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## Treasures from the Avesta: Niyayishns and Yashts



PUBLICATION OF THE FEDERATION OF ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA



# FEZANA JOURNAL

PUBLICATION OF THE FEDERATION OF ZOROASTRIAN  
ASSOCIATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA

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ON THE COVER  
*Khordeh Avesta manuscript and  
prayer books [see page 49]*  
PHOTOGRAPHS: **Cyrus Rivetna**.

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# Centrality of devotions in the lives of Zarathushtis

By Jamsheed K. Choksy  
Guest Editor

Vignettes of growing up in Ceylon in the 1960s and, after that country's name changed, Sri Lanka in the 1970s go beyond those of a tropical 'paradise' (another word that we owe to the ancient Iranians) [1].

**Colorful memories.** Etched in my mind are colorful memories of Zarathushti families, mainly Parsis but also a few Iranis forming the most miniscule of minorities demographically, yet so much a vital part of that fledgling nation's urban society, strolling by the waterfront along the mile-long Galle Face Green near the heart of Colombo city, usually after the day's work, greeting each other while their attentive babies laying in strollers noted "the sun goes down, the lights come on" and their ice cream-gobbling and sorbet-slurping older children flew kites on the ocean breeze. At least once, each adult would face the Indian Ocean and the setting sun – offering praise to Ahura Mazda, the water, and earth's star.

It was a scene that reoccurred in other contexts: by the flickering flames in *atashdars* or *afrinaganyus* 'fire altars' and *divos* 'oil lamps,' on community picnics to hot beachfront resorts, during field trips by families to muggy coconut palm plantations, at misty hilltop tea estates during the year-end holidays, at dawn if persons had awoken to briskly greet a new day (and sit down to a hearty breakfast with a glass of toddy), or at sunset before the cool of night (and another generous meal!).

Essentially, time was found to give thanks for life, love, happiness, health, family, friends, community and success.

**No confusion.** At no time did any of those Zarathushtis feel any large degree of intellectual or religious confusion about their pious actions – praxes that they had picked up from their forefathers. For them, Ahura Mazda was God par excellence, the benevolent creator of all good creatures and things. The *Amesha Spentas* or holy immortals and the *Yazatas* or divine spirits worthy of worship were, for the Zarathushtis whom I grew up among, creations of God to help and guide humans, entities who assisted Ahura Mazda in nourishing and protecting the material world.

Those Zarathushtis who recited *niyayishns* or invocations of praise and *yashts* or devotional poems plus other more basic prayers like the *Ashem Vohu* 'Order is best' viewed themselves as following Ahura Mazda's will by uniting in common cause with the *Amesha Spentas* and the *Yazatas*, with other Zarathushtis worldwide, and with all other good people and creatures.

Individually and collectively they attempted to strive for righteousness and good through *Asha* or order, by at least negating and at most countering the evil and chaos of *Drug (Druj)* or confusion associated with *Angra Mainyu* the angry spirit, who they regarded as the source of all harm and unhappiness, by the thoughts, words, and deeds of their daily lives. Mostly their beliefs were not challenged by thorny theological issues,

even when their minds were not completely clear as to the precise sequence of events by which *Amesha Spentas*, *Yazatas*, *Fravashis* and the like became a part of Zarathushti belief.

“ At no time did these Zarathushtis feel any large degree of intellectual or religious confusion about their pious actions ... Mostly their beliefs were not challenged by thorny theological issues ... ”

**This issue of FEZANA Journal.** The incorporation of beliefs, litanies and praxes surrounding spirits such as *Mithra* and *Anahita* into the religion of Zarathushtra is a fascinating, yet historical and scholastic story.

Still, moving beyond the devotional to the educational is fully in keeping with the ideals of the *Den i Mazdesn* or *Mazdayasni* religion. Knowing how and why the religion developed, the many changes and permutations it went through over different times and in diverse places yields a fuller understanding of the centrality of devotion in the lives of people and the role of faith in the actions of societies.

The essays in this issue of FEZANA Journal are offered to readers in that spirit. So it has been a great pleasure working with my colleagues *Pallan Ichaporia*, *Firoze Kotwal*, *William Malandra* and *Oktor Skjærvø*. Their vast learning, sense of service to Zarathushtis and all other members of the general public, plus their generosity of spirit, mind, and time have made my task as guest editor an enjoyable and insightful one. *Roshan Rivetna* gently but professionally shepherded the articles from conception to print with patience and understanding, again making my under-

[Continued on next page]

[1] Greek *paradeisos* borrowed from Old Persian *paradayada*, based on *paradaida*, from *para* 'beyond, around' and *dida-* 'to be piled up, erected, constructed of rock,' hence 'walled area' or 'enclosed garden,' compare Greek *peri* 'around' and *teichos* 'wall,' all originating from Indo-European *per* 'around' and *dheigh-* 'to form, build.'





## Socio-demographic realities and their implications for the future

### Need to increase birth-rate and decrease divorce-rate a North American Perspective

Presented by FEZANA president Firdosh Mehta at the World Zoroastrian Youth Congress in Pune, India, December 2003.

From Ervad Kavasji Edalji Kanga's *Gatha-Ba-Maani*, published by BPP:

O thou Pouru-chista of the  
Family of Haechat-aspa  
Youngest amongst the  
daughters of Zarathushtra  
and descendant of Spitama!  
Ahura Mazda has appointed  
Jamaspa, brother of Frashaoshtra,  
who is devoted to good thought  
and righteousness, for thee as thy  
husband; therefore now do thou  
keep on communicating with him  
and through thy holiest and most  
bountiful wisdom of perfect-  
mindedness, do thou show care  
and thought for the future.

Pouru-chista replies:

I will try to show him more love than  
he will show his love for me.

A part of today's topic is "Decrease  
Divorce Rate." What better wisdom  
can one adopt with perfect-minded-  
ness, than to adhere to the divine

words of Asho Zarathushtra in Gatha  
Vahishtoist [Ha 53.3-4].

In any relationship, if we adopt the  
practice of doing increasingly Good  
to each other, with trust and devo-  
tion, then the righteous path would  
prevent the relationship from falling  
apart.

But we are also very human in our  
nature, and with the modern maxim  
of the ME generation, it is difficult  
to practice a degree of sacrifice gen-  
erated out of love for one another,  
which becomes a barrier between  
two people enjoying a life of happi-  
ness together.

If we believe in the maxim "happi-  
ness to those who bring happiness to  
others," why not practice the same  
with your life partner?

**Demographics.** The chair of  
FEZANA Census Committee, Dr.

Noshir Langrana presented a paper  
on "Demography of Zarathushtis in  
North America," in 1998, subse-  
quently published in FEZANA Jour-  
nal [Winter 1999]. About 4,000  
responses were received from 9,000  
individuals polled; from a statistical  
point of view the results can provide  
a meaningful insight into the demo-  
graphic profile of Zarathushtis in  
North America.

One can also extrapolate the percent-  
ages in proportion to the growth of  
our population over the last 5 years  
from the time of this study. I thank  
Dr. Langrana for permitting me to  
utilize his published data.

Shown below are some charts that  
convey the demographic realities of  
Zarathushtis in North America. The  
anticipated growth can be done from  
further demographic studies done by

## Guest Editorial

[Continued from previous page]

taking an easy one. Numerous other  
individuals have very graciously  
contributed their talents, resources,  
and photographs toward making this  
issue of FEZANA Journal a success-  
ful one.

To all of them I offer heartfelt *stay-  
ishn* 'praise' for they have joined in  
furthering *menog i khrad* 'the spirit of  
wisdom.'

Table 1. Age distribution

Age	Male	Female	Total	% of Total
Under 5	102	105	207	5.30
6 to 18	448	320	768	19.61
19 to 30	229	306	535	13.66
31 to 40	323	322	645	16.47
41 to 50	346	328	674	17.20
51 to 60	324	276	600	15.32
61 and up	286	192	478	12.20
Total	2,068	1,849	3,917	100.00



Prof. Hinnells of the University in Manchester, UK.

**Age distribution.** Table 1 shows the age distribution. The oldest living Zarathushti who responded during the time of this survey was from New York, born in 1903. The grace of Ahura Mazda has bestowed longevity to the Zarathushtis; that is a matter of record. Our concern of course is that a disproportionately large percentage of respondents are seniors.

**Place of birth.** Even though many were reluctant to show their country of origin [see Table 2], it can be observed that more than half of the Zarathushti settlers of North America are from India, followed by Iran.

Table 2 also indicates that a large majority (61%) of families have only one child; we did not observe a single family with more than 4 children, and only 8 families had more than three.

**The geographical distribution** of Zarathushtis in North America outlined in Table 3 indicates that almost 60% of the Zarathushti population is concentrated along the West coast in

Table 3. Geographical distribution of Zarathushtis in North America

	% of Total
Ontario	18.2
California	18.2
British Columbia	12.2
Texas	11.1
New Jersey	5.0
New York	4.8
Delaware/Maryland	4.4
Quebec	4.0
Pennsylvania	3.5
Massachusetts	2.8
Virginia	2.4
Illinois	2.3
Alberta	2.2
Michigan	1.4
Florida	1.2
Connecticut	1.0
Others (US/Canada)	5.3

Table 2. Place of birth

	Head	Spouse	Child #1	Child #2	Child #3	Child #4	Total	%Total
India	1523	876	129	69	8	0	2605	46.4
Iran	529	275	82	43	10	2	941	16.7
Pakistan	311	163	34	22	3	0	533	9.5
USA	167	156	350	81	81	5	840	14.9
Canada	77	32	112	74	26	3	324	5.8
UK	21	19	18	6	1	0	65	1.2
Others	78	71	121	33	6	0	309	5.5
Total	2,706	1,592	846	328	135	10	5,617	100.0

Table 4. Distribution of intra- and interfaith marriages in North America

	Based on female's age			Based on Male's age		
	Intra-faith	Inter-faith	Interfaith as % of total	Intra-faith	Inter-faith	Interfaith as % of total
19 to 30	46	40	46%	27	33	55%
31 to 40	173	97	36%	158	76	32%
41 to 50	187	58	24%	209	67	24%
51 to 60	140	44	24%	165	43	21%
61 and up	85	26	23%	134	26	15%
Total	631	265	30%	693	245	26%

British Columbia and California, and in the industrially developed areas of Ontario and Texas.

**Intra- and Interfaith Marriages.** Table 4 would be of particular interest to this topic as it shows the distribution of intrafaith and interfaith marriages in North America.

Since the sample size is relatively small, and since it is a first attempt at such a survey, one should be extremely careful at coming to any conclusions. Future studies will help us chart some trends.

The numbers and percentages of persons reporting are based on the ages of females and males separately in these two categories.

**Conclusion.** We believe this is a good start at understanding the demographics of our community in the newly

settled world of United States and Canada. More work is necessary and will be continued under the present Committee chaired by Mr. Noshir Jesung. The earlier survey was conducted under the presidency of Dr. Dolly Dastoor, assisted by many Zarathushtis on the FEZANA Census Committee. We understand that the eyes of the world are focused on the growth of our community in our part of the world, and we hope and pray that over time our numbers will reflect our commitment to growth and thereby the preservation and perpetuation of our beloved community in North America.

I thank the Congress Organizing Committee, especially Malcolm Deboo of ZTFE for giving me the encouragement and opportunity to make this presentation. ■



# North American Mobeds' Council- AGM 2004

Eighteen mobeds (from Chicago, Toronto, Montreal, New Jersey and Pennsylvania) attended the 17th AGM of NAMC, in Chicago, April 9-10, 2004



PHOTOGRAPH: CYRUS RIVETNA

*Grand community jashan at the Arbab Rustam Guiv Darbe Mehr, Chicago, on April 10, 2004.*

Reflecting their typically outstanding hospitality, the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago, went past the call of duty to host the AGM, organized by Er. Pesi Vazifdar. For the first time, it was gratifying to see the presence of young faces at the meeting.

The AGM opened with a collective benediction and words of welcome by ZAC president Arnavaz Elavia.

NAMC president, Er. Jehan Bagli highlighted **major recent activities**:

- Seminar sponsored jointly by NAMC and FEZANA in Toronto.
- Participation in the UNESCO 3000th anniversary celebrations in Toronto and Washington DC.
- The book "*Understanding and Practice of Obsequies*" will go to press after a final proofreading.
- Improved financial health of the Council. NAMC contributed \$1000 towards transportation cost of a young mobed from abroad, to participate in NAZYC in Toronto; awarded \$450 to Mobed Sam Bapasola towards his travel to Pune, for

WZYC; and donated \$700 towards the Bam earthquake relief fund.

Discussion was focused on two aspects brought up by the chairperson of the **mobed program**, Er. Behram Panthaky.

- (a) Training of a new mobed whose spouse is a non-Zarathushti.
- (b) Consequence, if an ordained mobed later marries a non-Zarathushti spouse.

Both these points were discussed at length. The qualification to be a mobed as defined by a resolution of the 12th AGM is: a male child born of two Zarathushti parents, and whose navjote is performed by a duly ordained mobed. Such a person can choose to undergo training as a mobed, in order that he can serve the community and his religion. The choice of his spouse has little relevance to the training that he has undertaken. His calling is to fulfill his personal desire for service and to find spiritual satisfaction.

Members present were of unanimous view, that the faith of the spouse has no direct relationship and that he

should be accepted for training as a mobed. Furthermore, if an ordained mobed chooses to marry a non-Zarathushti spouse, he may continue to provide services to fulfill the spiritual needs of the community.

Among **other topics** discussed were:

(1) Recommendations by Ervads Adi Unwalla and Cawas Desai on the constitution and by-laws of the Council.

(2) Participation in the jashan prayers by the congregation.

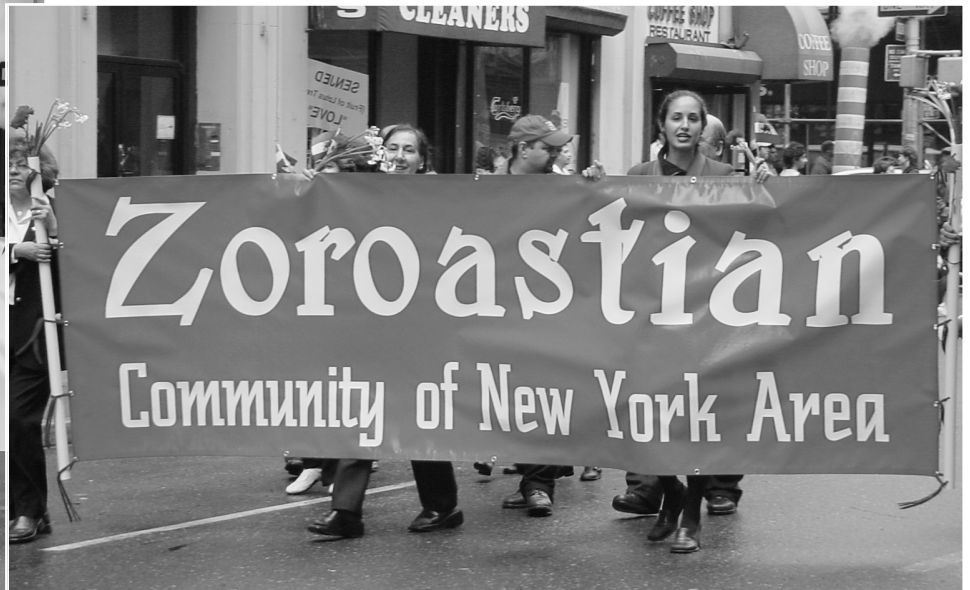
Generally there was unanimity among those present to have the congregation participate in the recital of certain parts of the prayers, as long as the meaning and understanding of the same are provided. This project will be recommended to the associations, and in time the Council will attempt to formulate a small booklet that will provide some chosen portions of the jashan litany for this recital.

In 2005 it is planned to have a workshop on various aspects of the Zarathushti religion, in Toronto.

- by Er. Dr. Jehan Bagli



# Persian Parade in NY



*Top, the leading float of the parade, in honor of Cyrus the Great. Below, Nariman Deboo of Connecticut, carrying a farohar banner leading the Zarathushti contingent of ZAGNY and IZA members. PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY SHAZNEEN RABADI GANDHI.*

## The Persian Parade

NEW YORK CITY, MARCH 27, 2004

**W**hen you put aside all the political arguments for not participating in a parade that walks under the Iranian flag and all the jokes about how this is going to be the most watched (by the secret service) parade in the history of New York, the Persian Parade (2004) was just a peaceful, joyous, celebratory walk down Madison Avenue by a people who are proud of their heritage. Starting on 41st Street, the parade wound its way down Madison Avenue to 27th Street in New York on March 27, 2004, where its audience mingled with its participants to celebrate Nou-ruz, the New Year and welcome the spring with a bright panoply of col-



ors and a symphony of heartfelt national music.

Sponsored by a handful of Iranian philanthropists and civic leaders who funded and organized the entire event, the parade was surprisingly inclusive, showcasing Zarathushtis, Kurds, Iranians of different nationalities, American friends of Iranians, and many other diverse groups that had a connection to Persian culture.

Members of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York (ZAGNY) and the Iranian Zoroastrian Association (IZA) marched under a united Zoroastrian banner on behalf of themselves and FEZANA.

The Zarathushti float was the second float of the parade following one in honor of Cyrus, the Great. Nariman Deboo of Connecticut carried the Asho Farohar symbol and was followed by a horse drawn carriage in which a Zarathushti priest and two children rode carrying different symbols of the religion.

The carriage was followed by ZAGNY and IZA members who proudly walked the parade in honor of their ancient heritage. They were followed by numerous other floats including a long line of horse drawn carriages each representative of the various items of the haft-seen table.

For more information, please see [www.persianparade.org](http://www.persianparade.org).

*by Shazneen Rabadi Gandhi*

### **Nouruz Radio broadcast**

The rendering of "Chaiye Hamay Zarthosti" (the English translation) by the children of Avesta Class who participated in the Nouruz celebration of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington (ZAMWI), on March 26, 2004, has been recorded for a radio broadcast. It is included in a piece about the Zarathushtis in North America for BBC "The World" program, broadcast on PRI in the USA. It can also be heard on [www.wamu.org](http://www.wamu.org).

*by Behram Pastakia*



*Talent show participants: above, Bollywood style dance; at right, Berges Irani and Tanya Patrawala reciting the Ahura Mazda Song. PHOTOS COURTESY ROSHAN DAVAR.*

## **OZCF Navroz Celebration**

Ontario Zoroastrian Community Foundation celebrates Nouruz with a gala dinner and talent showcase.

OZCF celebrated Nouruz with a gala evening and talent showcase at the Payal Banquet Hall in Mississauga on Saturday, March 27.

Following the jashan ceremony, the 367 attendees enjoyed the talent show presented by ten children and nine adults.

The evening continued with mouth-watering hors d'oeuvres, a scrumptious buffet dinner and delectable desserts. Following a speech by OZCF President Er. Kobad Zarolia, 15 individuals were recognized and presented with an 'appreciation plaque' for their continuous involvement and dedicated voluntary services to OZCF since its inception in January 2002. Superintendent, Sam Fernandes, representing the Toronto Police Service honored the occasion with his presence.

OZCF continues to bring the community together by organizing activ-

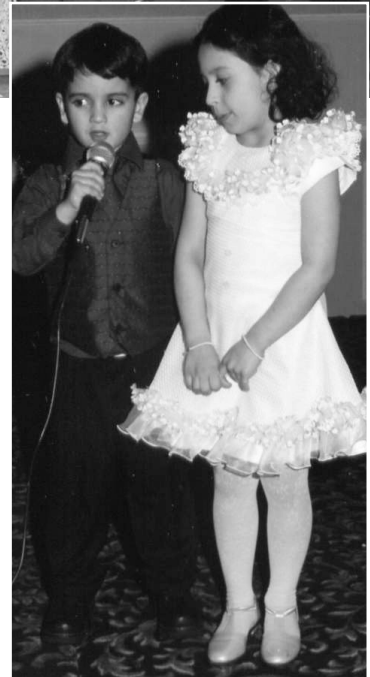
ities/events. This time OZCF successfully raised \$5,000.

The focus remains on OZCF's goal: in phase I, to raise money to purchase a parcel of land in the western part of Greater Toronto; and in phase II, to build a house of worship and a Zarathushti cultural center to fill the growing needs of the community.

OZCF is very enthusiastic about achieving its objectives and invites Zarathushtis worldwide to support this worthy cause. Generous donations to OZCF will contribute towards promoting, enhancing and preserving our wonderful and rich Zarathushti heritage. After all, this project will be of interest and benefit to future generations worldwide.

Please contact OZCF Treasurer, Ervad Nozer Kotwal at 905-820-0461 and visit us at [www.ozcf.com](http://www.ozcf.com).

*by Roshan Davar*





*Haft-seen table setup for Nouruz celebration at the Tajik International School in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, 2004.*

PHOTOGRAPH POSTED BY ESPHANDIAR AZADI ON CREATINGAWARENESS@YAHOOGROUPS.COM.

## ■ INTERFAITH-INTERALIA ■

### Invocation at Rotary 1



Farobag Homi Cooper was invited to give the Invocation at the Rotary 1 luncheon in Chicago, on April 13, 2004, with words from the Zoroastrian tradition:

The Light within man is that of the Spark of the Eternal Fire which always blazes forth. This Light shines in all, but in all it does not shine forth ...

That light which burns within thee is in no way different from the light that burns inside me – though our outer garments delude us into saying “thou and me.”

Let self-discipline, purification, aspiration, and unselfish service be our guide: the consummation being the conscious realization, The Atonement – The At-one-ment

... let each of us now “blaze forth” with whatever is right and powerful and good and true for your purpose in the events and experiences of this luncheon meeting. Amen. ■

### Republic Day speaker



Sohrab Homi Fracis was invited by the Indian Cultural Society of Jacksonville, Florida, to be guest speaker at the Republic Day of India celebrations, on January 26th. He said:

“... We expatriates are growingly recognized as an influential voice in America and also a well-respected one in India. We should make our perspective felt in both countries, indeed in the world. It’s an important perspective. Whenever we hear of injustices arising from perceived differences between human beings—differences in race, sex, class, religion, culture, age, language, region, or nationality – we must remember what it means to be a unified democratic republic and speak up against those injustices. We come from the land that first showed the world the enormous transformative power of non-violent protest; we must speak out against violence both within and between nations ... ■

### “Festival of Fire” celebrated in California

“Lectures, cultural dance, Persian food, children’s entertainment and a fire ceremony culminating in a fireworks extravaganza will mark the 4th millennium of Zoroastrian culture, in the largest such celebration outside of Central Asia,” writes Brenda Bolinger in the *Claremont Courier*, February 7, 2004.

“... the ancient religion is believed to be the first monotheistic religion and the first worldwide religion. It is also considered to be the most broadly influential faith, profoundly affecting the doctrines of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism.”

The article was based on an interview with Arman H. Ariane, one of the organizers of the Sadeh event. The event, held at Pomona College, California, was presented by the Council of Zoroastrian Studies in the School of Religion at Claremont Graduate University and the Zarathushtrian Assembly.

For information, visit [www.zoroastrianeducation.org](http://www.zoroastrianeducation.org) or email [religionculture@cgu.edu](mailto:religionculture@cgu.edu). ■





FEZANA breaks new ground at the United Nations, as the team led by Shahrokh Mehta, presents the first panel discussion by Zarathushtis in its history.

PHOTOGRAPHS:  
AFREED MISTRY

*FEZANA-UN/NGO team members at the 48th Annual session of the Commission on the Status of Women. From left, Homi Gandhi, Nina Bilimoria, Princeton University professor Dean Karlan, Roxanna Mirza, Shahrokh Mehta and Afreed Mistry after the panel discussion "Microfinance: A Step Toward Uplifting Women".*

## Team FEZANA Speaks about Poverty Alleviation at the United Nations

By Nina Bilimoria  
Chicago, Illinois

**F**EZANA sent a delegation to the 48th session of the "Commission on the Status of Women" hosted by the United Nations at its New York City headquarters, March 1-12, 2004. The conference focused on the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality and on women's participation in conflict management.

FEZANA was represented by **Shahrokh Mehta** (New York), leader of the 2004 FEZANA-UN/NGO team, **Homi Gandhi** (New Jersey) and youth delegates **Roxanna Mirza** (Toronto), **Afreed Mistry** (Toronto), **Nina Bilimoria** (Chicago), **Suzie Karani** (New York) and **Aysha Ghadiali** (New York).

**Session on Microfinance.** Additionally, for the first time, FEZANA hosted a workshop session at the conference, entitled "Microfinancing – A Step towards Uplifting Women," on March 5th.

The panel discussed microfinance basics and celebrated microcredit's ability to narrow the chasm between the 'haves' and 'have-nots', which is the UN's core mission.

Microfinance involves awarding small loans to the world's poor who do not possess collateral to obtain commercial banks loans. Micro-credit has been highly effective in empowering women, who are able to become entrepreneurs thanks to their loans.

In FEZANA's panel discussion, case studies from South Asia and specifically the work of the World Zoroas-

trian Organization in Gujarat, demonstrated the merits of microfinance. The panelists also described techniques to teach other NGOs how to implement micro-finance structures. The workshop was very well-attended, and FEZANA hopes to continue its active participation at the UN, featuring our community's youth.

**Workings of the UN.** Furthermore, FEZANA members learned a great deal about the inner workings of the grand UN. Personally, I was particularly struck by the high level of consensus necessary to make worldwide decisions; compromise and empathy are particularly useful skills for delegates to possess. It was very disconcerting to hear of the horrors that women throughout the world have faced in their societies.



*Roxanna Mirza and Homi Gandhi, meeting the Canadian Ambassador to the UN, His Excellency Ambassador Lauren, at a reception in his suite at the Trump Tower.*

Overall, the conference made me realize how fortunate both our Zarathushti women and men are to be part of a community where women are treated with much more parity.

For more information, visit the UN's Educational link: [http://www.un.org/Pubs/chronicle/eosportal\\_index.asp](http://www.un.org/Pubs/chronicle/eosportal_index.asp).

**Nina Bilimoria** is a senior at Stanford University, majoring in International Relations and Economics.

### Participation invited for future UN/NGO events

Zarathushtis interested in participating on the FEZANA team, in future UN/NGO activities should send their curriculum vitae to Homi Gandhi ([homi\\_gandhi@usa.net](mailto:homi_gandhi@usa.net)) and Behram Pastakia ([bpastakia@aol.com](mailto:bpastakia@aol.com)).

An upcoming event is the 57th Annual DPI/NGO Conference, on the theme "Millennium Development Goals: Civil Society Takes Action", September 8-10, 2004, at UN Headquarters, NY.

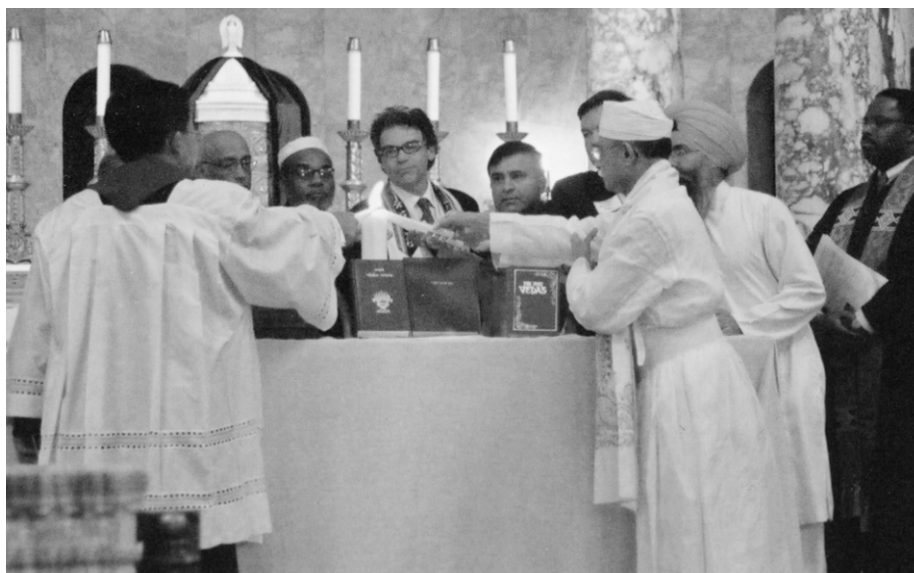
## When presidents work together!

When people put their hearts and minds together, positive results happen.

Behram Pastakia (president of ZAMWI) and Homi Gandhi (president of ZAGNY) are co-chairs of the FEZANA UN-NGO Committee. With visions of where they want to take FEZANA at the UN, they work hard behind the scenes quietly making things happen, both determined to promote Zarathushti youth, molding them in becoming the leaders of tomorrow. A small first step was taken in presenting a panel discussion for the first time at the United Nations in March 2004 [see page 9].

Communications are in progress with the UN chaplain, to consider placing a Zarathushti symbol alongside the huge hanging symbols of five other religions (Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam) behind the pulpit at the UN Chapel.

The point I am making here is that a handful of Zarathushtis with the right materials (on the religion of Zarathushtra), at the right place (the UN), and at the right opportune time (48th session of CSW), created a tremendous amount of Zarathushti awareness to UN-NGO delegates from all around the world. In the future, perhaps a large contingent of Zarathushtis will participate in holding several sessions in creating Zarathushti awareness and presence at the highest levels in the UN. Kudos to Behram and Homi Gandhi in demonstrating their Zarathushti leadership. - Shahrokh Mehta



PHOTOGRAPH: BILL SANDA

### IFC's 25th anniversary recommitment ceremony

*Er. Behram Panthaki [in white pagree at right] representing the Zarathushti faith, joins religious leaders – Baha'i, Hindu, Islam, Jain, Jewish, Latter-Day Saints, Protestant, Roman Catholic and Sikh – in lighting a single candle, to signify their commitment to work with each other, at the 25th Anniversary celebration of the Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington, at Trinity College, Washington, DC, on March 30 [more on page 13].*

*Facing page, handout distributed by the FEZANA-UN team to delegates at the CSW meeting at UN headquarters in March, modified to meet FEZANA journal editorial and formatting guidelines. The original brochure was prepared by Shanaya Mistry of Toronto with editorial help of Suzie Karani and Shahrokh Mehta, and formatted by Mehrdad Aidun and Nina Bilimoria.*





## WHAT IS FEZANA?

- ❖ FEZANA is the **F**ederation of **Z**oroastrian **A**ssociations of **N**orth **A**merica which functions as the umbrella organization for North American Zarathushti (Zoroastrian) associations;
- ❖ It has been a registered non-profit, religious and charitable organization since 1987;
- ❖ FEZANA is also registered as a non-governmental organization (NGO) having consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (UN);
- ❖ The FEZANA-UN delegation represents the North American Zarathushti community at UN venues to foster a better understanding and a deeper appreciation for the UN and its humanitarian endeavors, particularly the UN Millennium Goals;
- ❖ FEZANA is also dedicated to the task of promoting the study, understanding and practice of the Zarathushti religion and the welfare of its followers;
- ❖ It fosters and encourages Zarathushti fellowship in North America and represents the interests of its membership in national and international forums;
- ❖ FEZANA presently coordinates 24 North American associations as its members with over 25,000 individual constituents, and it works closely with other Zarathushti (Zoroastrian) organizations worldwide.

## THE ZARATHUSHTI RELIGION

- ❖ The Zarathushti religion (also known as Zarathushtrianism or Zoroastrianism) is acknowledged as one of the world's oldest surviving monotheistic religions;
- ❖ The Zarathushti religion embraces the worship of one God (Ahura Mazda) and is based on the revelations and teachings of the prophet Zarathushtra (also known as Zoroaster) (circa 1400 BCE).
- ❖ The Zarathushti religion calls upon its followers to pursue an ethical life through a three-fold path of "Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds";
- ❖ The corpus of Zarathushti scriptures, known as the Avesta, includes the Gathas (the divine hymns of Zarathushtra), which teach its followers that every human being must use his or her own free will to choose between good or evil;
- ❖ Zarathushtis must strive to develop the values of a good mind, truth, righteousness, strength, service, charity and piety to attain perfection and immortality;
- ❖ Respect for fellow human beings and protection of the environment are fundamental tenets of the Zarathushti religion.



## A BRIEF HISTORY

- ❖ The Zarathushti religion (also known as Zarathushtrianism or Zoroastrianism) was the imperial religion of the Persian empire dominant during the Achaemenian (559 - 334 BCE), Parthian (250 BCE - 227 CE) and Sassanian (226 - 651 CE) periods of Persian imperial rule which once extended across central Asia, west towards Greece, east into India, north into Russia and south into Egypt;
- ❖ It was during these centuries of Persian rule that Zarathushti doctrines (belief in One supreme God, heaven and hell, the ultimate triumph of good over evil, a final judgment day) are believed to have influenced Judaic and Christian theologies;
- ❖ The conquest of Persia in 334 BCE by Alexander of Macedonia was devastating to the Zarathushti religion as it led to the substantial destruction of its religious texts and historical records;
- ❖ Following the Arab conquest of Persia in 641 CE, Zarathushtis faced oppression under Islamic rule, causing many to flee to India in the ensuing centuries.
- ❖ The Zarathushtis who settled in India have come to be known as 'Parsis';
- ❖ There are approximately 25,000 Zarathushtis in North America, 12,000 in Europe, 2,500 in Australia, 2,500 in Pakistan, but the largest concentrations remain in Iran (150,000) and India (76,500);
- ❖ The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) symbolically designated 2003 as the "3000th Anniversary of Zoroastrian Culture." Zarathushti communities worldwide organized celebrations to mark this milestone anniversary.

For more information, contact:

FEZANA  
5750 SOUTH JACKSON STREET  
HINSDALE, IL 60521, USA

<http://www.fezana.org>





At reception for the Snowden Lecture: Behram Pastakia (co-chair, FEZANA UN-NGO), James Wolfensohn (president, World Bank) and His Excellency Karim Kawar, Ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

## World Bank president Wolfensohn reaches out to faith leaders



James D. Wolfensohn, president of the World Bank Group, emphasized the education of women and girls as a key to ameliorate poverty and reduce the gap between the privileged and dispossessed in our world. Speaking at the 3rd Annual Snowden Lecture held by the Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington on “The Millennium Challenges for Faiths and Development: New Partnerships to Reduce Poverty and Strengthen Conservation” he reached out to the worldwide faith community with a plea to help.

Held on March 30th at the chapel of the Trinity College, Washington DC, itself an institution which for over a hundred years has been in the forefront of uplifting women through education, the program started with a remarkable spiritual ceremony to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the IFC [see photo on page 10].

This year also marks the 25th anniversary of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington.

“In addition to the golden rule common to all faiths ‘Do unto others as you would have others do unto you,’ the realities of our world had another golden rule in operation,” said Wolfensohn: ‘He who has the gold, rules!’ The speaker exhorted faith leaders to work toward debt-forgiveness for poor countries, and promote free and fair worldwide trade to achieve the Millennium Goals set by the international community.

Volunteerism and a willingness to participate to make a difference in our world was encouraged.

- Behram Pastakia



Roshni Kasad, right, with neighborhood children in the village of Manund, in Gujarat, where she is on a one-year volunteer service program through Indicorps.

## Roshni Kasad – making a difference in Gujarat schools

“Not having to worry about locking doors; daily requests from parents to take their child to America with me; walking through fields, watching farmers silently and efficiently work their land; my rockin’ social life – having my pick of neighbors to visit every evening; and eating *dal*, *bhat*, *shak*, *rotli* every day. These are just some reasons why I love living in India.”

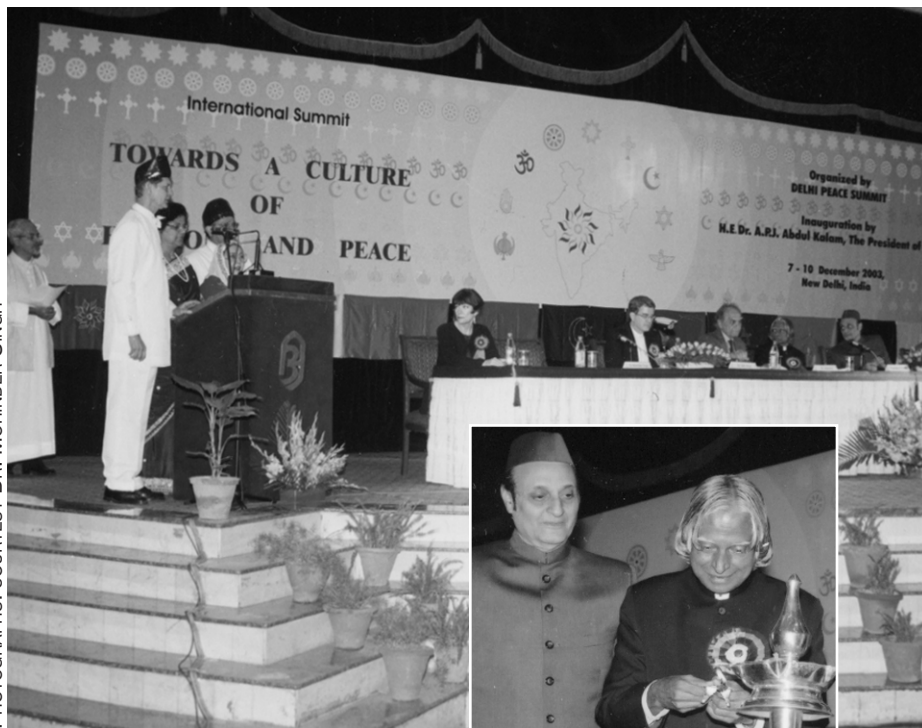
Roshni Kasad, a 2002 graduate of University of Delaware, has been in India since August 2003 on a one-year public service Indicorps fellowship. Indicorps is a non-profit organization that sends NRI youth to India to reconnect to their roots and to do a year of service. It is designed to be a one-of-a-kind transformational experience, emphasizing both personal growth and international development. Selected Indicorps fellows are given individual responsibility to execute projects, the limits of their contribution defined only by the fellows’ creativity and motivation.

Under the Gujarat Education Ministry, Roshni works with 5 village high schools in Patan, Gujarat to incorporate more practical learning into the curriculum and to make science more interesting and exciting for students.

Upon her return Roshni, daughter of Adi and Persis Kasad of Pennsylvania, will pursue her PhD studies at Berkeley. Meanwhile she is happy developing and teaching creative lessons in the Patan schools.

“Only in India can I go home with my students, meet their families, and roam around their farms,” says Roshni. “An integral part of my project occurs outside the classroom. Only by understanding the people and their way of life can I affect change, whether it be in education or any other aspect of development.” ■

[For information on Indicorps and the public service program, contact [RoshniKasad@yahoo.com](mailto:RoshniKasad@yahoo.com)]



# Delhi Peace Summit

Leaders from faith communities in India and around the world, gather to work together “Towards a Culture of Harmony and Peace”

**Inauguration by the president.** “When religion is elevated to the level of spirituality and when science is harmoniously blended with spirituality for development, then real peace, harmony and happiness, can be restored in the family, state, nation and the world.”

Speaking at the inaugural function of the 4-day Peace Summit at the Ashoka Hotel Convention Hall in Delhi, the president of India, His Excellency Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam said positive thinking, determination and courage which emanated from the practice of spirituality can bring peace and happiness to self and society.

Over 300 religious leaders and delegates from all faith communities in India and around the world convened for the mega-event organized by the India Peace Summit committee (with veteran Congress leader Dr. Karan Singh as chair of the Advisory Board and Dr. Mohinder Singh as secretary, and Regional Chairs Dr. T. D. Singh, Shri Saidas Babaji, Father Albert Nambiaparambil and Dr. Ausaf Ali) in partnership with the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions (CPWR), Chicago.

The mission of the gathering was to “invigorate the conscience of all the people of India and the world at large regardless of religion, creed and ethnicity through a gathering of those who will seek to transform the hearts and minds of people and to promote a culture of peace and healing ...”

**Zarathushti participation.** As a trustee of the CPWR, *Rohinton Rivetna* was the moving force behind the

Summit, from the early conceptual stage, through planning, writing the drafts of the Mission Statement and the Declaration, and post-event followup.

*Dr. Homi Dhalla* and *Rohinton Rivetna* were presented shawls for their longtime contributions to the interfaith movement. In the session on “Importance of Inter-Religious Dialogue”, *Lt. Gen. Adi Sethna*, president of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman, was among nine religious communities (Baha'ism, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Sikhism and Zoroastrianism) that spoke about their respective faith perspectives. *Dr. Meher Master Moos* co-chaired a workshop on Interfaith Cooperation. A Zarathushti group (comprised of the above Zarathushtis along with *Dadi* and *Nergish Mistry* and *Navaz Kotwal*) was honored to be among faith groups invited to present a devotional song at the inaugural function.

**Program.** The four days were packed with concurrent sessions, workshops and small group discussions at various venues in Delhi including the Chinmaya Centre, India International Centre (IIC) and Ashoka Hotel, all promoting a culture of harmony and peace: the Role of Women, the Role of Youth, Stories of Interfaith Solidarity, Interfaith Cooperation, Importance of Inter-religious Dialogue, Social Justice and Empowerment and more. Devotional evenings and cultural programs were held each night.

**The Declaration.** The Summit culminated at the Valedictory Function on December 9, held at Gandhi Smriti, site of the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, in 1948, with a valedictory address by His Holiness The Dalai Lama. A commitment was made by the gathered assem-





*Facing page, Zarathushti group singing a devotional song at the inaugural function. Seated are Diane Goldin of the CPWR Goldin Institute, CPWR executive director Rev. Dirk Ficca, Tourism and Culture Minister Jagmohan, His Excellency the president of India and Dr. Karan Singh.*

*Left, the president of India, His Excellency Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam lighting a lamp at the inaugural function, at Ashoka Convention Hall in New Delhi, with Congress leader Dr. Karan Singh to his right.*

*Above, at the valedictory function at Gandhi Smriti. Dignitaries include Bhai Sahib Bhai Mohinder Singh, Dr. Karan Singh, Minister Jagmohan, His Holiness The Dalai Lama, Dr. L. M. Singhvi, Mayor of Delhi Mr. Ashok Kumar Jain, and Shri Saidas Babaji. Dr. Mohinder Singh is at the podium. Inset, His Holiness The Dalai Lama, being honored by devotees. Right, Rohinton Rivetna giving the concluding remarks at the closing valedictory function.*



bly to The Declaration “to seek unity in diversity, to be a positive force for peace, to leave a legacy of harmony and peace with justice ...”

Rohinton Rivetna presented the concluding remarks, urging each delegate to “go forth and spread the message – of understanding and respect, to heal the wounds of the past, to pledge to reaffirm for India the glow of spirituality and tolerance like a shining jewel on the planet...” ■

*by Roshan Rivetna*





*Left, the prestigious Asian Civilizations Museum – the building in the foreground, will be the venue of the Singapore exhibition.*

*Above, the community's name has been immortalized in the prime business district of Shenton Way, where a road is named "Parsi Road."*

## Singapore to showcase Zarathushti Culture at Asian Civilizations Museum

The president of Singapore will grace the celebrations, May 28-29, to commemorate the UNESCO-declared 3000th Anniversary of Zoroastrian Culture and the 50th anniversary of the Singapore anjuman.

**The celebration.** His Excellency the president of the Republic of Singapore Mr. S. R. Nathan will be chief guest on May 29th, at the Holiday Inn Park View for the mega-event orchestrated by the Singapore Parsi Zoroastrian Association of South East Asia, co-sponsored by the Zoroastrian Charity Funds of Hong Kong, Canton and Macao.

Earlier, on May 28th, Minister of State Mr. Chan Soo Sen, will officially open the exhibition that will run for two months at the prestigious Asian Civilizations Museum. This is the first time that Parsi Zoroastrian culture is being showcased in Singapore. On display will be heritage items and treasured artifacts – garments, books, jewelry, watches, prayer items and old photographs.

Russi Ghadiali, president of the Parsi Zoroastrian Association, notes: "For

Singapore, the exhibition is a landmark event as it also marks the Association's 50th anniversary."

Eminent speakers including Homi Dhalla, Khojeste Mistree and Firoza Panthaky Mistree, will participate in a seminar on Zoroastrian religion and culture, May 29- 30, to be followed by a slide show of heritage temples and sacred places in Iran. A souvenir program will feature commemorative articles, photographs and the history of the Zarathushti communities in Singapore and Hongkong.

**The Singapore community.** The recorded history of the Parsis in Singapore, goes back to the early 1800s when merchants stopped there en route to China. In the early 20th century, two Parsis made fortunes in aerated drinks. Phirozshaw Manekji Framroz started the Framroz Aerated Waters factory and later Navroji Mis-

tri opened Phoenix Aerated Water Co. and G. H. Café. Navroji Mistri bequeathed a million dollars to the Singapore General Hospital for a Mistri Wing, on his death in 1953. His nephew Noshir Mistri and family are notable members of the community.

Today's Parsi community of about 180 members, includes mostly professionals who have been contributing to Singapore's development as accountants, doctors, lawyers, pilots and IT executives. Ervad Percy Khambatta, Dr. Pesi Chacha and Kersi Aspar perform religious ceremonies for the community.

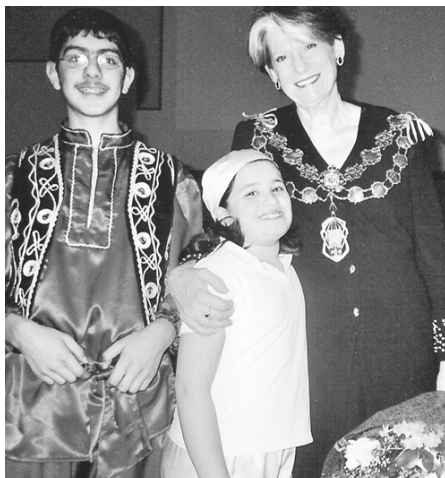
The new committee, appointed March 21st, comprises **Russi Ghadiali** (president), **Armin Dotivala** (VP), **Dilnavaz Zaveri** (secretary), **Rohinton Karkaria** (treasurer), **Shernaz Heerjee**, **Daisy Driver** and **Paurus Nekoo** (committee members).

The Zarathushti religion is one of nine religions of the Inter-Religious Organization of Singapore. ■

*by Suna Kanga*

*[Contact: The Parsi Zoroastrian Association of South East Asia, 19 Grange Road, #20-21 Grange Heights, Singapore 239697; tel: (65) 6737-8504, 9639-5929; fax: (65) 6732-5054; email: rghadial1@irf.com]*





At Faith Links, London, Yazdyar Avari, Roxanne Mistry and chief guest the Lord Mayor of Westminster.

## ZTFE children at cultural event.

Zarathushtis were among nine major faiths invited to present cultural items at the "Faith Links" event organized by the Westminster Faith Exchange, in London's West End, on February 25th. The colorful Persian Harvest Dance by children of the ZTFE directed by Mojdeh Kermani with costumes by Mahnaz Ostad, evoked the biggest applause. Younger children enacted a navjote ceremony directed by Armaity Homavazir.

## Commonwealth Day observance in London

Commonwealth Day was observed with a multi-faith service on March 8th at Westminster Abbey in the presence of Her Majesty, Prince Philip, Prince Charles, Prime Minister Blair, Opposition Leader Howard and other ministers, MPs and Ambassadors.

ZTFE VP Ervad Rustom Bhedwar and 12-year-old Riyaz Mody, were presented to the Royal Family.

Later in the evening, Prime Minister Blair hosted The Downing Street Lecture, delivered by the Archbishop of Canterbury, at his residence. ZTFE president Dorab Mistry and ZTFE's Interfaith representative Jehangir Sarosh were amongst the select audience of 40 leaders of faith communities. - Paurushasp B. Jila.

# AROUND THE WORLD



Main entrance of Zoroastrian Khosravi Hall in Tehran, one of eleven polling places for Zarathushtis, plastered with posters of candidates for the single seat for a Zarathushti representative in the Iranian Majles.

## Niknam wins Zarathushti seat on Majles

Long lines formed at the eleven polling locations on February 20, as Zarathushtis turned out in large numbers to cast their vote for the Zarathushti representative to the seventh Iranian Parliament (Majles). Zarathushtis, a tiny minority within the 60 million Iranians, are allotted one seat in the 280-member Majles.

