiful September afternoon where many scholars and supporters from India, Iran, Europe, and North America arrived in the city of DoShambeh to witness what would be one of the greatest events to go down in the history of Tajikistan. The celebration of a prophet who has influenced the world as we know it – Zarathustra. With this in mind, the conference ended with an agreement that in order to reach global peace and unity, we, as inhabitants of this beautiful earth, must accept the same tenets that Zarathushtra himself praised many years ago; the principles of Good Thoughts, Good Words, and Good Deeds.

Fereshteh Yazdani-Khatibi
Eml: Bano33@aol.com
Tel: 949-349-9492



فرشته یزدانی خطیبی



MRS.
KHATIBI

فرهنگ زرتشتی و جایگاه آن در تمدن جهان

زرتشت در گاتها از آزادی بیان و عقیده صحبت کرده است ، از احترام به دوستان و دیگران صحبت نموده و گاتها میتواند راهنمای بشریت باشد. توجه به گاتها راه نجات جهان است .

همانطوریکه میدانید تاجیکستان قسمتی از کشور اتحاد جماهیر شوروی بوده است و تا آن زمان هیچ عنوان نمیتوانستند ازادانه هویت خود را بیان نمایند اما پس از استقلال تاجیکستان مردم این سرزمین که ۹۵ در صد از آنها فعال هستند با تحقیقات فراوان به ریشه اصلی خود پی برده و درصدد زنده نمودن هویت ملی خود میباشند.

رئیس جمهور تاجیکستان میگوید زرتشت بار نخست در تاریخ بشریت ارزشهای اخلاقی را در لباس دین به جلوه درآورد، و اندیشه نیک ، گفتار نیک و کردار نیک را سر منشا زندگی و آیین همیشگی پیروان خویش قرار داده است.

همانطور که میدانید زرتشت از همه متفکران راستگوتر و راست اندیش تر بود، تعلیمات اخلاقی زرتشت از ستایش نیک و نیک اندشی ، راستی و راست کرداری و دیگر فضیلت های نیک انسانی منشا گرفته است.سه اصل اندیشه ،گفتار و کردار نیک بنیاد اساسی دین زرتشتی میباشد.

در عاقبت دین زرتشتی دو راه را در پیش میگیرد. راه راستی و نیکي که نگهداشن اهورامزدا میباشد و راه بدکرداری که نگهداشن اهریمن میباشد، و ادمی با اراده و نیروی خود میتواند یکی از این دو راه را برگزیند.

بخانه هر تاجیکی که بروید تمام مراسم و روشهای دینی زرتشتی را بدرستی اجرا مینماید، اما نمیدانند که این مراسم قسمتی از مراسم آیین زرتشت است. بهمین دلیل است که محققان کوشش دارند که زرتشت را هرچه بهتر و بیشتر به مردم تاجیک معرفی نمایند تا آنها به ریشه اصلی خود پی برده و قدم های مثبت در راه پیشرفت هرچه بیشتر تاجیکستان بردارند.

در روز ادینه ۱۴ شهریور ماه ۱۳۸۲ مطابق با سپتامبر ۲۰۰۳ در شهر دوشنبه پایتخت تاجیکستان گردهم آیی بین المللی تحت عنوان فرهنگ زرتشتی و جایگاه آن در تمدن جهان برگزار شد.

این گردهم آیی به ابتکار دولت تاجیکستان و حمایت سازمان جهانی یونسکو برگزار گردید.(یادآور میشود که نقطه نظرهای علمی ، فرهنگی و آموزشی سازمان ملل متحد رایونسکو میگویند.سال ۲۰۰۳ را سال فرهنگ زرتشتی نامیده اند و بهمین دلیل ما کوشش بر آن نمودیم که در سراسر جهان سمینارهایی بمناسبت

So... You Want to Marry a Zarathushti, But You Don't Know How? (Part 1)

I took a trip this past weekend to a nearby city that was just far enough to relax. The trip was 6 hours long, but this time, it was a bit different than before. What made this trip a bit interesting was the fact that I had 10 other Zarathushti youth with me who I have known for about 2 years or so. So you're probably wondering what we talked about for the 12 hours that it took for us to drive both ways? Well...when I think about it, it all came down to one topic – with all the pressure to marry inside the religion, how in the world were we going to get the opportunity to meet another Zarathushti who we can build a relationship with?

I live in a state where the Zarathushti population is probably the highest in the United States and still I get people coming up to me and telling me how hard it is to meet someone with the same qualities or attraction. Well, let me tell you. If you want to go somewhere, you've got to be the one who makes the opportunities for yourself. What I mean is, stop wondering if there is a Zarathushti out there for you to meet and go about finding him or her.

How to go about doing this? Start with your local community. Get involved with youth events and definitely participate and attend the center events. You never know when Mr. or Ms. Right may walk in that door. You may not realize it, but as you continue coming to events and making new friends with other Zarathushtis, eventually those same friends could be the ones who introduce you to their friends or family members that you may have not seen before and are interested in.

Well...until next time where I will go into more details, definitely get involved in your community if you haven't already done so and show yourself to the community at large. I am sure there is someone who you haven't already met!

*Nikan H. Khatibi
www.JoinNikan.com
nikan2@aol.com*



How does faith impact your spiritual journey?

Faith means trust in a higher power. I believe that God is within everyone. Each person has a spiritual divineness and that there is something within each of us that wants to connect with it.

The more I studied and spent time with myself, the more I connected to my divine self and to the bigger picture. It's all part of my faith journey. It is in times of crisis that I learn about my faith. It makes me grow or it defeats me. I have a choice to move ahead and grow or to stay still and suffer. I was born with faith. It is part of who I am. What I've had to learn is to trust that faith. The way I do that is through silence and listening to the voice within.

When I meditate or chant or center it brings me closer to my true self and life seems to go better. That's faith. I don't have a faith tradition – my trust in institutions is limited. Faith is intuitive, internal, a flow of energy. It's hard to describe the experience. I have faith that things will work out and I don't have to know how. It is stepping out – it takes courage. Faith is a spiritual journey – a seeking, going forward.

Faith is expressed in the positive. I don't think I have ever had faith in something negative. Belief can be positive or negative. My faith can be summarized in knowing that this Living Spirit is always wanting the highest good for all concerned, so that becomes my prayer. Faith is the ground of my being. Everything comes from faith – morality, ethics, the way I live my life.

Faith is what grounds me, keeps me connected. It is the presence of the holy. It takes patience and courage.

Nikan H. Khatibi
www.JoinNikan.com
nikan2@aol.com



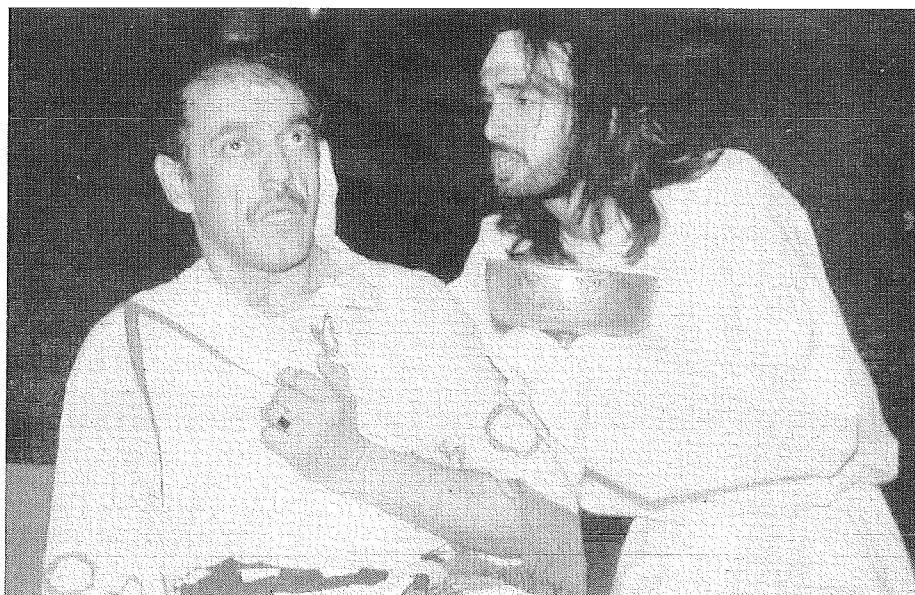
Our generation is gifted in the sense that we are living in an age where advances in science and technology have exponentially increased in just the past 20 years. We should take information obtained from these advancements and use it to educate our community. Perhaps we could hold a biannual health symposium where we recruit professionals knowledgeable in medicine and health to educate the community about screening programs for cancer, and other health related issues. Another area that I hope to see improvements in, is educating and advancing science in developing and less medically advanced nations, who don't have access to the latest health information, or enough money to conduct research. We should strive to take what we learn and transfer our knowledge to populations who don't have the ability to acquire such information. In addition, there may be many Zarathushtis residing in developing countries that are dealing with the same medical conditions that some of us over here are facing; however, they may not be offered the same treatment opportunities that we are fortunate enough to have here. Thus, it is essential that we communicate about prevalent health conditions, and available resources and treatments.

As a future genetic counselor, my goal is to work with my community in educating and listening to those in need of genetic and health services. I have yet to figure out the precise role of genetics in Zarathushti Deen. But given that the premise of our religion is based on choice and informed decisions, educating an individual to the best of my ability and listening to their concerns about the particular ailment they may be afflicted with, is my primary goal. Once given adequate information and support, I have full faith in individuals to make their own informed decisions.

Ushtavaity Davar

ushta@aol.com





Khorsheed Mostafa [right] as Zarathushtra in a stage performance of "The Message of Zarathushtra" directed by Farrokh Qassim, at the Aharoun Theatre in Dushanbe.

[PHOTO COURTESY OF ESPHANDIAR AZADI, DUSHANBE]

the Development of World Civilization" was organized by the Tajikistan National Commission for UNESCO, the Ministry of Culture and the Academy of Sciences, in honor of the "3000th Anniversary of Zoroastrian Culture". It was held in the conference hall of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Tajikistan on September 5.

The conference was opened by the Hon. Minister for Culture Mr. K. O. Olimov. Following a welcome from the Tajik president, read by Mr. A. Rahmonov there were greetings by the deputy prime minister, Madame Sharopova [photo previous page] and president of the Academy of Sciences, Mr. Ulmas Mirsaidov.

Among the 18 distinguished speakers were Prof. Mirsaidov, Prof. Yusuf Jakobus, Prof. Dr. Saimuddin, Dr. R. Mukinov, Dr. R. Komilov and Prof. Dr. Jamshedi Parvonakhon – all spoke in Persian or Russian. Mine was the sole English language speech.

On behalf of Mazdayasnie Monastirie-Zoroastrian College, my book co authored by Prof. Rustom Fuzaylov on Yashts, Vol. I was officially released. I presented an afarganyu, and gifts including kushtis and topis; and a donation of \$3,000 (including

\$2,000 contribution from Mr. Jamshed Guzder) for building a Zoroastrian Cultural Center in Dushanbe, with an Atashkadeh, a library, and a room for meetings and jashans. This has been a long-time dream of the Tajiks.

Prof. Jakobus presented a book that he had discovered in an old fire temple building excavated in Tajikistan. Another book of poems from *Zarathushtra to Borbad* was released.

In the evening there was a special stage performance at the Lahuti Theatre, "The Message of Zarathushtra" acted by some of the leading actors of Tajikistan [photo above]. Elsewhere, in the Aharoun Theatre the opera of "Rustom and Sohrab" was playing.

On September 8th, at the glittering Republic anniversary function, televised on Tajik TV, President Rahmonov called for a revival of the ancient culture of Tajikistan and declared year 2006 as:

"The Year of Aryan civilization, to further protect and value the intellectual treasures of our ancestors, remind people of their worthy contribution to world civilization and strengthen the national identity of the future Tajik generation."

Reviving the Religion

Later, I visited Khujand and Yagnob and gave lectures at the Slav Tajik University in Dushanbe and the Tajikistan Technological University in Khujand. Khujand is an ancient city, the center of the Zarathushti Sogdian kingdom. The city symbol of a vulture killing a snake is to be found on the clock in Iranshah Atash bahram in Udvada giving an indication of where our ancestors came from. Yagnob is a mountain region, with people still speaking Yagnobi, an ancient dialect, akin to Sanskrit and Avesta. These villagers, though Islamized, still practice Aryan vedic customs.

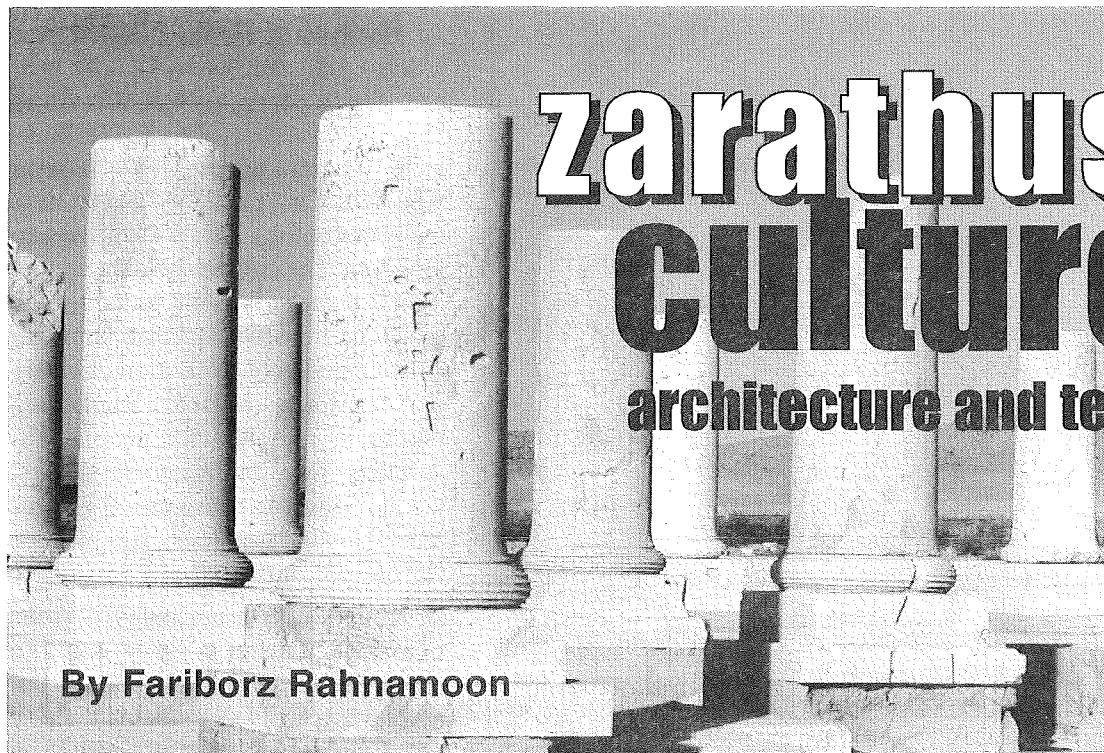
In Khujand there are many persons of old Zarathushti stock, wanting to revive the religion. I met one spiritually highly evolved gentleman whose deepest wish was to sit and pray in an atash bahram. He was even willing to build an atash bahram in Tajikistan if Zarathushti mobeds would come there to consecrate a holy fire. The University students are also keen to study Avesta, which is now on the University curriculum.

It is up to Zarathushtis worldwide to lend a timely helping hand to the Tajiks *now* to revive our ancient common faith and culture.

“ If Zarathushtis worldwide continue to remain apathetic, we will lose our people to Islam. ”

If Zarathushtis around the world continue to remain apathetic, we will lose our people to Islam. Twelve years after independence, this is the clear writing on the wall, that I observed during these celebrations.■

Dame Dr. Prof. Meher Master Moos, founder-president of Zoroastrian College, Sanjan, has provided yeoman service for the Zarathushti cause, in Tajikistan and India.



zarathushti culture

architecture and technology

By Fariborz Rahnmoon

*Massive stone
pillar bases at
the palace of
Cyrus the Great
at Pasargadae,
c. 550 BCE.*

PHOTO CYRUS
RIVETNA

Zarathushtra changed the very course of human existence, to that of 'achieving perfection, individually and collectively' through knowledge and wisdom. Millennia ago, ancient Persian civilizations set the course of intellectual human progress through their knowledge of technology, natural science and astronomy and promotion of art and architecture.

Culture and tradition

The Oxford dictionary defines 'culture' as: 'tillage; rearing; improvement by mental or physical training; intellectual development'. On the other hand 'tradition' means 'opinion or belief or custom handed down from ancestor to posterity'. So when we talk of the culture of a nation or a people, we have in fact to talk of their intellectual development.

Tradition involves copying what has been done or said before. Change is not looked upon kindly and since intelligence can cause change, its use is not welcome; but tradition is an important tool of unification and necessary to bond a group of people.

Most of the time we use the word 'culture' as a misnomer when we actually mean 'tradition'. The work

of cultural organizations should be to promote knowledge and help society advance intellectually. In Iran by naming a ministry as 'The Ministry of Culture and Higher Education', (*Vezarat Farhang va Amozesh e Alee*, which means 'intellectual development and higher education', they set an example of the correct use of the term 'farhang', which means culture. They even called their teachers 'farhanghi'.

Change in course of human history

The human race has been progressing steadily since its origins, with different nations at the helm at different times. In celebrating this 4th millennium of Zarathushti culture we are claiming that over 3000 years ago Zarathushtis, as a people, set the course of intellectual progress. To

substantiate this claim we need to compare the ancient Zarathushti civilization to others of its time.

Before the advent of Zarathushtra, people believed in many gods who controlled their daily life. Decisions were referred to the gods of stone and their advice sought by making offerings of gold, silver or food. Zarathushtra brought about a major shift in the direction of human progress. He introduced a single God whom he called 'Ahura Mazda' which meant 'Creator of Wisdom'. Every human being possessed the tool of wisdom – the mind.

Zarathushtra also changed the very purpose of human existence, to that of 'achieving perfection individually and collectively' through the use of wisdom [*Ys 28.3*]. Using the mind to acquire good knowledge, with the



aim of achieving perfection in all walks of life, became the aim of the followers of Zarathushtra.

We see a change in the direction of human history, when we study other ancient civilizations before and after they came under Persian influence – namely the Babylonians, the Jews, the Egyptians, the Greeks and the Romans.

The bible has faithfully recorded this influence and noted the change in society. Here it will suffice to note that the bible refers to the Persians as men of wisdom and Persian kings as wise kings. Even the knowledge (in advance) of the birth of Jesus Christ is not considered an act of prophecy but an act of wisdom, and the Magi who went looking for him are called the wise men and astronomers.

A life-affirming view

While other civilizations of the ancient world were engaged in building temples to appease the gods and elaborate tombs and pyramids to prepare for life after death, the Persians, of the life-affirming religion of Zarathushtra, were honing their technological skills to improve the quality of life on earth.

The Persians do not show any real signs of valuing death, and life after death or rigid devotion to tradition. Herodotus supports this when he says, “No race is so ready to adopt foreign ways as the Persians”.

Technological wonders

The New York Times of Nov 13, 2001 reported a recently discovered **canal**, built in 480 BCE by King Xerxes of Persia through a peninsula in northern Greece and which has been reported by Herodotus. The canal was about 2 kilometers in length and cut through a rocky plateau making it one of the biggest engineering assignments of its time. It is a testament to the remarkable work-force management and civil engineering skills of the Persians.

The Persians are also known for having built a **canal** joining the Red Sea to the Mediterranean via the river Nile – a forerunner of the Suez Canal.

They also **mapped the waters** from the Indus River to the Red Sea to make sea travel safe; and built the **Royal Road**, an all weather highway over a distance of 1500 miles from Susa in Iran to Sardis near the Mediterranean.

“Neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night...”

Darius the Great introduced what may be called the world’s first **courier postal system** to carry post along the Royal Road from Susa to Sardis. The distance of 1500 miles was purportedly covered in 6 days, by mounted couriers riding night and day. Herodotus remarks:

“Nothing mortal travels so fast as these Persian messengers. The entire plan is a Persian invention ... Along the whole line of road there are men (they say) stationed with horses. The first rider delivers his dispatch to the second, and second passes it to the third; and so it is borne from hand to hand along the whole line ... Not snow, no, nor rain, nor heat nor night keeps them from accomplishing their appointed course with all speed”

These words have since been immortalized by the US postal system and can be seen inscribed on the facade of the General Post office in New York. ■

The Canal of Darius

The engineering feats and innovative skills of the Persians were well-known in ancient times. King Darius had a canal constructed linking the Red Sea and the Nile – a precursor to the Suez Canal.

The canal was 150 feet wide and boats could pass through the canal via the Red Sea and the Nile in four days to reach the Mediterranean port of Alexandria. There Darius left an inscription, which still stands today:

“I am an Achaemenian from Persia. By the Grace of Ahura Mazda I seized Egypt. I gave orders to tame the Nile ... this canal was dug thus as I had ordered and ships went from Egypt through this canal ...” ■

[From Ushta, Zoroastrian Studies, June 1999].



Magnificent Legacy

The grand palaces at Susa, Pasargadae and Persepolis

Describing his palace at Susa, Darius the Great says in his inscriptions: "The cedar timber was brought from a mountain by the name Lebanon. The 'yaka' timber from Gandara and from Carmania. The gold came from Sardis and from Bactria. The precious stone lapis-lazuli and carnelian from Sogdiana. The turquoise from Chorasnia. The silver and ebony from Egypt. The ornaments from Ionia. The ivory from Ethiopia and from Sind and Arachosia. The men who wrought the baked bricks, those were Babylonians. The men who adorned the walls, those were Medes and Egyptians ..."

This was imperial art on a scale the world has not seen before. Materials and artists were drawn from all the lands ruled by this Zarathushti emperor. The tastes, styles and motifs were mixed together in an eclectic style of art and architecture that in itself mirrored the Empire. Yet the whole was entirely Persian.

At Pasargadae and at Persepolis one can see the planning, conception and the finished product distinctly Persian, so also the arts at which Persians excelled including fine metal tableware, jewelry, seal cutting, weaponry and its decoration as well as fine pottery.

Cyrus had a long Iranian artistic tradition when he chose to build Pasargadae. Two examples distinctly prove this – the tradition of the columnar hall and the fine gold work. The columnar hall can be seen as belonging to an architectural tradition on the Iranian plateau that extended back through the Median period to at least the beginning of the first millennium BCE. The rich Achaemenid gold-work was in the tradition of the delicate metalwork found in the Iron Age II at Hasanlu and still earlier at Marlik.

In its carefully proportioned and well organized ground plan, rich architectural ornaments and magnificent decorative reliefs, these palaces are artistic legacies of the ancient Zarathushti empire and of the bygone world reflecting the glory and goodness in the history of the religion of Zarathushtra and its adherents.

- by Pallan R. Ichaporia

Left, Glazed brick relief of Royal Guard from the Palace at Susa (Louvre, Paris)

They introduced a unique system of *postal couriers*, which has been described by Herodotus [see page 39].

A development that could well challenge engineers today, is the system of *underground waterways* in the desert called '*ghanat*' that carried scarce water from the springs to the fields. The beauty of these canals is that though they travel at times for over 60 miles through the parched desert they do not erode the walls of the canals, because of the perfectly designed steady slope to guide the flow.

The Persians were credited with ending the dreaded flood of Gilgamesh and Noah by building a *network of dikes and canals* such that the grains cultivated in Mesopotamia, the land between the two rivers, were so big that Herodotus does not describe it out of fear that his readers will not believe him.

The weaving of *metal mesh* to be worn as armor by warriors and horses, has a long history going back to Persian times. They even had the knowledge of *electrolyzing* other metal with gold, and archeologists have found the remains of an ancient *battery*.

Arts and architecture

The Persian contribution to the architecture and sculpture of the world is summed up by S.G. Benjamin, [*Persia and the Persians*, 1880s]:

"One may consciously ascribe to Persia a very high position among the races that have contributed most to the progress of the arts. The long continued existence of Persia as an integral people, exhibiting for twenty-five hundred years an almost unbroken career of national and intellectual activity is almost without a parallel in the history of the arts. The arts of Egypt, Assyria and Greece culminated long ages ago, so also have other nations since. But the artistic life of Persia is still active."

The palaces at Takht-e Jamshid (Persepolis), Susa and Pasargadae, and mountainside rock reliefs – at Naqsh-e Rustom, Taq-e Bostan, Behistun, the temple of Anahita, and numerous other monuments across the Iranian lands – are all among the magnificent architectural legacy left by the Persians. Moreover, they were built by workers who were cared for, for their lifetime, to commemorate progress and the spirit of tolerance and respect for all the diverse peoples of the Persian lands.

An architectural innovation was the building of large halls of monumental proportions, without the support of pillars. This they accomplished by constructing *vaulted domes*. They decorated these with geometric designs made of glazed tiles, like the Taq-e Kasra in Iraq and fire temples that were converted to mosques by the Arab invaders in the seventh century, which still exist. Many structures were given Arabic names such as *Takht-e Soleiman*, *Masjid-e Soleiman* and *Imam-Zadehs*, to prevent their destruction by Muslim invaders.

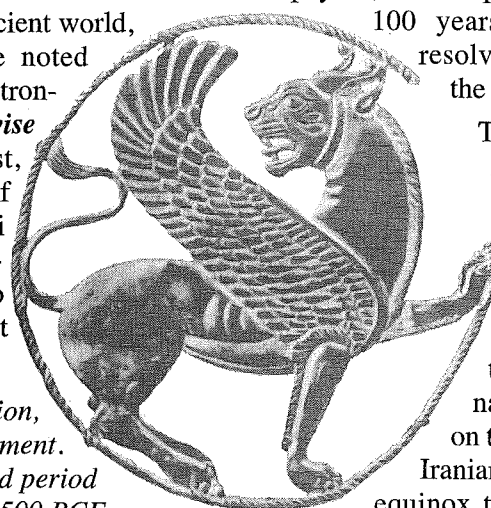
About Sasanian contributions to the arch, vault and dome architecture, Benjamin says:

"The principle of the arch, so thoroughly understood in Persia, was apprehended and practiced in Iran before the Parthenon and Colosseum challenged the admiration of the world."

Knowledge of astronomy

Throughout the ancient world, the Persians were noted for their skills in astronomy. It was the '*wise men*' from the east, the Magi, priests of the Zarathushti religion, who followed the star to greet the infant Christ.

*Winged lion,
gold ornament.
Achaemenid period
c. 500 BCE*



The notion of the *International Date Line* is an Iranian one. The fore-runner of Greenwich was located in Seistan in ancient Iran and called Nimrouz, meaning 'half day' or 'mid-day'. The Nimrouz Observatory was located at 33.5 degrees latitude, a choice based on the fact that Seistan is the center of the lands in the eastern hemisphere.

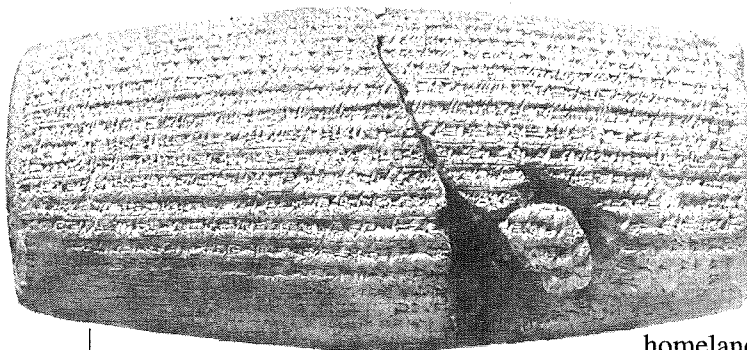
The ancient Zarathushtis had extensive knowledge about planet earth. They knew that the earth consisted of seven separate land masses, for in Avesta we repeatedly read of '*haft keshvar zamin*' – the *seven continents*.

More importantly the ancient Zarathushtis knew the relationship between *the sun and the earth*. While Galileo in 1616 CE was imprisoned for saying that the earth went round the sun, the Iranians two millennia before that date had all their calculations in place with regard to the movement of the earth round the sun.

The celebration of the '*New day*' (Nouruz) as against the '*New year*' (Saal-e-Nou) is a matter of great significance astronomically [1]. The journey of the earth around the sun does not end in a whole number of days but in a recurring fraction (365.24190). The beginning of the journey is marked in spring with the vernal equinox. This happens with a difference of about 5:48:20:16 hours each year. Today in spite of having a leap year, and skipping one every 100 years we have not resolved the issue of the fraction.

The ancient Zarathushtis had devised a method of maintaining a calendar that could be fine-tuned with nature. To zero in on the difference the Iranians waited for the equinox to coincide with

[1] "What we are never told about Nourouz and Haft Seen", *Iran Zamin*, Vol. 1, No. 2, Feb 2001, www.ancientiran.com.



Cyrus the Great's 'Bill of Human Rights'

When the Persian, Cyrus the Great, known as the benevolent conqueror, entered the gates of Babylon, on October 29, 539 BCE, he was hailed as a savior and agent of Jehovah, and branches were spread in his path. In the ensuing months, he freed the Jews from Babylonian captivity, allowed them to return to their homelands and rebuild their temples.

The clay cylinder [above] inscribed in Akkadian cuneiform, was excavated in Babylon in 1879. Housed at the British Museum, London, with a replica at the UN Headquarters in New York, the Edict of Cyrus is acknowledged as the ancient world's first "Bill of Human Rights". It reads:

"I am Cyrus, king of the world, great king, mighty king, king of Babylon ... When I, well-disposed, entered Babylon, I set up the seat of domination in the Royal Palace amidst jubilation and rejoicing ... I did not allow anyone to terrorize the land of Sumer and Akkad. I kept in view the needs of Babylon and all its sanctuaries, to promote its well-being. I lifted the unbecoming yoke of the people of Babylon ... Their dilapidated dwellings I restored. I put an end to their misfortunes ..."

[By Roshan Rivetna. For the complete text, visit <http://oznet.net/cyrus/declarat.htm>]

sun rise at a given location and called the new year (Saal-e-Nou) of that year a new day (Nourouz). One such Nourouz is believed to have been recorded by Zarathushtra in 1725 BCE, and another in 487 BCE when the vernal equinox coincided with sunrise at Takht-e Jamshid (Persepolis). A square stone was placed in the central hall where the first rays of the rising sun would fall, at the same time as the equinox.

In harmony with nature

Zarathushtis, even before the third century BCE, made sure not to go against nature but rather progress hand in hand with nature. Today in the 21st century the progressive world is learning this the hard way.

The early Zarathushtis observed and learned many things from *nature*. The Avestan *Mah Yasht* mentions "In spring, if a seed is sown with the new moon, the fruit of that plant will be sweet and in abundance". Scientist in Japan and the former USSR arrived at the same conclusion in the 1960s.

The Persians studied nature and applied it effectively in their *war strategy*. In a war against the Lydians, the Persians sent in a regiment of camels knowing well that the Lydian

horses were not familiar with camel scent and that would disarray them, which it did, and they won the war. A similar strategy was used against the Arab horses but this time the Persians sent elephants for they knew that the Arab horses were familiar with the camel's scent.

It is also recorded that when Cyrus led the Persian army into Babylon, they *diverted the river*, which flowed into the city from under its protective wall and the army entered the city through that waterway.

The important aspect of the ancient Iranian culture is the fact that it went hand in hand with nature (Wisdom in Creation) the root of which was in the teachings of Zarathushtra.

Everything that is, was and will be created, is first in the form of thoughts. Only those thoughts that are converted into words become reality. Thoughts that are not converted into words are lost. We should keep our thoughts good and in harmony with nature, not against it, so that the products of our thoughts – our deeds, are also good and in tune with nature. From this verse comes the cornerstone of the Zarathushti religion and culture – *Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds*. ■



Fariborz Rahnmoon was born in Yazd and went to Bombay at an early age, where he was an active member of Sazeman-e Javanan-e Zartoshty. He returned to Iran with a masters in cost accountancy only to come face to face with the revolution. In 1991, he left Iran for Australia. There he personally obtained permission to install the life size statue of Cyrus the Great in the Olympic village in Sydney. Now settled in Vancouver he conducts Gatha classes, is an ex-director of ZSBC, chairman of Arbab Rostam Guiv Trust-BC, editor of *Iran Zamin* and webmaster of www.ancientiran.com. Contact him at ancientiran@hotmail.com.

music & dance in iran

By Feraydoon Demehri

A cylindrical stamp, unearthed at Choghamish near Dezful city, showing a music ensemble including a harpist and a drummer. c. 5th millennium BCE. Collection, Ancient Persian Museum, Tehran.

Seeking happiness, for oneself and others is part of the Zarathushti ethos; and singing and dancing, and traditional classical and folk Persian music, are very much an integral part of all Iranian festivals and celebrations.

Early development

The history of musical development in Iran dates back to the prehistoric era. The great legendary king Jamshid, is credited with the invention of music. The world's earliest document of a music ensemble is a cylindrical stamp dating back to the 5th millennium BCE, unearthed at Choghamish near Dezful city. It depicts a group of musicians, including a harpist and a drummer [see above].

Fragmentary documents from various periods of the country's history establish that the ancient Persians possessed an elaborate musical culture. The Sasanian period (226-651 CE), in particular, has left us ample evidence pointing to the existence of a lively musical life in Persia.

Music played a significant role in Sasanian court life. On mosaics, drinking bowls and art works, musical instruments of the harp, trombone, mandolin, flute and tambourine families were favorites.

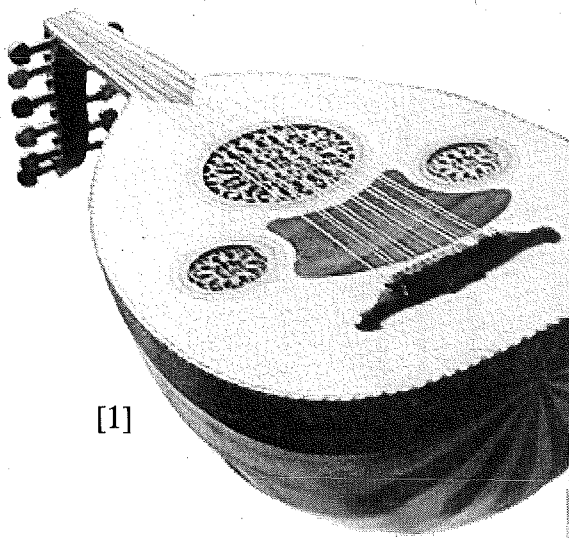
The names of some important musicians such as Barbod, Nakissa and Ramtin, and titles of some of their works have survived.

Throughout the Sasanian period, dignified status was conferred to court musicians. Barbod, the most famous of these court musicians, reportedly conceived a musical system consisting of seven royal modes, thirty derivative modes, and three-hundred sixty melodies. This was the oldest Middle Eastern musical system of which some traces still exist. Its enduring heritage is the names given to some 'dastgahs' (modes) in the modern system of Persian music. There is every reason to believe that the musical tradition of today, although threatened in recent decades by western and other influences, is a direct descendant of Sasanian music, about which much detail is known.

During the Arab invasion and thereafter (643-750 CE), musical activity was suppressed for about a century. However, the increasingly secular



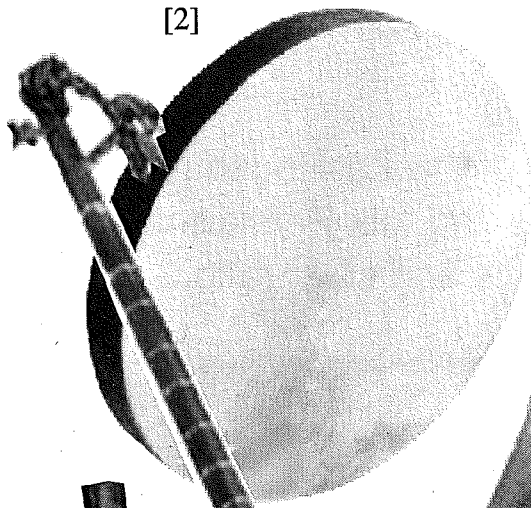
Woman playing the barbad (oued). Gold coated silver cup, Sasanian period. Collection, Ancient Persian Museum, Tehran.



