

# FEZANA JOURNAL



FALL 2004, PAIZ 1373 YZ

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## The Zarathushti Connection with Judaism and Christianity

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# FEDERATION OF ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA (FEZANA)

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# FEZANA JOURNAL

PUBLICATION OF THE FEDERATION OF ZOROASTRIAN  
ASSOCIATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA

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COVER DESIGN  
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*Detail from the Ravenna mosaic of the  
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HINTZE, COURTESY "A ZOROASTRIAN  
TAPESTRY, ART, RELIGION AND CULTURE"*  
ED. PHEROZA J. GODREJ AND FIROZA  
PUNTHAKEY MISTREE.

Fezana Journal, Vol.17, No. 3, ISSN 1068-  
2376, published quarterly by FEZANA,  
5750 S. Jackson St. Hinsdale, IL 60521-  
5109. Periodicals postage rate is paid at  
Oakbrook, IL 60523. Annual subscription  
\$15(US); \$20(Canada); \$30 (surface) and  
\$50(air) for other countries; details on Sub-  
scription Form. POSTMASTER: send  
changes to Fezana Journal, 5750 South  
Jackson Street, Hinsdale, IL 60521-5109.

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# Influence of the Zarathushti Faith on Judaism and Christianity

By Khorshed Jungalwala  
Chair, FEZANA Publications

The religions of the world provide a great record of human thought and sublime expression. All the arts and sciences of the world have been brought into the service of religion. From earliest time people have expressed their convictions about the universe and mortal life in worship and in symbol.

Scholar Mary Boyce states in her book – *Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*,

“Zoroastrianism is the oldest of the revealed world religions, and it has probably had more influence on mankind, directly and indirectly, than any other single faith.”

It is of interest to note many common elements in the development of ancient civilizations of the Middle East, a region where the Zarathushti religion, Judaism, Christianity and Islam were born. Its theological influence can be traced to the regions of Egypt (3000-2500BCE), Sumeria (3000-2000BCE), Babylonia and Media (2500-550 BCE), Greece (500-330 BCE) and Rome (1st century CE). There are five original ideas that arose from Zarathushtra’s teachings that were absorbed into Judaism and then into Christianity:

The concept of a Universal God.

The concept of existence of the soul after death.

Judgment of the soul after death.

A Savior who will bring about the destruction of all evil.

The idea of the final renovation of creation.

There is striking resemblance in the accounts of the story of Creation in



the Book of Genesis of the Torah and the Bundahishn. One Supreme God, heaven and hell, individual judgment, triumph of good over evil, life after death, eschatology and resurrection are mentioned in the Gathas as well as in 2nd Isaiah.

Both Judaism and the Zarathushti religion have profoundly influenced the development of liberal humanistic ideas of the West. The revelation to Zarathushtra came with the vision of Ahura Mazda at Mt. Elburz and to Moses on Mount Zion.

The Zarathushti influence on Judaic practices is very evident in the Dead Sea Scrolls. The text known as the “Essene Manual of Discipline” sometimes sounds almost like the Gathic depiction of good and evil.

The Old Testament is replete with references to the Persian emperors – Cyrus, Darius and Xerxes. When Cyrus the Great entered the gates of Babylon he was hailed as a savior and agent of Jehovah. About 150 years earlier the prophet Isaiah [44:28, 45:1-3] had predicted, and later Ezra [1:2, 7:11, 2:1] indicated that the king and savior named Cyrus helped the exiled Jews rebuild the temple, supplying manpower and

material. He also permitted the Israeli captives in Babylon to return as free men to Jerusalem and Judah. Many Israelis hailed Cyrus as the promised Messiah. The Edict of Cyrus, written in cuneiform on a clay cylinder discovered in 1879 and housed in the British Museum, is acknowledged as the world’s first declaration of human rights.

Scholar John R. Hinnells (Zoroastrian and Parsi Studies) states, “In the decades immediately prior to the birth of Jesus, Zoroastrianism was not a distant or shadowy presence, but the world’s most powerful religion ... The close doctrinal parallels between Jewish, Christian and Zoroastrian teachings can hardly be dismissed as coincidental.”

Both Christianity and the Zarathushti religion are monotheistic faiths that visualize God as creator and sustainer, accessible through prayer. Zarathushtra was considered a Man of divinely inspired Wisdom and Jesus as the Son of God. The use of metaphors such as “God’s Will” and “Kingdom of Heaven” by Jesus is close to the cosmic principles of Asha and Ahura Mazda’s Good Dominion (*Kshathra Vairya*).

The Zarathushti doctrine is often credited with introducing the idea of *frashokereti*, or the knowledge of the end of time and its events into the religious world of both the East and the West.

Both religions see a final resolution of the struggle between good and evil and the establishment of the Kingdom of God. In the case of the Zarathushti religion the refreshment of the world is brought about by an evolutionary process by joint contribution of the righteous people. In the case of Christianity the ultimate answer to evil will be in cataclysmic events resulting from abrupt divine intervention.

It has been said that the Three Wise Men who followed the star to Bethle-

[Continued on page 15]





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در فلسفه دین زرتشت ما از اد هستیم که میان بدی و نیکی یکی را بر گزینیم. فرد زرتشتی در این میان نیکی را بر میگزیند و گام در چاله اندیشه نیک گفتار نیک و کردار نیک میگذارد بنابراین کسی زرتشتی تلمیذ میشود که نیکی را بر گزیند و نیک اندیش و نیک گفتار و نیک کردار باشد. اساس و پایه اصلی دین زرتشتی اندیشه نیک گفتار نیک و کردار نیک می باشد. این پیام باید از سوی زرتشتیان به اجرا در آید تا آنچه زرتشت میگوید برای همیشه زنده بماند اگر اندیشه نیک و گفتار نیک به کردار نیک در نیاید چه سودی حاصل ما و دیگران و جامعه زرتشتی خواهد شد. بنحاطر داشته باشید کار نامه و عمل کرد یک فرد زرتشتی نباید به گونه ای باشد که با ذره بین کردار نیک را در آن جستجو نمود دین زرتشتی را نمیشود به ارث برد بلکه باید آن را با اختیار برگزید. دین زرتشتی دین آزادی است نه دین هر ج و مرج و تبلی و تن پروری و فرار از کار و مسئولیت و کسانی که این راه را برگزینند نه زرتشتی هستند و نه زرتشت را میشناسند. کسانی که ادعای زرتشتی گری مینمایند و باوردارند که زرتشتی هستند نگاه باید وظیفه زرتشتیگری را انجام دهند. دین زرتشتی یک دین اجتماعی است در هر کار اجتماعی و تیمی تقسیم کار و هماهنگ شدن با دیگران و همکاری و پذیرش راهنمایی و شنیدن دستور و بیان ضروری و لازم میباشد کسی که از کار گروهی و توصیه و راهنمایی مر بیان با تخریب به خوش نمی آید اصلاً از فلسفه و مفهوم آزادی و کار گروهی اطلاعی ندارد اینگونه انسانها هر ج و مرج طلب هستند و برای خود شخصیت گاذبی ساخته اند که نیاز به راهنمایی و توصیه و سفارش دیگران ندارند. چنین افرادی از فلسفه دین زرتشتی آگاهی ندارند و در حقیقت زرتشتی نیستند در هر جامعه متمدن و پیشرفته باید و نباید هائی وجود دارد که افراد آن جامعه باید آنرا بپذیرند و اجرا نمایند پس اگر کسی از این باید و نباید های جامعه خوشش نیاید به زمان بریریت برگشته و باید در غار ها و جنگلهای تنهایی زندگی کنند تا قاتوهای بلید و تیلیر اجرا نمایند. زرتشتی بودن فقط پوشیدن سدره و کشتی و در یافت کارت زرتشتیگری نیست بلکه دین جهان از دیدگاه زرتشت میباشد. زرتشتی بودن یعنی کار اجتماعی انجام دادن و جامعه زرتشتی را به پیش بردن است. کسانی که بیای حس رهبر پذیر و آزادی و کار تیمی آشنا هستند و در ایادی جهان و سر بلندی میهنشان میگویند زرتشتی هستند. کسانی که در گسترش پیغام زرتشت تنها در بین خرد گران در جهان میگویند زرتشتی هستند کسانی که بیای از خود گذشتگی از وقت خود از مال و ثروت خود از دانش و تجربیات خود





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بهره هائی به جامعه زرتشتی می‌رسانند زرتشتی هستند . زرتشتی باور دارد که از خود گذشتگی و کوشش نشانه ایمان به دین زرتشتی است. از لاک خود بیرون بیایید زمان ترس و بخود فکر کردن گذشته زمان آنکه دین را از پدر و مادر به ارث بردن و از اینکه در خانواده زرتشتی متولد شدم زرتشتی هستم گذشته بپای خیزید و فلسفه زرتشت را به جهانیان بشناسانید . زرتشتی انسانی است که نیک اندیش نیک گفتار و نیک کردار باشد گفتار نیک بدون کردن نیک فریب دادن دیگران است . انسان نیک اندیش و نیک گفتار و نیک کردار که یک انسان زرتشتی است کوشش خواهد نمود که دین زرتشتی را به همه جهانیان بشناساند. تنهاده این خردگرا در جهان شایستگی آن را دارد که تمامی مردم دنیا در مورد آن آموزش ببینند و آن را بشناسند و در کتابها در مورد آن بیشتر وبیشتر نوشته شود. زرتشتیان گرामी و موفق دین زرتشتی ارثی نیست که از پدر و مادر به شما ارث رسیده باشد رهبران را انتخاب کنید اندیشه نیک و گفتار نیک خود را به کردار نیک تبدیل نمایند و در پیشبرد دین زرتشتی و جامعه زرتشتی کوشا باشید به امید موفقیت بیشتر شاد کام و تندرست باشید

### *The Religion of Zarathushtra: It's Not Inherited but Chosen*

The Zarathushti religion is very unique in the sense that we have the freedom to create our paths in life. Our destiny is not determined by our parents or children, but instead, by the decisions we make in life. A person that chooses to live a righteous life will in fact be the one who will achieve happiness in life and be a true Zarathushti. You are Zarathushti because you choose to live by the three principles that our religion preaches and not because you were born or inherited this religion. This notion alone should convince each and every one of you to fight for this religion and take a stand to preserve this great religion. We are a unique group of people and we have a duty to share our knowledge about this amazing religion with people around the world.



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## *‘A TIME TO GROW’*

*Dear Readers, this article is dedicated to a mother who wrote to me last week regarding her daughter who will be attending college this fall.*

For many seventeen and eighteen year olds, going to college is the first big step towards true independence. Not every student leaves home and moves to the campus, but for those who do, going away to college is often the first time a young person will live away from home for more than a few weeks. As a result, college not only prepares a young person for his or her role and place in the adult world, it also provides a gradual transition away from the world of their childhood. Although the college experience offers many opportunities for independence, it offers more in terms of opportunities to grow as an individual. At a time when students entering college are focused on trying to fit into a school that is several times bigger than what they are used to, with few or no friends around from their high school and very important stress of academics, one wonders how it can be possible to make time to maintain their “Zarathushti Identity.”

College is not easy. Fitting into a college environment and succeeding in reaching your goals will not be easy. You are going to have to work hard, stay up late studying while making sure your bills are paid in time, your clothes are washed for tomorrow’s class and sufficient nutritional food is available to keep your mind off your stomach. Now you are probably wondering about all the college socializing you had heard about while in high school. What about all the parties? Well, let’s put an end to this myth. College is what you make of it. If you are the type of person who wants to go to college to stay up late and party, then be my guest, but knowing a little bit about most of you out there, (the fact that you are Zarathushti) tells me college will be a time for you to gain that understanding you were looking for about the connection between you and your religion.



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We have all heard the phrase 'opportunity knocks only once.' Well, college is your opportunity. Expand your knowledge and most importantly your views on the religion. College is your time to learn about who you are and what you stand for. You don't have anyone there to judge you or tell you otherwise that your views are not normal. So take advantage of this opportunity and find out what you like, dislike, or even consider changing about the religion and talk to your friends about it. They don't have to be Zarathushti to understand where you're coming from; remember, they probably have similar questions about their religious beliefs.

In order to find your spiritual connection with the religion you must also be comfortable with your dual identity, as an Iranian or a Parsi American. Many of us are caught between two worlds. On the one hand, we face pressure to conform to the American culture where eating out all the time, wearing hip-hop style clothing, and listening to loud rock music is a norm. On the other hand, our families place heavy burdens on us to maintain our more conservative ways of watching little television, eating healthier foods, focusing on education and wearing a suit to every evening event.

Now especially is your time to choose what you feel is right and makes you feel comfortable. You'll find in college that every person has a story behind them. Whether they are a first generation immigrant or born from parents of two different races, there will be someone in your classes or school club you will meet who has a story similar to yours that you can discuss and laugh about.

College is a story in itself. Friends will be made, experiences will be shared, and most importantly, those fond memories and ideals will last forever. So as you prepare for college, begin thinking what you want to gain out of this experience besides your degree. For most people, it is an understanding of the past and a preparation for the future. Choose righteously, because college comes around only once.

Please feel free to email or call me with any thoughts on the article.





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## PERSEVERANCE

In many Zarathushti newsletters or journals there is almost always a section on the accomplishments of our youth and our community. We are undoubtedly a community that harbors many talents and achievements. However, it is rare that we have the opportunity to read about accolades for those individuals who have encountered minor setbacks in life and ultimately persevered. Perhaps this is so because it's easier both emotionally and physically to talk about achievements. But in failing to discuss the hardships along with the achievements, we portray a picture to our youth that success is something that is expected rather than something that is accompanied perseverance.

I am certain that nearly all of us have failed and had minor setbacks at some point in our lives. The first time we tried to walk, we probably fell right back down. Some of the greatest inventions wouldn't be in existence if their inventors didn't fail the first couple of times. Studies have shown that the average entrepreneur fails 3.8 times before making their business successful. Even Zarathushtra had his fair share of setbacks when he was trying to enlighten people with his vision on Ahura Mazda. I state all these instances because I want our youth to be aware that failures are common occurrences and merely only minor setbacks from achieving our goals. Growing up, I was always aware of everyone else's success stories. I read about how certain kids excelled in academics and others in sports or the arts, and some in all. However, I never really heard too much about those kids who had repeatedly failed but never given up. Although my family was always supportive and encouraged me to follow my dreams, I almost felt as though I needed to hear it from someone closer to my age who could understand more about what I was going through. In college I was told by two academic supervisors that I should major in something a bit easier than genetics and that I would probably not make it to graduate school. I was completely appalled by the "advice" I was given and even more so that an academic advisor would encourage me to ditch my dreams especially after I had mentioned how passionate I was about what I wanted to do. Fortunately my stubbornness enabled me to ignore the "advice" I was given, and as a result I am currently in my second year of graduate school, following my dreams.

I now know many people who have had numerous failures and minor setbacks in their lives. However, what I have come to learn is that many times what we think is the end, is merely just a new beginning. It is important to learn from the mistakes we have made and to realize that at one point we all managed to get back on our feet after falling on our bottoms. Someone pretty wise once told me not to worry about failure, rather that I should worry more about the chances I may miss if I don't even try. I think it's time that along with our accolades we all applaud the part of each of us that has persevered and never given up.



## FEZANA UPDATE

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

# Report on Continuing World Body Deliberations in London, July 2004

By FEZANA president Firdosh Mehta, with Rohinton and Roshan Rivetna and Behram Pastakia



PHOTOS BY ROSHAN RIVETNA

*The group of ten ("G-10") reviewing world body drafts (IZO and WZOI) at the residence of WZO chairman Rumi Sethna and his wife Hilda, in London on Day 1 (July 2nd). From left, ZTFE secretary Malcolm Deboo, ZTFE president Dorab Mistry, FPZAI president and BPP chairman Mino Shroff, FPZAI secretary Keki Gandhi, overall coordinator Rohinton Rivetna, Sethna, WZO president Rustam Dubash, chair of the WZO Trust and BPP trustee Dinshaw Tamboly, and FEZANA representatives ZAMWI president Behram Pastakia and FEZANA president Firdosh Mehta.*

July 2nd and 3rd, 2004 might turn out to be epic days in the history of Zarathushtis worldwide, as the days when four major Zarathushti organizations, the FPZAI/BPP (India), the ZTFE (Europe), the WZO (World Zoroastrian Organization) and FEZANA (North America), all came to the table for the first time to contribute to the formation of *ONE* World Body – that would be the *FACE* of the established Zarathushti communities in most of the countries of the world. Expectations are that soon after the acceptance of the revised drafts of the Constitution (Articles of Incorporation, By-laws and Memorandum of Understanding) by the executives and members of the four organizations mentioned above as its founding constituent entities, other areas of recognized Zarathushti populations would join.



## MEETING OF LEADERS IN LONDON, JULY 2, 2004

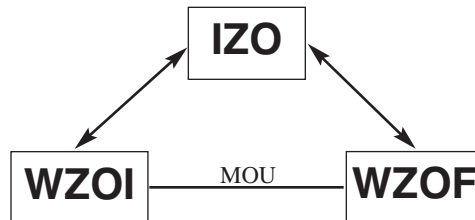
The first day, 2nd July, was a meeting of a small working group of 10 (“G-10”) representatives: Minoo Shroff and Keki Gandhi (FPZAI and BPP), Dorab Mistry and Malcolm Deboo (ZTFE), Firdosh Mehta and Behram Pastakia (FEZANA), Dinshaw Tamboly (BPP/WZO India), Rohinton Rivetna (overall coordinator) and our hosts Rumi Sethna and Rustam Dubash (WZO), at the residence of Hilda and Rumi Sethna.

**“Sense of the FEZANA AGM 2004” addressed.** After a short benediction and introduction by Rumi Sethna, the discussions commenced with the presentation by Firdosh Mehta of “The Sense of the FEZANA AGM 2004” report that was presented by a group comprising of Khorshed Jungalwala, Sarosh Collector, Yasmin Pavri, Homi Gandhi, Behram Pastakia and Purvez Rustomji, under the leadership of Farrokh Mistree, at the AGM in Tampa in May 2004. The five points [see footnote below] of the summary of this report were presented. These were agreed to by all attendees, in a general sense of approval, by consensus.

Behram Pastakia emphasized the need to form a body in the near future and not lose the momentum gained.