### Mobedyar Kourosch Niknam

[photo right] of Tehran, won the seat, hotly contested by nine candidates initially, including Aflatoon Ziafat (former representative, from Tehran) who came in second, Dr. Khosro Dabestani (outgoing representative, from Tehran) who came in third, Mobedyar Mehran Ghiebi (Kerman) and Mr. Nazari (president of the Kerman Anjuman). Niknam's campaign



motto was non-separation of religion and state. He will serve for a four-year term, starting June 2004, representing Zarathushti interests.

Outgoing MP, Dr. Khosro Dabestani is noted for his historical achievement in modifying the unfair Islamic law of 'Dieh' for the benefit of all religious minorities in Iran.

Mobedyar Niknam, 50, a veteran of the Iraq-Iran war, and a member of the Iranian Mobed Council in Tehran and Faith Council in Qum city, has been a religion teacher at Firooz Bahram High School in Tehran, for 30 years. [Based on input from Khodayar Attaie, Tehran, and postings by Mehran Sepehri and Feraydun Demehri on creating awareness@yahooogroups.com.]

## Chahar Shanbe Suri celebrations in Tehran

[Excerpted from *San Diego Union Tribune*, March 17, 2004; posted by Mehr Soroushian on [creatingawareness@yahoo.com](mailto:creatingawareness@yahoo.com)].

### Tehran allows old fire festival

BY PAUL HUGHES, REUTERS  
MARCH 17, 2004

TEHRAN, IRAN. Iranians danced in the street, threw firecrackers and jumped over bonfires last night as authorities tolerated an ancient fire festival for the first time in 25 years.

Halted each year since the 1979 Islamic revolution because hard-liners considered it un-Islamic, the Chahar-Shanbe Suri, or Red Wednesday, festival was officially recognized in Tehran, where the City Council set aside dozens of parks for people to enjoy the boisterous celebrations.

Tens of thousands packed the streets of the capital to mark the eve of the last Wednesday of the Iranian calendar year. Unlike previous years, when riot police blocked off streets and hard-line Islamic vigilantes beat and arrested many trying to enjoy the festivities, security forces were virtually absent.

"They wanted to try to stop this tradition, but it will never die," said Mahmoud Afshar ...

The festival dates back centuries to pre-Islamic times and is thought to be derived from Zoroastrian traditions that accord special properties to fire ...

## Nouruz celebration at the British Museum

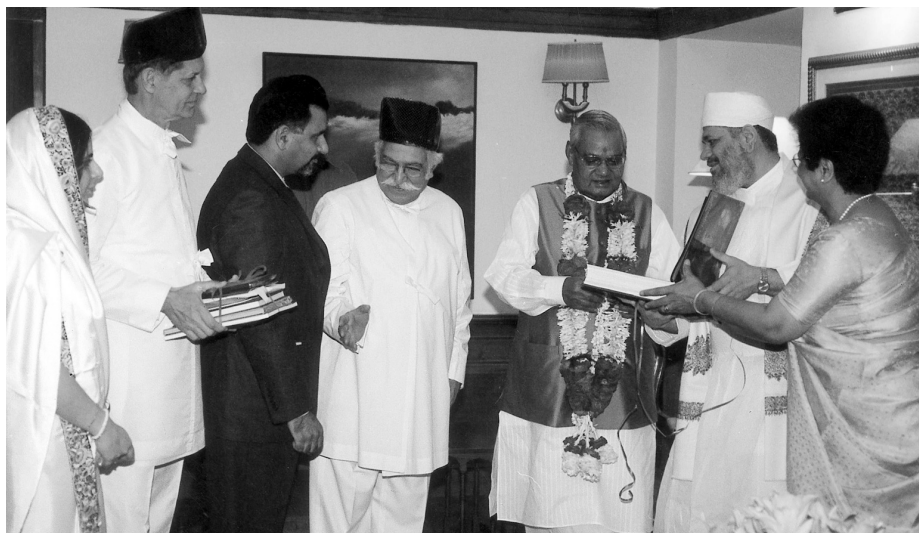
The British Museum, in the Great Court, organized Nouruz celebrations April 2nd to 4th, with Zurkhaneh gymnasts (Iranian wrestlers), Sufi dancers, traditional musicians, craftsmen at work and much more. All events were open to the public at no charge.

This is the first time that the British Museum has organized Nouruz celebrations on such a scale.

PHOTOGRAPH: COURTESY MANUCHEHR IRANPOUR



**The Pahlavi family celebrating Nouruz.** In an interview with Barbara Walters on ABC TV's 20/20 program, on March 5th, the Shahbanou revealed new insights into her life as Empress of Iran, and her life in the USA, after the 1979 revolution. Visit [www.farahpahlavi.org](http://www.farahpahlavi.org).



**Navroz celebration with Prime Minister of India.** From left, Mrs. Havovi Dastur, Dr. Homi Dhalla, a Zarathushti scholar, Dadi Mistry (vice president of the Delhi Anjuman and WZO, and director of WZCC) the Hon. Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee, prime minister of India, Dastur Khurshed Kaikobad Dastur, high priest of Iranshah Udvada, and Mrs. Nergish Mistry.

The group visited the Hon. Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee, at his residence, on Navroz morning. Havovi, wife of the Vada Dasturji felicitated the PM with the traditional 'ses sagan', which included a pair of Dadabhai Naoroji commemorative coins. Mistry presented him with the magnificent "The Zoroastrian Tapestry" by Feroza Punthakey Mistree and Pheroza Godrej. The group assured the PM of the support of the Zarathushtis in the growth of India, and appealed for help in restoration of Zarathushti heritage sites. The PM then surprised the group by serving a delicious traditional Navroze breakfast of sev, dahi, falooda – and a lot of joy and goodwill.





## The Chenoy of Secunderabad and Hyderabad

*Above, over 100 members of the illustrious Chinoy family gather for the bi-centennial anniversary celebrations at the Chenoy Anjuman Dar-e-Mehr and the Bai Pirojbai Chenoy Hall, in Secunderabad. Inset: Mithoo (Chenoy) Coorlawala.*

On February 3, 2004, the Chenoy of Secunderabad and Hyderabad (India) celebrated 200 years of their family's glorious history and heritage in the twin cities. One hundred of the 120 in the family clan attended from different parts of the world, including Navroze Chenoy from Canada and Jehangir and Maneck (Chenoy) Kotwal from the US. The youngest was 4-year-old Arman Homi D. Chenoy and the oldest was Mr. Keki Dalal, great grand-son of the family's earliest ancestor, Khan Bahadur Edulji Chenoy, who had come to the 'City of Nawabs' in 1803.

Over two centuries the Chenoy family has produced men of outstanding ability, recognized and respected for their meritorious service by the Nizam. They were businessmen, industrialists, philanthropists, nationalists, administrators, legal luminaries, financiers generously rewarded with titles of Nawab, Subedar (governor), Sadr-ul-Maham of the Sarf-e-Khas Mubarak etc. Nawab Darab Jung Bahadur was the only Parsi minister in the government of the Nizam.

In 1950, the Nizam's rule came to an end with the formation of the State of Andhra Pradesh. Since then, the present generation has continued to excel nationally and internationally in medicine, finance, accountancy, banking, business, teaching, fine arts and social service among others.

To commemorate this occasion the family minted a special silver coin bearing the face of Khan Bahadur Seth Eduljee Sohrabji Chenoy. A souvenir of the family's history of fame and fortune under the Nizam VI of Hyderabad was also prepared. A message of greetings and congratulations was sent by Hoshang M. Chenoy, vice-president Cobra Beer, New York. A jashan in the Chenoy Anjuman Dar-e Mehr at Secunderabad was followed by festivities and an elegant, traditional dinner, in the Bai Pirojbai Chenoy Hall.

*By Dolly Dastoor, based on article by Mithi Chenoy.*

## Daughter of the founder of Pakistan visits to watch India-Pakistan cricket match

*[Excerpted from articles in Pakistan's newspaper "Dawn", March 25 and 27, 2004, submitted by Shahrokh Mehta]*

"I am here to enjoy the fifth and final match between Pakistan and India", said Dina Wadia, daughter (and only child) of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan.

She arrived in Lahore in a special plane along with her son, prominent Indian businessman and owner of Bombay Dyeing, Nusli Wadia, his wife Maureen and their children Jehangir and Ness, on the invitation of the Pakistan Cricket Board.

President Pervez Musharraf specifically came to Lahore to see the Wadia family.

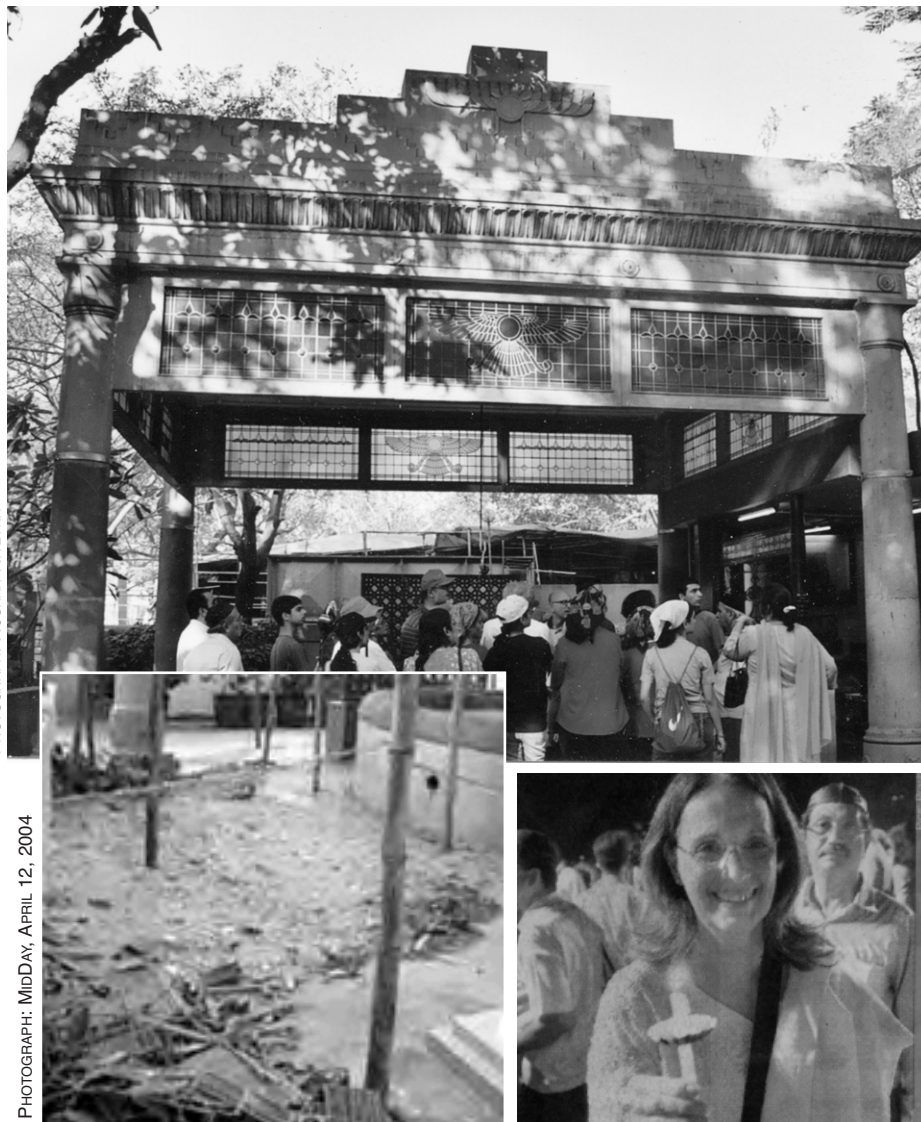
Dina Wadia, who lives in the USA, visited the mausoleum of her father, in Karachi and laid a floral wreath. She arrived in tight security, as buglers paid their respects.

"This is the happiest moment of my life to be in Pakistan," said Wadia, who had never visited Pakistan in her father's lifetime. Her first visit was at his death, 56 years ago, when hundreds of thousands of Pakistanis paid their last respects to the Father of the Nation.

"This has been very sad and wonderful for me. May his dream for Pakistan come true," wrote Dina Wadia in the visitors' book, reflecting the emotional experience she had gone through during this visit.

Nusli Wadia wrote in the visitors' book: "My dream to come here has been fulfilled. I will come back to see his dream come true."

The renewed cricketing relations between Pakistan and India had provided Dina Wadia the opportunity not only to watch the final game of the series, but also the tremendous emotional experience of visiting the nation founded by her father. ■



## Bhika Behram well vandalized

The 279-year-old Bhika Behram well, a Parsi heritage site, at Churchgate, in downtown Mumbai, was vandalized, by unidentified miscreants on the night of March 11.

Trust members suspect hawkers in the area. "Even though the Supreme Court ordered the area to be cleared of hawkers, they've refused to move." The hawkers deny the charge. Over 2,000 Zarathushtis congregated at Azad Maidan, in an unprecedented gathering in recent history, for a candlelight vigil, on April 13th, to voice their anguish over this incident and lack of followup by the police.

The Bhika Behram well Trust is talking to artists from Kolkata, about replacing the rare panels.

The well, a heritage structure, is a venerated place of worship for the Parsis, who come to light a *divo* and offer prayers at the site.

**History of the well.** In 1725 a Parsi, Bhikaji, who came to Mumbai from Bharuch to seek his fortune, dug the well to provide drinking water.

At that time, the well was on the oceanfront. In the ensuing years, large areas were reclaimed from the ocean to form present-day Churchgate and Marine Drive.

The well was venerated by the Parsis for providing sweet drinking water, even while neighboring wells all had salty water. *[Based on articles in MidDay, March 15 and April 12, 2004, submitted by A. B. Damania]*

*Clockwise, rare stained glass panels with the farohar motif, embellish the canopy over the venerable Bhika Behram well, before the vandalism on March 11; Phiroza Godrej was among the 2,000 Zarathushtis that held a candlelight vigil at Azad Maidan to voice their anguish over the incident and lack of police followup; debris of the panels, which will remain empty until replacements are made.*

### ARCHEOLOGY

#### Research project on "Zoroastrian Monuments in Azerbaijan"

*Sami Pishnamazzade* of Ganja State University in Azerbaijan, and *Orkhan A. Gurbanov*, a history teacher in Goranboy, Azerbaijan, are seeking support for a 2-year research project on "Zoroastrian Monuments in Azerbaijan."

Such research has not hitherto been possible under the Soviet regime, which "tried in every way possible to erase the history of all old relics of the people, from the memory of the Azeris." Today, with the independence of Azerbaijan, this has opened up.

The bulk of their research activities (about 1 year) will be spent locating and studying Zarathushti architectural monuments in various regions of Azerbaijan – Nakhichevan, Gandja-Gazekh, Sheki-Zakatala, Guba-Khachmaz, Lenkora-Astara, Daglig Shirvan, Aran and Absheron.

In each of these locations, they will need support for a place to stay, a telephone dialer, computer accessibility and supplies.

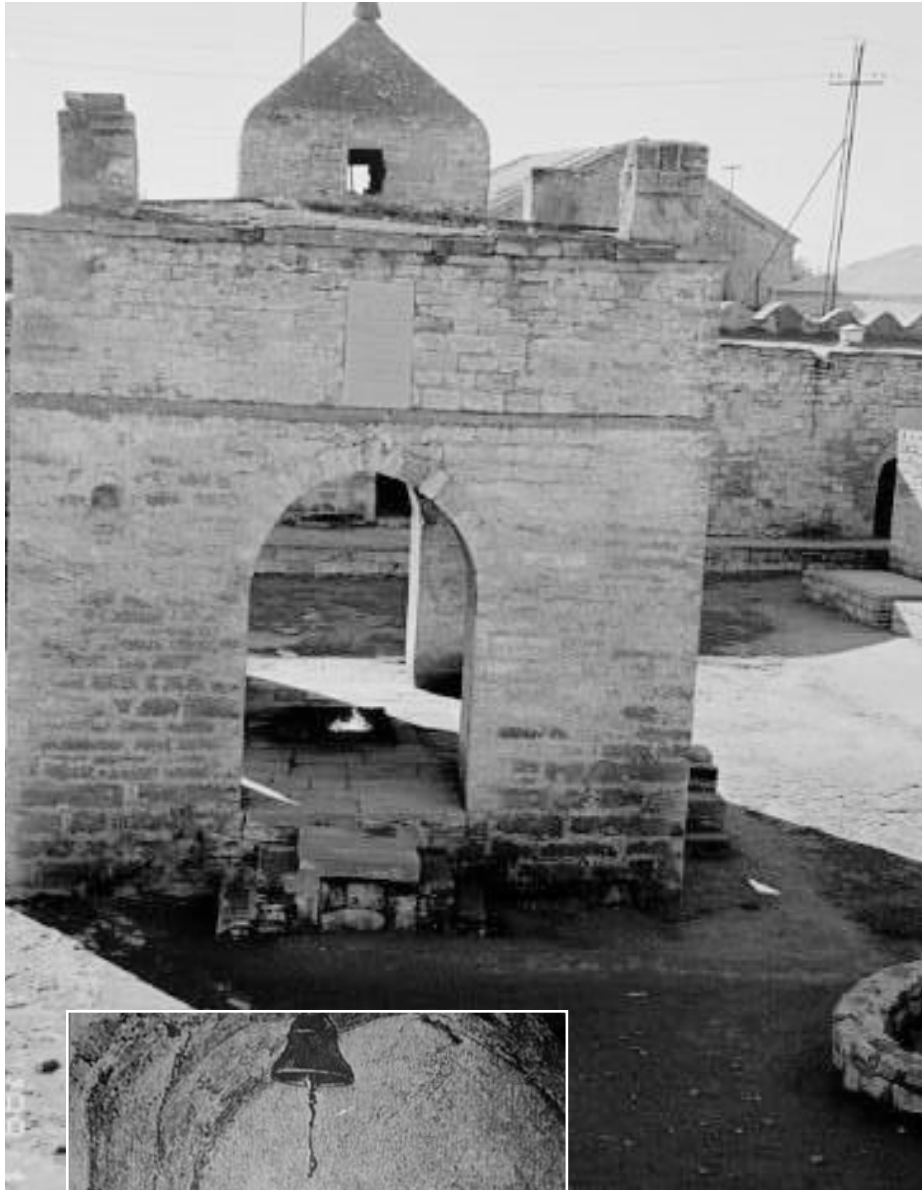
The researchers hope their research will prevent recurrence of abuses of the past in relation to Zarathushti monuments.

For information, contact: [pishnamazzadesp@mail.ru](mailto:pishnamazzadesp@mail.ru) or [orkhangurbanov@yahoo.com](mailto:orkhangurbanov@yahoo.com).



# Ateshgah at Baku, Azerbaijan, “Land of Fires”

Account of a visit to the shrine and nearby Azerbaijan History Museum



“I was in Baku, Azerbaijan a few years ago on a business trip and was fortunate to be able to see the old Atashgah and other attractions in that area,” writes Nano Daroowala, of Houston. “I also visited Azerbaijan History Museum. What caught my attention was a painting of a ship named ‘Zoroaster’. The caption, in Russian read:

“1878 ZOROASTER,  
1st Oil ship in the World.”

The Intourist brochure describes the history of the temple:

“The historical roots of the monument go back to the hoary past, to the days when Azerbaijan statehood was taking shape and Zoroastrianism, the central part in whose ritual is played by fire, was the dominant religion in the country.

“The flaming torches of gas escaping from under the ground and burning in many places all over the Apsheron Peninsula, were believed to have miraculous, divine powers.

“These ancient fires have given Azerbaijan its name, which is ‘Land of Fires.’”

The temple, 25 feet in height, shows evidence of gas pipes in the center and four corners, from which the flames would rise. The surrounding structures include prayer cells, stables and guest rooms, built in the 17th to 19th centuries, for Indian (Hindu) merchant caravans. The inscriptions on the walls, all in Sanskrit and Hindi (none in Persian), attest to the Hindu origin of the temple.

A. V. W. Jackson [*FEZANA Journal*, Fall 2002, p. 77] also concludes that the present shrine, barely more than two centuries old, is more Indian than Persian, although possibly the site itself may have been a hallowed one in ancient times. ■

By Roshan Rivetna, based on materials from Nano Daroowala, Houston.



Above, the 18th century atashgah at Surakhany, near Baku. According to the guide, the circular stone enclosure on the right was used as a cremation place by Hindus.

Picture of a devotee in front of the flames, at the museum. The caption, in Russian, reads “Flame admirers in city of Baku in Caspian Sea.”

PHOTOGRAPHS: NANO DAROOWALA

## COMING EVENTS

### 2004 Zarathushti Games

The 9th 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. Contact [zsc@fezana.org](mailto:zsc@fezana.org) or [www.zsbc.org](http://www.zsbc.org) [see page 23].

### Parliament of Religions, Barcelona 2004

The 4th Parliament of the World's Religions will be July 7-13, 2004 in Barcelona, Spain. Registration is \$495. The Parliament will be preceded, from July 4-6, by the "Assembly of Religious and Spiritual Leaders", in Montserrat, Spain. Visit [www.cpwr.org](http://www.cpwr.org) or contact CPWR trustee Rohinton Rivetna [[rivetna@aol.com](mailto:rivetna@aol.com)] who is coordinating the Zarathushti participation.

### UN DPI/NGO conference

The 57th Annual DPI/NGO Conference on "Millennium Development Goals: Civil Society Takes Action", will be held September 8-10, 2004, at UN Headquarters, NY. Contact: Homi Gandhi at [homi\\_gandhi@usa.net](mailto:homi_gandhi@usa.net) or Behram Pastakia at [bpastakia@aol.com](mailto:bpastakia@aol.com)) [See page 10].

### CESS - call for papers

The Central Eurasian Studies Society (CESS) invites panel and paper proposals for the **Fifth CESS Annual Conference**, October 14-17, 2004, at Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana [<http://cess.fas.harvard.edu>].

### 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, [nazehler@aol.com](mailto:nazehler@aol.com) [see page 24].

### WZCC Business Conference and Luncheon

The NA Congress 2004 and the World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce,

## Calendar of Festivals May - December

<b>Daye Mah nu Jashan</b> <i>Mah Daye, Roz Fravardin</i>	Wed May 5 Thu Jun 4	(K) (S)
<b>Maidhyarem Gahambar</b> <i>Mah Daye, Roz Meher-Behram</i>	Sun May 2 - Thu May 6 Tue Jun 1 - Sat Jun 5	(K) (S)
<b>Homaji Baj</b> <i>Mah Daye, Roz Govad</i>	Mon Jun 7	(S)
<b>Pir-e Sabz Festival</b> <i>Mah Khordad, Roz Ashtad-Aneran</i>	Mon Jun 14 - Jun 18	(F)
<b>Pir-e Banu Festival</b> <i>Mah Tir, Roz Meher-Behram</i>	Sun Jul 4 - Jul 8	(F)
<b>Maidyoshem Gahambar</b> <i>Mah Tir, Roz Khorshed-Daepmeher</i>	Tue Jun 29 - Jul 3	(F)
<b>Jashne Tirgan</b> <i>Mah Tir, Roz Tir</i>	Thu Jul 1	(F)
<b>Fravardegan/Muktad</b> <i>Five Gatha Days</i>	Fri Jul 16 - Jul 20 Sun Aug 15 - Aug 19	(K) (S)
<b>(Pateti) Navroz</b> <i>Mah Fravardin, Roz Hormazd</i>	Wed Jul 21 Fri Aug 20	(K) (S)
<b>Khordad Sal (Birthday of Zarathushtra)</b> <i>Mah Fravardin, Roz Khordad</i>	Mon Jul 26 Wed Aug 25	(K) (S)
<b>Fravardian Jashan</b> <i>Mah Fravardin, Roz Fravardin</i>	Sun Aug 8 Tue Sep 7	(K) (S)
<b>Maidyozarem Gahambar</b> <i>Mah Ardibehesht, Roz Khorshed - Daepmeher</i>	Mon Aug 30 - Fri Sep 3 Wed Sep 29 - Sun Oct 3	(K) (S)
<b>Paitishem Gahambar</b> <i>Mah Sheherevar, Roz Ashtad - Aneran</i>	Sun Sep 12 - Thu Sep 16	(F)
<b>Jashne-Mehergan</b> <i>Mah Meher, Roz Meher</i>	Sat Oct 2	(F)
<b>Ayathrem Gahambar</b> <i>Mah Meher, Roz Ashtad - Aneran</i>	Tue Oct 12 - Sat Oct 16	(F)
<b>Jashne-Avangan (Avan Ardivisur Parab)</b> <i>Mah Avan, Roz Avan</i>	Tue Oct 26	(F)
<b>Maidyoshem Gahambar</b> <i>Mah Tir, Roz Khorshed - Daepmeher</i>	Fri Oct 29 - Tue Nov 2 Sun Nov 28 - Thu Dec 2	(K) (S)
<b>Jashne-Adargan</b> <i>Mah Adar, Roz Adar</i>	Wed Nov 24	(F)
<b>Death Anniversary of Zarathushtra</b> <i>Mah Daye, Roz Khorshed</i>	Sun Dec 26	(F)

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



## IN COMING ISSUES OF **FEZANA** JOURNAL

Fall 2004:

**A guide to Common Rituals,  
Customs and Festivals**

Winter 2004:

**Death and the Hereafter**

*Guest Editor:*

Farrokh Mistree

*Co-Guest Editor:*

Khojeste Mistree

Spring 2005:

**Vegetation on Earth**

*Guest Editor:* Sam Kerr

Summer 2005:

**Social Justice and Ethics**

*Guest Editor:* Suzie Karani

*Future topics in the works:*

- Treasures from the Avesta:  
Yasna, Vispered, Vendidad  
(Fall 2005, Guest Editor  
Pallan Ichaporia)
- Focus on Youth  
(Winter 2005, Guest Editor  
Mahrukh Motafram)

# 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  
Behramsha Mizan at  
bmizan@hotmail.com or  
Homi Italia at (604) 438-2076  
or visit

**www.zsbc.org**

WZCC, will hold a **Business Conference** on December 28, 2004 and a **Business Luncheon** on December 31, in San Francisco. Contact Edul Daver at (732) 469-1866, [daver@acupowder.com](mailto:daver@acupowder.com) [see page 79].

## NA Congress 2006

The XIVth North American Congress has been awarded to the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario. For information, contact Roshan Sethna, chair, FEZANA NA Congress Committee, at [rosh@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rosh@sbcglobal.net).

## "Year of Aryan Civilization", Tajikistan, 2006

President Emomali Rahmonov of Tajikistan has declared year 2006 as "The **Year of Aryan Civilization** to further protect and value the intellectual treasures of our ancestors ..."

## EIGHTH WORLD ZOROASTRIAN CONGRESS, 2005

**London, UK, July 1 - 8, 2005**

It is now confirmed that the Eighth World Zoroastrian Congress, hosted by ZTFE, the Zoroastrian Trust funds of Europe will be in London, UK, during the week of Friday, July 1 to Friday, July 8, 2005.

**KEEP YOURSELVES FREE!**

*For more information or to deliver a paper, please contact:*

*Chair:* Dorab E. Mistry

*Co vice-chairs:* Rusi K. Dalal  
and Malcolm M. Deboo.

*Email:* [library@ztfe.com](mailto:library@ztfe.com)

*Tel:* +44 20 7328 6018

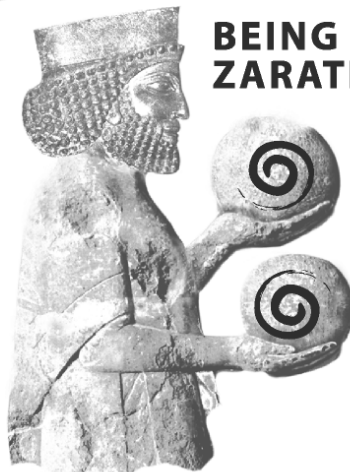
*Fax:* +44 20 7625 1685

## ZOROASTRIAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

*CALL FOR MUSICIANS*

The **Zoroastrian Symphony Orchestra (ZSO)** invites musicians, professionals or amateurs, to participate as part of the Eighth World Zoroastrian Congress in London, UK, in July 2005. Composers and conductors are also invited to apply. ZSO performances in Houston and Chicago were largely considered as one of the major highlights by congress attendees, and we hope to continue to enlarge as well as enhance the standards of the Orchestra.

Contact Cyrus Mehta at [cyrusmehta@aol.com](mailto:cyrusmehta@aol.com) to voice and/or confirm your intent. ■



## 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](mailto:etarapore@bigfoot.com)

*Publicity chair:* Nazneen Spliedt, [nazehler@aol.com](mailto:nazehler@aol.com)

*Website:* **[www.zanc.org/congress](http://www.zanc.org/congress)**

**Theme: “Being Zarathushti: Looking at Issues, Searching for Answers”**

*Hosted by ZANC in association with FEZANA*

**Program:** The program revolves around the theme “*Being Zarathushti: Looking at Issues, Searching for Answers.*” Some of the topics for discussion will be: Relevance of Zoroastrianism in the 21st Century; Zoroastrianism in the Internet Age; Zoroastrian Archaeology and efforts to preserve our heritage; What we need to do to assure the future of Zoroastrianism in North America; Inter-faith marriages; The Message of the Gathas.

**Pre- and Post-Congress Programs:** Visit the website for information on sight-seeing tours, FEZANA meetings/workshops.

**WZCC Chamber of Commerce:** There will be a full day Business Conference on Dec 28th and a Business Luncheon on December 29th. Business persons and professionals are invited. Visit the website for information.

**Speakers:** Prominent community members, university professors and scholars as well as speakers from different backgrounds and perspectives have been invited to discuss the many varied topics.

**Youth:** “*California Gold Rush*” for youth 15-30 years, includes San Francisco city tour and a late evening fun event “*California Caliente*” – a dance evening geared to the youth and adults.

**Entertainment:** Entertainment to suit all age groups will include “*A Night in the Golden State*” with welcome dinner; “*A Touch of Persia*” – a night of special Persian food and entertainment; and “*A Night among the Stars*” – Gala New Year’s Eve Dinner. We encourage you to **WEAR TRADITIONAL CLOTHES** to all events.

**Z-Bazaar:** Entrepreneurs, artists and businesses will have a place to display their wares at the **Z-Bazaar**. This is an excellent opportunity to reach a large and varied audience.

**Registration:** Visit [www.zanc.org/congress](http://www.zanc.org/congress). On this site you can register for the congress, find instructions on how to reserve your hotel room, book your car or reserve tables for the Z-Bazaar. **Take advantage of Early Bird registration prices valid until June 30, 2004.**

**Accommodations:** The Santa Clara Marriott Hotel, in the heart of Silicon Valley, is located 4 miles north of San Jose International Airport, and 26 miles south of San Francisco International Airport.

**Room Rates:** \$69 per room (plus taxes) for up to 4 persons, valid from December 24, 2004 – Jan 3, 2005.

Contact Marriott central reservations at 800-228-9290, and specify “Event Code NAZNAZA” to get the discount.

**Advertising:** Here is an opportunity for you as an individual, your association or your business to advertise or send a message in the program brochure. Order forms and advertising rates are on the web site. There is a special discount for FEZANA member associations. ■

















# treasures from the avesta: niyayishns and yashts

Guest editor Jamsheed K. Choksy

**W**riting in the fifth century BCE, the Greek historian Herodotus commented about the Zarathushtis of ancient Iran: “They offer worship to the sun, moon, earth, fire, water, and wind” [*History* 1.131]. That tradition of devotional praise continues to the present through the *niyayishns* (or *niyayesh*) and *yashts*.

These devotional songs form part of the scripture known as the *Khwurdag Abestag* (*Khordeh Avesta*) or ‘Concise Praise’, a prayer book central to the lives of all devout Zarathushtis worldwide. So *niyayishns* and *yashts* are recited in a variety of settings from the halls of fire temples to the beaches of seas, in the sunlight and the moonlight, by worshippers offering praise and seeking assistance from God.

The views expressed herein are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of FEZANA or FEZANA Journal.



# A guide to some treasures from the Avesta

In this short essay, we will provide a concise introduction of the *niyayishns* (or *niyayesh*) and the *yashts* that form part of the Avesta. It is hoped that this overview will clarify some questions that readers may have, while setting the stage for the articles that follow: “Contents of the *Niyayishns* or *Niyayesh*,” “Transmission of the *Yashts*,” “*Aredvi Sura Anahita*” and “Devotional Uses of the *Niyayishns* and *Yashts*.”

by *Jamsheed K. Choksy and Firoze M. Kotwal*

## The *Niyayishns* (*Niyayesh*)

The Middle Persian or Pahlavi term *niyayishn* means “invocation of praise or devotional song.” Its New Persian or Farsi rendition *niyayesh* carries the same meaning. Both can be compared to the Sanskrit term *gayati* “to sing,” *gita* “devotional song,” and the Avestan *gatha*, “devotional song,” with the verbal prefix *ni-*.

There are five *niyayishns*, each addressed to a *yazata* (*yazad*) or spiritual entity and the element of nature linked to that spirit. The five *niyayishns* are (the first term denotes the technical name, others are variant forms):

1. **Khwarshed** (or **Khorshed**) *Niyayishn* directed to the Sun.
2. **Mihr** (or **Meher**) *Niyayishn* directed to Mithra.
3. **Mah** (or **Mah Bakhtar**, **Mah Bokhtar**) *Niyayishn* directed to the Moon.
4. **Aban** (or **Awan**, **Avan**, **Ava**) *Niyayishn* directed to Water.
5. **Atakhsh** (or **Atash**, **Atash Behram**) *Niyayishn* directed to Fire.

## The *Yashts*

A Middle Persian or Pahlavi term, also used in New Persian or Farsi by Zarathushtis, *yasht* means “devotional poem.” Each *yasht* is an invocation in honor of a *yazata* who is worthy of worship, spirits whose praise was

assimilated into the Zarathushti religion from earliest Iranian piety.

There are twenty-one surviving *yashts* and three variants, having divergent dates of oral composition, canonization, and codification. They also differ in length and poetical elegance. The names of these *yashts* are (the first term denotes the technical name, the others are variant forms):

1. **Ohrmazd** (or **Hormazd**) *Yasht* to the Wise Lord.
2. **Haft Amahraspand** (or **Haft Ameshaspand**, **Haftan**) *Yasht* to the Amesha Spentas or holy immortals.
3. **Ardwahišt** (or **Ardibehesht**) *Yasht* to the Amesha Spenta Asha Vahishta or best righteousness, prayer.
4. **Hordad** (or **Khordad**, **Awerdad**) *Yasht* to the Amesha Spenta Haurvatat or integrity, wholeness.
5. **Ardwisur** (or **Aban**, **Awan**, **Avan**, **Ava**) *Yasht* to the feminine water spiritual entity Aredvi Sura Anahita.
6. **Khwarshed** (or **Khorshed**) *Yasht* to the *yazata* Khwarshed, the Sun.
7. **Mah** (or **Mah Bakhtar**, **Mah Bokhtar**) *Yasht* to the *yazata* Mah, the Moon.
8. **Tishtar** *Yasht* the star Tishtrya (or Sirius), which has religiously been confused with Tir or the planet Mercury.



**Jamsheed Kairshasp Choksy** is Professor of Central Eurasian Studies, Professor of History, and Adjunct Professor of Religious Studies at Indiana University. He holds a BA in Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures from Columbia University and a Ph.D. in the History and Religions of the Near East and Inner Asia with the major field of Iranian Studies from Harvard University. He has been a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study (Princeton), a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellow, and an Andrew W. Mellon Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences (Stanford). Choksy is an elected Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland (London) and of the Explorers Club (New York City).

**Firoze M. Kotwal** [see photo and biodata on page 64]

9. **Druwasp (or Drvasp) Yasht** to the feminine horse spiritual entity, the yazata Drvaspa .
10. **Mihr (or Meher) Yasht** to Mithra, the covenant and solar yazata or spiritual entity.
11. **Srosh (or Sarosh) Yasht Hadokht**, an extract to Sraosha, the yazata or spiritual entity of observance and prayer, together with:
- 11a. **Srosh (or Sarosh) Yasht Wadi [Yasna 57]**, the greater yasht to Sraosha.
- 11b. **Srosh (or Sarosh) Yasht i Keh [Yasna 56]**, the lesser yasht to Sraosha (not in Khordeh Avesta but the term is found in Yasna manuscripts where Yasna 56 is so titled).
12. **Rashn (or Rashna) Yasht** to Rashnu, the yazata of spiritual judgment.
13. **Frawardin (or Farvardin) Yasht** to the fravashis or immortal souls of humans.
14. **Wahram (or Behram) Yasht** to Verethraghna, the yazata or spiritual entity of victory.
15. **Ram Yasht** to Vayu (or Way), the yazata or spiritual entity of the celestial wind.
16. **Den (or Din) Yasht** to the yazata or feminine spiritual entity of insight or religious knowledge known as Cista or Cisti (pronounced Chista or Chisti).
17. **Ard (Ahrishwang, Ashishwang) Yasht** to Ard, the feminine yazata or spiritual entity of recompense.
18. **Ashtad Yasht** to Arshtat, the feminine yazata of order, rectitude and justice.
19. **Zamyad Yasht** to fortune or glory.
20. **Hom Yasht [Yasna 8.9 - 10.21]** to Haoma, the yazata or spiritual entity of the haoma plant. Parsis call this yasht the **Moti** (larger) **Hom Yasht**. There is also the **Nani** (smaller) **Hom Yasht**, an extract from Yasna 9 to Haoma.
21. **Wanand Yasht** to the star Vega.

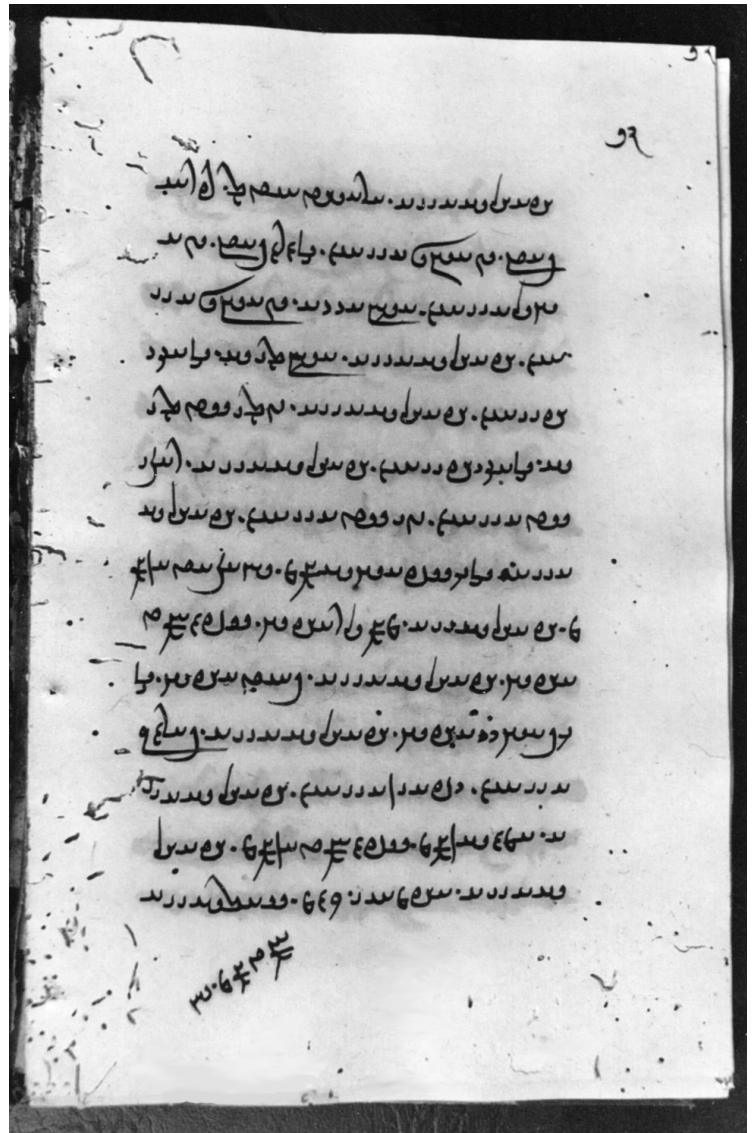
#### FURTHER READING

- [1] Geldner, Karl F. *Avesta: The Sacred Books of the Parsis*, vol. 2. Stuttgart, 1895, reprint Delhi, 1982.
- [2] Lommel, Herman. *Die Yäsht's des Awesta*. Göttingen, 1927.
- [3] *Niyayesh and Yashts*, [http://www.avesta.org/ka/ka\\_tc.htm](http://www.avesta.org/ka/ka_tc.htm)
- [4] Pour-e Davoud, Ibrahim. *Introduction to the Yashts*, 2 vols. Bombay, 1928, Tehran, 1968.
- [5] Wolff, Fritz. *Die heiligen Bücher der Parsen*. Strasburg, 1910, reprint Berlin 1960.

#### COMPANION FEZANA JOURNALS

This issue of FEZANA Journal is companion to:

- [1] Ichaporia, Pallan, Ed. *Journey of the Avesta*. FEZANA Journal, Winter 1998. A historical review of the entire corpus of Zarathushti religious literature.
- [2] Manekshaw, Sarosh J. H. *Treasures from the Avesta: Our Daily Prayers*, FEZANA Journal, Summer 2003. ■



A page from *Srosh Yasht Hadokht*, from a manuscript of the Khordeh Avesta, handwritten in the Avestan script. c. 1750. COLLECTION: FIROZE M. KOTWAL. PHOTOGRAPH: CYRUS RIVETNA

All religious texts like the *niyayishns* or *niyayesh*, literally songs or prayers, are important in the lives of the people of the faith. Yet it is necessary to know the ancient Avestan texts well to understand all the mythological allusions, and there are even some that we still do not quite understand. In the following I shall try to explain what the songs refer to in the beliefs and myths of the ancient Zarathushtis.



# contents of the niyayishns or niyayesh

by P. Oktor Skjærvø

## The Songs

The *niyayishns* (Persian: *niyayesh*) are five Avestan prayers recited on a number of occasions. The Pahlavi word *niyayishn* originally meant ‘song’ or perhaps ‘invocation.’ An even older form may have been something like *nigaya*, which contains the same syllable *ga* meaning ‘sing’ that we find in *gatha*, ‘song.’ With *ni-* it probably meant ‘directing a song at’ or ‘invoking.’

The *niyayishns* are relatively short versions of much longer hymns, the *yashts*, which are reserved for solemn occasions – for instance, the very long *Yasht 10* to Mithra (Mihr or Meher) was performed at the *Mihragan* (*Mehergan*) festival. The *niyayishns*, on the other hand, performed once or several times daily or monthly, needed to be shorter. This does not necessarily mean that the *niyayishns* are simply abbreviations of *yashts*. Nor does it mean that they are later than the *yashts* in any sense. Presumably, short prayers always coexisted with the longer hymns. Finally, it certainly does not imply that these prayers are, in any way, of inferior quality to the *yashts*.

Pahlavi translations of the *niyayishns* are preserved, as well as the Sanskrit translation made by Neriosang the son of Dhaval in the twelfth century. There are also Gujarati and Persian translations. This is typical of texts that were popular and often used by lay Zarathushtris.

There are five *niyayishns*, which today are contained in the *Khordeh Avesta*. Parts of the texts are in *Avestan*, the language of the Avesta, other parts are in *Pahlavi*, that is, the Middle Persian language of Sasanian Iran, and parts are in early modern *Persian*. In the manuscripts, however, all these texts are written in Avestan script. When Pahlavi and Persian are written in Avestan script they are called *Pazand*. The *Pazand* in the *niyayishns* is quite late, ‘Persianized’ one might say, containing many Arabic words.

The five *niyayishns* are the Song to the Sun (Khwarshed or Khorshed *Niyayishn*), the Song to Mithra (Mihr or Meher *Niyayishn*), the Song to the Moon (Mah, Bah Bakhtar or Mah Bokhtar *Niyayishn*), the Song to the Waters (Aban or Avan *Niyayishn*), and the Song to the Fire (Atakhsh or Atash *Niyayishn*).

## 1. The Song to the Sun (Khwarshed, Khorshed *Niyayishn*)

This prayer is recited three times a day at the *Hawan* (Havan) gah or daybreak, *Rapithwin* (Rapithwan) gah or noon, and *Uzerin* (Uzirehn) gah or sunset. The text varies at one crucial point, depending on when it is recited, referring to the sun’s rising, its highest position in the sky, or its setting.

It is important to remember that the sun is regarded as the heavenly fire and Ahura Mazda’s own son. It is the sun that makes light and warms the earth and makes it fertile, so that it can produce all good things for living beings. The sun is also said to be Ahura Mazda’s eye, which is a very old concept, presupposing that Ahura Mazda was in fact visualized as the day-lit sky itself.

Herodotus tells us: “The Persians call the entire heaven Zeus,” that is, Ahura Mazda. That God is represented by his most beautiful creation is, of course, not surprising.

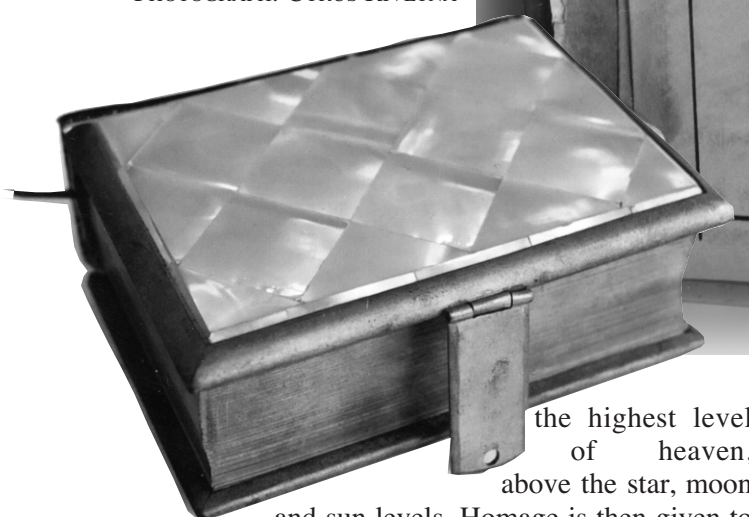
The Song to the Sun starts with a short invocation, in *Pazand*, of Ohrmazd (Ahura Mazda) as the creator who is powerful, just, merciful, and so on, before the Avestan text starts with:

Homage to you, O Ahura Mazda,  
three times beyond other creatures!

Various explanations have been proposed for the expression “three times beyond other creatures.” It may originally refer to Ahura Mazda’s dwelling place as being on

*Khordeh Avesta, in Gujarati script, published in 1263 Yz. (1894). The preface states the book was bound in genuine mother-of-pearl to protect the volume from damp, and to inspire those who took it with them on their travels, to remember to recite their prayers.*

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the highest level of heaven, above the star, moon and sun levels. Homage is then given to the Amesha Spentas (here translated as life-giving immortals), the Fravashis or pre-souls of righteous humans (which play an important role in birth, notably that of the sun), and Vayu or the spirit of the intermediate space between heaven and earth (through which the sun has to travel) [1]:

Homage to you, O life-giving immortals,  
all having the same pleasure in the sun (as Ahura Mazda)!  
This (homage) will come to Ahura Mazda,  
to the life-giving immortals,  
to the pre-souls of the sustainers of order,  
to Vayu, long obeying his own law.

The song continues with the following statements, which are also uttered at the beginning of the Yasna ceremony:

Through (my) satisfaction of Ahura Mazda,  
through (my) disdain of Angra Mainyu (the Evil Spirit)

“On account of my true (act or utterance) may what is most invigorated be produced as your matching gift!”

This expresses the way a Zarathushti takes sides in the struggle between good and evil in the world. The quotation in those lines is the end of the Vohukshathra Gatha and expresses that, in return for humans’ efforts to aid Ahura Mazda in the cosmic battle, God should reinvigorate the world, making it fertile for humanity.

The reciter then praises Ahura Mazda’s order by reciting the Ashem Vohu prayer: “I praise Asha (order): ‘Order is the best good...’” which expresses that, when humans do

their best to match Ahura Mazda’s order in their lives, then God will keep reproducing it and humans will be rewarded with their heart’s desire.

The reciter then recommends that one should embrace good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, but reject evil thoughts, words, and deeds. He or she offers the yasna and the hymns to the Amesha Spentas, together with nothing less than his or her own self.