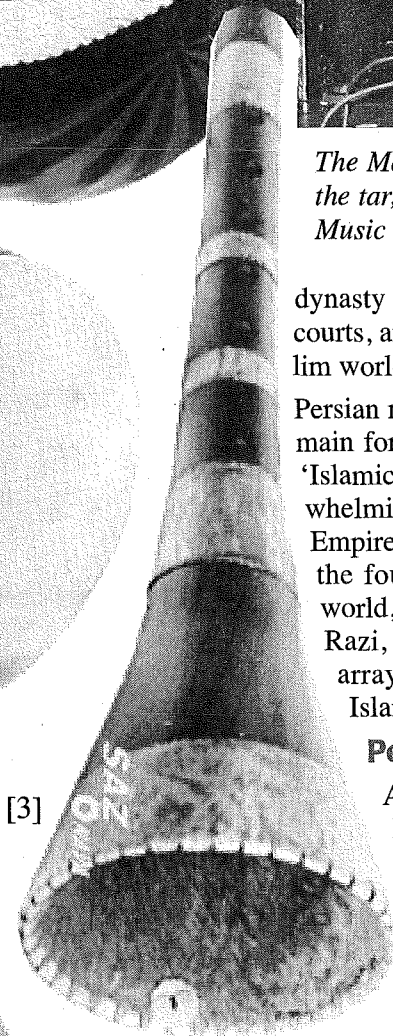
[1]



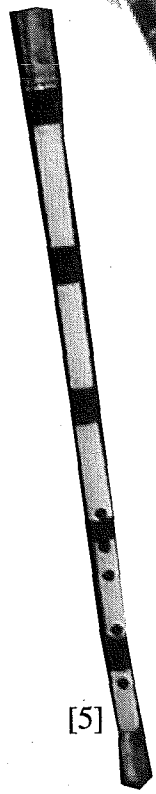
The Mazandaran Music Group playing l. to r. the daff, the tar, kamancheh and tonback, at the Mehergan Music Festival in Vancouver, October 2003.



[2]



[3]



[4]

[5]

dynasty of the Abbasids (750-1258) re-established music at the courts, and Iranian musicians were scattered throughout the Muslim world.

Persian music, as well as other Persian cultural traits, became the main formative element in what has, ever since, been known as 'Islamic civilization'. Persian musicians and musicologists overwhelmingly dominated the musical life of the eastern Muslim Empire. Abu Nasr Farabi, whose *Kitab al-musiqi al-kabir* laid the foundations of the musical tradition of the core Muslim world, for example, at the royal court in Baghdad. Ebne Sina, Razi, Ormavi, Shirazi, and Maraqi are but a few among the array of outstanding Persian musical scholars in the early Islamic period.

Persian musical instruments

All the musical instruments known in the long history of Iran are too numerous to name here. The following are some which are widely used at the present time:

[1] **Barbat (Oued)**: a plucked string instrument with 9 to 11 strings. It is a derivative of the European lute.

[2] **Daff (Arebooneh)** is the Zarathushti version of this instrument): of the drum family, made of animal skins stretched around a wooden ring. Daf is very popular and treated as a holy item amongst our Kurds.

[3] **Soran**, a wind instrument.

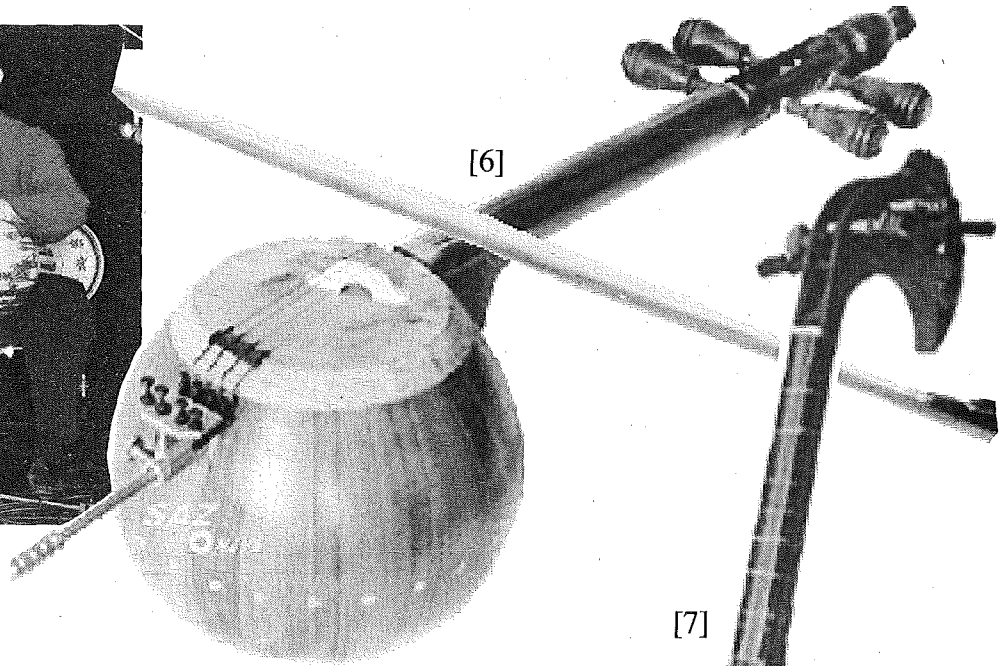
[4] **Tanbour** or **doe-tar**: a plucked string instrument with 3 strings; it is the mother of the sitar. It is the most ancient instrument and has a religious significance. There is mention of this type of instrument in the *Bundahishn*.

[5] **Ney**: the generic name for a number of varieties of flutes.

[6] **Kamancheh**: a bowed instrument with four strings, played in the fashion of the violincello, but with the size and tone range comparable to the violin.

[7] **Robab**, a string instrument.

[8] **Tombak** (or *tumbak* or *tunback* or *zarb*): The principal percussion instrument in Persian classical music. It is a vase-shaped



drum, open on the narrow end, and covered with a tightly stretched skin on the other side.

[9] **Tar:** a plucked string instrument with six strings and a range of two octaves and fifth.

[10] **Santur:** a dulcimer played with delicate wooden mallets, with a range exceeding 3 octaves.

Musical instruments not pictured here are:

Dayereh: a tambourine.

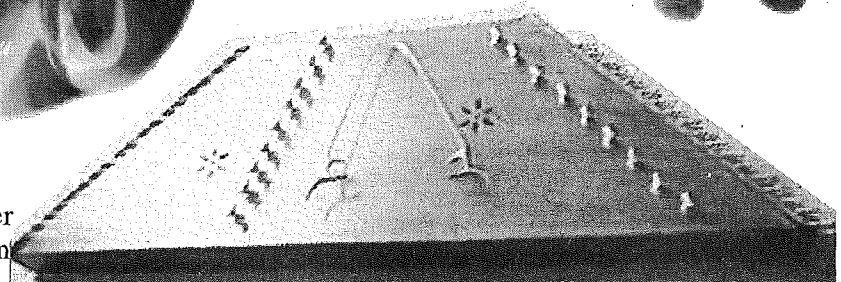
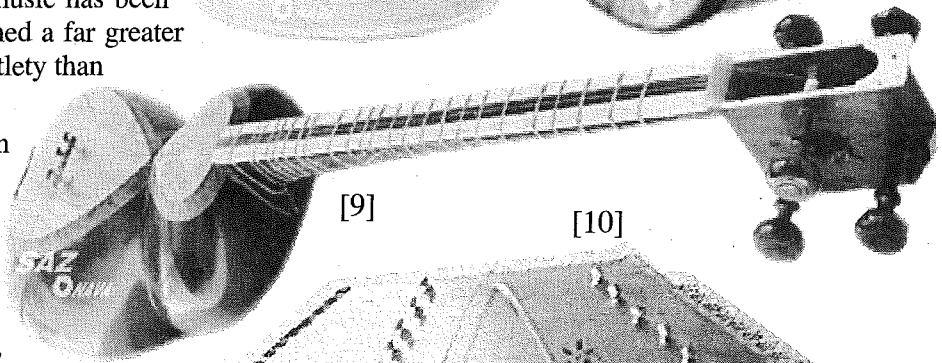
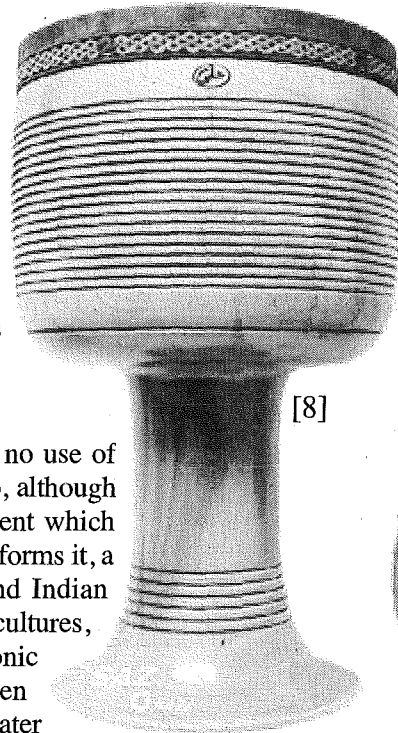
Sitar: an instrument related to the tar with the same range, but with four strings. The sitar is strummed with the nail of the right index finger.

Music structure

Persian music is mainly melodic. It makes almost no use of harmony, and its performance is most typically solo, although sometimes a soloist is accompanied by an instrument which echoes and recapitulates each phrase as the artist performs it, a technique also widely used in Arabic, Turkish and Indian music. As in the case of many non-western musical cultures, Persian music has not evolved a systematic harmonic practice and the development of this music has been primarily melodic. As such it has attained a far greater measure of melodic refinement and subtlety than western music.

The collection of melodies in Persian classical music called '*radif*' is organized into twelve modes. Seven larger ones called '*dastgahs*' (mahour, shour, nava, rast panj-gah, homayoun, segah and chahargah) and five smaller subsets called '*avaz*' or '*maqam*' (abu-ata, bayat-e-zand or bayat-e-tork, dashti, afshari and bayat-e-Isfahan).

Each of these modes are divided into smaller melodic forms called '*gushehs*', which vary in





At the Mehergan Music Festival, Vancouver, 2003: from left, Hiadeh and Khodi Kaviani of the 'Ancient Whispers' musical group; and Feraydoon Demehri [far left in photo] leading the Zarathushti music choir, the 'Gatha Group'.

terms of meter, length, expression and importance. A gousheh is not a clearly defined musical composition; rather, it represents modal, melodic, and occasionally rhythmic skeletal formulae upon which the performer is expected to improvise.

Modern Persian Zarathushti Music

An Iranian music scholar once said that there is at least one 'arebooneh' (similar to the Kurdish daff) and one arebooneh player in every Zarathushti house in Yazd, Iran. The master of arebooneh was **Ardeshir Bazadeh** who passed away a few years ago. His family is still noted for carrying on this tradition of playing the arebooneh.

Rostam Zerehpooosh shall be called the 'Father of Dari Poetry' with his beautiful folk songs, very popular in Iran and abroad.

The **Faravahr Zoroastrian Youth Organization** in Tehran has been a pioneer in teaching music and establishing the first choir group. Also very popular is the Zoroastrian University Students Association choir group called **Mazda Yasnan**. They shall be remembered for their famous song *Khan Ashem Vohu*.

Singers who have sung Dari songs are: **Shahpour Mehrabani, Ardeshir Jamshidian, Jalal Hemmati, Khodad Shid, Shayesteh, Adokht** and

others. Amongst them, Shahpour has taken Persian classical music seriously and held concerts in Vancouver. While migrating to North America after the Iran revolution in 1979, several groups and individuals have done a tremendous job of promoting Zarathushti music. The Zarathushtrian Assembly produced an album of **Pari Zanganeh** with three beautiful songs on the religion of Zarathushtra.

Dr. Khosrow Mehrfar wrote a song on the noted *Khan Ashem Vohu* of Pourdavood which is sung by **Laila**

Forouhar and **Morteza** (two famous Persian pop singers).

Khodi Kaviani has been very active writing, singing and producing music. Two of his CDs are called *Ancient Whispers* and *Amordad*.

The **Gatha Group** from Vancouver, led by Feraydoon Demehri, marketed their first album, *A Cedar Branch* in 2002. **Shahrokh Vafa** from the US east coast, has produced 2 cassettes and a CD of songs sung by himself. He has a beautiful voice and also plays several Persian instruments.

ALL PHOTOS ARE COURTESY OF FERAYDOON DEMEHRI AND WWW.OSHIHAN.ORG



Feraydoon (Feri) Demehri, a chemical engineer from London University is a Project Management Professional for the IT and engineering /construction industries in Vancouver. He was born in Mumbai, and brought up in Yazd. He is founder of O'Shihan Cultural Organization for Zoroastrian arts, culture and sports (www.oshihan.org); producer of the first Dari documentary film – 'The Old Man'; founder and leader of the Gatha Group – a Zarathushti music choir group; founder of the Zarathushti International Film Festival (ZIFF); writer/poet of Zarathushti songs for the Gatha Group's first album 'A Cedar Branch'; and editor of the Persian section of 'Manashni Newsletter', Sydney, Australia. Contact: oshihan@telus.net.

Persian Zarathushti dance

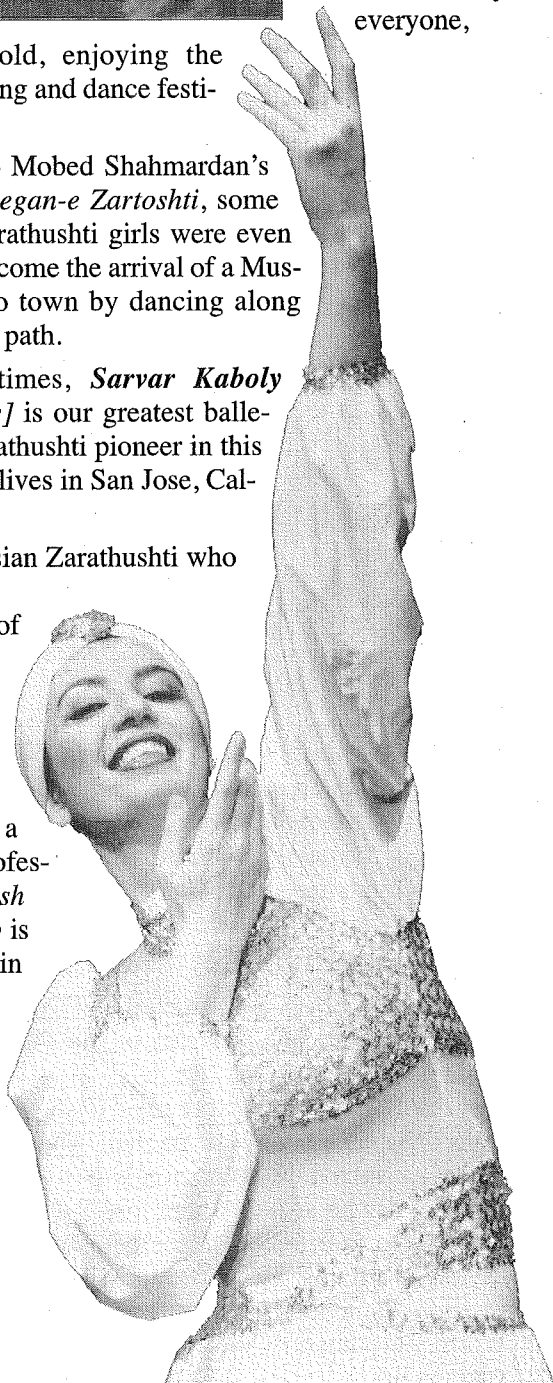


young and old, enjoying the night-long song and dance festival.

According to Mobed Shahmardan's book *Farzanegan-e Zartoshti*, some time ago, Zarathushti girls were even forced to welcome the arrival of a Muslim ruler into town by dancing along the reception path.

In present times, **Sarvar Kaboly** [photo above] is our greatest ballerina, and Zarathushti pioneer in this art. She now lives in San Jose, California.

The first Persian Zarathushti who established a dance group of mainly Zarathushti dancers, was **Mojdeh Shahriari** [photo right] a lawyer by profession. Her *Atash Dance Group* is very popular in Vancouver, Canada. ■



There is plenty of historical evidence that music and dance were an integral part of life of the ancient Persians and this has been inherited down to the present day. One has only to visit one of the annual pilgrimages in Iran to see nearly everyone,

Musical Structures in Zarathushti Prayers

[Raiomand Mirza's research has uncovered musical structures in Zarathushti ritual prayer performance, which are arguably over one thousand years old. "The fascinating thing," writes Mirza, "is that before this work, nobody had known they were there or had ever really looked for music within Zarathushti ritual". The study, which took Mirza from London to Iran to India, covers a span of history dating back to 1,500 BCE and touches on other traditions including Buddhism, Judaism, Islam and Vedic practice. An abstract of his PhD thesis is given below.]

This thesis uncovers the presence of musical structures within Zarathushti prayer performance and articulates the details of these structures and also the way in which they are manifested and are passed down through generations.

Initial research included an amalgamation and examination of the few references to music in Zarathushti prayer that there are to be found in existing literature. The bulk of the research involved traveling to different countries to make contemporary sound recordings of prayers and to conduct extensive interviews with priests. Archival recordings were also gathered as data for examination.

The evolution of the status and role of priests within the Zarathushti community from antiquity to the present day as well as the training they receive is presented in order to understand the social as well as religious context within which Zarathushti prayer is performed and taught.

The thesis supplies a substantial body of evidence in the form of musical notations of the prayers of over thirty men and boys as well as more than an hour of accompanying sound recordings. Interview data is also provided to illuminate the perspectives of the performers on their own material.

The musical analysis of the notations uncovers musical structures in Zarathushti prayer. An examination of interview data reveals how these structures are manifested and transmitted and then synthesizes the conclusions into a model for music making which operates to shape the sound of Zarathushti prayer. The final analysis explores the age of these musical structures from the most recent and provable point of existence to a possibly ancient origin. ■

Raiomand Mirza received his PhD in 2003 from SOAS, the School of Oriental and African Studies, of the University of London. Raiomand, son of Khushroo and Minnie Mirza of Montreal, lives in London, with his wife, British actress Nina Wadia.

zarathushtis & western music

By Roshan Rivetna

Notwithstanding a rich tradition of devotional and festive songs in Gujarati, the Parsis have, by and large adopted the western music tradition, and produced an inordinately large number of budding and seasoned artistes on the western classical as well as pop music scene.

PHOTO: CYRUS RIVETNA



*Opening night gala at the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress, in Houston, December 2000: above, **Farobag Homi Cooper** conducts the "Zoroastrian Symphony Orchestra"; left, the **ZAC (Chicago) choir** sings Gujarati songs.*

PHOTO: CYRUS RIVETNA



Parsi Gujarati Music

A plethora of Parsi devotional and festive songs exist, and are an integral part of the Parsi Zarathushti musical tradition. In fact, in earlier centuries, 'goyens' (lady singers) were hired to sing on happy occasions or when a boon was granted. Mostly passed down orally or in handwritten notebooks, these heirlooms could easily be scattered and lost, were it not for some recent efforts to record these gems of our Zarathushti heritage, notably by Khojeste Mistree of Zoroastrian Studies (zstudies@vsnl.com) and Homi Dhalla of the World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation, (wzcf@bom8.vsnl.net.in).



Above, popular Bombay pianist and conductor, Jehangir Khodaiji [center] was founder of India's first all-women western music ensemble, the Young Ladies High School Orchestra, in the early 1900s. The Parsi women, in beautiful garas, played violins, mandolins, cello, double bass and drums. Below, from left, Mehli Casinath and Jehangir Khodaiji. Bottom, Damri, center with harmonica orchestra. [PHOTO COURTESY PHIROZ DASTOOR AND RODA KHODAIJI]

On the Indian music scene

In recent years, there have been several Parsi musicians of note on the Indian music scene – such as composer-performer **Vistasp Balsara**, classicist **Pandit Keki Jijina**, tabla maestro **Aban Mistry**, singer **Jaloo Bhesania**, composer-singer **Soli Kapadia**, composer **Kersi Lord**, kirtankar **Parvez Katrak**, music director **Kersi Mistry**, ghazal song-bird **Penaaz Masani**, song-writer **Navroze Mehta**, pop singer **Zeenia Mirza**.

Zarathushtis in western classical music

Notwithstanding the occasional stars of Indian classical and pop music, for the most part, Parsis have adopted the western music tradition, and have produced an inordinately large number of budding and seasoned artistes on the western classical as well as pop music scene.

Parsi musicians, bands and orchestras were among the first to bring western music to Bombay audiences, in the early 1900s. **Ardeshir Khodaiji** (1863-1916) was the patriarch of three generations of Khodaiji musicians and orchestra-leaders that entertained Bombay. The forgotten genius **Mehli Casinath** (b. 1894) founded the Young Men's Parsi Orchestra and a Parsi women's orchestra. Harmonica legend **Phiroze Damri** popularized the harmonica in India and coached three generations of students.

Most popular among the bands that played at weddings and navjotes in Mumbai for several decades in the 1900s were those of **Goody Seervai** and **Nelly Battiwalla**.

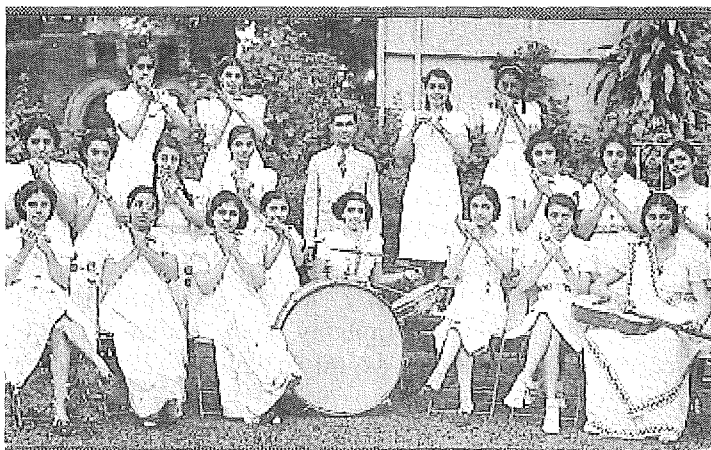
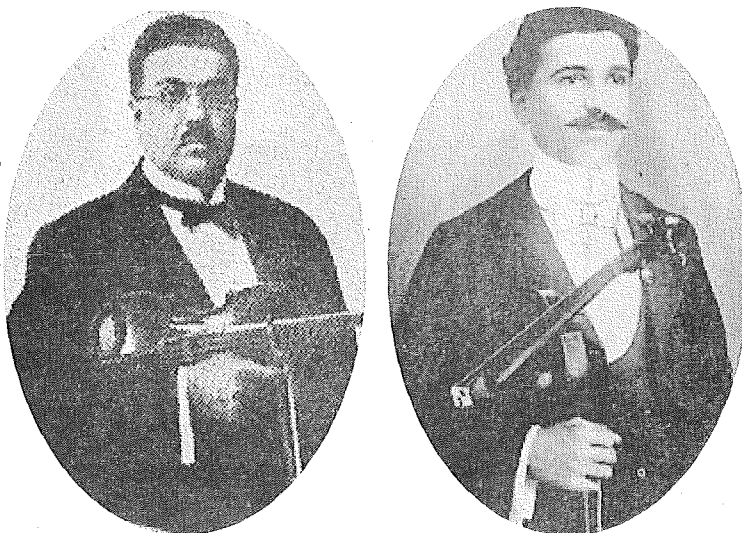
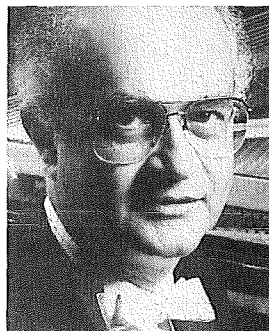


PHOTO: PARSIANA, JUNE 1998



The Mehtas, from top, l. to r. Zubin, Bejun (in Handel's "Flavio" in New York), Mehli, Zarin, Dady and Navroj



The Star-studded Mehta family

Maestro Mehli Mehta, patriarch of a family of musicians, founded and conducted the Bombay Symphony Orchestra in 1935, and the Bombay String Quartet in 1940, and was instrumental in bringing western music and culture to Indian audiences. He founded and led the American Youth Symphony in Los Angeles for 33 seasons, until his passing in 2002.

His son, **Maestro Zubin Mehta**, conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the New York Philharmonic, and the Israel Philharmonic, is one of the great music legends of our times. Mehli's other son **Zarin Mehta** has garnered honors as executive director of Chicago's Ravinia Music Festival. A nephew, **Xerxes Mehta** is founder and director of the Maryland Stage Company; while another nephew **Dady Mehta** is on the music faculty of Eastern Michigan University. Dady's son **Navroj Mehta** plays the violin with the San Diego symphony, and another son, **Bejun Mehta**, was recently proclaimed an "overnight sensation" as a countertenor with the New York City Opera.

- By Roshan Rivetna

Notable among emerging young conductors today are **Farobag Homi Cooper**, music director of the Chicago Philharmonia and the Zoroastrian Symphony Orchestra, **Zane Dalal**, **Cyrus Ginwala** and **Adil Mehta**.

In a novel experiment, the *Zoroastrian Symphony Orchestra*, of about 25 talented Zarathushti musicians and an equal number from the Houston Symphony, under the baton of **Farobag Cooper**, first performed at the Seventh Zoroastrian World Congress in Houston in December 2000. Soprano **Dilshad Khambatta** sang *Jashme* from composer **Meher Madon-Jansen's Ahura**, accompanied by flutist **Ayesha Dastur**. The orchestra also featured pianist **Sorab Wadia**, violinists **Jamshed Turel** and **Cyrus Mehta**, and trumpeter **Firdosh Khambatta**. **Adil Mehta** conducted the last two works.

In a second performance of the ZSO, at the 12th North American Zoroastrian Congress, in Chicago in 2002. Baritone **Dinyar Vania** and soprano **Anita Parekh** received standing ovations for the grand finale performance of *Zarathushtra*, composed by **Parizad Irani**.

Other classical musicians of note today are: classical singer **Sonia Behrana**, violin virtuoso **Farhad Billimoria** and his sister, flautist **Dilshad Billimoria**, **Piroozi Cooper** who orchestrated the ZAGNY Philharmonic for the North American Congress in 1998, **Parvez Doctor**, founder of the Bombay Philharmonic and Chamber Orchestra, violinist **Jini Dinshaw**, concert pianist **Tehmie Gazdar**, singer **Treta McCrelless**, pianist **Ratti Mehta**, pianist **Parvez Modi** and **Coomi Wadia**, conductor of the internationally acclaimed Paranjoti Academy Chorus.

Rock, pop and jazz

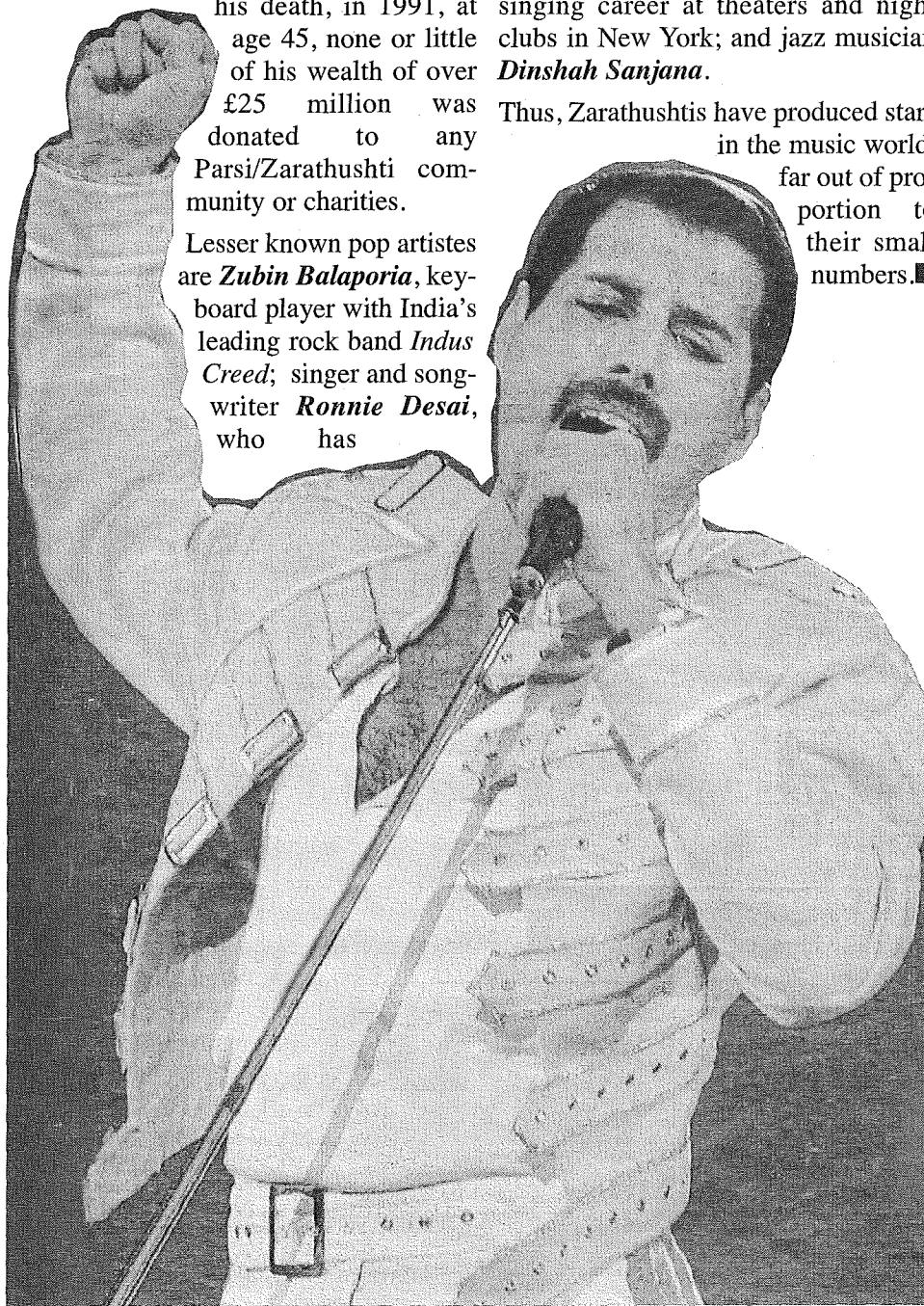
Flamboyant rock superstar, **Freddie Mercury** of the pop band, **Queen**, grew up as a quiet, studious Parsi school-boy, Farokh Balsara, at St.

Peter's school, in the small town of Panchgani, near Bombay. Sadly, he played down his Parsi roots, and at his death, in 1991, at age 45, none or little of his wealth of over £25 million was donated to any Parsi/Zarathushti community or charities.

Lesser known pop artistes are **Zubin Balaporia**, keyboard player with India's leading rock band *Indus Creed*; singer and songwriter **Ronnie Desai**, who has

been described as the "Bob Dylan of India"; singer, songwriter and composer **Gary Lawyer**, who started his singing career at theaters and night clubs in New York; and jazz musician **Dinshah Sanjana**.

Thus, Zarathushtis have produced stars in the music world, far out of proportion to their small numbers. ■



Guinness Book Record



According to the Guinness Book of World Records, the longest non-repetitious piece for piano ever composed was the *Opus Clavicembalisticum* by **Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji**.

The work is in 12 movements with a theme and 44 variations and a playing time of 2 3/4 hours, which concludes with a gargantuan chordal passage, spread across five staves. Some of his other works are even longer, upto seven hours duration.

Composer Sorabji, a Parsi, born in 1892, lived most of his life in England. An enigmatic figure in 20th century western classical music, his was a name that inspired the awe and dread of pianists, a composer whose works are much more heard of, than heard. ■

On Culture and Civilization ...

Cultures are maps of meaning through which the world is made intelligible - *Peter Jackson, 1989.*

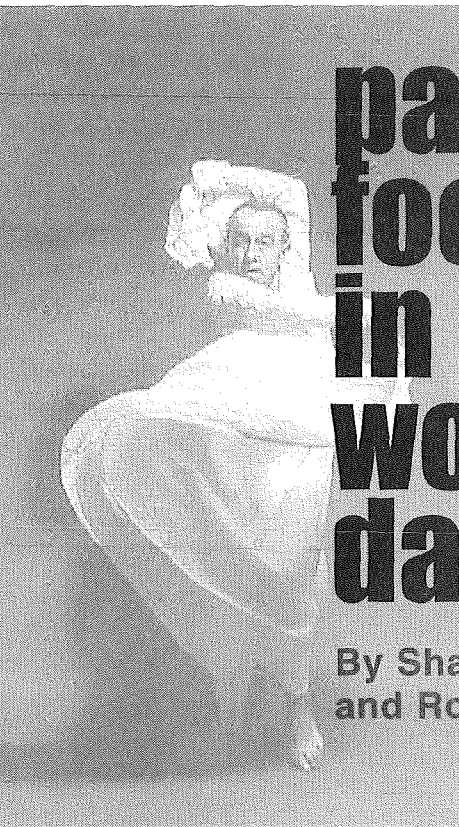
The test of civilization is the power of drawing the most benefit out of cities. - *Ralph Waldo Emerson.*

[The above two are from "Global Culture", *National Geographic*, August 1999, submitted by Dinaz Rogers]

A civilized society is one exhibiting the five qualities of truth, beauty, adventure, art and peace - *Whitehead*

The test of a civilization is the way it cares for its helpless members. - *Pearl S. Buck, 1954.*

Music and art and poetry attune the soul to God - *Thomas Merton*



parsi footprints in the world of dance

By Shazneen Rabadi Gandhi
and Roshan Rivetna

PHOTOS COURTESY WWW.OUTOFINDIA.NET/ABROAD/WASHINGTONDC

The Zarathushti community proudly acknowledges the mark left by the contributions of these talented Zarathushtis in the world of dance.

"I don't think it's atypical at all!" exclaimed **Uttara Coorlawala** when asked about her "atypical career choice" in a recent conversation. "A lot of Parsis are doing it and doing it well!"

The "it" Coorlawala speaks so passionately about is dancing. Names of several other Parsi dancers who she considers talented and successful in the world of professional dance roll off her tongue in rapid succession to support her point.

The list isn't long, but it does include several people who have received tremendous accolades for their work: Shiamak Davar, Yasmen Mehta, Rohinton Cama and Astad Deboo.

Shiamak Davar is well known for his *Institute for the Performing Arts*, widely heralded as India's foremost dance and fitness school. His appeal to the younger generation as a 'pop star' is undeniable [see www.shiamak.com].

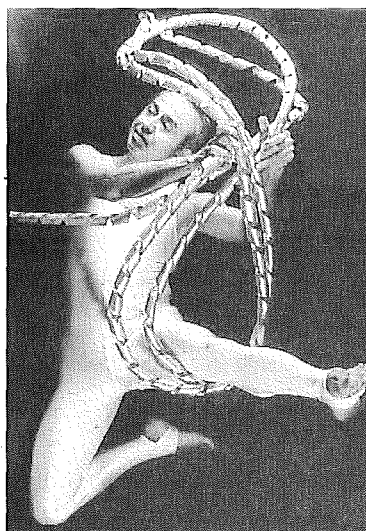
Yasmen Mehta, who runs her own dance company in California had originally enjoyed dancing only as a hobby, but later gave up a career in hotel management to dance professionally. Her work over the last two years has been characterized as a "vibrant celebration of life" [see www.ccdancers.org].

Rohinton Cama has been acknowledged as a "master of each and every facet" of the Bharatanatyam and "one of India's best known interpreters" of that dance form.

He is said to be "young and beautiful as a God" [see www.association.sargam.com/rohinton_cama.htm].

Astad Deboo, winner of the highest awards for creative performance by

the government of India, brings stunning visual impact and contemporary abstraction to his performance. He is also widely acknowledged for his



work with deaf artists. His contribution to modern dance has made "dance accessible to all" [see www.outofindia.net/abroad/WashingtonDC/Performances/astad_home.htm].

Coorlawala herself is a legend in the world of dance. An internationally acclaimed dancer, choreographer and dance scholar, she is a pioneer credited

with having brought modern dance to India and blending it seamlessly with elements from Bharata Natyam as seen in the sculptures and paintings of India. She appears to be unparalleled in stature and achievement, having



PHOTO COURTESY "THE ZOROASTRIANS OF INDIA, PARSIS, A PHOTOGRAPHIC JOURNEY" BY SOONI TARAPOREVALA

Facing page, Astad Deboo, creating stunning visual impact in a style uniquely his own. Above, Shiamak Davar, dancer, choreographer, singer, actor, rehearses with his troupe in Bombay, 2000. Right, Yasmen Sorab Mehta and Will Elder-Groebe in "Day and Dreams", 2002, choreography by Yasmen Sorab Mehta.

won several awards, including most recently the Dadabhai Naoroji International Award for Excellence and Lifetime Achievement. The award credited Coorlawala with the creation of a new dance vocabulary for India that precipitated a profound and permanent change in the Indian dance environment.