**Review of IZO draft constitution.** Everyone reiterated the concept of

One World Body, based on the “Sense of the January 2003 Mumbai Meeting” and subsequently developed into the triad: the IZO (International Zoroastrian Organization) with its two independent operating arms – one for federations and associations (where there are no federations) called the WZOF, and one for individuals (the current WZO with a revised WZO-2002 constitution and with further updates) called the WZOI.



The G-10 then proceeded to review a draft constitution for IZO prepared and presented by Firdosh Mehta of FEZANA a few days prior to this meeting. This draft was vetted in detail, and a consensus was reached with mark-ups.

Firdosh would revise the IZO draft and resubmit to G-10 for final review, prior to sending it to members of all the four organizations for final ratification.

**Major issues and concerns.** Issues and concerns raised, that required prolonged discussion were:

(1) *Office bearers of the IZO should be Zoroastrians of continuous Parsi/*

*Irani patrilineal descent, and who had a duly constituted navjote performed by an ordained mobed.*

Difficulties in arriving at a universally acceptable definition was recognized, but there was general understanding that the newly proselytized Zoroastrians with no Parsi/Irani lineage at all, would not be considered for this office, at least for 10 years, till general acceptance levels would be updated worldwide.

For now a “Letter of Common Understanding” addressing this topic, outside of the constitution, was suggested for later consideration.

FEZANA expressed preference for *not* specifying the definition of a Zoroastrian/Zarathushti in the documentation.

Representatives of WZOI and WZOF would heed these concerns expressed by some members of the G-10, during the election of the four IZO office bearers. The selection process specified in the constitutions of WZOF and WZOI would provide the necessary safeguards.

(2) *The WZOI being an organization of individuals should not have any associations as members where a federation exists, and such a federation will also be a member of WZOF.*

The fact is that some associations are already members of WZO (future WZOI). Since the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) separates the functions of WZOF and WZOI, and if some associations wish to participate in the functions assigned to WZOI, then it would be improper to deprive them of such an opportunity for the overall good of our community.

To promote the concept of a true “Federation of Federations” for WZOF, the representatives of WZO were willing to consider a moratorium on any new associations joining WZOI, pending acceptance by their International Board members.

(3) *Regions as defined in WZOI and WZOF should be similar.*

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### Footnote: Foundational Principles

1. All three entities (the umbrella and the two operationally independent arms) are anchored in shared principles and embody structures that are compatible with each other;
2. While ensuring the operational independence of the two independent arms (namely, the WZOI and WZOF) the umbrella body (IZO) must be given the appropriate authority to ensure the long-term structural viability of the One World Body with Independent Operating Arms construct;
3. The structure of the WZOI and the WZOF must be compatible to function as *ONE* World Body. Core procedures (e.g., time of elections, reporting, procedure of elections, etc.) must be compatible;
4. The World Body derives its authority from Zarathushtis residing in Regions and these Regions must be the same for the Two Independent Operating Arms, namely, WZOI and WZOF;
5. For a World Body based on the proposed structure, representation based on population, is inappropriate and can result in significant inequities (hence, representation should be based on an alternate method).



*Working on the WZOF constitution on Day 2 (July 3), hosted by ZTFE at Zoroastrian House, London. From left, Firdosh Mehta, Minoo Shroff, Dinshaw Tamboly, Rustam Dubash, Rumi Sethna, Dorab Mistry, Keki Gandhi, Rohinton Rivetna and ZTFE past president Rusi Dalal.*

WZO representatives agreed to do so for WZOI, based on the regions defined by WZOF.

(4) *The election procedure and process for WZOI office bearers and WZOF office bearers to be similar.*

There was concern expressed by WZO representatives regarding the inherent difficulty in the implementation of this concept, as there were areas with very few individual members. However, they have acknowledged the importance of this issue and agreed to bear it in mind when WZOI constitution is finalized.

**Review of WZOI draft constitution.** The meeting continued with a review of the WZOI draft, which was essentially the WZO 2001/02 revised constitution reviewed by WZO counsel and accepted by their International Board members, with all reference to COF (Council of Federations) removed as the COI (Council of Individuals) would now evolve into WZOI. Rustam would revise this draft addressing the concerns expressed earlier and await the

WZOF revised draft to include similarities where required.

**In closing.** The review of the WZOF draft was left for the next day at the meeting at Zoroastrian House, UK.

It was unanimously agreed that Mr. Minoo Shroff, chairman of Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) and FPZAI, representing currently the largest concentration of Zarathushtis in the world, would be the first president of IZO.

A very hearty lunch and a sumptuous dinner with tea and snacks over the course of the long day showed the best hospitality that Rumi Sethna and his wife Hilda, provided to all. We thank them very much for hosting this productive meeting.

### **WORLD BODY DISCUSSION MEETING, JULY 3, 2004**

After the very positive and congenial atmosphere of the first day, we started the second day's meetings at the Zoroastrian House, London, with ZTFE as our hosts, chaired by Dorab Mistry.

**Meeting with Khojeste Mistree and Tahamtan Aresh.** The pre-lunch meeting commenced with a benediction by Er. Russi Bhedwar and included Minoo Shroff, Keki Gandhi, Firdosh Mehta, Roshan and Rohinton Rivetna, Behram Pastakia, Dorab Mistry, Rusi Dalal, Malcolm Deboo, Paurushasp Jilla, Kobad Avari, Jehangir Sarosh and special invited guests Khojeste Mistree and Tahamtan Aresh.

Khojeste Mistree presented concerns from the Indian perspective of maintaining sanctity of the Parsi infrastructure and membership of Parsi/Irani Zoroastrians as understood in India. He asked for a convincing argument to establish a real need for a world body today. His stand was that all the things that could be done for the community could be achieved via the currently established institutes and vehicles. Many positive purposes and needs were tabled for Khojeste's understanding, but he did not seem convinced. He was also invited to participate in the process and facili-



tate in the formation of the world body. However, after much deliberation his concerns were noted, and a general understanding to bear these in mind during the formation of IZO/WZOI/WZOF, was acceptable to all participants.

Jehangir Sarosh with his vast experience in interfaith work in Europe, strongly emphasized the need to establish one representative world body to project Zoroastrian presence on the world stage. He also wished to include the principle of local, national, regional and international autonomy in the structure of the world body for it to function successfully. He was assured that this idea was incorporated during the deliberations of the previous day.

#### **Meeting with ZTFE dignitaries.**

After lunch the meeting continued with some ZTFE dignitaries joining the group – Noshir Avari, Shahrokh Shahrokh and Firoze Munshi. ZTFE concerns for the office bearers of IZO/WZOI/WZOF to be Parsi/Irani Zoroastrians as per the Indian tradition, were voiced [*see Concern 1*]. There were serious reservations voiced by some during this meeting that in many parts of the world, espe-

cially in North America, the practice of accepting children of Parsi/Zarathushti mothers married to non-Zarathushtis, and the acceptance of individuals with Iranian lineage was now normal practice, even supported by many members of the two Mobed Councils in North America.

FEZANA's stand was *not* to include any definition of the term “Zoroastrian or Zarathushti”, as there was no universally acceptable term available. However, the representatives of FEZANA were willing to consider presenting to their members, a selection process for IZO office bearers, in the WZOI and WZOF constitutions, that would have built in safeguards.

The election of officers of WZOF and WZOI would be within the purview of their respective memberships, in order to uphold their autonomy and that of their constituents.

#### **Meeting with WZO representatives and review of WZOF draft.**

After tea break, the meeting continued with the arrival of Dinshaw Tamboly, Rumi Sethna, and Rustam Dubash. The discussions continued with a review of WZOF draft constitution, which was essentially the 1997 WCZF (Revision #6) document

as prepared by Rohinton Rivetna, Keki Gandhi and others. It was noted that this document did not reflect changes that have occurred since 1997. Also earlier inputs from Purvez Rustomji, Firdosh Mehta and Dinshaw Tamboly were discussed. All these were reviewed in detail and the draft was suitably marked up for revision.

The establishment of regions and their consequent voting structure was deliberated at great length. After much discussion, going past dinner, a set of four founding regions (India, Iran, Europe and North America – Canada/USA) were acknowledged that would currently participate with a voting structure which would be adjusted pro-rata when other smaller regions would join.

The ‘emerging regions,’ where no significant population of Zarathushtis of Indian/Iranian lineage currently exist, were not included in the current list.

WZO representatives indicated that they will modify the WZOI document to reflect the same region structure as that decided by WZOF [*see Concern 3*]. They still expressed concern for similar voting distribution as their membership spread is not necessarily similar to WZOF [*see Concern 4*].

The issue of associations around the world also being able to become members of WZOI [*see Concern 2*], was again presented as contravening to the principle of WZOI being an organization only for individual members. It was pointed out that there are already some associations that are members of WZO, and since the functions are separate for WZOF and WZOI, and if an association wanted to participate in those functions, then their joining WZOI would not be a duplication, but complementary to enhancing community service. The representatives of WZO had indicated that, subject to acceptance by WZO International Board members, they would consider a moratorium on any further new

#### **Tentative Timetable:**

IZO Draft update by Firdosh Mehta to G-10 .....	31 Jul 04
WZOF Draft update by Keki Gandhi to G-10 .....	15 Aug 04
WZOI Draft update by Rustam Dubash to G-10 .....	31 Aug 04
Review and final update of all drafts by G-10 .....	20 Sep 04
Introduce documentation to representatives of IRAN .....	20 Sep 04
Submit all Finalized Constitutions for ratification by members of FPZAI/BPP, ZTFE, FEZANA and WZO .....	30 Sep 04
Announce Ratification status of FEZANA at NA Congress ...	30 Dec 04
Complete revisions and updates as part of ratification process .	1 Mar 05
Initiate registration process for IZO/WZOF/WZOI .....	10 Mar 05
Announce registration initiation at Nouruz programs .....	21 Mar 05
Complete registration process .....	15 Jun 05
Announce registration completion at World Congress .....	24 Jun 05

member associations, but would continue with current members which could be phased out over the next 10 years when the world body would become more blended and would not need separate operating arms.

This was acceptable to all present.

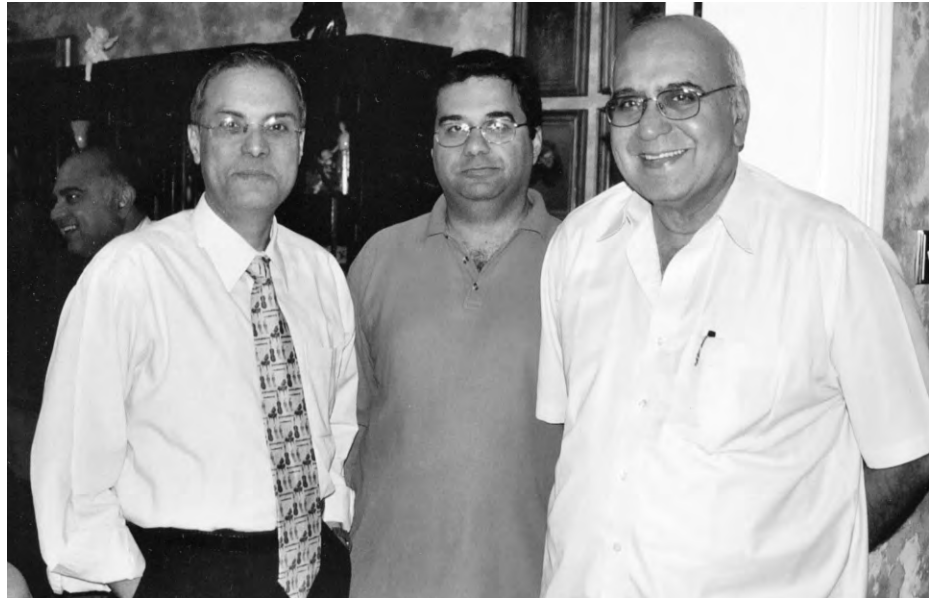
Keki Gandhi was assigned the task of completing the updates to the WZOF constitution draft. After receipt of the IZO and WZOF updated drafts, Rustam Dubash was to complete the update of the WZOI draft and send it to those present at the July 2nd meeting (G-10).

A very hearty lunch and a sumptuous dinner with tea and snacks through the day with kind hospitality, was provided to all by Dorab Mistry and the ZTFE Team.

We thank them very much for hosting this meeting in a cordial manner.

*Inshah-Ahura!* If all goes well, we will have One World Body that will be the *FACE* of the Zarathushti community to the world, as developed consensually by all stakeholders.

We invite your support and co-operation to make this a working reality.■



*Group of 10 (G-10) on Day 1. From top, l. to r., Dorab Mistry, Rustam Dubash and Dinshaw Tamboly; Rohinton Rivetna, Firdosh Mehta, Rumi Sethna and Minoo Shroff; Keki Gandhi; Malcolm Deboo; and Behram Pastakia.*

*Facing page, on Day 2, hosted by ZTFE. Top, on the steps of Zoroastrian House at 88 Compayne Gardens, London: front, Keki Gandhi, Dorab Mistry, Firdosh Mehta, Behram Pastakia; middle, Tahamtan Aresh, ZTFE treasurer Paurushasp Jilla, Minoo Shroff; top, Malcolm Deboo, Freddy Deboo, Rohinton Rivetna.*

*Below, guests and ZTFE dignitaries: Khojeste Mistree, ZTFE social secretary Kobad Avari, Rusi Dalal, Tahamtan Aresh; Shahrokh Shahrokh, ZTFE trustee Noshir Avari and Jehangir Sarosh.*





At 2-day talks in London, leaders listen to concerns, review draft constitutions and chalk out timetable for formalizing a consensual world body.

Convergence on creating a 'world body' for Zarathushtis appears to be closer than it has ever been in its long and tortuous journey, spanning well-nigh a quarter of a century.

The unprecedented "coming together" of the four major stake-holders – FPZAI/BPP, ZTFE, FEZANA and WZO, at a common forum, bodes well for progress on this long-standing issue.

Pursuant to further draft updates, and ratification by constituent members, the tentative timetable proposes a formal announcement at the World Congress in 2005.

- Photos by Roshan Rivetna

Firdosh Mehta's report [page 8] gives a summary of the two days' proceedings.



**FEZANA committee chairpersons for the 2004-2006 term, appointed by President Firdosh Mehta and ratified by Member Associations.**

### **STANDING COMMITTEES**

*Coordination and Planning:* Mahrukh Motafram, WI  
*Unity and Welfare (Critical/Medical Assistance):*  
Houtoxi Contractor, PA and Hosi Mehta, IL  
*Information Receiving and Dissemination*  
*(Publications/Journal):* Khorshed Jungalwala, MA  
*FEZANA Journal Editor-in-Chief:* Roshan Rivetna, IL  
*Funds and Finance:* Dr. Jerry Kheradi, RI  
*Census and Survey and North American Directory:*  
Noshir Jesung, CA  
*Youth (ZYNA):* Afreed Mistry, ON  
Negin Sharyari, CA  
Freyaz Shroff, FL  
*Education, Conference and Scholarship:*  
*Religious Education and Conference:*  
Kayomars Mehta, IL  
*Academic Educational Scholarship:*  
Dr. Dolly Dastoor, QE  
*North American Zoroastrian Congress:* Executive –  
Mahrukh Motafram, WI  
*Small Groups of North American Zarathushtis:*  
Dr. Hoshedar Tamboli, FL  
*Zoroastrian Sports:* Bijan Khosraviani, CA

### **AD-HOC COMMITTEES**

*Heritage Preservation and Historical Research:*  
Er. Dr. Jehan Bagli, ON  
*External Affairs:* Rohinton Rivetna, IL  
*Public Relations:* Executive  
*Canadian Chapter:* Sam Vesuna, ON  
*Constitution – Articles of Incorporation and*  
*By-Laws Separation:* Executive  
*North American Awards:* Yasmin Pavri, TX  
*North American Congress Terms of Reference Review*  
*Committee for Future Congresses (beyond 2004):*  
Dr. Rustom Kevala, MD  
*Financial Investment Advisory Council:*  
Funds & Finance, Dr. Jerry Kheradi, RI  
Treasurer, Rashid Mehin, CA  
Ardaviraf Minocherhomjee, IL  
Pervez Patel, BC  
*UN/NGO:* Homi Gandhi, NY  
Behram Pastakia, MD  
*Creative and Performing Arts:* Anahita Sidhwa, TX  
Sherazade Mehta, MA  
*Strategic Planning:* Dr. Dolly Dastoor, QE  
*ZYNA and Youth Congress Terms of Reference Review:*  
Afreed Mistry, ON



*Vice president  
Mahrukh Motafram*

## **Fezana Open Forum**

### **Listening to the voice of the people to better understand issues facing the community and develop action plans**

The FEZANA Open Forum, the first of its kind was held on Friday, May 25, the evening before the AGM, at the AmeriSuites Conference Room in Tampa Bay, FL. Vice president Mahrukh Motafram chaired the session with the help of Executive members Firdosh Mehta, Farrokh Mistree and Rita Engineer.

The main objective of the Open Forum was to get feedback from the community. What we achieved was to get a panoramic view of ideas and suggestions that will enable us to pave the way for the future.

About 35 persons – association presidents, representatives, committee chairs and interested individuals – participated. The youth were well represented by ZYNA chairs, Afreed Mistry and Freyaz Shroff along with the past chair Sherazade Mehta.

#### **Brainstorming session**

- How can FEZANA improve upon its image within the community?
- At present, there is lack of participation and interest for FEZANA. Why?
- What are some projects that you feel FEZANA can be involved in the next decade?

At the beginning of the session each participant was given the opportunity to speak on the above three questions. Highlights from this brainstorming activity are below:

- The religion receives little or no recognition outside the Zarathushti community.
- Formulate a plan to coordinate activities.
- Iranian Zarathushtis are interested but do not feel welcome.
- We need to celebrate our diversity by preserving the core.
- Get the fringes involved.
- Make an effort to include young adults (30-40) and the youth.
- Empower the youth. Give the youth leadership roles in FEZANA.
- Each Association to bring a youth representative to the AGMs.
- Talk to the youth at their level, trust them more. Get them involved in projects.
- Youth need to be connected at college level. Have college network, college guides.
- Assist with employment.
- Need a strong internet/web presence.



Invest money on website. Electronic communication needs to be increased. ● Need a strong financial foundation for the future. 10,000 Points of Light (\$1 million) needs to be achieved. Add assistant treasurer to the FEZANA executive. ● Have paid positions to do the work. ● Improve communication within the community; assimilate ideas, projects in the larger community. ● Encourage volunteerism; have an outreach program involving humanitarian work through the UN. ● Develop a Power Point presentation about FEZANA. ● We need to be 'clannish' and support our own people to be successful. ● Pay more attention to the religious side. Actively support the need to create one place of worship, dadgah. ● Build upon an infrastructure based on the teachings of Zarathushtra that will bind the community together. ● Look into getting funds from the government. ● Set up a forum to discuss this idea further at the 2004 North American Congress.