After these introductory statements, homage to Ahura Mazda and his creations resumes, this time including Mithra, who travels before the sun and clears its path of evil enemies, the bull and Gaya Martan (Gayomard) – that is, the first two living creatures, the pre-soul of Zarathushtra, and, finally, Ahura Mazda’s entire creation in time – past, present and future.

This is followed by a praise of the sun taken from the Gathas and the Yasna Haptanghaiti, which differs according to the *gah* or time of the day at which the Khorshed Niyayishn it is uttered.

**At Hawan gah or sunrise:** “Keep growing in body at wish by (my/your) good thought, by (my/your) command and Order!” [Ys. 33.10].

**At Rapithwin (Rapithwan) gah or noon:** “These lights, yonder highest of heights” [Ys. 36.6].

**At Uzerin (Uzirehn) gah or sunset:** “The turn at which you come with your life-giving inspiration [Spenta Mainyu, Ys. 43.6].

While the first two phrases are immediately clear, the third refers to the turn of the ‘race course,’ as it were, that the sun hurries along during the day, turning back at sun-



set to go back to the 'starting line,' ready for another race the next morning.

The reciter then offers worship (*yazamaide*) to Mithra, who is linked to the sun's journey across the sky, describing him with usual epithets as the one who watches over the good functioning of the world, never sleeping, always awake. Worship is offered next in the *niyayishn* to the sun, as well as several important entities worthy of worship in the world of thought and in the world of the living (*mainyava/gaethiya yazata*), among them Tishtrya or the Dog star, and other stars which herald the rainy season, Thvasha or the firmament, which measures time, and Time itself both eternal time and time limited to the duration of Ahura Mazda's creation.

Then follows the Fravarane or profession of faith, by which a Zarathushti pledges himself to worship Ahura Mazda. This in turn is followed by a praise of the *gah* or time of day at which the prayer is uttered.

Only at this point does praise of the sun itself commence in the *niyayishn*:

We worship the radiant Sun,  
immortal, resplendent, and with fleet horses.  
Thus, when he makes the Sun shine in light,  
thus, when he makes the Sun illuminate the light,  
(then) those worthy of worship in the world of thought  
take up their positions, a hundred and a thousand.  
They carry together those gifts of fortune. [2]  
They convey down those gifts of fortune.  
They apportion those gifts of fortune  
over the Earth established by (Ahura) Mazda.  
It furthers the living beings of order.  
It furthers them for the body of order.  
Thus, when the Sun rises,  
there is purification of the Earth  
established by Ahura (Mazda),  
there is purification of the flowing Water,  
there is purification of the Water of the wells,  
there is purification of the Water of the seas,  
there is purification of the standing Water,  
there is purification of the orderly living beings that are  
those of the life-giving inspiration (Spenta Mainyu).  
For if the Sun does not rise,  
then all the daevas (evil gods)  
destroy (all the living beings)  
that are in the seven continents,  
and those worthy of worship in the world of thought –  
not one (of them) – (or) in the bony (material) existence  
will find any defense, any resistance.

The poem then mentions the benefits of praising the sun:

He who worships the Sun,  
immortal, brilliant, with fleet horses  
for the resistance of darkness,  
for the resistance of the daevas spawned by darkness,  
for the resistance of thieves and robbers,  
for the resistance of sorcerers and witches,  
for the resistance of danger,  
he worships Ahura Mazda,  
he worships the life-giving immortals,

he worships (his) own soul,  
he satisfies all those worthy of worship,  
both those in the world of thought and those in  
the world of the living,  
he who worships the Sun,  
immortal, brilliant, and with fleet horses.

Thereafter, the reciter turns his attention to Mithra, whose function was described above, with the words:

I will worship Mithra who provides wide grazing grounds,  
him with a thousand ears, with ten thousand eyes.  
I will worship (his) cudgel well swung down  
upon the heads of the daevas.  
Mithra who provides wide grazing grounds.  
I will worship, as well, the companionship  
that is the best of all companionships:  
that between the Moon and the Sun.

The Khorshed Niyayishn comes to an end with the priest's promise to the sun of pleasing sacrificial offerings.

## 2. The Song to Mithra (Mihr or Meher Niyayishn)

This *niyayishn* is performed at Hawan *gah*, following the Khorshed Niyayishn or Song to the Sun. Its description can be kept brief because it starts like the Song to the Sun praising Ahura Mazda, the Amesha Spentas, the Fravashis, and Vayu. It contains many of the same prayers as the Khorshed Niyayishn. Specifically, Mithra is praised for keeping his eyes and ears on the affairs of the world during Mithra's journey around the world, and for protecting it from evil forces:

For his worship and hymn  
and satisfaction and glorification:  
that of Mithra who provides wide grazing grounds,  
– of him with a thousand ears, with ten thousand eyes,  
the one worthy of worship in which his name is uttered –  
and of peace who provides good pastures.  
We worship Mithra when he is next to the land.  
We worship Mithra when he is within the land.  
We worship Mithra when he is close to the land.  
We worship Mithra when he is on the land.  
We worship Mithra when he is under the land.  
We worship Mithra when he is around the land.  
We worship Mithra when he is behind the land.  
We worship the two lofty ones,  
Ahura (Mazda) and Mithra,  
the two sustainers of Order, who pose no threats,  
as well as the stars and the Moon and the Sun,  
together with the plants that give us the barsom.  
We worship Mithra, the landlord of lands.

Mithra is promised worship and offerings wherever he may be, as he follows the track of the sun above and below the earth. Mithra is finally praised as a great ruler who brings peace and prosperity to the Aryan lands and is invoked for assistance:

On account of his wealth and munificence  
I shall worship him with a worship

that he shall hear clearly  
 and with libations, him, Mithra,  
 who provides wide grazing grounds.  
 We worship Mithra who provides wide grazing grounds,  
 who provides peaceful dwellings and good dwellings,  
 for the Aryan lands.  
 May he come to us to help us.  
 May he come to us to give us spaciousness.  
 May he come to us to support us.  
 May he come to us to have compassion on us.  
 May he come to us to heal us.  
 May he come to us to give us  
 obstruction-smashing strength.  
 May he come to us to give us good existence.  
 May he come to us when he feels undeceived,  
 he, the strong, unshakable one,  
 worthy of worship and hymns,  
 to order our world.  
 May he come to the entire world of beings with bones,  
 he, Mithra, who provides wide grazing grounds.  
 Him, the forceful one worthy of worship,  
 the strong one, strongest among living beings,  
 him, Mithra, I will worship with libations.  
 Him I shall serve with affection and homage.  
 Him I shall worship with a worship  
 that he shall hear clearly,  
 and with libations, him, Mithra,  
 who provides wide grazing grounds.  
 We worship Mithra who provides wide grazing grounds,  
 with haoma mixed with milk and with barsom,  
 with the skill of our tongue and with our poetic thought,  
 with our speech and action and libations  
 and with correctly spoken words.

### 3. The Song to the Moon (Mah Niyayishn)

This niyayishn – in praise of Mah (Mah Bakhtar. Mah Bokhtar), the Moon – is performed three times every month at new moon, the full moon, and the last quarter. The moon with the mark (or sign) of the bull (gao-chithra) is invoked, as well as the first bovine from which all animals are descended. In the Pahlavi translation of this text, the expression “the mark of the bull” is translated as “having the seed of the bull” (the word *chithra* can mean both ‘mark’ and ‘seed’). The moon’s fifteen-day waxing and waning are described.

The song then refers to the significance of the increasing and decreasing of the moon, which, in the Pahlavi translation, is explained as follows:

“For fifteen days it (the Moon) receives the work and good deeds of those in the world of the living and compensation and rewards from those in the world of thought. For fifteen days it delivers the work and good deeds to those in the world of thought and the compensation and rewards to those in the world of the living. As for the goodness of the victorious Moon, from day one to fifteen it receives goodness and blessedness from those in the world of thought, and from day fifteen to day thirty it apportions it to those in the world of the living. And from that day one, when it

is ‘new’, there is increase in the Moon. Until day thirty it receives light and goodness from those in the world of thought and delivers it to those in the world of the living as compensation and rewards.”

All this is also clearly alluded to in the subsequent lines of the niyayishn, which also state that plants grow in moon light:

We worship the Moon with the mark of the bull,  
 orderly model of order.  
 Then I see the Moon face to face.  
 Then I wish to see the Moon face to face.  
 I look at the shining Moon.  
 I wish to look at the shining Moon.  
 The life-giving immortals take up their positions.  
 They hold up the gifts of fortune.  
 The life-giving immortals take up their positions.  
 They apportion the gifts of fortune  
 over the Earth established by Ahura (Mazda).  
 Thus when the Moon illuminates in the light,  
 the greenery of green plants  
 grows up all over the Earth.

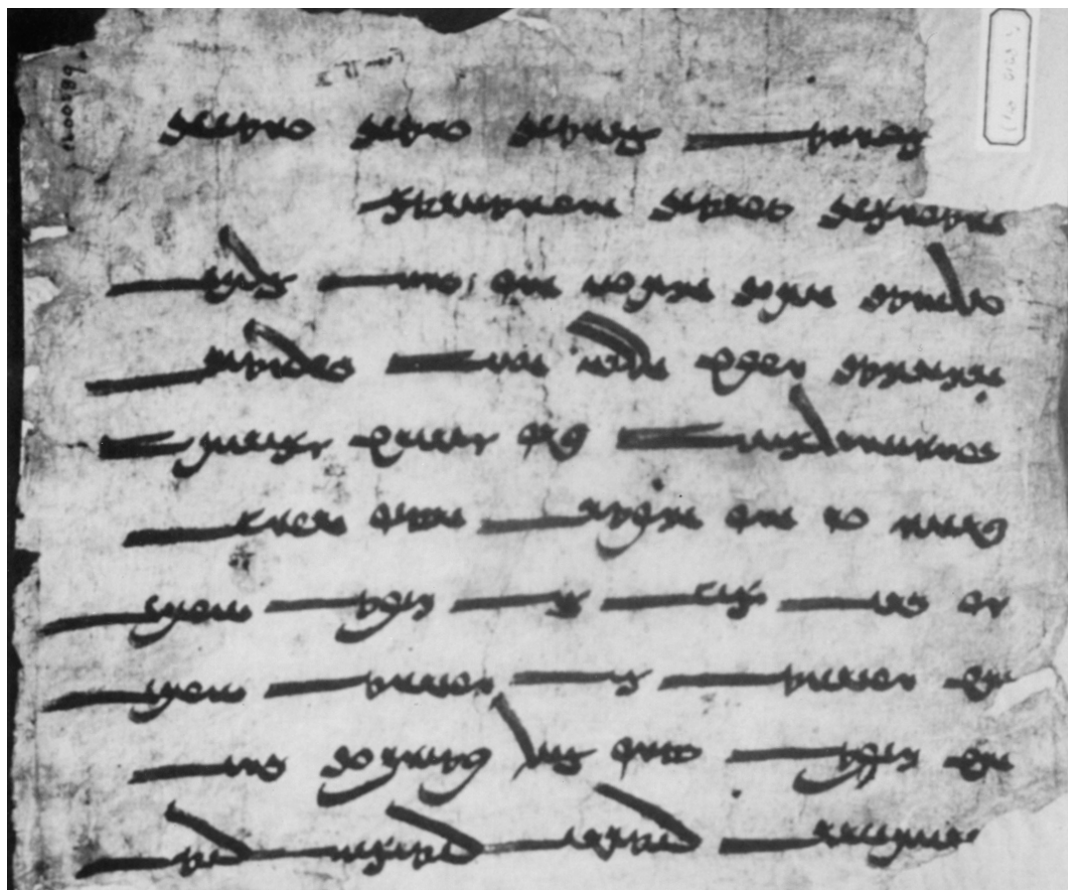
This niyayishn continues with worship of the moon, its phases, its role in apportioning good things to living beings. For this reason it is also called the ‘Apportioner,’ (Avestan: *baga*, Pahlavi: *bakhtar*; in Old Persian this became the word for ‘God’).

The Mah Niyayishn concludes with prayers for strength and aid against evil:

Give (us) force and obstruction-smashing strength!  
 Give (us) the ability to provide comfort for the cow!  
 Give (us) plenty of men, stalwart and eloquent,  
 conquering but unconquerable,  
 who there and then conquer the opponents,  
 who there and then conquer the enemies.  
 I pray to you all who are worthy of worship,  
 the munificent ones!  
 I pray to you all who are worthy of worship,  
 the healing ones!  
 May your greatness be brilliant!  
 May you give brilliant life-giving strength  
 to him who pours the libations!  
 May you too give brilliant munificence,  
 O Waters, to the priest!

### 4. The Song to the Waters (Aban or Avan Niyayishn)

This niyayishn is addressed to the Waters, that is, the waters of the heavenly river Ardwisur (Anahita) the lady, after whom the song is named. It is performed during the day, near water (rivers and wells) and when one sees running water. It also is performed at various gahs on the days of Spandarmad (Aspandarmad) (5th), Aban (Avan) (10th), Din (24th), Ard (Ashishwang) (25th), and Mahraspand (Marespand) (29th) because Aban, Din, Ard and Mahraspand were assigned by Ahura Mazda as the collaborators of Spandarmad according to texts like the Bundahishn [3.17, 26.86–27].



*Old Sogdian text, c. 8th century CE. Discovered by Sir Aurel Stein in Dunhuang, Western China. The Ashem Vohu prayer in the fragment was recognized by Ilya Gershevitch and published in the Indo-Iranian Journal 1976 in a paper by Nicholas Sims-Williams.*

PHOTOGRAPH:  
COURTESY NICHOLAS  
SIMS-WILLIAMS.

Her Avestan name, Aredvi Sura Anahita, probably means “the lofty (Aredvi ), life-giving (Sura), unattached (Anahita) one,” referring to the fact that the heavenly river needs nothing to hold her up without her falling down. Anahita is also often translated as ‘unsullied’ [3].

The song begins with a praise of the waters of Ardwisur:

To satisfy the good Waters established by (Ahura) Mazda, (especially) the lofty (heavenly) Water, unattached, a sustainer of order, all the Waters established by (Ahura) Mazda and all the plants established by (Ahura) Mazda, for (their) sacrifice and hymn and satisfaction and glorification.

Then Ahura Mazda asks Zarathushtra to worship her:

Ahura Mazda said to Spitama Zarathushtra:  
May you worship her for me,  
O Spitama Zarathushtra,  
Aredvi Sura Anahita,  
with her broad front, the healing one,  
who said no to the daevas  
and chose Ahura Mazda as her guide.  
The whole world of living beings with bones  
should worship her, should celebrate her.  
She sustains order, furthering the grains,  
furthering the herds, furthering the flocks,  
furthering the settlements, and furthering the lands.

The poem continues with a detailed description of her, including her ability to purify the semen and wombs of all living beings so that they will be fertile:

She purifies the semen of all the males.  
She purifies the wombs of all females for giving birth.  
She grants easy delivery to all females.  
And she makes the milk of all females flow  
at the right time and in due measure.  
She, the large one, can be heard from afar.  
She is as large as all these Waters  
that flow forth upon the Earth.  
Forceful she flows forth  
from Mount Hukairya to the Vouru-kasha Sea.  
All the shores of the Vouru-kasha Sea are in commotion.  
The entire interior rises up in commotion,  
when she flows forth into them,  
when she rushes into them, Aredvi Sura Anahita.  
She has a thousand bays and a thousand outlets,  
and each of these bays and each of these outlets  
is a forty days’ ride for a man riding a good horse.  
And now the flow of this single Water of mine  
shall go out to all the seven continents.  
And the flow of this single Water of mine  
comes down in one and the same way  
both in summer and in winter.  
She purifies my Waters,  
the semen of the males and the wombs of the females.  
She makes the milk of the females flow.

Ahura Mazda goes on to explain that he brought Ard-  
wisur up to heaven to further and protect human society:

I, Ahura Mazda, carried her up  
by the impetus of my tongue,  
for the furthering of the house,





the town, the tribe, and the land,  
for their protection, guard, and overseeing,  
to protect and guard them.

The singer promises that he or she will praise Ardwisur, reciting both the Ahuna Vairya and the Ashem Vohu prayers (which were regarded as the strongest weapons against the evil spirit) and that he or she will purify Ardwisur's waters by reciting the promise in Yasna 51.19 of rewards (for the successful poet and priest) presented by Ahura Mazda himself, and Ardwisur grants his wish:

I shall proclaim the Staota Yesnya.  
And I shall proclaim the Ahuna Vairya.  
And I shall make the Ashem vohu famous.  
And I shall purify the good Waters  
with this word from the Gathas:  
"In the house of songs, Ahura Mazda comes first."  
She gave him that prize.

The song comes to a close with more promises of praise and worship:

In return for her wealth and heavenly gifts,  
I shall worship her with worship that she shall hear clearly.  
I shall worship her with a well-performed ritual.  
May you thereby be better worshiped!  
We worship Aredvi Sura Anahita with libations,  
Aredvi Sura Anahita, a model of order,  
with haoma mixed with milk and with barsom,  
with the skill of our tongue and with our poetic thought,  
with our speech and action and libations  
and with correctly spoken words.

## 5. The Song to the Fire (Atakhsh, Atash Niyayishn)

This niyayishn is performed at all five gahs (that is, also at night during the Aiwisruthrim and Ushahin gahs) by the priest who oversees the fire and adds fragrant firewood and incense to it. It is a song to the heavenly fire, the sun, of which the earthly fires are reflections. Keeping the earthly fires kindled and satisfied by day and by night guarantees the survival and rebirth of the heavenly fire, it is believed. The heavenly fire is thought to travel across the sky driven in its chariot by two charioteers.

This song begins by citing Yasna 33.12–14, which contain some of the most powerful imagery in the entire Gatha collection. These verses describe how Zarathushtra by the gift of his sacrifice and even of his own life substances brings about the rebirth of the cosmic order as Ahura Mazda's counter-gift:

Rise up before me now, O lord (the Sun)!  
Through Armaiti (the Earth) receive strength  
Through your most life-giving inspiration (Spenta Mainyu), O all-knowing one (Mazda), receive my invocation with my good presentation,  
forceful power through the order (of my ritual),  
creative power through my good thought!  
You shall show me now for support for the far-seeing Sun,  
(the ford) by which I shall cross over to you.

Along that path of (my/your) command, O lord,  
along which the reward of my good thought shall arrive,  
launch, O Armaiti, our vision-souls (Daenas) through  
life-giving order (the sun-lit, heavenly spaces)!

Thus, Zarathushtra is giving as gift the life breath of nothing less than his own body as the foremost share of his sacrifice and the gift of his good thought to the all-knowing one, as well as what is the foremost share of his action, through order, and that of his utterance: his readiness to listen and the (divine royal) command (generated by his sacrifice).

The song continues with praises of the fire, as well as of fortune, both of which play important roles in the creation of living beings and is also associated with mountains and lakes:

For the glorification of the Fire, O son of Ahura Mazda,  
of the fortune (and) life-giving strength  
established by Ahura Mazda,  
of the fortune of the Aryans established by Ahura Mazda  
and of the fortune of the Kavis  
established by Ahura Mazda—  
of the Fire, O son of Ahura Mazda,  
of Kavi Haosravangha (Kay Khosro),  
of the Haosravangha Sea,  
of Mount Asnavanta established by Ahura Mazda,  
of the Chaechasta Sea established by Ahura Mazda,  
and of the fortune of the Kavis  
established by Ahura Mazda;  
of the Fire, O son of Ahura Mazda,  
of Mount Raevanta established by Ahura Mazda  
and of the fortune of the Kavis  
established by Ahura Mazda—  
of the Fire, O son of Ahura Mazda—  
of the two life-giving charioteers of the Fire,  
the two ones worthy of worship,  
full of munificence, full of healing—  
of the Fire, O son of Ahura Mazda,  
together with all the Fires,  
and of the heroic announcer (Nairiosangha),  
the one worthy of sacrifice, scion of command.

In the Pahlavi translation, this enumeration is interpreted to refer to the three great fires that had been established throughout Iran in the Sasanian period, which are also associated with the three social classes: Adur Farnbay or Farobay (Adar Farnbagh) in Khwarazm, fire of the priests; Adur Gushnasp (Adar Gushnasp) in Azerbaijan, fire of the warriors; and Adur Burzen or Burzenmihir (Adar Burzin Meher) on Mount Vishtasp, fire of the husbandry.

Then follows the entire Atash Niyayishn as included in the Yasna (62.1–10), in which fire is praised, worshiped, and asked for boons and rewards for the worshippers. It is encouraged to stay burning until the day of the final renovation and grant paradise to the worshipper, as in the following extracts:

May you keep burning in this house!  
May you shine in this house!  
May you grow in this house,

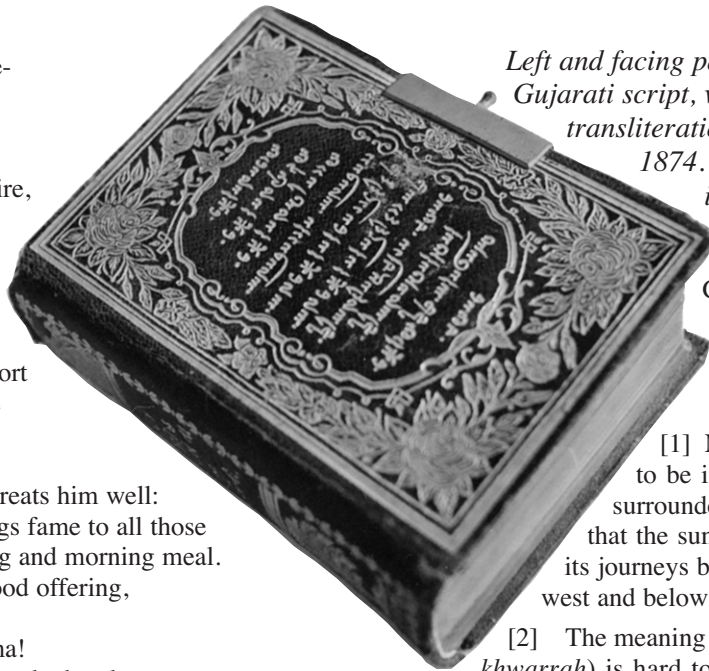
for a long time after indeed,  
until the renovation rich in life-  
giving strength together with  
the good Renovation rich in  
life-giving strength! ...

May you give me, (you) the Fire,  
O son of Ahura Mazda,  
(that) by which shall be  
permanent for me both now  
and for eternity the best life  
of the sustainers of order,  
full of light and all good comfort  
so that I may win a good prize  
and good fame and long  
well-being for my soul!

The Fire treats well him who treats him well:  
The Fire of Ahura Mazda brings fame to all those  
for whom he cooks the evening and morning meal.  
From all of them he desires good offering,  
offering of wished-for things,  
offering of adoration O Spitama!  
The Fire has always looked into the hands  
of all those who walk by:  
What does the friend carry to the friend,  
the one walking to the one sitting still?  
We sacrifice to the life-giving Fire,  
firm when acting as charioteer  
Thus if this one carries to him  
firewood carried in orderly fashion  
or barsom spread out in orderly fashion  
or the pomegranate plant,  
afterwards the Fire of Mazda Ahura  
invites him as a friend.

The Atash Niyayishn comes to a close with Yasna 34.4,  
in which the fire is asked to reward those who support  
it, but punish the enemies of Asha:

Thus, we wish your Fire to be powerful,  
O lord, through order,  
instructing, forceful, and giving brilliant help  
to him who supports (you/us),  
but, as for the one hostile (to you/us),  
O all-knowing one, we wish his sins to be  
clearly seen in the bad things  
he sends on their way by his hands. ■



Left and facing page, *Khordeh Avesta* in  
Gujarati script, with interlinear Gujarati  
transliteration, printed in Bombay,  
1874. The verse on the cover is  
in the Avestan script.

COLLECTION: ROSHAN  
RIVETNA. PHOTOGRAPH:  
CYRUS RIVETNA

## NOTES

[1] Note that the earth was thought  
to be in the center of heaven, which  
surrounded it on all sides, which means  
that the sun travels through Vayu both on  
its journeys both across the sky from east to  
west and below the earth from west to east.

[2] The meaning of Avestan *khvarenah* (Pahlavi  
*khwarrah*) is hard to pin down. The implications  
often seem to be 'divine fortune' or the 'gifts of fortune.' The  
*khvarenah* is closely connected with mountains and lakes and  
also plays an important role in the creation of living beings,  
including the Sun, son of Ahura Mazda.

[3] Skjærvø, P. Octor. *Anahita: Unblemished or Unattached?*,  
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- [5] *Niyayesh*, <http://www.avesta.org/ka/niyayesh.htm>



**P. Oktor Skjærvø**, a Norwegian by birth, has a PhD in  
Iranian languages from Oslo. He obtained his second doc-  
torate, the Habilitation, as assistant professor to Helmut  
Humbach in Mainz. He was Senior Assistant Editor of the  
*Encyclopaedia Iranica*, New York, and was appointed Aga  
Khan Professor of Iranian Studies at Harvard University,  
where he presently teaches. Skjærvø has written extensively  
on Middle and Old Iranian languages and the Gathas. His  
translation of Avestan and Pahlavi texts into Norwegian,  
"Zarathustras Sanger. De Eldste Iranske Skriftene"  
("Zarathustra's Songs, the Oldest Iranian Scriptures")  
appeared earlier this year.





# transmission of the yashts

A discussion of each individual yasht, the yazatas associated with those yashts and the complex religious conceptions found in those scriptures would require great length. So I shall limit my remarks to a broad discussion of textual nature of the yashts.

by William W. Malandra

## Contents of the yashts

The yashts are a collection of 21 hymns dedicated to various yazatas of Zarathushti belief. They form part of the Avesta called the Khordeh Avesta. To these 21 hymns, modern translations often add the Hom Yasht [Ys. 9–11.12] and the Srosh Yasht [Ys. 57]. Unlike other sections of the Avesta which play prominent roles in liturgy, the yashts are, for the most part but with some exceptions, not accompanied by Pahlavi glosses and translations.

The language of the yashts is Avestan, of which there are two general dialects. One is the language of Zarathushtra's Gathas and of the Yasna Haptanghaiti, called by some scholars 'Gathic,' by others 'Old Avestan.' The other, the language of the rest of the Avesta, is widely termed 'Young or Younger Avestan,' though the name 'Standard Avestan' is also used and has the advantage of signaling that many compositions in this dialect may be as or more ancient than those in the other one.

The term *yasht* (Avestan: *yashti*) means 'worship' and like *yasna* and *yazata* derives from the verb *yaz-* 'to worship.' The yazatas (literally "ones who are to be worshiped") include ancient Indo-Iranian deities like Mithra or Mitra, Vayu, Haoma or Soma, Hvar Khshaeta (Khorshed) or Svar, and Mah or Mas, uniquely Iranian deities like Ahura Mazda, Aredvi Sura Anahita, Ashi, Drvaspa, Rashnu, Sraosha, Tishtrya, and Verethraghna, the Ameshas Spentas and divine abstractions such as Cisti 'insight,' Daena (Din) 'religious vision,' Arshtat 'justice,' and *Khvarenah* 'royal glory.' For theological reasons, many Zarathushtis prefer to conceive of them all,

with the exception of Ahura Mazda, as *firishteh*, 'angels'.

The order and brief summaries of the yashts with sample quotations are given below:

**1 Ohrmazd Yasht:** 32 stanzas. A late compilation, much of which is devoted to the efficacy against evils, of reciting names of God.

Therefore (we should) make Him, the greatest of all,  
Ahura Mazda, the ahu and ratu, for the smiting of lying  
Angra Mainyu ....

**2 Haft Amahraspand Yasht:** 14 stanzas. A late composition of a mostly liturgical nature, often with little grammatical coherence.

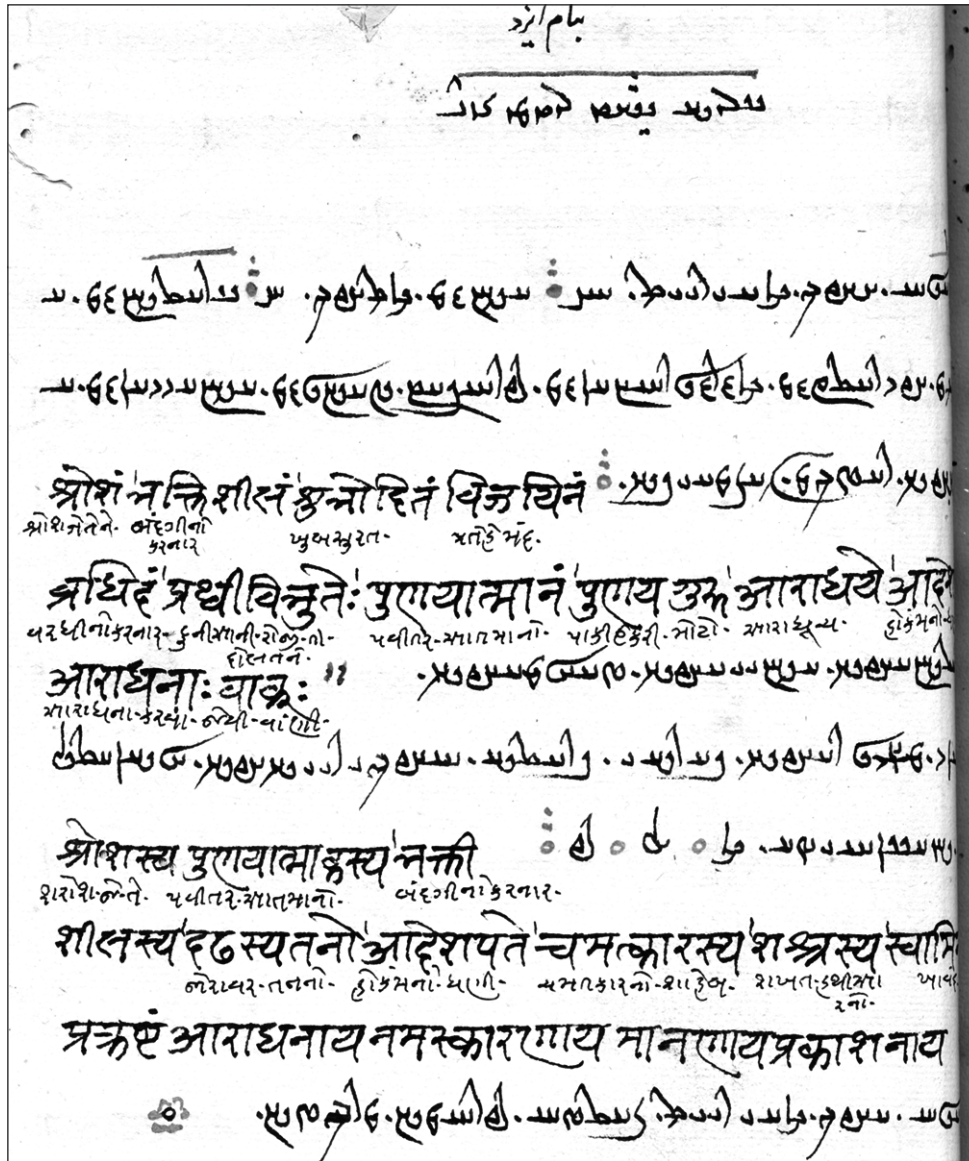
**3 Ardwhisht Yasht:** 18 stanzas. A late composition containing mostly abjurations of evils.

**4 Hordad Yasht:** 10 stanzas. A late composition containing mostly abjurations of evils.

**5 Ardwisur (Aban) Yasht:** 132 stanzas. One of the great yashts composed mostly in fine verse dealing with the river goddess Aredvi Sura Anahita, the immaculate. Particularly noteworthy are the allusions to Iranian epic traditions in the heroes who worship her and the detailed descriptions of her appearance.

Who is wont to be seen in the form of a beautiful  
very strong maiden, well built, high girdled, erect,  
noble in respect to her illustrious lineage  
dressed in a long-sleeved coat,  
much embroidered, golden.

....



Opening page of  
Srosh Yasht in a  
handwritten Avestan-  
Sanskrit-Gujarati  
Khordeh Avesta  
manuscript, copied  
by Mobed Darab  
Herbed  
Rostam, Navsari,  
1711 CE.  
PHOTOGRAPH BY  
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Showing off her earrings, four-cornered, golden,  
she of good birth is wont to wear  
a necklace about her beautiful throat.

....

She laces herself about the waist  
so that her breasts be well-formed  
and so that they are voluptuous.

**6 Khwarshed (Khorshed) Yasht:** 6 stanzas. A late non-metrical composition devoted to the Sun.

Were the Sun not to rise, then the demons would  
destroy all things which are in the seven continents.

**7 Mah (Mah Bokhtar) Yasht:** 6 stanzas. A late non-metrical composition devoted to the Moon.

I shall worship the Moon which contains  
the seed of cattle.

**8 Tishtar Yasht:** 61 stanzas. Dedicated to Tishtrya, the star Sirius, who brings rain and a good crop to the Aryan lands. Particularly significant is his annual battle with Apaosha, the demon of drought and famine and his

defeat of *pairikas* or witches in the form of shooting stars. He is especially connected with the Vouru-kasha sea.

When will he rise for us, opulent, glorious Tishtrya?  
When will the springs stouter than a horse,  
flow anew with Water.

....

Then against him rushes the demon Apaosha  
in the form of a black horse.

....

They grapple with each other,  
opulent, glorious Tishtrya and the demon Apaosha.

....

Thereupon (Tishtrya) drives him  
away from the Wouru-kasha sea,  
along a path the length of a race course.

**9 Druwasp (Drvasp) Yasht:** 32 stanzas. Except for stanzas 1–2 which portray the goddess as riding in a chariot and promoting the health of people and livestock, the yasht is mostly composed of material duplicated in yashts 5, 15, and 17.

**10 Mihr (Meher) Yasht:** 145 stanzas. One of the great yashts composed mostly in fine verse and dedicated to mace-wielding Mithra the god of covenants. Prominent is the depiction of his martial traits which he employs against those who break covenants and treaties.

Do not break a covenant (*mithra*), O Spitamid,  
neither that which you conclude with a drugvant,  
nor with an ashawan belonging to the Good Religion,  
for the covenant applies to both.

....

On every height, on every watch post  
sit Mithra's spies, espying those false to the covenant.

....

"May we here not come for  
bludgeoning by the enraged Lord,  
whose thousand blows encounter his enemy."

....

Who, strong, having ten-thousand spies,  
undeceivable, knows all.

**11 Srosh (Sarosh) Yasht:** Consisting of the Srosh Yasht Hadokht (22 stanzas) and Yasna 57 (34 stanzas), there is considerable overlap between the two compositions. Sraosha 'obedience,' adversary of Aeshma, 'wrath,' is particularly associated with prayer and ritual and functions as intermediary between human and divine spheres.

(Sraosha) who first strew baresman ....  
for the praise of the Amesha Spentas.

....

who first recited the Gathas,  
the five of the Spitamid, righteous Zarathushtra.

....

With his weapon, he smites Wrath with a gory wound;  
and then, smashing his evil head, he beats him to death,  
as the strong (man beats) the weaker.

**12 Rashn (Rashna) Yasht:** 37 stanzas. A late composition the yasht to Rashnu, 'Judge,' contains some ancient material relating to the function of the divine judge at a judicial ordeal.

**13 Frawardin (Farvardin) Yasht:** 157 stanzas. One of the great yashts dedicated to the *fravashis* of the righteous, where the fravashis are presented as a vast (99,999) troop of divine spirits who assist Ahura Mazda in creation and battle evil, as the spirits of the departed ancestors who visit the living at Hamaspathmaedaya and as each person's guardian spirit. Much of the latter part of the yasht contains long lists of men and women whose fravashi "we worship."

Through their opulence and glory  
I (Ahura Mazda) support yonder heaven  
above, shining and bright.

....

who are strong, unshakable victorious winners in battle,  
pacifying, smiting, decisive;  
whose blades are quick, whose bodies are nimble,  
whose souls are noble, righteous.

....

(At hamaspathmaedaya) here they move about for ten  
nights desiring to learn this:

Who will praise us, who will worship us,  
who will laud us, who will propitiate us,  
who will welcome us  
with hands holding meat (and) clothes,  
with Truth-attaining reverence?

....

Satisfied, may they wish upon this house good,  
beneficent Ashi!

May they depart from this house satisfied!

....

We worship the Fravashis of the righteous men  
of all countries.

We worship the Fravashis of the righteous women of all  
countries.

**14 Wahram (Behram) Yasht:** 63 stanzas. One of the great yashts, dedicated to the divine entity of Victory, Verethraghna, "the smashing of resistance." The first part of the yasht is mostly devoted to the ten *avatars*, while the latter part contains mostly spells.

To him a fourth time came driving  
Ahura-created Verethraghna  
in the form of a rutting camel,  
biting, assailing, bellowing, trampling.

....

To him a fifth time came driving  
Ahura-created Verethraghna  
in the form of a wild boar,  
ferocious with sharp teeth.

**15 Ram Yasht:** 57 stanzas. Actually directed to Vayu the wind, the yasht appears to be a late compilation containing little original material. There is an epithet list similar to that in yasht 1.

**16 Den (Din) Yasht:** 19 stanzas. Actually directed to Cista, 'insight.' A minor yasht preserving some valuable information about the goddess.

**17 Ard (Ahrishwang or Ashishwang) Yasht:** 61 stanzas to the goddess Ashi, 'reward.' One of the great yashts, mostly in good verse and rich in imagery. The invocations by heroes follow closely the content and structure of yashts 5, 9, 15. Especially noteworthy are domestic images and concern for sexuality.

Their couches stay nicely spread, sweetly perfumed.

....

Their respected wives are wont to sit on couches  
beautifully provided with cushions,  
grooming themselves, decorating (their clothing)  
with clasps; (thinking)

When will the master of the house come to us?  
When shall we enjoy his dear body?  
whom you accompany, O good Ashi.

....

Draw near to me, O upright, righteous Spitamid!  
lean against my chariot.

....

Then she caressed him



with her left arm and her right,  
with her right arm and her left.

**18 Ashtad Yasht:** 8 stanzas. A late compilation supposedly to Arshtatat, 'Justice,' but whose content ignores this divine abstraction.

**19 Zamyad Yasht:** 96 stanzas. One of the great yashts. The opening stanzas contain lists of mountains, yet the major part of the yasht is devoted to the abstract power of the royal *khvarenah* or glory. Especially noteworthy are the long quasi-epic sequences involving Yima's loss of the *khvarenah* and its pursuit by evil usurpers and legitimate rulers. Much of this material overlaps with yashts 5, 9, 15, 17.

**20 Hom Yasht:** 2 stanzas; plus Yasna 9–11.10 of 63 stanzas. To Haoma the personification of the divine drink, the material is of diverse content, though composed in mostly good verse.

Indeed, all other intoxicating drinks  
are accompanied by Wrath with the bloody club;  
but that intoxication which is Haoma's  
is accompanied by gladdening Truth.

**21 Wanand Yasht:** 1 stanza. Of almost no value in understanding this star (Vega).

## The Textual Tradition

When scholars study a body of religious texts such as the yashts, they ask a number of fundamental questions ranging

from "What is the origin of the text?" to "What does

it mean?" Before one can give an informed answer to the question of meaning, one must come to an understanding of what the text itself is. What is the manuscript tradition upon which the critical edition is based? When was the text in its present structure composed? Is this an original composition in toto or is it a compilation of many older traditions? What is the relationship between the text put in writing by scribes and the oral transmission of priestly traditions? Of course one must understand the language of the text, its grammar, syntax and vocabulary, a particularly difficult undertaking, in the case of the Avesta, for an ancient tongue which ceased to be spoken, perhaps, two and a half millennia ago.

Scholarship should never be seen as a substitute for faith, but in the history of world religions many flimsy theologues could have been avoided had their proponents taken greater pains to understand their traditions in some sort of objective way. For students of religion as well as for members of faith communities (and the two are not mutually exclusive!) the path to meaning must necessarily commence in the byways of these basic questions.

**The manuscript tradition.** Following the Arab invasion of Iranshahr and the subsequent triumph of Islam, the beleaguered communities in Iran and the immigrant Parsis of India were faced with the formidable task of preserving their identity as minorities. An ongoing achievement of these communities was the regular copying of manuscripts carried out by scribes of priestly families. Since manuscripts are made of perishable materials and suffer from wear and tear and the ravages of time, new hand copies of the old needed to be produced regularly. There are two distinct manuscript traditions for the



*Khordeh Avesta with Mother of Pearl cover embossed with the image of Zarathushtra. Bombay, 1871. COLLECTION: ROSHAN RIVETNA. PHOTOGRAPH: CYRUS RIVETNA*

yashts proper, and, when we include the yasht-like Hom and Srosh compositions, there is a third manuscript tradition of the yasna. The differences in manuscript traditions are due to the various ritual and liturgical purposes served by the texts. The yasht manuscripts are divided between:

- A modest number of comprehensive ones containing all the yashts, and
- A large and heterogeneous array of manuscripts containing collections of texts known as the Khordeh Avesta, which generally include what are commonly known as minor yashts (yashts 1–4, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16, 18, though 13 is popular in the Iranian tradition). Since the Khordeh Avesta manuscripts were intended for domestic use by the laity, they were widely distributed and inaccurately copied. This inaccuracy appears to be the result of the fact that these texts were rooted in a strong oral tradition. That is, the texts were memorized by the laity and so display a wide range of pronunciations and variants, even though they all share a common heritage.

Although the oldest of the true Khordeh Avesta manuscripts, Jm4 (Jamshedji Manekji Unwalla manuscript No. 4, in Bombay), dates to 1352 CE, it is of limited value. In contrast, the yasht manuscripts proper are essentially limited to a scribal tradition which was far more disciplined than the oral and scribal traditions of the Khordeh Avesta. Even so, the state of the minor yashts, especially 1–4, in the yasht tradition betrays the effects of contamination with the Khordeh Avesta. The authoritative manuscript for the yashts is that of Asa Din Kaka, named F1 (Framji Fardunji Madan manuscript No. 1, in Bombay), which according to its colophon, was completed on January 21, 1591 CE. The problem remains, though, that even our oldest manuscript is more than a millennium removed from the Sasanid archetype from which it ultimately derived.

In the scholarly literature the terms ‘vulgate’ and ‘archetype’ have been used, respectively and in a general way, to distinguish the received text, that is, the text to which the manuscripts attest, from the hypothetical version from which the manuscripts ultimately derive. Recently it has been shown that the relationship of the Avesta archetype, which is thought to derive from the Sasanid period, and the Avesta vulgate of modern critical editions, based on the manuscript tradition, is not at all clear.

The heart of the problem is that the Avesta manuscript tradition probably does not, in any linear fashion, derive from what the Denkard and other ninth century CE texts describe as the *den i mazdesn* “the Mazdean Religion”

consisting of *abestag ud zand* “Avesta and Commentary” and organized into 21 major divisions called *nasks*. Rather, it represents a side tradition of liturgical collections which were canonized prior, at least, to the final redaction of the *Den i Mazdesn* for which the script of

the Sasanid archetypal Avesta had been invented. That is, the inherited texts of the Avesta are not the debris of what has survived of the once glorious Sasanid Avesta. Except for fragments and Pahlavi epitomes this has been lost. This is not to say that the various contents of the extant Avesta manuscript tradition were not also contained in various *nasks* of the Sasanid Avesta.

“ The term ‘*yasht*’ means ‘worship’ and like *yasna* and *yazata* derives from the verb *yaz-* ‘to worship’. The *yazatas* (literally “ones who are to be worshiped”) include Indo-Iranian deities (Mithra ...), Iranian deities (Aredvi Sura Anahita ...), the Amesha Spentas and divine abstractions such as Cisti, ‘insight’... ”

### The texts and modern scholars

The Avesta deliberately presents itself as the revelation of Ahura Mazda to his prophet Zarathushtra. In the Pahlavi literature it is assumed that the Den (Din) was revealed to Zarathushtra by Ohrmazd. However, theological considerations aside, like the Bible and the Qur’an, the Avesta is a complex collection, whose constituent parts have their own histories. While differing more or less radically in the details, scholars of the Avesta have occupied themselves with the task of sorting out what is earlier from what is later.

**Great and minor yashts.** According to one set of analyses, based on considerations of style and content, the yashts may be divided into two main groups:

- (1) The great yashts consisting of yashts 5, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 17, 19, yasna 9–11, 57, and
- (2) The minor yashts consisting of yashts 1–4, 6–7, 11, 12, 16, 18, 20, 21.

Among group 1, only yasht 5, 8, 10, 13, 14, 15 and 19 are basically non- or pre-Zarathushti, and even among these one must painstakingly sort out ancient materials from later Zarathushti accretions. Further, a finer distinction can be made between ancient Zarathushti additions which would have been introduced during the Achaemenid period and more recent additions which would have been introduced in the course of the various Arsacid and Sasanid redactions. Thus, scholars like Arthur Christensen imagined a body of ancient, pre-Zarathushti yashts whose structure can be restored by stripping away the various more recent layers.

**A different approach.** A somewhat different approach was taken by Ilya Gershevitch. Rather than think of original yashts to which materials were added at various historical moments, he speculated that as the Zarathushti religion gained ground in western Iran under the



Achaemenids, an integration of non-Zarathushti textual material with the specifically Zarathushti traditions which were developing, was accomplished by the magi. In the hands of these priests new compositions were composed which are essentially the yashts as we have received them.

Gershevitch also suggested that, in the process, the magi had translated materials in an older, archaic language into a more popular idiom of the time. When did this all happen? According to Gershevitch the crucial date is the calendar reform of 441 BCE, which enacted a change in the nomenclature of the months from the Old Persian system, partially attested in the inscriptions of Darius, to a new Zarathushti system of deities known from the so-called Younger Avesta.

**Yazamaide and yazata yashts.** More recently, Jean Kellens while following the distinction between 'great' and 'minor' yashts, observed that within the group of great yashts there is a further division between two groups, the *yazamaide*-yashts (yashts 8, 10, 13, 14) and the *yazata*-yashts (5, 9, 15, 19), with yasht 17 falling in between the two groups. While there are many characteristics common to both groups, they differ according to phraseology and certain formulae unique to each, such as *yazamaide* "we worship" and *yazata* "he worshiped," as well as a general orientation toward the deities of the respective yashts.