Undoubtedly there are others. **Rukshana Engineer**, for instance, an award-winning classical ballet teacher who directs her own school, The Vancouver Festival Ballet Academy. Engineer, who comes with

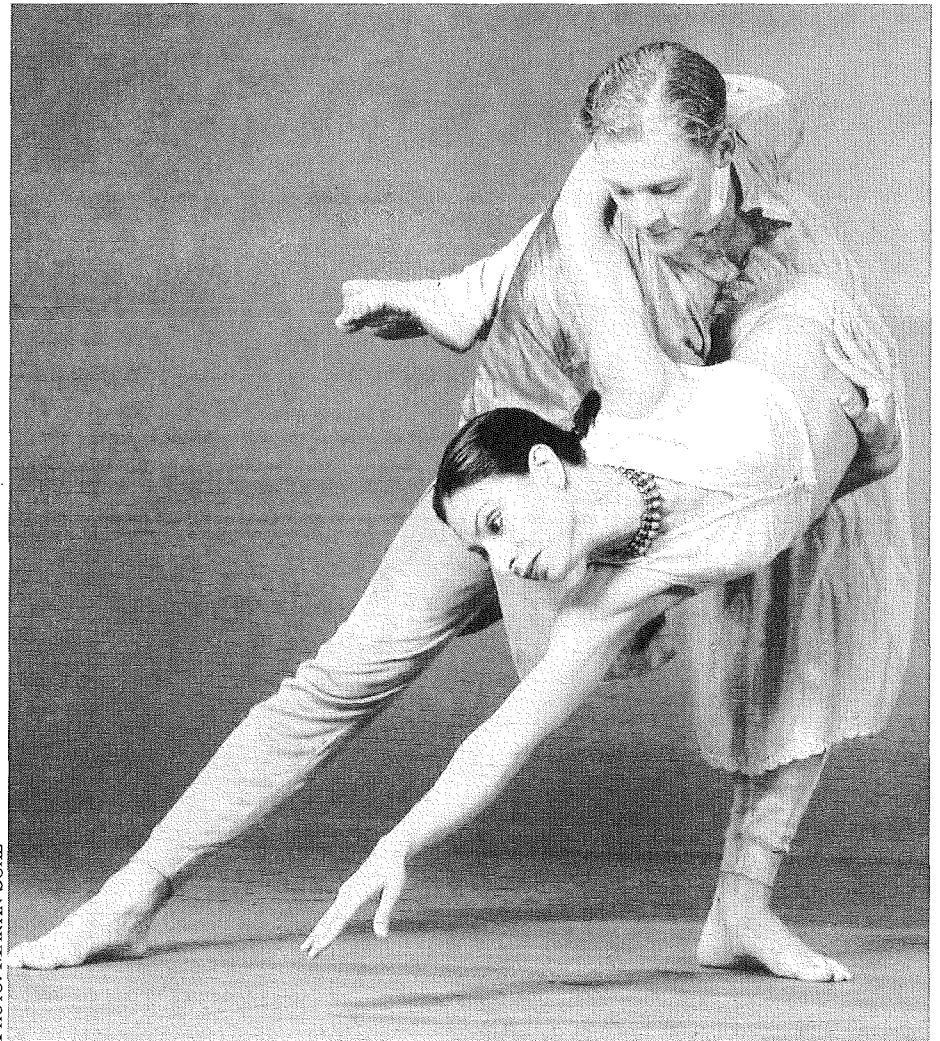
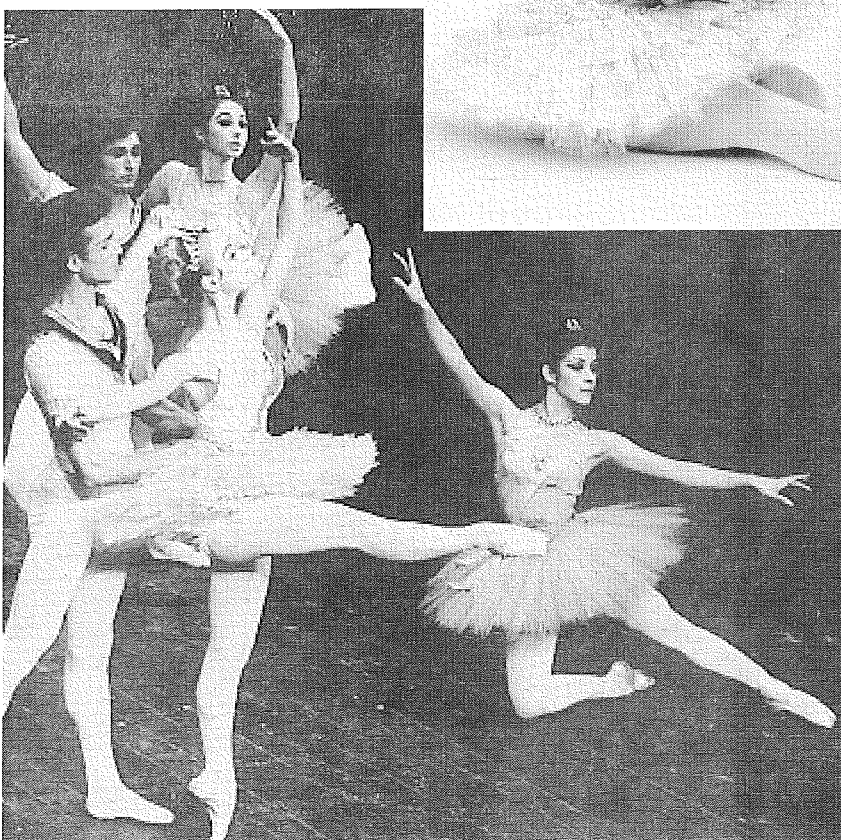
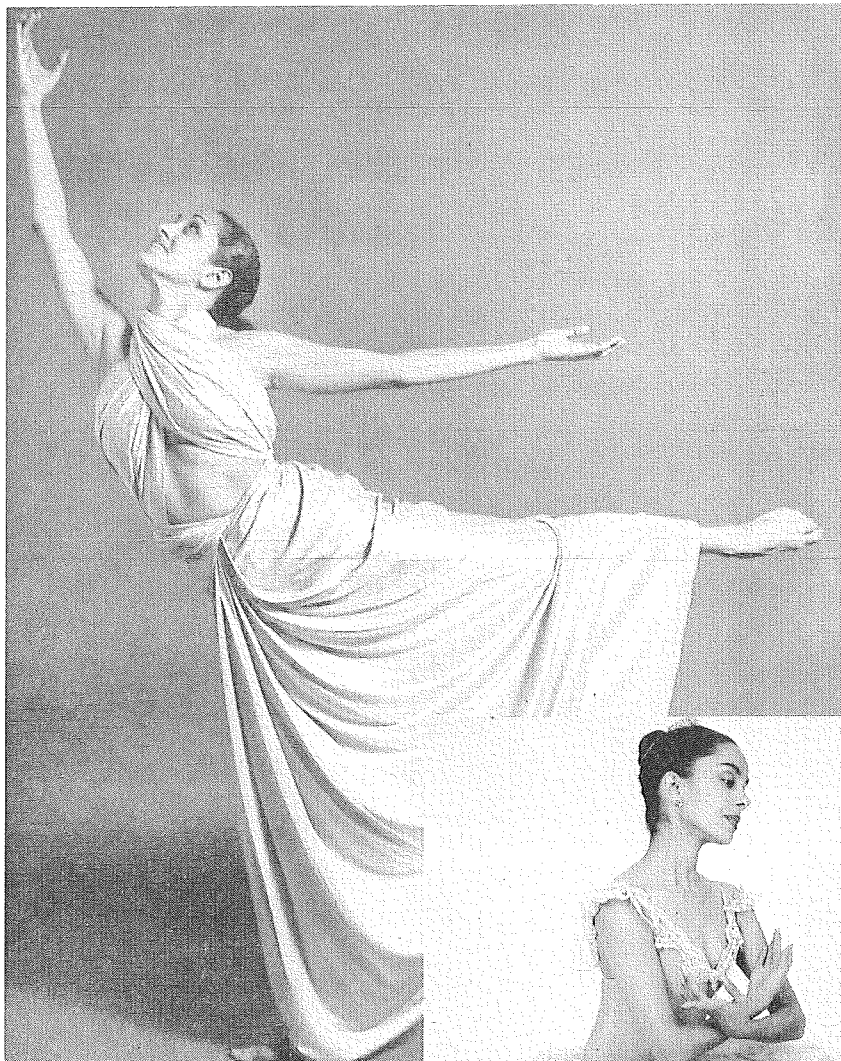


PHOTO: MARTIN SOHL



impressive qualifications, has developed a unique curriculum of traditional and innovative methods to nurture technical and artistic excellence. She has also performed Bharatanatyam, flamenco, ballroom, Latin and fusion pieces.

And there is **Rashna Homji**, who, in 1964, became the first eastern woman, in the history of the British Royal Ballet, to be accepted into its exclusive ballet school. In the 30-plus year association with the Royal Ballet Company at Covent Garden Royal Opera House and the Sadler's Wells Ballet Company, Rashna and her husband Stephen Jefferies have both risen to be star performers. Since 1996, Homji and Jeffries have been with the Hong Kong Ballet Group.

For at least some of these dancers, a subtle Zarathushti influence permeates some of their work. For instance, in a piece entitled

Meditation Coorlawala uses dark and light to advance a story of creation through dance. Mehta, recently inspired by A *Zoroastrian Tapestry*, is playing with the idea of performing a new dance based on "Anahita". While both dancers may draw from similar sources for inspiration – their background, culture, religion, ethnic heritage, etc. – their work may not be at all similar since their perspectives and personal

styles may be different.

It is not easy to earn a living as a professional dancer; but Coorlawala has been dancing since she was five, Deboo has

From top, Uttara Asha Coorlawala in Ushas Sukta (choreography Shri Mohanrao Kallianpurkar, costume design Astad Deboo); Rukshana Engineer, who directs her own school The Vancouver Festival Ballet Academy; and Rashna Homji [at right in photo] in a performance of the Royal Ballet at Covent Garden Royal Opera House, London.

danced at the Great Wall of China, Davar enjoys a fan following like a Bollywood hero, Cama has been compared to a God, and Mehta, disappointed, asks “One moment only?” when asked to describe the most glorious moment of her dancing career (she has “enjoyed every minute of the last fourteen years as a dancer”).

The message from all to young Zarathushtis who want to be dancers is: if you have a passion for dance, go for it!

The Zarathushti community proudly acknowledges the mark left by the contributions of these talented Zarathushtis in the world of dance. ■

Shazneen Rabadi Gandhi
lives in New York City. She writes as a hobby.



Rohinton Cama, called by critics as “Bharatanatyam’s Rudolf Nureyev”.

PHOTO: RAJEEV ASGAONKAR, COURTESY WWW. ASSOCIATIONSARGAM.COM/ROHINTON_CAMA.HTM



Detail from folio 294 of the Houghton Shah Nameh, showing Rustom, son of Zal, pursuing the demon. [FROM “A KING’S BOOK OF KINGS, THE SHAH-NAMEH OF SHAH TAHMASP” BY STUART CARY WELCH, METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK]

Epic of the kings

A thousand years after Firdowsi completed his monumental literary work, the Shah Nameh lives fresh in the hearts of Iranians and continues to inspire expression in other art forms – exquisite miniature paintings, calligraphy and the theater.

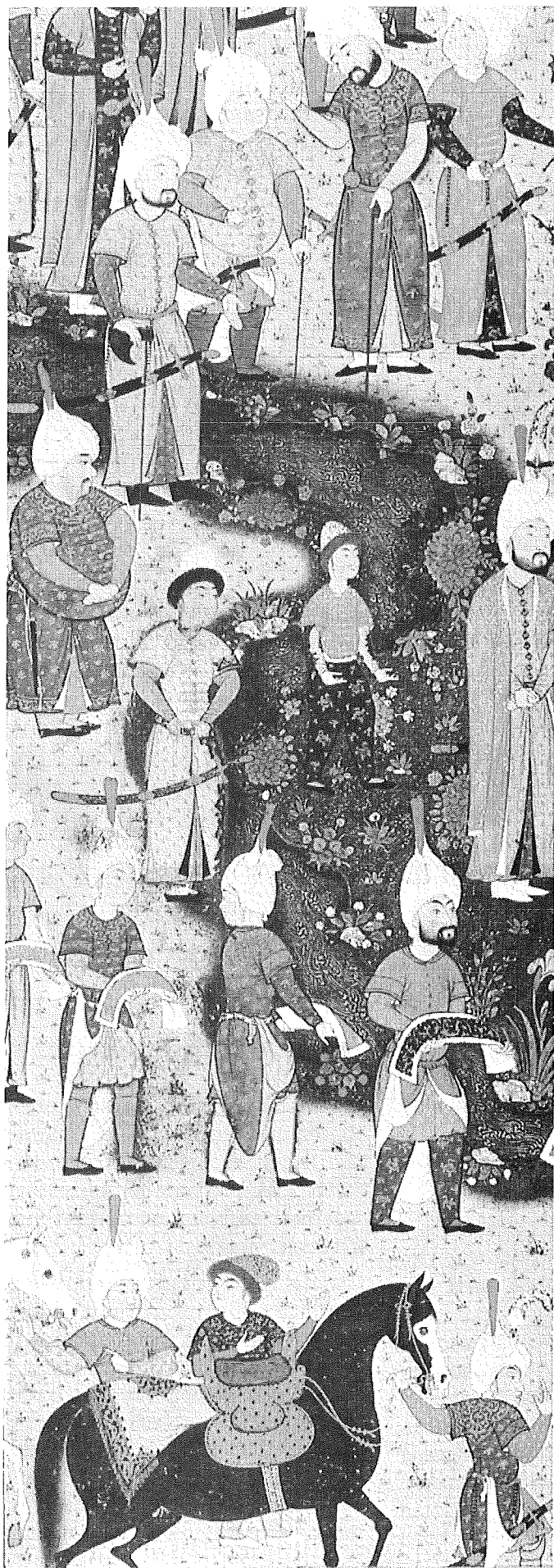
By Parviz Varjavand
San Carlos, California

The role of Daghighi

The Shah Nameh is a monumental book of poetry acknowledged by scholars as one of the finest, and most important work in Persian literature. The work was commenced in approximately 975 CE and ended in 1010. Two poets, one the Zarathushti Daghighi, and the other a Muslim, Firdowsi, collaborated in composing some 45,000 rhyming lines of poetry. Historians have long ignored Daghighi’s role in creating the Shah

Nameh, even though it was he who started the effort. Firdowsi admits that Daghighi began the work and that he took hundreds of his lines and incorporated them, unchanged into the Shah Nameh.

Daghighi was assassinated while chronicling the events surrounding our prophet Asho Zarathushtra. It seems the crime was a political conspiracy – but playing detective is difficult, a thousand years after the murder. However, this research was done by my late father, Dr. Feridoon Varjavand, and I feel obligated to bring the core of his writings (which



are mostly in Farsi) to the attention of scholars. Daghighi deserves notice for his role as the creative initiator of the Shah Nameh. This area invites research.

History of Shah Nameh

Firdowsi forged his destiny as an epic poet whose power lives on, even a thousand years later. Professional Shah Nameh readers can create magic and drama when chanting the rhythmic stanzas, to the beat of drums. On many an evening, their skills transform humble teahouses into the great battlefields of heroes and knights of old. Listeners may experience great ranges of feeling, from the thunder of thousands of charging horses to the gentle whisper of lovers exchanging their deep-felt anguish. As the readers artfully intone the cadence and enchantment of the changing moods of these venerated poems, listeners are moved to laughter and tears.

The Shah Nameh is in pure Farsi, and thus it breaks with the rule enforced immediately after the Arab invasion of Iran, that all writers had to use only the Arabic language.

During the previous Sasanian dynasty, many chronicles existed, called *Khwaday-Namag* or "Books of the Sovereign". These were collections of poetry describing great events of each sovereign's reign. In addition to history and mythology, philosophy and folklore were also mixed into these poems.

After the Arabs invaded Iran and ousted the Sasanians, they burned non-Arabic books in an attempt to systematically destroy the Farsi language, and obliterate the pre-Islamic history of Iran. Most Sasanian Khwaday Namags were lost during this period of our history.

In 945 CE, Prince Ahmad of the Buyid Dynasty entered Baghdad and deposed the caliph, marking the beginning of a revival of Persian culture. It was during this period that writers could compose books like the Shah Nameh.

A grave historic error and forgery credited the Ghaznavid Sultan Mahmud as having commissioned the book. The Ghaznavids used power based on slave holding. This dynasty destroyed much of Persian culture and paved the way for the disastrous invasions of the Mongol hordes. It is most likely that the Shah Nameh was begun before this tyranny permeated the land.

Firdowsi's genius

The Shah Nameh gained fame fast and early, for it was a new hope for a nation at a very dark period in its history.

Detail from folio 67 of the Houghton Shah Nameh. A vassal king pays homage to King Zal, with gifts of horses, slaves, coins, brocades and musk. [FROM "A KING'S BOOK OF KINGS, THE SHAH-NAMEH OF SHAH TAHMASP" BY STUART CARY WELCH, METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK]

It revived the tradition of reading Khwaday Namags and caused a renaissance of the Farsi language.

Firdowsi's genius was his ability to make these tales palatable to the new muslim sensibilities, whereas Daghighi, because of his anger and harsher tone, lost his name and his life in the effort. However, we cannot be certain if Firdowsi lived to see any sign of his success. In a very sad poem he describes how he is left old and poor and without the "sunshine" of his disappeared patron.

The poems recapture the history of the ancient Ariyana Vaeja, the homeland of the Aryan people. In this great epic, myths and heroic adventures live side by side with detailed historic events and tender love stories. It is the only ancient script that retells the story, with almost Darwinian accuracy, of the beginning of civilization from the use of stone tools to the discovery of fire and the making of different implements.

From Iran's earliest times, when people relied predominantly on memory to keep track of their history and mythology, poetry was of great importance. Verses which are rhythmic and interesting in imagery can be memorized easier than non-rhythmic prose. Musical instruments and especially drums then come into play to help the raconteur keep the rhythm. Inevitably, priests, shamans or bards usually monopolized the memorizing and retelling of poetry.

The Shah Nameh is a treasure trove for students of folk lore. The tales of Rustam and Sohrab, of Siavaksh passing through fire, of Esfandiar and Zarathushtra – all have that element of myth which makes them rich material for fresh exploration and interpretation.

Persian miniatures

Naturally, Iranians love to visually embellish these stories. As the Shah Nameh's fame grew, great artists began illustrating its pages with the most exquisite of Persian miniatures. Today prestigious museums of the world display these hand-painted Shah Nameh pages among their most valued collections.

These stories now bring renewed meaning as present-day Iranians give them life in fresh imagery. We might incorporate them into plays, films, animated sequences, and paintings.

Because these tales delve into the real consequences of difficult choices, they provide special comfort and support to our children who face daily challenges. As we read Shah nameh stories to them, they may find inspiration and guidance, as well as take pride in their ancestors.

The enigmatic Daghighi, Firdowsi, and the mysterious patron risked their lives to give the great-hearted Iranian heroes to the world. Whatever our age or situation, their quest enriches us. We recognize our fundamental and universal destiny in the Shah Nameh's transcendent song of freedom. ■

parsi art and artists

In art, as in song and dance, Parsis have by and large adopted the western, mainly British, tradition, and produced artists of the highest stature.

"After all, Mumbai, Parsis and Art: do they not all go together?" writes B. N. Goswami in his column "Art and Soul" [November 3, 2002], as he wonders why the *Portrait of a Community* project, "an idea crying to be done" was so long in coming to fruition.

The project, initiated by Chemould Publications and Arts Trust, in collaboration with the World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation, rediscovered and restored art works reflecting the heritage of the Parsis, culled from private collections, homes and fire temples. The works were exhibited at the National Gallery of Modern Art in Mumbai in October 2003 and published in a hardcover volume [see page 112].

"In many ways, the exhibition is an act of celebration. The Parsis are no ordinary community, and their enterprise, their vision, their philanthropy, all need to be celebrated," writes Goswami. "The exhibition draws attention to individuals through whom a whole age, the texture of times gone by, can be felt."

"One can see in the mere fact of so many of them commissioning portraits of themselves, or of members of their families, a conscious emulation of the British colonial masters of those years. But most of the works go well beyond that, and one can quickly begin to see distinct artistic merit in them.

"The academic style, the mannered look, the frozen posture, are of course all there. But one also sees skilled renderings and great penetration of character in some of the



works: the brooding air, the inward turning, the shrewd glint in the eye.

"The portraits are not all by Indian artists, one reminds oneself ... a sizeable number of the works are by itinerant European artists who were commissioned by celebrated Parsi houses [see painting at left]. Again, the works are not all oils on canvas, as one might initially imagine; there are engravings and lithographs, paintings on ivory and glass – some of them by Chinese artists or done in the Chinese manner – and a wide range of photographs ... there are riches of all description here."

Among the most celebrated of the Parsi artists, of the early 20th century were **Pestonjee Bomanji** whose works were figural representations depicting Parsi costumes, rituals and lifestyle; **Manchershaw F. Pithawala** whose ease with both oils and watercolors and sheer technical prowess made him a greatly revered artist; and **Jehangir A. Lalkaka**, with an eye for detail. Versatile artist **Cumi Dallas** was as comfortable creating a mogul scene in watercolors as she was in portraiture in oils and pastels.

Contemporary artists **Jehangir Sabawala** and **Shivavux Chavda** of Mumbai are noted for their unique art styles. And finally, one cannot forget India's foremost woman photojournalist, **Homai Vyarawalla**, whose career spanned six recent decades of India's turbulent history.

- by Roshan Rivetna



Clockwise from right:

*Sorabji Limji Palamkote (1865-1909).
Oil on canvas by M. F. Pithawala, 1928.
Courtesy Palamkot Hall, Dadar, Mumbai.*

*Dasturji Khurshetji Daboo,
pastel by Cumi Dallas, c. 1960.*

*Cooverbai Jamsetjee Wadia (1836-1914).
Oil on canvas. Courtesy H. B. Wadia Atash
Bahram, Mumbai.*

*Artist's Daughter and Her Painting. Oil on
canvas by Pestonjee Bomanji, 1887. Cour-
tesy Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu
Sangrahalaya (Prince of Wales Museum),
Mumbai.*

*Lady Meherbai Dorab Tata (1879-1931).
Oil on canvas by Sir John Lavery R.A., 19th
century British school. Courtesy Chhatrap-
ati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya
(Prince of Wales Museum), Mumbai.*

[ALL PHOTOS COURTESY "PORTRAIT OF A
COMMUNITY, AN EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS
AND PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE PARSEES",
NATIONAL GALLERY OF MODERN ART,
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 2002, CHEMOULD
PUBLICATIONS AND ARTS.]



zarathushti artists in North America

Profiling a few of the many Zarathushti artists who have enriched and ennobled the communities in which they live, in USA and Canada.

Phil Avari started his company, Phil Avari Graphic Design in 1994. Working from his California home, single-handed, he is comfortable in any media: crayons, water colors and pen renderings, producing logo designs, brochures, flyers, corporate image advertising, program covers, illustrations and more. He has recently illustrated children's books for the Council of Iranian Mobeds.

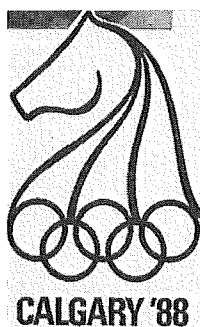
Delna Dastur of McLean, VA, has pursued a career in fine art since she moved to the USA from Mumbai in 1969. She works from her home studio, in multi-media – colored artists inks and crayons. Her current passion is landscapes and trees.

Parvin Farzaneh [photo right] sculpts massive works of art in marble, agate, stone and winterstone. A graduate in Fine Arts from the University of Tehran, the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Lausanne, Switzerland and Ecole de Louvre, Paris, Farzaneh started her career as a painter, but moved to sculpting when she came to Canada.

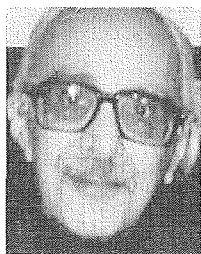
She received formal training in sculpture at the Saidye Bronfman Centre in Montreal and has developed her own style for large-scale outdoor sculptures. She has exhibited solo in Tehran, Toronto, Montreal and in group exhibitions in New York, California, Montreal and Magog.



Yasmin Irani produces promotional materials, logos, letterheads, business cards, ads, posters and brochures. She is also a talented artist and illustrator. Yasmin's logo design was selected out of hundreds, for the 1988 Winter Olympics Organizing Committee in Calgary.



Sam Tata, award-winning photo-journalist, was in Shanghai during World War II seeking out rare photographic materials. In 1946, laden with cameras, Tata spent



two years traveling and discovering through his lens, the country of his origins, India. After immigrating to Montreal, Canada in 1956, Tata gained acceptance in Canada as a photo journalist. Tata's works have been published in notable magazines and exhibited in galleries in Canada, New York and London.



Roda Patel, pediatrician, now committed to health care for mal-nourished children in Gujarat, is also an accomplished painter. Most of her paintings portray the mother and child theme, and all proceeds go to the Gram Seva Trust in Gujarat.

Goolita Wadia-Shave of Victoria, BC works in acrylic and water colors, and has created some lithographs using images from Persepolis. Her ultimate goal is to collaborate with other artists and historians in compiling a visual record of fire altars, agiaries and atash bahrams.



Mehroo J. Wadia, graphic artist from Calgary, AB has shown her works in Bombay, Delhi, London and most-recently in Calgary, where she displayed a retrospective of her works over a fifty-year career. Wadia is as comfortable doing freelance work in commercial and graphic art (posters, press layouts, illustrations, ads) as she is in a number of fine art styles and media.

- by Roshan Rivetna

cultural icons

in pictorial carpet designs

By Parviz Varjavand

Exploring the spiritual bond that exists between the identity of a people and the icons of their mythical, legendary or historic past, as expressed by the carpet weavers of Iran.

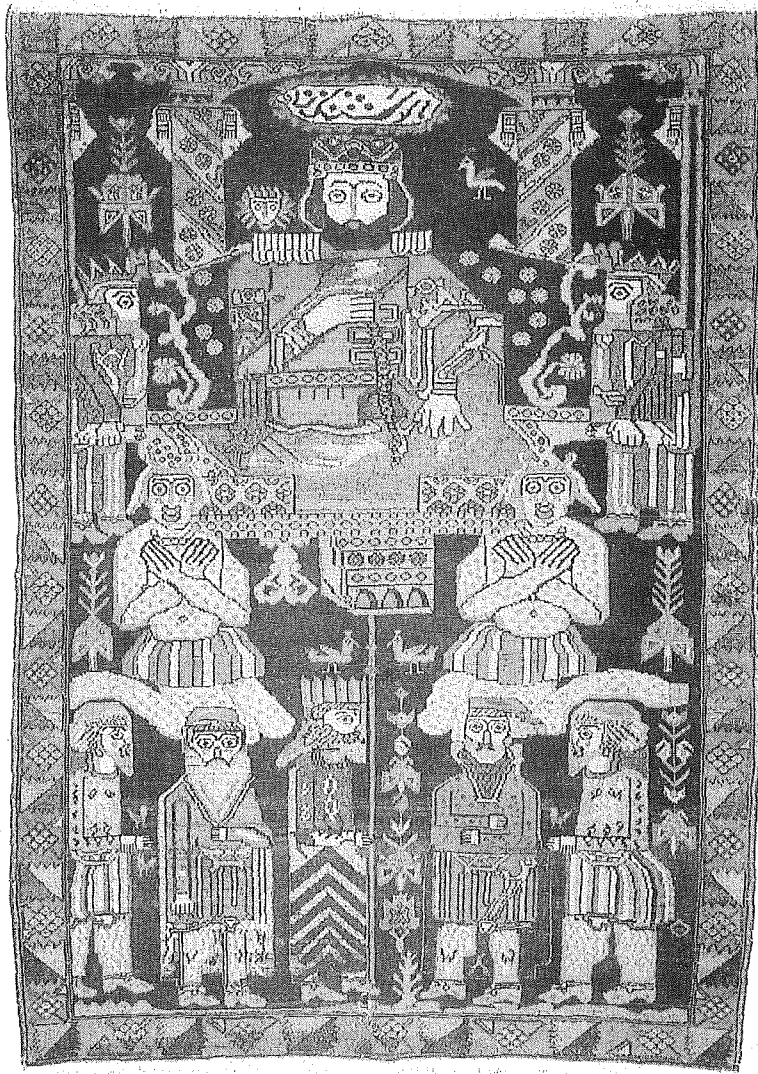


FIGURE 1. A typical "Hushang Shah" pictorial rug.

There are images that, over a period of time, become carved into the subconscious psyche of a nation or a tribe. One interesting way to observe this is to follow primitive designs that carpet weavers knot into their carpets. Pictorial carpets fascinate me because, by giving image to mythical stories in a woven medium, they express an art far more unique than a decorative motif that one throws underfoot.

Hushang Shah Rugs

One group of rugs that I love are called "Hushang Shah" pictorial rugs. Pictures of a number of them are printed in the book by Parviz Tanavoli [*"Kings, Heroes and Lovers, Pictorial Rugs from the Tribes and Villages of Iran"*].

A typical Hushang Shah rug is shown in Figure 1 [above].

Legends tell us that before Iranians became Zarathushtis, they were of the religion of Hushang Shah.

One of the important passages of the *Shah Nameh* gives voice to the creed through Rustam during the battle of Rustam and Esfandiyar. Esfandiyar, newly initiated into the religion of Zarathushtra, comes to convert Rustam by force to his new religion. Rustam refuses and answers back:

"I have no regrets about my ancient religion; as there is no religion better than the religion of Hushang. It is all justice and chivalry, chastity and love; and observance of the movement of stars and planets."

There is an idiom amongst Zarathushtis of Yazd that when they want to say that someone is not very religious, they say that he or she has become a 'Hushangi' or follower of Hushang. While the religion of Zarathushtra is Mazdayasni and celebrates the mind and intellect, the word 'hush' refers to 'instinct' rather than 'intelligence'. Thus a Hushangi would be one who goes more by instinct through life rather than reasoning and logic.

Until this present generation, we Zarathushtis did not have a tradition of considering our ancestors prior to Zarathushtra as worshippers of false gods and evil entities. It is most unfortunate that recently a group of us do try to establish such an unkind precedence.

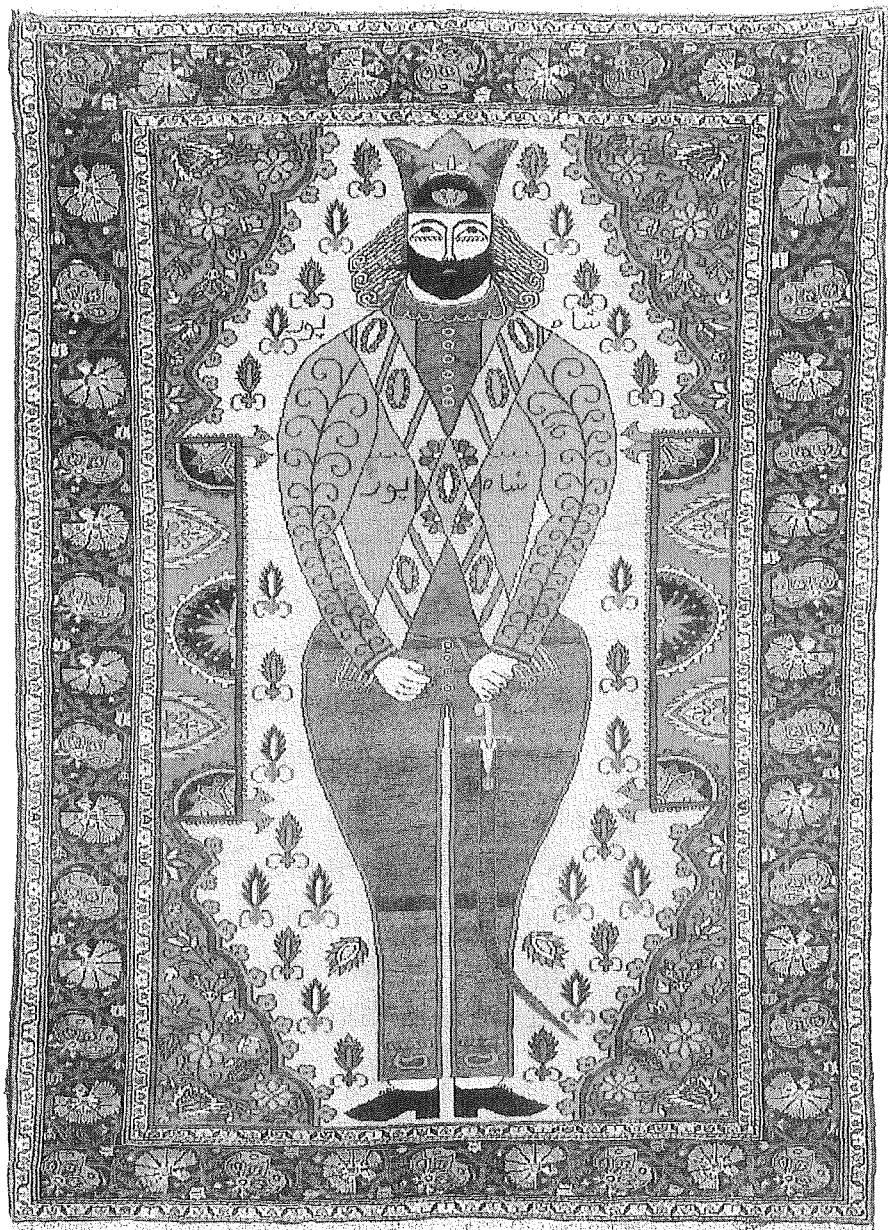


FIGURE 2 [AT LEFT]: A "Shapur Rug". The central figure in the carpet stands in the particular "warrior pose"

FIGURES 3 AND 4 [COLOR PLATES ON PAGES 64A AND 64B]: "Shapur Rugs" with the figure, again, in a strikingly similar military pose.

FIGURE 5 [FACING PAGE]: Twenty-one foot high statue of Shapur I, found in a cave near Kazeroon, near Shiraz, bearing close resemblance to the figure in the carpets.

FIGURE 6 [FACING PAGE]: General Rostam Nowzari in ceremonial uniform of the Iranian army of the south, again, in the same characteristic military pose.

ALL PHOTOS FOR THIS ARTICLE: COURTESY PARVIZ VARJAVAND

Military designs

The carpets I would like to talk about next belong to another family of tribal pictorial rugs. They depict a king or military leader standing in a particular warrior pose [see Figure 2 above, and Figures 3 and 4 on color plates overleaf].

Here the warrior stands erect in a military pose directly facing the viewer with his hands resting on his sword. Even though the design and coloring of the rugs may vary, the pose of the central figure stays always the same. Many rugs have the name Shapur written on them, often backwards. These rugs are

usually woven by tribal women who migrate, in the Fars province around the city of Shiraz.

Statue of Shapur I

In the province of Fars, near the city of Kazeroon, west of Shiraz, there is a cave of great historical significance. The bodily remains of the mighty Sasanian emperor Shapur I (241-272 CE) are supposed to have been deposited there. As every part of this cave has been plundered, no bones or sarcophagi have been found of Shapur.

In the central great chamber of the cave we find a stone statue of Shapur [Figure 5 on facing page] that stands

over twenty-one feet high. The statue is carved out of a single stalagmite that has been formed in this central chamber over the centuries.

The statue has been broken at the knee, possibly in search of treasure or by those against statuary, causing it to collapse. There it lay fallen for many years until it was re-erected by the Iranian army core of engineers some forty years ago. This was accomplished with great difficulty because it was very hard to take heavy equipment needed to lift such a huge weight, into the cave.

Even though this statue had been in a collapsed position for many years, now when one looks at it back in a standing position, one sees an extremely close resemblance between the statue and the carpets that the tribal women of the area have woven for generations.



This expresses what I consider a spiritual bond, that exists between the identity of a people and the icons of their heroes of mythical, legendary or historic past.

The officer and the general

Looking through some old pictures, I came across a picture of General Rostam Nowzari [Figure 6, above] in his ceremonial uniform of a general commanding the army of the south. (The Iranian army of the south has its command center in the city of Shiraz).

I was struck by the similarity between his pose, the pose of the

central figure on the carpets, and the statue of Shapur in the cave.