**Prioritized Projects.** From the brainstorming session, it was clear that FEZANA needs to be proactive in its approach. One way to achieve this is to prepare a list of potential projects that the community feels the need to participate in. The executive can play a leadership role in initiating projects by actively engaging interested individuals within the community to work with them on planning and implementing these projects.

The ideas from the brainstorming session were consolidated into 11 action items/projects. Each member of the audience then participated in prioritizing the projects, by selecting their 3 top projects and assigning points by priority. The top three projects selected are:

#### ***Project 1. Increase involvement.***

(a) Increase youth involvement by giving them leadership roles, encouraging youth representatives to attend meetings. Place upper limit on years that a person can serve on a local association board, to increase participation.

(b) Increase Iranian Zarathushti participation by working together to celebrate cultural diversity.

#### ***Project 2. Build religious infrastructure***

(a) Work towards building one place of worship, a *dadgah*. Help raise funds through the community and look into getting funds from the government.

(b) Set up a forum for laying an infrastructure that is based upon unified religious principles, spirituality being the core that binds the Zarathushti community together.

#### ***Project 3. Enhance web presence and electronic communication***

Develop electronic communication that includes a Power Point presentation about FEZANA; invest, if need be, to bring our communication tools into the 21st century.

The remaining projects, in order of priority are:

***Project 4:*** Organize youth camps around North America to start with, and global youth camps in the near future.

***Project 5:*** Publicity and 'creating awareness' needs to be addressed to improve communication within the community and help assimilation in the larger community.

***Project 6:*** Raise funds for the future. The goal should be to raise \$1 million through the "1000 Points of Light" program. Facilitate a position for an assistant treasurer on the executive board to help with the finances.

***Project 7:*** Work towards building a national FEZANA center.

***Project 8:*** Develop Zarathushti Peace Corps working on humanitarian projects during the summer.

***Project 9:*** Create a college network of Zarathushtis on campus that can help with guidance and employment opportunities for the younger generation.

We need to keep in mind that this would be a collective effort on the part of the entire Zarathushti community of North America. The FEZANA executive has taken the initiative to begin the process. It is up to the member associations and individuals to step up to the plate and help the executive implement this plan and bring it to fruition. ■

*By the FEZANA Executive Committee:*

*Firdosh Mehta (president)*

*Mahrukh Motafram (vice president)*

*Rashid Mehin (treasurer)*

*Rita Engineer (secretary)*

*Farrokh Mistree (assistant secretary).*

Editorial: Influence [contd] ...

*[Continued from page 2]*

hem were priests (magis) of the Zarathushti religion. The commemoration of December 25th as the birthday of Christ has its origin in early Mithraic observances. This was the date of a festival in Rome chosen by Emperor Aurelian in 274 CE to celebrate the birth of the unconquered Sun and subsequently the Papal Church in Rome established the date as the birthday of Jesus Christ.

All religions have as the basis of their faith, a universal moral code. Some lay emphasis on asceticism, others on strict practice of rituals, but the message is always clear – pure thoughts, kind words and righteous deeds.

It is truly remarkable that Zarathushtra delivered his message that is as fresh and relevant today as it was 3,500 years ago. A healthy respect for one another's ideology will, in time, make differences inconsequential. In the long run, we can hope that religion will change the nature of man and reduce conflict. While the followers of Zarathushtra's message may, through the ages, suffer varying fortunes, the timeless and enduring legacy of Zarathushtra's message lives on forever in the doctrines of other religions that followed. ■



*The AGM opened with a benediction by Ervad Soli Dastur of Florida.*

The 17th Annual General Meeting of FEZANA was held on May 28 and 29, 2004, at the AmeriSuites Hotel in Tampa, Florida. The Zarathushti Association of Tampa Bay (ZATAMBAY), a small association is commended for hosting this

event and for the warmth with which it embraced the 40-plus out-of-townners.

**Hoshedar Tamboli** [left] welcomed delegates, noting that this was the first

time an AGM was hosted by a 'Small Group.' The benediction and homilies of Ervad Soli Dastur and the reception at the Tambolis' home are but two memorable events of this weekend. Thank you ZATAMBAY!

#### ELECTIONS

Results of the elections:

**President: Firdosh Mehta** was elected unopposed.

**Treasurer: Rashid Mehin** accepted to be reinstated at the AGM, in the absence of any other candidate.

**Assistant Secretary: Farrokh Mistree** was elected unopposed.

They will serve for a two year term ending at the AGM in 2006.

# FEZANA AGM, FLORIDA 2004

## Highlights of the 17th FEZANA Annual General Meeting



*FEZANA Executives at the AGM, vice president Mahrukh Motafram, president Firdosh Mehta, secretary Rita Engineer and assistant secretary Farrokh Mistree. Not in picture, treasurer Rashid Mehin.*

#### MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS

Yasmin Pavri of the Zoroastrian Association of Houston moved and Homi Gandhi of Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York seconded the motion that **Atlanta Zarathushti Association** be admitted to FEZANA. The vote was unanimous and since the vote of those present exceeded 2/3 of the total qualifying votes, AZA was admitted and its representative given voting rights at this AGM.

Firdosh Mehta informed delegates that the **Zoroastrian Association of Arizona** (ZAAR) had decided to let its membership lapse and that he had encouraged it to continue as a "Small Group Corresponding Member" in FEZANA.

Firdosh Mehta indicated that the resolution for amending the FEZANA constitution did not receive response from 3/4 of the qualifying votes, and therefore did not pass. He indicated that the intent of the resolution was to separate the constitution into articles

of incorporation and by-laws. The Executive was charged to solicit further comments and re-issue the separation resolution.

#### ALLOCATION OF FUNDS

- \$2,500 was allocated to the president's travel expense reimbursement for the 2004-2006 term.

- \$4,692 was earmarked in the Scholarship account plus \$5,308 from the general fund (total \$10,000) to be disbursed by the Academic Education Scholarship Committee.

- \$7,100 was approved for use by the Religion Education Committee.

- \$5,000 from the ZYNA Youth account plus \$5000 from the general fund (total \$10,000) to be disbursed by the ZYNA Performing-Creative Arts Scholarship Committee.

- \$2,000 to be allocated to Malcolm Deboo as travel subsidy for the Meherji Rana Book Restoration Project being spearheaded by the ZTFE.



- \$2,000 to be allocated to purchase equipment for religious infrastructure restoration projects in India.
- \$5,000 to be allocated to facilitate North American Zarathushtis to participate in the Zarathushti Symphony Orchestra scheduled to perform at the World Congress in London in 2005 (per an appeal from ZSO music director Farobag Homi Cooper).
- \$1,000 to be allocated towards continuance of the Dari Language Project by Anahita Faroodi and colleagues.

### OFFICERS' REPORTS

President **Firdosh Mehta** welcomed all present and thanked Hoshedar and Anahita Tamboli and ZATAMBAY for hosting the meeting and pulling together their limited resources to successfully organize this event. Firdosh requested support from members for the success of the Z-Games in Vancouver, July 2004 and for the North American Congress in San Jose, December 2004. He noted that the UN – NGO, after some period of dormancy, was now active due to the untiring efforts of Homi Gandhi and Behram Pastakia and thanked them.

The 3000th anniversary celebrations were a huge success worldwide. He thanked Dolly Dastoor and Homi Gandhi for coordinating FEZANA's efforts. Houtoxi Contractor and Hosi Mehta were recognized for their contributions to world wide community welfare and critical assistance. These donations were possible in part by private donations and partly from proceeds of the Damkevala Endowment.

Firdosh reported that \$100,000 has been donated by a private anonymous donor through FEZANA to The B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital in Mumbai. He also reported that many FEZANA scholarships have been awarded and thanked the donors who made it all possible. Firdosh thanked and acknowledged all committee chairs for their active participation and hard work through the year.

He reported that the Mehraban Dorab Kheradi and Moobed Faridoon Zar-

doshty Scholarships continued to be awarded and that a new Scholarship Fund for Performing-Creative Arts will soon be announced. He commended the world class FEZANA Journal, under the leadership of Roshan Rivetna and Khorshed Jungalwala. Referring to the world body meeting in Mumbai in January 2004, Firdosh mentioned that there seemed to be a convergence on the world body issue, sensed after his meeting with BPP trustees in Mumbai. He once again thanked the FEZANA World Body Working Group for their efforts.

Vice president **Mahrukh Motafram** thanked everyone for attending the Open Forum the previous day. She noted that the Executive has learned how to work together with the dynamics of each member playing an important role. The FEZANA News Bulletin was published three times last year and Mahrukh stated that she would try to increase the frequency this year. She touched upon the Bam earthquake relief efforts and the Gram Seva Project in India. She emphasized that every effort needs to be made to keep Small Groups involved and that it was time for Small Groups to get together by region.

Secretary **Rita Engineer** thanked the Executive for helping her do her duties. It was enlightening to see the work done by all the member associations and committees. She felt that FEZANA was achieving what it was set up to do.

Treasurer **Rashid Mehin**'s report was presented by Firdosh Mehta in his absence. Framroze Patel was thanked for filing tax reports on behalf of FEZANA. Reporting procedures were modified to improve clarity and understanding. The Financial Statement for January 1 to December 31, 2003 was presented and approved.

Assistant secretary **Farrokh Mistree** gave a short update on the FEZANA website ([www.fezana.org](http://www.fezana.org)). He described the features that had been introduced in 2003-2004 and the plan for 2004-2005 to get FEZANA publications on the web. He recognized the sustained contribution of Zubin

Medora in the development and maintenance of the website. He distributed Noshir Jesung's gift of CDs containing the FEZANA directory to member association representatives, and mentioned that the CD could be ordered online at the website.

### ASSOCIATION REPORTS

Delegates of the associations made brief reports on their activities. All associations indicated having religious classes, social events for celebration of Fasli and Shenshai Nouruz, Jashn-e-Sadeh, and picnics and outings. Most encourage their youth to get involved in association and FEZANA activities. Some described their efforts to raise funds and at increasing participation from their members.

### COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Academic Educational Scholarships Committee.** Chair **Dolly Dastoor** reported that during the academic year 2003-2004 the Academic Scholarship Program Committee received 20 applications for the **FEZANA scholarships** and the **Mehraban Kheradi Endowment Scholarship (FEZANA Scholar)**.

*Celeste and Jerry Kheradi (Funds and Finance) with Dolly Dastoor (Academic Scholarships)*



[\*] = Reports submitted in absentia

Association representatives, from left, Kobad Zarolia (president, OCZF-Ontario), Jehan Daruwalla (ZAF-Florida), Khushroo Daruwalla (president, ZAF-Florida), Behram Pastakia (president, ZAMWI-Washington, DC).

Facing page, Ness Lakdawala (president, ZAQ-Quebec), Cyrus Toorkey (president, ZAPANJ), Houtoxi Contractor (president, ZAPA-Pennsylvania) [hidden], Homi Gandhi (president, ZAGNY-New York), Yasmin Pavri (representative, ZAH-Houston), Hosi Mehta (representative, ZAC-Chicago), Homi Italia (president ZSBC-British Columbia) and Khushroo Lakdawalla (president ZAC-California).



The \$5000 Kheradi scholarship for merit was awarded to **Roshni Cooper** of Macungie, PA, in the engineering and computer science program at MIT. Academic scholarships from the \$10,000 allocated were awarded to: **Suzie Karani** (IL) human rights; **Freddy Mistry** (CO) biochemistry; **Shekufeh Sonji** (ON) medical studies; **Pouya Bastani** (BC) computing science and music; **Zarin Behramshah** (TX) business; **Cyrus Sarkari** (IN) aviation maintenance technology; **Adil Tata** (CA) computer engineering; and **Navaz Mistry** (ON) psychology/ physiology and zoology.

**Awards Committee.** Chair **Yasmin Pavri**, reported that the committee continues to work towards establishing and adopting standards and streamlining all aspects of Award presentation. Nomination forms will be sent out to all, requesting nominations for the 2004 awards.

**Census and Survey Committee.** Chair **Rashna Ghadialy** [\*] suggested that member associations conduct their own census and share results with the FEZANA Census Committee or rethink ways to share their member and address lists with the committee. FEZANA should look into another way of conducting the census. In light of this recom-

mendation **Noshir Jesung** [\*] suggested three options, namely:

(1) member associations conduct the survey and return information to the Census and Survey Committee; (2) the Census and Survey Committee be given permission by member associations to approach individuals in North America; or (3) some combination of Options (1) and (2). Noshir Jesung and Farrokh Mistree have been tasked to poll member associations and proceed with the survey.

**Congress TOR Committee.** Chair **Rustom Kevala** [below] of the North



American Congress Guidelines Review Committee presented the Terms of Reference and will develop them further per the sense of the meeting. Rus-

tom stressed the use of "Zarathushti" in all communication. ZAC - Chicago has offered to archive all Congress transcripts.

**Constitution Committee.** **Firdosh Mehta** indicated that the resolution for amending the FEZANA constitution did not receive response from 3/4 of the qualifying votes, and there-

fore did not pass. He indicated that the intent of the resolution was to separate the constitution into articles of incorporation and by-laws. The Executive was charged by member associations to solicit further comments and re-issue the separation resolution.

**Coordination and Planning Committee.** Chair **Mahrukh Motafram** reported that the calendar of events for 2004-2005 will be out soon. She expressed that the FEZANA News Bulletin (on the FEZANA website) and Journal were two powerful tools in bringing together Zarathushtis, but felt that there was a stronger need for more outreach programs to reach all Zarathushtis. She stressed the need for more youth involvement.

**Directory Committee.** Chair **Noshir Jesung** [\*] reported that the FEZANA directory in CD format is available for \$10 and can be ordered online. A printed copy can be obtained from Farrokh Mistree for \$30 per copy. Noshir Jesung was commended by member associations for his contributions and hard work in publishing the directory.

**External Affairs Committee.** Chair **Rohinton Rivetna** reported an increase in Interfaith activities across North America. He was on the organizing committee for the 4-day Inter-

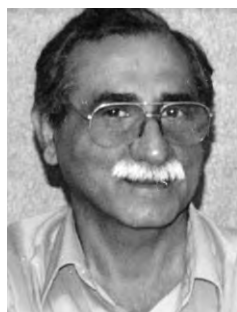
[\*] = Reports submitted in absentia





national Peace Summit in Delhi in December 2003, graced by the President of India and the Dalai Lama. About 20 Zarathushtis are expected to attend the Parliament of World Religions in Barcelona, Spain. FEZANA has been an active participant at the UN due to the efforts of Homi Gandhi and Behram Pastakia.

#### **World Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce (WZCC).**



WZCC president Rohinton Rivetna mentioned that there are currently 400 members of WZCC worldwide – in Australia, India, Iran, Middle East, UK and

USA. There are six chapters in North America. WZCC will hold a Business Conference and Business Lunch with the North American Congress in San Francisco. A trade delegation from India had visited Dubai and made some good contacts. A trade delegation to Iran is planned for 2005.

#### **Funds and Finance Committee.**

Chair **Jerry Kheradi** reported that 2003 was a slow year for fund raising. However, the “1000 Points of

Light” program was nearing its goal and had reached 840 points (\$84,000) by the end of 2003. The committee’s goal is to continue to strive towards achieving the long-term goal of 10,000 Points of Light (\$1,000,000) that will provide a solid financial base for FEZANA to continue to do the great work it has started. The second “Thousand Points of Light” campaign will begin shortly. Canadian associations should encourage participation from their members.

#### **Information Receiving and Disseminating Committee.**

Chair **Khorshed Jungalwala** [\*] stated that FEZANA Journal continues to show remarkable improvement in its content and quality. The demand for the *Legacy of Zarathushtra* booklet (which is currently being reprinted in India) continues. Two universities order about 30 copies each semester. New committee member Farobag Cooper appointed last year has added to the Journal’s quality. Success of this committee is assured due to the uncompromising and unbiased accuracy in reporting of facts, events, concepts and ideologies via the website and the journal. A guide to ceremonies and daily rituals is planned as a supplement to FEZANA Journal in the coming year. A gift of \$750 from

Sarosh Collector for revision and reprinting of the flyer, *Zarathushtis, Followers of an Ancient Faith in a Modern World* is gratefully acknowledged.

#### **Public Relations Committee.**

**Firdosh Mehta** indicated there was a need to put together a promotional CD and PowerPoint presentation that could be used to promote FEZANA and Zarathushtis on this continent. He stated that the Information Receiving and Disseminating Committee will assist in putting this CD together. The old FEZANA promotional brochure needs to be updated and converted to PowerPoint. A call for volunteers was registered.

#### **Religion Education Scholarships Committee.**

Chair **Kayomars Mehta** [\*] reported that applications for the 2004-2005 Moobed Faridoon Zardoshty Religion Education scholarships had been processed and that five candidates have been pre-qualified for \$1000 each. This is the second year of awards and will continue on till 2007. The committee is looking into the issue of candidates being eligible for multiple years.

#### **Small Groups Committee.**

Chair **Hoshedar Tamboli** mentioned that individuals need to be made a part of FEZANA as there is a significant mass out there that needs to be brought into the fold. The committee requested assistance in spreading FEZANA’s role in the community by getting updated emails, addresses and telephone numbers. Hoshedar was asked to contact Noshir Jesung, Rustom Kevala, Farrokh Mistree and Cyrus Toorkey for assistance.

#### **Strategic Planning Committee.**

**Dolly Dastoor** on behalf of her colleagues Rustom Kevala, Farrokh Mistree and Beheruz N. Sethna summarized their report. The FEZANA Strategic Plan for 10 years was adopted in 1997. Dolly reviewed what had been achieved, observed that progress had been slow, identified some reasons and suggested a strategy for moving forward at a faster pace. She called on member associations to embrace the follow-

ing objectives: (1) Nurture the community towards health, wealth and happiness; (2) Create the ambience that promotes a sense of belonging amongst all in the community; (3) Facilitate the growth of the Zarathushti community; and (4) Increase awareness of Zarathushtis in the community at large. She suggested that FEZANA identify a blue print (Strategic Plan) and develop action plans.

Firdosh Mehta observed that many of the items in the Strategic Plan that could be achieved with the limited available resources, have been achieved. Those that remain are either unresolvable, or need large sums of money, and the Strategic Planning Committee should continue to work on those items.