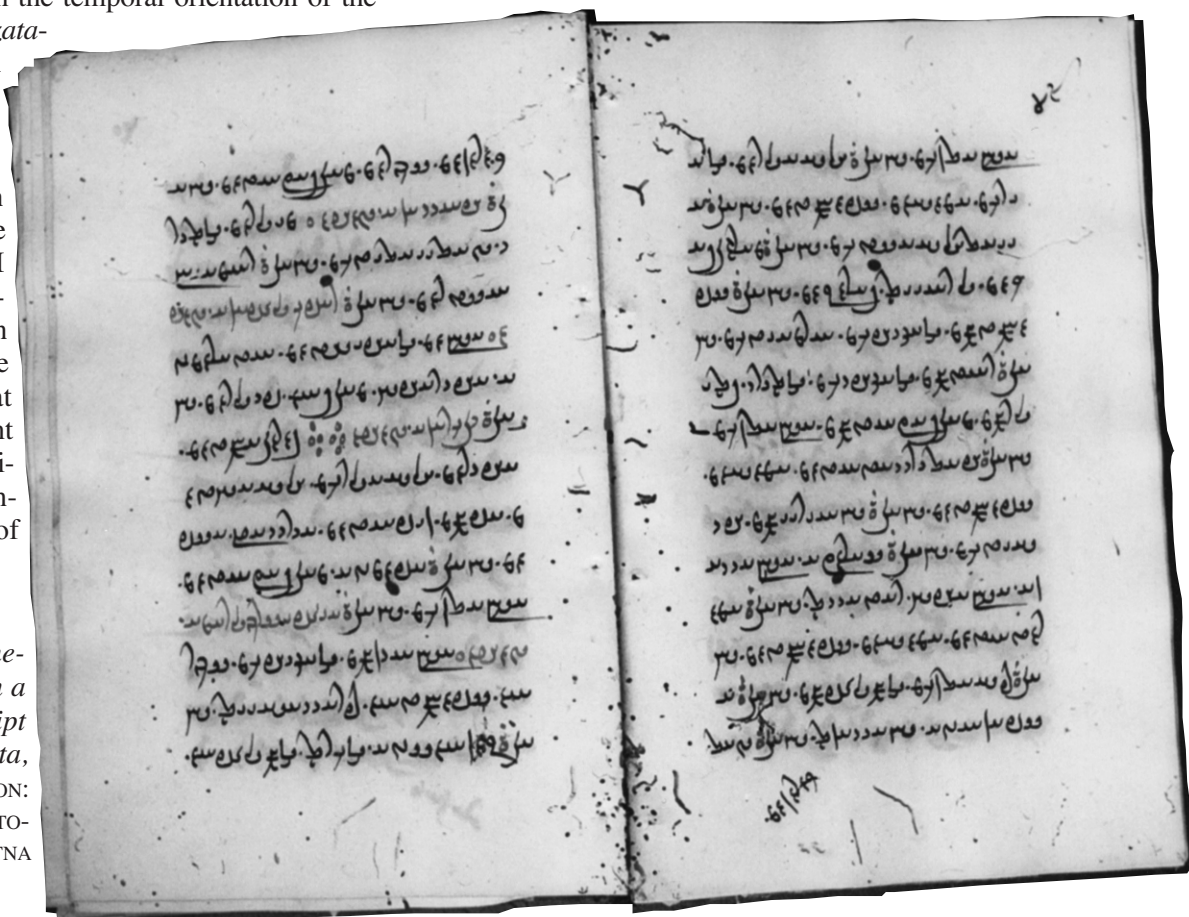
The extensive allusions to the mythological and legendary history of Iran common to *yazata*-yasht 5 etc. are entirely lacking in *yazamaide*-yasht 8 etc. According to Kellens, this is further reflected in the temporal orientation of the two groups, where the *yazata*-yashts are situated in deeds of the past and the *yazamaide*-yashts in the present, abiding activity of the deities. Even though one can adduce counter-examples, I believe that Kellens' analysis basically is correct. In an explicitly tentative mode, he speculated that the two groups represent different redactional traditions after the establishment of the religion of

Zarathushtra and that Artaxerxes' mention of Mithra and Anahita beside Ahura Mazda may bear witness to an accommodation by that king.

**Yashts as oral epic compositions.** A very different approach was taken by P. Oktor Skjærvø. Through the application of orality theory developed in respect to Homeric epic, he argued that the yashts, as a whole and each individually, are the original and complete oral compositions of non-literate poets. The essential feature of oral epic composition which Skjærvø identified for his literary analysis of the yashts, is that of performance. That is, the context in which bards actually compose orally is the performance before an audience in the immediacy of live spontaneous invention. There is no fixed text which the bard has memorized for verbatim recital.

In order to sustain a poetic narrative which may last for hours, the bard must have acquired through long training, a vast repertory of formulae of all sorts which will aid in framing verses and connecting these in larger narrative structures. Formulae may range from the position in a verse of specific words, such as epithets, to stock phrases, to larger thematic structures. Although Skjærvø devoted a few pages to formulae at the verse or stanza level, the bulk of the discussion focused on the greater thematic formulae which determine the structure of the yashts themselves.

Skjærvø has identified some fourteen of these – invocations, requests for knowledge, exhortations to worship



Page of the Haft Ame-shaspand Yasht, from a handwritten manuscript of the Khordeh Avesta, c. 1750. COLLECTION: FIROZE M. KOTWAL. PHOTOGRAPH: CYRUS RIVETNA



the deity, cosmological and legendary material, and so forth – and provided very useful and detailed synopses of all the yashts illustrating the ways in which these themes recur.

The model for understanding oral composition developed by classicists has its shortcomings. In terms of its utility in analyzing the Avesta, the model is of limited utility in two main respects. The first is that it was based on epic composition and performance. That model works well for the ancient Indian epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, and, with limitations, to the Persian Shahnameh. However, its application to non-narrative forms of sacred composition is problematic.

We can be reasonably certain, on the basis both of what the poets themselves record and of the extreme complexity of the poems, that the hymns of the Rig Veda and the Gathas of Zarathushtra, do not in any way belong to a genre of spontaneous performance. That is, these sacred poetic compositions were prepared, albeit orally and without the use or even knowledge of writing, in advance for performance in ritual contexts. Except for a few fragmentary epic verses, the yashts belong to the general genre of hymnic literature and so should not be presumed a priori to conform to the model of epic performance.

The second respect in which the epic model is inadequate, is that it did not foresee the complex problem namely, simultaneity of orality and literacy in a single culture. The reality that presents itself across ancient and some modern literate societies, is that the advent of writing and literacy does not necessarily produce a total paradigm shift, so that a society passes swiftly from only orality to only literacy. Rather the two linguistic modes exist side by side and interact in various ways.

While the application of orality theory to Avestan poetics is useful for understanding how poets originally crafted their verses, it does not, in my opinion, provide an adequate model for explaining the complexities of the Sasanid Avesta text. Even when one dispenses with the normal sorts of effects of a scribal tradition on a received written text, there remains an intervening stratum in the text which stands between the pure manuscript tradition of the descendants of the Sasanid archetype and the verses composed by non-literate poets inherited from an age which we can no longer determine. This redactional stratum which was preserved in the Sasanid Avesta, derives either wholly or in part from earlier editorial activities.

## Questions and hypotheses

These paths in the scholarship of the Avesta lead to several general conclusions on the yashts. There exists a large body of material in the yashts that is pre-Zarathushti and the product of oral composition. One can separate minor yashts, which are late creations, from the most part of the great yashts. One can also see that the

great yashts are the product of redactional work aimed at an accommodation of pre-Zarathushti materials with the Zarathushti religion which was developing in, probably, the fifth century BCE.

Did the great yashts exist, pretty much as they have been transmitted to us, already in the fifth century BCE? Or did there exist smaller hymnic compositions, on the analogy of the Gathas and the Vedic hymns, which lent themselves to further and later editorial redaction under the Arsacids or Parthians and Sasanids, as described in the fourth book of the Denkard?

There can be no doubt that the evidence of the extant yashts shows that there are Zoroastrianized portions of text which show good grammar and an awareness of the metrical structure of Avestan verse. Even though we have no direct evidence for Avestan in the fifth century BCE, we do know that the Old Persian of the inscriptions of Artaxerxes I (465–424 BCE) witness a severe decline in the already archaic language attested in the earlier inscriptions of Darius and Xerxes. If there were not available people who controlled the grammar of Old Persian in the days of Artaxerxes, how secure would the knowledge of the grammar of a cognate language have been? My sense is that this period is a watershed for the possibility of competent use of the Avestan language.

However, there are certain indications that the received text of the yashts is the product of an editor or editors who did not fully understand Avestan. Numerous cases of irregular syntax betray an editorial splicing of verses which originally were quite separate. As an example, kardeh 2 of the Aban Yasht begins with the refrain containing Ahura Mazda's exhortation of Zarathushtra to worship the divine spirit. However, the relative pronoun that introduces stanza 11 is in the nom. singular masculine, while the three present middle participles are nominative singular feminine:

*yo paourvo vashem vazaite*  
Who (masculine) in front drives the chariot,  
*anxnao drazhaite vashahe*  
holds the reins of the chariot;  
*ahmya vashe vazemna*  
driving (feminine) in this chariot,  
*narem paitishmaremna*  
yearning (feminine) for a man,  
*avat manangha mainimna*  
thinking (feminine) this in (her) mind.

What is the explanation? Puzzled, Karl Geldner who edited the Avesta placed an asterisk before *yo* and noted that this is the reading of all manuscripts.

One could suppose that there had been a mistake in transmission prior to the archetype of the extant manuscripts, that somehow an *o* had carelessly come to replace the

original *a*. Such a mistake could not have a graphic explanation, as the two letters cannot be easily confused. If the grammatical lapse has no plausible graphic explanation, then it will have to be sought elsewhere. One possibility would be that in the oral transmission the error occurred, to be perpetuated in the written text. An argument that the tradition or original author himself made a grammatical error has little chance of persuading, for the reason that the rest of the yasht is too consistent to support a theory of random lapses.

The only explanation which makes sense is that the reading of the manuscripts is correct and that, then, the grammatical problem is due to the manner of the verse's composition.

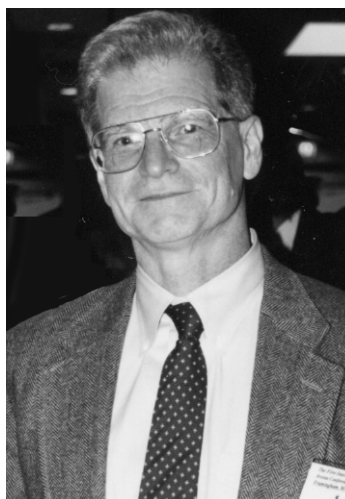
## Concluding thoughts

To summarize these reflections, I believe that we can identify a number of phases of composition that led to the yashts as they have come down to this day:

1. The yashts contain a large amount of poetic material that is archaic and pre-Zarathushti. This was composed by anonymous oral poets in the form of short hymns analogous to those of Zarathushtra and of the *rishis* of the Rig Veda.
2. After the spread of the Zarathushti religion, some of this material was reworked, still in the context of oral composition, by priest-poets in order to accommodate Zarathushti concepts to traditional sacred modes of expression. Yet, a great deal was preserved. This phase probably drew to a close in the fifth century BCE.
3. Subsequently, literary activity continued, but now by persons who no longer being in full control of the language, crafted new compositions out of inherited verses and phrases. It is difficult to provide a chronology for this. The testimony of the fourth book of the Pahlavi Denkard is that collections of disparate sacred textual material were made under Vologeses I (51–80 CE) and again under Ardashir I (224–240 CE). Finally during the reign of either Shapur II (310–379 CE) or Khusrow I (531–579 CE) – scholars disagree when exactly – the Avestan script was invented and the Avesta-Zand edited into the one large canon of the 21 nasks or divisions. Further – and again scholars disagree amongst themselves – this long phase of literary activity was carried out through the interplay of oral traditions and writing.
4. Although the yashts achieved their final shape during phase 3, they are part of a side-tradition, partially independent of the Avesta-Zand. Further, they may well contain post-Sasanid era interpolations in response to Islam, such as the grammatically incoherent epithet list in the Ohrmazd Yasht. However, the hallmark of this phase, which extended well into the nineteenth century CE, was faithful scribal preservation. ■

## FURTHER READING

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**Professor William M. Malandra** has just retired from his position at the University of Minnesota and has settled in Austin, Texas where he continues his research on Zoroastrianism and teaches courses part-time on ancient Iran and India at the University of Texas-Austin through the departments of Asian Studies and Middle Eastern Studies.



# Notes on the little treasures shown on the cover...



Above, cover page background text: a page of the *Aban Niyayesh* in Avestan script, from a handwritten manuscript of the *Khordeh Avesta*, c. 1750. Abbreviated texts or numerals are in red. Red flowers indicate a period or, sometimes, continuation of an abridged text. COLLECTION: FIROZE M. KOTWAL. PHOTOGRAPH: CYRUS RIVETNA



(2)



(3)

## Miniature Khordeh Avesta prayer books

(1) *Khordeh Avesta with Mother of Pearl cover, in Gujarati script, published in 1870.* A note, in beautifully scripted pen and nib handwriting says: "This handsome little prayer book is a kind present to me from my dear brother, Mr. Shapoorjee Jamajee, after his return to Bombay on Tuesday evening, the 27th August 1878, from his voyage to Europe ... Yours Jeejeebhoy Jamajee." According to the preface, the Mother-of-Pearl cover was designed to protect the book from damp and decay, and safeguard the owner during his travels.

(2) *Khordeh Avesta with silver cover, in Gujarati script, published in 1892.* The handwritten note on the flyleaf says "To Meherbai Dadyseth, from grandfather Sir Dinshaw with love, 12-8-1897." In the preface, publisher Jehangirji Karani states: "Even in this tiny book, we have accommodated all the daily Avesta prayers and 10 yashts, and have taken utmost care to make this a useful and long-lasting little book. We have ordered the silver covers especially from 'Vilayat' (England), yet have kept the cost low. It is our hope that our small prayer book will be used daily by Zarathushtis for a long time to come."

(3) *Khordeh Avesta, green leather cover with a gold image of Zarathushtra, in Gujarati script, published in 1872.* The preface states: "We hope that every day, before you begin the day's work, you will make the time to say these prayers, with true devotion and with understanding in your heart. With humility, ask for forgiveness for any bad thoughts and deeds you may have committed. Ask Ahura Mazda to guide your actions, and lead you on the path of Asha. If you clear your mind of all worries, and engross yourself with your full heart and mind in reciting these prayers, you will be sure to find peace and enlightenment."

(4) *Present-day Khordeh Avesta prayer books*, bearing two other popular Zarathushti images (besides the figure of Zarathushtra shown above) on the cover – the *afrinaganyu* 'fire altar' and the popular winged figure.



(4)

COLLECTION: ROSHAN RIVETNA, PHOTOGRAPHS: CYRUS RIVETNA





# aredvi sura anahita ardwisur banu

by Pallan R. Ichaporia

The Iranian goddess Aredvi Sura Anahita (Old Pers. Anahita, New Pers. Nahid, Armenian Anahit, Greek Anaitis, Mid.Persian Anahita) is a popular Zoroastrian yazata celebrated in Yasht 5, known as Aban Yasht, which is one of the longest and well preserved of the Avestan hymns.

**S**ura and Anahita are common adjectives meaning respectively ‘strong/mighty’ and ‘undefiled/immaculate.’ Only Aredvi is special to divinity and interpreted as a feminine adjective, meaning ‘most humid.’

In the Pahlavi books her proper name was replaced by her epithets ‘aredvi’ and ‘sura’ which coalesced to give her the Middle Iranian name of *Ardwisur*. In her hymn the river-goddess is described as a beautiful, strong maiden clad in beaver-skins [Yt. 5,129] who drives a chariot drawn by four horses, which are wind, rain, clouds and sleet.

As a water-divinity, she is worshiped as a bestower of fertility, who purifies the seed of all males, the wombs of all females, and makes milk flow, which nourishes their young [Yt.5.2] She also nourishes crops and herds and is hailed both as a divinity and as a mythical river which she personifies, “as great in bigness as all these waters which flow forth upon the earth” [Yt.5.3].

There is a mantic link in Zoroastrianism between water and wisdom, hence priests and their pupils (Av. *hawist*

‘scholar pupil’) pray to Aredvi Sura for knowledge [Yt. 5, 86]. As a water-divinity she is linked with *Aban*, the mid-Persian term for waters (Av. *apo*). In Yasna Haptanghaiti [Ys. 38.3] the waters are venerated as the ‘*ahurani*’:

*apo at yazamaide maekaiiantishcha hebuaaintishcha  
frauuzangho ahuranish ahuraiia hauuapangha*

We worship the Waters which are tasty and juicy, the  
Ahuranis which flow through the artful work of the Ahura.

Aredvi Sura is also held to bestow upon her worshippers possessions such as chariots, arms and household goods [Yt. 5.130], as well as victory in battles and destruction of foes [Yt. 5.34 ff].

Aredvi Sura’s popularity grew in Achaemenian times through her identification with the western Iranian divinity *Anahiti* known from Greek sources as *Anaitis*.

The first Achaemenian king to acknowledge this river goddess was Artaxerxes (404-358 BCE) who in inscription invoked her after Ahura Mazda and Mithra. In the Parthian period or even earlier, Ardvisur Anahid was worshiped at many natural sanctuaries created by lake or mountain spring. One of these was on a mountain with a spring at its foot, near the city of Ray. This shrine seems to have been devoted to Anahid as “the Lady of the Land” (Shahrbanu), and so great was the veneration in which it was held, that after the Arab conquest, it was rededicated to ‘*Bibi Shahrbanu*’ held to be a daughter of the last Sasanian King Yazdagird III and widow of Hosyan, son of Ali b. Abu Taleb. Muslim prayers and sacrifices are accordingly offered there to this day.

Worship of the divine beings in the presence of natural objects is more in consonance with orthodox Zoroastrianism than is the veneration of man-made images.

Sasanians became the hereditary guardians of a temple dedicated to Anahid at Estakr, which in all probability was established by Achaemenian King Artaxerxes II.

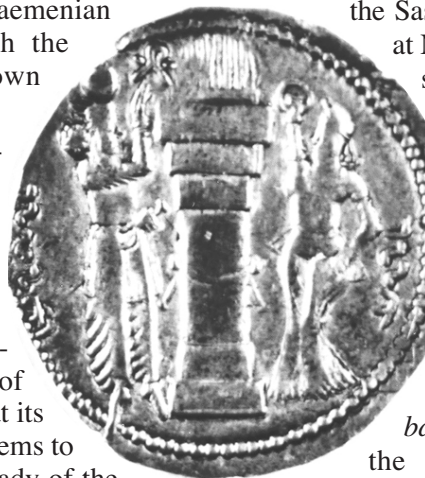
Tabari described this temple as “the temple of fire of Anahid.” Furthermore Shapur’s queen of queens was called Adur-Anahid (Anahid of Fire) which further confirms that a sacred fire consecrated to Anahid had replaced the image of Anahid placed in the temple by Artaxerxes II.

Two reigns later under Bahram II, the high priest Kirdar was honored with responsibility for two sacred fires at Estakr, one was called “the Fire of Anahid, the Lady” and the other “the Fire of Anahid-Ardashir” [see line eight of the *Ka’ba-e Zardosht* inscription].

Anahid was thus the patron divinity (under Ohrmazd) of the Sasanians. In an investiture ceremony carved at Naqsh-e Rostam, Narseh had himself represented receiving the diadem of kingship from the hand of a female divinity generally recognized as Anahid. Later, Khushrow Parvez also showed his fidelity to the family tradition by having Anahid present to support him at his investiture [photo facing page].

The dedication of Fire of Anahid at Estakr shows that, to Sasanians as to Parthians, Anahid was known as (Pahlv. *banug b’nwk*, N.Pers. *banu*) ‘the Lady.’ In the Paikuli inscription Narseh invokes “Ohrmazd and all the yazatas and Anahid who is called the Lady.” This usage influenced Zoroastrian priestly terminology in late Sasanian and Islamic times, and the yazata is spoken of as Ardvisur Banu – ‘Ardvisur the Lady’ and ‘the Lady of the Waters.’

One of the beloved mountain shrines of the Zoroastrians of Yazd, set beside a living spring and a great confluence of water-courses is devoted to Banu-Pars, “The Lady of Persia.” This sanctuary was originally dedicated to Anahid “the Lady” but was rededicated in Islamic times, to a legendary Sasanian princess similar to the Shrine of Bibi Shahrbanu near Ray. This and other new dedica-



Facing page, the grotto at Taq-e Bostan, in Iran, showing King Khushrow Parvez [center] receiving the diadem from Ohrmazd [right] while Anahita also offers a diadem.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY “PERSIAN MYTHOLOGY” BY JOHN R. HINNELLS

Facing page, sketch of Anahita, as depicted at Taq-e Bostan. COURTESY THE ANAHITA TEMPLE KANGAVAR, BY SEYFOLLAH KAMBAKHSH FARD, IRANIAN CULTURAL HERITAGE ORGANIZATION.

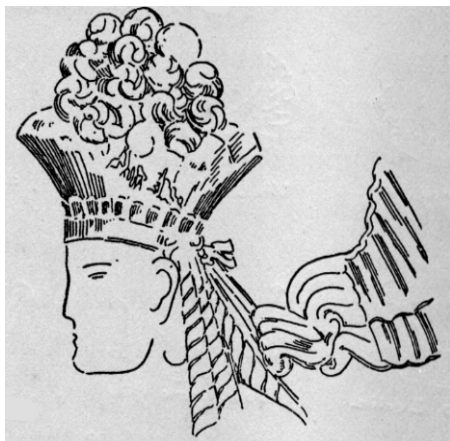
Above, reverse of drachm or silver coin issued by Wahram II, showing Anahita at right, offering the king a diadem of sovereignty, with the fire altar in the middle. PHOTOGRAPH BY PERMISSION OF ARCHIVE J.K.CHOKSY.



**Pallan R. Ichaporia, PhD**, has a BA in Avesta/Pahlavi from Bombay University, did post-graduate work in Iranian Studies at Columbia University, and has a doctorate in Business Administration. He has lectured widely, authored “The Gathas of Asho Zarathushtra,” and co-authored, with Prof. Helmut Humbach, “The Heritage of Zarathushtra, A New Translation of His Gathas” (1994) and “Zamyad Yasht” (1998). He was chair of the Second North American Gatha

Conference and president of the First International Avesta Conference. Forthcoming works include “Concordance of the Gathas” with Prof. Helmut Humbach.





*The crown of Anahita.* FROM PAIKULI, MONUMENT AND INSCRIPTION OF THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE SASANIAN EMPIRE, 2 VOLS., BY ERNST HERZFELD, BERLIN, 1924.

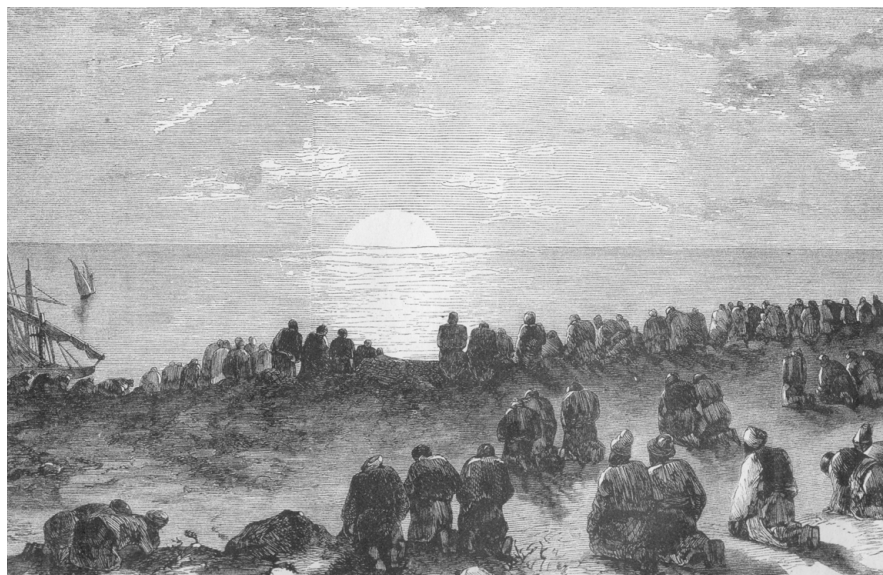
tions have lead to the partial eclipse of Anahid herself among Iranian Zoroastrians, but kept alive among the Parsi Zoroastrians of India who have deep veneration of waters and it continues to be an important part of Zoroastrianism as it was from the days of the prophet.

Devout Parsis pray the Aban Niyayesh and the Aban Yasht, both dedicated to Aredvi Sura Anahita, while venerating waters. They are never recited in a fire temple or before fire, but only within sight of water. A description of the Aban Ard-wisur jashan 'the feast of Ardwisur of the Waters', is given by K. N. Seervai [1], where a full account of Parsi Zoroastrians going to the stream, lake or sea and praying with offerings to waters, is fully dealt with. Albiruni, in his "Atar-ul-Bakiya", c. 1000, called Abangan the Zoroastrian festival dedicated to water [2].

Among the devout Parsis of India, who have remained the preservers and perpetuators of the ancient religion of Zarathushtra, one finds the veneration of the "Lady – Banu Aredvi Sura Anahita" is in good hands. ■

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*Wood engraving of Parsis at Sunset, published in The World's Great Nations, Chicago, 1888.* PHOTOGRAPH BY PERMISSION OF ARCHIVE J.K.CHOKSY.

## Worship in Nature's Temple

From ancient times to the present day, Zarathushtis are wont to offer their devotional prayers to the Creator Ahura Mazda, in the midst of nature – by mountain, stream, or oceanfront. Thus, at the Abangan festival, on roz Aban of mah Aban, they gather at the seashore to offer prayers to Aredvi Sura Anahita, who presides over the Waters.

It was such a sight, at the seashore in Bombay, that moved Andrew Carnegie to write [ "A Modern Zoroastrian", by Samuel Laing, 1890]:

"This evening we were surprised to see, as we strolled along the beach, more Parsis than ever before, and more Parsi ladies richly dressed, all wending their way towards the sea ...

"Here on the shore of the ocean, as the sun was sinking in the sea, they congregated to perform their religious rites. Fire was there in its grandest form, the setting sun, and water in the vast expanse of the Indian Ocean outstretched before them. The earth was under their feet, and wafted across the sea the air came laden with perfume ..."

"Surely no time or place could be more fitly chosen than this for lifting up the soul to the realms beyond sense ...

"How inexpressibly sublime the scene appeared to me, and how insignificant and unworthy of the unknown seemed even our cathedrals 'made with human hands,' when compared with this **looking up through nature to nature's God!**

"I stood and drank in the serene happiness which seemed to fill the air. I have seen many modes and forms of worship ... but all poor in comparison with this.

"Nor do I ever expect in all my life to witness a religious ceremony which will so powerfully affect me as that of the Parsis on the beach at Bombay."

*By Roshan Rivetna, excerpted from  
"Parsis, Ancient and Modern," by F. K. Dadachanji*





*Parsis at Marine Drive in Bombay, 1984, offering prayers at the Abangan festival (Ava Ardwisur-nu-Parab) on roz Aban and mah Aban.*

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY PARSIS, THE ZOROASTRIANS OF INDIA, A PHOTOGRAPHIC JOURNEY, BY SOONI TARAPOREVALA.

# yashts & niyayishns devotional uses

by

**Firoze M. Kotwal**

**Jamsheed K. Choksy**

The niyayishns, as invocations of praise and the yashts, as devotional poems have served and continue to serve the pious needs of Zarathushtis. They play no direct role in the central or high rituals conducted by mobeds in fire temples. Rather, through recitation, those texts serve the pious religiosity of individuals. In other words, scriptural passages were given ritual uses aimed at endowing religion with meaning on everyday life. So niyayishns and yashts are still prayed by orthodox Zarathushtis even though many of them no longer comprehend more than the gist of the texts. At other times these texts are used as *nirangs* to ward off evil and ensure wellbeing.

## The Gahs

Medieval (Modern) names of the five watches (*gah*) of each day:

### **Hawan (Havan) gah:**

Havani or dawn to noon, morning period.

### **Rapithwin (Rapithwan) gah:**

Rapithwina or noon to mid-afternoon, afternoon period.

Observed only during the first seven months of the year. For the rest of the year, it is the 'Second Hawan'.

### **Uzerin (Uzirehn) gah:**

Uzayeirina or mid afternoon to sunset, evening period.

### **Ebsrusrim (Aiwisuthrem) gah:**

Aiwistuthrima or sunset to midnight, early night period.

### **Ushahin (Ushahin) gah:**

Ushahina or midnight to dawn, late night period.

## Farziyat Prayers

The *Farziyat* (*Farajyat*) or 'obligatory' prayers include:

- The *Padyab-kusti* (*koshti*)
- *Divano Namaskar*  
(recited in Aiwisuthrim and Ushahin gahs only)
- *101 names of Ahura Mazda*
- The *Srosh Baj*.
- The appropriate *gah prayer*
- The *niyayishn* or *yasht* as appropriate:
  - (a) During the three daylight periods – Hawan gah, Rapithwin gah and Uzerin gah – the *Khwarshed (Khorshed) and Mihr (Meher) Niyayishns* are recited.
  - (b) During the Aiwisuthrim gah, the *Srosh Yasht Wadi* is recited.
  - (c) During the Ushahin gah, the *Srosh Yasht Hadokht* is recited.
- *Doa Vispa Humata*  
(recited in Hawan gah only)
- *Doa Nam Setayeshne*
- *Char Disa No Namaskar*  
(recited in the daylight gah only – Hawan, Rapithwin, Uzerin).
- *Tandorosti*

## PREREQUISITES

**Z**arathushtis must be in an appropriate state of ritual purity to perform rites including prayers.

A *niyayishn* or a *yasht* can be recited after the performance of the *Padyab-Kusti* (*koshti*) purification ritual and the recitation of the *Farziyat* (*Farajyat*) or obligatory prayers [*at left*].

Then a Zarathushti may recite as many additional prayers as he or she wishes. After concluding the Avestan prayers he or she may chant *monajats* (litanies) in languages such as New Persian or Farsi, Gujarati and English to understand the gist of the prayers.

## DEVOTIONS

### INVOLVING NIYAYISHNS

### 1. & 2. Khwarshed (Khorshed) and Mihr (Meher) Niyayishns

The first two *niyayishns* are always recited together, one after the other, during the first three daylight periods or *gahs* [*see left*] because the sun and Mithra were linked together in trajectory with the function of upholding Asha or order. So these two invocations of praise are jointly called the Khwarshed-Mihr *Niyayishn*.

Variation in the recitation of the Khwarshed *Niyayishn* occurs based on the period of the day. During the Hawan gah, the words used are [*Ahuna-vaiti Gatha 33.10*]:

“grow at will in body through my good thought, power, and order.”

During the Rapithwin gah the words used are [*Yasna Haptanghaiti 36.6*]:

“these lights there, the highest among the high.”

During the Uzerin gah the words used are [*Ushnavaiti Gatha 43.6*]:

“at the turning point to which you come with your holy spirit.”

In summary, praise is chanted because it is believed, that the sun and its light facilitate life on earth [*Khwarshed Niyayishn 11*]:

“We worship the shining Sun, immortal (and) radiant, (led) by swift horses (across the sky)”.

The poetry invokes the yazata Mithra because he is thought to be the spirit who grants “wide pastures” and “peaceful and good abodes” to righteous humans on behalf of Ahura Mazda [*Mihr Niyayishn 13*].

Zarathushtis recite the Khwarshed and Mihr *Niyayishns* facing the rising and setting sun. Habitually neglecting to recite these two invocations of praise is thought to adversely affect a soul's attempt to successfully cross *Cinwad* (*Chinvat*) *Puhl* (the Bridge of the Compiler) after death because spiritual merit has not accrued. On Khordad Sal or Greater New Year's day, Zarathushtis are supposed to recite the Khwarshed *Niyayishn* nine times and the Mihr *Niyayishn* three times each during the Hawan gah; and the Khwarshed *Niyayishn* three times and the Mihr *Niyayishn* once during both the Rapithwin and Uzerin gahs.

To rectify any omission by a Zarathushti while alive, the deceased individual's relatives perform these *niyayishns* in memory of the departed soul on the third day (*sevvom* or *uthamna*) after death. In Iran until the 1960s, the Khwarshed-Mihr *Niyayishn* would be recited by both priests and laity at a public gathering in the fire temple on the third morning of the *Atash Bozorg Kardan* or “making the fire great” ritual. Many Parsis on the Indian subcontinent light a divo or oil lamp and recite these *niyayishns* to it on auspicious days.

### 3. Mah (Mah Bakhtar, Mah Bokhtar) Niyayishn

This *niyayishn*, directed to the Moon, is recited because Zarathushtis believe that the moon bestows happiness and success upon people by controlling *bakht* (fate). It should be recited during the two night periods, that is the Aiwisuthrim and Ushahin gahs, especially at the new moon or beginning of the first quarter, the full moon or second quarter, and moonless days or fourth quarter. It is recorded that praise from the devotee

is necessary for the moon to wax by gathering *khvarenah* (*khwarrah*, *farr*), or glory, until it is ready to dispense fate and fortune in accordance to each individual's deeds, as Zarathushtis pray "may you also give tangible glory" and in so doing it then wanes [*Mah Niyayishn 11*].

Those three days each month came to be regarded as auspicious, and some traditionalist Parsis still cook special meals and decorate the entrances to their homes with flower garlands and chalk designs. Other orthodox Parsis recite the invocation at home before beginning each day's work hoping for success. Many feel that the *niyayishn* is capable of miraculous cures.

Eventually Zarathushtis came to believe that neglecting to recite the

*niyayishn* can prevent a soul from crossing the Bridge of the Compiler after death. So now in Iran, relatives recite it on behalf of the deceased person's soul at *sevvom*.

“ The Ohrmazd Yasht has long been prayed daily to thank Ahura Mazda for the bountifulness of creation and to ward off evil created by Drug (Druj) or confusion ... ”

#### 4. Aban (Awan, Avan, Ava) Niyayishn

Aban Niyayishn serves as an invocation of praise for the worship-worthy feminine spirit Aredvi Sura Anahita (Ardwisur Anahid) who presides over water on behalf of Ahura

Mazda. It is recited during the three daylight gahs for the fulfillment of vows as noted by the text itself [*Aban Niyayishn 9*]:

“In return for her radiance and glory, I shall worship her with audible worship, I shall worship her with an exactly-performed ritual”.

Popular belief still holds that if this *niyayishn* is recited for forty days, or else each day during mah Aban, wishes will come true. During the first three gahs of each day, it may also be recited by mothers to ensure good flow of breast milk [*Aban Niyayishn 3*].

The invocation's broadest ritual function is, however, in relation to Aban or water – especially flowing water. In that respect, it is central to the priestly ritual of *Ab-Zohr*. Laity should recite the *niyayishn* while fac-

### THE ZARATHUSHTI CALENDAR (NAMES OF 12 MONTHS)

Zarathushtis follow a solar calendar of twelve months of 30 *roz* (days) each. The remaining five days are the five epacts or Gatha/Gahanig days. The names (medieval and modern) of the twelve months and the five Gatha days, are listed below, with their meanings.

Medieval	Modern	Meaning
1. Frawardin	Farvardin	Fravashis or immortal souls, eternal human spirits
2. Ardwhisht	Ardibehesht/Ordibehesht	Asha Vahishta or best order, prayer
3. Hordad	Khordad/Awerdad	Haurvatat or integrity, wholeness, perfection
4. Tir	Tir	Tishtrya/Tishtar or Sirius, beneficent stars
5. Amurdad	Amardad	Ameretat or immortality
6. Shahrewar	Shehrevan	Khshathra Vairya or desirable dominion, power
7. Mihr	Meher	Mithra or covenant, contract
8. Aban	Avan	Anahita or undefiled, water
9. Adur	Adar	Atar or fire
10. Day	Dae	Dadhva or creator
11. Wahman	Bahman	Vohu Manah or good mind, good thought
12. Spandarmad	Aspandarmad	Spenta Armaiti or good disposition, holy devotion
Frawardigan	Farvardigan	The 10-day commemoration of Fravashis during the last five days of the twelfth month and the five epacts or Gatha/Gahanig days: First Gatha day: Ahunavaiti Second Gatha day: Ushtavaiti Third Gatha day: Spenta Mainyu Fourth Gatha day: Vohu Khshathra Fifth Gatha day: Vahistoishti.



## THE ZARATHUSHTI CALENDAR (NAMES OF 30 DAYS)

The names (medieval and modern) of the 30 days in each month, are listed below with their meanings. The days are organized into four 'weeks' (of 7, 7, 8 and 8 days) each beginning with the name of the Creator.

	<b>Medieval</b>	<b>Modern</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
1.	Ohrmazd	Hormazd	Ahura Mazda or wise lord
2.	Wahman	Bahman	Vohu Manah or good thought, good mind
3.	Ardwahisht	Ardibehesht/Ordibehesht	Asha Vahishta or best order, prayer
4.	Shahrewar	Shehrevhar	Khshathra Vairya or desirable dominion, power
5.	Spandarmad	Aspandarmad	Spenta Armaiti or good disposition, holy devotion
6.	Hordad	Khordad/Awerdad	Haurvatat or integrity, wholeness, perfection
7.	Amurdad	Amardad	Ameretat or immortality
8.	Day pad Adur	Dae pa Adar	Dadhva with Atar, creator with fire
9.	Adur	Adar	Atar or fire
10.	Aban	Avan	Ap or water
11.	Khwar(shed)	Khorshed	Hvare Khshaeta or shining sun
12.	Mah	Mah/Mohor	Mah or moon
13.	Tir	Tir	Tishtrya/Tishtar or Sirius, beneficent stars
14.	Gosh	Gosh	Geush or cattle, beneficent animals
15.	Day pad Mihr	Dae pa Meher	Dadhva with Mithra, creator with covenant
16.	Mihr	Meher	Mithra or covenant, contract
17.	Srosh	Sarosh	Sraosha or observance, prayer
18.	Rashn	Rashna	Rashnu or justice, spiritual judgment
19.	Frawardin	Farvardin	Fravashis or immortal souls, eternal human spirits
20.	Wahram	Behram	Verethraghna or victory
21.	Ram	Ram	Raman or peace
22.	Wad	Govad	Vayu or celestial wind, good wind
23.	Day pad Den	Dae pa Din	Dadhva with Daena, creator with religion
24.	Den	Din	Daena or religion
25.	Ard	Ashishwang	Ashi or recompense
26.	Ashtad	Ashtad	Arshtat or rectitude, order, justice
27.	Asman	Asman	Asman or sky
28.	Zamyad	Zamyad	Zam Yazata or earth, ground
29.	Maraspand	Mahraspand/Marespand	Manthra Spenta or holy word, spell
30.	Anagran	Aneran	Anaghra Raoca or eternal light

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ing water – particularly on the fifth (Aspandarmad), tenth (Aban), twenty-fourth (Din), twenty-fifth (Ashishwang), and twenty-ninth (Marespand) roz of each month.

Zarathushtis, often entire families on the Indian subcontinent recite this niyayishn by the sea shore. Some Parsis also recite it at the Bhikha Behram well in Mumbai seeking solutions to problems that life presents. It is also intoned during the Abangan festival (that is on roz Aban of mah Aban). The niyayishn is not recited during the two night periods for fear that the invocation may be utilized by demonic forces to produce confusion.

## 5. Atakhsh (Atash) Niyayishn

The Atakhsh Niyayishn is linked ritually to the holy fires that blaze

within the fire temples, as the invocation to the fire. Therefore, it is performed by the mobed who tends the fire with clean, dry, fragrant wood and incense during the *Boy* (*Bui*), the ‘(offering of) incense’ ritual conducted at the beginning of each of the five periods of the day, while a bell is rung to exorcise evil with loud sound.

The number of recitations and offerings for each gah varies with the ritual grade of fire involved, as does the level of purity required of the priest. Such recitation is still even performed at home to the hearth fire by *behdin* (lay) Zarathushtis in Iran and the Indian subcontinent, often in conjunction with lighting a *divo* or oil lamp, or else carrying a fire in a small brazier through every room of the house in the *loban* (incense) ritual.

Three invocations are necessary for a holy fire of the *Atash Adaran* or sec-

ond rank. The number of recitations for an *Atash Behram* or highest (victory) rank depend on the gah – eleven during the morning, nine in the afternoon, seven in the evening, seven at night, and nine after midnight.

It is also recited during the ordination (*nawar, navar, navezuti*) of the priests, because they tend the holy fires, and the initiation (*navjote, sedreh pushi*) of all laity. The niyayishn’s text also forms Yasna 62, and therefore is recited during that most central of Zarathushti rituals.

For the same reasons, this niyayishn is regarded as appropriate for recitation by lay Zarathushtis during all five gahs, especially on Hormazd, Ardibehesht, Adar, Sarosh and Behram roz of each month.

The reciter seeks from the fire the best existence of the orderly ones, for now and forever [*Atash Niyayishn 12*]. Therefore Zarathushtis are enjoined to recite the Atakhsh Niyayishn on Khordad Sal (that is on roz Khordad in mah Frawardin). For the same reason, this niyayishn used to be steadfastly recited until the 1960s at the early Spring festival of *Hiromba*, a praxis that has now become less frequent in Iran. Likewise, it would be chanted on the third morning of the *Atash Bozorg Kardan* ritual.

This niyayishn remains popular as a demonstration of public piety at the Adurgan (Adargan, Azargan) festival on roz Adur (Adar) in mah Adur (Adar) [*photo at left*]. To rectify any omission by a Zarathushti while alive, his or her relatives in Iran perform this niyayishn in memory of the deceased’s soul on the third day after death.

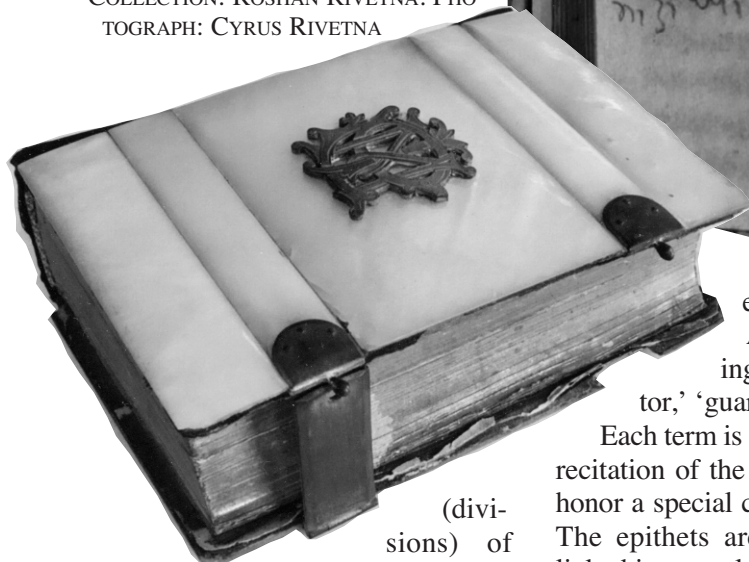
## DEVOTIONS INVOLVING YASHTS

The yasht literature may have been far more extensive in ancient and medieval times than today, for it is possible that each of the thirty-three divine spirits mentioned in the two *Siroza* (Thirty Days) texts once possessed a yasht in his or her honor. The twenty-one extant yashts appear to have belonged to one of the *nasks*

*Long lines of devotees at the Pak Iranshah Atash Behram, Udvada, waiting to offer prayers at the Adurgan festival on Shenshai Adar roz, Adar mah, April 25th, 2004. PHOTOGRAPH: ER. SOLI DASTUR.*



Opening page of *Aban Niyayesh*, with pencilled annotation: "Indian Ocean, Nov. 26, 1887, roz Avan, mah Khordad..." The *Khordeh Avesta*, 1868, has a mother of Pearl cover with a "PMJ" (possibly Piroshaw 'Muga' Jeejeebhoy) monogram. The flyleaf has a pencilled diary of his travels in Asia, Africa, Europe (1881), Poona (1882), Mahableshwar (1883, 1885), London (1887) and America (1887).  
COLLECTION: ROSHAN RIVETNA. PHOTOGRAPH: CYRUS RIVETNA



(divisions) of the Sasanian Avesta. Zarathushti astrologers, especially among the Parsis of India, recommend that selected yashts be recited to ward off malignant influence of specific planets and stars. Each yasht also had and still has particular ritual functions in the lives of Zarathushtis.

## 1. Ohrmazd (Hormazd) Yasht

Ohrmazd Yasht has long been prayed daily to thank Ahura Mazda for the bountifulness of creation and to ward off evil created by *Drug* (*Druj*) or confusion [*Ohrmazd Yasht* 1]. Due to its title, this yasht was placed first in the sequence of devotional poems. It is appropriate to recite this yasht as part of the Farziyat during any period of the day because Zarathushtis feel it serves to glorify god for all the good creations.

The Ohrmazd Yasht also provides two lists of between seventy-two and sev-

enty-four epithets for Ahura Mazda including 'shepherd,' 'protector,' 'guardian,' and 'exalted.'

Each term is intended, in the ritual recitation of the devotional poem, to honor a special characteristic of God. The epithets are also symbolically linked in textual tradition and popular belief to the number of chapters of the Yasna and to the number of threads of the *kusti* (*koshti*).

Moreover, pious tradition considers the last portion (stanzas 23–33) of the yasht as belonging to the now lost Avestan Vohu Manah (Wahman, Bahman) Yasht (a Pahlavi translation has survived), thus linking the Wise Lord to the Amesha Spenta of good thought.

## 2. Haft Amahraspand (Haft Ameshaspand) Yasht

Because it praises the holy immortals and the aspects of the material creations that they oversee, this yasht is not only the second devotional poem but also one that can be recited in all five gahs of each day.

Of relatively late composition, its role is largely that of warding off and exorcising aspects of *Drug* (confusion) that causes evil. For example,

pious belief holds that the yasht's words are particularly effective in warding off the supposed evil influence of eclipses and of the planet Saturn—regarded as the planetary lord of darkness when prayed in combination with the Aban Yasht. Another such belief involves its supposed power to dispel personal and professional problems.

## 2. Ardwhahisht (Ardibehesht) Yasht

The Ardwhahisht Yasht is also of relatively late composition and functions as an incantation against evil. This devotional poem is regarded as the most powerful prayers against diseases and untimely death because Asha Vahishta, like the element of fire to which that Amesha Spenta is linked, is believed to smite and drive away demonic spirits [*Ardwhahisht Yasht* 13–16].

The yasht is also thought to be efficacious in spiritual healing [*Ardwhahisht Yasht* 6]. By medieval times, the devotional poem had also gained standing in Zarathushti astrology. It came to be considered helpful in averting the evil influence of the planet Mars when in astrological opposition to the star Vega or Wanand.



Owing to its remedial and curative attributes, this yasht is considered appropriate for praying in all five periods of the day. Some times its *nirang* (incantation, spell) is chanted as well—for example, against the “evil eye.” To rectify any omission by a Zarathushti while alive, his or her relatives and other community members in Iran perform this yasht on behalf of the deceased’s soul on the third day after death.

#### 4. Hordad (Khordad) (Awerdad) Yasht

As with the preceding devotional poems, the Hordad (Khordad, Awerdad) Yasht may be recited in all five gahs. Representing integrity and wholeness, which are symbolized by the notion of completeness and inseparability in water, and are divinized by the holy immortal Haurvatat, this late yasht became a verbal means of dispelling evil and restoring health [*Hordad Yasht* 5]. As a spell to cast off confusion, it must be safeguarded against recitation by persons with evil intentions [*Hordad Yasht* 10].

Owing to the mantic and exorcistic properties ascribed to this yasht, Zarathushti astrologers and folk healers claim that if it is prayed with the Tishtar Yasht to Sirius, healing supposedly comes to a person who falls under the negative astrological influence of Tir or Mercury.

#### 5. Ardwisur (Aban, Awan, Awan, Ava) Yasht

The Ardwisur Yasht to Aredvi Sura Anahita is regarded as a major older devotional poem, one displaying considerable syncretism. Much of the ritual context of the Aban Niyayishn also applies to this fifth yasht. It too can be recited during the three daylight gahs for the fulfillment of vows as noted by the text itself [*Ardwisur Yasht* 9].

While seeking a boon, Zarathushtis pray this yasht – sometimes once each day for forty days, beginning on roz Ohrmazd of mah Aban through

roz Aban of mah Adur. During the three daylight periods of each day, the yasht can also be recited by mothers seeking adequate production of breast milk [*Ardwisur Yasht* 2].

“Purificatory power is ascribed by Zarathushtis to sunlight, an idea reflected in the Khorshed Yasht, where words claim that the earth, waters and all holy creatures become pure when the sun rises.”

Like its *niyayishn*, this yasht’s broadest ritual function relates to “all the waters that flow forth upon the earth” [*Ardwisur Yasht* 15]. Therefore, Zarathushtis from ancient times to the present have recited this devotional poem in the presence of flowing water – often at sunrise and sunset to unite the liquid and fire elements of nature.

The devotional poem’s wording itself specifies the times for its proper recitation as being “from sunrise until sunset” [*Ardwisur Yasht* 91].

#### 6. Khwarshed (Khorshed) Yasht

Khwarshed Yasht is a recitation utilized during all five gahs in praise of both Ahura Mazda and the sun. In many respects, this yasht’s ritual functions overlap with those of the Khwarshed Niyayishn.

Purificatory power is ascribed by Zarathushti tradition to sunlight, an idea reflected in the devotional poem where words claim that the earth, waters, and all holy creatures become pure when the sun rises [*Khwarshed Yasht* 2]. Therefore, it should be performed on the fourth day after a person’s demise, following the *Afrinagan* (*Afringan*) service, to ward off demonic spirits who may prey upon the soul.

When chanted at sunset, the yasht is intended to invigorate the sun for its rise the next dawn because the Zarathushtis of antiquity had concluded that if the sun did not rise then

daevas or demons would destroy everything on each continent and the yazatas would not be able to counter the evil onslaught [*Khwarshed Yasht* 4-5]. Many Zarathushtis still include this devotional poem at least once in their weekly prayer cycle.