“ I was struck by the similarity in the pose of General Nowzari, the figure in the carpet and the statue of Shapur ”

It looked as if the same icon of a legendary past was standing there in the flesh to have his picture taken. Rostam Nowzari is shown [Figure 7 overleaf] as a corporal of the newly formed modern Iranian Army, and [in Figure 8 overleaf] as a little boy from a humble Zarathushti family of Yazd.

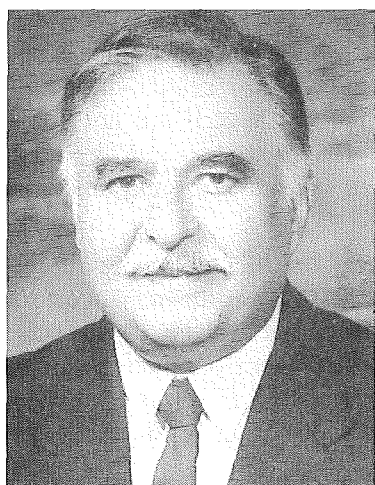
General Nowzari may well be the personality who has played the pivotal role in changing the course of Iranian history at a very crucial time. I do not wish to elaborate on this event yet as my research and documents about it are not complete. He died in 1962 under rumored suspicious circumstances in Shiraz.

We pray for the happiness of the ‘ravan’ (soul) of all our ancestors from Kayumarz to the Saoshyants. We gather force from them and may we be worthy to continue in their path of noble struggle to refresh our world. ■

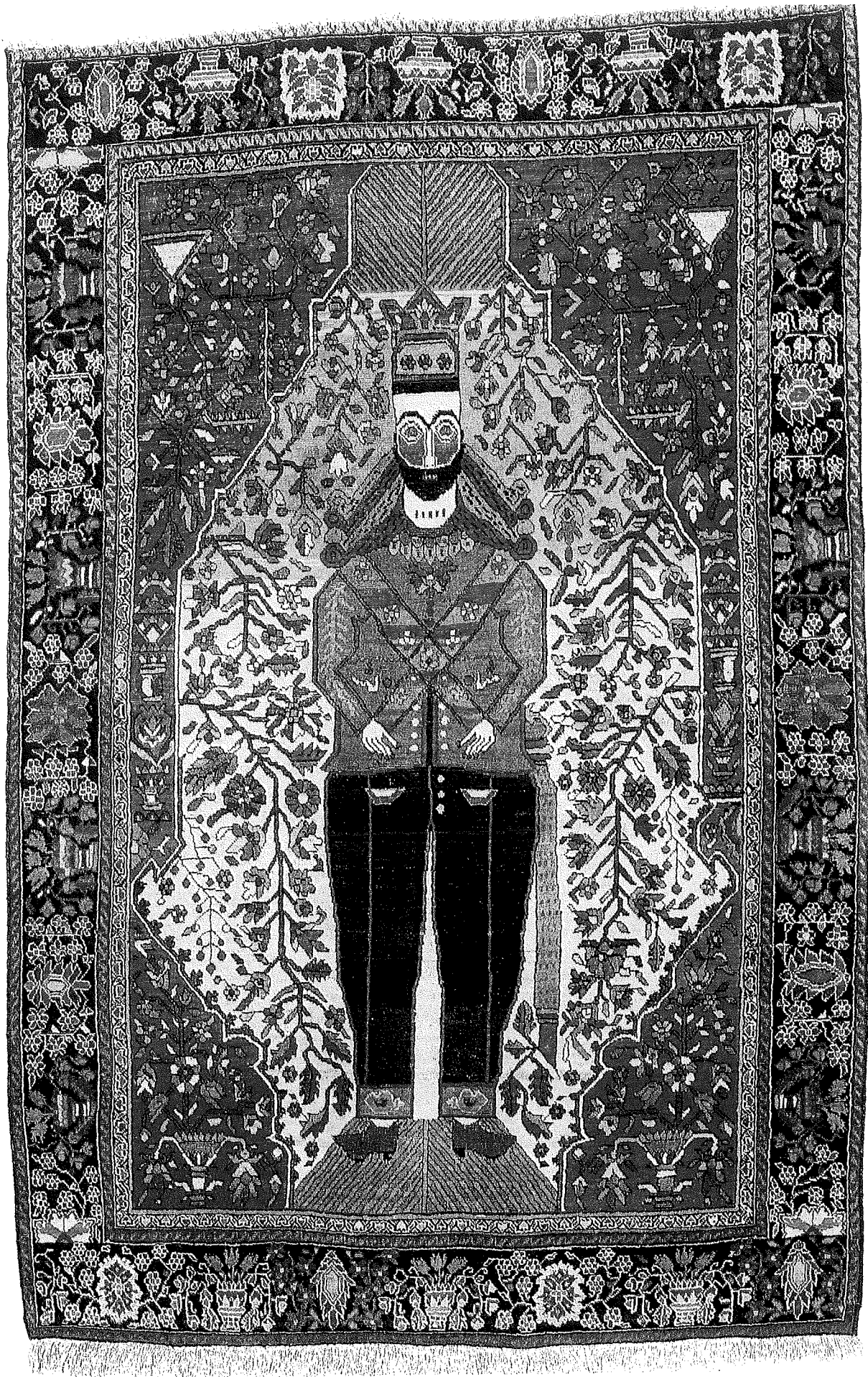


FIGURE 7 [INSET ABOVE]: Young Rostam Nowzari as a corporal of the newly formed modern Iranian army.

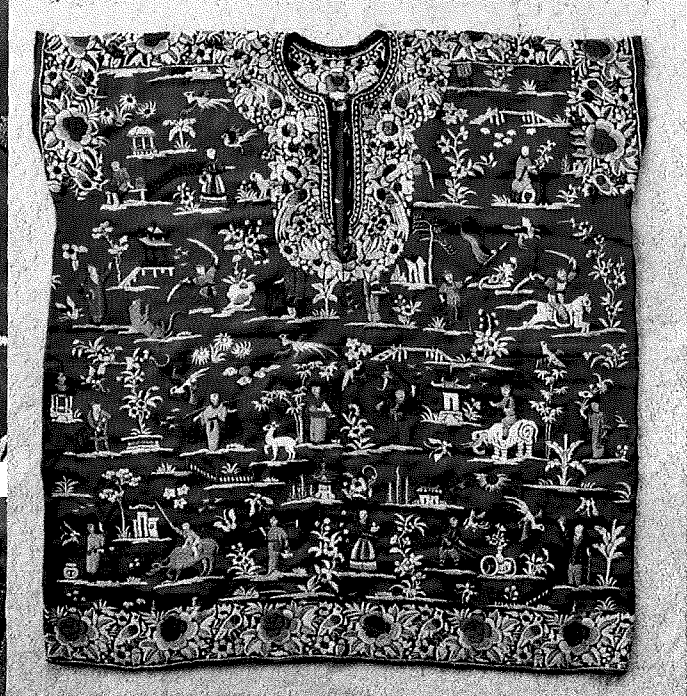
FIGURE 8 [ABOVE]: Boys and girls from the humble background of a Zarathushti family in Yazd. Rostam Nowzari, as a boy, is on the extreme right in the front row. My father, Dr. Feridoon Varjavand, is the boy on the extreme left.



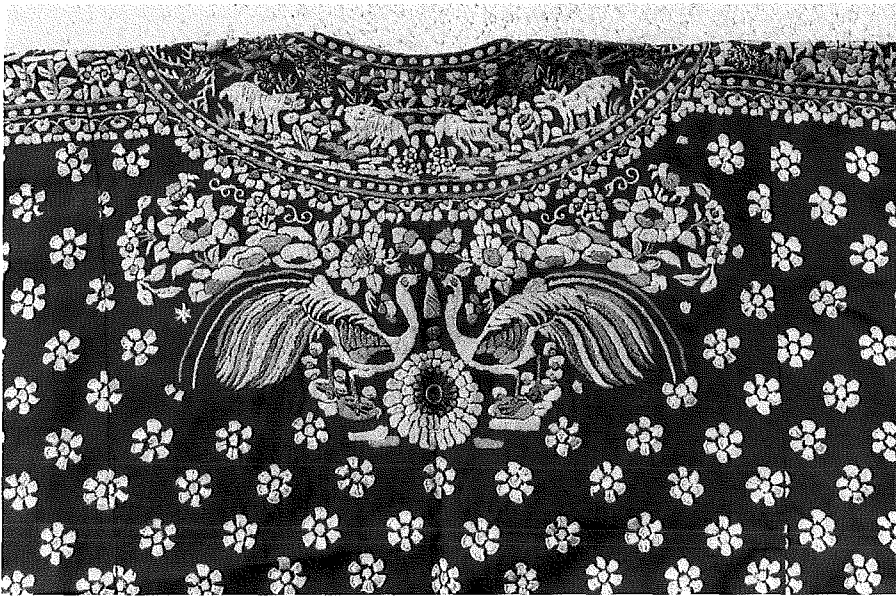
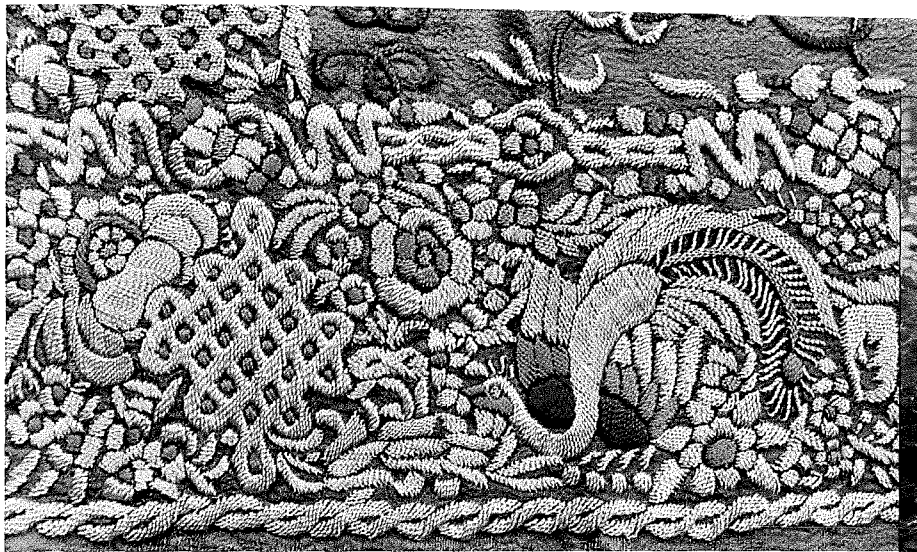
Parviz Varjavand is an architect. He was born in Tehran in 1940 and graduated from the University of California at Berkeley in 1965. Parviz works in Iran as an architect, but resides in the USA. He collects rugs and artifacts related to Iran and the religion of Zarathushtra. At present Parviz is involved in the renovation and restoration of some eight Zarathushti houses and a fire temple in the city of Yazd.







Detail of antique jhabla embroidered with 'cheena-cheeni' (Chinese) motifs. LATE 19TH CENTURY. COLLECTION ROSHAN RIVETNA. PHOTOS CYRUS RIVETNA.



Above, model wearing a modern gara with 'chakla-chakli' design. EMBROIDERY BY NAJU DAVER. PHOTO COURTESY NAJU DAVER.

Left, details of antique gara borders and jhabla. LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURIES. COLLECTION ROSHAN RIVETNA. PHOTO CYRUS RIVETNA.

exquisite ensembles

Among the most treasured possessions in a Parsi woman's wardrobe are the exquisite 'gara' and 'tanchoi' saris.

By Roshan Rivetna

Below, Models display modern garas created by Naju Daver, Mumbai. PHOTO: THE AFTERNOON DESPATCH & COURIER, MUMBAI, OCTOBER 19, 1995.

Right, detail of a modern gara by Ashi Creations, Mumbai. PHOTO CYRUS RIVETNA.



For further reading and magnificent photographs of *garas* and *tanchois*, see "A Zoroastrian Tapestry, Art, Religion & Culture" edited by Pheroza J. Godrej & Firoza Punthakey Mistree" [To order, see page 112]



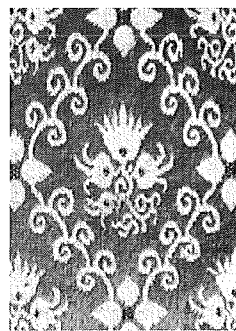
Among the most treasured possessions in a Parsi woman's wardrobe is a '*garo*' or '*gara*' – a fine silk sari exquisitely embroidered, at times the full six yards, in a uniquely Parsi tradition. These *gara* saris, as also *jhablas* (children's dresses), *eejar* (pantaloon) and ladies' blouses, became family heirlooms, passed down through generations, and deeply valued for their artistry and workmanship.

Origins of the *garo*

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, Parsi merchants plied a flourishing trade with China – making their fortunes exporting cotton and opium. They would travel (in the Wadia-built ships) from the ports of Surat and Bombay to the Far East, and return home with huge wooden chests laden with Chinese porcelain, artifacts, brocades, damasks and embroidered silks for their families.

For Parsi women, sporting these Chinese fabrics became a symbol of their affluence. They commissioned Chinese artisans to embroider made-to-order saris, with special motifs or the family crest in their designs, with borders on all four sides of 6 yards of fabric. Thus was born the '*garo*' (singular) or '*gara*' – an ornately hand-embroidered sari.

The *tanchoi*



These interactions with Chinese artisans and weavers led to the development of yet one more quintessential Parsi sari style – the '*tanchoi*' [left].

The '*tanchoi*' is so named for the three ('*tan*') Chhoi brothers of Surat, who went to China under the patronage of the legendary Sir Jamsetji Jeejeebhoy, to learn the art of brocade-weaving. They trained under a master weaver in Shanghai named Chhoi, whose name they were to take on upon their return. The brothers set up a mill, to make these specially woven *tanchoi* saris, which are now in the annals of Indian textile history.

Fabrics and designs

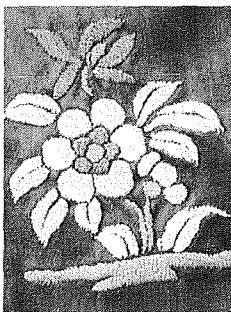
Early Chinese saris had a seam down the length of the sari, since the Chinese looms were not wide enough. These saris were called '*dodh-pati*' (one-and a half widths), and were indicative of the old age of the sari.

Various satins such as the heavy '*ghat*', crepes ('*ojeryou*'), fine silks ('*gaaj*' and '*paaj*') often self-



embossed with designs of flowers and birds, and light, almost see-through gauze materials in bright colors – reds and purples – or black, were popular fabrics for garas.

Gara designs were drawn from the rich repertoire of centuries-old Chinese motifs – trees, flowers, animals, birds, fish, human figures, scenery – embellished with symbols of longevity (the fan or lotus stem), immortality (the crane or the sacred fungus), fertility (the pomegranate full of seeds), happiness (butterflies), nobility (the peacock) and good fortune (peony and orchids), all craftfully placed to create a work of rare beauty. Here, too, among the flowering vines and birds of paradise, one discovers untold stories, myths and legends.



In some garas, the embroidery is so profuse, that the background material is scarcely visible, and the sari looks like a fine painting. So skilled were those artisans, that the back face of the embroidery looked almost as neat as the front.



Garas were generally embroidered with the satin stitch [see flower motif at left] using very fine, single-strand embroidery silk. Some early work was done with the *kha-kha* (seed-pearl) stitch or tiny french knots [see peacock motif at left]; but was discontinued due to the eye strain it caused.

The designs have exotic names such as: *cheena-cheeni* – depicting chinese men and women and oriental motifs, *kada papeta* (literally ‘onions’ and ‘potatoes’) is a design of large yellow and beige polka dots, *chakla-chakli* (lovebirds), *karolia* (literally ‘spiders’) – an all-over pattern of spidery flowers, and ‘*booti*’ or ‘*phulki*’ – stylized flower motifs [the photo below shows three ‘*phulkis*’]



Some garas were made by Indian artisans in Surat. These, called *Surti garas* [see section at left] were influenced by British tastes, and bore french knot and cutwork flower motifs and scalloped edges.

Today, an antique gara could well command a price of over one lakh rupees or \$2,500. Little did those unsung and unknown Chinese arti-

sans realize the value of their creations.

Reviving the art

Until a few decades ago, Chinese peddlers could be seen in Bombay, carrying large bundles on their shoulders or on their bicycles, displaying their wares – silks, linens, embroidered saris and borders – at the doorstep of their mostly-Parsi clientele. [Continued on page 71]

Facing page, from top: Behram Ardeshir Patell, the author's uncle, as a child in a jhabla, c. 1903.

PHOTO COURTESY ROSHAN RIVETNA.

Ratanbai Bomanjee Wadia (1886-1920), in a silk saree with an embroidered border and blouse. COURTESY: SIR JAMSETJEE JEJEEBHOY, BT. PHOTO COURTESY “PORTRAIT OF A COMMUNITY, PAINTINGS & PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE PARSEES”, CHEMOULD PUBLICATIONS AND ARTS, 2002.

Sari sections on pages 66 and 67. COLLECTION: ROSHAN RIVETNA. PHOTOS: CYRUS RIVETNA

Below, a modern gara with embroidered birds and flowers, on a black satin ground. EMBROIDERY: NAJU DAVER. COLLECTION: MEHR JESIA. PHOTOGRAPH: GAUTAM RAJADHYAKSHA. PHOTO COURTESY “A ZOROASTRIAN TAPESTRY, ART, RELIGION & CULTURE” EDITED BY PHEROZA J. GODREJ & FIROZA PUNTHAKEY MISTREE.



traditional Zarathushti dress in Iran

By Roshan Rivetna



Clockwise from left:

A young Kermani couple from the early 1900s. The child is Mr. Ardeshir Farhangi, father of Shida Anoshiravani of California. PHOTO COURTESY ARDESHIR ANOSHIRAVANI.

Zarathushti man in Yazd, wearing the uniform that marked him as a Zarathushti, and hence a target for humiliation and abuse. FROM A DRAWING BY A FRENCH TRAVELER, EARLY 19TH CENTURY, PHOTO COURTESY M. SOROUSHIAN.

Shirin Namvar and Dolat Jamshidi, giving a traditional Iranian welcome to guests at the world Zarathushti congress in Tehran, 1996.

PHOTO: ROSHAN RIVETNA.

Manijeh Deboo of California, in traditional Zarathushti dress, at a recent celebration. PHOTO COURTESY MANIJEH DEBOO.





During the dark centuries of oppression and humiliation suffered by Zarathushtis in Iran after the Arab conquest (651 CE), and through the Safavid (1499-1722) and Qajar (1796-1925) dynasties, Zarathushtis were forced to wear characteristic dull grey, brown or yellow unbleached and undyed homespun robes, and the cumbersome rolled turban [photo left top] to mark them as ‘*gabars*’ – unclean and untouchable. Conditions eased after the celebrated visit of Manekji Hatara in the late 19th century, and brighter colors and silks and brocades slowly crept into the Zarathushti dress.

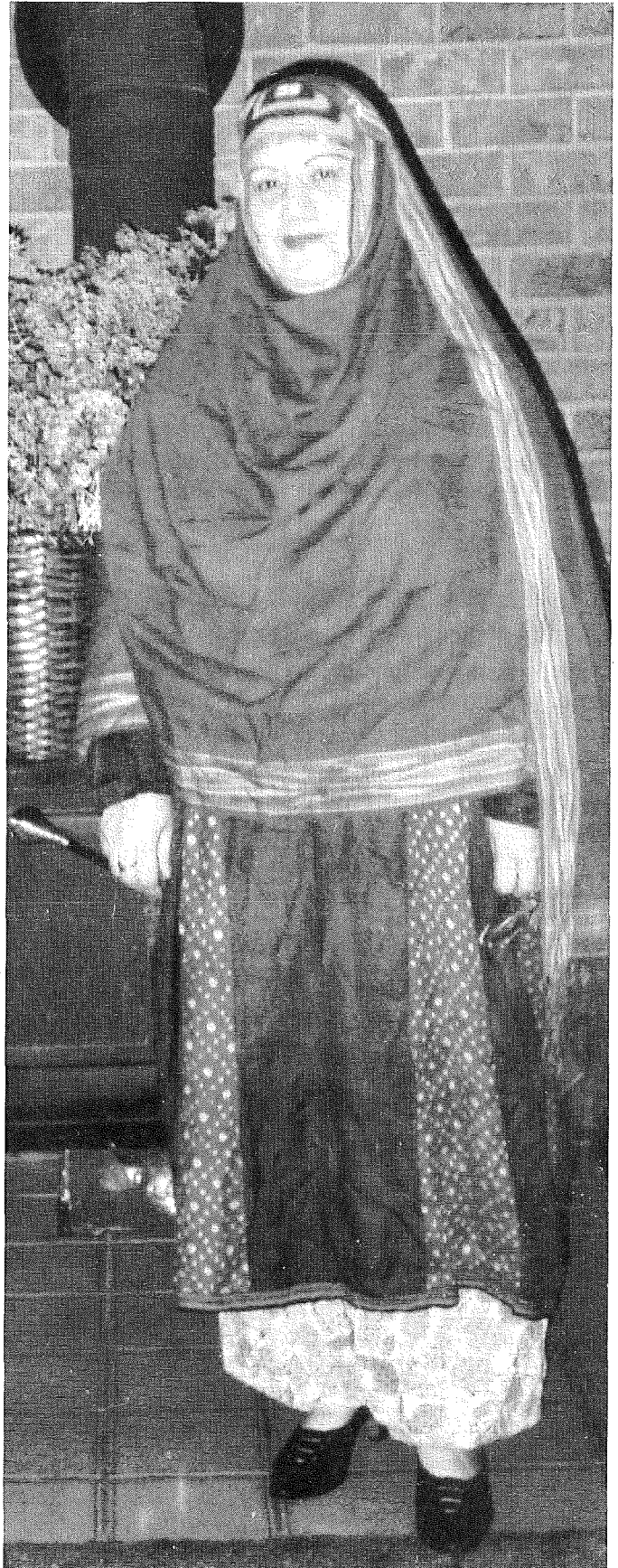
Today, Iranian Zarathushtis have all but abandoned the traditional Zarathushti dress, except for special ceremonial or festive occasions and in the Zarathushti strongholds of Yazd and Kerman and their surrounding villages.

Here, little has changed in dress styles over the centuries. Albeit, the men folk have, for the most part, given up the long coat [see photo at left] in favor of western dress, or a shirt and trousers, modified perhaps with a cummerband or a cap or loose turban.

The distinctly Zarathushti women’s attire [photos pages 68-70] includes very wide pantaloons gathered at the waist and ankles, called the *shaval* or *shalvar*, depending on the dialect. Over this is worn a long, flared dress (*pirahan* in Farsi or *pranah* in Dari) or a skirt (*doman*) and blouse (*boloose*) or shirt (*kameez*).

Deep maroons, and rich reds and greens are popular colors, also favored for special occasions and for the Iranian Zarathushti wedding dress.

The multi-layered head gear starts with the *lachak*, a close-fitting bonnet with a fancy border framing the face. Sometimes a small, plain scarf is worn under the *lachak*, similar to the Parsi *mathabanoo*, possibly to protect the fine fabric of the *lachak*. A large shawl (called the



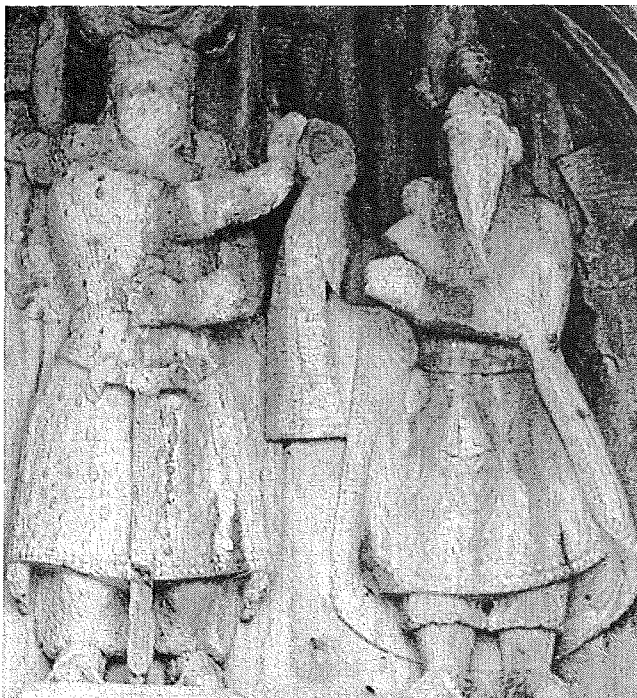


Above, Abnayee Kyani, in the courtyard of her home in Sharifabad, weaving a kushti. Right, manager Jamshid Khusrow with wife Shirin Rahidi, at the entrance to Pir-e Banou near Yazd. [PHOTOS ROSHAN RIVETNA]

maghna in Farsi or *maghnoo* in Dari) is draped over the head and around the face.

Some women wear another scarf over the *maghna*, tied in the back and tucked under to form a turban, called a *soya ku* [see photos this page].

While the basic dress style has changed little over the centuries, Zoroastrian women now enjoy the freedom to adorn themselves in colorful fabrics – cotton, silks or brocades and ornately embroidered, materials. ■



Evolution of the shalvar and kameez

The *shalvar* (pantalons) and *kameez* (shirt) commonly worn in Pakistan and in India (mostly by Muslims) could well have originated in Parthian Iran (250 BCE to 227 CE). The words ‘*shalvar*’ and ‘*kameez*’ are both from the Pahlavi language.

The use of the *shalvar* and *kameez* (sometimes shown with a belt) as a national Iranian costume can be seen in various monuments of Parthian as well as the later Sasanian (226 - 651 CE) periods. Some examples are the bronze statue from Shami and from Bard-i-Nishandeh, in south western Iran, and the statue of the worshipper from Hatra in Iraq. The figure of Sasanian monarch Khusrow Parviz [photo left] at the rock carvings at Taq-i-Bustan, near Kermanshah is, similarly, depicted wearing a richly decorated tunic and pantaloons, that could well be perceived as a precursor of the Iranian *shaval* and *pirahan*, or the Pakistani *shalvar* and *kameez*. The ‘*odhni*’ shawl which accompanies the latter, could well be an adaptation of the Iranian *maghna*. ■

[Adapted from “*Shalwar Kameez—a Zoroastrian Costume*” by F. Ali, reprinted in “*Ushao*” newsletter, October 2003]

The gara, revived ...

[Continued from page 67]

Since World War II, no gasas have been produced in China. During the Mao regime, it was a banned craft.

With the whimsies of fashion, in the mid 20th century, Parsi ladies turned to French chiffons, Chantilly lace and georgette, and sold their old gasas, and *jari* (gold and silver thread and sequins) borders to the '*jaripuranawala*' (junk-man) or bartered them for pyrex jars and cookware, or even cut them up to make curtains!

A few years ago, the gara thus had a bleak future.

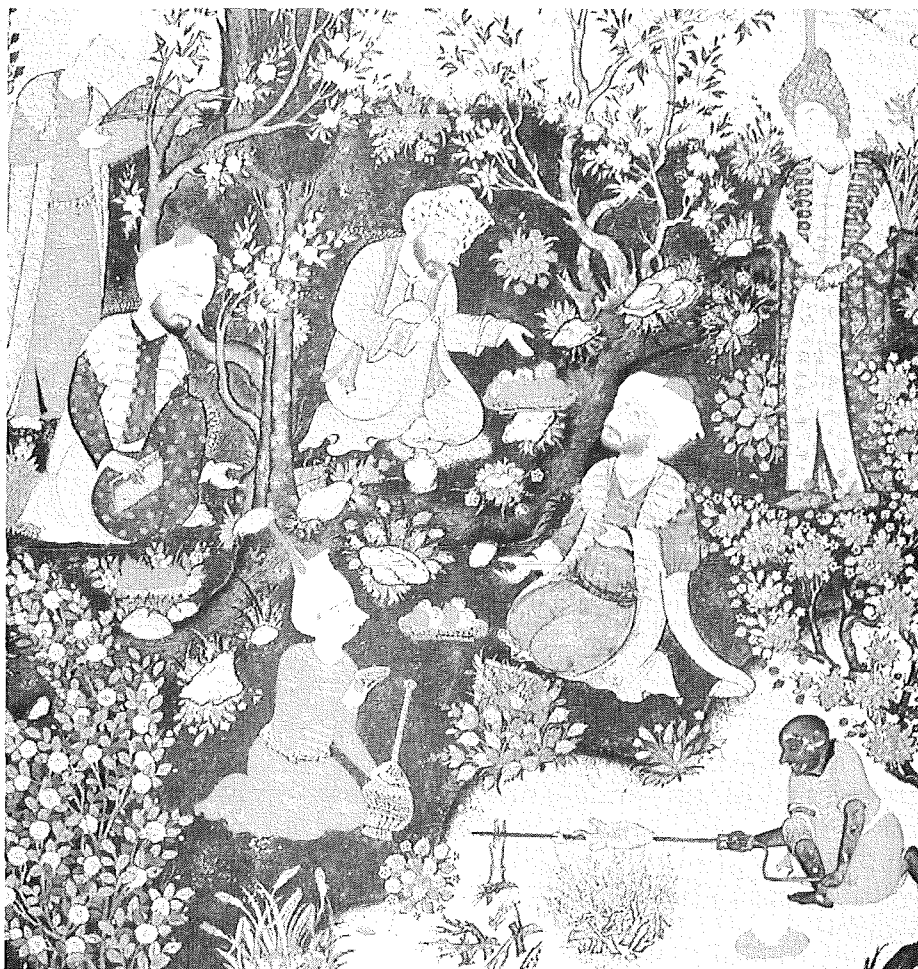
Today, a number of designers have revived this ancient art form. Among the pioneers is Naju Davar who started in 1986 with a few craftsmen.

An all-over sari takes nine months to complete, with 4-6 craftsmen working around a loom. Each craftsman specializes in one particular motif, such as a tree or bird, to maintain consistency. To relieve the monotony, the craftsmen work on simpler jobs in between the more intricate ones. These days, more durable and washable materials like crepe silk and charmeuse satins are used.

Hitherto, the gara was mainly a Parsi tradition. With its recent revival now, it is becoming popular with women all over India. ■

Ordering gasas today

Naju Davar (Mumbai, 2386 6052) is among the pioneers. Other designers include **Ashi Creations** (ritaengineer@yahoo.com or sonalidas13@rediffmail.com); **Rayomand Workingboxwalla** (Mumbai, 2496 6679, rayo1@rediffmail.com); **Armayesh** (Mumbai, 2265 8071, www.armayesh.com); and **Gulshan Kolah** (Mumbai 2282 0017) who also makes *fetas*. Among antique gara dealers are **Roshan Davar** (Mumbai tel: 2283 3078, yezdi@bom3.vsnl.net.com.in) and **Marzbeen Jilla** (London +44 7816 327 253, marzbeen.jilla@virgin.net).



Tenth century poets' picnic, FOLIO 7R FROM "A KING'S BOOK OF KINGS, THE SHAH-NAMAH OF SHAH TAHMESP" BY STUART CARY WELCH, METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK

feast fit for a king

Exploring centuries-old culinary traditions, so central to the life and culture of the Iranians.

By Roshan Rivetna

The Greek historian Herodotus speaks thus of Persian culinary habits: "The main dishes at their meals are few, but they have many sorts of desserts. It is this custom that has made them say that the Greeks leave the table hungry ... They are very fond of wine."

Extravagant hosts

There is no doubt that since the earliest times, the Persians were known to be extravagant hosts. The Old Testament Book of Esther speaks of "Ahasuerus, who reigned from India to Ethiopia over 127 provinces ... as he

sat on his royal throne which was at the capital in Susa, in the third year of his reign he gave a banquet for all his princes and nobles of Persia and Media ... and he displayed the riches of his royal glory and the splendor of his great majesty for 180 days.

"... then the king gave a banquet lasting seven days for all the people who were in Susa, from the greatest to the least, in the garden of the king's palace.

"There were hangings of fine white and violet linen held by cords of fine purple linen on silver rings and marble columns, couches of gold and silver on a mosaic pavement of

porphyry, marble, mother-of-pearl and precious stones. Drinks were served in golden vessels and the royal wine was plentiful ...”

The bible does not divulge the foods served during this six-month-long party; but the world well knows the opulent menu served at another extravagant banquet 25 centuries later.

It was the extravaganza orchestrated by Reza Shah Pahlavi, in 1971, to celebrate the 2500th anniversary of Cyrus the Great. This unprecedented gathering of kings and queens and heads of state from all nations of the world, at Persepolis, reliving for one moment, the grandeur of the Persian Empire, could well go down in history as the grandest party of them all.

The unforgettable banquet began with quail eggs stuffed with Iranian caviar, extracted from sturgeons of the Caspian Sea; and continued with crayfish mousse, roast lamb with truffles and roast peacock (the symbol of the Iranian monarchy) stuffed with foie gras.

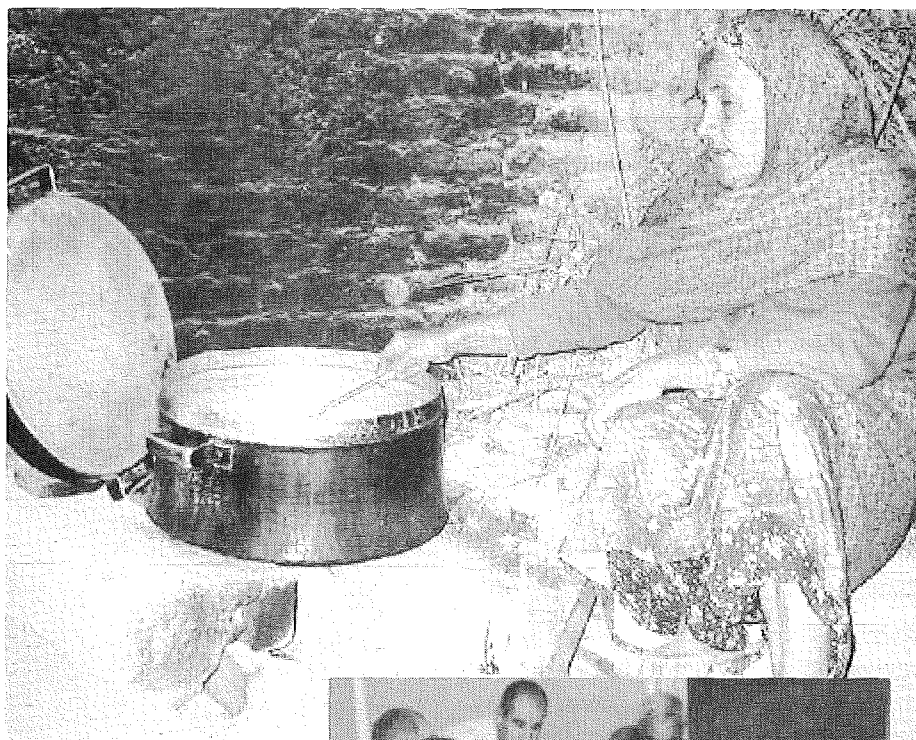
Persian Cuisine

Everyday Persian cuisine, albeit less exotic, is rich in variety (their cook-books run into volumes) and among the oldest in recorded human history.

Ubiquitous, in Iran, is the famous ‘*chelow kabab*’ – skewers of sizzling grilled meat served over aromatic white rice – found at roadside stands and bazars as well as gala banquets.

The kababs, made from tender cuts of beef filet (*kabab-e barg*), lamb (*chenjeh kabab*), ground beef (*kabab-e kubideh*) or chicken (*jujeh kabab*) are first marinated in combinations of lime juice, saffron, herbs, onion, garlic, or yogurt, threaded onto skewers, lathered with melted butter or ghee, and grilled over a charcoal fire.

Chelow is also served with *khoresh*, a stew of meats and fresh vegetables, herbs and spices, simmered till tender over a low flame. Especially delicious is *khoresh-e fesenjan*, chicken or duck, slow-cooked in a sauce of ground walnuts and pomegranate juice.



Above, lady cooking at a wood stove (or tash-o-kree) in Mazra Kalantar, a village near Yazd.

Right, enjoying a meal of abgusht (a thick lamb soup) and naan, at a gahambar in Ghassem Abad, a village near Yazd.