**UN-NGO Committee.** Co-chairs Behram Pastakia and Homi Gandhi reported that FEZANA participated in the 56th Annual DPI/NGO Conference "Human Security and Dignity: Fulfilling the Promise of the United Nations", attended by over

*Welfare Committee co-chairs Hosi Mehta and Houtoxi Contractor [at right] with Freyaz Shroff, coordinator of the family emergency assistance hotline and a co-chair of ZYNA.*



600 NGOs. The team included Neville Antia, Freyan Billimoria, Aysha Ghadiali, Susan Karani, Shanaya Mistry, Trita Parsi, Roda Patel and Rohan Vilms. FEZANA was also represented at the 48th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. These efforts have had a very positive effect in raising the profile of Zarathushtis at the UN.

**Welfare Committee.** Co-Chairs *Houtoxi Contractor* and *Hosi Mehta* reported that \$10,000 was sent out last year, \$6000 overseas and \$4000 in the US. Plans for a family emergency assistance hotline to assist Zarathushtis in need have been drawn up. There is a need for advisors in the areas of legal consultation, counseling, food, daycare, transportation, jobs, etc. The committee's budget request for funds to get the emergency hotline going was approved. A fund raising gala is planned in Chicago on September 4, 2004.

**Historic Research and Preservation Committee.** Chair *Jehan Bagli* stated that the draft of a book on Zarathushti funeral rites has been completed. It is being proofread to ensure that the guidelines given for pronunciation and action are clear and correct. NAMC is looking for a printer and would appreciate help.

**Zoroastrian Sports Committee.** Chair *Bijan Khosraviani* [\*] reported that the 3rd Unity Soccer Games took place August 29 - 30, 2003 in Torrance, CA with athletes from all over the US. Forty-eight athletes in eight different teams competed for the Unity Cup. The 9th Zarathushti Games will be in Vancouver, Canada, July 1- 4, 2004. The committee is looking for a member association to host the 10th Zarathushti Games, July 1-4, 2006. Interested associations are requested to contact ZSC at [zsc@fezana.org](mailto:zsc@fezana.org).

This ad hoc committee has requested its status be changed to a standing committee. A three quarter majority of all qualifying votes is required for this to take effect; hence the outcome will be announced later.

**Zoroastrian Youth of North America (ZYNA).** 2003 co-chair *Sherazade*



*ZYNA co-chairs Sherazade Mehta (2003) and Afreed Mistry (2004).*

*Mehta* reported on ZYNA's activities in 2003. ZYNA gave four \$500 travel grants for its members to attend the Youth Congress in Pune. It organized walks to raise funds throughout USA. ZAMWI participated in the three-day breast cancer walk. ZYNA announced a new Performing-Creative Arts Scholarship and will work on a TOR to get this started. ZYNA has donated \$5,000 towards this scholarship and requested FEZANA to approve this amount from the ZYNA Youth Fund. This was unanimously approved. Members also approved a \$5,000 contribution to this fund from the FEZANA General Fund.

The 2004 co-chairs *Afreed Mistry* and *Freyaz Shroff* indicated that the youth congress in Pune was a huge success. They described the highly successful Holiday Youth Program sponsored by the Bombay Parsi Panchayet, and proposed a similar program in North America. Several people volunteered assistance; Bomi Patel indicated that ZANC would donate \$1000 towards this program. A ZYNA New York meet is planned for summer 2004. ZYNA plans on creating a global e-newsletter network and a youth database.

#### OTHER REPORTS

**The 3000th Anniversary Celebrations.** *Dolly Dastoor* thanked Homi Gandhi and Behram Pastakia for their involvement in this historical event and Aban Rustomji, for putting this program together. A chronological list of events is on the FEZANA

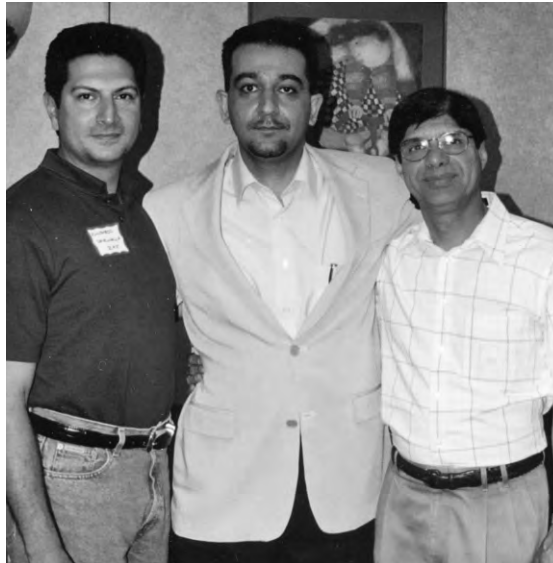


website. UNESCO throwing the spotlight on 3000th Anniversary of Zoroastrian Culture, has generated a cascade of events around the world. Public officials, e.g. the Commissioner for Immigrant Affairs in New York, the Ambassador of Tajikistan to the UN, the District Attorney General of Orange County, representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Tehran, and in India, the Prime Minister himself, Government Minister and Legislators in Alberta, spoke at various events, giving the community a high profile in the US Congress, the White House, major universities, and Think Tanks across the country. A PowerPoint presentation will be displayed at the upcoming Congress in San Francisco.

**North American Congress.** *Bomi Patel* stated that the XIIIth North American Zoroastrian Congress will be held December 29, 2004 to January 1, 2005 in San Jose, California. The theme is “Being Zarathushti: Looking At Issues, Searching For Answers”. It will be held at the Doubletree Hotel in San Jose; \$69 plus tax for a room and \$139 plus tax for a suite. More information and forms are available at [www.zanc.org](http://www.zanc.org).

The XIVth North American Zarathushti Congress will be hosted by the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO). The date is yet to be decided.

**North American Mobed Council.** Er. Jehan Bagli stated that 2003 was



*From top, Floridians: ZAF president Khushroo Daruwalla, Orlando dentist Kia Kaviani and president of the Central Florida Small Group Mez Birdie; Sam Vesuna (president, ZSO-Ontario); Californians: Ehler and Nazneen Spliedt (XIIIth Congress publicity chair), Anahita and Khushroo Lakdawalla (president, ZAC-California) and Bomi Patel (president ZANC-California and XIIIth Congress chair); Floridians on the dock at the Tambolis' oceanfront residence in Tampa: Er. Soli and Joanne Dastur, Hoshedar and Anahita Tamboli, and Hoshi Presswalla.*



*FEZANA delegates and Florida Zarathushtis at the magnificent oceanfront residence of Hoshedar and Anahita Tamboli*



*Er. Jehan Bagli*

a busy year for NAMC. The NAMC-FEZANA seminar on Rituals held in Toronto in 2003 was a huge success. NAMC priests were involved in the 3000th anniversary celebrations. \$2000 was allocated for editing the tapes of lectures in Chicago by Dasturji Minocher Homji. NAMC is planning to get copies of Er. Rustom Bhedwar's Gatha CD, review this work and if appropriate distribute to associations. Four Mobedyars were certified by NAMC this past year. NAMC priests decided unanimously that a Zarathushti married to a non-Zarathushti would be eligible to be trained and practice as a mobedyar.

Member associations were requested to ensure that their mobeds participate in NAMC activities by paying their membership and supporting their travel to NAMC meetings, and offer to host NAMC meetings.

**Sun City Program** [see page 29]. **Yasmin Kevala** expressed delight with the overwhelming response. Twenty people were turned down as all rooms were booked. Since there were so many interested in visiting Sun City two tours were scheduled. Yasmin thanked FEZANA for its support in this endeavor and for ZATAMBAY hosting the AGM in Tampa enabling this visit to Sun City Center.

#### **WORLD BODY REPORTS**

**Firdosh Mehta** briefed delegates on the status of the world body.

The "Sense of the January 2003 Mumbai Meeting" was to have two independent Councils (COI and

COF) within the overall umbrella structure of WZO, with no common boards and no common general body. This proposal would eliminate the 50-50 voting requirement between COI and COF, which was the dealbreaker.

Firdosh was charged by the Meeting of Leaders (Mumbai, January 2003) to present the "Sense of the Meeting" to WZO leadership, which he did when he stopped over in London, on his way back from Mumbai.

Subsequently WZO presented the "triad" structure of IZO, WZOF and WZOI, which had consensual agreement in principle from FPZAI, ZTFE and FEZANA, in May 2003, and was officially approved by WZO's International Board in December 2003.

The FEZANA World Body Working Group built on work done earlier by WZO and WCZF, developed thorough analyses of various models and



presented recommendations that should be included in the constitutions of IZO, WZOI and WZOF.

- The main problem in moving forward with the world body was the inability to get all stakeholders to a common forum for collective discussions. Firdosh therefore set about to bring all parties together; and all the principals have agreed to meet in London over the July 4, 2004 weekend.

- In preparation for the London 2004 meeting he set up three sub-committees to draft the constitutions for the IZO (the umbrella body) and the two independent operating arms, namely, WZOF and WZOI.

- These draft constitutions of IZO, WZOF and WZOI, and Memorandum of Understanding will be reviewed at the London 2004 meeting.

- Some issues that will be discussed at the London 2004 meeting are: (1) Whether office bearers of the world body should be Zarathushtis as per the Beaman – Daver ruling; and (2) How regional religious autonomy will be safeguarded, e.g., an ‘opt-out clause’ could be included.

Firdosh assured that FEZANA Members would be the final authority on whatever is proposed.

**Sarosh Collector, Homi Gandhi, Khorshed Jungalwala, Farrokh Mistree, Behram Pastakia, Yasmin Pavri, Purvez Rustomji**, having studied the issues involved, drafted a report, in which they identified the foundational principles upon which the IZO should be based and the terms that should be embodied in a Memorandum of Understanding. **Farrokh Mistree** presented this report on behalf of his colleagues. He highlighted the following:

Status post FEZANA World Body Working Group Report (August 2003).

- Overview – One World Body with Two Independent Operating Arms Construct.

- Key Principles.

- Functions unique to IZO.

- IZO Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

- He requested endorsement of the One World Body with Two Independent Operating Arms and Foundational Principles by FEZANA Members.

“Recognizing that the following five points are foundational to the long-term viability of the One World Body with Two Independent Operating Arms construct:

- (1) All three entities (the umbrella and the two operationally independent arms) are anchored in shared principles and embody structures that are compatible with each other;

- (2) While ensuring the operational independence of the two independent arms (namely, the WZOI and WZOF) the umbrella body (IZO) must be given the appropriate authority to ensure the long-term structural viability of the One World Body with Independent Operating Arms construct;

- (3) The structure of the WZOI and the WZOF must be compatible to function as ONE World Body. Core procedures (e.g., time of elections, reporting, procedure of elections, etc.) must be compatible;

- (4) The World Body derives its authority from Zarathushtis residing in Regions and these Regions must be the same for the Two Independent Operating Arms, namely, WZOI and WZOF;

- (5) For a World Body based on the proposed structure, representation based on population, is inappropriate and can result in significant inequities. Hence, representation should be based on an alternate method;

FEZANA member associations endorse the adoption of the One World Body with Two Independent Operating Arms construct.”

**Rohinton Rivetna** stressed the overarching goal was to *SERVE* the worldwide community and bring the community together in *HARMONY*. He supported the ‘*Consensual World Body*’ model mooted by the ‘Sense of the Mumbai Meeting,’ subsequently developed into the 3-body chart by WZO, developed/evaluated further by the WG, and consensually agreed to in principle by the four major stakeholders. He offered some design requisites.

Rohinton presented his vision of several other (besides the WZOI welfare-charity arm and the WZOF representative arm) world-level institutions (e.g. Mobed Councils, WZCC Chamber of Commerce, World Cultural Foundation, etc.) *all* coming together in a ‘*Global Alliance*,’ with the nexus provided by IZO, the world body.

He enumerated several ‘projects’ that could be undertaken by the world body, e.g. world center in Udvada / Sanjan, consecrated dadgah in North America, coordinated interfaith activities, the world congress, Dadabhai Naoroji memorial, emissaries to Iran, etc. He ended with a call to action to establish the world body registration procedures and begin work on the ‘projects’ *NOW*.

The session ended on a high note with member associations present unanimously endorsing the foundational principles upon which the IZO should be based and the terms that should be embodied in a MOU.

Firdosh Mehta indicated that he would:

- Promote what has been endorsed at this AGM, at the London meeting.

- Not make commitments and not sign any documents in London.

- Brief the FEZANA community about what transpires in London.

- In consultation with FEZANA Executive, determine the next steps.

#### NEXT AGM

The next AGM will be held in Pittsburgh, PA over the 2005 Memorial Day weekend. ■

[Report prepared by secretary Rita Engineer and assistant secretary Farrokh Mistree, July 31, 2004]

For up to date information please visit the FEZANA website at:

**www.fezana.org**

Manager Farrokh Mistree  
farrokh.mistree@eudoramail.com



## the ninth zarathushti games a fantastic success

by Homi Italia  
President, ZSBC



*Clockwise from above,  
women's track competitors;  
track relay team gold, silver  
and bronze medal winners  
with presenter Bella Tata;  
winning volleyball teams  
from left, Mehr from San  
Diego (2nd place),  
Bachehayeh from LA (1st  
place) and VBA from Pak-  
istan, Vancouver and Ger-  
many (third place);  
basketball gold medal win-  
ners "LA Champions";  
women's swimming event.*

Over 130 Zarathushtis from Canada, USA, Germany, Pakistan, India and Australia participated in the Ninth Zarathushti Games, hosted by The Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia, with support from the Zoroastrian Sports Committee of FEZANA, at the University of British Columbia, in Vancouver, July 1 to 4, 2004.

Athletes, spectators and visitors began arriving two days before the games, and arrangements were made for the athletes to stay at UBC in the residential accommodation at Gage Towers. Pick up and drop off from the airport was very well co-ordinated by Sharook Kapadia and his wife Yasmin.

The opening ceremony was held on July 1, Canada Day, at the War Memorial Gym. It began with a prayer recited by mobed Firdosh Balsara and national anthem of Canada sung by Vista Pourbahrami. The president of ZSBC, Homi Italia welcomed everyone and thanked executive committee members Behramsha Mizan, Kourosh Edalati, Nooshin Kiani, Sharook Kapadia, Adi Desai, Ardeshtir Behi, Farhad Mistry and Pouya Bastani for their tremendous contribution in organizing this event; and Bijan Khosraviani of the Zoroastrian Sports Committee for their

guidance and cooperation in bringing these games to fruition.

A message from the President of FEZANA Firdosh Mehta was read by ZSBC's first president, Bella Tata. The program continued with a dance by ladies from the Shiamak Davar dance group, a Hapkido and martial arts demonstration by Cyrus Mizan and other youth, and singing of verses from the Gathas by the Gatha Group.

A colorful parade was held by athletes from all over the globe, and the Ninth Zarathushti Games were declared open by Homi Italia. The very first games of volleyball and basketball began immediately following the opening ceremony, in front of a very enthusiastic crowd. The afternoon was busy with table tennis, badminton, basketball and volleyball.

On July 2, track and field events were held at Eric Hamber school







track. Many track events were won by athletes from Pakistan and India. In the afternoon table tennis, badminton, volleyball and basketball continued at the Student Recreation Centre.

Over 500 people enjoyed the “Austin Powers” theme dinner and dance at Student Union Building ballroom that evening. Entertainment was provided by a live band performed by local Zoroastrian youth.

The swimming events were held on July 3 morning at the Aquatic Centre in UBC. After the whole day’s tiring play, about 300 persons were entertained on a four hour harbor cruise with dinner and dance aboard the “Britannia.” It was a beautiful evening; the sight of the rising moon over the Pacific Ocean was spectacular.

On the last day of the games final volleyball and basketball games were played at the War Memorial Gym before a cheering crowd with banging of drums and blowing horns.

“All good things come to an end,” said Sharookh Daroowala, MC for the opening and closing ceremonies. The closing ceremonies included Vista singing “Time of Your Life,” a media presentation by Narious Dastur and Rokshar Panthaky and a chorus “We are the champions” sung by a group of Zarathushti youth.

All winners received their well earned gold, silver and bronze





## medal winners at the Ninth Zarathushti Games

*The logo design by Zeenia Mizan, and the farohar motif, was engraved on the gold, silver and bronze medals.*

### Track

#### Women's 100 meters

1. Kainaz Mistry Mumbai
2. Havovie Suraliwalla Vancouver
3. Parizad Hathidaru Vancouver

#### Men's 100 meters

1. Spencer Karanjia Karachi
2. Keyarash Jahanian Kansas City
3. Jamshid Khodavandi Woodland Hill

#### Youth's 100 meters

1. Darius Roohani Las Vegas
2. Arash Roohani Las Vegas
3. Ferehdoon Kavoosian Vancouver

#### Women's 400 meters

1. Guita Yazdani Vancouver
2. Kainaz Mistry Mumbai
3. Parizad Hathidaru Vancouver

#### Men's 400 meters

1. Spencer Karanjia Karachi
2. Jamshid Khodavandi Woodland Hill
3. Jehangir Meherkhodavandi Los Angeles

#### Youth's 400 meters

1. Darius Roohani Las Vegas
2. Arash Roohani Las Vegas
3. Ferehdoon Kavoosian Vancouver

#### Women's 1600 meters

1. Shirin Farrahi Vancouver
2. Afrooz Demehri Vancouver
3. Roxana Gowharrizi Los Angeles

#### Men's 1600 meters

1. Jamshid Khodavandi Woodland Hill
2. Jehangir Meherkhodavandi Los Angeles
3. Farzad Kasad Vancouver

### Track: Relay

1. Keyarash Jahanian
1. Jamshid Khodavandi

### 1. Jehangir Meherkhodavandi

1. Sam Farkhondeh
2. Afrooz Demehri
2. Godrej Umrigar
2. Spenser Karanjia
2. Kaizan Irani
3. Havovie Suraliwalla
3. Shaydin Gustasp
3. Parizad Hathidaru
3. Farzad Kasad

### Badminton - Women

1. Armin Bozorg Vancouver
2. Roneesha Ghagat Vancouver
3. Shayain Gostasp Canada

### Badminton - Men

1. Arzan Ghagat Vancouver
2. Firdaus Irani San Diego
3. Shahram Rostami Vancouver

### Table Tennis - Women

1. Armin Bozorg Vancouver
2. Homa Kameh Toronto
3. Afrouz Demehri Vancouver

### Table Tennis - Men

1. Mehernoush Kasad Vancouver
2. Zain Mavalvala Vancouver
3. Arzan Ghagat Vancouver

### Swimming: Individual

#### Women's 50 meters Freestyle

1. Taraneh Bastani San Diego
2. Leila Kiamanesh Los Angeles
3. Shirin Kiani Vancouver

#### Men's 50 meters Freestyle

1. Kaveh Bastani San Diego
2. Spencer Karanjia Karachi
3. Kaizan Irani Karachi

#### Women's 100 meters Freestyle

1. Taraneh Bastani San Diego

2. Shirin Kiani Vancouver

3. Shayain Gustasp Vancouver

#### Men's 100 meters Freestyle

1. Kaveh Bastani San Diego
2. Kaizan Irani Karachi
3. Arya Zartusht Iranpoor Vancouver

#### Youth's 50 meters

1. Diba Zomorodi Los Angeles
2. Fereydoon Kavoosian Vancouver
3. Darius Roohani Las Vegas

### Swimming: Relay

1. Fereydoon Irani
1. Bijan Khosravi
1. Spencer Karanjia
1. Taraneh Bastani
2. Shirin Kiani
2. Arya Zartusht Iranpoor
2. Kaveh Bastani
2. Kaizan Irani

### Basketball

**First Place:** LA Champions (Los Angeles): Sam Namiri (captain), Soroosh Amanat, Bahman Farkhondeh, Arsham Dianat, Kourosh Dianat, Mehran Namiri, Ryan Namiri, Sima Namiri.