#### 7. Mah (Mah Bakhtar, Mah Bokhtar) Yasht

The Mah Yasht may be recited in praise of the moon and its creator Ahura Mazda

during any of the five gahs. This late and short devotional text, like the Mah Niyayishn, discusses the moon in relation to cattle and glory. Also spoken of is the waxing and waning of the moon, the growth of plants in the moonlight, and the moon’s relationship to the flow of water [*Mah Yasht* 2-5]. The moon is said to grant health, wealth, and wisdom [*Mah Yasht* 5]; therefore, Zarathushtis are urged to offer this prayer to the moon as thanks for the good fortune provided.

#### 8. Tishtar Yasht

Recitation of the relatively long Tishtar Yasht is recommended because it invokes Tishtrya or the star Sirius. Sirius was regarded by Zarathushtis as a spiritual entity that counters the demon of drought called Apaosha and the Parikas or witches who scorch the earth in the form of shooting stars or meteors [*Tishtar Yasht* 8, 21–23, 39–40, 51, 53–55].

The struggle to ensure continuous flow of water for life on the earth, noted not only in this Avestan poem but also in the astrological passages of the Bundahishn, associates Tishtrya with fertility and beneficence.

As a result, from at least the early Achaemenian period or sixth century BCE, this yasht would have been recited at the early summer feast of *Tirikana* or *Tirgan*. Even today, Tishtrya is venerated in an august fashion by Iranian Zarathushtis during the five day *Jashn-e Tir o*

*Teshtar*, also known among residents of Kerman and Bam as *Tir o Jashn* – all referring to the feast of Tirgan.

Celebratory veneration of Tishtrya on that occasion begins with devotees cleaning their homes on the previous day, washing themselves and donning clean, new, clothes, then singing praise to the yazata by comparing that spiritual entity to pearls. Women tie seven-colored strings called threads of *Tir o Bad* (wind) around their wrists to honor the fecundity represented by Tishtrya's rain water yielding good harvests.

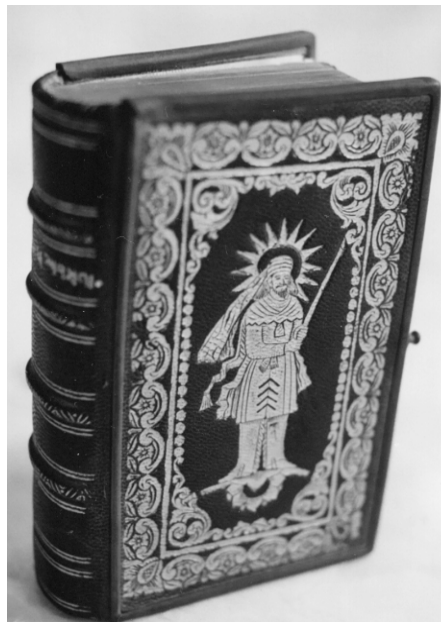
Devotees also sprinkle each other with water from streams as a symbolic blessing from the yazata. Tirgan enjoys less favor among contemporary Parsis, but is part of the annual cycle of jashans or thanksgiving celebrations.

## 9. Druwasp (Drvasp) Yasht

The Druwasp Yasht, to the feminine yazata Drvaspa, associated with horses, is commonly known as the Gosh Yasht because of its opening reference to herds [*Druwasp Yasht 1*] and because Drvaspa is an epithet of Geush Urvan or the Soul of the Ox. Like so many other yashts its words focus on beseeching for boons – by legendary Iranian heroes such as Yima Khshaeta or Jamshid [*Druwasp Yasht 8-11*], examples held up for common folk to emulate. As a result, this yasht has come to be recited during all five gahs of the day.

## 10. Mihr (Meher) Yasht

The Mihr Yasht to the yazata Mithra is one of the major texts of the Young or Standard Avesta. Mithra is the yazata who oversees covenants between god and humans, and among people, traversing the sky to verify that human behavior is in keeping with Ahura Mazda's will. So he is praised with words identical to those in his niyayishn.



*Top, Mithra [left] the 'bestower of glory,' at the sacral coronation of Sasanian king Ardeshir II [center] by Ahura Mazda. Bas relief at Taq-e Bostan, c. 4th century CE. The image of Mithra with the crown of sun's rays has mistakenly become popular in modern times to represent the figure of Zarathushtra.* PHOTO: ROSHAN RIVETNA.

*Above, miniature Khordeh Avesta books bearing the popular image of Zarathushtra on the cover, published in 1879 and 1861.* COLLECTION: ROSHAN RIVETNA. PHOTO: CYRUS RIVETNA.



Mithra is thought to bestow glory [*Mihr Yasht 16*] and so came to be associated with the sacral coronation of the Sasanian monarchs as evidence by the rock relief at Taq-e Bostan of Ardashir II (ruled 379–383 CE) [*photo facing page*]. Through all these actions, Mithra became the protector of pious persons. So even the Achaemenian king of kings Artakhshathra or Artaxerxes II Mnemon (ruled 405–359 BCE) beseeched the yazata for protection from “all evil” [*Susa Old Persian inscriptions A.5, D.4*].

Mithra is still associated with success and wealth, which are prayed for in the yasht [*Mihr Yasht 30*]. This aspect, namely material success, has made the divine spirit an especial favorite of modern urbanized, professional, Zarathushtis.

In ancient and medieval times, the Mihr Yasht was recited at the feast of Mithrakana (Mihragan, Mehergan) on roz Mihr of mah Mihr originally in conjunction with the autumnal equinox as a harvest festival – to celebrate good fields and wide pastures plus the crops and herds that flourished under his patronage in the sunlight [*compare Bundahishn 5B.17, 26.70*]. Termed either Mehergan or Jashn-e Mehr (Yazad or Ized), it is still celebrated by Zarathushtis. At Sharifabad and Kerman, pirs or shrines to Shah Mehr Yazad serve as sites of pilgrimage especially during Meheragan.

It is not as central a festival among the Parsis whose main rites on that day are, if possible, to decorate their homes, visit a fire temple, and recite the yasht.

The Mihr Yasht itself may be recited during any of the periods of the day – and those who recite it often seek the protection and grace of Mithra. Due to purificatory power ascribed to Mithra through his connection with the sun or Khwarshed, the Mihr Yasht is performed on the fourth day after a person dies, following the Afrinagan service.

## 11. & 11a. Srosh Yasht Hadokht and Srosh Yasht Wadi

Sraosha is regarded by many Zarathushtis as a special protector whose assistance may be invoked at times of crises. This yazata is also viewed as the bringer of good luck, and so incense and fragrant leaves would be placed in the hearth fire of homes to please Sraosha – after that yazata’s special creature, the rooster, had heralded dawn – thereby hoping to be rewarded with a successful day.



PHOTO: CYRUS RIVETNA

*Khordeh Avesta with embroidered cover.*

The Srosh Yasht Hadokht or Yasht-e Hadokht-e Srosh [*Yasht 11*] may be culled from the Hadokht Nask. The text refers to the power of *manthras* or ‘(holy) words, spells’ in exorcising evil [*Srosh Yasht Hadokht 3*]. So Zarathushtis are enjoined to chant this Hadokht each morning during the Hawan gah after performing the rite of Padyab-Kusti.

In general, it may be recited in all five periods of the day. The Srosh Yasht Hadokht has specialized usages as well. The recital of one of

its sections [*Kardeh 2*] is necessary for the initiation of mobeds at the nawar level. Its performance occurs during the enthronement of an Atash Behram. It is recited during the Uzerin gah on the third day after a person’s death, during the uthamna service, so that Sraosha will protect the soul on its way to judgment.

The Srosh Yasht Wadi [*Yasna 57*] is a more elaborate devotional poem, although overlapping in phrases and ideas with the Srosh Yasht Hadokht. Because the Srosh Yasht Wadi is culled from Yasna 57, it was given the additional title of *Srosh Yasht-e yazishn* (Srosh Yasht belonging to the Yasna). However, it may be recited only in the Aiwisruthrim or fourth gah. Since it is recited at the “beginning of the night,” it is also called Srosh Yasht sar-e shab.

The reciter of this hymn believes that he or she will receive protection, help and victory from Sraosha in exchange for praise [*Srosh Yasht Wadi 3, 10*]. So orthodox Zarathushtis recite it before sleeping. Likewise, during the three nights after a Zarathushti dies, his or her relatives recite the Srosh Yasht sar-e shab at the beginning of the fourth period in order to ensure protection for the recently departed soul.

Similarly, it is recited in memory of deceased persons when their souls are commemorated collectively during the last ten days of the Zarathushti religious year – the Hamaspathmaedaya, Frawardigan (Farvardigan), or Mukhtad (Muktad) periods, especially during the *Panji-mas* ‘greater five (days)’ or *Gatha* days. The Srosh Yasht Wadi’s nirang is popular for daily recitation due to its brevity which is not regarded as detracting from its efficacy.

## 12. Rashn Yasht

The fairly short Rashn Yasht serves to honor the yazata Rashnu. Although containing archaic themes, its redaction is relatively recent in comparison



to the major yashts and may reflect this spirit's ascending importance in Zarathushti notions of the afterlife. It is regarded as auspicious to chant this yasht on the day dedicated to Rashnu in each month (the eighteenth day) and also on the seventh (Amardad), twenty-sixth (Ashtad) and twenty-eighth (Zamyad) days which are associated with the *hamkaran* (co-workers) of the Amesha Spenta Ameretat or immortality.

The yasht can be recited during any of the five periods of any day as well, for spiritual merit. The Uzerin gah or evening period is, however, associated most closely in myth with this yazata of justice.

### 13. Frawardin (Fravardin) Yasht

The Frawardin Yasht's length and themes reflect the importance ascribed to ensuring the welfare of the Fravashis or immortal spirits of humans. In premodern times, the Frawardin Yasht was celebrated as an inner ritual, within the holy precincts of fire temples, with the ritual offering of *dron* (portion of food) consisting of flat, round, wheat bread with seven twigs. It is still recited as part of the Farokhshi ritual.

Beyond the realm of priestly rites, it is considered meritorious to recite this yasht on the day of each month allocated to the Fravashis, that is on Frawardin roz – especially if performed with *kriya* (ritual activity). On that day, the yasht should also be performed at funerary towers or *dakhmas* and cemeteries or *aram-gahs*. In modern Iran, Zarathushtis recite the Frawardin Yasht on *ruze* (commemorative days) at the end of the second through eleventh months after a person's demise. More broadly, this yasht can be recited in all five gahs of the day in memory of deceased relatives and friends.

### 14. Wahram (Behram) Yasht

The Wahram Yasht reflects the abilities ascribed to the yazata honored by

that devotional poem (Verethragna, the yazata or spiritual entity of victory) to drive away all afflictions and correct inequities.

The second part of this yasht contains a series of mantras and refers to items – such as feathers, bones, and incantations, to dispel curses [Wahram Yasht 34–36, 44, 46]. Therefore, this yasht became a favorite among Zarathushti folk healers and astrologers who prescribe its recitation in combination with the Ardwasht Yasht to protect against the evil influences of spells and planets such as Mars.

“ Sraosha is regarded as a special protector whose assistance may be invoked, at times of crises. ”

As a spell to ward off evil, it is chanted prior to long journeys. Iranian and Parsi folktales claim that priests have invoked this prayer to avert natural disasters such as floods and attacks on herds by predatory animals. Its repetition is prescribed to fulfill vows. The yasht may also be intoned when purification rites are performed, again to dispel all forms of the *Drug* (*Druj*), especially if such rites occur on Behram roz or the day dedicated to Verethraghna each month. The same holds true for recitations of the *Tandarosti* (*Tandarosti*) or ‘health of the body’ when intoned for return to good health during which mobeds often include the Wahram Yasht.

It remains a popular devotional poem, and may be recited in all five watches of the day. A nirang created from the sixteenth section of the Wahram Yasht is popular among Parsis as well, and is often recited around nine times to invoke Verethraghna's aid in solving specific problems.

### 15. Ram Yasht

Ram Yasht is also called the Way Yasht after its main subject Vayu the

yazata of the atmosphere and the celestial wind. Medieval texts such as the Bundahishn clearly conjoined these two worship-worthy spirits. The devotional poem's lines entreat Vayu for boons [Ram Yasht 3, 8, 12, 16]. The yasht also refers to curative spells from Ahura Mazda which Zarathushtis are supposed to intone [Ram Yasht 56]. Therefore, the yasht is regarded as appropriate for recitation during all five periods of each day. As Ram is thought to preside over happy marriages, this yasht may be recited on those occasions as well.

### 16. Den (Din) Yasht

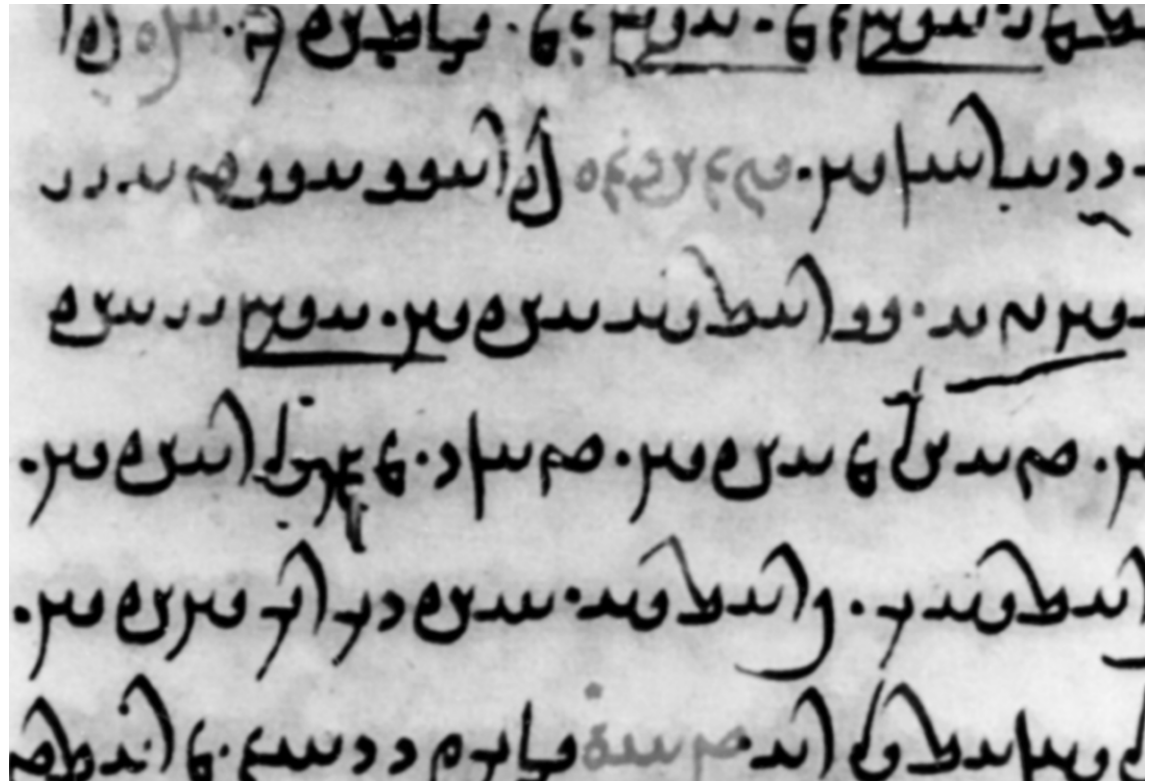
The Den (Din) Yasht, named for Daena or religion is intoned in honor of a related yazata named Cista or Cisti (pronounced Chista or Chisti) or ‘religious insight’. To further spirituality through introspection, the yasht can be recited during all five gahs of the day. As in the recitation of many other yashts, the invoker follows the example of Zarathushtra in requesting assistance from the worship-worthy spirit [Den Yasht 3, 6–7]. Performance of this yasht is said to result in the fulfillment of wishes if the devotee follows closely the teachings and observances of the Zarathushti religion.

### 17. Ard (Ahrishwang, Ashishwang) Yasht

The Ard (Ahrishwang, Ashishwang) Yasht glorifies the feminine worship-worthy spirit of recompense. Her yasht may be recited in all five periods of the day to obtain the good life because the poem spells out the bountifulness of existence, especially the rewards to be gained on earth and in heaven by pious Zarathushtis who uphold Ahura Mazda's order. So her yasht reminds the faithful at the inception of the recitation that she is one “who grants benefit, who provides cures” [Ard Yasht 1].

It goes on to fill the imaginations of reciters with images of large estates, storerooms full of material goods, houses decorated with couches and

Right, Srosh  
Yasht Wadi, from  
a handwritten  
manuscript of the  
Khordeh Avesta,  
in the Avestan  
script, c. 1750.  
The characters in  
red ink indicate  
instructions.  
COLLECTION:  
FIROZE KOTWAL.  
PHOTOGRAPH:  
CYRUS RIVETNA



cushions, and wives adorned with beautiful jewelry [Ard Yasht 6–10]. Associated with the notion of wealth are the ideas of physical attractiveness, controlled sexuality, and reproductive fertility for her venerators [Ard Yasht 11, 54–55]. So on the day dedicated to Ashi (the 25th day or Ashishwang) in each month, many Zarathushtis visit fire temples to recite her yasht.

Given the financial and social success achieved by Zarathushtis around the world, this yazata and her yasht remain popular.

## 18. Ashtad Yasht

Following a pattern evidenced by other late yashts like those to Ram and Den, the Ashtad Yasht does not focus on the subject of its title, namely the spirit of rectitude. Rather it is a eulogy of the “glory of the Aryans.” Therefore in certain old manuscripts Pahlavi writers noted that the yasht was also called the *Iran Yasn* or Prayer for Iran.

Other yazatas associated with glory are praised as well, including Ashi. Through this yasht, the reciter seeks advancement of the world for all of

humanity. Therefore it is permissible to recite this during all five periods of the day to receive the just assistance of this spirit. Shrines to her remain popular in Kerman and Sharifabad. There the yasht named for her is still recited. Among the Parsis of India, some individuals venerate Arshtat as the spirit of esoteric knowledge. The second stanza of this devotional poem, which speaks of the destruction of Angra Mainyu (Ahreman, Ahriman) the ‘angry spirit’ or ‘evil spirit,’ *Aeshma* (*Kheshm*) or ‘wrath,’ and other demonic entities, is believed by such persons to act as a charm.

## 19. Zamyad Yasht

The Zamyad Yasht is also called the *Kayan Yasn* or Prayer for the Kayanians in certain manuscripts after the legendary figures referred to in its words. Essentially, for devotional purposes the yasht focuses on the benefits bestowed through *khvarenah* or glory. It may be recited in all five gahs to obtain those benefits. If properly propitiated, it is believed that the yazata Zamyad will make the home of each pious reciter full of

glory and happiness, plus gladden his or her soul in the afterlife.

## 20. Hom Yasht

The Hom Yasht comprises the Moti (larger) Hom Yasht [Yasna 8.9 - 10.21] to Haoma the yazata of the haoma plant, and the Nani (smaller) Hom Yasht or extract from Yasna 9 to Haoma. Essentially the devotional poem reflects the notion that the haoma plant, like the worship-worthy spirit who is the plant’s spiritual manifestation, is a ritual libation which is a symbolic elixir of immortality by virtue of supposedly being “death dispelling” [eg. *Hom Yasht* 2]. So it may be recited in all five periods of the day.

Via its intonation, devotees past and present may connect themselves to heroes of Iranian epic such as Yima (Jamshid) and Thraetaona (Ferdun) and to the prophet Zarathushtra. Due to the life-giving powers attributed to Haoma as mentioned in the yasht, Parsis recite both the Hom Yasht and its nirang for healing and maintenance of good health. Likewise, its repetition has also been prescribed to fulfill vows. Haoma the yazata, when correctly propitiated,

will bestow glorious and righteous progeny, it is believed.

“ Ard (Ashishwang)  
Yasht spells out the  
rewards to be gained  
on earth and in heaven  
by pious Zarathushtis  
who uphold Ahura  
Mazda's order. ”

## 21. Wanand Yasht

The Wanand Yasht may be recited in all five periods of the day. The star Vega was believed to act as guardian of four captured celestial demons in Zarathushti cosmogonical and astrological speculation. Vega was said to combat the negative influences of Mars as well. So the devotional poem is still prescribed by folk healers. In addition, it is used by Zarathushtis as an exorcism for warding off evil from their homes, especially that caused by *khrafstras* or 'noxious creatures' [*Wanand Yasht 1*]. Beyond specialized uses, many Zarathushtis still believe that through its recita-

tion, the power of demons, sorcerers, and heretics is weakened and overcome. So Parsis in India recite both the Wanand Yasht and its nirang for healing and maintenance of good health. During the recitations, devotees ritualistically clap their hands once, twice, and thrice so that the sound symbolically dispels the *Daevs* (*Dews*) or demonic spirits.

## Siroza 1 and 2

In addition to the yashts, the two texts, Siroza 1 and 2 contain short invocations to thirty-three divine spirits individually. These two texts may be recited during any of the five gah. Lay devotees are drawn to recitation of the sirozas by the notion that it represents an abbreviated version of all the yashts. For the same reason, the Siroza invocations are regarded as absolutely essential of the priests who perform Zarathushti rituals.

## Summary

The niyayishns as invocations of praise and the yashts as devotional poems play no direct role in the central or high rituals conducted by mobeds in fire temples. Rather, through recitation, those texts serve

the pious religiosity of individuals. In other words, scriptural passages were given ritual uses aimed at endowing religion meaning on everyday life. So niyayishns and yashts are still prayed by orthodox Zarathushtis even though many of them no longer comprehend more than the gist of the texts. At other times these texts are used as nirangs to ward off evil and ensure wellbeing. ■

## FURTHER READING

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**Dastur Dr. Firoze M. Kotwal**, High Priest, Mumbai, was born in Navsari in 1935. He was trained as priest in the M.F. Cama Athornan institute in Bombay. He took Avesta - Pahlavi as principle subjects and acquired a PhD from Bombay University in 1966. He revised his thesis in the light of middle Iranian dialects and languages under the guidance of Prof. Dr. Mary Boyce and submitted his thesis to the Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters, Copenhagen. He was the principle of the same institute in which he received his training from 1970 to 1977. He was appointed High Priest of the H. B. Wadia Atash Bahram, Bombay from 1977 to 1998. A noted lecturer and speaker, Dr. Kotwal is author of a number of books and articles. His major books include: "Shayest Ne-Shayest"; "A Guide to the Zoroastrian Religion," co-authored with Prof. James Boyd; "The Yasna, a Zoroastrian High Liturgy," co-authored with Prof. James Boyd; "The Herbedestan and Nerangestan, vols. I and II," co-authored with Prof. Philip G. Kreyenbroek. Volume III of the Herbedestan and Nerangestan, co-authored with Prof. Philip G. Kreyenbroek, was published in April 2004 in Paris. The "Khordeh Avesta manuscript E1," a facsimile edition, co-authored with Dr. Almut Hintze, will be published in late 2004 in Berlin.



## Son of Ahura Mazda

For me, there is absolutely no problem if the fire is called "son of Ahura Mazda." If Jesus can be the son of Yahweh, and Christianity can remain as strong as it is while preaching this strange concept, then why all this fuss and bother about fire being the son of Ahura Mazda?

Those who come from backgrounds who are ill at ease accepting such concepts, can pray any which way they want. They are fabricating a religion for themselves as they go along, and that is no sin. The sin is when they teach those who may come to follow them the art of hateful thinking. Hate for those who may have a poetic vision in which the earth has a soul in shape of a cow or Ahura Mazda has a son on earth in shape of the fire.

I love to think of the fire receiving my prayers as the son of Ahura Mazda. When I splash my face with cold water and drink some of it too, that water to me is the daughter of Ahura Mazda. When I jump in a cold pool of clear water on a hot day, I am jumping in the arms of my beloved Ardvisur Anahita.

Those who have not the gift of making a bridge between the ordinary and the Divine are not persons of spiritual quality for me. It does not impress me if they can recite by heart the whole Gathas while standing on one leg. May Athra and Geush, Anahita and Mithra be your friends and lovers,

Parviz Varjavand  
San Carlos, California



**Thine inner Fire,  
Ahura to see we yearn,  
He blazes mightily  
through Truth;  
He has Thy Strength;  
Our Goal and hope is He,  
He lights the faithful  
clearly through Life;**

Ahunavaiti Gatha, Ys. 34.4,  
tr. I.J.S. Taraporevala

## 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 past issues

I would like to congratulate Shazneen Rabadi and the editors, for your thoughtful and fluent article on the dancers [*"Parsi Footprints in the World of Dance," FJ Winter 2003*] with the photographs so carefully selected and arranged. **THANK YOU!**

Uttara Coorlawala  
New York, New York

... Your editorial [*"Sunrise over Camelot, Again," FJ Spring 2004*] really tugged at my heartstrings. You hit the nail on the head when you said you can never share the same camaraderie with others as you can with Parsis. That is so true. My husband (Cusrow Baug) and I (Dadar) dearly miss the company of all our baug friends and family back home in India. And yes, we too are very fond of *dhansakh, kors, ses* and such ...

Farida J. Major  
Davie, Florida

Thank you very much for the past issues of FEZANA Journal. I have gone through each copy cover to cover. **GOOD READING!** In the Spring 2004 issue I was happy to see my long lost friend Dr. Iranpour Boustani and his wife Mehroo. Every issue is beautifully put together, it is a pleasure to read them.

Behrooz Azarmi Irani  
Chesterfield, United Kingdom

I am retired from DOD and moved out of DC to a nice small beach resort on the Atlantic Ocean. Reading FEZANA Journal is an absolute delight and I read it page by page. It is my only link to the Zarathushti world. Lets say as good as having Zarathushtis in my living room!

Adi Maneckshaw, PE  
Rehoboth Beach, Delaware

Just received the Spring 2004 issue and was thrilled to read the article on my daughter, Delna Bhesania. On the next page read about our good friend Jimmy Ghadially and on another page about Er. Adil Tata, son of dear friends from Dadar. You do such a wonderful job of keeping us all in touch. **THANK YOU!**

Sheraz Bhesania  
Vancouver, British Columbia

### Come to India

I, Dr. Faramroze Chyella from India, come forward to offer all Iranians from all over Iran and neighboring countries, to emigrate to India for employment and religious perspectives. We, as a part of our resettlement program, not affiliated to any organization or individual, want to set up a larger platform of Zoroastrians in India. This idea is only to facilitate Iranian Zoroastrians to have better opportunities in life, and increase our numbers.

By the blessings of Ahura Mazda, I wish to give this initiative a bright start ... Please feel free to contact me. Its a community service and totally cost free.

Dr. Faramroze Chyella,  
Mumbai, India  
fxchyella@rediffmail.com

### Miracles do happen

Last year I had gone to the States to visit my son in Chicago. On August 6, after a round of golf, I found that when I folded my arms, they tended to separate out, as if by an invisible force. I put it down to a hangover and my imagination. After a while my legs began to give way and I could hardly stand. I was rushed to the city hospital and was admitted to its intensive care unit. I soon became paralyzed from head to toe ...

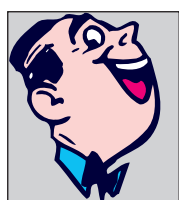
The neurosurgeon suspected I was suffering from Guillane-Barre Syndrome, a rare neurological disorder of the immune system. I was put on a ventilator on which I remained for three-and-a-half weeks.

As my condition was fast deteriorating, the neurosurgeon felt that my heart would give up if I was not put on a heart-lung machine. My wife did not agree to this as she did not want me to live like a vegetable on a life-support system.

When the news spread to the Zoroastrian community of Chicago, they all gathered together and organized a special prayer for my recovery.

The very next day I suddenly started breathing on my own for short spells, and soon I was off the ventilator.

The neurosurgeon could not believe this. The attending doctors, staff and the duty sisters exclaimed, "A miracle has happened. Only God could have done this."



## Laugh and be Merry *by Jamshed Udvadia*

A Cajun was stopped by a game warden in South Louisiana with an ice chest full of fish, leaving a bayou well known for its fishing.

The game warden asked the man, "Do you have a license to catch those fish?"

"Naw, ma fren, I ain't got none of dem, no. Dese here are my pet fish."

"Pet fish?"

"Ya. Avery night I take dese here fish down to de bayou and let dem swim 'round for a while. Den I whistle and dey jump rat back into dis here ice chest and I take dem home."

"That's a bunch of hooey! Fish can't do that!"

The Cajun looked at the game warden for a moment and then said, "It's de truth ma' fren. I'll show you. It really works."

"Okay, I've GOT to see this!"

The Cajun poured the fish into the bayou and stood and waited.

After several minutes, the game warden turned to him and said, "Well?"

"Well, what?" said the Cajun.

"When are you going to call them back?"

"Call who back?"

"The FISH!"

"What fish?"

*[Submitted by Rusi Sorabji, Campbell, CA]*

An elderly woman was attending a lecture by a local celebrity.

"Where would you like to sit?" the usher asked politely.

"The front row please," she answered.

"You really don't want to do that", the usher said. "The speaker is really boring."

"Do you happen to know who I am?" the woman inquired.

"No," he said.

"I'm the speaker's mother," she replied indignantly.

"Do you know who I am?" he asked.

"No," she said.

"Good," he answered, as he hurried to greet the next arrival.

*[Anon]*

I believe the courage of my wife and the prayers of my community initiated God to bring about this miracle – of course the medicos also helped.

As I was leaving the hospital on a stretcher heading back to India, I asked my neurosurgeon, a golfer, whether I would ever be able to play golf again. His reply was, "God will be waiting for you on the 19th hole," and He was.

*Brig (Retd) N. B. Grant  
Pune, India*

## Fearless Nadia

Congratulations on an excellent Spring 2004 issue, which solved a nearly sixty-year-old mystery for me.

It goes back to my childhood days, to the little town of Mwanza, in the then Tanganyika, now Tanzania. In my autobiography [*"Jambo Paulo, Jambo Mykol, Kem Che Pol. Kem Che Maikl", work in progress*] I have described how every weekend, all the six-year-and-older town children, would clutch their ten-cent piece and make their way to the Mwanza Talkies, a long cement block building with a tin roof.

We watched our weekly Westerns and thrillers, lost in the world of our heroes. Among the most popular were the films from Wadia Movietone, with the equally popular Nadia and John Cawas.

The movies, with exotic names like Tuffan Mail and Hunterwali were the greatest treat. Every punch up and stunt by Nadia was cheered and their efforts egged on by claps, punches in air, whistles and loud comments ...

The mystery was Nadia. Nobody knew the ethnicity of Nadia. Now, thanks to Riyad Wadia [*FJ, Spring 2004*], Nadia's mysterious ethnicity is now revealed.

I am sure my peers in Mwanza too, will be delighted to know this, after all these years.

*Kersi Rustomji  
Lavington, NSW, Australia  
rustomji@bigpond.net.au*

## **Teach thyself thy religion**

I am responding to the letter by a community member offering suggestions to perpetuate our religion [FJ, Spring 2004, page 83].

*"Keep our religion simple and basic and easy to follow."* We should make mathematics and languages, history, geography and science also simple and easy to follow so that our poor little children do not have to exert and challenge their brains! Do we eliminate formulae, grammar, spelling, so we may become functionally illiterate? Shakespeare and Byron should also be made easier to read!

Take the initiative to learn the Avesta, Pahlavi and English. Don't have the time? Borrow some from other discretionary activities such as entertainment, gossip and snacking.

*"Simplify and shorten death rituals."* Why have rituals at all? Neither Ahura Mazda nor Zarathushtra demanded any prayers or rituals from anyone. Rituals and prayers are at our discretion. Practice them, participate if you desire, or leave them to others.

In the name of reform, please do not meddle with religion and scriptures; this only diminishes our identity.

Invoking space-constraint, FEZANA Journal might have gracefully opted out of printing that letter.

Mehroo M. Patel, MD, FRCS  
Westchester, Illinois



***A thousand people  
cannot convince  
one by words, to  
the extent that  
one person can  
convince a thousand  
by action.***

- Dinkerd 6.15

## **More on "Perpetuating the Religion and Strengthening the Community"**

*Some late and/or followup responses to the question asked in the Spring 2004 issue of FEZANA Journal on suggested actions to "Perpetuate the Religion, Strengthen the Community" are given below. Due to space constraints, only excerpts are given here; the full articles may be requested from the author.*

### **Reality check - past and present**

The present generation faces a tremendous challenge to safeguard their religion, rituals and identity. We have become careless of the core problems facing us, to the point of almost extinction in the next century or so, if the status quo is maintained.

One of the reasons for our denial is that we have been dwelling on the past glories of the three ancient Persian dynasties, and not giving much thought to the reasons for their downfall. Each successive dynasty repeated the mistakes of their predecessors.

History is witness to the immense contributions of the Persians to human civilization. However, there is another side of our history that needs to be brought to light. I will focus here on only the Sasanians.

**The Sasanians.** Ardeshir Papakan, founder of the Sasanian dynasty (in 224 CE) revitalized the Zarathushti religion and made it the State religion, following rigid moral and ethical codes of conduct. In essence it became a theocratic state. The previously practiced class system – royalty and priests, the military, teachers and artisans, and the most oppressed and deprived, peasants and laborers – was rigidly enforced.

Many pre-Zarathushti rituals, concept of sin, endless ceremony and pageantry and sacrifice were re-introduced. Strict laws of purity were adhered to. Any deviations were punishable by law.

The autocratic behavior of the priesthood and their partnership with the royalty made people live in fear.

Every act of injustice was done in the name of religion.

These inequalities and injustices led to the birth of three cults: Manichaeism (during Shapur I's reign 241-270); Mazdakism, whose communistic ideologies were endorsed by Kobad I (488-531); and the Zurvanite cult who promoted the concept of cosmic duality instead of the ethical duality as taught by our prophet Zarathushtra.

Several post-Sasanian religious texts, elaborating on cosmic duality and other pre-Zarathushti rituals, became a powerful tool for the Arabs and other Abrahamic religions to degrade and mortify our religion. It is surprising that even today many Parsi and Irani Zarathushtis uphold such doctrine.

During the last years of the Sasanian dynasty, conditions became so chaotic that twelve kings and queens ascended the throne in a period of less than five years. This climate paved the way for the Arabs to invade Iran, bringing their new religion, Islam, and the rest of course is history.

The Sasanians imposed a minority personal tax on Jews and Christians living in Iran. When the tables were turned and the Arab's Islam became rulers and subsequently the majority, they imposed the same tax (*jizya*) on the Zoroastrians. What goes around comes around!

**Suffering in Iran.** During the World Congress in Houston in 2000, one of the presenters, a mobed from India, praised his ancestors who fled from Arab brutality and preserved their faith in India. He failed, however, to mention how Irani Zarathushtis who were left behind, preserved their



faith. He probably did not know how those who were left behind were treated. They were beaten, robbed, stoned, had their lands confiscated. They were tortured or even killed if they could not pay their toll tax and refused to accept Islam. Their mobeds were beheaded. Their women were raped. Fire temples and religious texts were burned. History has witnessed Zarathushti massacre during Islamic dynasties, on a scale leading to almost extinction.

**Learning from history.** The Parsis deserve praise for preserving their religion and ethnicity for the last 1,000 years in India. However, they have failed to separate religion from ethnicity, therefore it became synonymous. In fact they are known more as Parsis than Zarathushtis.

The recent edict by the high priests of India banning inter-marriages and ex-communicating offspring of such marriages, is a radical departure from common sense and contrary to science. To preserve Parsi ethnicity and Zarathushti religion, our religious leaders have overlooked taking cognizance of results of the past. This has been our shortcoming, which has led to our depleting population.

Although, there are many Parsis and their priests who are aware and trying to depolarize the community and bridge the gap – between the orthodox and moderates, and between the Irani and Parsi Zarathushtis. Hats off to them.

Changes can occur only if the grass-roots demand them. Further, if Irani mobeds and Parsi mobeds would form one organization under one banner and discuss the ails of our community with rational thought and create a constructive and progressive roadmap, we would achieve unity and harmony much faster.

That is the only way they would preserve their respect, the religion, and in turn the community will grow and prosper.

*Rustam J. Mehdiabadi, MD  
Lubbock, Texas*

## ***Increasing our numbers by retention, not conversion***

The only way for our religion to survive is for us to fight for every single Zarathushti we currently have. Forget about trying to convert outsiders.

For those of you who believe conversion is the answer to our numbers problem, look to England where we have had one of the oldest and longest diaspora communities. See how many of the succeeding generations of those Zarathushtis who married non-Zarathushtis are still practicing our religion. The results are depressing, and should be a vital warning to us in America.

If numbers are the issue, how do we get our Zarathushti youth to marry within the faith, so the family unit they form will be able to better deal with all the outside influences they and their children face?

Consider how hard it will be to retain the children of a marriage in which one of the parents has converted to our religion, when the grandparents whose religion is dominant in that community, take the children to church on Sunday, celebrate the festivals, and reinforce what the children see day in and day out, all around them.

For those concerned that our numbers are shrinking, the fight should not be on how do we bring new members into our faith, but how do we fight tooth and nail to keep those we already have.

Why are those of you who are willing to spend the energy on converting others to our faith, unwilling to spend that scarce resource on trying to educate and retain our own youth within our faith?

What incentives do we give our young Zarathushti families to have larger families? What support system do we provide? What extra funding do we offer?

Rather than spending our minimal resources to try and bring in new members into our fractured religion, I propose that those resources be used instead, to **convert our own people**. Those who work with fervor to convert others, could do better to convert our own Zarathushtis who have strayed, to appreciate our beautiful religion, and practice its tenets.

I promise you the value of saving them, and increasing our numbers by retention will be far greater than any other program.

*Rohinton Aresh  
Corona del Mar, California  
tmza@aol.com*

## ***I have a dream***

Zarathushtis are a microscopic minority in the world [see chart below] still keeping intact their ancient monotheistic religion, founded 3,500 years ago by Prophet Zarathushtra.

How is it that this mighty State religion of ancient Persia, was exiled about a thousand years ago to the shores of Gujarat, India? A handful, determined to preserve their endangered religion, left Iran in five fishing vessels, and landed in India. If these, the first ‘boat people’ had landed in any other country, their descendants would not have risen to be so prominent and powerful, albeit few in numbers (70,000) as the Parsis of India. They are indeed the miraculous result, largely of Mother India’s tradition of democracy, equality and liberty.

In 711 CE, the Moors brought most of Spain under Islamic rule until 1492, when the leader of the last Muslim

### **Estimated number of followers**

Zarathushtrianism	250,000
Hinduism	900 million
Judaism	15 million
Buddhism	360 million
Christianity	2 billion
Islam	1.2 billion





# 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: drogorsor@msn.com.

## Prayer heals!

*Be not afraid to pray; to pray is right.  
Pray, if thou canst, with hope, but ever pray,  
Though hope be weak, or sick with long delay.  
Pray in the darkness if there be no light.*

Hartley Coleridge 1796-1849

In 1987 a cousin from Bombay sent me a clipping in Gujarati from KISMET [June 1968] with six short one-line prayers. These prayers came to me in one of my darkest hours of need. I recited them [see above] with faith, night and day, whenever I could. Over time, my most horrendous difficulties abated and some even vanished. My prayers were answered and a couple of minor miracles delivered. I’ve translated the clipping, staying close to the original, and offer it here, for I have come to believe that these simple gems could well help others.

These prayers and mantras are easy and simple, so that anyone can recite them; but in order to do so, one must heed the following:

- (1) The person who is going to recite these prayers must give up smoking and refrain from backbiting.
- (2) He/she must always think of doing good for others and continually utter good words.

(3) Before reciting these mantras, take a cleansing bath. Burn *sukhadloban* in the *afarganyu*; the aromatic smoke will enhance its effectiveness.

(4) Cleanse your mind of all thoughts; you must be totally absorbed in the recitation of the prayers. Without such absolute concentration there will be no benefit.. The prayers listed here will make a

• બનામે યઝદ, બુક્ષાયન દેહ  
બુક્ષાયઝગાર મહેરબાન  
યા યઝદ યઝદાન, અશાઉમ  
વાસના, યા દસ્તગીર  
અશાઉમ હરપ અતુમ  
નીજેહબાન યઝદગાર  
યઝદદા યઝમદ છે.

• નીસત, હસ્તી, બેજોઝ યઝદાન

• યા વંદેહુદાએ વંદેહુતીમ  
યરે, નદીમ યઝમદ છે.

• અશાઉમ બફરીફતેહ યઝમાદ

• અશાઉમ સનાયા યઝમાદ છે

• યા યઝદ યઝદાન બિગેબાન  
અશાઉમ અબરીન કેહાવાન  
પીરેઝગારી બાદ યઝમદ છે.

Above, the six short one-line prayers may be recited all together, as and when possible, with faith, to tide over difficult times. They are effective, even when not offered in the exact manner prescribed below.

difference in one’s life and will not harm the petitioner in any way.

● **May your difficulties abate** (mushkeli tully jai):

“Banamey yizad-bukshayan deh, buksha yazagar meherban, ya-yazad-yazdan, ushoom vasna, ya dastagir ushoom hurpushptoom neeheyban-parvara-parvanda, yazmaidey.”

When horrendous problems besiege you, then after sunset take a purification bath. Fill the room with the aroma of sandalwood, incense and myrrh. Recite the above prayer 101 times. In a few days your difficulties will abate and you will get relief from your problems.

● **For your every wish to come true** (Harek murad bur avey):

“Nis-te-hustee-bey-joz-yazdaan.”

On recitation of the above chant your wishes will come true. It should be recited every night, 707 times, for 41 days. All your difficulties, uneasiness and restlessness will go away



and your mind's wishes will come to pass. During these 41 days do not drink or smoke.

● **For spiritual salvation from financial stringency** (*na-unna bheednoo neevurun*).

Many times in life one comes up against financial troubles – for such a predicament, this manthra comes to the rescue:

**“Ya-vanghooda-o-vanghootim-parendim yazmaidey.”**

After purifying yourself with a bath, recite the above 101 times every night, after 8 pm for 21 nights. This will lessen your difficulties and if unemployed, you will find a job.

● **To be rescued from enemies** (*shutroothee buchava matey*).

Many a times one is harassed by unknown or hidden foes. The following manthra will help you escape from such entanglement (duress) from enemies:

**“Ushaoom bafreefateh yazmaidey; ushaoom parvara yazmaidey.”**

Say this prayer 21 times for 7 days at two o'clock in the night; on the eighth day you will experience relief.

● **Prayer for subduing a person** (*vuhsheekarun manthra*):

**“Ushaoom-shanaya-yazmaidey.”**

This prayer is used to subdue or control someone (in a helpful and not harmful way). *Vuh-sheekaran*, in Gujarati means, subduing or controlling by hypnotism or using a charm.

It may be used, for example, if a child is hooked on drugs or going around in bad company, and demonstrating destructive behavior. It is then, that this 'cleansing prayer' is effective, to put a positive influence on the person.

Place a picture of the person you wish to subdue or control in front of you as you repeat the above manthra 1,111 times after 10 o'clock in the night. Pray for 21 continuous days.

● **To see the future in your dreams** (*svapnama bhavish jano*):

[Continued on page 74]

## *My mother used to say...*

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

**“Adhooro ghado chhalkey gano”**

*A partially filled water pot spills (chhalkey) more.* Statement made regarding a person with inadequate knowledge who boasts.

Another version of this saying is:

**“Adhooro ghado chalkey gano”**

*A partially filled water pot shines (chalkey) the most.* Empty vessels make the most noise.

**“Dyaanat teyvi barkhat”**

*As the inclination so is the reward.* Good intentions yield good results.

**“Bey a(n)kh ni sharam.”**

*The embarrassment of seeing (something offensive) with both eyes wide open.* See no evil.

**“Samp tya(n) jump.”**

*Where there is unity there is strength.* United we stand, divided we fall.

**“Parki ash sada nirash.”**

*Seeking support from outsiders can bring despair.* Home is where there is the warmth of loving family support.

**“Namey tey saoo ney gamey.”**

*An humble person is liked by all.* Humility is appreciated by all.

**“Doodh no dazyo, chhas phuki ney piyey.”**

*Blistered by drinking hot milk one tends to blow even on cold buttermilk before drinking it.* A fearful experience heralds caution. Once bitten twice shy. A burnt child dreads the fire.

**“Chor kotwal ney dandey.”**

*The thief accuses the police.* Remark made when one tries to pass the blame on to others.

**“Dam karey kaam.”**

*Monetary gain gets the work done.* Money talks.

**“Navro nakkhod valey.”**

*The idle become destructive.* An idle mind is the devil's workshop.

**“Ma(n)they singra(n).”**

*Horns on the head.* A statement made when one presumes a selfish ownership of rights and requirements.

**“Gulab ney chhodi ney kanta ney parni.”**

*In wedlock she chose a thorn in favor of a rose.* A statement made when a lady prefers to have something (as the observer perceives), that is not so good.

**“Vayey vat jayey.”**

*Words carry in the wind.* Even walls have ears. Nothing remains secretive in society.

**“Aag lagey tarey koovo khodva jaey”**

*When the house is on fire, one starts digging a well for water.* Remark made when someone attempts to do something when it's too late. Similar to closing the barn door after the horse has bolted.

Submitted by **Sam Kerr**, a consultant surgeon and lecturer in Sydney, Australia. He initiated the formation (in 1969) and was founder member of the Australian Zoroastrian Association of NSW. Author and lecturer on the reli-



# SUNDAY STORIES

## 8. Zal and Rudabeh get married

By Shazneen Rabadi Gandhi

Zal so impresses the court with his intelligence and physical prowess, that King Manoucher blesses the union of Zal and Rudabeh. They get married and live happily ever after.

### Astrologers' prediction

Zal had promised to marry Rudabeh, even though both of them knew that it would be difficult to convince their parents and King Manoucher to bless their union because Rudabeh was descended from the evil King Zohak. He wrote to his father, Salm and asked for his blessing. He reminded Salm, that he had promised to grant Zal his every wish, when he had reclaimed him from the Mountain on whose side Zal had been abandoned as a child.

At first, Salm struggled with the notion of accepting a woman descended from Zohak as his daughter and his son's wife. He asked his astrologers to consult the stars and see what lay in store for such a match. They returned with great news. The union of Zal and Rudabeh will yield a splendid son who will be a great warrior and protector of Iran and its Kings, they said:

**Iran will trust in him and in his fame,  
Her champions will rejoice to hear his name;  
Throughout his life the monarchy will thrive,  
In times to come his glory will survive;  
Before his name, inscribed on every seal,  
Iran and Rum and India will kneel.**

Happy to hear such good fortune foretold, Salm told Zal that he would convince King Manoucher to bless the union. Unfortunately, King Manoucher had already heard of the matter. Before Salm could say anything about it, the King ordered Salm to invade Kabul and defeat King Mehrab, Rudabeh's father and capture his kingdom for Iran.

When Salm reached the outskirts of Kabul with his army, Zal met him at this tent and pointed out the unfairness of the King's actions. Salm thought about his son's arguments for a while and then wrote to Manoucher. After reminding the King of his loyalty, he wrote that Zal would bring the letter to him and ask for his blessing to marry Rudabeh.

Zal set out at great speed for King Manoucher's court. After Manoucher read Salm's letter, he too consulted his astrologers and learned that the couple would have a strong and loyal son. He decided that before he consented, he would test Zal.

### The wise men test Zal

In the first test, a priest asked Zal: "I saw twelve flourishing trees, each one had thirty branches. What is the meaning of this?" Zal answered: "The twelve trees are the twelve months of the year; each of them has thirty days and the passage of time is measured by them."

The second priest asked Zal: "I saw two swiftly galloping horses, one as white as snow and the other as black as pitch. Each hurried after the other but neither could catch the other. What is the meaning of this?" Zal replied: "The black and white horse are the night and the day and though they both gallop with speed neither one ever reaches the other."

The third priest said, "I saw two tall cypress trees that rose from the ocean and on each of them is a bird's nest.



In the day the bird would sit on one tree and in the night on the other. Whenever it sat on the tree, it would flourish. Whenever it flew away, the tree would wither and die. What is the meaning of this?" Zal said, "The two cypresses represent one half of each year and the bird is the sun. In one half of the year, in the spring and summer, the sun shines and the world flourishes; in the other half of the year it is cold and dry in the fall and winter."