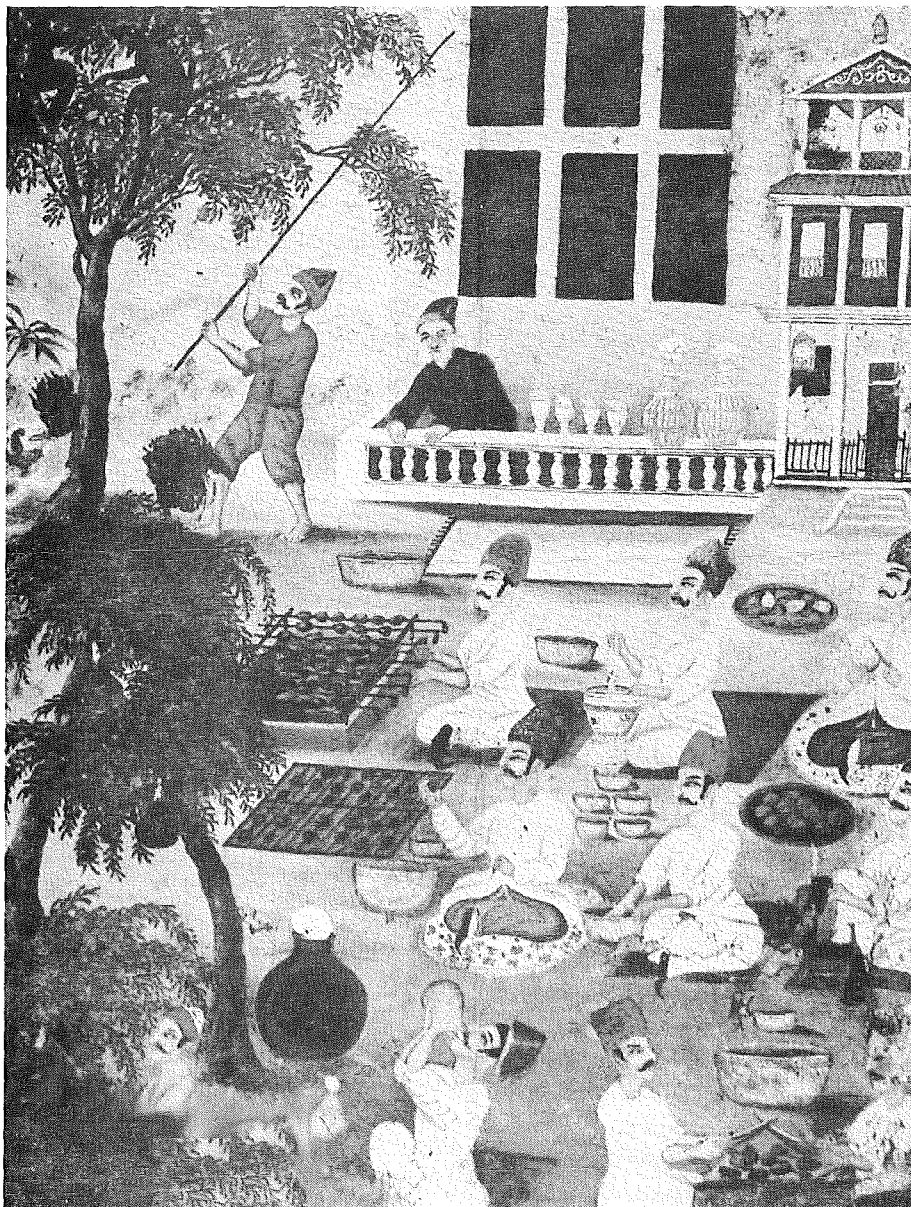
PHOTOS COURTESY
FERAYDOON DEMEHRI,
WWW.OSHIHAN.ORG



Persian rice dishes can be a simple, steamed white rice made with the aromatic long-grain Basmati rice, or a number of varieties of elaborate *pullaos*. The king of Persian *pullaos*, often to be found on the wedding banquet menu, is Shirin Pullao or *Javaher Pullao* (‘jeweled rice’) garnished with barberries (*zereshk*) and pistachios, representing rubies and emeralds. The tender crust (*tah-dig*) at the bottom of the pot, is especially prized. Pistachios (from the Persian word ‘*pesteh*’) as also other nuts and dried fruits are served liberally on all occasions.

Iranian culinary traditions are closely tied to their religious life and culture. A traditional food served at gatherings of family and friends, such as a *gahambar* [photo above] or the yalda festival, is the hearty ‘*ausht*’ [recipe on p. 17] served with crusty Persian bread. Sharing a bowl of this thick, flavorful soup, made of various meats and vegetables, is believed to forge the bonds of friendship. ■

[Many of these recipes are in “*New Food of Life*” an excellent cookbook by Najmieh Batmanglij, Mage Publishers, 1996].



Parsi Toddy Party, 1850. Parsi men, in dagli and feta, enjoying toddy and meat kababs grilled on the open flames. Toddy is made from 'neera', sap of the toddy, or palmyra, palm tree, that is collected in round earthenware pots [at bottom left in the picture] and allowed to ferment.

[FROM A PRINT, ARTIST UNKNOWN]

parsis live to eat

By Bapsi Sidhwa

Proust bit into a tea-cake, and reeled-in a colossal cache of childhood memories. I doubt if I'm capable of unleashing anything as heroic as *Remembrance of Things Past*, but *doodh-na-puff* (sweet milk-froth) and *kharya-ni-jelly* (sheep-trotter jelly laced with brandy), can transport me to the delights of childhood.

Now, the most exotic recipe I have come across is undoubtedly *papri noo oomberyoon*. The tender *papri*, which looks like crescent snow-peas, is cooked with whole bulbs of garlic. Whichever way the *papri* is prepared, whether with lamb and kidneys or egg-plant and sweet-potatoes, the garlic bulbs, permeated with the fla-

vors of meat and spices, are prized by connoisseurs.

The recipe begins ordinarily enough: "Cut and soak all the vegetables, except the onions, in a bowl of water. Fry the onions until golden brown. Drain the vegetables, and add the spices and fried onions."

Then comes the exotics: "Take a *matka* (earthenware pot), and glaze the inside with ghee. Place the meat, marinated vegetables and palm-toddy (twelve ounces according to one recipe) into the pot. If toddy is not available use fermented coconut-water or yeast. Seal the lid with wheat-dough and palm leaves and tie up firmly."

What makes this recipe transcend all others in complexity appears in the next set of instructions. "Select a garden" (any garden-variety of garden will do). Once you have the garden, you are to "prepare a large hole in it (if near the ocean, simply dig a hole in the sand) and place the pot with all the contents, lid side down, into the hole. Pack the sides with earth, and top with hay and bits of fire-wood. Light the hay and keep it smoldering evenly.

"After three to four hours lift the dish out and test the beans for preparedness. Replace the dish in the hole and leave it there till ready to serve. Serve with rice-flour chappatis."



Parsi fish favorites, clockwise from bottom, whole fried pomfret, patra-ni-machhi (chutney-coated pomfret slices cooked in banana leaves), crispy fried ramus (Indian salmon) and the delectable fried boamla (Bombay ducks). [PHOTO COURTESY "101 PARSİ RECİPES" BY JEROO MEHTA].

Below, enjoying the Parsi lagan-nu-bhonu at Albless Baug in Mumbai.



Like everything else, Parsi cuisine too is influenced by Gujarati culture. An essential difference though is the addition of meat or fish to the Gujarati recipes, which are basically vegetarian. I think the addition of the toddy to the Papri also belongs to this somewhat subversive category.

A further subversion is the addition of sweet and tart flavors. This came about in the early 19th century when some Parsis did a brisk trade in opium with China and settled there. Consequently, the Parsis add a dash-of-vinegar and a scoop-of-sugar to a majority of the dishes they prepare. The scores of fiery fish, shrimp and dried Bombay-duck *patias*, lathered in fried onions and garlic and soused in spices, rely for their piquant taste on lumps of brown sugar and tamarind gravy – as does *macchi-no-sahs*. The *Tarapori patio* is the king of all *patias*.

When a recipe does not call for sugar or vinegar, as is the case with *dhan-dar*, then the Parsi gourmet is likely to sprinkle the *dar* with sugar and have it with an onion and vinegar salsa. This makes for some odd eating habits. I have a cousin who gar-

nishes his ice-cream with onion *kachoombar*.

The tradition of serving *dhan-dar* – boiled rice and dal – on all celebratory occasions has its roots in pragmatism. It permits partying without getting the women all tangled up in cooking rituals. One can prepare a feast for twenty people in as many minutes – and the accompanying *patia* is readied beforehand.

But grant us a sad occasion, a bereavement or a death anniversary, and we Parsis promptly console ourselves by serving *dhansakh*. A most delectably spiced dish of fat-tailed-lamb, mixed lentils and fresh vegetables, served with aromatic browned rice and fried kababs. Is it any wonder the Parsis are prone to irony?

There is, of course, the famed “*lagan-nu-bhonu*” or wedding banquet. The guests scramble to find seats at one of the many long tables. Teams of waiters bearing large round platters ladle out portions of dry-fruit pickle and candied-pumpkin *muramba* on the banana leaves, which serve as plates. They are fol-

lowed by other teams who serve fish-sas or *patra-ni machhi* (chutney-fish in banana leaves), *sali noo gos* or *marghi*, *pullao-dar*, and finally the rich *laggan-nu custer*, which bears as little resemblance to ordinary custard as a Beethoven symphony does to a nursery rhyme.

So far as I know we have only one dietary taboo. Parsis eat hens, but not roosters. None of us would buy a cock for the table, or eat one without a twinge of guilt. It is believed that the demon Zohak, chained inside a cave, licks the chain thin during the night. But at the crack of dawn, when the cock crows, the chain grows thick again and our world is saved! ■

Distinguished international writer Bapsi Sidhwa [photo page 77] has published four novels: The Bride, The Crow Eaters, Cracking India and An American Brat. Among her many honors, Sidhwa has received the LilaWallace-Reader's Digest Writer's Award, Pakistan's Sitara-i-Imtiaz, and has been a Bunting Fellow at Radcliffe/Harvard.

[Excerpted from "The Dream Merchants" by Dr. P. V. Vaidyanathan, *The Indian Express*, August 29, 2003. The full article may be viewed at www.screenindia.com/fullstory.php?content_id=5694]

on stage and screen

A historical look at
the role of Parsis in the
Indian theater and films.

Early Parsi Theater

The whole concept, organization and production of modern theater in Gujarati, Hindi and Urdu is found to be the work of the Parsis. Their first drama company, in 1853, was named *Parsee Natak Mandali*. Faramjee Gustadjee Dalal was the proprietor and the first drama staged at the Grant Road Theater in Bombay was *Rustam and Sohrab*. Thereafter, during the years 1853-1869, twenty more Parsi drama companies were formed, giving a further momentum to the theater activity.

In 1874-75, Parsis staged the monumental *Harishchandra*, in Gujarati at the Framjee Cawasjee Hall near Dhobi Talao in Mumbai. The *Natak Uttejak Mandali* staged 1100 shows over 16 years. Parsi drama companies traveled to Rangoon (Burma), Singapore and London and won much appreciative praise. Their performances of *Harishchandra* and *Alauddin* in London were graced by the presence of Queen Victoria and Edward VII.

The Parsi theater was a confluence of various theater streams: different dramatic genres; four languages - English, Gujarati, Urdu and Hindi; historical, mythological, social, political storylines and those adapted from the English stage; varied musical scores drawing on Western, Indian and Arabic music heritage; variety of songs and dances; the English and Sanskrit dramatic styles; impressive stage decor, and newer stage techniques. Integrating the best from among all these sources and assimilating them, the Parsi theater thrilled Indian audiences with some of the best performances.

The Parsi theater performed *Indrasabha* and 125 years ago, for the first time in India, cast a woman actor on the stage (until then female roles were played by men) amidst protests from the conservatives in the society.

Among those who dedicated life-long efforts to the Parsi theater in the early days were: Kekhashru Navroji Kabraji, Bomanji Navroji Kabraji, Jehangir Patel-Gulfam, Framji Dadabhai Pandey, Edalji Khorji, Sorabji Ogra, Dadi Patel, Nanabhai Ranina, Pirojshah Marzban Pejam (Adi Marzban's father), Jehangir Khambatta, Khurshedji Baliwala, Firoze Gar, Dhanjisha Mehta, Dadabhoy Thuthi, Kavasji Khatav and many more.

Post-independence India

The Parsi theater took a new turn in post-independence India; its standard-bearers were Adi Marzban, Feroze Antia and Dr. Ratan Marshal. Adi Marzban freed Parsi drama from the shackles of tradition and brought realism to the theater. He was a journalist, playwright, director and actor - a versatile drama personality; and script-writer for *On Wings of Fire*, directed by Cyrus Bharucha and produced by Meherji Madan - a dramatic film of epic proportions about the history of the Parsis and their prophet Zarathushtra spanning 3,500 years of history.

Other illustrious names of the Parsi theater world are Homi Tavadia, Eruch Pavri, Erick Paymaster, Naju Dastur, Pilloo Mistry, Moti Antia, Dinshaw Daji, Minu Nariman, Burjor and Ruby Patel, Bomi and Dolly Dotiwalla, Dinyar Contractor, Aban Patel and Pilloo Wadia.

In the film industry

In 1918, J. F. Madan, the Parsi pioneer of cinema in Calcutta, claimed to control over one third of the 300 cinemas in India. Ardeshir M. Irani, produced the first talkie of the Indian cinema, *Alam Ara* in 1931. If Dadasaheb Phalke was the father of Indian cinema, Irani was the father of the talkie.

Other Parsi pioneers in Indian films include J. B. Wadia, Homi Wadia of *Wadia Movietone* and Sohrab Modi

Jamshed Boman Wadia was truly one of the film industry's pioneers. With Hilla Wadia, he founded *Wadia Movietone/Wadia Films* in 1933, during the early years of Indian cinema. In one of his films, *Lal-e Yaman*, he cast a Russian circus artiste, who came to be known as *Fearless Nadia*, and later married his brother, Homi Wadia.

Wadia Movietone produced many popular action films including *Hunterwali*, *Miss Frontier Mail* (1936) *Hurricane Hansa* (1937), *Bambaiwali* (1941), *Jungle Princess*, *Lady Robin Hood* (1946) and *Toofan Queen*. He was responsible for giving several legends of the Indian screen their early breaks - among them Dilip Kumar and Nargis in *Mela*.

Homi Wadia, Jamshed's younger brother, followed Jamshed into films and went on to become a famous director himself. He also set up Basant Studios. It was Homi Wadia who noticed talent in the great singer, Mohammed Rafi and insisted that he sing for his forthcoming film *Sharbati Ankhen*.

The talkie era introduced a completely new style of acting, edging

out the athletic heroes in favor of new stars who had command over the language.

Sohrab Modi was undoubtedly the master of the historical genre. He had the regal bearing and the needed voice to play royalty. He had an eye for detail, an ear for fine language and his films were always visually grand.

Modi was a stage actor of the Parsi stage, who had done some work in silent films, but returned with the advent of sound as actor, director and producer. In the middle period, he had earned quite a reputation as a Shakespearean actor. However since 1931 with the advent of the sound film, theater was declining. To rescue this dying art, Modi set up the Stage Film Company in 1935. His first two films were *Khoon ka Khoon* (1935) an adaptation of Hamlet and *Saed-e-Havas* (1936) based on Shakespeare's King John. His *Minerva Movietone* was famous for its historical spectacles wherein Modi made the most of his gift for grandiloquence to encapsule all that is grand about Indian history.

Modi also made *Nausherwan-e-Adil* (1957) and directed India's first film in technicolor *Jhansi ki Rani* in 1953.

Saraswati Devi, India's first woman composer, composed the songs of the films made by Bombay Talkies. Her real name was Khurshid Minocher-Homji. With the setting up of the radio station in Bombay in 1925-26, every month, Khurshid and her sisters, known as the Homji sisters, would present a program on the radio. A chance meeting with Bombay Talkies owner Himansu Rai at a musical performance in Bombay led her to work at Bombay Talkies, where she was re-christened Saraswati Devi.

The Irani sisters, Daisy and Honey, also shone in many films. Daisy Irani was a child star, and she has acted in a number of movies and also produced and directed a television serial in 1994, called Under one Roof. Her sister, Honey Irani's main contribu-

tion to cinema is her story writing and screenplay for several superhit films such as *Albela*.

Present-day torch bearers

After 1947, there was a lull in the contribution of the Parsi community to cinema and theater. Then began the legendary plays by *Adi Marzban*, both thrillers and comedies. Today, the theater world boasts of quite a few members of the Parsi community, who are torch bearers, in their own way. *Dinyar Contractor* now an octogenarian, in theater for 35 years, is famous for his 'Hinglish' plays.

Hosi Vasunia has been associated with English Theater for three decades. Actor, director and producer, his productions are the hallmark of quality and value.

Shernaz Patel, daughter of *Burjor* and *Ruby Patel*, who themselves were pioneers in the field of Parsi theater, is a renowned film maker and TV, film and stage personality.

Penaz Masani entered the world of ghazal music in 1981 and has since, cut over 20 discs in more than 10 languages. She has also established herself as a playback singer for the Indian cinema and has sung for over 50 Hindi films.

Persis Khambatta, Miss India 1965 is known for her roles in Hollywood films like *Star Trek*, *Warriors of the Lost World*, *Megaforce*, *Deadly Intent* and *Night Hawks*.

Among recent up and coming personalities are film-maker *Kaizad Gustad*; MTV VJ *Cyrus Broacha*, a prolific actor who has also scripted and directed plays; stage and film actress *Tanaaz Currim*; actress *Perizaad Zorabian*, seen in *Bollywood Calling* and *Jogger's Park*; and MTV VJ and actress *Shenaz Treasuryvala*. Actor *Rahul Khanna*, son of Vinod Khanna and Gitli Taleyarkhan, starred in the film *Earth*.

Sooni Taraporewala wrote the screenplay for award-winning films: *Salaam Bombay*, *Mississippi Masala*, *Such a Long Journey* and *My Own Country*, and is also a noted photographer.

Films about Parsis

Films featuring Parsi characters or about the Parsi community, include:

Khatta Meetha is the story of two Parsi families and has captured the ambiance of the Parsi community with utmost detail; *Pestonjee* – this drama, with touches of gentle comedy gives an accurate glimpse into the Parsis of Bombay in the 1930s; *Encounter*, about a Parsi police officer; *Earth* by Deepa Mehta is a story of the India-Pakistan partition based on the novel *Cracking India* by Bapsi Sidhwa; *Supari* about a Parsi girl, Dilnavaz in love with the hero; *Everybody says I'm fine* about a super-socialite's drug addiction; *Such a Long Journey* based on a novel by Rohinton Mistry about a Parsi man trying to lead an honest life in a corrupt world.

Though this article does not claim to be exhaustive, it can be seen that the Parsi community has contributed tremendously, as it has in almost every other field, to the entertainment industry, whether it is theater or films ... We hope that this fun-loving and lovable community will continue to shine on stage and screen. ■

Stage and screen actors in Britain

Jimi Mistry has recently emerged as one of Britain's best young acting talents. Last year Mistry starred in the romantic comedy, *The Guru*, which grossed £1.5 million in the first week, taking the top spot in the British box office charts.

Stage actor *Zubin Varla* has appeared in Royal Shakespeare Company productions of *The Tempest*, *Faust* and *Romeo and Juliet*, and now has the lead role in the West End adaptation of Salman Rushdie's award-winning novel *Midnight's Children*.

Writer and actress *Nina Wadia* is a star of the hilarious BBC TV sitcom *Goodness Gracious Me*, which takes a comic look at how Asian society is viewed by Britain and vice versa. ■

parsis making literature

By
Sohrab Homi Fracis

Several young as well as seasoned Parsi writers are gaining international readership and recognition

At the start of the twentieth century, an extraordinary Parsi made a foray into the world of letters that marked the beginning of what we may call modern Parsi literature. When Cornelia Sorabji published her first book of stories, *Love and Life Behind the Purdah*, in 1901, she was also about to make history of a different kind, graduating with a law degree from Oxford to later become India's first woman barrister. She championed the cause of orthodox Hindu and Parsi women who suffered under patriarchal traditions, writing stories with titles such as "A Living Sacrifice" and "The Fire is Quenched". Sorabji died in 1954 at the age of eighty-eight, but more than a hundred years after it was born, *Love and Life* is again in print and the focus of women's studies. Such is the lasting potential of literature.

Sorabji wrote more books, notably *Sun Babies* and her memoir *India Calling* (also in print), but other Parsis were slow to follow. In 1968,

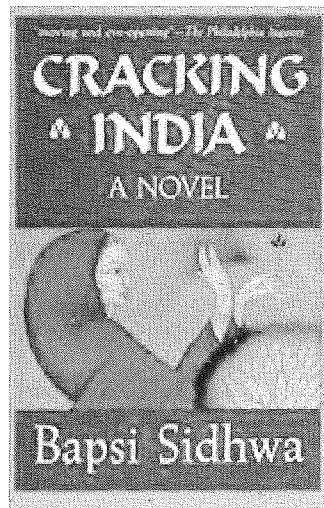
Perin Bharucha wrote *The Fire Worshippers*.

Growing up in Bombay, I saw my mother read it and talk about it. That was my first intimation that

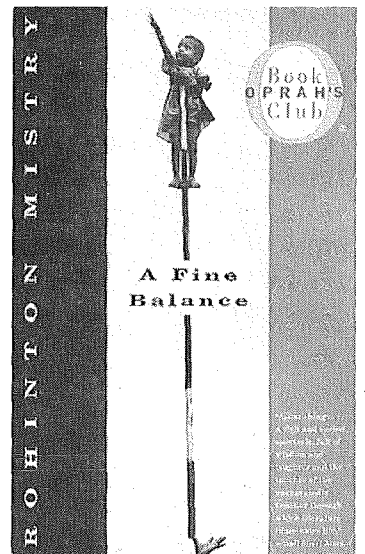
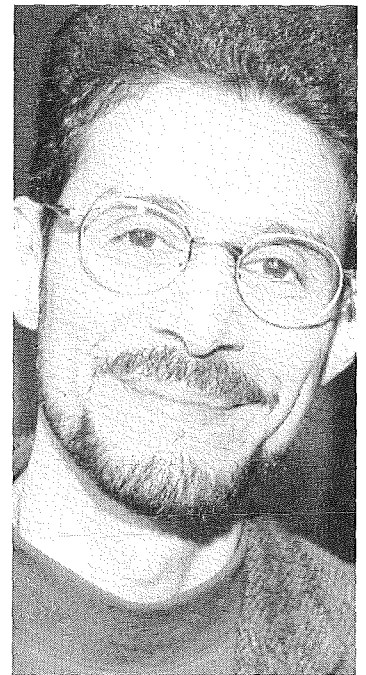
books were not always like the ones I usually saw in her hands, by distant foreigners about distant foreigners. A decade later, Bapsi Sidhwa wrote *The Crow Eaters*, which was published in England and began to garner an international audience.

From then on, there was a steady trickle of fiction by Parsi authors: Farrukh Dhondy, Rohinton Mistry, Boman Desai, Firdaus Kanga, Dina Mehta, Ardashir Vakil, Meher Pestonji, Thrity Umrigar, and myself, among others, eventually too many for me to do them full justice here.

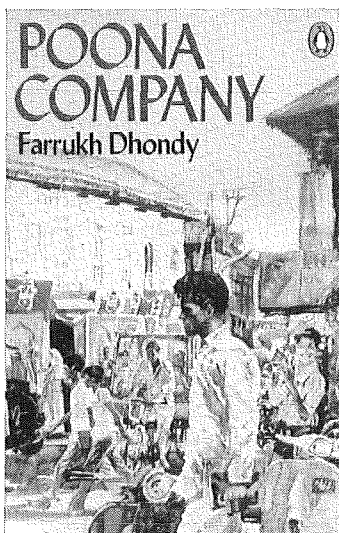
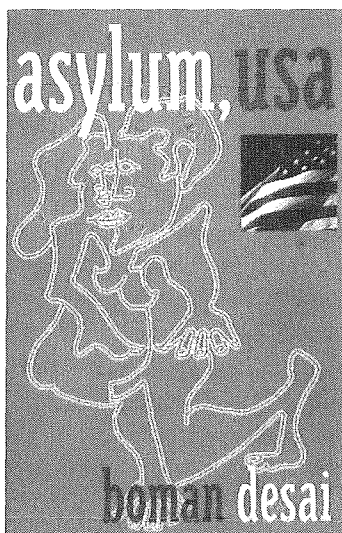
When one applies the yardstick of international readership and recognition, Mistry and Sidhwa emerge as



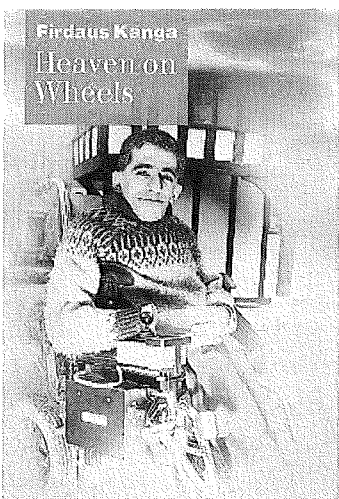
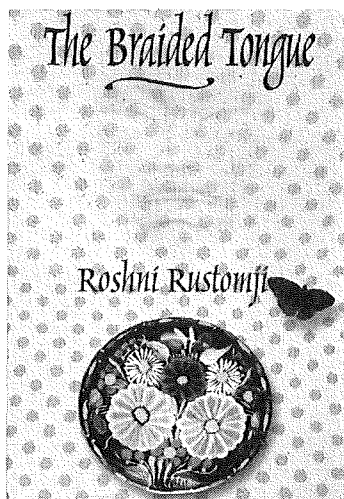
Above, Bapsi Sidhwa
and her novel
CRACKING INDIA.
Right, Rohinton
Mistry and his novel
A FINE BALANCE



the two stars. Sidhwa has had a long and productive career, the apex of which was probably her powerful, award-winning novel, *Cracking India* (published as *Ice-Candy Man* in India), which was made into the movie, *Earth: 1947*, directed by Deepa Mehta. Its young, polio-afflicted Parsi narrator, Lenny, observes pre-Partition Lahore from her seat on the hip of her youthful ayah, Shanta, who is her protector and teacher and friend. Shanta is also the object of many a lusting male eye: "The covetous glances Ayah draws educate me. Up and down, they look at her ... Ayah is chocolate-brown and short. Every-



Clockwise from left, ASYLUM, USA by Boman Desai; POONA COMPANY by Farrukh Dhondy; HEAVEN ON WHEELS by Firdaus Kanga; and THE BRAIDED TONGUE by Roshni Rustomji.

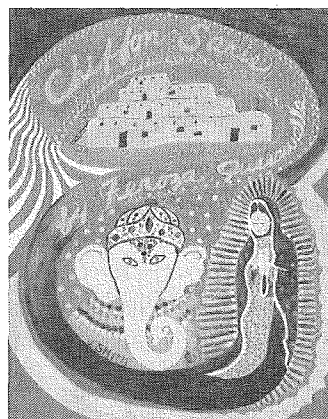


read by many who had never even heard of our little community.

The one repeated rap against *A Fine Balance* has been that it is unrelentingly dark, but that is to ignore its quiet humor and miss the inspiring humanity and courage of Dina Dalal, her young house-guest Maneck Kohlah, and

ers have ventured into other genres as well. All the way back in 1877, Behram Malbari published a book of poetry, *The Indian Muse in English Garb*. Among today's crop of poets, Keki N. Daruwalla has won Sahitya Akademi and Commonwealth Poetry awards for his poems in *The Map-maker*. Zarina Mullan-Plath read her poems, published in literary magazines, at the 2002 North American Zoroastrian Congress alongside Sidhwa, Desai, and myself. Feroza Jussawala has a new book of poems: *Chiffon Saris*. She is versatile, having published non-fiction books such as *Conversations with V. S. Naipaul* and *Interviews with Writers of the Post-Colonial World*, and has had her own short fiction appear in anthologies.

Roshni Rustomji-Kerns (*Living in America: Poetry and Fiction by South Asian American Writers, Encounters*), Saros Cowasjee (*The Oxford Anthology of Raj Stories, Modern Indian Fiction*), Nilufer E. Bharucha (*Mapping Cultural Spaces: Post-colonial Indian Literature in English*, Rohinton Mistry: *Ethnic Enclosures and Transcultural Spaces*), and Novy Kapadia (*Parsi Fiction, The Novels of Bapsi Sidhwa*) have all compiled and edited literary anthologies.



Feroza Jussawala's book of poems, CHIFFON SARIS.

thing about her is eighteen years old and round and plump. Even her face." Cooks, gardeners, masseurs, and ice-cream vendors vie amicably for her attention and her heart, though the Hindu masseur is slowly gaining on the Muslim ice-candy man. But once Partition begins to tear Lahore apart, amicability is hard to come by and things turn very ugly for Shanta and for Lenny's family. The highlight of Mistry's career, thus far, is arguably also the high point for Parsi literature. In 2001, as if to celebrate the one-hundredth anniversary of Cornelia Sorabji's debut, Parsi fiction stepped confidently into the homes of mainstream North American readers with the selection of Mistry's acclaimed novel, *A Fine Balance*, by Oprah's Book Club. For the first time, hundreds of thousands of copies of a book about Parsi characters were

her tailors Ishvar and Omprakash, during the disturbing and dangerous times of Emergency in India. That tragedy can make for great literature was known as far back as in ancient Greece, the epics and plays of which may well have drawn on our own Persian mythology. For sheer sweep of the contemporary Indian terrain, only Vikram Seth's *A Suitable Boy* can beat Mistry's epic. It brought him, deservedly, one of his three Booker Prize nominations, the other two for *Such a Long Journey* and *Family Matters*.

Fiction has been the cutting edge of Parsi literature and the area of its greatest achievements, but Parsi writ-

Rustomji-Kerns also has a new novel called *The Braided Tongue*. Thrity Umrigar, author of *Bombay Time*, has released a memoir, *First Darling of the Morning*. The acclaimed literary theorist, Homi Bhabha, wrote

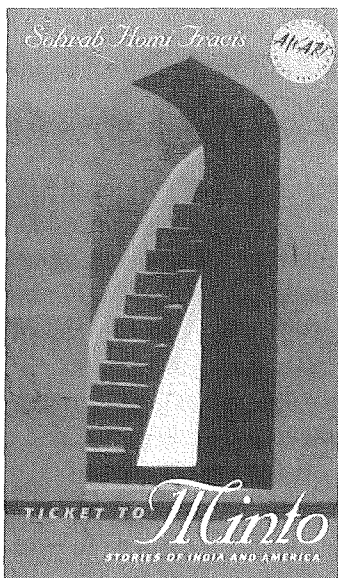
Nation and Narration and *The Location of Culture*. Playwright Zaraawar Mistry has had his contemporary adaptation of *Sohrab and Rustum* performed in Minneapolis to glowing reviews and will soon present it at a New York venue. In that crossover genre where writing is published on film rather than paper, Sooni Taraporevala earned acclaim as the screenwriter of movies such as the Academy Award-winning *Salaam Bombay*, *Mississippi Masala*, and *Such a Long Journey*.

Just in case you're wondering, what does it take to become a writer? A

little talent, hard work, a lot of perseverance, some luck, and a willingness to take chances in your life. The brief bio of Boman Desai, author of *The Memory of Elephants* and *Asylum, USA*, tells us that he has worked as a "farmhand, bartender, dishwasher, short-order cook, secretary, musician, bookstore clerk, telephone operator, auditor, and teacher". Now, that's an intrepid person. Having worked as a civil engineer, programmer-analyst, software consultant, peer tutor, and professor myself, I can attest to the likelihood that a writer is not born but evolves.

It makes for an interesting life, if not the most stable one. Increasingly, however, aspiring young writers are taking advantage of the proliferation of MFA university programs around the nation to learn the craft and, frequently, to teach it as a parallel vocation.

Joining the editorial staff at publishing houses or magazines is another parallel option. So if you think you've got what it takes, go for it, and maybe one day you'll be counted among the ranks of Parsis making literature. ■



Sohrab Homi Fracis is the first Indian author to win the Iowa Short Fiction Award, judged by the famous University of Iowa Writers' Workshop. You can read reviews of his book, *Ticket to Minto: Stories of India and America*, at www.fracis.com.

Thoughts on Zarathushtra by President Rahmonov of Tajikistan

[Excerpts from the book "Tajiks in the Mirror of History" [London River Edition Ltd., ISBN 0-9540425-0-6] by Emomali Rahmonov as posted on zoroastrians@yahooogroups.com by Esphandiar Azadi, zumspenta@yahoo.com]

"From history books and from old Tajik-Persian literature I had already obtained certain knowledge about Zarathushtra. Not infrequently in those hard times I recited in my mind his call for "goodness in thoughts, words, and deeds". More than anything in the Zoroastrian religion, I remember the deep reverence for the earth and water ... I was repeatedly impressed by the humanistic essence and wisdom of Zarathushtra's teaching.

"Time and time again I would go through the pages ... rereading the Gathas and admiring their poetry and wisdom. My thoughts go back to Zarathushtra ... the first prophet of the Tajiks whose trace on earth has not been erased by the dust of millennia and the ashes left by countless bloody wars ... the sacred book of the Zoroastrians can be defined as the greatest encyclopedia to have ever encompassed so many fields and activities of human life through so many epochs ... the teachings of Zarathushtra, which embraced such huge geographical space and period of time, without doubt surpassed all previous achievements of human thought ...

"... evidence helps to show that both the prophet Zarathustra and the Avesta had their origins in Bactria ... in other words the cradle of Zoroastrianism is Bactria ... Many principles of the Zarathushtrian religion have left a deep imprint on the people's mind ... water, earth and fire have to be protected from any impurity ... these and many other examples give evidence that in every Tajik house we may find traces of Zarathushtra's teachings.

"Let us hope in the new millennium, the Tajik people will continue to live under the spiritual guidance of Zarathushtra, the prophet of truth and light." ■



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: drogersor@msn.com.

Our Inimitable Language and Culture

After centuries of living in India, Parsis adopted Gujarati as their mother tongue, although what eventually emerged is a particular version of the language of their Gujarati hosts, that they proudly claim as '*aproo Parsi Gujarati*'. It is remarkable that over the centuries, so far away from their *madar vattan* Iran, Parsis adopted and adapted to their new mother land, without losing that certain idiosyncratic distinctiveness that makes them unique.

Borrowings from English

Parsis have been known to adopt English words and give them a unique twist, to make them, at times, almost unrecognizable. Here's a compilation of some such distortions that come to mind.

Ga-vaan (Eng. gown) Most Parsi women wore ankle-length, short-sleeved cotton dresses at home, but wore saris when going out. Presumably in trying to adapt, the word 'gown' mutated to '*gavaan*'.

Fur-raak (Eng. frock). Frock, *furr-aak* or dress was usually knee-length (or a mini in the 60s). Not to be confused with the *gavaans* our mothers wore, a *furraak* was the badge of the younger generation.

Ee-jee-chur (Eng. easy chair). Only recently did I realize that the *eejeechur* that my grandfather spent many an afternoon in, was really an 'easy chair'. The back and seat were made of cane; it had double arm-rests, so the lower ones could be pulled out (like opening a penknife) to the front for the legs to rest upon.

Farej-beej (Eng. french beans). It took me some time to connect these two words – but oh boy, that *farej beej ma gos*, that grandma used to make, was tasty! *Gos*, of course was goat's meat.

Garey-bee (Eng. gravy). I would look all over my dinner plate for gray bees; but back then I did not know any better.

Cut-lace (Eng. cutlets). No laces were cut or sacrificed, but the *garey-bee* went so well with the *cutlace*!

Koh-beech (Eng. cabbage). No one was exhorted to go to any beach, but with *gos*, it sure tasted better.

Kek (Eng. cake). Naturally this *kek* had to be bought only at the best bakeries in town, like the one in the Taj Mahal Hotel at Apollo Bunder; and along with *kek*, for tea we had *biscote* (Eng. biscuits)

Kub-but (Eng. cupboard). If our darling grandmothers had come upon Old Mother Hubbard's *kubbut*, oh the nursery rhymes they would have recited for the rest of the world!

Tur-raam (Eng. tram). Just imagine San Francisco with our Parsi tur-raams.

Tuh-rain (Eng. train). By either name, they both ran on *tuh-racks*.

Ees-station (Eng. station) was where the *tuh-rains* stopped; just as in *ees-peetaal* (hospital) and *ees-tool* (stool).

Guh-laas (Eng. glass). No bonnie lass was pressed into service to make tumblers for our people.

Puh-late (Eng. plate) were the ones we ate on back home, made of plastic, paper or fine bone china. Though the purists would call it a *ruhkaabee* or *thali*. At weddings and navjotes, this *puhlate* morphed into *kera-noo-patoo* (banana leaf).