**Second Place:** Azar (Vancouver): Mehraban Poulad-Noshiravan (captain), Rishad Daruwalla, Jamiel Djam-torki, Kourosh Edalati, Ashkan Zomorodi, Cyrus Mizan, Azadmehr Kaviani.

**Third Place:** Asha (Vancouver): Vanda Pourbahrami (captain), Farbod Abtin, Babak Bahrami, Farhad Mehrkhodavand, Farhad Rahnamoon, Navid Nobakht.

### Volleyball

**First Place:** Bachehayeh (Los Angeles): Negar Demehri, Sam Farkhondeh, Neema Mehrkhodavandi, Alborz Zainabadi, Alvand Zainabadi, Mehraban A.

**Second Place:** Mehr (S. California): Rostam Akhtarkhavari, Kamiar Soroosh, Daryush Bastani, Kaveh Bastani, Rita Bastani, Taraneh Bastani, Jehangir Mehrkhodavandi, Kiumars Zerehpoush.

**Third Place:** VBA (Pakistan, Vancouver, Germany): Afrooz Demehri, Shayain Gustasp, Armin Djamashb, Kaizan Irani, Spencer Karanjia, Godrej Umrigar.



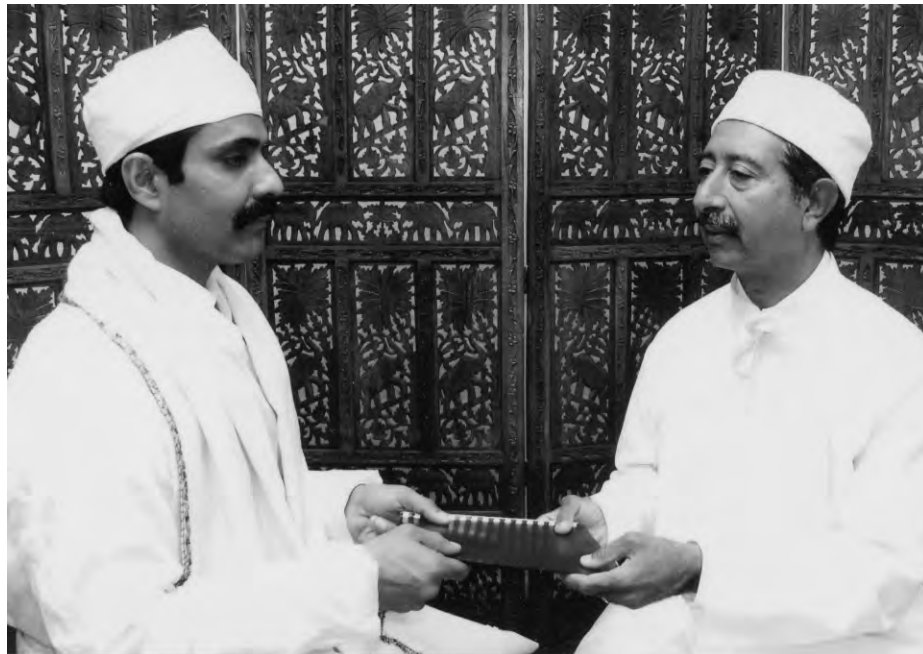


*Bijan Khosraviani at the Closing Ceremonies*

medals, to cherish the memories of the Ninth Zarathushti Games and all volunteers received beautiful roses courtesy of the Zoroastrian Sports Committee.

Finally, the Ninth Zarathushti Games was declared closed by Homi Italia. A jar with a lit candle was passed on by Neeku Amanat of Vancouver to Andia Dianat of Los Angeles as a symbol of good will for the 10th Zarathushti Games to be held in Los Angeles, California, in July 2006.

*[Games results and photos (mostly by Afreed Mistry) from [www.zsbc.org](http://www.zsbc.org)]*



## Maneck Bhujwala initiated as Mobedyar

At a meeting of the Zoroastrian Association of California, at the California Zoroastrian Center in Westminster, Southern California, on June 6, 2004, Maneck Bhujwala [right] was formally initiated as an ordained mobedyar by Mobed Zarir Bhandara [left], after a jashan to celebrate the gahambar.

Similar to Hinduism, Zarathushti priesthood is usually hereditary, but due to shortage of practicing priests, the North American Mobed Council has started training lay Zarathushtis, giving them the title of 'mobedyar.' The trainees are able to perform basic religious rituals like jashans, mukhtad and funeral prayers.

Mr. Bhujwala was born and raised in Bombay, came to USA in 1965 for graduate studies in engineering, and worked as a software manager. He attended NAMC training in Washington DC, in 1998, and then performed ritual ceremonies for the community in Northern California. He is a co-founder of Society for Rapid Advancement of India and Zoroastrian Associations in Southern and Northern California. He has written numerous articles in Indian and American newspapers educating readers about Parsis and the religion of Zarathushtra, appeared on radio and TV talk shows, given lectures at Zarathushti, Indian and interfaith conferences, conducted religion classes, and was on the Stanford University Associated Religions board. He now lives in Southern California with wife Mahrukh and daughter Shehnaz.

Mobed Zarir Bhandara, who performed the official initiation of Mobedyar Bhujwala has served the Southern California Zarathushti community as a dedicated priest for many years. ■

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*Er. Parvez Dastoor with community members in Farmington, Missouri*

## First ever jashan celebrated in Farmington, Missouri

### **HAMAZOR! HAMAZOR BAAD!**

The first ever community jashan was celebrated “*Undar America, Farmington, Shaherastan*” on “*Roz Pak Mubarak: Teshtar Tir, Mah Mubarak: Dae Dadar*” (May 29.)

Over 46 Parsis and friends attended this ceremony where [Ha 31]:

Athra vachem baraiti,  
va ahya zeredacha manangacha ...

***Each lifts his voice to proclaim  
his faith, according to his own  
heart and mind ...***

We thank Dadgar Dadar Ahura Mazda for its success, and would like to share how closely the community stood together to make this a truly happy and joyous occasion. .

After an early morning ‘*satum*’ the jashan started with **everyone** saying the opening prayer:

Ya paak Dadgar Dadar Ahura Mazda,  
Kera gaah roz shaheryari, kesh pirozgar baad! Yatha ahu vairyo (do).

The crowd also chanted 21 *Yatha ahu vairyo* and 12 *Ashem vohu* at the end of *Afrin-e-haft Ameshaspandan*, then the *loban mukti vakhate bhanvana avesta* and for those who were still interested, an English rendition of the *Afrin-e-Buzorgan* (elders) and *Afrin-e-haft Ameshashpands* (*hamkara*). After that the *zoti* and the *raspi* led in performing the ritualistic dual handshake with every member of the congregation, saying “Hamazor! Hamazor baad!”

All went well, so well indeed, that some are now thinking of learning more of our prayers and some want to take a *nahn* the next time they visit Mumbai.

Our house is quiet now. Everyone has gone to their homes safe and sound, with one definite thought in mind: We have to do this again on Memorial Day 2005, with only one difference – this time with **six** mobeds praying, all together in unison, in one voice, over **three** afarghans and a spread that is **ten feet** long. We look forward to our learned and loved community members for suggestions and good wishes for this undertaking and, as always, everyone is welcome.

Till next time: “*va geti nek baad*” (May the world be good to you).

**TANDAROSTI AND KHUDA HAFIZ!**

*Children of the  
Bakhtavar and Shavaksha  
Dastoor family*

*Farmington, Missouri  
jjbean@jcn1.com*





*Yasmin Kevala [seated, to right of club sign] with group of Zarathushtis at Sun City Center in Florida*

## SCC Getaway - a fun time for fifty Zarathushtis

After the FEZANA AGM in May, close to 50 Zarathushtis from all over North America enjoyed the 3-day program at Sun City Center (SCC) in Florida.

**The 3-day getaway.** It was an intensive experience, starting with a tour bus ride through Tampa, Bay Shore and St. Petersburg, and ending at the SCC Inn. Immediately, we were whisked over to get an overview of the Sun City community, stopping at the brand new Renaissance Club [photo above], with state-of-the-art health club facilities.

The gourmet dinner that evening was at the SCC country club. Entertainment included a Parsi skit by Bomi and Bachi Damkevala and spontaneous karaoke sessions by Soli Dastur and Homi Gandhi, among others.

Hoshedar Tamboli talked about his experiences as a heart specialist at SCC and living in the Tampa Bay area; and Rustom Kevala and Tehmina Jamaspian gave their takes on the area. Firdosh Mehta thanked the organizers and regaled the group with his jokes.

Our sponsors and myself had put together this 3-day getaway. They tried to accommodate us wherever possible. We do need to thank the sponsors Ron Cress of WCI and Joy and Jay Sparkman, the in-house brokers.

The next morning, after breakfast at the Golf and Racquet Club, we saw the model homes and visited Mira Bay, a new waterfront development. Most homes have direct access to canals that lead to Tampa Bay. Mod-

erate priced condominiums are also available. Again there was a sumptuous lunch for us. We then saw some pre-owned homes, toured the surrounding areas and sampled the recreation and health facilities. Some went to St. Petersburg beaches or to dine at the revolving Holiday Inn restaurant – both have spectacular sunset views. The third day some of us took the Sarasota harbor lunch cruise [photo next page]. A few couples stayed for almost a week exploring and relaxing.

My intention was to give an overall picture of the opportunities at SCC, and a feel for the Tampa Bay-Sarasota area from what Rustom and I had gathered over a period of 2 years.

**Comments.** I am very encouraged by most of the comments I have



Some members of the group enjoying the Sarasota harbor lunch cruise.

## Gahambar in memory of Shahzad Dorabshaw



About 65 people from Zarathushti families attended the annual gahambar of the ZAKOI (Zoroastrian Association of Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana) on June 26th at the Civitan Club in Fairfield, Ohio.

The gahambar was dedicated to the memory of Shahzad Dorabshaw [photo above], who passed away in June 2003 at the young age of 34.

Besides his family members, from Canada and Columbus, Ohio, other families also came, from various cities in Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana.

The function began with a *humbandagi* (group prayer) and observance of a moment of silence to show our respect for Shahzad.

Families brought *dhansakh*, *kavabs*, vegetarian dishes, and ice-cream, that was shared and enjoyed by everyone. There were trivia and bingo, and other fun activities for all.

ZAKOI organizes 3 to 4 functions each year which enables Zarathushtis from cities in the three States to meet and enjoy one another's company.

All are welcome to come to future ZAKOI gahambars.

Bakhtavar Desai  
President, ZAKOI  
bfdesai@aol.com

received and would like to share them with you.

An ideal place to retire – decent prices and quality homes built by the builder who was declared America's Best Builder in 2004.

Attractive summer climate. Comfortable and secure, good for Canadians to get away from the winter.

SCC reminded me of Bombay, with its hot sun, its greenery, the breeze (like Marine Drive) and the friendly residents.

Maybe the Hong Kong Parsi community should also look into it.

Suitable for the elderly, with easy transition from independent to assisted living if needed.

Just great – fitness centers, swimming pools, tennis courts, golf courses and manifold activities. I

would even encourage my daughter to start her dentist practice here. Thanks for the vision you have for our community. That is exactly what is needed for us to settle in this beautiful country.

Now it is up to these 50 attendees to give their first hand information to other Zarathushtis. Several said that they would move there after about 10 families move there. We have made a start. Rustom and I plan to move there sometime next year. Actually, there are already a few Zarathushti families living within a 30 mile radius.

I would be happy to arrange the Preferred Guest Invitation for others to visit SCC whenever they get the urge to explore Florida.

Yasmin Kevala  
yaskeval@aol.com  
Tel. (301)765 0793

## Seminar on Social Justice and Ethics in NY

In celebration of the UNESCO-declared "3000th Anniversary of Zoroastrian Culture", the Zarathushti community of Greater New York presented a seminar, "Social Justice and Ethics in Zoroastrian Law and Thought" on April 25th at Arbab Rustom Guiv Darbe Mehr in New York, moderated by **Khorshed Jungalwala**, chair of FEZANA Publications. Featured speakers were **Kaikhosrov D. Irani**, Prof. Emeritus, CUNY, **P. Oktor Skjaervo**, Aga Khan Professor of Iranian Studies, Harvard University and **H. Zvi Szubin**, professor at Hebrew University of Jerusalem and CUNY. This topic will be covered in the Summer 2005 issue of FEZANA Journal with guest editor Suzie Karani.



# Mega-celebration in Singapore

Zarathushtis of Singapore and Hong Kong commemorate the Golden Jubilee of the Parsi Zoroastrian Association of South East Asia - Singapore, and the UNESCO-declared 3,000th Anniversary of Zoroastrian Culture

By Roshan Rivetna, based on  
a report by Noshir Lam

*First Day Cover  
issued on the  
occasion of the  
50th anniversary  
of the Singapore  
association. PHOTO  
COURTESY NOSHIR LAM*



The President of the Republic of Singapore, **His Excellency Mr. S. R. Nathan**, was Guest of Honor at a gala event at the Holiday Inn Park View in Singapore, on May 29th, for the double celebration – the Golden Jubilee of the Parsi Zoroastrian Association of South East Asia and the UNESCO-declared 3,000th anniversary of Zoroastrian Culture.

The gala dinner, a delectable Parsi spread by a chef specially flown in from Mumbai, was enjoyed by dignitaries and over 150 Parsis of Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Australia, in formal dress – daglis and elegant silk gara saris.

**Russi Ghadiali**, president of the Singapore association, and the moving force behind the celebrations, notes: “The aim of this celebration is to share our unique Zoroastrian heritage and culture with fellow Singaporeans of all faiths, especially the youth and visitors to our island, in a joyous spirit of racial harmony.

“*Flame of the Faith – an Insight into the Parsi Zoroastrian Tradition*” an exhibition showcasing Zarathushti

art, culture and traditions, ran for two months starting May 28th, at the prestigious Asian Civilizations Museum on the Singapore waterfront. On display were treasured artifacts, many flown in from Mumbai, such as garas, embroidered *kors*, *jhablas*, old silver jewelry, coins, stamps, medals, kushti weaving, books, portraits and art works.

The exhibition was inaugurated by **Mr. Chan Soo Sen**, Minister of State, who paid glowing tributes to the community [see next page for text of his speech]. The Distinguished Guest was **Mr. Fali Nariman**, member of the Rajaya Sabha of India.

The ensuing two-day seminar featured eminent speakers: **Firoza Punthakey Mistree** of Mumbai (“Zoroastrian Culture – Ancient Threads”); president of the Hong Kong anjuman **Jal Shroff** (“History of Parsis in Hong Kong”), founder chair of the World Zarathushti Cul-

tural Foundation of Mumbai **Dr. Homi Dhalla** (“The Zarathushti View of Ecology”); **Khojeste Mistree**, founding trustee of Zoroastrian Studies, Mumbai (“*Bridging the Ancient World – Imperial Iran, History and Influence*”); president of the Singapore association **Russi Ghadiali** (“*History of Parsis in Singapore*”), a vice president of the World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce and of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman **Dadi Mistry** (“*Worldwide Zoroastrian Network*”); **Rusheed Wadia** (“*Colonial trade and Parsi Entrepreneurs*”); and author of *Parsi Zoroastrians on Stamps* **Noshir M. Lam** (“*History of Parsi Zoroastrians*”).

A First Day Cover [see photo above] as well as a handsome Souvenir Commemorative Volume were released on the occasion.

Full credit for the success of the celebrations goes to president Russi M. Ghadiali (rghadiali@irf.com) and his team, who are to be commended for bringing recognition and respect to the Zarathushti community.

[continued on next page]



*The Ancient Civilizations Museum, venue of the two-month “Flame of Faith” exhibit on Zoroastrian Art, Culture and Traditions, in Singapore.*

Recognition from Minister of State, Singapore

*Extracts from the speech of Singapore Minister of State Chan Soo Sen, at the inaugural of the “Flame of Faith” exhibition, on May 28th.*

“Parsi-Zoroastrians have demonstrated resilience over the last 1,300 years. Although only some 150,000 strong worldwide, you have established your presence throughout the world. In many countries your communities are very small, only numbering in the hundreds. However, you have somehow internalized the notion ‘Small is beautiful.’ Your small communities are highly cohesive. Their achievements are anything but small.

“Staying with much bigger communities, you managed to preserve your identity and religion over many generations. You have also done well, producing many successful businesspersons and professionals around the world. Those who are successful have also shown strong spirit of giving. Their beneficiaries include many outside the Parsi-Zoroastrian community.

**“I like the theme of your exhibition: ‘The Flame of Faith.’ In a dark room, even a small flame lights the place up and helps us see. Despite the strong winds that always come, your flame of faith kept going, generation after generation. Indeed you have brought your flame to many parts of the world, to continue to light up the dark nights of your communities.”**

“The Singaporean Parsi-Zoroastrian community told me you have been considering a Fire Temple for some time now. It is not going to be easy. You have to mobilize support from your community. You have to comply with government regulations. However, if you truly want it, you should work for it. If there is a will, there is a way. If you need to communicate with government regulatory authorities, I will be happy to assist you.”