The fourth priest asked Zal: "I saw a beautiful green meadow through which a man moved with a sickle, harvesting that which was fresh and that which was withered, and neither tears nor entreaties moved him in any way. What is the meaning of this?" Zal responded: "The man who passes through the meadow and who cuts down the fresh and the withered, making no distinction between them, is Death, who is unmoved by our tears and entreaties, who is merciful to none when their time has come, taking from this world the young and the old, the mighty and the helpless."

The last priest spoke: "I saw a beautiful land next to which was thorn covered waste. People took no account of the beautiful land and built their houses in the thorny waste. Then suddenly they began to weep and wail, longing for the beautiful land. Now tell us, what is the meaning of this?" Zal replied, "That beautiful land is the eternal world while the thorny waste is the fleeting world in which we live. While we are in this world, we take no thought of the eternal world and are content to be among these thorns and weeds, but when Death comes wielding his sickle, we remember the eternal world and regret that we had given no thought to it before."

When Zal had finished speaking, all the courtiers in Manoucher's court were astonished at his intelligence.

The next day, the King tested Zal's strength in the stadium in various physical contests with other warriors. Zal won each contest with fairness and endurance.

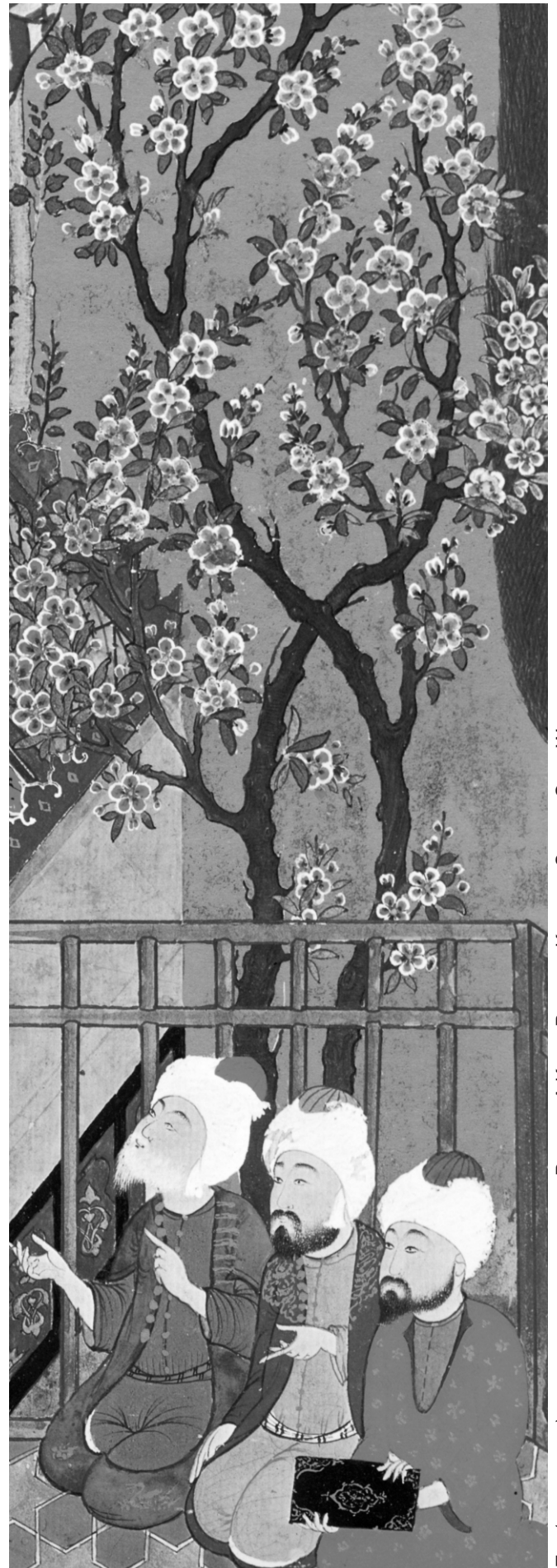
### Zal and Rudabeh get married

Finally, Manoucher granted him permission to return to his father. The King gave Zal a letter to take to Salm. It said, "Your envoy has come and I am aware of what it is that the world's great hero desires. I have also put your courageous young son to the test. He is a wise, brave and skillful youth. I grant his desire and I send him back to his father rejoicing. May evil never harm the brave and may you always live in happiness and contentment."

Zal's joy knew no bounds. He galloped back with the good news to his father's tent. Thirty days passed in celebration and rejoicing, and no one slept for joy or happiness. Zal and Rudabeh were finally married and lived happily ever after.

*Next time:* Iran's favorite son, Rostam.

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



ZAL (FACING PAGE) IS TESTED BY THE WISE MEN. PHOTOS: A KINGS BOOK OF KINGS BY STUART CARY WELCH.



PHOTO BY NINA GREIPEL/THE OREGONIAN



Shala Bodaghi takes part in an Iranian Community discussion group at a member's home in Tigard, Oregon.

## Iran's new revolution?

BY ANGIE CHUANG

Local Iranian Americans gather regularly on the porch of Siyavash Eslamizar's Tigard home to talk about events and politics in their native nation.

Among the dozen who met recently were a former military pilot who flew in the Iran-Iraq war; a woman who lived in Tehran when she and other women could vote, hold elected office and wear the latest European fashions; and Eslamizar, who fled Iran after escaping political imprisonment.

They call their discussion group the Iranian Community. They enjoy talking about their countrymen and women and debating politics ... Bodaghi said the United Nations should take a closer look at human rights violations in Iran.

*[Excerpted from The Oregonian, August 22, 2003.  
angiechuang@news.oregonian.com]*

## Prayer Heals!

*[Contd from page 71]*

**"ya-yazad-yazdaan-nigayban ushoom abreen kayhan  
tavan pirozguree bad yazmaidey."**

Pray the above 303 times after taking a bath and before going to bed. After reciting this go to sleep immediately. Within seven days the answer to your wishes or what you've prayed for, that which was in your heart and mind, will appear in your dreams, and questions about your future will be revealed. ■

## Parsis face success, survival

BY STEVE SAILER

UPI NATIONAL CORRESPONDENT

LOS ANGELES, JUNE 11 (UPI)-- Last year, a Miami psychotherapist visited a Sydney database administrator's web site for help in finding the girl of his dreams, who turned out to be a flight attendant based in the Persian Gulf.

Welcome to the dizzyingly cosmopolitan realm of Parsi matchmaking, where the Internet is helping one of the most culturally sophisticated ethnic groups keep alive one of the most ancient but endangered major religions.

In a world in which minorities are often violently persecuted, the collective survival of the Parsis and their Zoroastrian religion is threatened by a more paradoxical peril: lots of non-Parsis want to marry them.

The Parsis are India's remarkably well-educated and affluent followers of the Iranian prophet Zoroaster (or "Zarathushtra"). The Parsis are centered in Bombay, India, but are increasingly spread thinly throughout the world. Mahatma Gandhi said of them, "In numbers, Parsis are beneath contempt, but in contribution, beyond compare."

To explain their economic success in India and America, Rumi Engineer, president of the Zoroastrian Association of Rocky Mountain, pointed to the Parsi tradition of intensive education. Houtoxi Contractor, head of the Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania, suggested to UPI, "Parsis can't become complacent because they don't have a country of their own"...

The Parsis face many of the same demographic problems as the Jews. "Only we, unfortunately, do not have the luxury of numbers that the Jews have," points out Roshan Rivetna, editor of the FEZANA Journal. Because there are only about 1 percent as many Parsis as Jews on earth, the survival pressure on them is more intense ...

The Parsi example raises a seldom-asked but important question: Can diversity survive tolerance? The fate of the Parsis will say much about whether Westernized religious-ethnic groups that encourage education and gender equality can maintain their ancient coherence as a people in a globalizing world.

Parsis also compete with Jews for the title of best-educated diaspora group in the world. Shahrokh Mehta, a prominent figure in the American Parsi community and a cousin of conductor Zubin Mehta, estimates that 80% of Indian Parsis earn college degrees, and the figure may be even higher in America...

As with Jews, Zoroastrian religious opinions range from orthodox to reform. There is much debate within the community today ... *[Full article at [www.upi.com/view.cfm?StoryID=04062002-091157-4598r](http://www.upi.com/view.cfm?StoryID=04062002-091157-4598r)]* ■

## PRAYER CORNER

### *The Garment of the Millenniums*



#### *Its Synergy on Human Energy*

Copyright 2004, Meher D Amalsad

DEDICATED TO ZARATHUSTRA



My Dear Zarathushti Sisters and Brothers:

It is said that: *LOVE* is an act of *FAITH* – when *FAITH* matures it becomes *LOVE*. The following contribution is a culmination of my *FAITH* in *LOVE* along with my *LOVE* in *FAITH*.

The topic of *sudreh* and *kushti* has always fascinated me. This fascination led me to a unique quest for learning in the past ten plus years. The information acquired has touched me at a spirit level, which in the distant past was beyond the comprehension of my mind. It also helped me to somewhat correlate and understand the spiritual constitution behind the physical construction of *Sudreh* and *Kushti*. My humble conclusion is that the *sudreh* or *kushti* is not a “Garment of Convenience”. Rather they are “The Garment of the Millenniums.”

In these 3-part series, I will be sharing information along with experiential exercises and rare pictures that have touched the spiritual dimension of my consciousness. The information shared in this article is supported more by the conviction of my faith rather than the prescription of science, because I firmly believe that *IT TAKES FAITH TO TRUST THE ODDS*.

Furthermore, this information is not meant to prove anything but simply to share something that I value very dearly in my heart and soul. As you read this information, may you ALWAYS be BLESSED in ALL-WAYS.

In the spirit of sharing, may the

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be with you and your family.

(: With Blessings of *LOVE* and *LIGHT* always from Meher Amalsad :)

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#### PART 1 OF 3

##### THE CHAKRA/CHAKHRA SYSTEM

Is it bell-bottoms or jeans? Is it mini or maxi? Let us find out through the help of these stories.

**Clairaudience.** A story is told in “*Review of Reviews*” about Mr. Stead from UK who in 1910 was selling beautiful Persian rugs woven by Zarathushti women. One day, Mr. Stead sold one of his rugs to an Englishman who had a small daughter.

Now, whenever this little girl would relax on the carpet, she would start singing in a strange language. She said that she sang what she heard

from the carpet. Whenever she was picked off from the carpet she would stop singing. This intrigued her parents, so they conferred with eminent doctors who concluded that the girl was sound in body and mind.

One day, the father asked Mr. Stead to call an Iranian and tell him to quietly jot down the song verbatim. After a careful investigation, they discovered that the words and the tune of the song were exactly the same as those that the Zarathushti ladies would sing while weaving the carpet. These were songs of praise traditionally sung by Zarathushtis.

The girl through her power of clairaudience not only could hear the song but was also blessed with the innate ability to reproduce the song.

The woolen threads, from which a carpet is woven, possess excellent property of absorbing colors produced by the vibrations of the sound, and when the carpet comes in friction with the wind, it reproduces those vibrations in the form of sound. To be able to listen to these specific vibrations requires the power of clairaudience.

Likewise, the *kushti*, which is also made of wool, absorbs sound as well as all vibrations – the physical and the ultra-physical. I want you to hold that thought as you read the next story.

**Kirlian photography.** A medical doctor once asked the Russian scientist Kirlian, who invented the concept of *Kirlian photography*, if he had taken the time to check out the energy levels of plants by using his photographic techniques.

When Kirlian responded “Yes,” the doctor gave Kirlian a freshly plucked leaf from a tree and asked him to check its energy level. Kirlian and his wife worked all night but were unable to get any notable results. They thought that maybe their machine was malfunctioning.

The next day, when the doctor returned, Kirlian was upset that he had not accomplished anything worthwhile. On hearing that the doctor became very happy and said, “great job.”

“What do you mean great job?” said Kirlian, “I was not able to see anything, my machine is broken.”

The doctor said, “Kirlian, I was expecting those results, there is nothing wrong with your machine. The leaf I gave you, although it looked healthy, came from a diseased tree. That is why you were unable to see any productive energy around it.”

Now, we can use the same principle to analyze and predict any disease, which the human body is presently going through or will be encountering in the future.

Furthermore, it is important to note that, scientific observations on plant



growth by Dr. Barbara Brennan and Dr. John Pierrakos, through the use of 'high sense perception' have shown an energy field matrix in the shape of a leaf that is projected by the plant prior to the growth of a leaf, and then the leaf grows into that already existing form.

**Human aura.** Now, let us get a perspective on the value of human aura and its energy.

Did you know that, when you take a picture of a living human being and look at it through a prism having a refractive index of 2.6, you see different colors on the energy points of the body which represents the human aura? Apparently, when that person dies, and you look at the same picture through the same prism, you don't see any colors. The aura is gone. That is the power of the human aura.

Edgar Casey, the noted American clairvoyant called the 'Sleeping Prophet,' was once shopping in a departmental store with a friend. After completing their shopping they went to board an elevator. The elevator came, the door opened, but Casey told his friend that he did not want to board that elevator.

The friend asked him, "Why?" Casey replied, "I do not see any colors in their aura, it is black." Moments later the elevator crashed killing everybody on board.

It is said that the white colored *sudreh* that is made of cotton – a natural fiber, retains the divine vibrations of our prayer *manthras*, which form a protective shield of energy around the human body. I

want you to hold on to this thought on *sudreh* along with the previous thought on *kushti* as we proceed further.

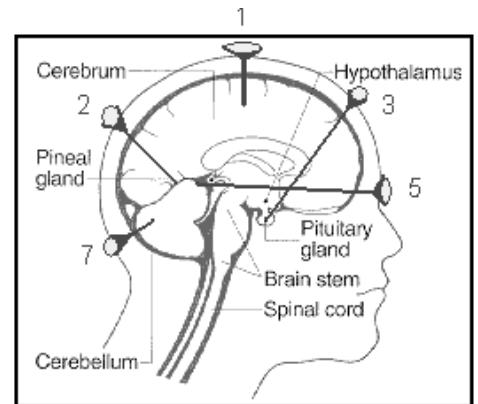
**Centers of energy.** In Hindu science, the word for these centers of energy is '*chakra*' (Sanskrit for wheel or disk). In Zarathushtrian science the word is '*chakhra*'.

Spiritual energies of different intensities and textures are zooming in these centers. These energies can be invoked, awakened, and made to emerge and spread all over in the living cells of the physical body. This process activates our mind to focus on good thoughts, good words, and good deeds.

Energy channels join our *chakras*. They are like electric lamps arranged on a circuit. The lamps are lighted if a current beyond a certain intensity starts flowing in the circuit. My grandmother told me that in the Zarathushti religion one of the modes through which this current can be intensified is the *sudreh* and *kushti*. The special design of the *sudreh* and *kushti* has a significant connection with the locations of the *chakras* within us.

Hindu science has 7 *chakras* but Zarathushti Science has 16 *chakras*. However, there is a numerological correlation between the two sciences when we see that  $16 = 1 + 6 = 7$ .

The list of the 16 *chakras*, their positions and functions is given in our *Vendidad*



[*Fargad 1*]. They correspond to 16 kinds of fire.

Although the energy of the *chakras* can be monitored, they have no mass or substance of their own. However, each individual *chakhra* does have a general location.

**Zarathushti *chakra* system.** Let us examine the Zarathushti *chakra* system [see figures at left and above]:

- (1) Crown of the Head (crown *chakhra*)
- (2) Convolutions of the brain (above the cerebellum)
- (3) Cerebrum (above the brain)
- (4) Between the eyes on the brow (third eye *chakhra*)
- (5) Line that joins the two eyes
- (6) On the nose
- (7) Line that joins the two ears
- (8) Tongue
- (9) Throat (communication *chakra*)
- (10) Heart (*chakra* of the *daena*)
- (11) Solar plexus.
- (12) Navel (gut *chakhra*)
- (13) Sexual organs (creativity and productivity *chakhra*).
- (14) On the line which joins 2 thighs.
- (15) On line which joins 2 knees
- (16) On line which joins 2 soles of feet (base *chakhra*)

Former NASA physicist, Dr. Barbara Brennan (who has been researching and exploring the human energy for more than 30 years) in her book "*Hands of Light*", gives the total number of energy vortices for the Hindu *chakra* system. When I compared them with the total number of energy spokes in the Zarathushti

HINDU CHAKRAS

Z-CHAKRAS



chakra system, the correlation was mind-boggling [see table below]. It is important to note that this is, by no means, just a mere coincidence.

### Energy channels and chakras.

The crown chakra/chakhra (located on the top of the head) is known as the 1000-petaled lotus flower, which is our connection with the cosmos or the divine. Furthermore, it is understood that all these energy centers are connected with each other through a channel that runs from the crown chakra/chakhra to the base chakra/chakhra.

The purpose of this system is to create a mechanism that, on an energetic level, can manifest the divine into the physical plane because chakras/chakhras ground spiritual energies into the physical plane.

There are 72,000 subtle channels in the human body, but three principal ones: The central channel running parallel to the spine, and the right and left channels, which run on either side of it. The right and left channels coil around the central one at a number of points to form a series of 'knots'. Along the central channel are situated a number of 'channel wheels', the chakhras or energy-centers, from which channels branch off like the ribs of an umbrella. These chakhras are the non-physical organs of the human body.

The 16 chakhras are sub-divided into two groups: Group 1 comprising of

seven chakhras and Group 2 comprising of nine chakhras.

It is important to note that the energy pattern in the nine chakhras of Group 2, could reverse and may not be life threatening; but if the energy patterns in the seven major chakhras of Group 1 were to reverse, it could become fatal. Those vital Chakhras are 1, 2, 3, 4, 10, 12, and 15. It is said that the seven chakhras in the first group drives us in the direction of Asha, whereas the remaining nine chakhras either stop you or attempt to take you in the opposite direction.

The chakhra can be viewed as a lamp of light. In the absence of the black soot the lamp gives all its light. This is when the chakhra is fully balanced. Now as the lamp starts to accumulate soot on it, the power of its light (to the observer) begins to fade. This is when the balance of the chakhra begins to get affected, which in turn impacts the clarity of human energy.

It is important to note that since the observer is not able to see the light due to the accumulation of the soot does not mean that the light is not there. It simply means that the soot needs to be removed to obtain clarity. The light is there but it is not visible. That is why they say, there is always hope. The principle of hologram suggests that there are 16 chakhras in all of Mazda's creations.

This makes me think about what my wise grandmother used to tell me: "Meher, in the Zarathushti faith, the

science and spirituality of the sudreh-kushti has something to do with the spiritual energy and the divine light within us. It has something to do with our spiritual development during our journey in this world."

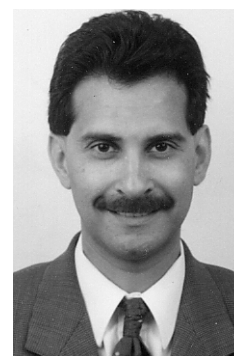
God bless my grandmother for introducing me to the power of sudreh-kushti. ■

### SOURCES

The following sources and resources are gratefully acknowledged for the entire three-part series:

- [1] Ahura Mazda and Asho Zarathushtra.
- [2] My grandparents, parents and family
- [3] Ervad K. N. Dastoor, India, for his reflections and interactions through personal discussions and audio cassette programs.
- [4] Mehta, Silloo. *Navjote and sudreh kushti – the Golden Gifts* - Silloo Mehta, Cypress, California.
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Westminster, California with his wife Katayoon and daughter Anahita. He is listed in *Who's Who in the World 2000, 2001 and 2002*. He is author of *BREAD FOR*

*THE HEAD™*. His life's work is focused on Creating Unity within Diversity in Humanity. To subscribe to his free Bread4theHead.com Z-inspirational newsletter visit: <http://www.bread4thehead.com/>

*Comparison of Hindu and Zarathushti Chakra Systems*

Hindu chakras		Zarathushti chakhras	Hindu vortices	Zarathushti spokes
7	Crown	1	972	1000
6	Brow	4	96	96
5	Throat	9	16	16
4	Heart	10	12	12
3	Solar Plexus	11	10	10
2	Sacral/spleen	14	6	6
1	Base	16	4	4



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## **WZCC Business Digest**

**A landmark for WZCC.** Possibly the finest achievement of the three-year-old WZCC to-date, was the 20-member WZCC (India) Trade delegation to the WZCC (Middle East Region) in Dubai this April [see next page].

We are confident that this venture, a first in the history of the WZCC, and possibly in the history of Zarathushti business and enterprise, will herald the beginning of many new relationships and interactions among WZCC members worldwide, and serve to further the mission of WZCC – to energize the Zarathushti entrepreneurial spirit and make this organization the economic engine for the prosperity and well-being of our community.

The India Region (president Minoo Shroff, director Dady Mistry, Mumbai chair Kersi Limathwalla, Delhi chair Rustom Daroga) and the Middle East Group (director Meher Bhesania) under their respective inspired leadership, have sown the seeds and set the pace for other regions/chapters to follow.

Very special thanks to Meher Bhesania for sparking this brilliant idea and

spearheading it to fruition, Edil Katrak (WZCC-India) for ably coordinating the project, and Dady Mistry for leading this pioneering delegation.

**WZCC (Australia) inaugural.** It gives us a good sense of well-being and strength as WZCC now sink roots 'down under'. Spearheaded by Sydney businessman **Filli Madon** (pars09@yahoo.com)

WZCC (Australia) held its inaugural function on May 16th, at AZA (Australian Zoroastrian Association) House in Sydney.

**Upcoming conference and meetings.** A One-day Business Conference, a Business Luncheon, the WZCC AGM and Board Meeting will all be held in conjunction with the NA Congress in San Francisco this December [announcement at right].

Contact WZCC corporate secretary Edul Daver at (732) 469-1866, daver@acupowder.com or visit [www.wzcc.net](http://www.wzcc.net)

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



**All business persons and professionals are invited to visit:**

**[www.wzcc.net](http://www.wzcc.net)**

(Website designed, maintained & hosted by Avesta Computing, New Jersey)

For a step-by-step guide to the website, contact website manager Homi Davier at [Davier@CapricornTravel.com](mailto:Davier@CapricornTravel.com)

Post business news on the Zarathushti business email group:

**[zchamber@yahoogroups.com](mailto:zchamber@yahoogroups.com)**

To subscribe, send an email to:

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**The XIII North American Zoroastrian Congress and WZCC are pleased to announce:**

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December 28, 2004, 9 am - 5 pm, at the Santa Clara Marriott, San Francisco. \$70 (lunch included)\*.

**Business Luncheon:**

December 31, 2004, 12 - 2 pm, at the Santa Clara Marriott, San Francisco. \$40\*.

[\* or \$100 for both events]

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*Left, WZCC-India delegation with WZCC ME Group committee members.*

*Below, Er. Jamshed Sidhwa and Meher Bhesania at opening ceremony.*

**O**n April 4th, 2004, the WZCC Middle East Group unveiled their Two Way Trade Program with WZCC India chapter, in Dubai. Twenty reputed Parsi businessmen from New Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore participated in this program.

It was for the first time in the history of Parsis, that a delegation of Zarathushti businessmen actually crossed the Indian Ocean and visited Dubai to explore business opportunities in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Businesses included various industries such as IT, manufacturing of florescent whitening agents for textile and paper, manufacturing, architectural aluminum products, back office business outsourcing, outdoor advertising, exterior decoration, art and design, stained glass, hot fusion, metal enameling, events management, fashion designing, uniform garments, belts and hand gloves manufacturing, travel and tourism and fitness management,

The overall objective of the Delegates was to showcase their products, create distribution channels in UAE, hold meetings with prospective buyers, explore existing business climate and infrastructure facilities available in their line of business, meet the WZCC-ME members in person, understand their business require-



## Dubai Means Business

India and Middle East chapters forge business relations

ments and build long-term professional/personal relationships and possibly joint venture alliances in future. The whole program went off well. Everyone enjoyed the Dubai Trip which included showcasing of businesses, gala dinners, meetings with dignitaries at government levels, traders/distributors, visits to other emirates like Sharjah and Abu Dhabi, a desert safari trip and a dhow trip in the blue waters of Dubai creek.

Mrs. Meher Bhesania, chapter chair and Director Middle East region, gave a very high score to this pro-

gram. She said, "It was a joyous occasion to receive the WZCC-India delegation for the first time in Dubai." The trip offered each and every delegate an opportunity to enhance their business prospects.

Some delegates even returned to India with trial orders, and some are planning to return for follow up and firming up business deals. The Dubai trip has become a model program for WZCC and the Middle East Group looks forward to replicating it with other chapters around the world. ■

*by Meher Bhesania*



## NY chapter discusses surviving downsizing

WZCC New York chapter (chair Rusi Gandhi) presented “*Survive/Prevent Downsizing, Reinvent Yourself*,” on February 29, at the Darbe Mehr. The panel of speakers – **Manek Dustoor**, CEO, InQuery Group, MI; **Kersi Harda**, Deutsche Bank, NYC; and **Kurush Maneckshana**, ex-director of Marketing, AMP Inc., PA. – covered topics such as: disaster or opportunity, resources to marshal, build relationships, assess options, SWOT analysis, and shared their unique personal experiences. ■

### OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

If you know of any opportunities available, please post them in:

- This column, or
- The WZCC e-group  
zchamber@yahoogroups.com,
- The wzcc website  
www.wzcc.net

● **Opening for managing director.** A leading Muscat, UAE, group of companies with diverse business interests in automobiles, foods and pharmacies, has an opening for a managing director. Candidate should have min. 10 years experience in managing top franchises with strong exposure to brand development and marketing communications. Contact bhesania@emirates.net.ae.

● **Oracle developer and designer** positions available in Richmond, VA. 3-month to 2-year contracts. Contact Rummy Mohta at (804) 763-5688, www.Rittscorp.com.



## Business opportunity for horse-breeding

A stud farm in Tajikistan has developed a new breed of horses, called the ‘Tajiki horse,’ from the noted Arabian, English and local Khotalani horses (connected to the famous Parthian horses). Central Asia, especially Tajikistan is one of the main regions of the world in horse breeding. Tajik horses are already well known and recognized by CIS experts on biological selection and breeding.

The director of the stud farm, named *Khorasan*, in beautiful mountainous area 20 km from Dushanbe, is seeking financing for business expansion and promotion. Contact Esphandiar Azadi at zumspenta@yahoo.com.

[From posting on creatingawareness@yahoogroups.com]

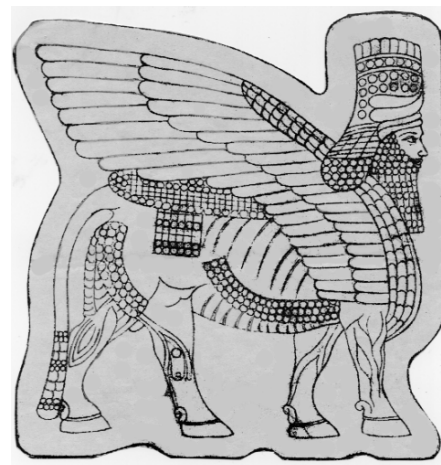
### OPPORTUNITIES WANTED

Please assist these Zarathushtis in their job search.

● **Physician.** Hardworking Zarathushti physician seeking H-1 sponsorship and/or any information or services regarding immigration to US. Contact Laura at 415-871-7479 or myfreepostino@yahoo.com

● **Sponsor a dream.** Sohrab, 21, a “hopeful and driven” youth from Yazd, with a degree in electricity, dreams of coming to USA/Canada for higher education, but has found all “doors shut”. “I have lost all hope and spend night and day worrying,” he writes, “but I refuse to give up on my dream.” He has been accepted for an English language program at Rutgers and is now seeking a sponsor, “If one of the Zoroastrian associations sponsor me, my chances of being granted a visa, would be dramatically increased.” Contact sohrab\_001@yahoo.com. ■

## BUSINESSES



## Ivory finish fiberglass sculptures

**Kamal Dhalla** of Mumbai makes fiberglass sculptures with an ivory-look finish as well as artifacts in sand-blasted glass. Her craftsmen carve the mold in wood (not rubber), so the finish is of superior quality.

Among her designs are Assyrian bull [see above] Farohar, Persian gatekeepers from Persepolis. Her bas relief sculptures could serve as bookends, plaques, stands, trophy/award or interior decorations. Prices start at \$12 each (for 100 pieces of the Farohar desk stand) Contact Kamal Dhalla, in Mumbai, at 91-22-2202 6303 or wzcf@bom8.vsnl.net.in.



## Useful website

A wealth of information on financial matters relating to topics such as repatriation of money, estates in India, investments in India, etc. is available at the website of the Hongkong Shanghai Bank at [www.hsbc.co.in](http://www.hsbc.co.in) or call their toll-free number 716-841-2168.

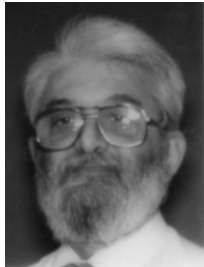
- Dara Rivetna

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## Anu Aga in Top 20 Women in Business

**Arnavaz 'Anu' Aga** [shown below at WZCC-India inaugural, Mumbai, 2003] received the Financial Express Lifetime Achievement Award, on February 19. Aga was selected from among 20 high-achieving women of India, short-listed by the Financial Express-Electrolux Awards jury.

Chairperson of the Rs. 770 crore Thermax group, Anu Aga, 61, assumed that position in 1996 after the sudden death of her husband Rohinton Aga, who had built Thermax up from a small boiler company in the 1980s into a leader in engineering solutions in energy and environment.

When an economic slowdown threatened the company's bottom lines,

Aga took tough decisions like exiting non-core business and laying off employees, pushing the company into the black again in 2002.

On the personal front, she not only had to deal with her husband's death, but also the tragic death of her only son a year later.

Despite these vicissitudes, Aga has never shied from discharging her social responsibilities. She was among the few corporate leaders to speak out against the riots in Gujarat and campaign for the cause of minorities in India.

Recently, Aga stepped down as the chairperson of Thermax in favor of her daughter Meher Pudumjee. [Sources: Zarine Commissariat and www.Rediff.com].



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A few items are still left from the first consignment. Now taking orders and suggestions for next shipment, scheduled for fall delivery to Chicago.



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## **Soozan Baxter organizes fundraiser for Bush-Cheney campaign**

*Soozan Baxter, at left, with vice president Dick Cheney, who was guest of honor, at a gala fund raising event in Syracuse, on November 17, 2003, which she organized. Soozan is responsible for Corporate Marketing for the Pyramid Management Group – one of the largest mall developers in the North East USA. Daughter of Thritee and the late Darius Baxter, Soozan was born in Syracuse, NY. She graduated in 1997 from Barnard College and in 1998 with a Masters in Journalism from Columbia University.*

## **Lion Erach Amaria is elected vice governor**

*Erach Amaria*, a dedicated Lion for many years at the Lions Club of London-Finchley, UK, has been elected vice governor of Lions International District 105. He will become vice district governor for a major portion of the UK for a year from July 2004 and then take over as district governor. He will be the first Zarathushti to achieve this rank in Lions in the UK. In November 2003, Erach was elected to the managing committee of the ZTFE. - *Paurushasp B. Jila*

## **Award-winning realtor Rusi Gandhi donates 10% of fees to your association or FEZANA**

Rusi Gandhi of RE/MAX Properties Unlimited in Montville was awarded membership in RE/MAX International prestigious 100% club at the Borgata Hotel and Casino in Atlantic City. Mr. Gandhi also received the New Jersey Association of Realtors (NJAR) Circle of Excellence Award-Silver Level for his sales performance in 2003.

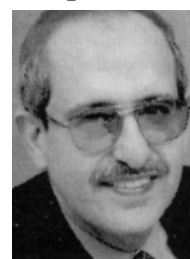


Gandhi has over 26 years of real estate experience, in residential and commercial properties.

Dedication and commitment to the real estate industry is evident in Gandhi's many professional affiliations and community activities. He is also a member of the Montville Chamber of Commerce, the Chapter Chairman of WZCC (NY) and Business Manager of FEZANA Journal.

*Rusi Gandhi donates to the local Zarathushti Association or FEZANA, 10% of fees he receives when members of any Zarathushti organization or their families and friends purchase, sell or rent a commercial or residential property in the US, Canada and 52 countries listed by RE/MAX and International Real Estate Federation based in Paris. Contact Rusi Gandhi at 973-575-6005, rusigandhi@remax.net or visit [www.rusigandhi.com](http://www.rusigandhi.com).*

## **Dady Dadyburjor is department chair**



*Dady Dadyburjor* is chair of the chemical engineering department at West Virginia University in Morgantown. His recent research focuses on the development of

novel, iron-based catalysts for coal liquefaction and related processes, found to be superior to catalysts funded by DOE-sponsored research. Dadyburjor, a graduate from the Indian Institute of Technology, has published over 80 papers in technical journals. [Submitted by *Sohrab Vatcha*]. ■

## **Recognition for Roozbeh Dadabhoy**

*Roozbeh Dadabhoy*, originally from Karachi, was selected as a "2003 Businessman of the Year" [*sic*], for her involvement as a community and business leader in Richmond, VA. She was recognized at an awards ceremony in Washington, DC on April 1, attended by President Bush and other congressional republican leaders. [Submitted by *Behram D. Avari*] ■





## Mehta Motors wins Beautification Recognition

*Mehta Motors*, the automotive repair shop owned by Hosi Mehta, in suburban Chicago was selected a winner in the Elmhurst 2004 Beautification Recognition Program jointly sponsored by the Elmhurst Economic

Development Corporation and the Elmhurst Chamber of Commerce to acknowledge businesses and organizations that have made significant aesthetic contributions to the Elmhurst community. Mehta was recognized at an Awards Breakfast at Athar Restaurant, on March 3, in a ceremony covered by local press and Comcast Cable Channel.

Mehta Motors has been at this location since 1988. It was recently expanded with a 2,000 sq. foot addition (Rohinton Rivetna served as construction manager) with Hosi's wife, Kim, in charge of landscaping. Mehta started in the automotive repair business at another location, in Oakbrook, Illinois, in 1983. Kim helps with bookkeeping and sons Shawn and Sheroy, both certified auto technicians, have been in the business with him for some years. ■



## Forever loyal

Family, faith and dedication rank among corporate VP's strengths

[Excerpted from "The Business Journal," Scottsdale, Arizona, August 16, 2002, submitted by Daulat Divecha]

BY ANNE ROBERTSON

Navaz Ghaswala's poise is made evident by the great posture she sports sitting behind her mahogany desk at *Forever Living Product's* lavish headquarters in Scottsdale.

Bedecked in a luminous pink suit and shipshape hairstyle, the executive vice president of Arizona's largest private company offers quiet, but firm answers to questions about growing up in Pakistan, the current state of her homeland, and the ancient religion that still guides her in life.

"I am Zoroastrian, a religion founded by the prophet Zoroaster, in 600 BCE," she says. "The religion is based on living your life with good thoughts, words and deeds..."

Ghaswala, 51, brightly recalls her years in Karachi as the youngest of seven children, a contrast to the religious extremism that has infiltrated the area today. Her father owned taxis. Ghaswala attended a Zoroastrian school. She is saddened by the fanaticism that has taken hold ...



*Two Parsis, Adi Godrej and Pallonji Mistry, are among eight Indians on the 2004 Forbes list of billionaires. The top three are Bill Gates (\$46.6 billion), Warren Buffet (\$42.9 billion) and Karl Albrecht of Germany (\$23 billion).*

SOURCE WWW.FORBES.COM

Indian Billionaires				
Rank	Name	Age	Worth(\$bil)	
58	Azim Premji	58	6.7	
65	Mukesh-Anil Ambani	46	6.0	
147	Kumar Birla	36	3.2	
277	Adi Godrej & family	61	2.0	
186	Sunil Mittal	46	2.7	
231	Pallonji Mistry	74	2.3	
310	Shiv Nadar	58	1.8	
552	Anil Agarwal	50	1.0	

She left that country at age 25 to move to Canada with her husband Darius, and the couple landed in Phoenix in 1977.

She began her career working as an executive assistant for Rex Maughan when he was at Del Webb Corp. Maughan is the founder of *Forever Living Products*, a \$1.5 billion manufacturer of health and beauty products.

The company initially operated out of Tempe and had an outside manufacturer making the products. In 1982, Maughan bought a manufacturing plant in Dallas. They moved to Scottsdale five years ago. It has distributors in 80 countries and a *Forever Resorts* division with locations in South Africa and Alaska.

"It's been an exciting ride. I've grown with the company," Ghaswala says. Maughan says Ghaswala's loyalty has been invaluable to him and the business.

"Navaz has been at my right side from the beginning. Though it's been almost two decades, it seems like only yesterday that she made the leap of faith and helped start the company – I remain grateful that she did."

Ghaswala and her husband Darius live in Scottsdale, Arizona. They have two children, Sonia, 23 and Kevin, 22. ■



PHOTOGRAPH: TIMES OF INDIA, JANUARY 16, 2004

*Ratan Tata, chairman of the Tata Group, unveiled his company's (Tata Motors Ltd) new luxury car, the "Indigo Marina" at the 7th Auto Expo 2004, in New Delhi, January 15, 2004. Over 960 exhibitors from 26 countries participated.*

## **Ratan Tata wins Ernst & Young "Entrepreneur of the Year" award**

Tata Sons chairman Ratan N. Tata was awarded the "Entrepreneur of the Year 2003" award by India's Deputy Prime Minister L. K. Advani on October 30, 2003. The award was bestowed on Tata by global consultancy firm Ernst & Young for achieving a makeover of "far reaching dimensions."

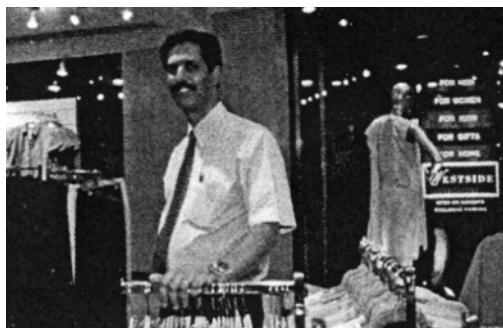
Tata will now represent India at the Ernst & Young World Entrepreneur of the Year Award to be held in June 2004 in Monte Carlo, Monaco.

Tata hopes to "design the country's cheapest car, priced just above a motorcycle" in a bid to reach a much larger market. Tata said the breakthrough project was at a conceptual stage and he hoped the new car would be priced at an affordable 100,000 rupees (\$2200). [Source: *Times of India*, Oct. 30, 2003] ■

## **Noel Tata, Tata Group**

*TIME* magazine, December 1, 2003, profiled the "2003 *TIME/CNN* list of Global Business Influentials" – prime contenders for the top jobs at 20 of the world's biggest corporations. One of them was Noel Tata; his profile by Aravind Adiga is reproduced below.

In some ways, Noel Tata is an unlikely candidate to take over the Tata Group. India's most famous business conglomerate, which sells everything from steel to IT consulting to coffee and tea. The 46-year-old heads Trent, the group's retail unit, which had \$27 million in revenue last year – a tiny share of the conglomerate's overall \$11.2 billion revenue. But Noel has the right dynastic connections to



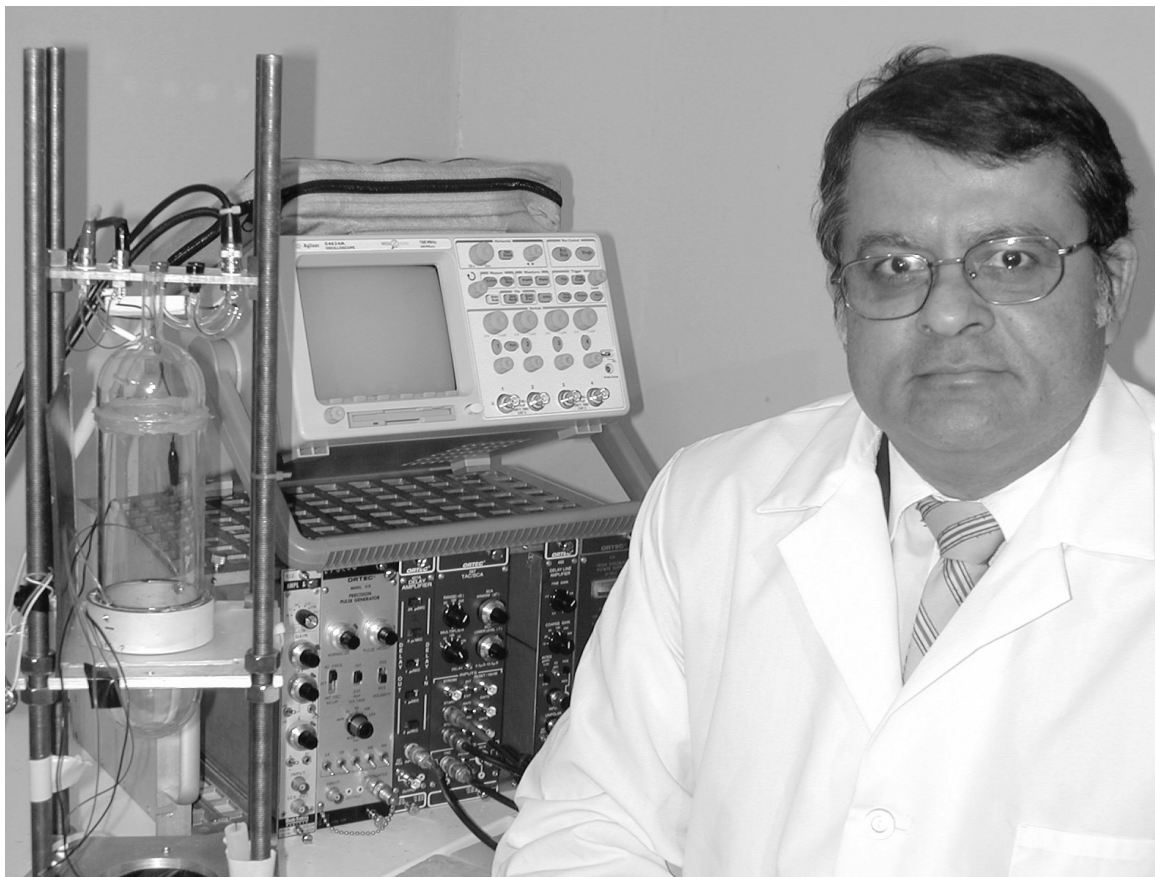
take over the group, founded by an ancestor in the 19th century. His half brother Ratan is now chairman, and father-in-law Pallonji Mistry is one of the largest shareholders.

Noel's managerial record is good. Since taking over Trent in 1999, he has expanded its chain of Westside retail stores, which stock perfume, crockery and upmarket clothing.

Sales were up 33% last year, helping his case as unofficial front runner to succeed Ratan in 2008. Noel was also recently appointed to the boards of Titan, the Tata watchmaking unit, and Voltas, an air-conditioning giant.

Noel's challenge if he makes it to the top: to show that in the new India, dynasty and meritocracy can intersect. ■





*Rusi Taleyarkhan in laboratory at Purdue University. To the left is a test reactor cell (used for conducting acoustic inertial confinement nuclear fusion experiments) together with some data acquisition equipment.*

## Rusi Taleyarkhan's nuclear fusion discovery gains credibility by Porus Cooper

Following unprecedented scientific scrutiny, Rusi Taleyarkhan's remarkable tabletop fusion experiment to produce energy, gains some important believers and backers.

**T**wo years ago, nuclear engineer Rusi Taleyarkhan and an international team of researchers he led at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, surprised the scientific community with a tabletop experiment that seems to offer a bountiful and cleaner source of energy.

**The discovery.** Using a technique he calls acoustic inertial confinement fusion, Taleyarkhan imploded bubbles containing deuterium atoms – a heavy form of common hydrogen – with intense shock-wave heating and compression to create nuclear fusion. The result replicated the extreme conditions (tens of millions of degrees in temperature and billions of atmo-

spheres of pressure) found within the “interior” of stars like our sun.

One out of about every 6,000 atoms of seawater is heavy hydrogen, so there is a plentiful supply of this potential fuel, Taleyarkhan explained. “A few cubic kilometers of sea water could be enough fuel to supply the energy needs of the United States for several hundred years,” he said.

Unlike the better known nuclear fission, whose byproducts remain radioactive for thousands of years, his nuclear fusion process leaves radioactively activated byproducts that would go down to background level in about 10 years, he said.

“Imagine fueling your car with a small cup of this material, and then you never have to refuel again,” he mused. That could be just one of its potential revolutionary uses.

**Scientific scrutiny.** The experiment, published after extensive peer review in the journal *Science*, was met with both guarded acceptance in the scientific community as well as the kind of fierce and unrelenting skepticism that scientists bring to bear on extraordinary discoveries announced by their peers.

So Taleyarkhan and his team spent the last two years refining and expanding their effort and acquiring even more sophisticated equipment to detect and



provide what he said was “vastly more compelling and irrefutable evidence.” Now the results are the subject of a new published report, this time in the journal *Physical Review E*, the journal of the American Physical Society, which is the association of American physicists.

His team picked the journal advisedly, Taleyarkhan said. “It is a journal in the domain of the skeptics,” he said. The process leading to publication in *Physical Review E* was unprecedented in the history of Oak Ridge National Laboratory and excruciatingly demanding, he said. Around 100 scientific reviewers, working anonymously, took numerous cracks at trying to find fault with the methods used and the results presented by his team.

That the eventual decision was to publish the experiment means it has gained some very important believers and backers, Taleyarkhan said. He hastened to add, however, that this does not mean clear sailing now. “The ultimate test would be when somebody else successfully overcomes the various hurdles involved and repeats it,” he said. But it isn’t easy to pull together such a project. It takes years and significant financial and scientific resources.

**Ultimate rank in academia.** The growing notice his work has gained has made the travails of recent years worthwhile for the 51-year-old Taleyarkhan, who has come a long way from boarding school at Billimoria High School in Panchgani and Boys Town in Nasik. He is a graduate of the Indian Institute of Technology in Madras and received his MBA and PhD degrees from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, NY.

“Imagine fueling your car with a small cup of this material, and then you never have to refuel again.”

It has also led to a recent transition in his professional life. Universities came courting him to join them. He has now accepted the tenured position of Arden L. Bement Jr. Professor of Nuclear Engineering at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana.

The position, at a university that enrolls 68,000 students and is considered one of America’s best, was conferred on Taleyarkhan by the board of trustees with the approval of the

governor of Indiana during a special ceremony. He retains his position of Distinguished Scientist at Oak Ridge on a part-time basis.

“It is the ultimate rank in academia,” Taleyarkhan said of being named to an endowed chair.

**Family life.** While he is currently commuting between West Lafayette and Knoxville each week, the transition to Purdue comes at an opportune time for a man who prizes his family and his Zarathushti faith above all.

The first of his three daughters is almost ready to go to college, and he hopes she and the others would be able to attend Purdue. “We are a very nuclear family,” he said of his wife Navaz, who is at home, and daughters Pervin, 17, Manaz, 16, and Meher, 11. His goal is to keep the family together.

Pervin is a high school senior who intends to study biomedical engineering and then study to be a doctor. Manaz loves animals and wants to go to veterinary school. “Meher wants to have fun,” Taleyarkhan said with a chuckle.

They are the only Parsi Zarathushti family in Knoxville, Taleyarkhan said, though there are a couple of Iranian Zarathushti families. The rela-



*Rusi Taleyarkhan in laboratory at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, lecturing on data being acquired during an experiment being video-taped. Behind him is the test enclosure containing the reactor cell and sensitive neutron/gamma-cum-light flash detectors, all covered with a dark covering to prevent ingress of environment light. This enables detection of faint pico-second duration sonoluminescence light flashes that are emitted when deuterated vapor cavities implode to produce nuclear fusion. Sonoluminescence is the process of concentrating acoustic (sound) energy high-enough to produce light.*

tive isolation has in some ways helped to solidify their religious faith, he said. He and Navaz often spend about an hour a day in prayer, he said. "I don't recall doing this in India," he said.

"We teach our children to say their prayers and understand their prayers and to have Zoroastrian values," he said. They have been taught to persevere and to not compromise "if they believe in something and know it is right."

**Porus P. Cooper** is a veteran journalist, currently working at the *Philadelphia Inquirer* as a business writer specializing in venture capital and small business issues.

Cooper lives with his wife, Hutokhshi, and children, Malcolm, 13, and Burjis, 10, in Cherry Hill, NJ. He is in the early stages of researching a biography of Cyrus the Great and is soliciting readers' suggestions on the topic. Please correspond with him at [poruscooper@hotmail.com](mailto:poruscooper@hotmail.com).