Ta-boe-two (Eng. tomato). Oh the delicious dishes we can cook with those *taboetaas*, like *taboetaa per eedoo* and *taboetaa ma gos*. Of course, one cannot forget the delicious **Puh-pay-ta** (Eng. potato) *ma gos*.

Ee-stoo (Eng. stew). A delicious stew: deep-fried cubed potatoes, sweet potatoes, peas, and carrots dumped in sweet and spicy cooked *taboetaas*. Sometimes we would add *gos* to this delicious mixture, and eat it on fine china *puhlates*.

Vee-nee-jun (Eng. venetian blinds). The *veeneejuns* I remember were thick wooden slats on my kitchen window, plastered with grime from

the wood stove, on the inside, and from pigeon droppings on the outside.

Sur-but (Eng. sherbert or sherbet, in turn taken from the Hindi sharbut). A delicious cold sweet drink for those hot, Bombay summer days.

Daak-tur (Eng. doctor). We were all encouraged to grow up to be a *daak-tur*, or an *eej-nayr* (Eng. engineer); and some of us did.

Buh-loo (Eng. blue). Why was *buhloo* the only color borrowed from English; all the other colors of the rainbow had their own Parsi names.

Kee-rees-chun (Eng. Christian). The Jews call them 'gentiles' but we Parsis have to be different, right?

Too-vaal (Eng. towel). After eating *tambotaa per eedoo*, or *garey-bee na cutlace*, be sure to wash your hands and wipe them with a *toovaal* – from Bombay Dyeing, ofcourse!

Fuh-root (Eng. fruit). What was this mysterious 'root' my grandmother was referring to? Turned out to be bananas, apples and oranges.

Parsi Gujarati, Hindi and Marathi

We Parsis did not spare the Gujarati language either.

Papeti (Guj. pateti). I still wish my friends "Papeti mubarak" (Happy new year) even though we were always told it was 'pateti' and NOT 'papeti'. The latter, we all know, is a small *puhpaytoe*.

Jamshedji-Navroze (Guj. Jamshedi-Navroze). Brought up amidst the inimitable culture of a Parsi colony, I was convinced that this holiday, every March 21st, was in honor of all men with the name Jamshed, and I remember a couple of Jamsheds that thought likewise.

There were a few who went even further, and wished their friends "**Jamshedjee Navrojee Mubarak**"!

Soj-joo (Guj. Saa-roo). Good or fine. Every time we said *sojjoo*, our Gujarati teacher Mrs. Varma would yell at us to speak in "*shroodth* (correct) Gujarati". "It is *saaroo*, and not *sojjoo*" they would correct us.

Hindi and Marathi were not spared either. When their *dhobi* (washer-man) would tear their *sudrehs* in the wash, time and time again, Roshan's father would reprimand him, "*Toom dar vakhat aysaa karegaa, toh humkoo kaisaa patla faavegaa?*" This literal translation of a Gujarati phrase into a jumble of Hindi and Marathi defies translation, but believe me, it is hysterical.

Repeating with a 'b'

Yet another idiosyncrasy, was our Parsi tendency to repeat a word with the letter 'b' in front. Here's an example:

Roshan told her husband Rohinton, "Don't forget to eat your *tarkari* (vegetables)." To this he gave the customary Parsi response: "**Tarkaari, barkaari, kai khaavanano nathi**" (I'm not going to eat any *tarkari, barkari*.)"

Later Roshan reminded him, "We have to see the doctor." To which he retorted, "**Daaktur Baaktur nee kai jaroor nathi**". (There's no need for any doctor, boctor.)"

The first time I realized that I, and others, spoke this way, was when our friend Hormusjee, who lived at the Parsi Hostel, reminded me. If he had heard the above conversation between our esteemed editor and her equally venerable husband, he would have questioned, "**Tarkaari to maney samaj avey, pun barkaari soo che?**" and "**Doctor toe majanoe, pun boc-tor soo kare?**"

The Gujaratis of Bombay would flock to see Parsi *nataks* (plays) not just for an enjoyable evening at the theater, but to delight in their mother tongue being twisted and transformed into a hilarious Parsi *eestoo*! ■

Some more Parsi Gujarati distortions

By Sam Kerr

Once at a dinner party in Sydney, when our hostess asked us to help ourselves to the *lagan nu custer* (wedding custard) I couldn't help saying, "Be quick. This is going to be 'Custer's last stand'".

My *fooi* (great aunt) used to call french beans, '**farenj beench**'. Gown was '**gavan kimono**', glass was '**gilass**', and the *chappal* (sandal) was '**champal**' in our house.

Generally, *pateti* was '**papeti**' and there was also a delicious dish prepared by the Surat '**babarchis**' with small deep fried baby potatoes and kid goat's meat – *papeti ma gos*. Also the correct Gujarati word is '**vavarchi**' for the accepted Parsi usage – '**babarchi**'. Strangely, the '**mistry**' was a household cook, and the young helping hand, a '**boy**', which word was also used in the *agiaries* as '**boy devanou**'.

The original word '**agni-ary**' (at the time we were offered refuge in Gujarat) stemmed from the Vedic word '**agni**' for fire. It soon became '**agiary**', possibly because the nasal sounding Gujarati character '**gna**', which is not present in the Pahlavi alphabet, may have been difficult to pronounce.

January became '**Jaa-ney-vaaree**' and February became '**Fey-bar-vaaree**' in some Parsi homes. Sauce became *saa(n)z* like in *Saa(n)z-jingaa-no* (shrimp in sauce); and a farcical light comedy/play was a '**faaras**'.

There is a Gujarati word on loan from the Pahlavi language – '**dukht**' meaning 'daughter'. Parsis converted it to a scornful slang word referring to both a girl ('**dukhti**') and a boy ('**dukhto**').

When *mamaiji* (grandmother) said " **##\$@# her Hitler**", as a child I thought she was referring to Hitler's girlfriend, Eva. One day my uncle explained to me that *mamaiji* thinks that 'Her' as in Herr Hitler is his first name.

My *mamaiji* (grandmother) used to say '**baraandin**' for brandy. '*Ardhi cham-chi baraandin ne madh*' (one-half teaspoon of brandy with honey) was her prescription for all ailments! ■

My mother used to say...

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

“Mot-tay gharay, mot-ti vaat, nay aardhi rotli per aakhi raat”

Big talk in rich households, and pass the whole night on half a rotli (flat bread). This saying is used to describe one who boasts about riches and grand things, or about the past wealth and glory of the family when today they may be living from hand to mouth. It literally means that in once rich or well-to-do households there is a lot of grand talk, but in reality they may be surviving the whole night on just half a “rotli” (a thin flat bread made from wheat flour which is eaten with all meals in India).

“Khahi, pee, nay mohj majaa”

Eat, drink and be merry. This is one of my mother’s all time favorites, and I hope it is yours too. It is self-explanatory and puts the Parsi ethos in a nutshell. No matter what, Parsis love the good life.

“Bhai kaha(n), toh jana taha(n)”

Brother where (are you?) same place as before. This is a very popular saying to indicate a status quo, or when one is frustrated due to a task remaining undone or making no progress.

“Gher ni murghi, dar baraaber”

Chicken cooked at home is the same as dal (lentils). My mother would say this when we kids did not appreciate the best of things she cooked, such as the expensive chicken, but treated it like the humble dal; but something not half as good, served in a fancy dish in a restaurant was well-liked.

“Dur thi doongar raliyamna”

The mountains look lovely from afar. This is a very useful saying when an object or person has to be kept or admired at a distance. It is often used when those that you consider as friends let you down or there is some disagreement between friends and one feels it is best to keep them at a distance.

There is an extension of the above saying:

“Dur thi doongar raliyamna, agal jaye to behamna”

The mountains look lovely from afar, but up close they are forbidding. From a distance the mountains look easy to climb, but when one comes up close, they may be insurmountable. Sometimes things or people look fine from afar, but when you look close they show their real character.

“Khadhu dhan nay gayoo maan”

Ate the grains and lost your mind. It means to profit from someone (like an employer or boss) and to be subsequently ungrateful. Or to take advantage of someone’s kindness and then not thank that person, or become so big-headed so as to refuse or forget to repay them. Lose one’s mind is synonymous with losing one’s sense or ‘akkal’.

There is another interpretation of the above saying:

Ate the grains and lost your respect. By availing of another’s hospitality or generosity or charity, one loses one’s dignity or respect. This saying can be used, for example if a guest overstays his welcome at someone’s house.

“Saap no dankhay-lo, dorda(n) thi daray”

Bitten by a snake, is fearful of a rope. This is similar to the English saying “Once bitten, twice shy”. Readers may notice repeated references to the snake; this was because in the villages in India snakes abound. Several of these, like the cobra and the python are very dangerous as they can and do kill. Anti-snake venom was almost never available in time for victims of snake bites in the villages and the victim almost always died. Hence the saying that if one has been bitten by a snake only once, he/she would have to be so frightened at the near death experience that even a coiled rope lying on the ground would be enough to strike terror in such a person. In other words, if one has had a bad experience with something, he/she will be forever frightened by anything similar, whether the threat is real or just a harmless one.

“Saathi, nay boodhi naathi”

At 60, intelligence runs away. When an old person talks nonsense or does something silly, it is attributed to his old age. It was a way for the younger generation to take a dig at seniors.

Parvin Damania is administrative assistant to the associate vice-provost-International Programs and director-International Alumni and Visitors Program at the University of California, Davis. She has a BA from University of Bombay and has held international positions in Europe and the Middle-East. Contact her at padamania@hotmail.com.

SUNDAY STORIES

6. Manucher

By Shazneen Rabadi Gandhi

With an army as mighty as a thundering ocean, Iraj's grandson Manoucher avenges Iraj's death by destroying his two evil brothers Salm and Tur. Then Manoucher and Fareydun lived in peace in Iran.

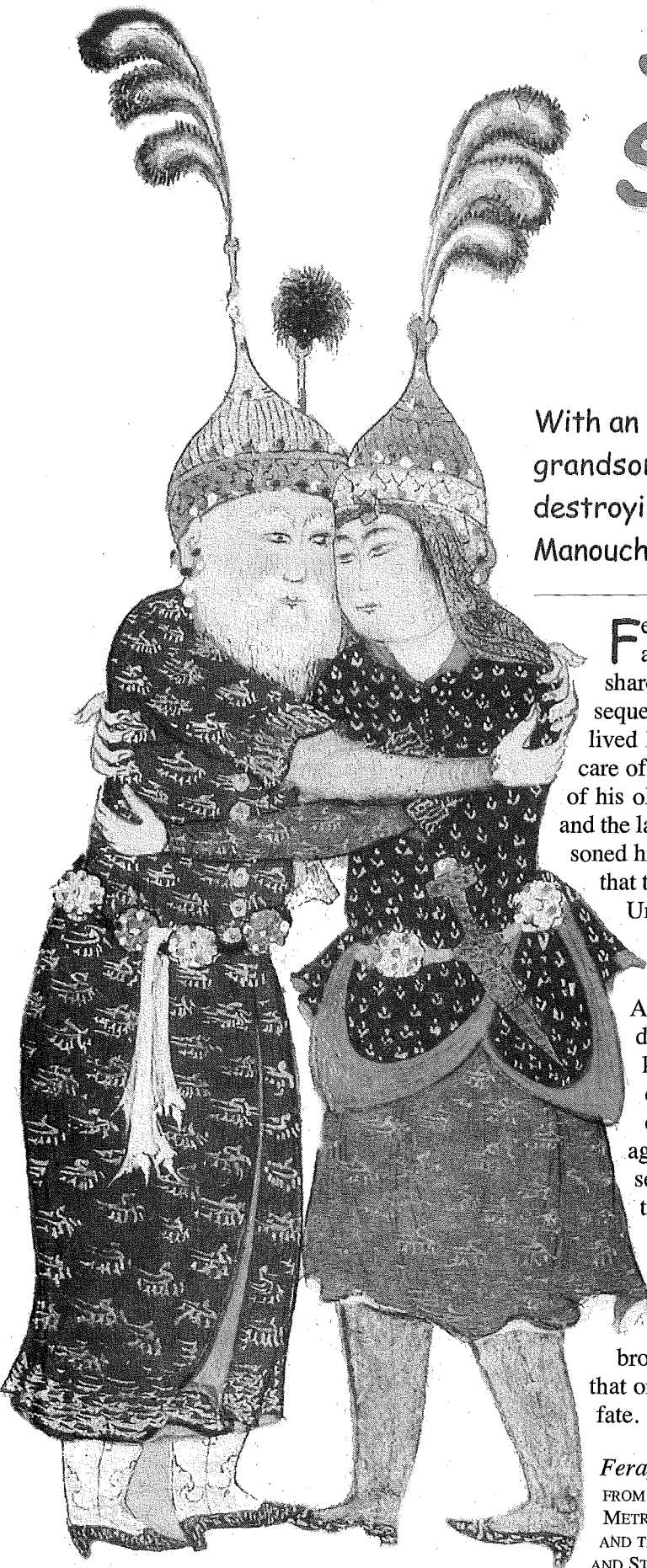
Fareydun had thought that if he divided his kingdom amongst his three sons they would each be happy with their share. Often times, however, our well-meant actions have consequences we never intended. As the years went by, Fareydun lived happily in Iran with his son, Iraj, who was kind and took care of him. But the demon of greed found his way into the heart of his oldest son, Salm, to whom Fareydun had given all of Rum and the lands to the West. He grew jealous of Iraj, and soon had poisoned his brother Tur's mind against Iraj as well. So it came to be that these two evil brothers plotted to kill their good brother Iraj. Unfortunately, they succeeded.

Manoucher is king of Iran

As Iraj died, his wife Mah-Afarid gave birth to his daughter. For years Fareydun was grief-stricken; but his joy knew no bounds when Iraj's daughter and her husband, the courageous Prince Pashang, were blessed with a son. They called him Manoucher. With his birth, Fareydun found hope again, and Manoucher was soon made king of Iran. He possessed the royal *farr* and all who came upon him, pledged their support to him.

Salm and Tur heard of his accession to the throne and fear gripped their hearts. They sent a messenger to Fareydun, praying for pardon for their evil deeds in the past. "We have come to realize the great injustice we did our brother," they explained, "but if we have sinned, it was fate that ordained this, and there is no escape from the will of divine fate. We were helpless too against the demon of greed."

Fareydun embraces Manoucher [PHOTO: DETAIL FROM FOLIO 59V OF THE HOUGHTON SHAH NAMEH, METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, COURTESY "THE LION AND THE THRONE", BY EHSAN YARSHATER, DICK DAVIS AND STUART GARY WELCH, MAGE PUBLISHERS, 1998]



War with Salm and Tur

Feraydun refused to forgive them. "If through all these years you have remained unpunished, it is because I did not consider it right to make war on my own sons. Now a noble son has been born from the line of the same King you felled, and he, Manoucher, will come to you with an army as mighty as a thundering ocean. He will destroy you, and wash away the sorrows of his heart in your blood.

"Don't lay your actions at the door of divine fate! Know that whoever sows the seeds of injustice will reap a harvest of sorrow and darkness. Your punishment is fated by God!" thundered Feraydun.

Salm and Tur were terrified. When Manoucher learned how his grandfather had died, he declared war on the two evil brothers and destroyed them. Then he returned to Iran and Feraydun, with the other warriors of Iran and they lived in peace.

As Feraydun's days came to a close, he called Iran's greatest warrior, Sam, to his side and said, "I am not long for this world. I hand my great-grandson over to your keeping; see that you are the prop and support of his reign." Sam pledged his support to Manouchehr.

Feraydun looked up to the heavens and prayed, "Dear God, all that you have fated has now taken place. Free me now from this world, and send me to another place."

As he closed his eyes and left this world, the poet Ferdowsi wrote [1]:

*Having done this, he bowed to Fate's decree –
The leaf was withered on the royal tree.
He lived his life in mourning; ceaseless tears
And constant grief consumed his final years.
Weeping, the great king said, "My heart's delight,
My sons, have turned my days to endless night –
My sons slain wretchedly before my eyes,
Since all my plans were evil and unwise . . ."
And so, heartbroken, weeping for the past,
He lived tormented till Death came at last.
O world, from end to end, unreal, untrue –
No wise man can live happily in you.
But bless'd is he whose good deeds bring him fame,
Monarch or slave, he leaves a lasting name.*

Feraydun's passing was cause for great grief in Iran, but Manoucher brought his country through this grief, and with Sam's help, Iran was prosperous again. ■

Next time: Zal and Rudabeh

[1] "The Lion and the Throne", by Ehsan Yarshater, Dick Davis and Stuart Gary Welch, Mage Publishers, 1998.

Shazneen Rabadi Gandhi lives in New York City. She writes as a hobby.

PRAYER CORNER

Let not anger enslave me, Ahura Mazda

From "Homage Unto Ahura Mazda"
by M. N. Dhalla

Aeshma, the demon of wrath is the impetuous assailant of man. He stirs up strife and hostility and spreads discord and disturbances. Anger breeds vindictiveness and revenge.

When anger puts man out of his wits, he is all on fire with excitement. He flies to anger; flings prudence to the winds and forgets himself. His eyes flash frantic fury, his teeth gnash, his breast flames with fierce passions, his heart leaps to his throat, his lips utter unspeakable words, and, in his unbridled rage, he does un-namable deeds. Fierce of face, he looks beastly and brutish. His anger shows him to others in bad form. It makes him ridiculous in their sight. He loses his self-dignity.

He repents, when his fit of temper cools and he returns to reason and is once again in his sober mood. But even though he may give his life itself he cannot recall the fiery words he spoke nor retrieve the wrong he did. Anger hurts him more than one against whom he ventilated his angry feelings.

Help me, Ahura Mazda, to bear with circumstances that provoke my anger. Give me patience and forbearance even under provocation. Let me forget offenses committed by my neighbor against me.

Teach me to forgive, as I would be forgiven. Enable me to take words of violence with equanimity. Let me not dwell upon the wrong done me. Let not harsh words of my opponent rankle in my heart. Let me disarm his anger by my affable disposition.

Let me not be out of humor. Let me not wax wrath with anyone. Help me not to speak or do anything until the heat of my excitement is cooled and my anger has subsided.

Let the fire of my anger be extinguished before it begins to burn. Help me to bridle my passion. Save me from the weakness of ill temper and help me to put a curb on it. Enable me to control my movements and let me always have a grip over myself.

Keep me always in the best of tempers. Give me the calm repose of mind and a meek and mild spirit and a serene and unruffled temper, that I may anger and master my control over it, and conquer it and rule, Ahura Mazda. ■

[Courtesy Manashni, Houston, August 2000]

The Magic of Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds

Now, it is said, "The biggest room in the world is the room for improvement"; but, sometimes in life, we feel that we are left with no more room for improvement.

The above clearly demonstrates that in life, when we feel stuffed to the brim with no more space left to serve others, all we need to do is make some minor adjustments, and we will create a paradigm shift in our consciousness.

All we need to do, is just re-align the pieces of our life and we will magically manifest some room for improvement.

As we open our minds, we will create an *extra space* in our hearts, to do more *good* for humanity.

During this process of re-alignment, however, we must remain cognizant that:

"In our quest for becoming someone different, we do not end up becoming someone else."

Or else, this *space* will end up creating a *hole*, in our life.

I will leave you with this profound thought on *life*, which comes from the wisdom of my tween-aged daughter Anahita:

"Life is a puzzle, which when put together becomes a miracle."

It is the epitome of this miracle that becomes our gift, which allows us to *lift, shift and uplift* the lives of others, as well as ourselves.

Let us use our *gift* with *Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds*.

In the spirit of Z-Gift with Love and Light to all.

© 2003, Meher Amalsad

For more spiritual inspiration, visit <http://www.bread4thehead.com/>

READERS' FORUM

Readers may submit letters (under 250 words) to the editor on topics of general interest. The Journal reserves the right to edit materials for suitability, clarity and space.

On the Aging issue ...

As guest editor Dolly Dastoor has done as usual a superb job of covering all aspects of aging in North America [FEZANA Journal, Fall2003, Vol. 16, No. 3]. The five vignettes on "Perspectives on Aging" were in particular most interesting.

Going through the articles, I felt how true was the adage "Growing Old is not for Sissies" displayed in my doctor's office.

The World Bank Retirees' Society recently issued a publication *Handbook for Survivors of World Bank Group Retirees*, providing guidelines for retirees and their families to deal with immediate important matters that arise on a retiree's death.

Perhaps a similar publication can be compiled by a Zarathushti lawyer/financial adviser to assist North American Zarathushtis and distributed through FEZANA.

Dinshaw Joshi
Chevy Chase, Maryland

I congratulate you on the latest issue. It carries such a wealth of information and so many different perspectives – it is really an 'intercultural' view of the North American diaspora. Thank you for your objectivity and breadth of reporting.

Dr. Zareen Karani Araoz
President, Managing Across Cultures, Winchester, Massachusetts

FEZANA Journal is one of the only two journals I decided to keep on subscribing to, when I retired, and the paycheck got sort of smaller! It is an excellent journal. Of course, I don't agree with everything, but what I don't agree with, makes me think.

Roshni Rustomji-Kerns
Half Moon Bay, California

I thought your 'aging' readers might enjoy this piece (author unknown):

A for arthritis, B for bad back,
C is for chest pains. Perhaps cardiac?
D is for dental decay and decline
E is for eyesight –
can't read that top line.

F is for fissures and fluid retention
G is for gas (I'd rather not mention).

H high blood pressure
(I'd rather have low)

I for incisions with scars
you can show.

J is for joints, that now fail to flex
L for libido--what happened to sex?
Wait! I forgot about K!

K is for knees that crack
when they're bent
(Forgive me, my Memory
ain't worth a cent).

N for neurosis,
pinched nerves and stiff neck

O is for osteo-and all bones that crack.
P for prescriptions, I have quite a few
Give me another pill;

I'll be good as new!
Q is for queasiness. Fatal or flu?
R is for reflux – one meal turns to two.

S is for sleepless nights,
thoughts in my head

T is for teeth, in a glass by my bed.
U is for urinary, difficulties with flow

V is for vertigo,
that's 'dizzy', you know.

W is for wrinkles, I stare with dismay
X is for x-rays revealing inner decay.

Y for another year I've left behind
Z is for zest that I still have my mind.
Have survived all the

symptoms my body's deployed,
And kept twenty-six doctors
gainfully employed

Rusi Sorabji
Campbell, California

Your recent issue with guest editor Dolly Dastoor, was informational and a timely read. You do a fantastic job – I eagerly check my mailbox each quarter. I have two comments:

Your mention of the Canada Postage stamp on page 27 carries no mention of it being an original initiative of the

Creating Awareness group. Granted, you have referred readers to the previous issue of the Journal where this credit was duly made, but it should have been credited here as well.

Secondly, I think the Journal for archival value, is ready to progress to labeling it with "Volume number and Issue number" rather than just the seasonal labels, on the cover as well as in references to it.

Aban Rustomji
Houston, Texas

[We apologize for not giving Creating Awareness due credit it so richly deserves, for initiating the Stamp Project. Secondly, coming from a

professional librarian, we value your suggestion on labeling, and will certainly try to conform. - Ed]

Nobel woman

This year's selection of a woman for the Nobel Peace prize, brought to mind the long history, since mankind came into existence, of the suppression of women and their infinite capacity for passing through the grindstone, still upholding the truth.

Iranian lawyer Shirin Ebadi is a conscientious woman seeing no conflict between Islam and fundamental human rights. She is passing through the wringer but never bothers about threats to her own safety. She is a

firm believer in "Satyam-ey-Jayeta" – truth alone triumphs, which is India's motto.

Imagine what the world would be if we have more Shirins in this world!

Noshir M. Lam
Mumbai, India

What is 'youth'?

I would like to share this excerpt from an article by 23-year-old Shireen Roshanravan, of Dallas area, in the ZANT (North Texas) directory and journal, with your readers. I found the article very insightful and thought-provoking.

"What exactly does 'youth' mean in our community? Is there an age peo-



Laugh and be Merry

By Jamshed Udvardia



Non-English speaking countries sometimes go out of their way to communicate with their English-speaking tourists...

Cocktail lounge, Norway:

LADIES ARE REQUESTED NOT TO HAVE CHILDREN IN THE BAR.

At a Budapest zoo:

PLEASE DO NOT FEED THE ANIMALS, IF YOU HAVE ANY SUITABLE FOOD, GIVE IT TO THE GUARD ON DUTY.

Information booklet about using a hotel air conditioner, Japan:

COOLS & HEATS – IF YOU WANT CONDITION OF WARM AIR IN YOUR ROOM, PLEASE CONTROL YOURSELF.

In a Nairobi restaurant:

CUSTOMERS WHO FIND OUR WAITRESSES RUDE, OUGHT TO SEE THE MANAGER.

In Aamchi Mumbai restaurant:

OPEN SEVEN DAYS A WEEK, AND WEEKENDS TOO.

In a Tokyo bar:

SPECIAL COCKTAILS FOR THE LADIES WITH NUTS.

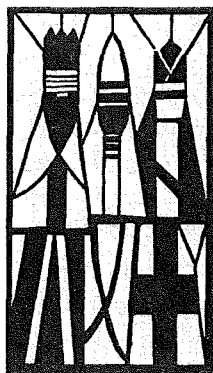
Airline ticket office, Copenhagen:

WE TAKE YOUR BAGS AND SEND THEM IN ALL DIRECTIONS.

In a Japanese cemetery:

PERSONS ARE PROHIBITED FROM PICKING FLOWERS FROM ANY BUT THEIR OWN GRAVES.

[submitted by Anaheeta C. Minwalla, VA]



In a small Southern town, USA, I saw a wonderful nativity scene, but one feature bothered me. The three wise men were wearing firemen's helmets. Unable to come up with a reasonable explanation, I left. At a convenience store on the edge of town, I asked the lady behind the counter about the helmets. She exploded into a rage, yelling at me, "You darn Yankees never do read the Bible!" I assured her that I did, but simply couldn't recall anything about firemen in the Bible. She jerked her Bible from behind the counter and riffled through some pages, and finally jabbed her finger at a passage. Sticking it in my face, she said, "See! it says right here: The three wise men came from *afar*."

[Submitted by Roshan Rivetna, IL]

ple are referring to? If I'm a youth (at 23) then what are our board members? Old, out-dated, boring, dogmatic, compassionate conservatives? If this is the case, then why are they running the community?

"Are they assuming that all persons under a certain age are going to share similar viewpoints? When I am asked to provide a youth's perspective, I feel they are asking for a point of view that they will find interesting, different, intriguing, perhaps cute or entertaining, but insofar as it is a youth's perspective, it won't be taken seriously, and will remain marginalized, if it is considered by the 'non-youth' at all.

"Listen to me and consider my thoughts, not because I'm a youth but because you ought to listen to all persons willing to speak. And if being a youth has to do with having an open mind, then I hope that we, as a community, will strive to be as youthful as possible – whether you're 15 or 51."

Dr. Mehroo M. Patel
Westchester, Illinois

Forms of marriage

As a priest, I am at times asked if a priest should perform the wedding ceremony, if a girl's parents are opposed to her marrying someone of her own choice after turning down the choice of her own father.

Our *Rivayets* (questions asked by Indian priests and responses given by Iranian priests from 1478 CE to the early nineteenth century) describe five types of marriages. The fifth is 'khudsarajan' – a woman choosing her husband on her own or by her own free will, implicitly from the Zarathushti community).

The *Rivayet* of Dastur Darab Hormuzyar [printed in 1896 by Navsari Printing and Ruling Press, reprinted in 1941, p. 367] states that "even if that girl's father is not in favor of it, it is enjoined upon priests to marry her with the proper Ashirwad ceremony, to the man she has accepted of her own free will."

When they beget a child, however, they are to be married again, so that their marital status is raised to the number one spot – *padshahajan* (royal marriage) and their children are treated as Padshahajan children and all the good things done by them are regarded as if done by their parents. Padshahajan is thus the most desirable form of marriage.

What surprised me most was these five forms of marriages continued to be observed in Gujarat up to the late nineteenth century, as noted in the *Bombay Gazetteer* [see *Parsiana* November 1998].

This is yet another illustration of how the tradition of equality granted to women by the prophet in the Gathas in prehistoric times, was observed even in the dark medieval ages, when none around us dared to do it.

Er. Kersey H. Antia
Orland Park, Illinois

Who listens to papa?

It happened by chance that on the Day of Ascension, last May, I was on holiday in Berlin. The liberated Berliners had organized an impressive ecumenical gathering of all the denominations of the Christian church. There were two prominent groups that caught my attention – the Protestant Lutherans and the Roman Catholics. Yet, only a month ago, the pope had issued an order that Catholics and Protestants should not say prayers together.

The pope has issued many orders on many subjects such as birth-control, abortion, ordination of women and celibacy of Catholic priests, etc. Millions of people, Catholic and otherwise, respect the pope. With all due respect, many of the pope's admirers just quietly ignore his recommendations. Respect and affection do not necessarily mean total obedience.

A group of well-respected Parsi high priests, in India, have passed 'resolutions' disapproving Parsis marrying outside their faith. They state that marriage outside the community for Parsis is against the tenets of the reli-

gion (though they fail to give even a single example) and that priests and trustees of "all the Atashbehras, Agiaris and all other Institutions of all the Anjumans in India to take note."

It seems that the resolutions are meant for the Parsis who live in India, and the high priests are concerned about the dwindling population of Parsis in India.

However, decrease in membership of the Zarathushti faith is a world-wide problem for all the responsible Zarathushtis and has many social, economical and even medical reasons behind it. An Iranian Zarathushti high priest, in a conference in Mumbai, said: "... it is difficult to believe that, in the time of Zarathushtra, his followers appeared on the scene, as if they had descended from the sky. Our prophet had to work hard on them."

The universality of Zarathushtra's teaching is very clear in many of his Yasnas [Ys. 29.7, tr. I. J. S. Taraporewala]:

*"Whom, Vohu Manah, has thou
in thine eye, Who might bring
succour unto all mankind?"*

I would like to close with another verse from the Gathas [Ys. 30.2, tr. I. J. S. Taraporewala]:

*Hear with your ears
the highest truths I preach,
And with illumined minds
weigh them with care,
Before you choose
which of two paths to tread,
Deciding man by man
each one for each;
Before the new age is ushered in
Wake up, alert to
spread Ahura's word.*

Shahrokh R. Vafadari
Surrey, UK

Internet predators

As a concerned parent I would like to bring to the attention of your readers some potential hazards faced by our children in cyber space.

I will mention some alarming statistics, not to scare, but to prepare one-

self against these dangers: 2 out of 5 missing children ages 15-17 are abducted due to internet activity; 1 in 5 children receive unwanted sexual solicitation online – through chat rooms, instant messages and email.

Though all concerned parents teach their children about 'stranger danger', the internet predator-pedophile is not viewed as a stranger by the child, because the predator has taken the time to brainwash the child before attempting to meet, rape, abduct or lure them; or, through email cloning, the predator has assumed the identity of the child's friend.

Some basic safety guidelines include: not to communicate with or share any personal information with strangers; never open emails from anyone you don't know; never share your password with anyone; never agree to meet an internet 'friend'.

If the child is exposed to images of pornography, or information that promotes racism, hatred, militant extremism, gambling, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, use of bombs – teach the child to inform their parents immediately.

It is also advisable for parents to look for kid-friendly search engines for their child's school projects, that would filter pornography and illicit materials.

For information, visit www.WebWiseKids.com, www.ISafe.org and www.CyberAngels.org.

*Meher Amalsad
Westminster, California*

A letter from hell

As we commemorate the anniversary of the 9/11 tragedy, I hope you will see fit to publish the following:

Dear fellow martyrs/terrorists,

I am Mohamed Atta, one of those who flew the plane into the World Trade Center two years ago. The Supreme Being has asked that I convey the following message to you.

First, what we did was evil. God, whether you call him Allah, or

Khuda, or Reality, or any other name, does not approve of destruction of human life and property; certainly not in the name of religion.

We do not have 72 virgins waiting for us. Not even one. We are not luxuriating in a garden of pomegranates and cool spring water.

Instead we are in hell. Our punishment is to suffer in the same way as our victims. It will take nearly an eternity before our punishment is complete. After that, when we fully repent, we will be in God's fold.

Second, God does not favor any one religion over others. Otherwise, why would He permit so many diverse religions to exist in this world. One does not go to paradise because one believes that Mohamed is the last, true and final prophet of Allah. All human beings are God's children. Belief in one prophet, or another, is not the path to salvation.

Allah is a just and loving God! Why would He punish non-Muslims when He is the grantor of all religions? Why would He punish good non-Muslims and reward bad Muslims? How can that be justice?

Allah is an all-powerful God! If He desired that all human beings accept Mohamed as their savior, could He not do so within the blink of an eye?

Each religion believes it has the final answer to human salvation. How can that be? Why would a loving and powerful God endorse religious conflicts, such as the ones inflicted by those who believe that only their own interpretation of religion is the right one, and all the rest are doomed?

Our life on earth is a test to see that the good we do outweighs the evil. A just God judges you not by your belief but by your deeds. We now realize that it is solely one's good thoughts, good words and good deeds that a loving, just and all-powerful Allah takes into consideration for your salvation. Heed this well.

*Maneck Wadia
Del Mar, California* ■

NAMC's Mobedyar Project

A few years ago the North American Mobed Council, NAMC, in their foresight, to satisfy the spiritual needs of the Zarathushtrian community of North America, initiated a program, to invest members of the laity, to function as assistants to the Zarathushti clergies, as 'mobedyars'. They formulated a curriculum and an ordainment ceremony for the project. A certificate is presented by NAMC to successful candidates.

This training program has no time span tied to it. An individual is free to take their time and learn the basic requirements of prayers through guidance of a member of NAMC. Upon fulfillment of the basic needs, the mentor may recommend the individual for ordainment. This ceremony is generally officiated by a member clergy in presence of a congregation such as a community function.

To date four Zarathushtis have been invested as mobedyars who can help fulfill the ritual needs of Zarathushtis: Jamshid Mistry (Maryland), Behram Deboo (Washington State), Khushroo Mirza (Quebec) and the most recent [see facing page] Sam Bapasola (New Jersey).

Interested persons may request further information from NAMC secretary Ervad Nozer Kotwal at (905) 820 0461.

We wish to bring this project to the attention of all dedicated youth of the community, who may choose to offer their services in the interest of perpetuation of our noble faith. ■

*Ervad Jehan Bagli
President, NAMC*

[Also see article at right, on Mobedyar Sam Bapasola, son of Noshir and Khursheed Bapasola, excerpted from THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER, October 12, 2003]

Young cleric is used to questions

At 19, he is an assistant priest of the Zoroastrians, a faith with just 10,000 U.S. adherents.

KRISTIN E. HOLMES
Philadelphia Inquirer staff writer

Nineteen-year-old Sam Bapasola of Voorhees became a member of the clergy last month ... Underneath his T-shirt and jeans is a hint of his spiritual commitment. Every day, he wears a special white undershirt, secured with a sacred cord wrapped around his body three times ...

Bapasola has taken on a role to help preserve his ancient religion by becoming a mobedyar. He is one of only four in the US and Canada.

"I wanted to give back to the community," Bapasola said, "and also my mom [Khursheed Bapasola] wanted me to become one. The position is a new one, approved in

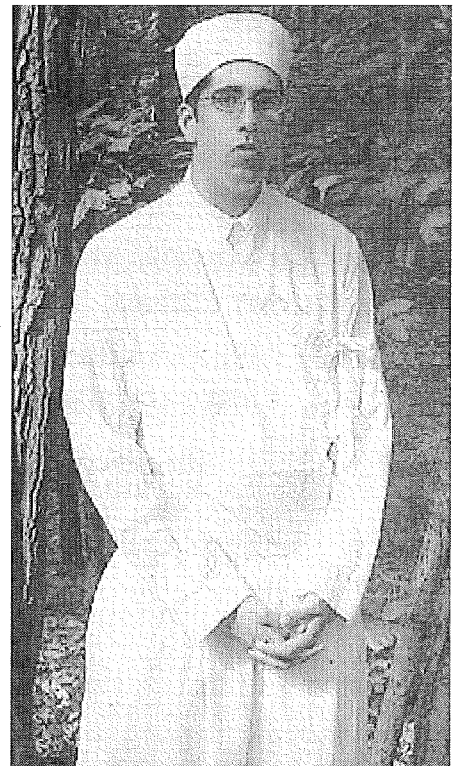
the last several years by a council of priests, to shore up the faith's shrinking priesthood and help continue its ceremonies and rituals.

Zoroastrianism is widely considered the world's first monotheistic religion. It is based on the teachings of the prophet Zarathushtra who lived sometime between the 18th and 16th centuries B.C. ...