*Chan Soo Sen*

*Minister of State, Ministry of Education and  
Ministry of Community Development and Sports*

Participation invited for UN Commission on the Status of Women

The forty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) will be held February 28 - March 11, 2005, at the UN Headquarters in New York. The Commission will be focusing on two thematic issues:

(i) Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/index.html>).

(ii) Current challenges and forward-looking strategies for the advancement and empowerment of women and girls.

Zarathushtis interested in participating with the FEZANA UN/NGO team, 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)).

Stained-glass window at Unitarian Church

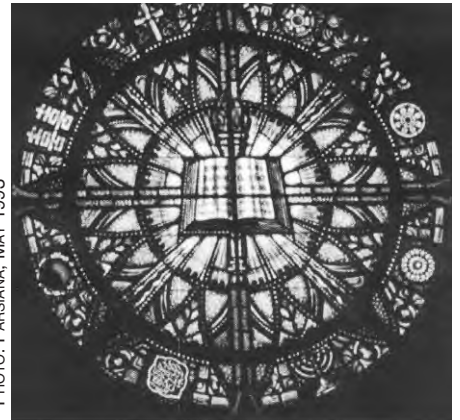


PHOTO: PARSIANA, MAY 1993

The symbols of all major religions are portrayed on the stained-glass window at the First Unitarian Universalist Church in Syracuse, NY. The Christian cross appears on the top left, the Islamic Koran on the left bottom, the Jewish menorah (candlestand) on the right bottom, the Hindu and Buddhist religious symbols also appear on the left and right of the circle. The Zarathushti symbol of ‘fire’ appears in the center, behind the book. [Courtesy ZAMWI newsletter, July 2004, photo: Shahrokh Mehta, Syracuse, New York]





*At a kibbutz in Jerusalem: Maharukh Patel [center] and Viloo Darukhanawalla [far right] with other Chicago area women on the trip to Israel sponsored by the Women's Federation for World Peace.*

## Israel meeting for world peace

Over 600 women from 33 countries gather in Israel to bring peace to the world "with a mother's heart"

History would suggest that Israel sits at the crossroads of humanity. Its beautiful landscape unfolds stories as far back as people can remember. Since then, three major religions of the world will claim the land is sacred to them. While the region's infrastructure, architecture, and even personal attitudes have been marred by centuries of distress and destruction, its spiritual zeal is far from blemished.

Recognizing the fortitude of that zeal, a group of 622 women from 33 distant countries harmoniously joined hands, meeting in Israel with the intention to help pacify the enmity among the people of the Holy Land. United together from May 21st to May 29th this caring group of women brought with them "a mother's heart" in hopes of furthering the peace process in Israel and the rest of the Middle East.

As two Zarathushti ladies from Chicago, Viloo Darukhanawalla and

I were sponsored by the Women's Federation for World Peace to join other women in hopes of quelling the existing animosity within the region.

While our days were filled with peace-taking initiatives and voluntary service, hearing the personal stories of the Israeli and Palestinian people is what touched us most deeply. Noticing their struggle compelled us to work even harder in anticipation of securing a more promising future for them. During our eight days, all the women were able to accomplish more than any one of us thought. Nevertheless, it made us realize how much more there is to do.

At the end of our trip, we women reminisced about how we spent those few days working together, laughing together, learning together, and praying together with the hope that someday "with a mother's heart" together we can all bring peace.

*- by Maharukh Dara Patel*

## Interfaith Ministries visits Houston center

About 110 women from the Interfaith Ministries of Houston visited the Zarathushti Heritage and Cultural Center in Houston, on January 22.

The visitors were given a tour of the Center, the Sunday School classroom and the library and viewed a power-point presentation on "Who are the Zoroastrians?" Dinner was followed by discussions among the women on their varying experiences as women of different faiths.



"I heard nothing but praise – from how beautiful our Center looked, to how delicious the food was, and especially how wonderful it was to meet so many

Zoroastrians and to learn about our ancient faith," writes Yasmin Pavri, "I hope we can continue to attend IM functions and increase our visibility in the greater Houston community."

*[From ZAH Newsletter]*

## The Magi come to Harrow, London

The 50th Anniversary of the London Borough of Harrow (where the new Zoroastrian Center is located), was celebrated with a week-long Interfaith Festival organized by the Harrow Interfaith Council.



Highlight of the celebrations was a lecture by ZTFE trustee Noshir Avari [left] on "The Magi Come to Harrow", on June 29th, at the Harrow Museum and Heritage Center. Mr. Avari's 45-minute talk on the Zarathushti religion and the Zarathushti contribution to public life in Britain and elsewhere, enthralled the large audience. The Mayor of Harrow attended the lecture and requested copies of the lecture be kept in the libraries of all schools in Harrow.

*Source: ZTFE Newsletter*



## Parliament of the Worlds Religions, Barcelona 2004

Religious leaders and lay people convene in Montserrat and Barcelona in a celebration of religious and cultural diversity and to develop commitments to address religious violence and other critical societal issues of our times.



### ASSEMBLY OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS MONTSERRAT, JULY 4-7

The mountaintop abbey at Montserrat ("serrated mountain") a 2-hour bus ride from Barcelona, Spain, was an idyllic setting for the 3-day (July 4-7) pre-Parliament Assembly of Religious Leaders.

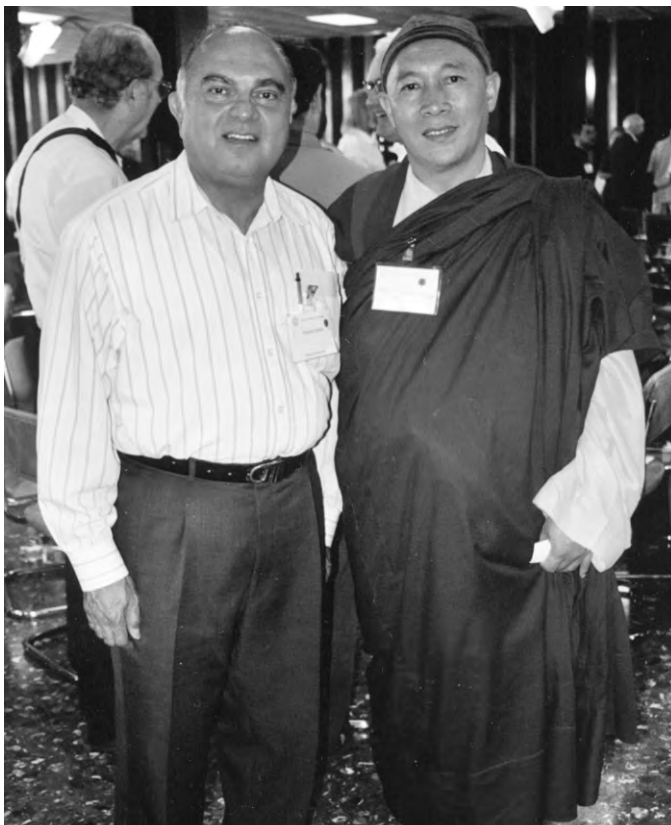
Among the 300 leaders at the Montserrat Assembly were Malcolm Deboo (London, UK), Dr. Homi Dhalla (Mumbai), Firdosh Mehta (Calgary, Alberta), Khojeste Mistree (Mumbai), Prof. Dr. Meher Master Moos (Mumbai), and two youth delegates, Minoo Jokhi (Mumbai) and Suzie Karani (Chicago), coordinated by Rohinton Rivetna (Chicago) who is a founding trustee of the Parliament of the World's Religions. Unfortunately Mobed Mehraban Firouzgary of Tehran and Er. Godrej Sidhwa of Karachi, were unable to come due to visa problems.





Over three intensive days of group interactions and workshops, the Montserrat Assembly developed a set of ‘Commitments’ centered on the issues of religiously motivated and targeted violence, access to safe water, the fate of refugees worldwide, and the elimination of developing countries’ debts. These were explored further at the ensuing Parliament.

*At the Montserrat Assembly, clockwise from left: Malcolm Deboo; Zarathushtis with elders of the Maya Tribe of Guatemala; Dr. Meher Master Moos and youth delegate Suzie Karani with Buddhist monks from China; monastery and hotel buildings nestled amidst the awesome grandeur of the craggy mountains; Homi Dhalla and Rohinton Rivetna with Marcus Braybrooke of Oxford, UK, president of the World Congress of Faiths, who might well be called the “father of the interreligious movement”; Khojeste Mistree with Rev. Dr. Clark Lobenstine, executive director of The Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington; and Firdosh Mehta with Dharma Master Hsin Tao, the inspiration behind the noted Museum of World Religions in Taiwan.*





*The "Forum" convention center in Barcelona, venue of the 2004 Parliament*

## 2004 PARLIAMENT OF THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS JULY 7-13, 2004

Over 8,000 persons of diverse religions and cultures, from 33 nations, came to Barcelona, Spain, July 7-13, for the fourth Parliament of the World's Religions, following the first Parliament in Chicago (1893), the centennial celebrations in Chicago (1993) and the third event in Capetown (1999).

The event, sponsored by the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions (Chicago) in partnership with the Forum of Cultures Barcelona 2004 and The UNESCO Centre of Catalonia, was held at the *Forum* convention center and plaza on a 100-acre public park on the Mediterranean Sea.

Unlike the 1893 Parliament, where the eastern religions were introduced for the first time to the established Judeo-Christian religions of the west, the 2004 Parliament was a celebration of diversity, with participants from most major (eastern and western) religions plus hundreds of faith traditions and spiritual communities.

**Theme.** The theme of the Parliament "*Pathways to Peace: the Wisdom of Listening, the Power of Commitment*" sought to provide a forum for



*Jewish elder; Hindu delegates with His Holiness Maheshwarananda; Rusi Dalal [right] at morning prayer observance conducted by Khojeste Mistree.*



*Malcolm Deboo at the exhibit booth with Rashna and Firdosh Mehta, Rusi Dalal, Nicholas Davidson, Susie Karani and Roshan Dalal; Christian Monk and nun; delegate from China at the exhibit booth.*





coming together to “foster mutual understanding and respect, learn to live in harmony in the midst of diversity ... seek peace, justice and sustainability, and actively commit to work for a better world.”

Zarathushti participation at Barcelona included all the Montserrat delegates plus Rashna Mehta (Calgary, Alberta), Rusi and Roshan Dalal (London, UK) and Perviz Randeria (San Francisco). Contact was also made with the sole Zarathushti resident of Barcelona, Marzban Cooper [photo above].

**Program.** The Parliament day began with Morning Observances. Homi Dhalla, Khojeste Mistree and Meher Master Moos, each led a Zarathushti morning observance with recitation of prayers, kushti and explanations.

Participants could then select from a plethora of parallel presentations, workshops and seminars. Morning programs focussed on intra- and interreligious encounter, dialogue and understanding. Afternoon programs focussed on engagement and cooperation in addressing critical issues. Late afternoons were reserved for Open Space dialogue and working sessions.



*Russian Orthodox Pere Barsanuphe of the WCRP, France; Homi Dhalla with Ephraim Isaac, president of the Yemenite Jewish Federation of America, NY.*



*Open air concert at the magnificent Sagrada Familia Temple, the life's work of architect Gaudi, begun in 1883, and still in progress; Christian nun.*



*Panel: Rivetna, Karani, Mistree, Mehta, Dhalla, Deboo, Minoo Jokhi and Meher Master Moos; Rivetna with Mahdi Tehrani, prof. of Islamic Law at Qum, Iran and Mohammad Karimian, Consul at the Iranian Embassy in Spain.*



*Mistree [standing] leading the Open Forum session on Zoroastrianism*

Notable among the dozen or more presentations/panels in which Zarathushtis participated were: a panel on Zoroastrianism [*previous page*], a talk “*Relevance of Zoroastrianism*” by Khojeste Mistree, and panels on “*Interreligious Dialogue*” and “*Peace Initiatives*” led by Homi Dhalla. FEZANA and ZTFE shared an exhibit booth [*previous page*] in the Exhibition Hall.

The Sikhs of Birmingham, UK, offered a delicious vegetarian lunch (*‘langar’*) daily for 10,000 people in tents on the seafront.

**Evening Plenaries.** The most memorable among the daily evening plenary programs, which featured notable speakers (Shirin Ebadi, Mahatma Gandhi’s granddaughter, the Mayor and Archbishop of Barcelona, and UNESCO officials) and entertainment, was the soul-stirring “*Sacred Music Concert*” outdoors at Barcelona’s famous “*Sagrada Familia*” [*photo previous page*]. Zarathushtis were honored to present a blessing at the Closing Plenary [*photo below*].

The Parliament has established a network of grass roots support with partner cities and civic organizations around the world, to facilitate implementation of the Parliament Commitments.

- by Roshan Rivetna  
[Visit [www.cpwr.org](http://www.cpwr.org) for more on the Parliament].



*Sufi Muslim Sheikh Abdul Bukhari, head of the Uzbek Cultural Center, Jerusalem and Eliyahu McLean, a Jew from Jerusalem; Hindu guru; Prelates of the Christian Essenian (Dead Sea Scrolls community) Church, Germany.*



*Khojestee Mistree [center] chanted the “Zoroastrian Blessing” – Ashem Vohu, Vohuman and Yatha Ahu Vairyo, concluding with the Hamazor handshake, at the Closing Ceremonies in the Edifici Forum Auditorium.*



# Re-enacting the Zarathushti Exodus

Retired Indian Navy officer Capt. Contractor dreams of re-enacting the voyage of 1300 years ago from Hormuzd to Diu – a defining moment in Zarathushti history.

The brainchild of Capt. Sohrab Contractor, of Mumbai, *Project Zarathushti Exodus*, will re-enact that first migratory voyage made by the forefathers of the Parsis, over a millennium ago, from the Iranian port of Hormuzd to Sanjan in India. Contractor plans to sail, with a crew of 25-30 Zarathushtis in two boats, constructed as exact replicas of the Persian trading vessels of those days.

**The original voyage.** Based on very sketchy historical data (mostly from the “*Kisseh-i-Sanjan*” written in 1600 CE) the original voyage was made between the 8th and 10th century. The generally accepted date of the landing in Sanjan is now said to be 735 CE.

Being good mariners and being familiar with the trading sea routes to the Malabar coast of India, the Iranian Zarathushtis decided to set sail towards the West Coast of India. The first batch of 5-7 boats, with about 150 men, women and children, made the voyage from a small river port on the southern shores of Iran called Minab, across from the island of Hormuzd.

They initially landed on the island of Diu on the south-western edge of the Saurashtra coast, stayed there for 19 years, and then moved further south. At some stage in their voyage, their boats were caught in a great storm, which they just managed to survive. Thereafter they anchored off the south Gujarat coast where the benevolent Jadiv Rana gave them shelter. They named this place Sanjan.

**Building replicas of Persian sailing vessels.** Lacking any precise data, the first step has been to establish the type of boats used, their design and



construction. Contractor's research shows that the Persians had been trading with India by the sea route before 500 BCE. Most of the Persian boats were built with teak wood, coir rope and resins for glue, from the Malabar coast of India. The Persians had known ship-building techniques of the Greeks, Phoenicians and Romans, who introduced new aspects of boat design, such as use of nails in the construction. Their boats were 70-80 feet long, and “double-ended”, very close in design to the Indian ‘dhows’ [photo above]. All

accounts also point to a similarity in the masts and rigging of the boats.

Contractor has been in touch with noted naval architect Colin Mudie who will provide the design and drawings for a replica. He will then carefully select a master builder at one of the traditional dhow-building yards in India.

The building is expected to take about 9 months. When the boat is ready he plans to provision the boat and sail her with a basic crew from Mumbai to Hormuzd. In the next stage he will sail with the full Zarathushti crew from Hormuzd to Diu; land at Diu, stay for 2-3 days, provision the boat and sail for Sanjan.

Contractor plans to document the voyage on film and publish a book on the adventure.

Besides his great desire to see this project through, Capt. Contractor is also eminently qualified: he served in the Indian Navy for 25 years, and was national sailing champion,

South Asian sailing champion, and bronze medal winner in the Asian Games.

**Estimated budget.** The project cost of each boat is over Rs. 1,00,00,000 (\$200,000). Persons interested in any aspect of this project – research, joining as crew, or as photographer/filmmaker, or to sponsor the project or make a donation, please contact Capt. S. J. Contractor, 11/4 Rustom Baug, Byculia, Mumbai 400 027, tel: 91-22-2371 4209, email: mainstay55 @hotmail.com.

- By Roshan Rivetna

## Ancestral Zarathushti roots in Uzbekistan

*Celebrating Khordad Sal in Tashkent: students at the Zarathushti school, with Rustam Abdukamilov [inset and in white shirt in top photo], Avestan teacher and leader of the Zoroastrian Anjuman in Uzbekistan*

vision of Asho Zarathushtra are gaining popularity. The Shah Nameh and the Avestan Gathas have been translated into the Uzbek, Russian and Tajik versions of the Persian language.

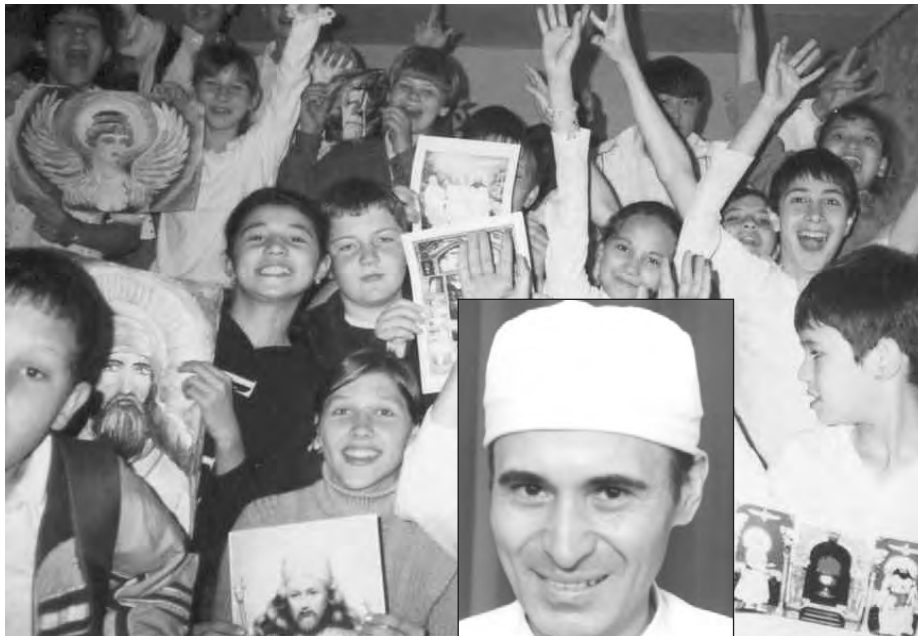
Mathematicians, physicians and astronomers like Kharazmi and Biruni have safeguarded Zoroastrian principles and, based on these principles, have made important discoveries.