Sarosh Bharucha [far left] with Support Alliance Group on "Enterprise Day"

## Zoroastrian Common Market inaugurated in Toronto *by Sarosh Bharucha*

Uniting to build wealth to fulfill everybody's dreams

The "Toronto Support Alliance" hosted "Enterprise Day" in Toronto on February 15, 2004 to present Zarathushti businesses and professionals to the community. Toronto becomes the first Zarathushti community to have taken a positive step towards creating a **ZOROASTRIAN COMMON MARKET**.

The program, began with a blessing from Ashishwang – the 'angel of wealth' by Er. Bomanshaw Kotwal, high priest of Toronto; followed by an encouraging welcome by ZSO president Sam Vesuna. Sarosh Bharucha opened the event with his

"Character Creates Destiny" speech. He called upon the community to unite to form the Zoroastrian Common Market.

"Let us unite to build wealth to fulfill everybody's dreams, to build a peaceful, united and rich community," said Bharucha. "One dream cannot succeed at the expense of another. A larger economic pie will allow us to fulfill everybody's dreams."

He extolled the progress made towards the new center and appealed to the community: **"Give us your business, and we will finish the job !"**

### Cyrus Todiwala wins Restaurant and Catering Industry Award

Restaurateur and author of the *Cafe Spice Namaste* cookbook, Cyrus Todiwala won the "Outstanding Contribution to the Restaurant and Catering Industry Award" at the Carlton TV Food Awards Nite on March 8th. Todiwala, chef and proprietor of two restaurants, *Cafe Spice Namaste* in Battersea, London, and *The Parsee* in North London, is a well-known figure on TV cookery and food shows and has done a great deal to popularize high quality Indian cuisine in the UK.

[Source Paurushasp Jila]

Community members presented their businesses: **Dr. Khorshed Balsara** (“Oxyfresh” marketing for Health and Household products), **Phiroze Dotiwalla** (Financial Planning services), **Mehernosh Kapadia** discussed investment options, **Yasmin Kevala** presented her proposal for creating a ‘Parsi baug’ for Zarathushti retirees in Florida, accountant **Kersi Sarkari** discussed tax planning strategies, **Sarosh Bharucha** presented his investment proposal on “Infill Housing” and demonstrated a business model for profitable investment with a Zarathushti builder, **Hoshang Mancherjee** presented his proposal for condominium investments.

**Shahnaz Polad** made a stirring speech about the “Power of a Dream,” and commended the ZSO dream for the new Center.

The crowd gave a standing ovation to **Dr. Dhun Noria**, chair of the ZSO Building Capital Campaign Committee. For information, visit [www.zso.org/BCCC/committees.html](http://www.zso.org/BCCC/committees.html)

## Zarathushti Investment Club – building wealth

Successful investing in the stock markets is an essential step in wealth creation. It is quite common for a trader to be averaging an annual salary of \$ 500,000 before the age of 30, suggesting an incredible opportunity for our youth if they learn to participate effectively in this vast wealth creation machine.

Believing that “A community that builds wealth together, stays together,” Investment Analyst **Khushroo Bhandara**, a member of the Support Alliance, dreams of forming a Zoroastrian Investment Club as a first step towards building a global Mutual Fund Company. 10% of the profits will go to the ZSO BCCC.

To move the community towards intelligent investing, Khushroo arranged for a course on “Technical Analysis of Stock Markets” on May 7, to provide investors with basic trading strategies. Contact Khushroo at [kbhandara@knbinc.com](mailto:kbhandara@knbinc.com).



**Dr. Jerry M. Kheradi** chair of FEZANA Funds and Finance

fruitful and we are very appreciative of the generous donations from many of you. **FOR THIS FEZANA THANKS YOU!**

We are now starting our **Second Thousand Points of Light Campaign** in a series of ten. Our long-term goal is to reach \$1 million over the next ten years. With your support and generosity the great work that has been started can continue. Kindly make your checks payable to FEZANA, indicate the fund you wish to support and mail to: Rashid Mehin, Treasurer, 583 Beverly Place, San Marcos, CA 90269.

Thank you for all your support and may you and your family be showered with the blessings of Ahura Mazda.

**Jerry Kheradi**, MD, chairperson, Funds and Finance Committee

Committee: **Rashid Mehin** (treasurer), **Rustom Kevala**, PhD, **Mitra Rashidi**, Esq., and **Celeste Kheradi**.

## ushta ahmai, yahmai ushta kahmai chit

[Ushtavaiti Gatha, Ys 43.1]

Happiness be the lot of him who works for the happiness of others. [tr. D. J. Irani]

Happiness (comes) to him who seeks happiness for others. [tr. Ramiyar Karanjia]

Happiness unto him, through whom others get happiness. [tr. Jimmy Nadershaw Sidhva]

Happiness (ushta) to him who brings utmost happiness to others. [tr. Piloo Nanavutty]

Whoever brings untold bliss to others, will be given that bliss. [tr. T. R. Sethna]

Who brings to others Light, himself gets Light. [tr. I. J. S. Taraporewala]



# FINANCIAL CORNER

Thousand Points of Light	2001-3	2004	Total		2001-3	2004	Total
Anonymous, FL	5		5	Er. Soli & JoAnn Dastur, FL	J 3		3
Anonymous, NY	G 1		1	<b>Adi &amp; Parvin Davar, VA</b>		S,W 2	2
Anonymous	R 1		1	<b>Edul &amp; Niloufer Davar, NJ</b>	G 2	G 1	3
A Wellwisher, MI	1		1	Homi & Nargish Davier, TX	1		1
Dr Babak Abadi, PA	W 2		2	<b>Farrokh M. Deboo, CT</b>		R 2	2
<b>Noshir &amp; Kashmira Antia</b>		C 1	1	Jimmy & Freny Deboo family, MI	1		1
<b>Shiraz Antia, CT</b>		C 2	2	<b>Ayesha Dinshaw</b>		(l) 1	1
Parviz & Simin Ardeshirpour, NC	S 2		2	Ross Dinyari	G 1		1
<b>Jim Arjani, CA</b>		C 1	1	Yezdi N Dordi, CA	5		5
Dr. Cyrus F Austin, AZ	G,W 19		19	Jimmy and Mary Dubash, VA	G,W 4		4
Porus Austin and Khar, CA	W 4		4	<b>J. H. Dudha, TX</b>		C 1	1
<b>Gulnar Balsara, PA</b>		C 1	1	Manek R. Dustoor, MI	2		2
Zubin & Silvia Balsara, AR	G 1		1	A.D. & G.A. Dutia, AL	G 4		4
Edul & Tehnaz Bamji, NJ	W 1		1	Tony & Swati Elavia, MA	1		1
Dolly & Pesi Bavadam	C,W 2		2	Freddy Engineer, CA	1		1
Thritee, Soozan & Trista Baxter, NY	(e) 1		1	Rumi Engineer, CO	C,S,W 3		3
<b>Beach Cigar Group, FL</b>	C,W 29	C,W 10	39	Adil Feroz,GA	1		1
Zazu & Tinaaz Bhandara, CA	G 2		2	Sami R. Framjee	W 10		10
Firdaus & Jasmin Bhathena, MA	1		1	Rusi D Gandhi, NJ	1		1
Rustom & Sheroo Bhathena, OH	1		1	Golmeher B. Gandi	(j) 2		2
Meena S. Birdie, FL	G 1		1	Cecilia & Sorab Gandhi, CA	5		5
Mezdie R. Birdie, FL	G 1		1	<b>Hanoz &amp; Shahzneen Rabadi Gandhi</b>		C,W 8	8
<b>Jal Birdy, CA</b>	C 1		1	<b>Navroz Gandhi, MD</b>		C,W 10	10
<b>Kobad &amp; Nancy Bugwadia, CA</b>		C 1	1	Eugene Gauger, MI	1		1
Homi & Ellen Byramji, NJ	1		1	Jamshed & Yasmin Ghadiali, NJ	2		2
<b>Kershaw &amp; Bakhtawar Byramji</b>		C 3	3	Rashna Ghadialy, IL	1		1
Dr. Lovji D. Cama, NJ	7		7	Mr. & Mrs. Sorab K. Ghadiali	3		3
Kamal E. Campbell, GA	C,W 1		1	Soonu & Jal Godiwalla, TX	1		1
Dr. & Mrs. Nadir Camay, CA	G 2		2	<b>Behli H. Hansotia, VA</b>		C 1	1
Sohrab D. Charna	C 1		1	Noshir L Hansotia, MO	1		1
Homiyar Choksi, VA	1		1	Piloo E. Ilavia, TX	C 1		1
<b>Coating Engineers, TX</b>		S(n) 2	2	<b>Behram K &amp; Farieda Irani, TX</b>	C,R,W 15	C,R,W 3	18
Cyra & Lyla Contractor, PA	1		1	Hormuz & Shahdookht Irani, GA	G 14		14
Dr Farhad & Hutoxi Contractor,PA (g)(h)C 6			6	Mervan and Katayoun Irani, MD	1		1
<b>Dr. &amp; Mrs. Farokh Contractor,LA</b>	C,R,W 5	C,G,R,W 4	9	<b>Shapur K. Irani, IN</b>		C 1	1
<b>Katy &amp; Farrokh Cooper, CA</b>	2	W 1	3	Minoo S. Italia	G 1		1
Phil F. Cooper, CA	G,W 2		2	Rohinton Boman Irani, NY	G 1		1
Tommy and Nairika Cornett, GA	1		1	Rustam H. Irani, MA	1		1
<b>Tammy &amp; Behram Dalal, NC</b>	G 2	G 1	3	Rustom and Sarvar Irani, FL	G 1		1
Keki Dalal	C 1		1	Irani Family Foundation	C,G,R,S,W 10		10
Phiroze H. Dalal, CA	C 5		5	<b>Minoo &amp; Ruby Italia, TX</b>		G 1	1
Dr Ardeshir & Parvin Damania, CA	2		2	Jim & Homai Jagus, PA	5		5
Diana Damkevala, CA	1		1	<b>Daryoush &amp; Mahin Jahanian, KS</b>		G 3	3
Maneck Daroowalla, NY	G 2		2	<b>Iraj Jahanian, MO</b>	G 4	G 1	5
Adil Daruwala, CA	G 2		2	Khurshid & J.J. Jamadar, TX	2		2
Dolly Dastoor, QE	S 1		1	Rumi & Kashmira Jamsetjee, IL	1		1
Farrokh N Dastur, CA	1		1	Dinshaw & Goolcher Joshi, MD	C 4		4
Meher N. Dastur, CA	2		2	Khorshed & Dr Firoze Jungalwala,MA	(d) 1		1
<b>Khurshed Jehangir Dastur, PA</b>		(g) 1	1	Afried Farokh Kamdin, NY	W 2		2
Nari & Dinoo Dastur, CT	1		1	Jamshed & Rita Kapadia, MA	R,W 7		7
				Homi & Shireen Kapadia, PA	5		5
				<b>Dr Natasha Karanjia, PA</b>	C 2	R 1	3
				<b>Aspandiar G. Katki</b>		C 2	2
				<b>Roya Kaviani, NJ</b>		C 1	1
				Dolly Kerawalla, CA	1		1
				Mr & Mrs K.S. Kermani, NY	(a) 5		5
				<b>Dr Rustom &amp; Yasmin Kevala,MD</b>	(f) J,W 4	W(k) 1	5

**"1000 points of Light"** donors are shown above. Each \$100 counts as 1 Point of Light. Help us reach our goal of 1000 points. Donations received from January 1 through April 24, 2004 are shown in bold.

[Continued on next page]

# FINANCIAL CORNER

## Thousand Points of Light [Contd]

	2001-3	2004	Total
<b>Purvez &amp; Aban Khambatta, OH</b>		<b>G 1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Nazneen Kharas</b>		<b>S 10</b>	<b>10</b>
Delara Kheradi, NY	S(f) 6		6
<b>Celeste Kheradi, RI</b>	S(f) 15	<b>S(f)W(k)13</b>	<b>28</b>
Dr Jerry Kheradi, RI	S(f) 70		70
<b>Sohrab Kheradi, NY</b>		<b>S(f) 5</b>	<b>5</b>
Kershaw & Nazneen Khumbatta, TX	1		1
Jasmin & Maneck Kotwal, NJ	2		2
Kaizad Kotwal, OH	G 1		1
<b>Zenobia &amp; Shahrookh Lala, MI</b>	1	<b>C 1</b>	<b>2</b>
Mathew Lungen, NY	S(f) 1		1
<b>Kaizad &amp; Jinobya Machhi, WI</b>	C 1	<b>C 2</b>	<b>3</b>
Borzoo Kushesh & Mahindokht	(b) 1		1
Dolly Malva, CA	G 2		2
Mehran & Dr. Mitra Mazdyasni, CA	1		1
Noshir & Yasmin Medhora, TX	2		2
<b>Farahnaz Mehdiabadi, TX</b>	1	<b>C 1</b>	<b>2</b>
Hosi & Kim Mehta, IL	1		1
<b>Kersi &amp; Kamal Mehta, OH</b>		<b>J 1</b>	<b>1</b>
Merwan and Rukshana Mehta, MO	1		1
<b>Shahrokh &amp; Gool Mehta, NY</b>	2	<b>G 1</b>	<b>3</b>
Hoshi & Nawaz Merchant, NJ	2		2
Mehraban & Mahbanoo Mehr	G 1		1
<b>Sherazade Mehta, MA</b>		<b>S(m) 1</b>	<b>1</b>
Manou Mobedshahi, CA	J(i) 25		25
Pesi Mistry, NY	1		1
Tehmtan & Aloo Mistry, MO	1		1
Jehangir and Olive Mobed, IL	1		1
Rumy Mohta, VA	1		1
<b>Edul D. Nakra, MA</b>		<b>S 1</b>	<b>1</b>
Nesh Inc.	1		1
Minoo Netervala, CA	2		2
Percy K Nikorawalla, NJ	1		1
Jamshed & Farzana Palsetia, MA	1		1
Farhad & Firoza Panthaki, MA	11		11
Drs. Khushru & Roda Patel, IL	1		1
<b>Homi Patel, IL</b>		<b>G 2</b>	<b>2</b>
Mr & Mrs Randolph Paulling, GA	(d) 1		1
Yasmin & Shapur Pavri, TX	S 3		3
Dr Parvez Pohowalla, OR	1		1
<b>Godrej &amp; Piloo Randeria, TX</b>	G 1	<b>R 1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Dr. Minocher Reporter, OR</b>	1	<b>R 1</b>	<b>2</b>
Jamshed & Tamara Rivetna, TX	1		1
<b>Rohinton &amp; Roshan Rivetna, IL</b>	2	<b>J 1</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Dinaz &amp; Dan Rogers, OR</b>	J 4	<b>J 2</b>	<b>6</b>
Villoo & Solee Rudina, TX	1		1
Purvez & Aban Rustomji, TX	(d) 2		2
Neville Sarkari, WY	1		1
Nargesh & Aspi Sethna, TX	1		1
<b>Prochy Sethna, CA</b>	W 15	<b>W 5</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Houshmand Sharyari, IL</b>		<b>W 1</b>	<b>1</b>
Behram Shroff, VA	C,W 2		2
<b>Dr Burjis &amp; Hovi Shroff, FL</b>	5	<b>C 1</b>	<b>6</b>
Dr Nariman & Parrin Shroff, FL	2		2
Zubeen Shroff, NY	1		1
<b>Fali Sidhva, OR</b>		<b>C 1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Feroze &amp; Anahita Sidhwa, TX</b>	C,S,W 10	<b>S 10</b>	<b>20</b>

	2001-3	2004	Total
<b>Timothy Robert Smith</b>		<b>G 1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Erach &amp; Vahbeez Songadwala, TX</b>		<b>G 1</b>	<b>1</b>
Yezdi N. Soonavala, MI	G 1		1
Nazneen & Ehler Spliedt, CA	1		1
Arnavaz Sukhia, NJ	G 1		1
Cyrus Subawalla, IL	C 2		2
Bella Tata, BC	1		1
Khurshed M Tengra, ID	G 2		2
<b>Mahnaz K. Tengra, ID</b>		<b>G 1</b>	<b>1</b>
Jamshed Udvardia, MI	5		5
Perry Unwalla, FL	1		1
Rayomand J Unwalla, PA	1		1
Minoo & Shirin Vaghaiwalla, FL	S(m) 1		1
Taera M. Vakil, FL	G 1		1
<b>Cainaz Vakharia, VA</b>	W 1	<b>C 2</b>	<b>3</b>
Dick & Sheroo Vazir, FL	2		2
Jer Vijan, AZ	1		1
Dr. M. Darius Vohman, GA	G 1		1
<b>Homey &amp; Bachi Writer, CA</b>		<b>G 1</b>	<b>1</b>
Parviz & Parvin Yeganegi, BC	4		4
ZAPANJ, DE, PA & NJ	2		2
<b>Farangis Zardoshty &amp; family, AZ</b>	<b>R(c) 326</b>	<b>G 10</b>	<b>336</b>
Mehraban Zartoshty, B.C	25		25
North American Mobeds Council	R 10		10
Z Assoc of Alberta, Canada	3		3
Atlanta Z Anjuman, GA	1		1
<b>Z Assoc of N Calif, CA</b>	2	<b>C,G,W 3</b>	<b>5</b>
Z Assoc of Chicago, IL	W 1		1
Z Association of Florida, FL	G 2		2
Z Association of North Texas	2		2
Zoroastrian Community	G 1		1
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>883</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>1032</b>

### Key to "1000 Points of Light":

- (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"
- (j) In memory of Behram J. Gandhi
- (k) Damkevala Endowment Fund
- (l) In memory of Rayomand Unwalla
- (m) ZYNA Art Scholarship
- (n) In memory of Dinshaw Joshi

Funds: C=Critical Assistance, G=General, J=Journal, R=Religious Education; S =Scholarship, W=Welfare.

## Living your dream in retirement

**P**lanning for retirement is a great challenge: At what age to retire? How much will you need? What are you planning to do in retirement? These are some of the very difficult questions you should ask yourself. If left unanswered, it could mean the difference between living your dream in retirement or being disappointed in retirement.

**At what age to retire?** Some people retire early with the idea that they will continue working on a part-time basis. This mistake can cost them. **Social Security** terms 'early' retirement as any time between age 62 and 67 (normal retirement is age 65 or 67 if born after 1959). If you receive early retirement benefits this year, you will lose \$1 of Social Security benefits for every \$2 of earnings above \$11,600. If you retire at full retirement age (65 or 67 if born after 1959), you needn't worry about a reduction in your Social Security benefits.

You can also postpone receiving benefits until age 70 and receive an increased lifetime monthly benefit above your normal retirement benefit amount. So, deciding on when to begin taking your Social Security retirement benefits will depend on your specific situation. We strongly advise you to check with your Social Security office and/or your financial advisor.

**How much will you need?** Determining how much money you will need to fund your retirement is not an easy calculation. You will need to consider how long you might live and your **living expenses** and inflation. One rule of thumb is that you will need 70% to 80% of your present income to maintain your present lifestyle in retirement. The theory is that some expenses, such as taxes, mortgage payments and the amount

you are putting away toward retirement will decrease. Other expenses such as health care will increase. You need to understand and be realistic about your expenses.

You will need to continue to be aware of your investment returns and make appropriate adjustments to your spending. Without proper **asset management** in retirement, your goals are not likely to be met. Diversification is no less important in retirement than it was during your income producing years. The key is choosing the right balance of investments in retirement.

It is also suggested that you make withdrawals from taxable accounts first. That way your tax-deferred accounts can grow tax-deferred for as long as possible. In addition, your tax-deferred accounts will be taxed at ordinary income tax rates, so the longer you wait to tap into these accounts, the lower your income (and tax rate) is likely to be.

### What are you planning to do in retirement?

**"A person can stand almost anything except for a succession of ordinary days."**

*Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*

Retirement can be a fulfilling combination of quality leisure, satisfying work and the pursuit of self-knowledge, a time to build closer connections to family and community and to make more time for physical and mental fitness. It is a time to live your life and fulfill your dreams. You may want to try out your retirement on your next vacation. Experience the area you would like to live in and the activities you would like to participate in during your retirement to get a better idea of your dream.

Other factors to consider for retirement are areas of the country with lower cost of living expenses and



## 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](http://www.fezana.org).**

states where there are no income tax, for example Florida. Also factor in additional expenses if you plan on traveling frequently, joining private country clubs and consider the cost of health care along with the premiums for long-term care insurance.

With proper **planning** and **saving** and **investing**, your retirement goals will be achieved. Reevaluate your retirement plan on a regular basis to help you keep ahead of the curve. ■

*[Submitted by Dr. Jerry Kheradi]*



## Grateful thanks!

FEZANA gratefully acknowledges donations received from January 1 through April 24, 2004. This does *not* include donations acknowledged under the "1000 Points of Light" program [see previous pages], nor any donations under \$50.

**General Fund:** Edul & Tehnaz Bamji, NJ (\$50). **Critical Assistance Fund:** Burjor T. Santoke, CA (\$51). **Welfare Fund:** Dinshaw Contractor, AZ (\$50). **Religious Education Fund:** Noshir Karanjia, NJ (\$51).

**Bam earthquake.** A total of \$4,298 was received for the Bam earthquake relief effort, from 29 individuals, families and two of our Member Associations: Zarthushti Anjuman of Northern California (\$500) and Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago (\$101). ■

## Scholarships available

A list of miscellaneous scholarships is given below:

● **FEZANA Scholarships** and **Mehraban Dorab Kheradi Endowment Scholarship for Merit – FEZANA Scholar**, for students at institutions of higher learning in USA/Canada. Dr. Dolly Dastoor, dollydastoor@sympatico.ca, tel: 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, tel: 708-974-1238, www.fezana.org.

● **Fali Chothia Charitable Trust** scholarships for students in North American universities. Feroza Fitch, ferozafitch@lexicongraphics.net, tel: 301-564-3726, visit: www.zamwi.org.

● **ZAC (Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago)** loans/scholarships for study in USA & Canada. ZACscholarships@yahoo.com, www.zac-chicago.org.

● **ZSBC (Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia)** awards scholarships to its members. Homi Italia, (604) 438-2076, www.zsbc.org.

● **Performing Arts Scholarship** offered by FEZANA/ZYNA (Zoroastrian Youth of North America). Sherazadem@yahoo.com, 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

## FEZANA SCHOLARSHIPS (2004-2005)

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

### Applications are invited for the FEZANA ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIPS and the MEHRABAN DORAB KHERADI ENDOWMENT SCHOLARSHIP FOR MERIT – FEZANA SCHOLAR.

The scholarships are open to Zarathushti applicants who have obtained admission for attendance at institutions of higher learning (accredited degree-granting colleges or universities) in USA or Canada.

**Scholarships:** Scholarships for the academic year 2004-2005 will be awarded in September 2004. The Mehraban Dorab Kheradi Scholarship for Merit will be for \$5000.

**Eligibility:** To be eligible the applicant must complete the application form and provide documentation for: (1) proof of status in USA or Canada (a minimum of one year residency in USA or Canada is required); (2) past academic records and accomplishments; (3) program of study; (4) annual financial need including assistance already pledged by other funds, charitable institutions or the institution of choice; (5) other financial assistance available from family and friends; (6) community service including contributions to Zarathushti functions and organizations; and (7) three reference letters.

**Award Criteria:** Applicants will be rated on Merit of Scholastic Achievement (40%), Financial Need (40%), Extra-curricular Activities (10%) and Community Service (10%). *The Mehraban Dorab Kheradi Endowment Scholarship will be awarded on merit only.*

**Application:** Application forms are available from the FEZANA website at [www.fezana.org](http://www.fezana.org) or from Dr Dolly Dastoor (dollydastoor@sympatico.ca). Completed application forms should be post-marked August 1, 2004 to:

**DOLLY DASTOOR Ph.D, Chair, FEZANA Scholarship Committee**  
3765 Malo, Brossard, Quebec Canada J4Y 1B4

## Scholarships (Contd)

language and culture. Visit [www.houtan.org](http://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](http://www.upakar.org).

● **International Research and Exchanges Board** offers programs in education, independent media, internet development and civil society. Visit [www.irex.org/programs](http://www.irex.org/programs).

● **Institute of International Education** is a global higher education and professional exchange agency. It administers the Fulbright program. Visit [www.iie.org](http://www.iie.org).

● **Harvard's Pluralism Project** website lists internship programs from numerous sources including Pluralism Project, Parliament of World's Religions, Interfaith Alliance DC, Interfaith Youth Core Chicago, Interfaith Center NY, Texas Faith Network. Visit [www.pluralism.org/resources/calendar](http://www.pluralism.org/resources/calendar).

● **Foundation for Endangered Languages (FEL)** offers grants for projects that will support protection of endangered languages. Visit [www.ogmios.org](http://www.ogmios.org). The **Endangered Language Fund (ELF)** is another source for funding for this purpose. [www.haskins.yale.edu](http://www.haskins.yale.edu).

● British Academy awards are offered to UK-based scholars, for postdoctoral research in the humanities and social sciences. Visit [www.britac.ac.uk/funding/guide/index.html](http://www.britac.ac.uk/funding/guide/index.html) ■

## ZAC (Chicago) Student Loans/Scholarships

The Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago (ZAC) invites applications for their annual loan-scholarships. All full-time, Zarathushti students currently studying or planning to study at institutions of higher learning are encouraged to apply. Applicants will

be evaluated on merit, community involvement and financial need. Applications must be received by July 1, 2004. Please visit [www.ZAC-chicago.org](http://www.ZAC-chicago.org) or e-mail us at [ZACscholarships@yahoo.com](mailto:ZACscholarships@yahoo.com).

## FEZANA-ZYNA Performing Arts Scholarship Fund

ZYNA (Zoroastrian Youth of North America) has provided \$5,000 as a startup amount for a FEZANA /ZYNA Performing Arts Scholarship. Donations towards this fund will be

## Appeals

gratefully accepted. Please send checks to FEZANA marked "Performing Arts." ■

## Dadar Association helps needy Zarathushtis

The Dadar Matunga Parsi Zoroastrian Association, assists the aged, infirm, mentally and physically handicapped and people in need of medical help. Many of the beneficiaries are widows and some bedridden. It is hard to believe but some of these Zarathushtis even reside in slums.

Over 200 such unfortunates are on their roll to whom they extend monthly cash assistance. They organize an annual gahambar at Palamkote Hall, an exhibition-cum-sale, purchase mulmul and get poor women to stitch sudreh, and bring out the Dadar Parsi Colony directory.

President Rustom Chothia ([chothia@vsnl.com](mailto:chothia@vsnl.com)) looks to charitable-minded Zarathushtis for help: "a generous corpus donation will bring relief to, and blessings from the underprivileged of our community." Please mail your checks, marked "Dadar Association" to FEZANA [see page 94].

## Mancherji Joshi Trust 'Food Scheme'

Under the Mancherji Joshi Memorial Trust 'Food Scheme' tiffins are supplied daily to 21 needy Zarathushtis in the Dadar Parsi Colony area. The trustees write:

"Many of our fellow Zarathushtis do not have a square meal to eat. Old and infirm, neglected by society, many are fighting for survival in this cruel world.

"Can you sponsor a meal for all 21 members for one day (\$20) or for one year (\$7000); or sponsor one mem-

## Revitalizing Kasnavieh Hall, near Yazd



Kasnavieh is a Zarathushti village in Yazd and in olden times, hosted many Zarathushti community events. After the recent return to this village, the community decided to expand the darb-e mehr and create a community hall to serve them for cultural, religious and sport activities.

After receiving donations from eight major donors and finishing almost 70% of the

construction, they have run out of money and are now short of \$25,000. They are now appealing to the Zarathushti community for financial help to complete this worthy project. Donations may be made in memory of loved ones, in which case, their names would be mentioned at ceremonies and public prayers. Please contact me at (604) 926 9891, [oshihan@oshihan.org](mailto:oshihan@oshihan.org), or visit [www.oshihan.org/Pages/kasnavieh.htm](http://www.oshihan.org/Pages/kasnavieh.htm) .

By Feraydoon Demehri

ber for one month (\$30), or for one year (\$325).

Please send your donations marked "Food Scheme" to FEZANA [p. 94].

### **Helping poor students with school expenses**

The "Vachha and Cowasjee Jehangir Schools Poor Parsi Students Helping Society" was formed in 1954 to provide poor students admitted to the Schools, with school fees, text books, uniforms, meals and medical aid.

Increased needs and lower interest rates, have impacted the Society's ability to render service. In this, its Golden Jubilee, the Society has set up an Endowment Fund. The annual cost per student is about \$350. A corpus of about \$5000 would earn recurring income to support one student.

Please send your donations, marked "Students Helping Society" to FEZANA [see page 94].

### **Parsee General Hospital fundraiser**

The 18th annual fundraiser for the B. D. Parsee General Hospital in Mumbai, will be held on June 26, 2004, at the residence of Yasmin and Jamshed Ghadiali in Baldwin, NY.

As in past years, the Ghadialys are spearheading this annual drive. Funds will be used for distributing free medicine to needy Zarathushtis at the hospital. Last year \$22,750 was collected and sent, along with \$700 to the Parsi Ambulance Division for equipment improvements.

Please make your check payable to ZAGNY-Critical Assistance Fund, and mail to Yasmin Ghadiali, 2686 Belcher Street, Baldwin, NY 11510, tel: 516-378-4516, ghad@aol.com.

### **TB and HIV/AIDS hospital in Panchgani**

Bel-Air, with facility for 250 beds, in the 44-acre campus in the hill-station of Panchgani, India, founded by Dr. Rustom Billimoria, has served as one of the best TB sanatoria for 90 years,

and recently became home to HIV and AIDS patients as well.

A Community Care Center and Outreach program enables Bel-Air staff to treat and reach out to patients in distant villages of India.

On a recent visit to Chicago, Father Tomy, the moving force behind this noble work, said: "We hope Bel-Air's philosophy of total commitment will inspire others to step out of



their own safe havens to serve suffering humanity and the less fortunate."

If you can help, please contact Fr. Tomy in Panchgani, at 02168-40639, belair@vsnl.com, or Dr. Mehroo Patel in Chicago at 708-409-9361.

### **ZACUCE Fundraiser**

The Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania and New Jersey is selling T-shirts and Golf shirts, in a fund-raising effort for a Zarathushti Cultural Center in the Delaware Valley [see FJ, Spring 2004, p. 12]. The attractive, dark blue shirts have a gold Farohar emblem.

### **Opportunities to help**

Besides the opportunities for giving listed in the "Appeals" section above, other worthy projects seeking funding, described elsewhere in this Journal, are listed below:

- Contribute to FEZANA's "1000 Points of Light" campaign to build the following FEZANA funds: Critical Assistance, General, Journal, Religious Education, Scholarship and Welfare [see page 91].

- Ontario Zoroastrian Community Foundation (OZCF) is raising funds for a new center in the Greater Toronto Area [see page 7].

- Research project on Zoroastrian Monuments in Azerbaijan [see page 20].

- ZANC is raising funds for the North American Congress in San Francisco. [see page 24].

- Sponsor the dream of a Zarathushti youth from Yazd, Iran to come to USA/Canada [page 83].

- Support Ayesha Nariman's bid for Congress. This will be the first time in US history that a Zarathushti is running for a seat in the US House of Representatives [see page 105].

- Zoroastrian Society of Ontario is raising funds for building larger premises on the site of the present darbe mehr [see inside back cover].

## **FEZANA Welfare Committee presents a Grand Evening of Entertainment**

Saturday, September 4, 2004

Arbab Rustom Guiv Darbe Mehr, Zoroastrian Center of Chicago

All are invited to this grand evening of entertainment, fine dining and surprises.

**FEZANA Welfare Committee will use 100% of funds collected to help older, needy people for health care, survival support and for help and guidance to families/individuals involved in domestic violence.**

For information contact Houtoxi Contractor at HFMC31@aol.com, tel: 412-367-2948 or Hosi P. Mehta at hosimehta@aol.com, tel: 630-833- 6923.





*This column on living a healthy and balanced Zarathushti life, is brought to you by **Mehroo M. Patel, MD, FRCS(Ed.), FAAFP.** 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.*

## Fitness and Figure

**F**itness in the context of this article refers to wellness. Let us be fit to perform or achieve a function – be it mental, physical, moral, ethical or spiritual. In this article we shall concentrate on physical fitness to perform the necessary functions.

Fitness differs from person to person and for the same person from time to time. To a marathon runner working day-in and day-out to achieve the stamina and strength for a long ordeal, fitness is defined differently from a sprinter who needs to achieve a short and quick spurt. Whatever may be our perception or level of expectation of fitness, we work hard, be disciplined, focused and methodical, eat and drink “right” and stay healthy. These are the very same attributes our religion teaches us. Spurts of workouts interrupted with periods of indulgence in faulty habits are less healthy and do not produce the desired results.

Fitness need not be limited to competitive athletes and performers. Every one of us can concentrate upon fitness at our own relative level of performance. We can improve our performance and fitness in small steps if we focus and work at it. If we give up, we can relegate ourselves to a downward sloping spiral. Ever heard “to rest is to rust?”

It is proven in physiatriac science that one week in bed reduces our muscle mass by 25% and each pursuant week can spiral down another 25% of the balance. To regain this loss we need three weeks of intensive exercise for each week of rest. A week of

hospitalization needs three to four weeks of rehabilitation, so short hospital stays and out-patient surgery and delivery do not just save money, they also conserve our health and help us remain fit and sound. In Yasna 62.7 [Atash Niyayesh] the devotee yearns for a short period of rest, perhaps six to eight hours, and a productive working day.

### Measures of Fitness

Methods to measure fitness have been used ever since we can remember. As children, height and weight were measured, and these measures evolved into charts relating height and weight to age. We could then compare them to average or expected values based on percentile scores plotted in a graphic format. In the early 1970’s we started measuring body-fat using calipers to measure skin folds on arms, back, abdomen, and thighs. This measure, though, was particularly crude and did not yield easily reproducible results.

A modern and sophisticated methodology is underwater body weight measure. This method, however, requires special equipment and is expensive, thus not necessarily useful for everyone. Body-mass index (BMI) utilizes our height and weight measures calculated by a formula (703 times weight in pounds divided by height in inches squared) or a constant derived from a BMI chart. The recommended BMI for men is 25 and for women 20. BMI over 30 is considered obese and 40 and above is rated as very obese. Another measure currently in use is waist circumfer-

ence: for men the cut-off is 40 inches, and for women it is 35 inches.

Whichever measure we use, most of us will awaken to the fact that many of us fall into overweight or obese categories. So, congratulations to those who are in the desirable range – consider yourselves fit as a fiddle. The rest of us can qualify if we work towards that goal.

Endurance, strength and performance can be enhanced using weights and fitness equipment, like treadmills, stair-masters and stationary bicycles. These machines also measure pulse rate and calorie utilization. They can also be programmed to issue alerts when the desired levels are reached.

### Figure

We admire and yearn to achieve an eye-catching figure. A good-looking figure is the one that fits in the category of a fashion model. Beauty is achievable by being fit though, given genetics and heritage, is also dependent on God. Height, body-frame, pelvic structure is genetically programmed although they can be molded ever so slightly by environmental influences.

We can impose our creativity to sculpture and modify our bodies to adjust to our visual image of what is trendy or good looking. Some of us can be a bit too focused on body-image and go through great lengths via self-mutilation to sculpture our nose, ears, face, breasts, abdomen, and other body parts to fit a perceived notion which some might define as self-esteem! Many of us, nonetheless, are satisfied with our natural figure – a reflection of a well-balanced personality.

Leading a well-balanced life of moderation, healthy eating and drinking, and adjusting to environmental influences is all that we can do to have a figure to admire and fitness to enjoy. This is exactly what our religion prescribes.

*Next Issue:* “Depression” by guest contributor Murali Rao, MD. ■

## ■ MATRIMONIALS ■

FEZANA will coordinate initial contacts between interested parties; we do not assume any responsibility for verifying credentials. Contact Roshan Rivetna [see inside cover].

**Parsi lady doctor, 38**, on East coast. Contact 718-347-4027. [F04-4]

**Marine engineer, male, 27**, working in Mumbai. Girl must be compatible with "Mangal". Mumbai tel: 011-91-22-2839-0854. [M04-5]

**Girl 22, 5' 2"**, slim, Bachelor of Business Management from University in Texas, pharmacy technician. Contact 214-437-6629. [F04-3]

**Girl 24, B.Com, 5' 5"**, medium build, studying for MBA and working in Mumbai. Contact aunt in Dallas at 214-437-6629. [F04-7]

**Attractive female, 26, 5' 4"**, working as human resources manager in London, UK. Call London 21-742 1369. [F04-8]

Seeking suitable Parsi match (living and working outside India) for **pretty Parsi girl, 32**, wholly educated and brought up in UK. BA (Hons), MBA, well-versed in culinary art,

outgoing, friendly and sociable. Contact jeroo\_kapadia@yahoo.com.uk. [F04-09]

**Male, 31, 5' 6"**, software engineer in New York area. Contact ruzhere@yahoo.com. [M04-10]

**Male, 40's, 5' 9"**, mathematician, musician, and weekend athlete seeks an equally vibrant, physically fit personality in her 30's who can reach beyond intelligence and expectation and towards intuition and anticipation. Contact shaman\_kokopelli@yahoo.com. [M04-11]

**Female, 38, practising lawyer**, in Canada, keen sense of humor, focused on family, likes to travel and enjoys carrying a conversation on world affairs. Interested in meeting a worthy gentleman, self-employed or professional, looking to meet your match and sincerely interested in marriage. Contact cuteprincess@write.me.com. [F04-12] ■

## ■ ■ ■ 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

**Shayan Bakhtyari**, to Farin Azadeh and Farshid Bakhtyari, of Boston area, on July 13, 2003.

**Daryush Balsara**, a boy, to Zubin and Shahnaaz Balsara, in Vancouver, on August 26.

**Bryanna Mehroo Balsara**, a girl, to Jimmy and Seema Balsara, granddaughter to Tehmuras and Jessica, in Calgary, on September 14.

**Cyrus Bharucha**, a boy, to Kersasp and Tazeen Bharucha of British Columbia, on December 19.

**Myra Bhathena**, a girl to Jasmin and Firdaus Bhathena, sister to Barian and Zenia, of Boston area, on February 28.

**Frayan Biuki**, a boy, to Khodaram and Nasrin Foroughi Biuki of British Columbia.

**Zubin Chikliwala**, a boy, to Mahbi and Shazad Chikliwala, a brother to Darius, in Pawtucket, RI, on September 12.

**Roya Deghanian**, a girl, to Jamshid and Angie Deghanian, sister to Meena, on March 11.

**Persis Engineer**, a girl, to Ferzin and Aspi Engineer, of Boston area, on October 18.

**Mehrzad Gandhi**, a boy, to Khushroo and Khurshid Gandhi of Palo Alto, CA.

**Isabelle Shirine Irani**, a girl, to Natasha and Adel Irani, sister to Roxanna, granddaughter to Katy Dinshaw Irani of Hous-

ton, and Dolly and Phiroz Dastoor of Canada, in Woodlands, TX, on March 8.

**Katayoun Kamdar**, a girl, to Jamshid and Gohar Kamdar of British Columbia, on January 2.

**Armaity Katki**, a girl, to Havovi and Khurshed Katki of Houston, on February 25.

**Darius Kavarana**, a boy, to Nazneen Engineer and Malcolm Kavarana, of Boston area, on August 9.

**Parsa Khanbadr**, a boy, to Daryoush and Farnaz Khanbadr of British Columbia, on December 19.

**Sohrab Kothari**, a boy, to Reji and Yasmin Kothari, brother to Lila, granddaughter to Kersi and Katy Bhathena and Yasmin and Kanti Kothari, in Chicago, on December 30.

**Tia Mirza**, a girl, to Raiomand and Nina Mirza, granddaughter to Minnie and Khushroo Mirza of Montreal, in London, England, on November 21.

**Xerxis Palsetia**, a boy, to Farzana and Jimmy Palsetia, of Boston area, on November 18.

**Jasmyne Pithawala**, a girl, to Jamshed and Hutoxi Pithawala, sister to Aban, granddaughter to Mehroo and Late Dara Pithawala and Dinshaw and Kety Batliwala, great granddaughter to Korshed Batliwala, in Toronto, on February 19.

**Arman Varjavand**, a boy, to Bahram and Leena Varjavand, brother to Bijan and Mitra, grandson to Parviz and Susan Varjavand, on January 18.

### NAVJOTES, SEDREH-PUSHI

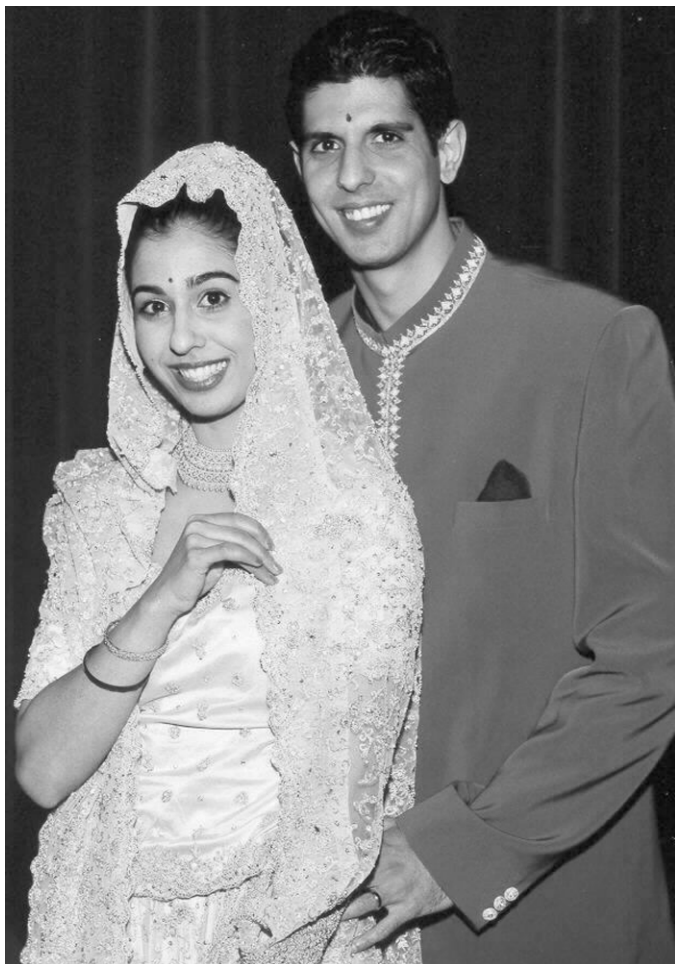
**Darius Bhadha**, son of Ervad Farhad and Afrid Bhadha, of Los Angeles, grandson of Ervad Jehanbux and Yasmin Bhadha and Homi and Meheroo Bulsara. The ceremony was officiated by Dastur Hormazd Dadachanji, his father, grandpa Ervad Farhad Bhadha and Ervad Jehanbux Bhadha, at the West End Hotel, Mumbai on January 4.

**Humin and Sanaya Dhabhar**, daughters of Arnavaz and Jamshed Dhabhar, in Mississauga, ONT, on April 17.

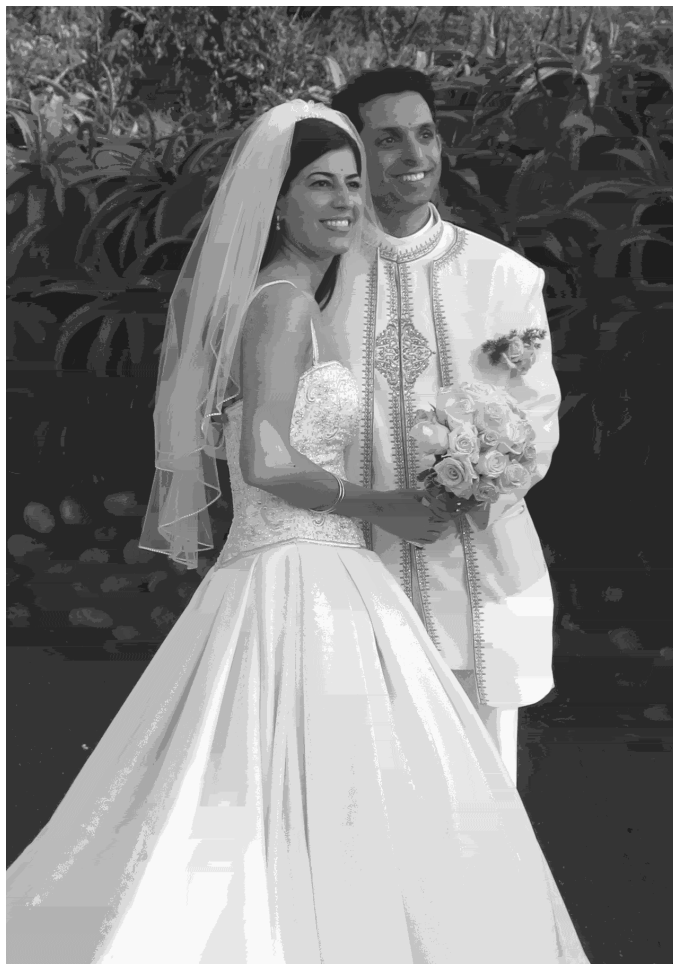
**Rayomand and Vispi Katrak**, sons of Percy and Jasmine Katrak of Houston, in Mumbai, on December 25.

**Shalina and Alycia Sherback**, daughters of Chris and Phiroza Sherback, in Edmonton on August 31.

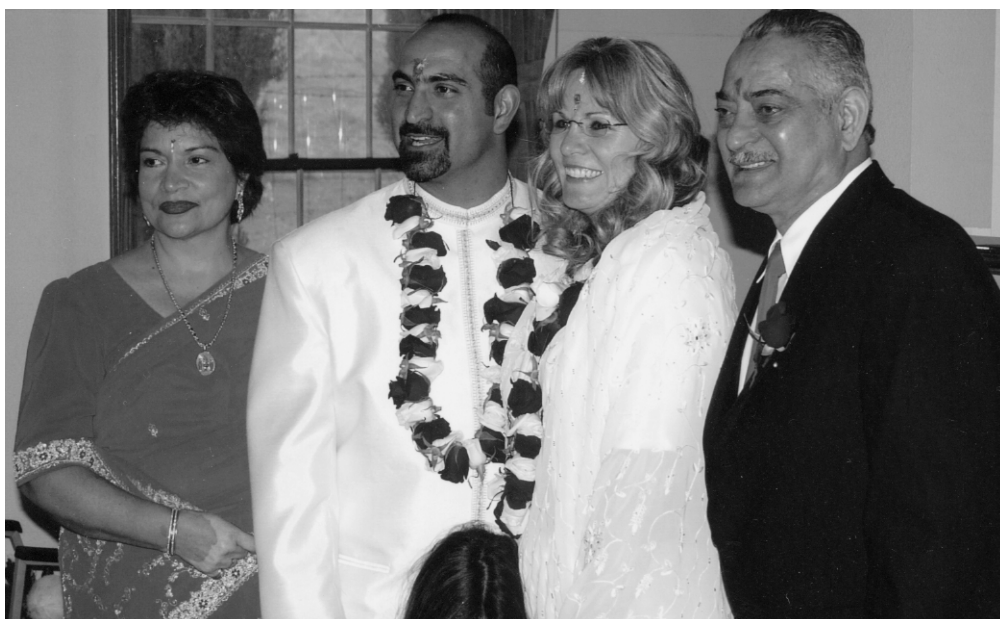




Left, **Jasmine Patel**, daughter of Loveji and Gulnar Patel of Baltimore, MD, was married to **Urmaze Naterwalla**, son of Yasmin Kevala of Potomac, MD and Dhunji Naterwalla of Mumbai, on December 6, in Potomac. The couple resides in Rockford, IL.



Right, **Mazda Antia**, son of Dr. Kersey and Dilshad Antia of Chicago area, was married to **Shahnaz Mehdiabadi**, daughter of Rustam and Roshan Mehdiabadi of Lubbock, TX, at the oceanfront in La Jolla, CA, on Avan mah and Avan roz, on March 27. The ashirwad ceremony was performed by Mazda's father Er. Kersey Antia and brother Er. Jimmy Antia. The couple will reside in San Diego, where Mazda is an attorney and Shahnaz, a dentist.