Followers believe in one God ... said Mobed Adi J. Unwalla, a priest and Bapasola's religious mentor. Bapasola studied with Unwalla weekly for three years ...

"I'm just trying to do my part," he said, "to keep the flame burning."

[Excerpted from THE PHILADELPHIA ENQUIRER, SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2003. Also see *Mobedyar Project*, p. 88]



PETER TOBIA/INQUIRER STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Sam Bapasola, Drexel business major and Zoroastrian, will conduct his first ceremony in Voorhees next week as a mobedyar.

Shrinking Together

Richmond area Zoroastrians, a tiny pocket of a beleaguered faith, try to hold on to their culture.

Whenever Rummy Mohta says he's a Zoroastrian, he's usually greeted by a stumped look ... Mohta has become a go-between for a tiny group [of 35] in the Richmond, VA area with ties to the 3,500-year-old monotheistic faith. "We have to keep the culture and tradition alive for our kids to show how we survived and came to this country," he says. It's a daunting situation for a faith that has survived so much for so long...

On these shores, many Americans would likely recognize some of the most famous Zoroastrians of recent times: Freddie Mercury of the rock band Queen, symphony conductor Zubin Mehta, and writer Rohinton Mistry, whose novel, "A Fine Balance" was an Oprah book club selection ... Some historians theorize that the wise men in Jesus' stable were Zoroastrians, and King Cyrus helped build the Jews' second temple in Jerusalem ...

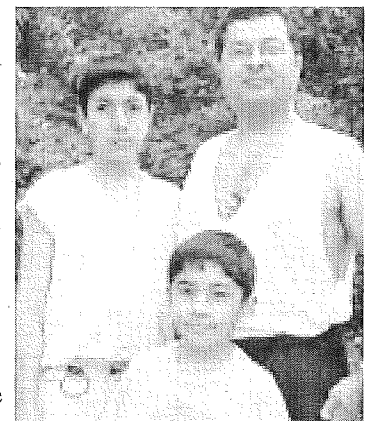
They're one of the most industrious, accomplished groups in the world, but in recent decades, their embrace of modernity has produced a sharp drop in births and much intermarriage ... But no one is ready to cave in to demographic despair. "We are going to survive," says Framroze Patel, "We have survived for 3,500 years."

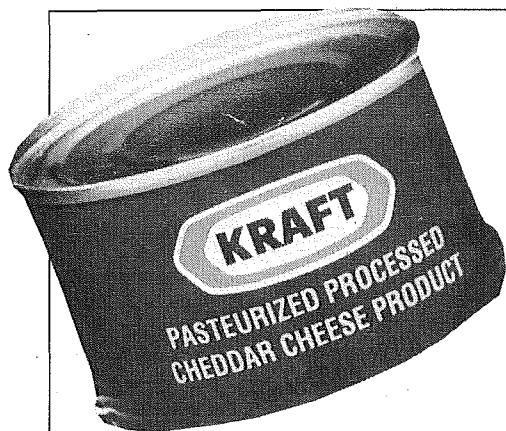
"The community in Richmond is growing," says Mohta, "and will continue if we keep ourselves together. ■"

[Excerpted from STYLE WEEKLY, RICHMOND, VA]

STYLE
WEEKLY

By Lisa Singh
September 10, 2003

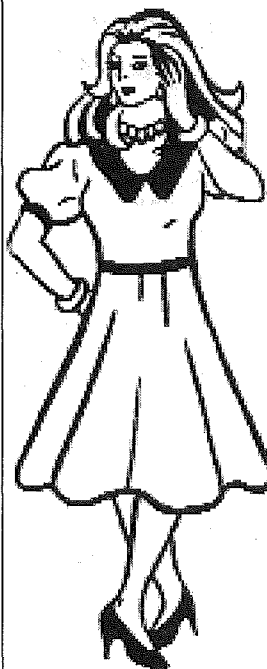




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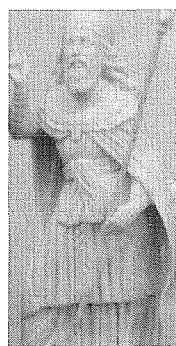
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WZCC Business Digest

The WZCC (World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce) celebrates its third anniversary this year; a successful three years, that saw the growth of chapters and regional organizations, with over 400 members, worldwide.

The WZCC is founded on three premises: (a) It has no hierarchical structure; (b) the organization prides itself on its simplicity of form and structure; and (c) a member is a member of WZCC worldwide, regardless of a member's location.

The basic units are the chapters, that bring members together locally and have complete autonomy, administrative as well as financial. All monies collected and expended are at the discretion of the chapters, with only a portion for the central budget. The WZCC regions are registered in a region to give governmental and legal validity to the local chapters. Neither the center, nor the regions have any legislative or governing powers over the chapters.

Regional growth. WZCC now has chapters in the US (Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, New York and San Francisco); Canada (in Toronto); and regional organizations in India (with chapters in Delhi and Mumbai), UK (a chapter in London) and Middle East (with groups in Dubai and Muscat).

Most recently a new regional WZCC (Australasia) is being spearheaded by Sydney businessman Phil Madon. New regional organizations are also

being considered in Singapore and Pakistan.

Kersi Limathwalla of India, (kersi@bom3.vsnl.net.in), Meher Bhesania of Dubai (meher_bhesania@hotmail.com) and Phil

Madan of Australia (pars09@yahoo.com) have been elected regional directors on the parent WZCC board.

The third WZCC Annual General Meeting

will be held at the Ramada Inn, Toronto, November 21-23, 2003, hosted by the Toronto chapter (chair Kobad Zarolia). Besides the AGM, the program will include showcasing of Zarathushti businesses and presentation of 2002 recognitions.

WZCC website and directory. The WZCC website (www.wzcc.net) provides unparalleled opportunities for networking. Website manager Homi Davier urges **all business persons and professionals** to visit the site (maintained courtesy of Avesta Computers) and enter their profiles.

The **e-group**, zchamber@yahoo.com, coordinated by Zareen Karani Araoz provides networking opportunities free of charge. To subscribe, send email to: zchamber-subscribe@yahoo.com.

Contact WZCC corporate secretary Edul Daver at (732) 469-1866, daver@acupowder.com or visit www.wzcc.net

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



WZCC chapter activities

The New York chapter (chair Rusi Gandhi, Rusi@garden.net) presented a talk on "Small Business Administration Loans" by George Varghese of The Mortgage Consultant and Co., highlighting special features of the loans. He agreed to offer complimentary consultations to ZAGNY's business owners.

Dr. Homi Dhalla, visiting from Mumbai, spoke about his wife Kamal's flourishing decorative glass business, "Accents". [By Rusi Gandhi]

The Houston Chapter (chair Kaemerz Dotiwala, kaemerzd@houston.rr.com) organized a business seminar and dinner on "How to Benefit from the New Tax Laws" featuring Sarosh Collector and Kershaw Khumbatta, on August 7.

Their Second Annual Business Banquet, was at the J. W. Marriott, on September 20. Guest speaker Robert Dale Morgan, CEO of the Houston Superbowl Host Committee spoke of business expansion opportunities from the upcoming superbowl.

[Mani Sarkari, ZAH newsletter]

The Los Angeles Chapter (chair Cowas Patel, kpimpexp@aol.com) will have a meeting for all interested Zarathushtis to view the WZCC website. Diana Damkevala will give a talk on how direct mail and other advertising strategies can impact a business. [By Cowas Patel]

The New Delhi Chapter (chair Dadi Mistry) held their August meeting at The Radisson. Guest speaker Christopher Doyle, director of Sales, Hilton Worldwide spoke on "Customer Relationship Management" and the Hilton properties in Europe, USA and Canada. A lavish High Tea was served. [By Yazdi Tantra]

The Mumbai Chapter (chair Kersi Limathwalla) held a dinner meeting at Hotel Diplomat, on July 18, to organize interest groups such as placement, legal/taxation, business advisory, business opportunities, start-ups, InfoTech and finance sourcing. [By Homi R. Mullan]

Visit the Business Directory at the WZCC website:

www.wzcc.net

(Website designed, maintained and hosted by Avesta Computing Service of New Jersey)

Post business news on the Zarathushti business email group:

zchamber@yahoogroups.com



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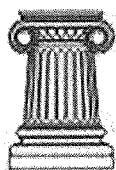
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From the President

[Continued from page 3]

endeavor, and like mindedness of intellectual characteristics of a uniquely identifiable people.

For Zarathushtis, this could also include culture from various geographies and eras of history. It is more likely that we have Persian, Iranian, Indian, Sasanian, Hellenistic, Tajik and many other cultures, all rolled into what we are today. This gives us infinite possibilities and opportunities to celebrate our past, which we can rejoice in the present, and that would pave the way for our future generations.

Having inherited this multi-colored rainbow of cultural wealth, Zarathushtis around the world are immensely fortunate, and should take every opportunity to demonstrate to the world, programs that can highlight our cultural heritage – a heritage that is priceless and unique to one of the smallest but oldest group of people the world has ever known.

So I invite you all to take the opportunity to share our cultural delights with those around you and make the year 2003 memorable for Zarathushtis around the globe.

May we be culturally well endowed – *always!* ■

Respectfully,

Firdosh Mehta

President, FEZANA

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FINANCIAL CORNER

Financial Progress Report



Dr. Jerry M. Kheradi chair of
FEZANA Funds and Finance

When the Thousand Points of Light Campaign was started in the fall of 2001, the goal was to have 1,000 families donate \$100 each toward the FEZANA funds, so a real difference could be made to create a world of true Zoroastrianism.

As I write this report in October, I am very pleased to announce that *we have surpassed 800 Points of Light towards reaching the goal of 1,000 Points.*

We are making a difference in the world. Money has been spent for many individuals who were ill or having very difficult times in their lives (for privacy, we cannot name the recipients of the funds).

Academic scholarships have been awarded totaling \$10,000 for the years 2001 and 2002, as well as \$15,000 in scholarships have been awarded for the year 2003; a religious education scholarship of \$5,000 each year for the next five years in the name of Moobed Faridoon Zardoshty Religion Education Scholarship was started for studies/research in the Zarathushti religion. Funds have been allocated for printing of the book "*Understanding and Practice of Obsequies*" and reprinting of "*The Legacy of Zarathushtra*" and updating the North American Zarathushti directory. Ms. Bachi Karkaria's multimedia project "*The Parsi Cultural Identity*" is moving forward with the help of FEZANA.

There are also other requests for various projects being considered by the executive committee as mentioned in the last issue of FEZANA Journal. It is heartwarming to know that the treasurer, Rashid Mehin, reports that more and more people are subscribing to our FEZANA Journal. These are just a few of the great accomplishments that are a result of the 1000 Points of Light campaign.

Everyone knows the old saying "It takes money to make money." With the donations to the Thousand Points of Light Campaign the FEZANA Funds have a solid foundation to build from and have an impact when the need arises.

We are close to reaching our goal of 1,000 points. With your continued support and help we can make a real difference. Kindly make your check payable to FEZANA, indicate the fund you wish to support and mail to: **Rashid Mehin, Treasurer, 583 Beverly Place, San Marcos, CA 90269.**

Thanking you for all your support,

Jerry Kheradi, MD, FACP, Chairperson, Funds and Finance Committee

Committee: Rashid Mehin (treasurer), Rustom Kevala, PhD, Celeste Kheradi, Mitra Rashidi, Esq.

"1000 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 from July 16th through October 15, 2003 are shown in bold.

FINANCIAL CORNER

Thousand Points of Light	2001-2	2003	Total		2001-2	2003	Total
Anonymous, FL	5		5	Jamshed & Yasmin Ghadiali, NJ	2		2
Anonymous, NY	Gen 1		1	Rashna Ghadiali, IL	1		1
Anonymous		Rel 1	1	Mr. & Mrs. Sorab K. Ghadiali	3		3
A Wellwisher, MI	1		1	Soonu & Jal Godiwalla, TX	1		1
Dr Babak Abadi, PA	1		1	Noshir L Hansotia, MO	1		1
Parviz & Simin Ardeshirpour, NC	1	Sch 1	2	Piloo E. Ilavia, TX		Cr 1	1
Dr. Cyrus F Austin, AZ	13	Gen 3	16	Behram K & Farieda Irani, TX	4	Wel/Cr 9	13
Porus Austin and Khar, CA	2	Wel 2	4	Hormuz & Shahdookht Irani, GA	6		6
Zubin & Silvia Balsara, AR		Gen 1	1	Mervan and Katayoun Irani, MD	1		1
Edul & Tehnaz Bamji, NJ		Wel 1	1	Minoo S. Italia		Gen 1	1
Dolly & Pesi Bevadani		Wel/Cr 2	2	Rohinton Boman Irani, NY		Gen 1	1
Thritee, Soozan & Trista Baxter, NY	(e) 1		1	Rustam H. Irani, MA	1		1
Beach Cigar Group, FL	20	Wel/Cr 8	28	Rustom and Sarvar Irani, FL		Gen 1	1
Zazu & Tinaaz Bhandara, CA	1	Gen 1	2	Irani Family Foundation	G/R/S/W/CA 10		10
Firdaus & Jasmin Bhathena, MA	1		1	Jim & Homai Jagus, PA	5		5
Rustom & Sherroo Bhathena, OH	1		1	Iraj Jahanian, MD, MO	1	Gen 3	4
Meena S. Birdie, FL		Gen 1	1	Khurshid & J.J. Jamadar, TX	2		2
Mezdie R. Birdie, FL		Gen 1	1	Rumi & Kashmira Jamsetjee, IL	1		1
Homi & Ellen Byramji, NJ	1		1	Dinshaw & Goolcher Joshi, MD	2	Cr 2	4
Dr. Lovji D. Cama, NJ	7		7	Khoshed & Dr Firoze Jungalwala, MA	(d) 1		1
Kamal E. Campbell, GA		Wel/Cr 1	1	Afried Farokh Kamdin, NY		Wel 2	2
Dr. Nadir Camay, CA	1		1	Jamshed & Rita Kapadia, MA	1	Rel/Wel 6	7
Sohrab D. Charna		Cr 1	1	Homi & Shireen Kapadia, PA	5		5
Homiyar Choksi, VA	1		1	Dr Natasha Karanjia, PA	Cr 2		2
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Hutoxi & Dr Farhad Contractor, PA	1	(g) (h) 2	3	Mr & Mrs K.S. Kermani, NY	(a) 5		5
Mr. & Mrs. Farokh Contractor		Cr 1	1	Dr Rustom & Yasmin Kevala, MD	(f) 2		2
Katy & Farrokh Cooper, CA	2		2	Delara Kheradi, NY	Sch (f) 1		1
Phil F. Cooper, CA		Wel 1	1	Celeste Kheradi, RI	Sch (f) 15		15
Tommy and Nairika Cornett, GA	1		1	Dr Jerry Kheradi, RI	Sch (f) 65	Sch (f) 5	70
Tammy & Behram Dalal, NC	1	Gen 1	2	Kershaw & Nazneen Khumbatta, TX	1		1
Phiroze H. Dalal, CA		Cr 5	5	Jasmin & Maneck Kotwal, NJ	2		2
Dr Ardeshir & Parvin Damania, CA	2		2	Kaizad Kotwal, OH		Gen 1	1
Diana Damkevala, CA	1		1	Zenobia & Shahrookh Lala, MI	1		1
Maneck Daroowalla, NY	1	Gen 1	2	Mathew Lungen, NY	Sch (f) 1		1
Adil Daruwala, CA	1	Gen 1	2	Jinobya Machhi, WI	Cr 1		1
Dolly Dastoor, QE		Sch 1	1	Borzoo Kushesh & Mahindokht	(b) 1		1
Farrokh N Dastur, CA	1		1	Dolly Malva, CA	1	Gen 1	2
Meher N. Dastur, CA	2		2	Mehran & Dr. Mitra Mazdyasni, CA	1		1
Nari & Dinoo Dastur, CT	1		1	Noshir & Yasmin Medhora, TX	2		2
Er. Soli & JoAnn Dastur, FL	2		2	Farahnaz Mehdiabadi, TX	1		1
Edul & Niloufer Daver, NJ	1	Gen 1	2	Hosi & Kim Mehta, IL	1		1
Homi & Nargish Davier, TX	1		1	Merwan and Rukshana Mehta, MO	1		1
Jimmy & Freny Deboo family, MI	1		1	Shahrokh & Gool Mehta, NY	2		2
Ross Dinyari		Gen 1	1	Hoshi & Nawaz Merchant, NJ	2		2
Yezdi N Dordi, CA	5		5	Mehraban & Mahbanoo Mehr		Gen 1	1
Jimmy and Mary Dubash, VA	1	Gen/Wel 3	4	Manou Mobedshahi, CA	(i)	Jr 25	25
Manek R. Dustoor, MI	2		2	Pesi Mistry, NY	1		1
A.D. & G.A. Dutia, AL	3		3	Tehmtan & Aloo Mistry, MO	1		1
Tony & Swati Elavia, MA	1		1	Jehangir and Olive Mobed, IL	1		1
Freddy Engineer, CA	1		1	Rumy Mohta, VA	1		1
Rumi Engineer, CO	Sch/Wel/Cr 3		3	Nesh Inc.	1		1
Adil Feroz, GA	1		1	Minoo Netervala, CA	2		2
Sami R. Framjee		Wel 10	10	Percy K Nikorawalla, NJ	1		1
Rusi D Gandhi, NJ	1		1	Jamshed & Farzana Palsetia, MA	1		1
Sorab Gandhi, CA	5		5	Farhad & Firoza Panthaki, MA	11		11
Eugene Gauger, MI	1		1	Drs. Khushru & Roda Patel, IL	1		1

[Continued on next page]

FINANCIAL CORNER

Thousand Points of Light [Contd] 2001-2 2003 Total

Mr & Mrs Randolph Paulling, GA	(d) 1		1
Yasmin & Shapur Pavri, TX	1	Sch 2	3
Dr Parvez Pohowalla, OR	1		1
Godrej & Piloo Randeria, TX	Gen 1		1
Dr. Minocher Reporter, OR	1		1
Jamshed & Tamara Rivetna, TX	1		1
Rohinton & Roshan Rivetna, IL	2		2
Dinaz & Dan Rogers, OR	2		2
Villoo & Solee Rudina, TX	1		1
Purvez & Aban Rustomji, TX	(d) 2		2
Neville Sarkari, WY	1		1
Nargesh & Aspi Sethna, TX	1		1
Prochy Sethna, CA	10	Wel 5	15
Behram Shroff, VA	Cr 1	Wel 1	2
Dr Burjis & Hovi Shroff, FL	5		5
Dr Nariman & Parrin Shroff, FL	2		2
Zubeen Shroff, NY	1		1
Feroze & Anahita Sidhwa, TX	(Sch/Wel/Cr) 10		10
Yezdi N. Soonavala, MI	Gen 1		1
Nazneen & Ehler Spliedt, CA	1		1
Cyrus Subawalla, IL		Cr 2	2
Bella Tata, BC	1		1
Khurshed M Tengra, ID	1	Gen 1	2
Jamshed Udvadia, MI	5		5
Perry Unwalla, FL	1		1
Rayomand J Unwalla, PA	1		1
Minoo & Shirin Vaghaiwalla, FL	Perf.Arts 1		1
Taera M. Vakil, FL	Gen 1		1
Dick & Sheroo Vazir, FL	2		2
Jer Vijan, AZ	1		1
Dr. M. Darius Vohman, GA	Gen 1		1
Parviz & Parvin Yeganegi, BC	4		4
ZAPANJ, DE, PA & NJ	2		2
Farangis Zardoshty & family, AZ (c) 260	Rel 65		325
Mehraban Zartoshty, B.C	25		25
North American Mobeds Council, NAMC	Rel 10		10
Z Assoc of Alberta, Canada	3		3
Atlanta Z Anjuman, GA	1		1
Z Assoc of N Calif, CA	2		2
Z Assoc of Chicago, IL	Wel 1		1
Z Association of Florida, FL	Gen 2		2
Z Assoc of N Texas	2		2

Total Points 615 225 840

- (a) In memory of Dr. Keikhosrow and Morvarid Harvesf
- (b) In memory of Irandokht Ezzati
- (c) In memory of Mobed Faridoon Zartoshty
- (d) In memory of Nargesh Mistree
- (e) In honor of the 70th birthday of Dr Jehangir Kotwal
- (f) For Mehraban Dorab Kheradi Scholarships
- (g) In memory of Mrs. Mitha Morris
- (h) For Mr. & Mrs. Dinshaw Nariman
- (i) For reprint of "Legacy of Zarathushtra"

Funds: Cr=Critical Assistance, Gen=General, Jr=Journal, Rel=Religious Education; Sch=Scholarship, Wel=Welfare. ■

PLEASE GIVE FROM YOUR HEART

FEZANA DONATIONS AND APPEALS

Donations. Unless specified otherwise, please send all donations to: **Rashid Mehin, FEZANA Treasurer, 583 Beverly Place, San Marcos, California 92069, tel: (760) 891-0699, Email: rmehin@yahoo.com.**

Please make checks payable to "FEZANA", specifying the fund name (General, Welfare, Critical Assistance, Religious Education, Scholarship and Fezana Journal). For specific earmarked donations, write the recipient's name, in the memo section on the check. All charitable donations to FEZANA are tax deductible in USA. Donors of \$250 or more will receive a confirmation letter for tax records. For donations under \$250, 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; HFMC31@aol.com. For more information, visit www.fezana.org.**

We are grateful ...

On behalf of the FEZANA Welfare Committee, we would like to thank the many community members who have offered generous donations this year, both in the form of funds and as advice and counsel on who is most deserving and how to best provide that help.

Your donations have enabled the committee to respond to requests from men, women and children in critical need of medical assistance. The majority of our assistance has been to subsidize expensive medications, but with the blessings of Ahura Mazda and the support of the community, this year we were able to help pay for operations such as angioplasty, a critically needed knee replacement, and treatment for HIV-related conditions.

This year alone FEZANA has donated in excess of \$7000. The Committee takes great care to ensure that funds go only to the neediest community members and the most critical health problems.

The requests we receive are overwhelming both in number and in the magnitude of need. The more we are able to help, the more we find need for our help, and the more we are able to bring out the goodness both in others and in ourselves.

With much appreciation for your support,
Houtoxi Contractor and Hosi Mehta
Co-chairs, FEZANA Welfare Committee

Take a little of your time to make a world of difference to someone

A new Critical Assistance subcommittee has been formed under the FEZANA Welfare Committee, to provide assistance to individuals, families and organizations facing temporary difficulties due to medical emergencies, natural disasters, violence or legal issues. The main objectives of this committee are to provide assistance and information in relation to:

- Domestic violence counselors, shelters, safe houses
- Rape crisis centers and counselors
- Couples and family therapists

The Welfare Committee is exploring the possibility of setting up a **confidential, toll-free, informational line** to direct community members in need to the appropriate source of help, such as:

- Lawyers who work in the immigration, family, and other related areas of law.
- Financial representatives who will help and guide community members in the right direction for financial assistance and stability during their time of crisis.
- Mentors for recently-migrated students.
- The nearest Zarathushti association and events to help community members stay connected.

We now need your help to make this plan a reality

If you are a **Zarathushti professional** – doctor, psychiatrist, psychologist, lawyer, financial specialist, counselor, social worker – who would like to serve as a resource person for guidance and support please contact Welfare Committee co-chairs Houtoxi Contractor (412-367-2948, HPMC31@aol.com) or Hosi Mehta (630-833-6923, hosimehta@aol.com).

We also need **volunteer representatives** from each US state and Canadian province to research and gather information, as specified in a packet that will be given to each volunteer. All materials will then be compiled and made available for our community members as needed. If you can offer your services to be the volunteer representative, please contact Freyaz Shroff (843-281-8010, Freyaz@aol.com).

We look forward to working with you to support and strengthen our community!

Freyaz Shroff

Critical Assistance Sub-committee

Appeals from the needy

Among appeals for financial assistance received by FEZANA in the past quarter are given below. Please send your donations to FEZANA [see previous page].

● **Vistasp, Spinal cord disease.** Vistasp, 47, of Sion, Mumbai, suffers from a very rare disease called Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), which attacks the spinal cord and degenerates all body muscles. This is a terminal disease for which no cure has yet been found. As the disease progresses, Vistasp will require rehabilitation, hospitalization and home nursing. His wife and 15-year old daughter are ill-prepared for these catastrophic expenses. Please specify "Vistasp" on your donation.

● **Sanaya, spastic/celebral palsy.** Since birth, Sanaya, now 12, has been getting treatments – physiotherapy, acupuncture and cranio-sacral therapy and homeopathy medicines in Mumbai and Pune. Expenses for her treatments as well as her schooling (at The Spastic Society of India at Bandra, Mumbai) are very high. Her mother is the only earning member of the family of five, as her father has been retrenched from service since July. Please specify "Sanaya" on your donation checks.

● **Disabled gentleman from California.** A single gentleman, resident of California for 10 years, is partially disabled due to an accident and unable to work. He is diabetic and may lose his eyesight due to lack of treatment. He is in desperate need of financial help. Please specify "California resident" on your donation checks.

● **Young widow in US.** A woman, 34, with two children (6 years and 19 months old) lost her husband under tragic circumstances in June 2003. The family is facing financial difficulties, since he was the primary source of income. Even though she is working full time, she is unable to make ends meet. Please specify "young widow" on your donation checks. ■

Tajikistan and Zoroastrian College

Prof. Dr. Meher Master Moos, of Mazdayesnie Monasterie, Mumbai, and president of Zoroastrian College (ZC), Sanjan – and a committed advocate for supporting efforts in Tajikistan, has sent an appeal to Zarathushtis in North America to "lend a helping hand".

Among the **many worthwhile projects** are: ZC building expansion (est. Rs. 75 lakhs); computer equipment to archive taped lectures (est. \$2500), and catalog of books and manuscripts; sponsor a scholar from Tajikistan to study/research at ZC (\$2500); send mobeds to Tajikistan (Rs.1-5 lakhs); construction of a fire temple in Tajikistan; higher education for mobeds; scholarships for higher education; support one ZC faculty member; social welfare projects – health care free clinic; towards corpus of educational trust funds or administration fund; donation for books; 'yadgari' donation in loved one's name.

Please specify "Zoroastrian College" or "Tajikistan" on your donations. ■

[Continued on page 100]

Moobed Faridoon Zardoshty Religion Education Scholarship 2003 Awards

We are grateful for the munificence of the Zardoshty sisters, Pari, Homayoun, Iran, Farangis and their families for their generous donation to FEZANA to set up the Moobed Faridoon Zardoshty Religion Education Scholarship in memory of their beloved father. We take pleasure to announce the awards of US \$1,000 scholarships to each of the following candidates for 2003-2004. Awards were presented to the SOAS students at the ZTFE Mehergan jashan at Zartoshty Brothers Hall, at the Zoroastrian Center, London.

Zartosht Atropatene: postgraduate student at University of London, SOAS (The Zartoshty Brothers Chair) studying Zoroastrianism and Avestan language.

Mandana Moavenat: postgraduate student at University of London, SOAS (The Zartoshty Brothers Chair) studying for a PhD in Zoroastrianism.

Bahman Moradian: postgraduate student at University of Paris studying for PhD in Languages and Culture of Ancient Iran.

Burzine K. Waghmar: postgraduate student at University of London, SOAS (The Zartoshty Brothers Chair) studying for PhD in Iranian and Central Asian Studies.

Applications for the 2004-2005 academic year will be available from www.fezana.org or from Kayomarsh P. Mehta, Chair, FEZANA Religion Education Committee, 8122 Circle Drive, Palos Hills, IL 60465, kay-omehta@aol.com, (708) 974-1238. Completed forms are to be returned by **March 31, 2004**.

FEZANA and Mehraban Dorab Kheradi 2003 Academic Scholarship winners

The FEZANA Academic Scholarship Committee is pleased to announce the 2003 scholarship winners.

The Mehraban Dorab Kheradi Endowment Scholarship of \$5000 is awarded on merit to **Roshni Cooper** of Macungie, PA. She is enrolled in the Engineering program at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The FEZANA scholarships are awarded to the following 8 outstanding students:

Suzie Karani (Illinois)	\$2000
Freddy Mistry (Colorado)	\$2000
Shekufeh Sonji (Toronto)	\$1000
Pouya Bastani (Vancouver)	\$1000
Zarin Behramshah (Houston)	\$1000
Cyrus Sarkari (Indiana)	\$1000
Adil Tata (California)	\$1000
Navaz Mistry (Mississauga)	\$1000

Application Forms and entry rules for the 2004 annual competition will be available after March 2004 from www.fezana.org or from Dr. Dolly Dastoor, Chair, FEZANA Academic Scholarship Program, dollydastoor@sympatico.ca. Completed applications are to be returned by August 1, 2004.

Further information will be in FEZANA Journal, Spring 2004.

Pourchista Foundation

This foundation was formed by Shahin Bekhradnia and Parvaneh Khosravi in 2000 for the purpose of helping young Zarathushti girls in Yazd, who had gone into prostitution and drugs. Funds were raised to purchase a house in Yazd, which provides shelter and accommodation to the girls and teach them crafts, sewing, embroidery, kushti-weaving, tailoring, etc. The Foundation is now raising funds to provide shelter and assistance to young Zarathushti boys. Please send your donation to FEZANA, marked "Pourchista Foundation". ■

Opportunities to give

Besides the opportunities for giving listed above, other worthy projects seeking funding, described elsewhere in this Journal, are listed below:

- **FEZANA Journal Spring 2004** issue on "Perpetuating the religion and Communities" is seeking sponsorships and donations [see page 3].
- **Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO)** is raising funds for building larger premises on the site of the present darbe mehr [see page 5].
- Health care for malnourished children in Gujarat through **Gram Seva Trust** [see page 12].
- Reviving Zarathushti cultural heritage through **World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation** [see page 21].
- "Portrait of a Community" video film project [see page 21].
- Assisting people of Zarathushti ancestry in **Tajikistan/Uzbekistan** [see page 34].
- Zarathushti **matrimonial database** on the internet [see page 102].
- **Dari Language Project** for fieldwork in Yazd, to preserve the endangered Dari language [see page 108].

PLEASE GIVE FROM YOUR HEART!

Scholarships Available

A list of miscellaneous scholarships is given below:

● **FEZANA Scholarships** and **Mehraban Dorab Kheradi Endowment Scholarship** for students at institutions of higher learning in USA/Canada. One year residency required. Dr. Dolly Dastoor, dollydastoor@sympatico.ca, (450) 656-2036, www.fezana.org.

● **Moobed Faridoon Zardoshty Religion Education Scholarships** for higher studies/research in Zarathushti religion at an institution of higher education anywhere in the world. Kayomars P. Mehta, kayomehta@aol.com, (708) 974-1238, www.fezana.org.

● **Fali Chothia Charitable Trust** scholarships for students in North American universities. ferozafitch@lexicongraphics.net, (301) 564-3726, visit: www.zamwi.org/about/2001FCCT.pdf.

● **ZAC (Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago)** student loans/scholarships for students in North America. ZACscholarships@yahoo.com, www.zac-chicago.org.

● **ZSBC (Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia)** awards scholarships to its members seeking admission to a university. Homi Italia, (604) 438-2076, www.zsbc.org.

● **Performing Arts Scholarship** offered by FEZANA/ZYNA (Zoroastrian Youth of North America). Sherazade Mehta, sherazadem@yahoo.com, www.fezana.org.

● **ZYNA (Zoroastrian Youth of North America)** is offering \$500 each to 2 to 4 young Zarathushtis attending the **Youth Congress in**

Pune, India in December 2003. Armaity Bamji, armaityb@sympatico.ca, www.fezana.org.

● **Paul and Daisy Soros Fellowships** support graduate education for immigrants and children of immigrants. www.pdsoros.org.

● **Houtan Scholarship Foundation** offers a scholarship of \$2,500 per semester for studies in Iranian language and culture. Visit www.houtan.org.

● **Indo American Community Foundation** offers scholarships of \$2,000 per year to Indian Americans pursuing educational, artistic or athletic goals. Visit www.upakar.org.

● **Special Initiatives Central Asia Fellowship** offers upto \$35,000 for field-based, research in Central Asian Republics. www.americancouncils.org/program.asp?PageID=83&ProgramID=42.

● **Individual Advanced Research Opportunities (IARO)** scholarships, funded by US Dept. of State, for research in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (Tajikistan). www.irex.org/programs/iaro.

● **Georgetown University post-doctoral fellowship** in contemporary Central Asian politics or foreign policy. \$30,000 stipend. Julie Steiger, js246@georgetown.edu.

● **Institute of International Education's Scholar Rescue Fund** offers fellowships to scholars from any country and in any discipline, whose life, security or work is threatened in their home regions. It provides temporary refuge at a university or college anywhere in the world. Visit www.iie.org/SRF. ■

FEZANA JOURNAL depends on you...

The Journal depends solely on your subscriptions, advertisements, sponsorships and donations to pay the high costs of printing and mailing. Please check your address label for your subscription status. Use the form on p.112.



*This column on living a healthy and balanced Zarathushti life, is brought to you by **Mehroo M. Patel, MD, FRCS(Ed.), FFAFP**. Questions and suggestions for future topics are 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.*

Designer Diets – A to Z

A hearty helping of alphabet soup of diets from Atkins' to Zone and all others in between, exists – enough to give indigestion to even the most savvy dieters. Each claims its own efficiency and guarantee – some with a subtle warning to “follow with the blessings of your physician”. People in public life claiming own personal success and dependence on one diet or other, augment social acceptance and correctness. Over all, most diets restrict (sometimes severely) one of the nutrition building blocks, compensated by a generous increase of the other two.

Low carbohydrate diets (basics of the Atkins' diet) replace carbohydrates with extra helpings of fat and protein. The body's usable energy is derived from complex carbohydrates as well as proteins and fat converted into simple sugars (monosaccharide) by the body's own digestive function whereas any excess of these is converted into fat and stored. Hence too much food in any combination will be stored as fat, increase weight, reduce activity and mobility and maintain the vicious cycle.

Do these diets work?

Almost any diet works in the short run. Initial weight (loss) control is the norm. All restrictive diets are designed to create deficiency – a decrease in energy production causing energy expenditure to exceed energy production. Just as they cause deficiency in building blocks

they also are deficient in trace vitamins, minerals, antioxidants carried in the particular building block altering the biochemical processes within the body. Calcium and vitamin D deficit can lead to osteoporosis while folic acid, B1, B12 deficiency contribute to neurological damage and are also factored in the genesis of atherosclerotic plaques leading to heart attacks, stroke, and Alzheimer's disease.

To replace these, most diet plans come with their own 'secret' additives and supplements recommended as a must. These supplements have to be purchased from the author or author's agent. Thus the lucrative business of the promoters of diets lightens our pockets.

As the body spends more energy than it takes in, energy is borrowed from fat reserves, so that the swollen, bloated fat cells relieve themselves of fat and shrink. These fat cells are now ready and waiting to get filled with fat when more food comes in.

The body also steps down its own resting metabolism or basal metabolic rate (rate at which energy utilization occurs). This is an attempt at energy conservation – an innate survival response. This survival response is genetically carried in all animals and expressed in hibernating animals, and primitive humans.

As fat burns alternative metabolic biochemical pathways kick in and ketosis sets in. Ketosis is not a

health-promoting phenomenon, which if prolonged and uncontrolled will eventually impact essential body functions negatively. However mild form of short-lived ketosis is essential to success of all weight reduction plans. It is directly proportionate in severity to the amount of weight loss. Hence most diets recommend such drastic measures for short 3 to 4 week periods.

These drastic diet programs need to be closely supervised by a health-care team specializing in this particular specialty – Bariatric Medicine. Most dieters try to “do it on my own” and go overboard maximizing the gain, with sometimes, not so pleasant consequences.

Over time, many dieters get bored with the restrictions imposed, or disenchanted with tapering off of the benefits. Cheating begins at once a month and escalates to once weekly and then more frequently till weight starts creeping up. Then a new attractive diet plan rolls on, touting its new benefits and the cycle repeats itself. Such yo-yo dieting rocks and knocks the body's metabolic and biochemical balance, which is injurious to health and wellness.

Dieter's Dilemma

What is the right diet for me? The answer can be found in the teachings of our own religion: [Yasna 30.2]

“Educate and be Informed, then Reform upon clear Reflection and make a Choice to Transform.”

Let us acquire all the knowledge available through books and media about our own nutritional needs.