Abdukamilov is lecturer of Avesta and Avestan language in the Tashkent State Institute of Oriental Studies, and an Avestan researcher. He has organized seminars, published papers including an Avestan dictionary and spoken about the teachings of Zarathushtra, the Gathas and the Avesta, on national TV and radio.

“We invite all of you your colleagues and friends to visit our website at [www.avesta.org.ru](http://www.avesta.org.ru) and also visit us,” he writes, “there are many ancient Zarathushtrian temples in Tashkent, and you can enjoy the hospitality of Uzbekistan.” ■

*By Roshan Rivetna, based on a posting by Khodayar Attai on the e-group [creatingawareness@yahoo.com](mailto:creatingawareness@yahoo.com), and subsequent communications with Rustam Abdukamilov, [spanta4@tut.by](mailto:spanta4@tut.by).*

*For more on Zarathushti roots in Uzbekistan, see FEZANA Journal Fall 1999.*



Abdukamilov mentions that

by official estimate, more than six million schoolchildren and students need the Avesta books and millions in Uzbekistan are interested in “Avesta and the Mazdayasni Zarathushtri Daena” and have “great faith, firm love and devotion for the Zarathushti religion.”

Uzbekistan has Zarathushti cultural roots for thousands of years. Even after the Arab invasion, Uzbekistan kept their Zarathushti roots alive.

Nouruz and Mehrgan are two important official festivals that are celebrated with traditional customs. Nouruz has been declared a first national and state holiday

Poets like Roodaki, Daghighi and Firdowsi, whose works are based on the

Rustam Abdukamilov, Avesta teacher and leader of the “Zoroastrian Anjuman” in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, writes that there are 400 students studying Avesta in his school, some of whom can read, write and even speak the Avestan language.

“I’d specially like to mention our young schoolgirl Anna Mavlichenko, who, after beginning to learn the Avestan language, excelled in school and placed first in her mathematics class, and student Andrey Kubatin who won first place in the Republic Linguistic Olympiad.” Almost all students are native speakers of different Indo-European languages, mostly Russian. Some know English as well.





*Rostam Vahidi [center] is initiated as a mobed, at a Nozooti ceremony in Tehran. He is flanked by Mobed Mehraban Firouzgary [left] and Mobed Pedram Sorooshpoor [right].*  
[PHOTO COURTESY MEHRAN SEPEHRI]

## Rostam Vahidi is initiated as mobed in Tehran

In a most beautiful ceremony in the early morning, on Friday, the eighth of Khordad at the Tehran Adaryan, Mr. Rostam Vahidi underwent the *Nozooti* ceremony to become a full mobed. Led by twelve mobeds, as the gathered crowd cheered, Vahidi, crowned and covered with a mouth-mask, and dressed in all-white priestly dress, was pronounced a Zarathushti mobed.

This is the highest rank and honor a Zarathushti can achieve. Rostam Vahidi has completed multi-year studies and passed the examination by the Mobed Council. He comes from a Mobed family, and has served as a religion teacher at the Fravahar organization for the past thirty years. He is about to complete a PhD degree in ancient cultures and languages from Tehran University.

While Mr. Vahidi was in a group of mobeds tending the fire and reading yashts all morning, a celebration was organized in the adjoining Khosravi hall by the Tehran Zoroastrian Anjuman, where over 400 Zarathushtis came to share in the happy occasion. A dinner celebration followed at the Fravahar organization.

Vahidi is the 68th mobed since Kankash Mobedan was formally formed and registered.

[From posting by Mehran Sepehri on creating awareness@yahooogroups.com]

## Election for Tehran Zoroastrian Anjuman

About 1,000 Zarathushtis of Tehran cast their ballots last May for the 40th term of the Executive Board of the Tehran Zoroastrian Anjuman. Officers elected are:

Mobedyar Rashid Khorshidian  
Sargent Rostam Khosraviani  
Mrs. Nepton Nikanjam  
Dr. Fariborz Ganji  
Mr. Farhad Kashavarzi  
Mr. Shahbahrām Siroosi  
Mr. Alayar Daneshmand  
Mrs. Nooshin Faramarzian  
Mrs. Farangis Kaviani

Reserves are:

Dr. Mehran Sepehri  
Mr. Keykhosro Kiani  
Mr. Esfandiar Behzadi

[From a posting by Faranak Artanejad on creatingawareness@yahooogroups.com]

## 24th annual Games at Marker, Tehran Pars

Over 700 athletes from Tehran, Kerman, Yazd, Shiraz, Isfahan and other cities, registered for the 24th Annual Games. The 5-day meet at Marker, in Tehran Pars, drew over 1500 spectators.

The Opening Ceremonies began with a beautiful rendition of “Gu Ashem Vahu, Khan Yatha Ahu” played by the official marching band of the Iran Armed Forces. The games were dedicated to Zarathushtis killed in the Iran-Iraq war, and pictures of 15 martyrs were paraded as the Iranian national anthem was played.

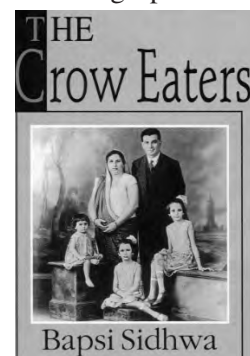
Entertainment included Shahnameh recitals and a disco party sponsored by the Zoroastrian Women’s Organization in Tehran.

[From a posting by Mehran Sepehri on creatingawareness@yahooogroups.com]

## Art gallery in Lahore

Bapsi Sidhwa has an art gallery named after her famed

autobiographical novel *The Crow Eaters*. The gallery offers creativity and excellence in indigenous arts and crafts. It provides an avenue of expression to talented artists and artisans of



Lahore. The charming and historical building belongs to Minoo Bhandara, Bapsi’s brother, who wanted to preserve their 150 year-old-ancestral home. The gallery started in 1999 and has had over fifty exhibitions.

[From a posting by Aban Rustomji on creatingawareness@yahooogroups.com]



*Mobeds Peshotan  
Katrak, Beghzad  
Bana, Karl Desai  
and Homeher Bana,  
celebrating jashan at  
AZA House [above].*



PHOTO COURTESY SAM KERR

### Tenth anniversary of Sydney dar-e mehr

Zarathushtis in Sydney, Australia, celebrate the 10th anniversary of their new building – Arbab Guiv Dar-e Mehr along with their annual jashan, on July 24th.

Dancer and choreographer Astad Deboo, who is in Sydney this season, was invited as guest and took an active part in a tree planting ceremony.

“On our 10-acre plot we are singularly lucky to have a natural pond, fed constantly by underground water through seams in the layers of earth and rock underneath,” writes Sam Kerr, “While the adjoining plots are drying up due to Council water restrictions, we enjoy lush green grass and rows of newly planted additional shrubs and trees irrigated by pumped water from the pond.”

[Source: Sam Kerr]

### Cercle Zarathushtra, France, and UNESCO, celebrate JRD centenary

The birth centenary celebration of J. R. D. Tata, who was born in Paris on July 29, 1904 (and laid to rest alongside his father, Ratan Tata, at the Pere Lachaise cemetery in Paris) was commemorated with a program at UNESCO, Paris, in the presence of India’s consul general Shri Mohan Menon.

Among the tributes to JRD by dignitaries from around the world, was a presentation by L. Kamgar Parsi, founder of Cercle Zarathushtra, “From Ancient Persians to Modern Parsis” outlining “2500 years of the Zarathushti humanistic spirit, from Cyrus’ political empire to JRD’s economic empire.”

*Cercle Zarathushtra* is a Zarathushti cultural organization at BP 946, 75829 Paris Cedex 17, France, fax: 33 1 42 284963, Zarathushtra@spitama.org, www.spitama.org. [Source: creatingawareness@yahoo.com]



### Harrow councillors welcome new Zoroastrian Centre

The Tirgan gahambar was celebrated at the Zartoshty Brothers Hall at the new Zoroastrian Center [above], in the London Borough of Harrow, on July 1, 2004. The Mayor of Harrow, Cllr. Mrs. Lurline Champagne was guest of honor and won the hearts of the large Zarathushti audience when she boldly proclaimed, “I am Conservative, I am British and I am Black – and proud to be all three.” Several well-known Councillors of Harrow, and leaders of other religions also graced the occasion and accorded the Zarathushti community a very warm welcome to Harrow. A jashan by the Ervad Sahebs of UK and a sumptuous gahambar dinner, rounded out the gala function.

[Source: ZTFE newsletter]

### Three Tata centenary commemorations in London

On May 19th, the House of Tatas and ZTFE organized a jashan of remembrance at the ‘bungli’ in the Zoroastrian Cemetery in Brookwood, to mark the death centenary of Jamshetjee Nussarvanjee Tata, founder of the Tata conglomerate and the greatest Zarathushti industrialist of the last 200 years.

Mr. Anwar Hassan, managing director of Tata Limited and many members of the staff from the Tata Company in London, as well as a large number of Zarathushtis, attended the jashan ceremony to respect the memory of this great builder of modern India.

On June 29th, ZTFE held a jashan at Zoroastrian House to commemorate three Tata centenaries: the death anniversary of J. N. Tata, the birth centenary of JRD Tata and the birth centenary of Naval Tata.

Veteran Tata hand and ZTFE stalwart Minoo Kalifa led the ceremonial *loban* offering. WZCC-UK vice chairman Jimmy Contractor, as well as ZTFE president Dorab Mistry and trustees Noshir Avari and Dr. Firoze Munshi paid tribute to these three of the greatest Zarathushti entrepreneurs of all time. [Source: ZTFE Newsletter]





### New Nani Palkhivala Building

for Jadi Rana School in Sanjan  
A new 3-story “Nani Palkhivala Building” [above] was constructed in 2003 for the Jadi Rana School of Sanjan, from a Rs. 60 lakhs donation by the noted jurist’s nephew, Homi Ranina, chair of the Mazda Educational Foundation. Started by the MET in 1987, it was the first English medium school in Sanjan. Presently there are 755 students, of which 5 are Parsis.

This school is a fitting tribute to Nani Palkhivala as well as to Jadi Rana, who granted asylum to the Parsis in Sanjan, over 1000 years ago.

Source: Marzban Giara

### Fertility clinic – new BPP initiative

“History bears testimony to the fact that every community that achieves a high level of literacy also raises its levels of aspirations, which in turn leads to a gradual decline in the growth of its population” notes a communique from the Bombay Parsi Punchayet.

In an effort to curb the negative growth rate of Parsis, the BPP has announced a new initiative to provide professional help to Parsi couples in planning early families. A modern and well-equipped clinic has been set up in Central Mumbai, that will provide counseling, laboratory testing facilities and the services of a gynecologist.

The BPP urges young couples to avail of these facilities. Contact Dr. Anahita Pandole in Mumbai at 98 2013 0284. ■

## ■ ■ ■ ARCHEOLOGY ■ ■ ■



*Housing Iran’s oldest brick cupola, the Sarvestan Palace, in Fars province, has an entrance corridor (ivan), and a dome in the center of the building. It is made of brick, stone and plaster.*

## Archeologists discover temple in Sasanian palace

The discovery of a temple in Sarvestan Palace, one of the most awe-inspiring monuments of the Sasanian era (226 - 651 CE) sheds light on this period.

The Sarvestan Palace was built during the reign of Bahram Gur (The Zebra-Hunter, 420-438 CE) as a leisure mansion. Mehrnevisi, his well-known minister ordered the construction of this palace.

Initially archeologists could guess that there might be more structures in addition to the main palace. “The site was explored prior to the 1979 Islamic Revolution, after which the work stopped and we had no vivid picture of the palace,” said Amir Pirooz Daghoghi, head of the project. “The new research, however, has led us to unearth a temple and several constructs, adding more pieces to the puzzle.”

The presence of a temple beside the main palace clearly indicates the significance of Sarvestan during the Sasanian era, he added, further saying, “The sanctuary’s area is 900 square meters, pointing to the eminence of the palace complex in that era. We also believe the mansion served as a resort for high-ranking officials and other dignitaries.”

The Sasanians established an empire roughly within the frontiers achieved by the Achaemenians, with the capital at Ctesiphon. They consciously sought to resuscitate Iranian traditions and to obliterate Greek cultural influence. Their rule was characterized by considerable centralization, ambitious urban planning, agricultural development, and technological improvements.

Sasanian rule and the system of social stratification were reinforced by Zoroastrianism, which became the State religion. The Zoroastrian priesthood became immensely powerful. The head of the priestly class (the mobedan), the priests (mobed), along with the military commander, the Eran spahbad, and the head of the bureaucracy, were among the great men of the state.

[Reprinted from Payvand Iran News, [www.payvand.com/news/04/jul/1109.html](http://www.payvand.com/news/04/jul/1109.html), forwarded by Maneck Bhujwala]

### ARE YOU MOVING ?

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World heritage sites: Achaemenian palace at Pasargadae; the citadel at Bam.

## Pasargadae and Bam on UNESCO World Heritage list

**Pasargadae, the first capital of the Achaemenid Empire and the City of Bam, are among 12 cultural sites inscribed on the World Heritage List by UNESCO, at the 28th session of the World Heritage Committee, in Suzhou, China, on July 3rd. This brings the number of cultural, natural and mixed sites on the List to 788.**

**Pasargadae** was the first dynastic capital of the Achaemenid Empire, founded by Cyrus the Great, in Pars, in the 6th century BCE. Its palaces, gardens, and the mausoleum of Cyrus are outstanding examples of the first phase of royal Achaemenid art and architecture and exceptional testimonies of Persian civilization ... It is considered to be the first empire that respected the cultural diversity of its different peoples. This was reflected in Achaemenid architecture, a synthetic representation of different cultures.

Criteria for selection of Pasargadae included: (i) Pasargadae is the first outstanding expression of royal Achaemenid architecture; (ii) The dynastic capital of Pasargadae was built by Cyrus the Great with contributions by different peoples of his empire; (iii) Pasargadae with its palaces, gardens, and the tomb of Cyrus the Great, represents an exceptional testimony to the Achaemenid civilisation in Persia; and (iv) The 'Four Gardens' type of royal ensemble, which was created in Pasargadae became a prototype for Western Asian architecture and design.

**City of Bam.** Situated in the desert on the edge of the Iranian plateau, Bam developed as a crossroads of trade in silk and cotton. [Also see "*Bam, the Zarathushti Connection*", *FJ Spring 2004*]. Its origins can be traced to the Achaemenid period. The fortified citadel area (Arg), with 38 watchtowers, governmental quarters, and the historic town, is a fine example of a fortified medieval town built in vernacular technique. The earthquake of 2003 has uncovered new evidence including remains of ancient settlements and irrigation systems, dating at least to the Parthian-Hellenistic period, 2nd century BCE. Bam's landscape bears exceptional testimony to the use of mud layer technique (*chineh*) combined with mud bricks (*khesht*). The underground water management system of *qanats* provides an outstanding example of the interaction of man and nature in a desert environment.

[Source: [www.whc.unesco.org](http://www.whc.unesco.org), forwarded by Behram Pastakia]

## COMING EVENTS

### 7th International Congress on Zoroastrian Culture of Iran and Central Asia

Date: October 27-31, 2004

Place: Brussels University

Organized by: "European Centre for Zoroastrian Studies," (Brussels), in cooperation with Cultural Foundation of D. Ebtehaj (England), Zoroastrian Centre of France (Paris), Association of Ancient Culture (Tajikistan), Peyvand Association (Tajikistan) and Roudaki Association (Paris).

Theme: The common cultural basis of Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Armenia, Turkmenistan and Kurdistan.

#### Contact:

Dr. Khosro Khazai, director,  
European Centre for  
Zoroastrian Studies  
7, Galerie de la Reine,  
1000 Brussels-Belgium  
Tel./Fax 30/2/374.92.60,  
[info@gatha.org](mailto:info@gatha.org); [www.gatha.org](http://www.gatha.org)

### IAAC Film Festival

Indo-American Arts Council announces the "**Fourth Annual IAAC Film Festival: The Indian Diaspora**," November 4-7, at Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, NY. Opening night gala will honor Salman Rushdie, Shabana Azmi, Ismail Merchant and Mira Nair. Contact IACC, tel: (212) 529-2347, web: [www.iaac.us](http://www.iaac.us).

### ZIFF Film Festival

The **Third Zarathushti and Iranian Culture Film Festival (ZIFF)** will be on November 12-14, in Vancouver, Canada. Deadline for submitting films is October 1. Contact Feraydoon Demehri at [oshihan@vcn.bc.ca](mailto:oshihan@vcn.bc.ca). [See page 47].

### 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 46].

#### 2004 WZCC

Business Conference and Business Luncheon  
The World Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce, WZCC, will hold a **Business Conference** in San Francisco, on December 28, 2004 (one day prior to the NA Congress) and a Business Luncheon on December 31. To register, visit [www.zanc.org/congress](http://www.zanc.org/congress) or contact WZCC secretary Edul Daver at (732) 469-1866, [daver@acupowder.com](mailto:daver@acupowder.com) [see pages 47 and 115]

#### WZCC delegation to Iran

The World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce is planning a **business delegation to Iran** in April 2005. Contact WZCC Secretary Edul Daver at (732) 469-1866, [daver@acupowder.com](mailto:daver@acupowder.com).

#### Next World Congress

The **8th World Zoroastrian Congress** will be held in London, UK, June 24-27, 2005. Post-congress program will be held June 28 - July 1, 2005. For information, visit [www.ztfe.com/Congress005](http://www.ztfe.com/Congress005) or email [congress005@ztfe.com](mailto:congress005@ztfe.com) [see page 48].

#### UN/NGO events

Zarathushtis are invited to participate on the FEZANA team in future UN/NGO activities. Interested individuals may send their curriculum vitae to Homi Gandhi ([Homi\\_Gandhi@usa.net](mailto:Homi_Gandhi@usa.net)) or Behram Pastakia ([bpastakia@aol.com](mailto:bpastakia@aol.com)) [see page 47].