**Cyrus Nozer Patel**, son of Nozer and Mehroo Patel, was married to **Cindy Ahern**, at the Rustam Guiv Dar-e Mehr in San Jose, CA, on February 14. Ervad Kobad Jamshed and Rohinton Bhandari officiated. The couple now reside in San Bruno, CA.



## ENGAGEMENTS

**Sassan Nadjmi**, son of Manijeh and Borzoo Nadjmi of Lincoln, RI, is engaged to **Morvarid Behziz**. They plan to get married in June 2004.

## WEDDINGS

**Farhad Daruwala**, son of Aspi and Zarin Daruwala of Ringoes, NJ, to **Tanaz Ginwalla**, daughter of Zeheen and Gulnar Ginwalla, of Bandra, in Mumbai, on May 4.

**Neha Fast**, daughter of Avan and Malcolm Fast of Edmonton, AB, to **Neil Dunichand**, in Edmonton, on August 2.

**Sarosh Kanga**, son of Viraf and Shirin Kanga of Chicago area, to **Anahita Antia**, in Mumbai, on May 4.

**Zubin Khambatta**, son of Dr. Purvez Khambatta of Chicago, to Daizy Kapadia, daughter of Jimmy and Roshan Kapadia of Austin, TX. [from ZAH newsletter]

**Darayus Kolah** of Houston, to **Debra Kay Bailey**, in Mumbai on December 29.

**Kashmira Madon** to **Naren Mathavan** in North Vancouver, on December 21.

**Mehernosh Mody**, son of Beroz and Kawas Mody of Boston area, and **Anaheeta Nanavaty**, daughter of Maneck and Yasmin Nanavaty, in Mumbai, on December 26.

**Arzan Patel** to **Ruzbeh Gonda** of Houston, in Mumbai, on January 13.

**Burjis Rabadi** of Palatine, IL, to **Jessica Patel**, in Mumbai on February 29.

**Xerxes Vania**, son of Dolly and Jehangir Vania of Syracuse, NY, to **Lillian Greenfest**, in Syracuse, NY, on July 5, 2003.

**Nauzer Vimadalal** of Waltham, MA, son of Kashmira and the late Dinyar Vimadalal, to **Khushnum Mogal**, daughter of Peshotan Mogal, in Mumbai, on January 8.

## DEATHS

**Bomi Rustomji Bulsara**, father of Farokh Bulsara (Freddie Mercury), in England, on December 28. He is survived by his wife Jer and daughter Kashmira and her family.

**Shirin Furokh Bamji**, 89, wife of late Furokh, mother of Jahan Hazare (of Delhi), Xerxes (Thrity) Bamji of Toronto and Zarir (Sandra) Bamji of Australia, in Toronto, on March 15.

**Freny Jamshed Batliwala**, 91, wife of late Jamshed, mother of Nergish (Hoshi) Aga of Birmingham, AL and Khushru (Goolloo) Batliwala of Gemfrina, Dadar Parsi Colony, in Mumbai, on March 23.

**Laal (Shahrivini) Bekhradnia**, mother of Shahin Bekhradnia of UK, sister of Dr. Mehraban Shahrivini of Vancouver.

**Pervin Damania**, wife of Minoo, mother of Nozer Damania of ZAPANJ, following a motor cycle accident, in Mumbai, on December 5.

**Khurshed M. Daroga**, 89, father of Jamshed (Jeannie) Daroga of Boston area, and Farhad Daroga of Oklahoma, and Aban, in France; in Merrimac, MA, on September 30.

**Adil Daruwala**, father of Farzeen and Xerxes Cama of Chicago, in Mumbai on February 25.

**Dinamai Dastur**, mother of Freny and Jimmy Deboo of Sterling Heights, MI, grandmother of Rustom and Nina, on February 15.

**Parin Desai**, mother of Rohinton Desai, grandmother of Anahita and Cyrus Desai in Houston, on December 1.

**Sheroo Desai**, mother of Firdausi (Niloofer) Desai, of North Texas, in Mumbai, in August.

**Katy Khushru Divecha**, sister of Minoo Baria of Houston, in Karachi on February 28.

**Sheroo Jehangir Dordi**, mother of Jeroo Daruwalla and Nergish Tavaria, mother-in-law of Hoshang and Purvez of CA, grandmother of Cyrus, Scherazade and Sanaea, in Mumbai, on February 10.

**Kushrow Elavia**, 45, son of Sheroo Homi Elavia, brother of Freny Mistry and Feroza Elavia, after a motor-cycle accident, in Oakland, CA, on March 27.

**Ardeshir Farhangi**, 90, husband of Parvin, father of Shahrar, Shahn timer and Shida (Ardeshir) Anoshiravani of California, grandfather of Arash, Ara, Nisa, Neekon, Ashkon and Narimon, in Los Angeles, on May 6.

**Homai Jamshedji Giara**, 86, grandmother of Zubin (Zenobia) Tantra of Chicago area, in Mumbai, on April 28.

**Peroja Rashid Irani**, mother of Gulzarine Vania of Olney, MD, mother-in-law of Rustom, grandmother of Farhad, and great grandmother of Lola, in Maryland, on April 14.

**Jal Jamshedji**, mother of Aspy Jamshedji of Houston, in Sydney, Australia, on March 16.

**Eruch Meherjibhoj Karva**, 86, husband of late Nergish (Nancy), father of Meher (Minoo) Bhivandivalla of Mumbai, Roshni (nauzer) Taraporvala of Dubai and Aban (Pesi) Vazifdar of Chicago; grandfather of Hufriya Bhivandivalla, Natasha and Charmaine Taraporvala, and Delnaz, Hoshi and Neville Vazifdar; great grandfather of Darius Vazifdar, in Mumbai on March 29.

**Noshir Kayani**, father of Navaz Kayani and uncle of Thrity Engineer and Mahnaaz Firozgari, all of Texas, in Pune, India, on November 14. An active partner in the confectionary business known the world over, he was instrumental in catapulting Kayani Bakery of Pune into fame for their delicious Shrewsbury biscuits, mawa cakes and wine biscuits.

**Perin Jal Khan**, 87, wife of late Jal Khan, in Mumbai on April 24 [See obituary next page].

**Daniel May**, 27, son of Dhun May, brother of Armaity, grandson of Naju Daruwalla, under tragic circumstances, in Los Angeles.

**Fali F. Mehta**, father of Rustom Mehta of Boston, in Mumbai, on August 29.

**Ervad Jamshed Mirza**, 52, son of high priest of Udvada Hormazdyar Mirza, husband of Dilnavaz, father of Zarin and Zal, of lung cancer, in Woodstock, NY, on February 2. Ervad Mirza was a Distinguished Engineer with IBM in Poughkeepsie, NY.

**Pesi Mohta**, father of Kaiyomarz Mohta of North Texas, in Mumbai

**Jal Noria**, husband of Late Bacha Jal Noria, father of Farokh, Zarin (Pestonji), Rohinton (Gusti) Noria and their families of Toronto, in Hyderabad, India, on January 4.

**Mehli Patell**, 84, brother of Avan and Adi, brother-in-law of Gool Patell, in Samia, ONT, on April 11.

**Parin Meherji Patel**, 84, mother of Marazban (Helena) Patel of Lisbon, Portugal, Yasmin Patel of Arlington, VA; Kekobad (Bakhtavar) Patel and Dr. Sam Patel, of Maputo, Mozambique; grandmother of Tinaze, Tania and Tiago; in Maputo, Mozambique, on March 13.

**Rusi B. Patel**, 74, father of Kaizad Patel of Boston, in Mumbai, on July 28, 2003.

**Vicajee Patel**, husband of Dhun, father of ZANC president Bomi (Binaifer) Patel of Northern California, Tehemton and Mazarine, and Pesi and Jeroo Patel.

**Godafriid Dadi Sanjana**, sister of Zeno-bia Turnbull of Burnaby, BC, mother of Roshnee Amooyan of Toronto, and Behmen Sanjana of Chicago, in Bilmora, India, on January 12.

**Fali Satta**, husband of Roshan, father of Darayus Satta of Northern California, in Mumbai, on February 23.

**Shirin Tata**, 90, wife of the late Dali Tata, mother of Bella Tata and Zarine (Nanu) Dastur of Vancouver, sister of Gool Kermani of Mumbai, succumbed to pneumonia after a prolonged illness, in Vancouver, on March 29.

**Homai Todiwalla**, mother of Meher (Kersi) Choksey of Chicago, Roshan (Yezdi Engineer) of Houston and Zarir (Hira) Todiwalla of Chicago, grandmother to Firdosh, Zubin, Dilshad, Michelle, Percy, Kayan and Binaisha, in Chicago, on April 13.

**Dhun Nari Unvala**, 82, wife of Nariman B. Unvala, sister-in-law of Darab (Nellie) Unwala of Boca Raton, FL, aunt of Perry Unwala, and Jasmine and Rustom Damania, in Boca Raton, FL, on April 18.

**Rashid Varjavand**, 72, father of Armita Varjavand Hormozi of Maryland, grandfather of Nayreka, Anahita and Sushiyant, in Tehran, on February 17.

**Parvin Varza Keikhosrovi**, sister of Jamshid Varza of California, in Tehran. Memorial service was held at the Rostam Guiv Dar-e Mehr in San Jose, on April 10.

**Nergish B. Wadia**, sister of Jini Russie Pestonji, Keroo Polishwalla and Minnie Chesson of Toronto, and Katy Jamshedji, Fardoon Polishwalla and Pervin Kapawalla of Mumbai, in Secunderabad, India, on April 24. ■

### Perin Jal Khan

MOLDING THE LIVES OF  
COUNTLESS CUBS AND SCOUTS

For over 50 years, Perin and Jal Khan actively served the Homavazir's 11th Central Bombay Scout Group (formerly the 100th Bombay Scout Group). Two genera-

tions of cubs and scouts, many of whom are now settled in USA and Canada, will always cherish their memory, and the life's lessons learnt from this self-less couple. A better example of a "made for each other couple" cannot be found.

They trained us to excel in every thing we did. We will always remember the good times and songs that we sang together, especially the one composed by Jal Khan:

"We will never never rest  
We will always do our best  
When you put us to test  
For we are boys of the  
100th Bombay Pack ..."

- Marzban Giara

### Shirin Tata (1901-2004)

A BRILLIANT WOMAN,  
WONDERFUL WIFE, MOTHER,  
FRIEND AND HUMANITARIAN.

Mothers are so very special. Ours was an angel sent by God and we were fortunate to have her mold our lives, shower us with love and teach us by example, the meaning of good thoughts, good words and good deeds.

She has now spread her wings and gone home, and even though we miss her physical presence, she will live in our hearts forever. It was time for her to become whole again and she chose our dad's death anniversary to leave us.

Shirin Tata was born in Shanghai to Rustom and Alamai Kermani, and was one of ten children. She was a brilliant woman, a great sports-woman, a concert pianist and a wonderful wife, mother, friend and humanitarian. She will live on forever in the hearts of her loved ones.

- Bella Tata and Zarine Dastur

**Dasturji Dr. Hormazdyar Kaiyoji Mirza**, 96, high priest of Udvada Atash Behram, author [see p. 108] and scholar, passed away on May 11; husband of late Manijeh, father of: Peshotan (Mahrukh) Mirza of Mumbai and children Aban and Darayus; Vera (Rohinton) Munshi of Mumbai and children Kaizad and Kambiz of Boston and Kurosh of Bangalore; Meher (Khurshed) Dastur of Pittsburgh and children Cyrus and Neville; late Jamshed (Dilnavaz) Hormazdyar [see p. 101], and children Zarin and Zal, of New York; and Rohinton (Havovi) Mirza of Mumbai and daughter Kashmira. Er. Peshotan will succeed his father as high priest of Udvada. ■

## Movie about Cyrus the Great may be most expensive British film ever made

[Excerpted from an article, "Cyrus is coming to a theater near you" by Fiachra Gibbons, in *The Guardian*, May 17, 2003].

An action adventure with a cast of thousands about the Persian emperor Cyrus is set to become the most expensive British film ever made.

Oscar-nominated director Alex Jovey, hopes to start shooting the \$80m (£49m) epic in December 2003. It is the first film about the shepherd boy who founded an empire that stretched from the Mediterranean to India.

Jovey, 32, said he wanted to create spectacular battle scenes reminiscent of *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*, but with the sweep of *Lawrence of Arabia* ... He is amazed that the story of Cyrus' rise in the sixth century BC has gone untold on celluloid.

He was an astonishing character who is mentioned in the Bible and the Koran. He's ... a champion of human rights, who drew up a Bill of Rights for his people – a precursor of the Magna Carta called the Cylinder of Cyrus, which is in the British Museum ...

The shoot would be divided between Britain and probably Pakistan.

"It may seem like a huge amount of money, but the budget is very low for an epic of this sort," he said.

Finance, he claimed, was solid, with distributors already keen to buy into the story, which turns on a love triangle and Cyrus's ultimate betrayal.

Jovey said he was in talks with several internationally known actors...

[From postings by Maneck Bhujwala and Feri Demehri]

*"I was fortunate enough to be in New York and see the absolutely brilliant performance of the Rustom and Sohrab epic by Zaraawar Mistry. He entwined the story with that of a contemporary Parsi father and son in Bombay. Zaraawar narrated the epic, playing different roles, with only an Iranian singer, and an instrumentalist accompanying him. He obviously is a trained dancer, because he expressed so much through his movements, creating entire battle scenes with the clash of armor, and the tenderest of love scenes."*

- Bapsi Sidhwa

## Modern Mistry takes on the Ancients – and succeeds by Roxanne Patel

PHOTOGRAPHS: CHARISSA UEMURA



*Zaraawar Mistry performs Rustom and Sohrab to a rapturous house in New York.*



### Two Alexander films in production

Hundreds of cast and crew members, not to mention 20 armor-clad elephants, gathered in central Thailand (in Lopburi province, 70 miles north of Bangkok) last January to start filming scenes for **Oliver Stone's "Alexander."** The Warner Bros. film, starring Colin Farrell as the Macedonian conqueror, and also starring Angelina Jolie, Anthony Hopkins and Val Kilmer, is scheduled to hit theaters in November, 2004.

Meanwhile, **Buz Luhrmann** (writer-director of "Moulin Rouge") has postponed production of his ambitious historical epic **"Alexander the Great"**. His film, starring Leonardo DiCaprio in the title role, with Nicole Kidman as Alexander's mother, Olympia, is planned for release in late 2005.

[From "The Oregonian", January 22, 2004, submitted by Dinaz Rogers]

It was the ancient *Shahnameh* that finally brought the thoroughly modern Zaraawar Mistry the creative freedom he'd been seeking his whole life.

A Bombay-born actor now living in Minneapolis, Mistry had spent over a decade bouncing around to different local theaters, always ending up dissatisfied with his work – whether at the all-white, classical Guthrie Theater, or the scrappy Asian start-up, Theater Mu. "I became tired of working in a climate where I needed to define who I was all the time, to fit into a particular box," Mistry says.

So Mistry in 1999 founded the Center for Independent Artists with his American-born wife, writer and performer Leslye Orr. (The couple have one daughter, six-year-old Naaja.) There, he slowly honed in on the kind of theater he wanted to do, that would fulfill his need to express himself – and that's when he remembered the stories in the *Shahnameh* that he'd heard growing up in India.

In particular, Mistry went back to the story of Persian warrior Rustom and his son Sohrab, a father-son tale with far-reaching themes. Weaving the ancient myth with modern-day characters and situations, Mistry developed Sohrab and Rustom, a one-act, 12-character play in which Mistry performs all the parts – modern, ancient, men, women.

He performed it first at his own Minneapolis theater; then in November at New York's Asia Society, where he sold out two nights and performed to a rapturous house.

Now, he has offers to take his show on the road – to Bombay, Chicago, Houston, and San Francisco for this year's Zoroastrian Congress.

"I didn't know at first that it was going to get so much interest," Mistry says. "I just knew it was something I wanted to do; and it seems universal enough that others relate to it." ■

**Roxanne Patel** is a senior staff writer for *Philadelphia Magazine*.





## Teen wins \$50,000 Intel Scholarship

**Ryna Karnik**, 17, a senior at Oregon Episcopal School, won a \$50,000 college scholarship in the Intel Science Talent Search last March. Ryna was the third place finalist in the national competition, which is America's oldest and most highly regarded pre-college science competition, sometimes called the 'Junior Nobel Prize.' The award was announced March 11th, at a ceremony in Washington, DC.

Ryna placed third from 1652 entrants, from across the country, for her research project on "constructing microchips using a focused ion beam as a 'molecular pencil' to directly 'write' transistors onto silicon wafers." This is a departure from traditional methods, which involve a process called photolithography. Using her patent-pending technique, she created a working transistor.

A multi-talented young woman, Ryna, daughter of Milind and Parizad Karnik of Portland, Oregon, counts among her many honors, several engineering awards at the 2003 Intel ISEF as well as qualifying as a Junior Olympics competitor in sabre fencing. As a freshman, she built a particle accelerator from an old Van de Graaff generator. Ryna plans to study pre-med at Stanford this fall.

- Roshan Rivetna



## First class cruise.

"I have never experienced anything quite like it," writes **Zubin Jimmy Major** [left], "I was fortunate enough to experience the Navy's full line of aircraft."

In training with the Officer Reserve Training Corps, at the University of Florida, Major writes of his experiences while stationed at Patuxent River Naval Air Station, MD: "One of the things I was able to do in the

SH-60S helicopter was to conduct search and rescue (SAR) operations ... When I thought my cruise could not get any better, I was put on the flight schedule for an F/A-18 Hornet. This required me to be fitted for a G-suit which helps keep the blood from rushing and pooling in your legs.

"I have to say this is absolutely the best experience in the world. Nothing compares to this aircraft (F/A-18 Hornet) except for the *TOMCAT*. I was able to do loops, pull 8 G's, go inverted, and do many high-speed acrobatics and dogfight with another F/A-18."

Zubin, son of Farida and Jimmy Major of Davie, Florida, has been accepted into the Navy Aviation program, after he graduates from the University of Florida this summer.

- Roshan Rivetna

## Yezad Nalladaru - priest and Boston Marathon runner

**Yezad Nalladaru** is a computer programmer, an active member of the Boston Zarathushti community, and a practicing priest (navar-martab) for the Greater Boston Area Zarathushti community.

On Monday, May 19, Yezad completed the Boston Marathon in 4 hrs and 42 minutes. Friends and family were along the route and at the finish line to cheer him on.

Congratulations to Yezad on behalf of the entire Zarathushti community in North America for a remarkable achievement.

- Shahrokh Mehta



*It is better to light one candle than to curse the darkness*

- Anon



### **Lifetime Achievement Award from PTC**

On the occasion of its inaugural meeting, on December 11, in Honolulu, Hawaii, the PTC (Pacific Telecommunications Council) Hawaii Foundation recognized and honored **Dr. Meheroo Jussawalla** for her “lifetime of outstanding work in Hawaii, Asia and North America in research, teaching and public service in the fields of economics and telecommunications.”

*FEZANA president Firdosh Mehta [left] was recognized for “outstanding dedication and contributions to the AWS Northern Alberta Section and the CWA Edmonton Chapter” at a joint meeting of the American Welding Society and the Canadian Welding Association, Edmonton and Alberta sections, on April 20. This is the first time a joint award was presented. Firdosh Mehta is currently chair of the AWS section and vice chair of the CWA section. At right is John Bringas, past chair of the AWS section.*

## **“Nariman for Congress” – in for the long haul**

Ayesha Nariman plans to build upon her success in 2002, and run again, to a win.



In her first bid for Congress, in November 2002, **Ayesha F. Nariman** [shown at left with John Kerry] received a little over 40,000 votes in New York’s 26th Congressional District. This was a great showing, considering Nariman had, as she muses, “just a three month run, as a complete unknown, with a strange name to boot, and limited resources.” [Also see *FEZANA Journal* [Fall 2002].

In February 2004, Nariman ran in the NY state primary as a delegate for John Kerry, and came in fourth out of five delegates in her district. She is now planning a second run for Congress, in 2004. “I hope to build on my lead, if not to pull off a surprise and defeat the incumbent,” she says, “Unfortunately, I am now facing a primary run against a self-financed, multi-millionaire Republican turned Democrat.”

Nariman is hoping to raise \$50,000 within a short period of time. This is an achievable goal, if readers generously support this bid by a Zarathushti (possibly the first time in US history) for a seat in the US House of Representatives. Please send your checks (\$25, \$50 or whatever you can afford). Make checks payable to “Nariman for Congress”, and mail to:

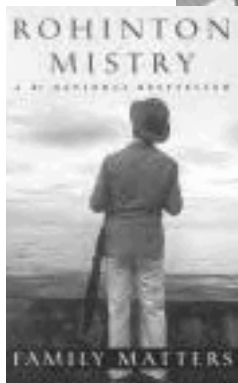
**Nariman for Congress**

PO Box 1956, Williamsville, NY 14231-1956.

“If I cannot raise sufficient funds, I may be forced to bow out and hold off until I can raise funds for the 2006 race,” says Nariman, “I am in this for the long haul.” Contact Nariman at [ayesha@yahoogroups.com](mailto:ayesha@yahoogroups.com). *By Roshan Rivetna*



## BOOKS AND SUCH



**2003 Torgi Award.** The recording of the novel, "Family Matters" by Rohinton Mistry, narrated by Phiroze Dotiwalla of Toronto, won the 2003 Torgi Literary Award from the Canadian national Institute for the Blind, in the fiction category. The winners were recognized at a special ceremony on September 16, 2003.

Narrating "Family Matters" was a new experience for Dotiwalla, who is an accountant and financial planner with Investor's Group, though he has been a volunteer with CNIB for 20 years. The recordings are produced on cassettes and CDs by volunteers at CNIB.

The Torgi awards recognize books that have been produced with excellence for adults and children who are blind or visually impaired. ■

### Human rights award for Nairobi lawyer

**Pheroze Nowrojee**, a Kenyan-born lawyer, was awarded the Bernard Simons Memorial award for his outstanding contribution to human rights across the continent. Nowrojee, who received the award in Durban at the International Bar Association conference in October 2002, is a senior advocate of the High Courts in Kenya and Tanzania. The Award recognizes endeavors which make a substantial contribution to the advancement of human rights.

Nowrojee has called for the re-installation of free and just societies on the African continent. His fight against the death penalty has won him praise, and he is regarded as a champion of freedom of expression. He is also recognized for his defense of opposition politicians who spoke out against Kenya's one-party state.

Pheroze lives in Nairobi, with his wife Viloo. The family tradition of civic consciousness has been upheld by his children: son Eruch (Elchi) is a corporate lawyer in New York, with strong interests in south Asian, east African issues; daughter Sia Nowrojee, of Baltimore, MD is a national and international public health researcher and trainer; and daughter Binaifer Nowrojee of Boston is a human rights lawyer, and teaches Human Rights at Harvard Law School. [Source: Tamina Davar]



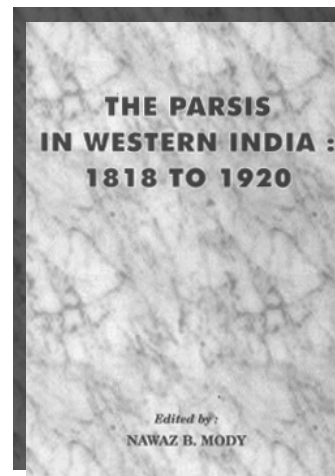
### Badminton champion

**Mahveer M. Javat**, was a minority champion in badminton at Karachi Goan Association in 1994, and champion of Karachi Gymkhana in 1995. An automobile engineer qualified from Japan, Mahveer, originally from Pakistan, is now settled in Toronto.

[Source Homi Ghadially]

### Award of Excellence

**Sharoukh Elavia**, son of Filly and Vira Elavia of Toronto, was awarded the National Award of Excellence by TD-Canada Trust. The prestigious award was presented at a ceremony at the Art Gallery of Ontario on November 27. [ZSO Newsletter]



### The Parsis in Western India: 1818 to 1920

Edited by: Nawaz B. Mody

Allied Publishers India, 1998. ISBN: 81-7023-894-3, Rs. 290/- (cloth)

Review by Aban Daboo

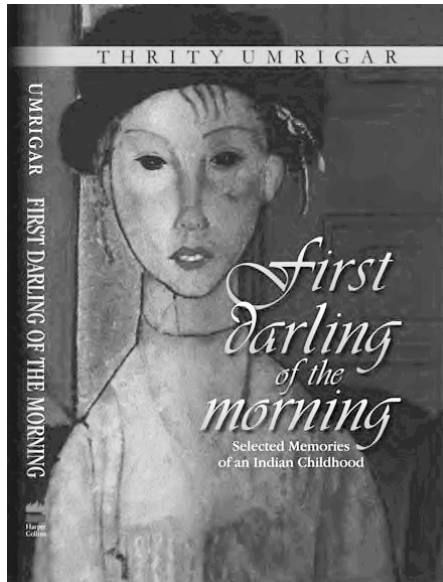
This volume is a treat for Parsi history buffs and students of the golden age of Parsis in India. It is an account of achievements of well-known Parsi pioneers in fields as diverse as India's struggle for independence, ship-building, industrialization, journalism, the film industry, and the urbanization of Bombay at the dawn of the last century.

The reader will be educated about the cosmopolitan benevolence of Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, pioneering spirit of Jeejeebhoy Dadabhoy, Banaji, Readymoney, Wadia, Cama, Petit, and other illustrious Parsi families.

In a small way this inspirational volume is a tribute to the community that contributed so much to the growth and development of India. The various authors have made tremendous efforts in researching their subjects and presenting a vivid picture of the history of the times. Interesting anecdotes and little known historical facts keep the reader enchanted and enthralled. ■



# Thrity Umrigar: sharing memories of an Indian Childhood - by Lylah M. Alphonse



**“First Darling of the Morning: Selected Memories of an Indian Childhood” by Thrity Umrigar**

**HarperCollins India, 294 pp. \$14.**

Available at [www.Amazon.com](http://www.Amazon.com); Appletree Books (email [appbook@aol.com](mailto:appbook@aol.com) or tel: 216-791-2665), and [www.josephbeth.com](http://www.josephbeth.com), or visit [www.umrigar.com](http://www.umrigar.com).

Thrity Umrigar has a knack for capturing people’s quirks. In “*Bombay Time*,” she explored the psyches of a cast of Parsi characters whose lives are inexorably intertwined. In her latest book, “*First Darling of the Morning: Selected Memories of an Indian Childhood*,” an autobiographical look at life growing up in 1960s Bombay, she takes on her own.

Umrigar deals unflinchingly with the conflicts that arose from being a middle-class Parsi girl going to a Catholic school in a predominantly Hindu city. Her writing is brutally honest and, at times, simply brutal, starkly detailing arguments between family members, her own rebellion, her mother’s sadistic bent, her teachers’ harsh punishments.

She gives readers a glimpse at life inside a close-knit, extended Parsi family, generously sharing poignant memories and awkward moments. The key events in her life are not the typical milestones of a typical girl. Her doomed romance is with activism, not boys. Her idol is a non-conformist older girl named Jesse, who shocks Umrigar by saying she doesn’t believe in God and then leads

her to worship at the altars of Van Gogh, Don MacLean, and Hermann Hesse. Her coming of age centers around Indira Gandhi’s Emergency and the death of a beloved uncle. Her navjote, a key time for many Zarathushtis, is not mentioned.



“I think my navjote was possibly one of the most unhappy days in my childhood, for a whole variety of reasons. I know that I was thinking of writing about it when I started the book,” she says. “I’m not sure why it didn’t make it.”

At the age of 21, following her dreams and a Joan Baez song, “Banks of the Ohio,” Umrigar left India to pursue a Master’s degree at Ohio State University. Though she bluntly calls herself “an unabashed Parsi chauvinist” when it comes to food (she missed “the wonderful Parsi meals, like *dhansak*” most, then and now), she says her identity as “a Bombayite” was important to her as she explored life away from her family.

“I have never particularly thought of myself primarily as Parsi. To me,

that was the joy of growing up in the secular Bombay of the 1960s and 1970s – I didn’t know too many people whose identities revolved around their ethnic groups.”

As for the issues of acceptance and conversion, Umrigar says: “I think that every institution in the world ... should be organized around principles of inclusion, not exclusion. If something is a source of joy in your life, why wouldn’t you want to share that joy with others?”

Once in Ohio, Umrigar was struck by the warmth and generosity of the people she met, establishing friendships that continue to this day. She still lives in Ohio, where she works as a journalist and is completing a novel. This summer, she hopes to begin another.

Many of the family members she describes in “*First Darling*” still live in Bombay, and she returns there every few years.

“Like many writers and most immigrants, I have a very fluid notion of home,” she says. “I guess home is where the love is – where your friends and loved ones are.” ■

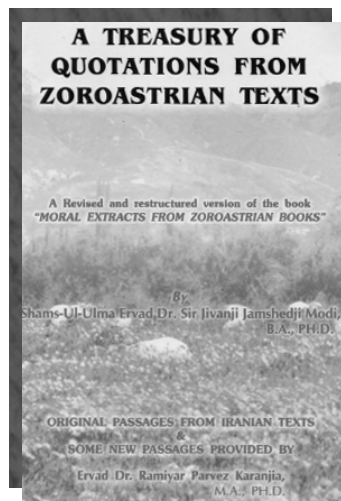
**Lylah M. Alphonse** is a journalist living in the Boston area. She is author of “*Triumph Over Discrimination: The Life Story of Farhang Mehr*,” and an editor with the *Boston Globe Newspaper*. For information, visit [www.lylahmalphonse.com](http://www.lylahmalphonse.com).

## Interesting websites

**[www.fravahr.org](http://www.fravahr.org)** published from Paris by Raham Asha and others, has interesting articles on Zarathushti religion, art and culture, history, archeology, linguistics and more.

**[www.TheParsiChronicle.com](http://www.TheParsiChronicle.com)**, managed by Ader Gandhi (Ader@Gandhi.com) of California, is a chronicle of Parsi-Zarathushti mentioned in the news. Consider it a living history of our community.

**[www.zoroastrianimes.com](http://www.zoroastrianimes.com)** by Bapoo Malcolm of India, is an international Zoroastrian newsletter. ■



## ***A Treasury of Quotations from Zoroastrian Texts***

By Er. Dr. Sir Jivanji Jamshedji Modi with additions by Er. Dr. Ramiyar Parvez Karanjia

Order from Athornan Boarding Madressa, 651 Firdausi Road, Dadar, Mumbai 400 014, Rs.150/-

Review by Marzban Giara

This book is a revised and restructured version of "Moral Extracts from Zoroastrian Books" by Dr. J. J. Modi. Some new useful quotations and four new chapters have been added by Dr. Karanjia.

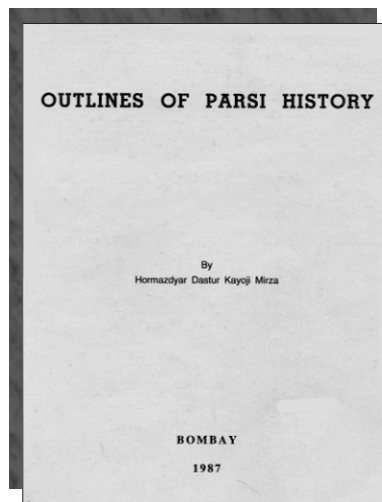
Quotations summarize and preserve for the future, the wisdom of the past and the experience of the ages.

Present day Zarathushtis have a chance, through this book, to become familiar with the minds and personalities of their great ancestors. The ethics and ideals of the Zarathushti religion are reflected in the quotations selected for this book. In the practice of these ethics and ideals is the key to success in all spheres of life.

Through the 32 chapters, which have been rearranged alphabetically, from 'cheerfulness' to 'zeal', nuggets of wisdom pour forth.

This edition is dedicated to the Zartoshti Brothers whose far reaching charities have contributed magnificently to the welfare of the Zarathushtrian world. ■

# **Dasturji Hormazdyar Kayoji Mirza – a legacy** - by Kayomارش P. Mehta



**"Outlines of Parsi History"**  
by Hormazdyar  
Dastur Kayoji Mirza

Bombay, 2nd ed. 1987.

To order, please contact Dasturji Mirza's daughter, Meher Dastur, 2021 Murdstone Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15241, tel (412) 833-2793.

**Dasturji Dr. Hormazdyar Kayoji Mirza** passed away on May 11 [see p. 102]. Born in Udvada in 1907, Dasturji studied ancient and Middle Iranian languages, culture and history, as well as Sanskrit and Aramaic at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, where he received his PhD under Dr. W. B. Henning. Returning to India, he served as professor of Avesta and Pahlavi at various madressas and at the University of Bombay, until his retirement in 1987. He has served the community for over 55 years as a Vada Dasturji and as a scholar. His towering presence, dedication, guidance and learning will be greatly missed.

An esteemed scholar of the Zarathushti religion, Dasturji has left a legacy of his knowledge and wisdom in several publications. As a fitting tribute to this learned personage, we present a review of his popular "*Outlines of Parsi History*". His other publications are: "*The Zoroastrian Religion*," "*Some Religious Problems Facing the Parsi Community*," "*Atash Adaran – A Modern Substitution for Atash Behram*" and "*Conversion in Zoroastrianism – A Myth Exploded*."

"*Outlines of Parsi History*" is a compendium on ancient and modern history of Iran – its religion, literature and art. In the preface high priest Dasturji Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa labels the composition as an ambitious layout: a bulky volume that would deter a casual student. The style of presentation is rather heavy but interesting, providing instructions on various fields of Iranian culture along with the history. It exhibits the author's vast reading, great depth of learning and scholarship.

The scope of this volume is rather wide, covering various fields – ancient and modern history of Iran, its religion, literature, art, etc., sup-

ported by profound research and by quotations by competent authors, including verses from Firdowsi's *Shahnameh*.

Modern books on Iranian and Persian history, particularly by western authors, generally disregard ancient Iranian historical tradition and commence their account of Iranian history with the Medians and the Achaemenians. They completely ignore prehistoric dynasties and the ancient Iranian tradition.

Dasturji Mirza's *Parsi History* starts out with a traditional account of the Worldly Creations as outlined in the Avesta starting out with the first man and the first human couple.



Its major tone and contribution, however, is historical, dealing with various dynasties that ruled over Iran: Peshdadian, Kayanian, Achaemenian, Macedonian, Pontus, Ashkanian-Parthian and Sasanian. Historical accounts of post-Sasanian Parsi settlements and of the Parsi era have also been included.

It is amazing how the learned scholar plods through meager details, even legendary, bringing the reader up to date.

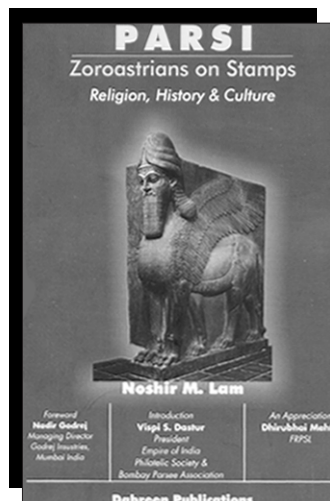
The book also outlines the Zarathushti scriptures, Avesta and Pahlavi Literature, Sanskrit and Gujarati writings as well as important manuscripts and literary treasures of the Parsi priests. There is an account on the date of Zoroaster with quotes from Greek scholars that result in assigning a high antiquity dating him no later than 6000 BCE. This is followed by an account of the life story of Zarathushtra and his teachings.

The book further deals with other important subjects: various aspects of our religion, Zoroastrian virtues and characteristics, life after death, biological individuality, archeological findings, population, history of Zoroastrian manuscripts, holy fires in ancient Iran, festivals, art, temples, etc. Zarathushti beliefs, customs, rites and literature are also described in detail, along with the author's introduction and concluding notes. Quotations are supplied from numerous rare books, even Sanskrit, that are tucked away in libraries, unknown to the average Zarathushti.

The book ends with brief outlines of ancient Iranian art—Median Achaemenian, Parthian and Sasanian. *Parsi History* is a legend – covering history, geography, demography, religion, rites, etc. It presents a bonanza to eager students of Iranian and Parsi History.

[This review was first published in [www.vohuman.org](http://www.vohuman.org)].

**Kayomارش P. Mehta** is chair of Religion Education, FEZANA, and founder member of the recently established Zarathushti Learning Center of North America.



## “Parsi Zoroastrians on Stamps – Religion, History & Culture” by Noshir M. Lam

**Bombay, 2nd ed. 1987.**

Dabreen Publications, Mumbai  
(tel: 2655-3935, nmlasoint@  
powersurfer.net) 2003. ISBN 81-7525-  
452-1. 144 p. \$15. Order from Parsiana  
Bookstore [see next page] or from  
Ms. Dogdoe Arjani, 222 Monterey  
Road #306, Glendale, CA 91206,  
tel/fax: 818-545-8161.

**Review by Roshan Rivetna**

In a true labor of love, Noshir Lam (a chartered accountant by profession, with a passion for philately as well as for his religion and community) has compiled a magnificent record of the Zarathushti religion, arts, culture and community, as memorialized on postage stamps and first day covers.

Profusely illustrated in color, the author uses philatelic materials, issued mostly in Iran and India (and a few in other countries – Pakistan, UK, Sri Lanka, Austria, Singapore, Zanzibar, Canada and Maldives) to present the saga of the religion and its followers from the dawn of the religion to the present day.

In Part A, the author presents stamps issued (mostly in Iran) to commemorate: the 2500th anniversary celebrations of Cyrus the Great, the Ferdowsi International Congress, the first charter of human liberty (the Cyrus cylinder), the world's first postal courier system, Nouruz and other festivals, the Origins of Writing and much more.

In Part B, Lam presents nineteen Parsi Zarathushtis commemorated on postage stamps, mostly in India, with one (Jamshed Mehta) in Pakistan and one (Freddy Mercury) in UK.



Four of the over 200 stamps in Noshir Lam's "Parsi Zoroastrians on Stamps", clockwise:

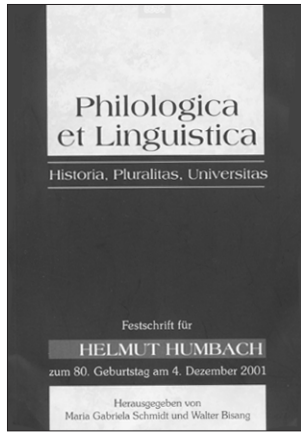
Cyrus the Great Proclamation Tablet, Iran, 5R, 1971;

Winged Lion Ornament, Iran, 5R, 1970;

Cuneiform-Iranian script, Republik Österreich, S1,80+50g, 1965;

Fifty years of Civil Aviation (J.R.D. Tata), India, Rs. 3.25, 1982.





# ***Philologica et Linguistica*** ***Historia, Pluralitas, Universitas*** ***Festschrift für Helmut Humbach zum 80. Geburtstag am 4. Dezember 2001***

Edited by Maria Gabriela Schmidt and Walter Bisang

Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2001. ISBN 3-88476-505-1, p. 621 + 12.

Review by Gernot Windfuhr

Helmut Humbach has been a major voice in the study of Zoroastrianism and Ancient Iran. His scholarly work revolutionized our understanding of the Gathas with his German translation and commentary of 1959. He has been a relentless researcher, teacher, colleague and friend to many not only in Zoroastrian Iranian studies but also in general linguistics and cultural studies that include Celtic and Chinese.

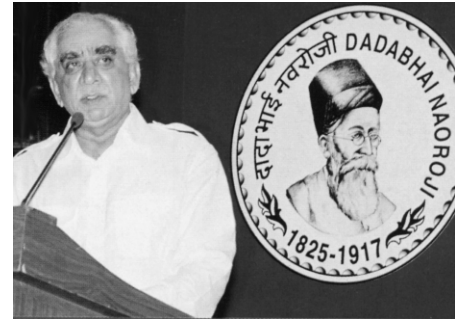
In 1986 he was honored by a Festschrift on the occasion of his 65th birthday. The present Festschrift, edited jointly by a colleague of his at Mainz, Germany, and a former student, honors Professor Humbach on the occasion of his 80th birthday. Forty-five new titles by him appeared between the dates of the two Festschriften, including the new critical edition of *The Gathas of Zarathushtra and Other Old Avestan Texts*, 1991, with Oktor Skjærvø and Joseph Elfenbein; the shorter annotated translation of the latter, *The Heritage of Zarathushtra*, 1994; and the edition of the *Zamyad Yasht*, the latter two with Pallan Ichaporia).

The 35 articles in this volume, include contributions from his col-

leagues at Mainz, former students, and colleagues in Iranian studies. Those of particular interest for Zoroastrian studies were contributed by the following (in alphabetical order): Heinz Bechert, Mary Boyce, Joseph Elfenbein, Philippe Gignoux, Claus Haebler, Pallan Ichaporia, Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa, Jean Kellens, Rüdiger Schmitt, Nicholas Sims-Williams, Oktor Skjærvø, Werner Sundermann, Renate Söhnen-Thieme, and Gernot Windfuhr.

They cover a wide range of topics, from mythology and cosmology to philology and textual studies, some of which challenge conventional views, as can be expected in a congratulatory volume dedicated to a colleague who has done the same splendidly throughout his scholarly career.

**Gernot Windfuhr**, PhD, is professor of Iranian Studies at the University of Michigan, in Persian and Iranian linguistics, culture and Zoroastrian Studies. Recent publications include a comparative study of Zoroastrian and Taoist rituals, *Hauma in mythology*, dating of *Zarathushtra*, and articles on Indo-European and Iranian linguistics.



Finance Minister of India, Jaswant Singh, releasing the Dadabhai Naoroji commemorative Rs. 5 coin.

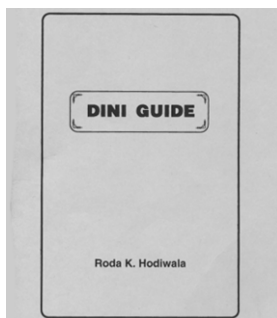
## **Dadabhoy Naoroji Commemorative Coin**

A Rs. 5 commemorative coin, in honor of the "Grand Old Man of India", Dadabhai Naoroji, was released by the Finance Minister of India [above] at a grand function in the Tata Theater in Mumbai, on October 2. Among the distinguished guests were the Governor of Maharashtra, HE Mr. Mohammed Fazal, and a galaxy of dignitaries of the Parsi community.

This was the first time in the annals of the Government of India that a coin has been struck for a Parsi. Though earlier, the Silver Entishai Coin was circulated in Surat at the behest of the East India Company and during the regime of Nizam Nasar-ud-Daulah the Princely State of Hyderabad brought out the Pestonshai coin (named after Pestonjee Meherjee) in 1840.

BPP CEO Behram Dastur is credited with conceiving the idea of the coin (designed by Mr. & Mrs. J. P. Irani) which was brought to fruition through the efforts of Lt. Gen. Adi Sethna and BPP PRO Godrej Dotivala.

[Source: BPP Review, Autumn 2003]



## **Dini Guide** by Roda K. Hodiwala ("Roda Aunty")

Roda Aunty is a feisty grandma of 83. When most people have retired from life, she dug deep and found in herself the courage and tenacity to put in print what she taught her grand children, and share with us this little booklet "*Dini Guide*." It is in the form of a conversation with her grand children who live in Vancouver. Roda Aunty was my neighbor in Ahmedabad since the time I was three, until I came to the USA, at 21. All through my childhood we hated each other guts but developed a mutual respect. When I am 83, I hope I have the spirit and energy to write a book. She has now asked me for suggestions for her second book. *WAY TO LIVE, RODA AUNTY. I AM PROUD OF YOU!*

By Hosi Mehta (hosimehta@aol.com).

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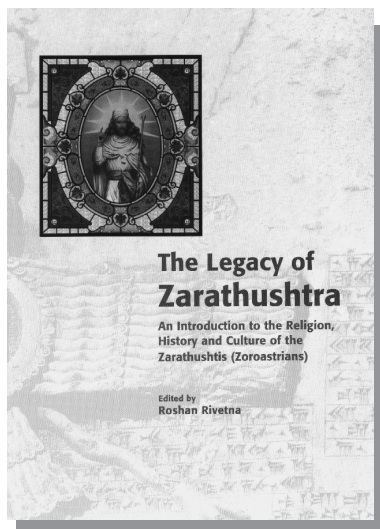
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**Book 1 (#421), 1243, 1874, Mother of Pearl squares, 1 flap,** used with open page in Sum04, p. 34.

**Book 2 (1243, 1874, Mother of Pearl squares,** thicker than #1 above. not used in Sum04.

Note from Silloo about Mother of Pearl: "The preface states that it was bound in mother of pearl to protect the volume from damp and to induce those who went abroad to remember their prayers."

Interlinear Gujarati translations. I am urging to take the time to recite these prayers, read the translations, and pray with understanding from your heart. If one recites with understanding, then we will find peace and enlightenment, our bad thoughts will be distanced, and if perchance we have erred, may Ahura Mazda forgive us.

**Book 3, 1240, 1871, Mother of Pearl Zarathushtra,** used with open page in Sum04, p. 44.

**Book 5 1241, 1872, green gold Zar. med, on cover**

"Peroshaw B. Jijibhoy (Muga)"

In the name of Our Lord Ahura Mazda, creator of the earth and heaven, we have undertaken to publish this book of prayers.

We hope that every day, before you begin the day's work, you will make the time to say these prayers every day, with true devotion and with understanding in your heart. With full humility, ask for forgiveness for any bad thoughts and deeds you may have committed, and ask Ahura Mazda to guide your actions, and lead you on the path of Asha. If you clear your mind of all worries, and engross yourself with your full heart and mind in reciting these prayers, you will be sure to find peace and enlightenment.

Book 6, 1243, 1874, Green and gold Avesta script, 1 clasp, on Sum04, p. 40.

"To say good, to wish good,

to do good works,

That alone gives meaning to life."

**Book 10 1262, 1893 Diamond pattern, Mother of Pearl, no photo taken.**

For Ahura Mazda's having created us on this earth, for showing us the right path, and for sending us Prophet Spitman Jartosht, we should offer 1000s upon 1000s of grateful thanks by reciting these sacred prayers every day. It is the duty of every good Jartoshti to do so.

**Book 11 1892 Silver, on Sum04 cover**

very small (2" by 3")

Same intro as book 10.

If this little book is successful, we will print in different forms and sizes. Price 50 paisa. There was a need for a very small "pocket book" version of the prayer book. Even in this tiny book (2" x 3"), we have accommodated all the daily Avesta prayers, 10 yashts, and have taken the utmost care to make this a useful and long-lasting little book. We have ordered the silver covers especially from "Vilayat" (England), yet have kept the cost small. It is our hope that our small prayer book will be used daily by Zarathoshtis for a long time to come. Signed the published Jehangir Bejunji Karani.

**Book 12 1239, 1870, Mother of Pearl with X, Purple velvet spine, on Sum04 cover.**

Handwritten in beautiful script with a pen and nib: "This handsome little prayer book is a kind present to me from my dear brother, Mr. Shapoorjee Jamajee, after his return to Bombay on Tuesday evening, the 27th August 1878, from his voyage to Europe, for which continent he left Bombay on Friday forenoon, the 1st March 1878 ... Yours Jeejeebhoy Jamajee."

**Book 14, 1244, 1875, plain brown leather cover, v. small 2" x 3", no photo.**

Handwritten on front page: Behenji Bachoobai Meherwanji Sorabji Jamshedjee ... (?) Framjee (?) Petit (?) , Mumbai, 17th June 1883.

**Book 15, 1264, 1895, 2"x3", no photo, brown with blubells**

Handwritten on front page: Meherbai Dadyseth, from grandfather Sir Dinshaw with love, 12-8-1897

**Book 16, 1237, 1868, Mother of pearl, JMU monogram, on p. 58.**

Many annotations about travels, and "Indian Ocean" against Ardvisoor Niyayesh. Opening page of Ava-Ardvisur Niyayishn, with pencilled annotations.

The Khordeh Avesta, 1868, has a mother of Pearl cover with "PMJ" (possibly Piroshaw (Muga) Jeejeebhoy) monogram. The flyleaf has a pencilled diary of travels in Asia, Africa, Europe (1881), Poona (1882), Mahabaleshwar (1883, 1885), London (1887) and America (1887).