Estimate our own body build and lean body mass. Keep a diet diary for a week or two recording in it all the food and drinks that enter our body except air and water. Calculate the calories that go in. Then estimate the energy expenditure by measuring and recording the daily activities. Deducting energy expenditure from energy intake will give us an estimate of energy excess one needs to eliminate to maintain the existing balance.

■ ■ ■ MILESTONES ■ ■ ■

Please send all submissions for "Milestones" to Mahrukh Motafram, 2390 Chanticleer Drive, Brookfield, WI 53045. (262)821-5296, mmotafram@msn.com. NOTE: If no year is specified, it implies "within the past 12 months."

BIRTHS

Sanaya Bamboat, a girl, to Khushnuma and Hoshedar Bamboat of Mississauga, ONT, granddaughter to Dolly and (late) Pesi Bamboat and Minoo and (late) Viloo Damania of Mumbai, on October 4.

Khshaeta Cama, a girl, to Xerxes and Farzeen Cama, in Chicago, on August 10.

Sarosh Firoz Ghandhi, a boy, to Shireen and Firoz Ghandhi, grandson to Behroze and Baji Ghandhi of Grosse Pointe, MI, and Aban and Aspy Daboo of Aurora, IL, in Detroit, on June 8.

Sophia Kanga, a girl, to Neville and Tricia Kanga, granddaughter to Viraf and Shireen Kanga, niece to Kamal and Sarosh, in Chicago.

Naomi Cyrus Minwalla, a girl, to Anaheeta and Cyrus Minwalla of Fairfax, VA, granddaughter to Aban and Savak Patel of Houston and Shiraz and Hoshedar Minwalla of Silver Spring, MD, on October 27.

Lyla Neville Patel, a girl to Parizad and Neville Patel of Modesto, CA; granddaughter to Armaity and Adi Sadri, and Roshan and Ronnie Patel, neice to Hutosh Sadri.

Nima Ashcon Samiya, a boy, to Afsaneh and Manouchehr Samiya, brother to Nadia and Niessa, in Dallas, on August 27.

Mason Shroff, a boy, to Zubin and Courtney Shroff, grandson to Farida and Rohinton Shroff, of Naperville, IL, and to Pirojshaw Umrigar.

NAVJOTES, SEDREH-PUSHI

Rayomand Antia, son of Mona and Adil Antia, in Markham, ONT, on August 23.

Shahver Bomanbehran, son of Katayun and Shahrukh Bomanbehran in Richmond, BC, August 16.

Jeraz Cooper, son of Tazeen and Zarir Cooper, of Mhow, India, on September 14.

Reza Driver, son of Hutoksy and Darius Driver of Coquitlam, B.C. on August 16.

Arzeen Farzadi, daughter of Farida and Rustom Farzadi, in Markham, Ontario, on July 19.

Karl and Shanaya Grant, children of Aban and Cyrus Grant, in Pune, India on July 18.

Johngir and Nima Kianipour, sons of Faroborz and late Mitra Kianipour, grandsons of Shirin Kianian of Coquitlam, BC, in Scottsdale, AZ, on March 29.

Delzad Kutky, son of Hoofrish and Khurshed Kutky, in Mumbai, July 5.

Narius Minwalla, son of Tushnaimaity and Jamshed Minwalla, of Richmond, BC, on July 13.

Parizad Patel, daughter of Firoze and late Thrity Patel, in Mississauga, ONT, on July 11.

Zahra Patel, daughter of Dinci and Percy Patel, in Oakville, ONT, on June 29.

Vandad Pourbahrami, son of Mahvash and Esfandiar Pourahrami, in West Vancouver, BC on August 10.

Simin Rupa, daughter of Dibur and Sorab Rupa of Nanaimo, BC, on July 26.

Zain Wania, son of Xerxes and Charis Wania, in Mississauga, ONT, on July 26.

Aurush Yazdgerdian, son of Firoozeh and Rustam Yazdgerdian, of Maple Ridge, BC, on August 8.

ENGAGEMENTS

Four couples from the Toronto area have announced their engagement:

Atoosa Javanmardian and **Abtin Zohrabi**; **Nasrin Dinyarian** and **Mehran Mehraein**; **Armita Zohoor** and **Dariush Felfeli**; and **Anahita Babak** and **Afshin Homaie**.

WEDDINGS

Tanya Bhesania and **Carl Best** in Vancouver, on August 10.

Veeda Shroff and **John Chesko**, of Vancouver, on June 1.

Mahzad Khosraviani and **Feradoon Irani** in Langley, BC on August 24.



Lylah Mistry Alphonse, daughter of Tehmina and Gerard A. Alphonse of Princeton, NJ, granddaughter of Roda H. Mistry and the late Homi P. Mistry of Hyderabad, was married to **Michael Sheridan Saunders**, son of Barbara and Charles Saunders of Plantation, Florida, in Westford, MA on July 13.

The bride, author of "Triumph Over Discrimination: The Life Story of Farhang Mehr" works as a news-editor at Boston Globe newspaper. The groom also works at the newspaper as an assistant systems editor and a freelance writer.

Diana Murzban Dinshaw of Connecticut, to **Hoshedar Bomi Mana**, in Karachi, on July 26.

Kevin Mancherjee, son of Jeroo and Hosie Mancherjee, to **Janine Tamboli**, daughter of Zareen and Rusi Tamboli, in Richmond Hill, ONT, on August 3.

Shiraz Italia and **Zain Mavalvalla** in Richmond, BC on August 31.

Nathalie and **Rayan Moos**, in Montreal, Quebec on July 17.

Cyrus Pfeutzner, son of Thrity and Uwe Pfeutzner, to **Roopa**, August 3.

Roxanne and **Quintino Rico**, in Montreal, Quebec, on September 27.

Mel Saklatvala and **Jossia** in Montreal, Quebec, on June 24.

Zahin Sorabji, son of Parvien and Parvez Sorabji, to **Delna Ghadiali**, daughter of Roshan and Jimmy Ghadiali, Quebec, August 9.

ANNIVERSARIES

Bachi and **Bomi Damkevala** of Naperville, IL, celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary, with daughters Diana, Zarine and Persis, and friends and relatives, on September 30.

RECOVERING

At one month old and just over 5 lbs in weight, little baby **Sanaya Bamboat** [see *Births this issue*] underwent a liver transplant on November 4. Fortunately, a matching liver was located within a few days of her being placed on the Canadian registry.

Sanaya was born with a very rare liver condition that was deteriorating day by day.

With the grace of Ahura Mazda, prayers and humbandagis of family and friends, and the miraculous skills of the doctors at Sick Children's hospital in Toronto, Sanaya's 12-hour operation was a success, and she is now on the long road to recovery.

[Continued on page 105]

Sheroo Daruwalla

A TRUE ZARATHUSHTI & BELOVED FRIEND OF THE CHICAGO COMMUNITY

The phone rang. It is 6:15 am on September 9, 2003. "Sheroo Daruwalla passed on" said the voice. When? "15 minutes ago." This was solemn news that filled me with sadness and relief.

We miss Sheroo, we revere and respect her life on earth and know that she is at peace now, cradled in the arms of Ahura Mazda.

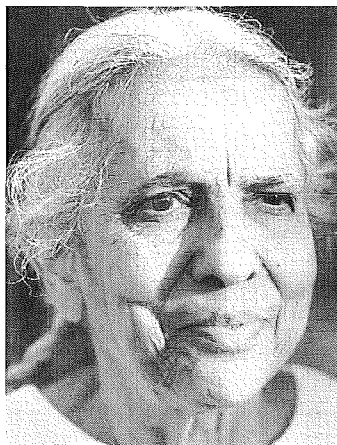
I came to know Sheroo in 1967. Armed with an M.S. degree in social sciences from Indiana University, Sheroo was working at Mount Sinai hospital in Chicago.

Soon thereafter, she received her Green Card, left her job, and embarked on a world tour for 1 year.

Upon her return, she could not hold a steady job. Small and slim and coughing frequently, she was erroneously labeled as "tuberculous" and shunned. It was not tuberculosis, but bronchiectosis, a weakness of lung tissue. Though weak in physical health, Sheroo was strong and tenacious and overcame one obstacle after another.

Sheroo needed social support often, hence we came closer and closer. She was endearing, though exasperating at times. Her teasing smile is her lasting memory.

Intelligent and well-read, she was also an artist and poet – many will recall her poems and her hand-crafted greeting cards.



She gave all of herself to the Chicago Zarathushti community; and the community honored her with the "Outstanding Service Award" (in around 1995), which she proudly displayed on her mantle.

Sheroo lived a simple and disciplined life, starting each day with prayer. After a fall and hip fracture, she lived in the nursing home for the last decade of her life.

Visiting Sheroo in the nursing home and supporting her socially was having its toll on us. In 1998, our community acquired the services of a mobed who, among his other duties, ministered to the needs of the lonely and elderly. He visited her regularly – they prayed together, brought her 'goodies' and served her needs, spiritually, psychologically and in worldly ways. Sometimes we were able to bring her to community events. Thus, she remained focused in the community, and enriched spiritually; and her life enriched ours!

A moment of great pride and joy to Sheroo was when, after living in the US for half a century, Sheroo acquired citizenship, in April 2001.

While we miss Sheroo, we rejoice in her heavenly status and remember her fondly. Haurvatat. Ameretat. ■

By Dr. Mehroo M. Patel

As of going to press, FEZANA Journal has learned of the sad passing of Ervad Dinshaw Framroze Joshi, 82, husband of Goolcher, father of Shehernaz (Farhad) Verahrami, grandfather of Anahita and Roksana, all of Maryland, in Washington, DC area, on November 10.

Ervad Joshi was a stalwart of the North American Zarathushti community, a man of great character and conviction, who leaves behind a legacy of service and volunteerism, and a high standard of professionalism in all the projects he undertook, at the local, national and international levels - Ed

DEATHS

Hoshang Eduljee Aga, father of Hutosh Irani, Cyrus and Armaiti Shukla of Montreal, and brother of Mini Patel (Karachi) and late Diana Aga, in Mumbai, on July 13.

Maharukh Buhariwala, 53, wife of Parvez, mother of Farrah Daruvala of Richmond BC, in Mumbai, May 26.

Sheroo Daruwalla, 72, at Lakeshore Healthcare nursing home in Chicago, on September 9. All the prayers were performed – *paydust*, *uthamna*, *charrom*, *satums*, *masiso* and *disi* by ZAC mobeds [see obituary].

Dr. Shahjahan Jamzadeh, 86, husband of Homayoun Khosravi-Jamzadeh of N. Vancouver, father of Parivash, Mahrnaz, Tabandeh and Feraydoon, in N. Vancouver, August 16.

Dinamai Jehangirjee Kaikobad, mother of Roshan Mavalvala, grandmother of Yasmin Petigara and Perveen Petigara of North Vancouver, in Karachi on July 7.

Behramjee Gandhi, husband of Gulmoher, father of Jamshed and Ader, in Northern California, on August 12.

Erach Hormusji Nariman, 74, father of Khushrav and Homi (of Austin, TX) and grandfather of Viraf and Rayhan, of a heart attack, in Mumbai, on October 12.

Rustom (Rusi) Dosabhai Patel, father of Viloo Bulsara of Burnaby, BC, in Mumbai on June 26.

Nilima Farroakh Rajkot, wife of Farroakh, mother of Sean and Nikita, on July 11 [ZAH].

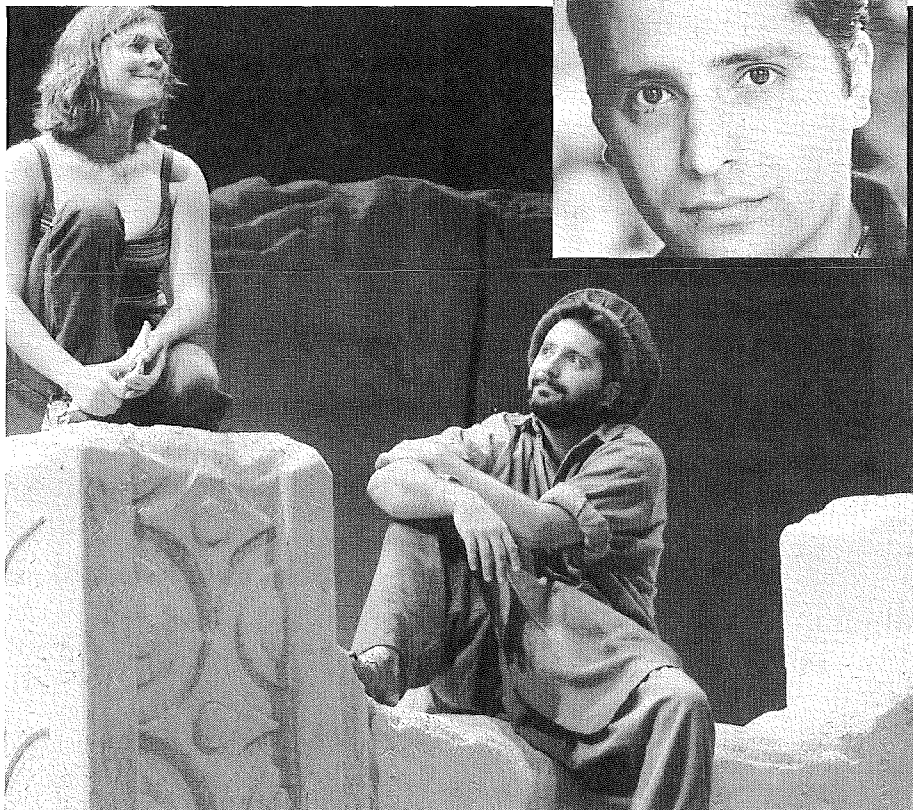
Mani Sethna, wife of late Feroze Sethna, mother of Jer Tehmul Homavazir and Rita (Toronto), Dadi (New York), Navil (Boston) and Amy Addil Contractor (Dubai), grandmother of 15, and great grandmother of 6, in Mumbai, on August 2.

Dr. Homi Vania, 56, husband of Kaye, father of Shane, Diana, Cyrus, Rachel and Natasha, brother of Dr. Avi Vania of Willowbrook, IL, in Boise, Idaho on Aug 27. ■

■ **ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT** ■

Bamji shines in Homebody/Kabul

Firdous Bamji plays a Tajik poet in Tony Kushner play



Stage actor Firdous Bamji played the role of a Tajik poet, in Tony Kushner's play *Homebody/Kabul* at Steppenwolf Theater in Chicago.

Homebody/Kabul, a well acclaimed play by Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Tony Kushner, played at the Steppenwolf Mainstage Theatre in Chicago during July and August.

The play takes place in London and Kabul during the American bombardment of the suspected terrorist training camps in Afghanistan in 1998.

Firdous Bamji plays the role of a Taliban government officer, Khawaja Mondanabosh. In the opening monologue by the protagonist, 'The Homebody', many references are made to Zoroastrianism, Persia, Achaemenians, Darius the Great and Sasanians. Some of the dialogue is in Dari and Pushtu.

This fall, Bamji played the same role in the Los Angeles performance of

the play, and Mullah Durrani in the New York production in 2002.

Firdous Bamji, son of Roshan and Ester Bamji of Maryland, made his acting debut with Trustus Theater while studying journalism in South Carolina. After his MFA he apprenticed with The Shakespeare Theatre in Washington, DC and then moved to New York where his credits include *SubUrbia* at the Lincoln Center Theatre.

His advice to aspiring actors is to make sure you know this is the only thing you want to do – and never say die. "It's a tough little road," he says, "finally for me a very rewarding one." He considers acting a "noble profession" and ten years from now sees himself acting and directing. ■

- Rashna Ghadialy



Zoroastrian Film Festival - Chicago, 2003

creating awareness.....

..... as we celebrate!!



Film Festival in Chicago

The First Zoroastrian Film Festival - Chicago 2003 [see page 30] showcased 16 films on the Zarathushti religion and ancient Persian culture, written, directed and produced by an emerging cadre of Zarathushti filmmakers.

Four of the filmmakers were on hand to participate in the Q&A: Fereydoon Demehri (*That Old Man*), Tenaz Dubash, (*In the Footsteps of our Forefathers*), Aryana Farshad (Mystic Iran) and Nima Mehraeen, (*Truth Lies in the Village*).

The brainchild of Kamalrukh Katrak



[left] of Chicago, assisted by Fereydoon Demehri of ZIFF, the festival fulfilled its two-pronged goals of celebrating the works of tal-

ented North American film-makers, while showcasing the Zarathushti religion, history and culture. ■



All-Zarathushti band, Generation 1. Possibly the first progressive Zarathushti band in the US, Houston-based **Generation 1** plays contemporary, rock-n-roll, hip-hop, oldies and more, using the latest sound and light equipment with smoke and dynamic effects. "We play an active part in our community in several ways," says Farrokh Firozgary [top left] who plays the keyboard/synthesizer, "and music is one of them". Other players are Aspy Jamshedji (bass guitarist), Raymie Daroga (drums), Rustum Challa (lead guitarist), Rustum Kanga (rhythm guitarist), with vocals provided by Sonia Behrana. They perform for nouruz and pateti functions at ZAH and for private events in Houston and elsewhere. Contact Farrokh Firozgary firozgary@sbcglobal.net, (281) 685-7245 or Rustum Challa at (281) 856-2828. ■



Aspiring Canadian actress. *Nazneen Contractor* is an aspiring actress who is forging an outstanding career on the Canadian screen and stage.

Nazneen, just 21, has already made a successful round of TV serials and last year was selected to perform in the 2003 Stratford Festival of Canada, considered the Mecca of classical theatre in North America. Nazneen is participating in three shows this season: as Marina in Shakespeare's *The Adventures of Pericles* (for which *The Toronto Star* critic called Nazneen's performance "The most stunning debut [he] could ever recall"), *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *Quiet in the Land*.

After graduating from the Etobicoke School of the Arts in 2000, with a major in drama, she has gone on to undergraduate studies at the University of Toronto, specializing in drama and majoring in sociology.

Nazneen has also been selected to participate in the esteemed Stratford Conservatory this winter, where she will train with leading teachers and actors.

Nazneen considers herself blessed. She thanks her family for their never ending support and her inspiration – grandmother Meher Contractor, who was an internationally renowned puppeteer.

- Roshan Davar ■



Multiple honors for Aban Daruwalla

Aban Daruwalla, combat systems specialist at the Naval Surface Warfare Center in Corona, California was recently awarded the *Lifetime Achievement Award* [photo at left with commanding officer Capt. Miller] a first at NSWC - Corona, recognizing her contribution to science and technology for more than two decades. The award was added to the Wall of Fame on Base. Earlier she also received the NSWC-Corona Employee of the Month award.

Thereafter, the Corona school district awarded Daruwalla a plaque for her work at science fair competitions for the last 15 years. Also, she was one of six women "who represent the very best of Riverside County, CA" to receive the "YWCA Women of Achievement Award".

Daruwala holds a doctorate in research design and statistics, and has worked for 22 years in civil service for the US army and navy. She works with a passion to encourage women to pursue careers in science and technology.

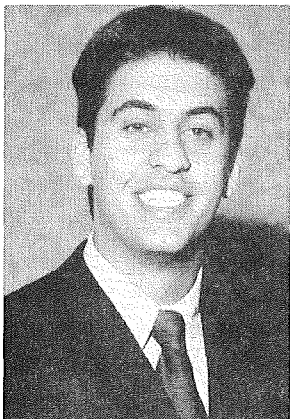
Daruwala encourages Zarathushti girls (and boys) to participate in various science fairs and festivals that she helps organize, and learn more about these exciting career opportunities. Contact DaruwallaAN@corona.navy.mil.



Anahita Darius Dastur

of Mumbai, graduated with distinction, securing a gold medal, from the internationally renowned Swiss hotel management school "Les Roches" in the village of Bluche, in the Swiss Alps, and was appointed president of the Summer 2002 Les Roches chapter of the Eta Sigma Delta international hospitality and tourism management honor society. During

2003, Dastur interned at the Mandarin Oriental Macau near Hongkong.



Nikan Khatibi, FEZANA

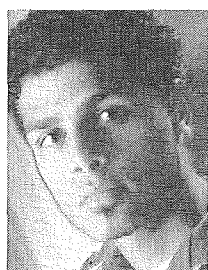
Journal youth editor, has announced his candidacy for the 2004 Laguna Niguel (California) City Council. Republican Khatibi has started his campaign for the November 5, 2004 elections, walking the neighborhoods, knocking on doors, and talking to residents about the issues. Visit his website at www.JoinNikan.com.



Maneck Sattha

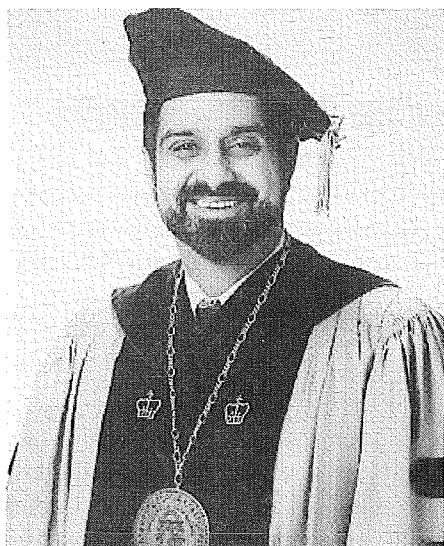
was awarded the Medal of Merit by Scouts Canada for "especially good service to scouting". Sattha, founder and guiding spirit of the "100th Toronto First Zoroastrian scout group", and before that a scouter of the 100th Bombay troop, has been active in scouting for almost 40 years. "I hope this inspires Zarathushti youth to scouting, and make them proud of our

community's contribution to the scouting movement," says Sattha, "I will continue scouting, for the benefit of the community, as our former scouters have done in Mumbai - the game will never end."



Shahryar (Shao) Shroff

son of Margarita and Armeen Shroff of New Jersey and grandson of Dadi and Nergish Mistry of Delhi, was selected "Athlete of the Week" by the Home News Tribune. His Colonia High School soccer team is No. 1 and Shao was the highest scorer. Besides his accolades in soccer, Shao is also an honor roll student, and loves to play the guitar and sing.



Dr. Beheruz N. Sethna [above] president of the State University of West Georgia, was selected to the exclusive list of Georgia's **100 most influential people** for 2003, alongside the likes of Ted Turner. Last year, the Times-Georgian newspaper listed Sethna and his university as No. 1 in "Movers, Shakers and Newsmakers of Carol County." Georgia Trend magazine says: "Sethna has pushed standards of his university far beyond traditional second-tier roots."

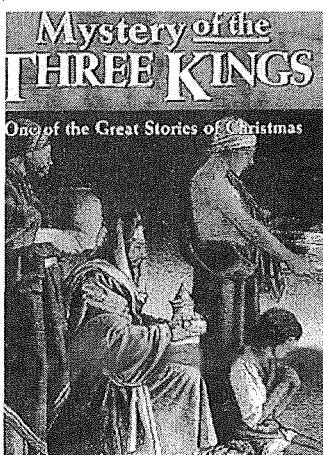
In 1994, Sethna is the first person from any ethnic minority to become president of a predominantly white university or college in Georgia, and the first person of Indian origin ever to become president of a university anywhere in the US.

Russy D. Sumariwalla was elected to chair the Board of Directors of the Community Foundation of the Napa Valley (California) in June 2003. Sumariwalla, who retired as president and CEO of United Way International, has consulting assignments with The Asia Foundation, Volunteers of America and others, and is founder-president of Global Philanthropy and Nonprofits.

Dilafruz Williams, professor of education at Portland State University won the election for the Portland School Board, with grassroots support from hundreds of volunteers – students, teachers and parents. Williams has been involved in education for 25 years and brings a legacy of leadership, experiences and skills to this position.



Nazanin Afshin-Jam, 24, an Iranian-Canadian from Vancouver, was crowned Miss World Canada 2003. She will travel to China in December to compete for the Miss World title.



Mystery of the Three Kings

As seen on BBC and PBS TV, 2003

DVD, Questar, tel: 1-800-544-8442, US\$19.99.

The story of the Three Wise Men is filled with mystery. This film searches for their origins, explains the miraculous appearance of a star that led them to Bethlehem, and explores new evidence which sheds light on the early traditions – from long-hidden frescoes to dusty sacred texts and beautiful mosaics throughout the ancient world. By retracing the steps of the Wise Men, the film pieces together a fascinating puzzle, indicating that they were mobeds of the Zarathushti faith sent by the king of the Persian empire who knew of Zarathushtra's prophecy 2,000 years earlier, and also as stated in the Bible, chapter on Daniel. [Submitted by Godrej Kerawala]

BOOKS AND SUCH

Preserving the imperiled Dari Language of Yazd and Kerman

This summer **Annahita Farudi** and **Maziar Toosarvandani** successfully completed fieldwork

for the **Dari Language Project**, in the village of Qasemabad, a Zarathushti village in Yazd. The project aims to promote preservation of the imperiled *Dari* (or *Gabri*) language of Yazd and Kerman. Because it has so few speakers, *Dari* is considered to be highly endangered, as young Zarathushtis are increasingly turning down the language of their heritage, in favor of the dominant language, Farsi.



In a report to FEZANA (that contributed some funds towards the project) the researchers write, "the results of our fieldwork shed light on areas of *Dari*'s grammatical structure of potential importance to contemporary linguistic theory."

"While the summer's research was highly successful, it only barely scratched the surface, and we have returned from Yazd with a new understanding of how much remains to be learned.

"We have also acquired a real appreciation of the dire situation that the *Dari* language and its dialects face, confronted with decreasing populations, upward socio-economic mobility, and emigration to urban centers.

"We hope to expand our next fieldwork endeavor, in summer 2004. This will necessitate greater resources, and we will be embarking on a new fundraising campaign."

For the full "Summary of Findings" please contact FEZANA president Firdosh Mehta at fdjmehta@telus.net. Also visit www.darilanguageproject.org.

DISCOURSES ON ZOROASTRIANISM

By Er. Godrej D. Sidhwa

US \$5 (in US) and US\$7 (in Canada) including postage. 135 pages, first printed in 1978. To order, contact Farhad Godrej Sidhwa at: Sidhwa@yahoo.com.

Packed with articles on diverse aspects of the Zarathushti religion – Life and teachings of Zarathushtra, navjote, wedding and death ceremonies, consecration of sacred fires, towers of silence, jashan, inner and outer ceremonies, Iranshah and more – *Discourses on Zoroastrianism* presents an elementary knowledge of the religion and ceremonies in a very concise and readable format.

It is based on lectures by Er. Sidhwa, who taught Zarathushti theology and history at BVS Parsi High School and Mama Parsi School in Karachi for 45 years.

"I have no hesitation in recommending this book," says Kayomars Mehta, chair of the FEZANA Religion Education Committee, "It provides a great value at a very reasonable price."

Professionally recorded CD on the Gathas

On Shenshai Navroze, Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE) launched a 2-volume CD on the *Gathas of Prophet Zarathushtra*. It is possibly the first time since Prophet Zarathushtra first chanted them over 3500 years ago, that they have been professionally recorded on CD.

The recitation, by senior ZTFE mobed, Ervad Rostam K. Bhedwar, is per the ancient Yasna tradition, accompanied by an English transliteration and translation. Recording was done in Zoroastrian House, London, by classical music engineers from Warner Brothers, enhanced in their studios in Europe and sent for manufacture at a plant in USA. Contact Malcolm Deboo, library@ztfec.com.

Zarathushti Calendar Generator

Er. Soli Dastur has created this amazing Excel program to automatically generate four Zarathushti calendars (Shenshai, Kadmi, Fasli and ZRE) side by side for any past or future year. It can also convert the date in any one of the calendars to the corresponding date in the other calendars.

Have you ever stopped at "Roj nek nam, Roj pak nam" while reciting a nyaesh or yasht, and wondered "What is today's roz and mah?"

Have you ever wished you knew the roz, mah and YZ year and the day of the week, on the date you were born? Or the date of someone's passing? Or any Gregorian date, for that matter, past or future?

These and other such questions inspired me, in 1991, to create a simple Lotus 1-2-3 program to calculate the Shenshai roz, mah and YZ year for a specified Gregorian date. I was working on our Dastur family tree program at that time, and this worksheet was very helpful to cross check important dates for each individual in our big family!

Then in August 1999, while visiting Mumbai, I created an Access database program, and found it very useful to cross check birth, enrollment, navarmartab dates for all 400-plus students who had enrolled in our beloved M. F. Cama Athornan Institute, Andheri, from its very inception in the 1920s.

Some years ago, I came across a concise one page Excel worksheet created by Sarosh Manekshaw to generate the Shenshai calendar for the current year. A unique feature in this worksheet was that holidays, jashans and gahambars were highlighted. Lately, a number of articles on our calendars appeared in the Creating Awareness and Zoroastrian lists. This created a great interest in me to study the various calendars, and to automate their generation.

This Excel program generates Shenshai, Kadmi, Fasli and ZRE (Zoroastrian Religious Era) calendars, side by side, giving the roj-mah, YZ year and the day of the week for all 365 days of a given year, or for any given Gregorian date, in the past or the future. The program highlights festivals and jashans in yellow and gahambars in blue. One can also convert a given date in any of the calendars to the corresponding date in the other calendars.

The program can be accessed on the Internet from the excellent website www.avesta.org of my very good friend, Joseph Peterson. The weblink to access it is www.avesta.org/zcals.xls. One can click on this weblink and open the Excel worksheet or save it to a file. Double-clicking on the filename launches the program. For further information or help in getting started, please contact dastur@comcast.net. - Soli Dastur

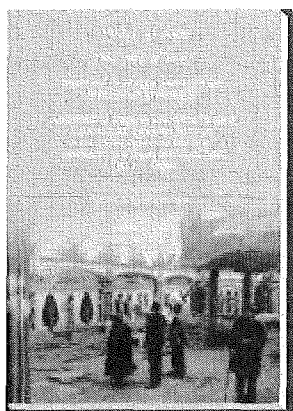
Born the last of 11 children in Tarapur, India, Er. Soli P. Dastur studied at the M. F. Cama Athornan Institute boarding school, completing his navarmartab and samel ceremonies in Udvada. He came to the US in 1960 and received his Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering from Northwestern University. He worked for Procter & Gamble in Cincinnati for 30 years before retiring in 1994. He lives with his wife Jo Ann in Sarasota, Florida. They have twin daughters, Shirin and Anahita, and four grand children.

Prayer CDs by Late Ervad Jimmy Makujina are available from Zarathushti Anjuman of Northern California. The two CDs – "My Navjote Prayer" and "Zoroastrian Prayers – both come with simple explanations in English. Price is \$10. Contact Nazneen Spliedt at nazehler@aol.com.

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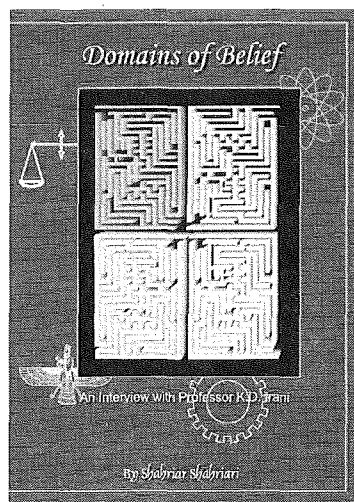
Coordinated by
Mehrborzin Soroushian

Edited by
Carlo G. Cereti
Farrokh Vajifdar

A staunchly traditionalist Zarathushti of Kerman, **Arbab Jamshid Soroush Soroushian** (1914 - 1999) devoted his scholarly energy to the investigation of his ancestral religion, history and culture and determinedly set himself the noble and unrelenting task of disseminating knowledge of true Zarathushtrianism among his co-religionists and congeners.

His treasured memory is celebrated in two commemorative volumes of which this present compilation is the English section.

Here are assembled over 40 original essays by renowned scholars, covering archeology, history, literature, rich philosophies, dialect studies and the theology and rituals of the Zarathushti religion. ■



Domains of Belief

An Interview with Professor K. D. Irani

By **Shahriar Shahriari**

REVIEW BY THRITY POURBAHRAMI
AND PETER CAPAK

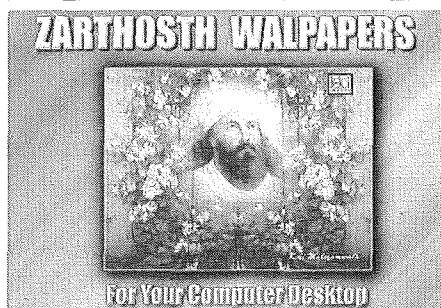
Shahriar Shahriari has created an intimate portrait of a man who is considered by many to be amongst the greatest thinkers of our times. Professor Kaikhosrov D. Irani discusses his interactions with such great thinkers as Albert Einstein and Mahatma Gandhi and how they influenced him early in his career. While view-

ing this program, you are placed in the middle of the conversation as if you are participating in the stimulating banter that appears on the screen. For instance you will anxiously wait to learn how Albert Einstein helped Professor Irani get a pay raise before even starting his position.

The first DVD of *Domains of Belief* begins with a discussion on the philosophy of science, bringing insights into the way Einstein and those around him thought. The ways in which simple ideas become world changing theories are discussed, as well as the reasons why one may want to get involved in such pursuits. In part two the discussion is brought to Zarathushtra's teachings. First the roots of the religion are discussed, then it's philosophy and place in the world. In the second DVD of *Domains of Belief* Prof. Irani explains his groundbreaking work in philosophy within the context of his own life and experiences.

If you have ever wondered about what makes those who change the world different from those who do not – you should watch *Domains of Belief*. Prof. Irani, urged on by Shahriar's curiosity, paints a portrait of our times, our thoughts and our domains of belief. They also illustrate how easily one can interact with, and become one of those who change the world. *Domains of Belief* should become an integral part of our public and private collections for it inspires us to continue to renovate and renew the world. ■

Trity Pourbahrami is a master's student at the University of Hawaii School of Social Welfare and Dept. of Public Administration; **Peter Capak** is a doctoral student at the University of Hawaii Institute for Astronomy.



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Domains of Belief

an Interview with Professor K. D. Irani

By Shahriar Shahriari



"Domains of Belief is a wonderful introduction to the thought, humanity and charm of Professor Irani."

Martin Tamny, Ph.D.

Professor Emeritus of Philosophy, City College of New York



"The interview is a tour de force for Professor Irani that brings together his life and work in four very interesting hours in which Prof. Irani tells us about his life, his faith and his achievements as a philosopher."

Dr. Lovji Cama, Dean of Religious Studies, ZAGNY



"In the old days, it was the wise elder of the tribe who related stories of wisdom that changed lives. In modern times, the wise elder has taken a different form and utilizes a different medium, and the tribe is humanity. Professor Irani is that Wise Elder who helped me change my life."

Shahriar Shahriari

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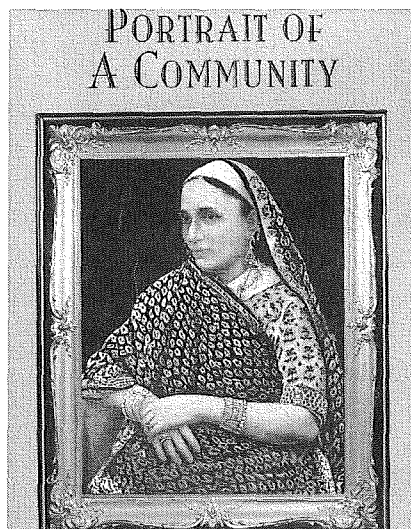
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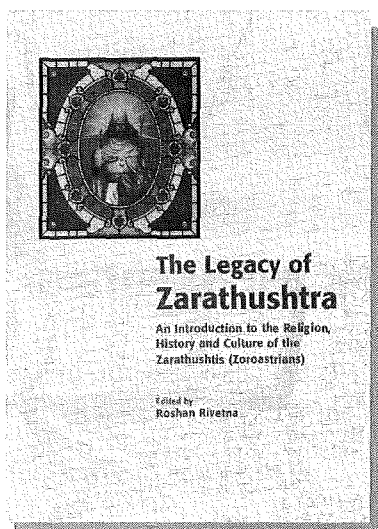
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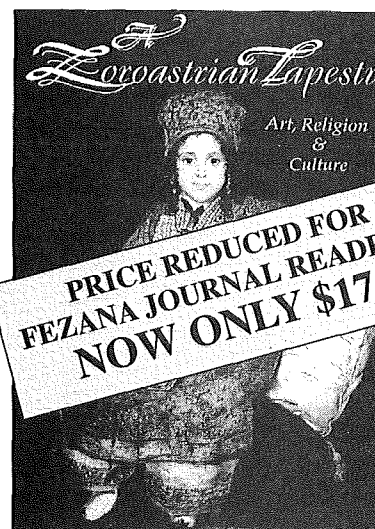
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