#### "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 ... and strengthen the national identity of the future Tajik generation" [FEZANA Journal, Winter 2003, page 37]. ■

## Calendar of Festivals

September - March

### Fravardian Jashan

*Mah Fravardin, Roz Fravardin* Sun Aug 8 (K)  
Tue Sep 7 (S)

### Maidyozarem Gahambar

*Mah Ardibehesht, Roz Khorshed - Daepmeher*  
Mon Aug 30 - Fri Sep 3 (K)  
Wed Sep 29 - Sun Oct 3 (S)

### Paitishem Gahambar

*Mah Sheherevar, Roz Ashtad - Aneran*  
Sun Sep 12 - Thu Sep 16 (F)

### Jashne-Mehergan

*Mah Meher, Roz Meher* Sat Oct 2 (F)

### Ayathrem Gahambar

*Mah Meher, Roz Ashtad - Aneran* Tue Oct 12 - Sat Oct 16 (F)

### Jashne-Avangan (Avan Ardivisur Parab)

*Mah Avan, Roz Avan* Tue Oct 26 (F)

### Maidyoshem Gahambar

*Mah Tir, Roz Khorshed - Daepmeher*  
Fri Oct 29 - Tue Nov 2 (K)  
Sun Nov 28 - Thu Dec 2 (S)

### Jashne-Adargan

*Mah Adar, Roz Adar* Wed Nov 24 (F)

### Death Anniversary of Zarathushtra

*Mah Daye, Roz Khorshed* Sun Dec 26

### Maidhyarem Gahambar

*Mah Dae, Roz Meher - Bahram* Fri Dec 31 - Tue Jan 4 (F)

### Jashne Daegan

*Mah Dae, Roz Daepdin* Fri Jan 7 (F)

### Jashne Bahmangan

*Mah Bahman, Roz Bahman* Sun Jan 16 (F)

### Paitishem Gahambar

*Mah Sheherevar, Roz Ashtad - Aneran*  
Wed Jan 12 - Sun Jan 16 (K)  
Fri Feb 11 - Tue Feb 15 (S)

### Jashne Sadeh

*Mah Bahman, Roz Meher* Sun Jan 30 (F)

### Ayathrem Gahambar

*Mah Meher, Roz Ashtad - Aneran* Fri Feb 11 - Tue Feb 15 (K)  
Sun Mar 13 - Thu Mar 17 (S)

### Fravardegan/Panjeh/Hamaspathmedayem Gahambar

*Five Gatha days* Wed Mar 16 - Sun Mar 20 (F)

### Char-Shanbe-Soori (Heralding the New Year)

*Tuesday prior to Nouruz* Tue Mar 15 (F)

### Nouruz or Jamshedi Navroz (New Year)

*Mah Fravardin, Roz Hormazd* Mon Mar 21 (F)

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

XIII NORTH AMERICAN ZOROASTRIAN CONGRESS



## BEING ZARATHUSHTI:

Looking  
at Issues,  
Searching  
for Answers

# XIII North American Zoroastrian Congress

December 29, 2004 - January 1, 2005

The Doubletree Hotel - San Jose  
in the San Francisco Bay area

Congress chair: Bomi Patel

Program chair: Erach Tarapore, etarapore@bigfoot.com

Publicity chair: Nazneen Spliedt, nazeher@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 sight-seeing tours, FEZANA meetings and workshops.

**WZCC Chamber of Commerce:** There will be a Board Meeting on December 27th (5-9 pm), full day Business Conference on Dec 28th, Business Luncheon on December 31st. Visit [www.wzcc.net](http://www.wzcc.net) 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. **Late fee after October 31.**

**Accommodations:** The Doubletree Hotel San Jose, in the heart of Silicon Valley and in the San Francisco Bay Area, is located one mile from the San Jose International Airport (free shuttle bus available), and 40 miles from San Francisco International Airport. **Room Rates:** \$69 per room (plus taxes) for up to 4 persons, or \$139 (plus taxes) for per suite. Valid from December 24, 2004 – Jan 3, 2005. Contact Doubletree reservations at 1-800-222-TREE, or visit [www.Doubletree.com](http://www.Doubletree.com). Specify "Group Code NAZ" to get the discounted rates.

**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.

**Raffle:** 1 Gara sari, 1 Singapore air ticket to India and 2 Air-India tickets to India will be raffled. [See next page]

**Visit [www.zanc.org/congress](http://www.zanc.org/congress) for latest information and registration forms.**



## IN COMING ISSUES OF FEZANA JOURNAL

Winter 2004:

### **Zarathushti Demographics**

Spring 2005:

### **Vegetation on Earth**

Guest Editor: Sam Kerr

Summer 2005:

### **Social Justice and Ethics**

Guest Editor: Suzie Karani

Fall 2005:

### **Treasures from the Avesta: Yasna, Vispered, Vendidad**

Guest Editor:

Pallan Ichaporia

Winter 2005:

### **Focus on Youth**

Guest Editor:

Mahrukh Motafram

Upcoming:

### **Guide to Common Rituals, Customs and Festivals.**

## **Fourth International Photo Competition on the Environment**

Gold prize worth \$20,000

[www.unep-photo.com/en/index.html](http://www.unep-photo.com/en/index.html)

## ZOROASTRIAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

### *CALL FOR MUSICIANS*

The ZSO invites musicians, professionals or amateurs, to participate as part of the Eighth World Zoroastrian Congress in London, UK, in June 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 Orchestra

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

## **The XIII North American Zoroastrian Congress and WZCC are pleased to announce:**

### **One-day Business Conference on "Energizing the Zarathushti Entrepreneurial Spirit":**

December 28, 2004, 9 am - 5 pm, at the Doubletree Hotel, San Jose.  
\$70 (lunch included)\*\*\*.

### **Business Luncheon:**

December 31, 2004, 12 - 2 pm, at the Doubletree Hotel, San Jose. \$40\*\*\*.  
\*\*\* or \$100 for both events

**AGM and Board Meeting:** December 27 (5 - 9 pm) and December 28, 2004

**To register, please visit:** [www.zanc.org/congress](http://www.zanc.org/congress) or [www.wzcc.net](http://www.wzcc.net)

**For information, contact:** Edul Daver, [daver@acupowder.com](mailto:daver@acupowder.com)



### **3rd Zarathushti & Iranian Culture Film Festival Vancouver, Canada November 12-14, 2004**



- Submission deadline is October 1, 2004
- Language can be English, Persian, Dari or silent.
- Duration of the film can be 3 minutes or more.
- Film can be in any format (Video, DVD, VCD, PAL, SECAM, NTSC, VHS, Super 8, etc.)
- Enclose note on filmmaker, title, date, location...
- Filmmaker does not have to be a Zarathushti

Contact: Feraidoon Demehri at [Oshihan@vcn.bc.ca](mailto:Oshihan@vcn.bc.ca)

### **UN/NGO events**

Zarathushtis are invited to participate on the FEZANA team in future UN/NGO activities. Upcoming events are:

● **United Nations: Commission on the Status of Women**, Feb 28 - March 11, 2005 will focus on two thematic issues: (a) Review of the Beijing Platform for Action ([www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/index.html](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/index.html)) and (b) Current challenges and forward looking strategies for the advancement and empowerment of women and girls. For more information visit [www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/49sess.htm](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/49sess.htm).

● **World Summit on the Information Society**, Phase 2, in Tunis, Tunisia, November 16-18, 2005.

Interested individuals may send their curriculum vitae to Homi Gandhi ([Homi\\_Gandhi@usa.net](mailto:Homi_Gandhi@usa.net)) or Behram Pastakia ([bpastakia@aol.com](mailto:bpastakia@aol.com)).

### **Raffle for a Gara and 3 air tickets to India**

The XIIIth Congress organizers are offering raffle tickets with great prizes:

\$10 each: One Naju Daver black embroidered Gara sari.

\$20 each: Two Singapore airlines tickets LAX/SFO to India, plus one Air India business class ticket from USA to India.

Contact: Nazneen Ehler at 650-624-8888 or [nazehler@aol.com](mailto:nazehler@aol.com) or visit [www.zanc.org/congress](http://www.zanc.org/congress).



## ZOROASTRIAN TRUST FUNDS OF EUROPE (INC)

(The oldest established Zoroastrian organization in the western world)

Proudly announces the hosting of

# THE VIIIth WORLD ZOROASTRIAN CONGRESS 2005 in London, UK

*“With Faith in the Future”*

Congress proceedings will be held at

**The Wembley Conference Centre**

**Friday June 24 - Monday June 27, 2005**

Post-congress program will be held at

**The Zartoshty Brothers Hall, Zoroastrian Centre, Harrow**

**Tuesday June 28 - Friday July 1, 2005**

Do not miss out on our traditional Tirgan Jashan and Gahambar on July 1, 2005.

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***Congress Registration:*** Early Bird Package starts from £200 per delegate.

Early bird deadline is December 31, 2004.

***Call for papers:*** Deadline for submission of titles and abstracts is December 31, 2004

ZTFE invites all fellow Zoroastrians to participate in this unique gathering. ● Join in the debate and voice your opinions. ● Meet and mingle with old friends and new. ● Taste the hospitality of local Zoroastrians ● Share in the lives of the community and sweeten it with your presence.

**Comfortable budget priced hotel accommodation for delegates around Wembley Conference Centre. Accommodation after the Congress Events can be arranged with host families, subject to availability.**

*For information, email [congress005@ztfe.com](mailto:congress005@ztfe.com)  
or visit [www.ztfe.com/Congress005](http://www.ztfe.com/Congress005)*

Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe, Zoroastrian House, 88 Compayne Gardens, London NW6 3RU, UK

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# the zarathushti connection with judaism and christianity

Compiled by Roshan Rivetna

**“Zoroastrianism is the oldest of the revealed world religions, and it has probably had more influence on mankind, directly and indirectly, than any other single faith...its leading doctrines were adopted by Judaism, Christianity and Islam ...”**

– Mary Boyce, Professor,  
University of London

*At left and on cover, detail from the Ravenna mosaic showing the three magi, Balthasar, Melchior and Gaspar in Persian attire carrying gifts for the baby Jesus. The pointed caps are similar to those seen in Parthian coins. The magi have remained one of the most enduring of Christian motifs, yet their connection with the Zarathushti faith is not well understood. San Apollinare Nuovo Basilica, Ravenna, Italy, 6th century.*

PHOTOGRAPH: ALMUT HINTZE,  
COURTESY “A ZOROASTRIAN TAPESTRY,  
ART, RELIGION AND CULTURE” ED.  
PHEROZA J. GODREJ AND FIROZA  
PUNTHAKEY MISTREE.

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

# Zarathushtis, Jews and Christians a timeline of historical contacts

Highlighting developments in religious thought and historical events that shaped the Semitic Judeo-Christian and the Aryan Iranian-Persian peoples.

By Roshan Rivetna

## JUDEO-CHRISTIAN



SISTINE CHAPEL BY MICHELANGELO

Adam and Eve are tempted by the serpent in the Garden of Eden.

**Adam and Eve** [above] in the biblical *Garden of Eden*, are progenitors of the human race.

**Noah builds an Ark** and takes a pair of each animal species there, to survive *The Great Flood* that followed the *Ice Age*.

**Abraham**, the first of the great post-diluvian (after the last Great Flood) patriarchs, father of Isaac, is the traditional founder of the ancient Hebrew nation.

**Greek mythology**, relates stories of gods and goddesses on Mount Olympus – Hercules, Jupiter, Zeus, Achilles, Neptune, the Trojan War ...

## IRANIAN-PERSIAN



PHOTO: ZAEHNER - DAWN AND TWILIGHT OF ZOROASTRIANISM

Mashya and Mashyani, the first human couple, tempted by Ahriman, depicted as an old man.

Iranian history begins with the legendary dynasty of the Peshdadian kings.

**King Gayomard** the first mortal was created.

**Mashya and Mashyani** [above] the first human couple, grew from the seed of Gayomard.

Ahura Mazda warns Jamshid that the world would be submerged in ice and snow. **Jamshid builds a 'vara' (fortress)** and brings there a pair of the finest men and women, animals and seeds.

**Iranian mythology** relates stories of kings and warriors of the Peshdadian Dynasty.

## Mythological Age PESHDIADIAN DYNASTY

4000 BCE. Arrival of **Sumerians** on the world stage. Sumer is the ancient name for **Mesopotamia**. **Uruk** on the Euphrates was the earliest city.

2600 BCE. **Epic of Gilgamesh**, by Sumerian King Gilgamesh, displays values and beliefs of Mesopotamian society.

2375-2225 BCE. **Akkadian Empire**. **Sargon I** conquers the Sumerians.

2250 BCE. **Pantheon of Gods** personifying elements and natural forces appeared in Sumer.

2000 BCE. **Elamites** conquer Uruk (from Susa to Lebanon).

1790-1000 BCE. **The Babylonian civilization** flourishes in Mesopotamia. **Hammurabi the Law Giver** introduced Code of Law, written in cuneiform.

1600 BCE. **The Canaanites**.





Moses, received the ten commandments on Mt. Sinai.



Zarathushtra received a series of revelations at the celestial court of Ahura Mazda

3000 to 800 BCE  
BRONZE & IRON AGES - KAYANIAN DYNASTY

2200-1400 BCE. **Greek Minoans** developed a high level of civilization in Crete.

1600 BCE. Old Testament, *Book of Genesis*.

1600 - 1100 BCE. **Mycenaean Civilization** flourished in Greece.

1300-1200 BCE **Moses**, the Hebrew prophet, received the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai. He led the Israelites out of Egypt. He adopted worship of the one God of Abraham – Yahweh.

1295 BCE. The *fall of Jerico*, in Palestine.

1250 BCE. Old Testament, *Book of Exodus*. Founding of the nation of Israel.

1200 BCE. The first Jewish *Passover*.

1100-800 BCE. *Dark Age in Greece*, following devastation by the Dorians.

1000 BCE. **Assyrians destroy Babylon** and take away the statue of Marduk.

900-600 BCE. **Assyrians overran Mesopotamia** and ruled their Empire with terror.

961-926 BCE. **King Solomon** of the Jews, son of David, is king of Israel. Old Testament is written in the court of Solomon.

900-600 BCE. In Greece, literature and trade revived. **Homer** wrote *The Iliad & The Odyssey*.

783 BCE. City of Rome is founded by Romulus. Twins **Romulus and Remus** reared by wolves.

776 BCE. First *Olympic Games* were held in Greece.

THE KAYANIAN DYNASTY

The **Kayanian Dynasty** is the most heroic period of ancient Iranian history. The single-most monumental historical event during this period is the advent of the prophet, Asho Zarathushtra.

1400-1200 BCE. **Prophet Zarathushtra**. Historians place Zarathushtra anywhere from before 6000 to 600 BCE, with recent studies pointing to 1400 to 1200 BCE. Asho Zarathushtra receives the revelation. He introduces the worship of one God, **Ahura Mazda**.



PHOTO COURTESY, ANCIENT PERSIA BY JOHN CURTIS

Priest in Median costume, carrying barsom twigs used in Zarathushti religious rituals. Gold plaque from Oxus Treasure, found in 1877 on the banks of the Oxus River. 5th - 4th century BCE.

728 to 559 BCE  
MEDIAN EMPIRE

722 BCE **Assyria (Sargon II)** conquered Israel.

711 BCE **Assyria** occupied Judah.

625 BCE Babylonians gained ascendancy over Judah. Jerusalem fell in 586 BCE. **Jews exiled** as slaves to Babylon.

612 BC: The Assyrian capital of **Nineveh** is destroyed by the Medes and Babylonians.

600-550 BCE. **The Chaldean Empire**.

THE MEDIAN KINGDOM (728 - 559 BCE)

728-675 BCE. **Deioces** founded the **Median Dynasty**. He founded city of Ecbatana.

653-625 BCE. **Scythian nomads** enter western Iran from the Caucasus.

625-585 BCE. **Cyaxares** overthrows the Scythians. His granddaughter marries **Nebuchadnezzar II** of Babylon.

587 BCE. Judah rebelled against Babylonian control, and as predicted by Jeremiah, Babylonian King **Nebuchadnezzar** destroyed Jerusalem. *The Jews lived as exiles in Babylon.*

539 BCE. **Cyrus the Great** captured Babylon, allowed the Jews to return to their homelands, and rebuild their temples.

**Post-exilic Judaism.** In Judah, the return of the Jews and re-building of their temples resulted in a regeneration of the Jewish faith. *Interchange of Jewish-Persian religious thought.*

522-486 BCE (Time of Darius) Prophetic texts of the **Hebrew Bible**: *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8, and Isaiah 56-66*, were written.

447 BCE. **The Parthenon** was built in Athens.

440 BCE. **Herodotus** wrote of Persian-Greek wars. Other Greek philosophers of the **Classical Age of Greece** were **Socrates** (b. 470), his pupil **Plato** (b. 427) and **Aristotle** (b. 384).

559 to 334 BCE  
ACHAEMENIAN

#### ACHAEMENIAN EMPIRE (559-334 BCE)

**Cyrus II the Great** (Kurush II) (559-530 BCE) conquered the Medes, the Lydians, and the Babylonians to become the first Zarathushti world power. His tolerance, benevolence and strategic genius were exemplified in his capture of Babylon in 539, whose Jewish inhabitants looked to him as the deliverer (Messiah) prophesied earlier in the Book of Isaiah II.

**Darius I the Great** (522-486 BCE) expanded the empire into Greece and Macedonia. His defeat by the Greeks at the **Battle of Marathon** in 490 was a turning point in world history.

**Xerxes I** (486-465 BCE), also known as **King Ahasuerus** in the **Book of Esther**, led a land and sea invasion of Greece (with "60,000 men and 1200 ships"). The Persians crossed the Hellespont, to Athens and took the Acropolis.

The fall of the Achaemenian Empire came in 334 BCE at the hand of the Macedonian '**Alexander the Accursed.**' *Religious texts were destroyed.*

200 BCE. **Old testament** is translated into Greek. By 150 BCE. **Roman Empire** extends over Italy, North Africa, Iberia, Macedonia, Greece and into Asia.

140 BCE. **Dead Sea Scrolls.**

53 BCE. **Battle of Carrhae.** Romans (**Crassus**) defeated by Parthian cavalry (**House of Suren**).

50 BCE. **Julius Caesar** (b. 100 BCE) "crosses the Rubicon" creek and occupies Rome. Caesar and Pharaoh Ptolemy's sister **Cleopatra** of Alexandria kill **Ptolemy** and plot to rule the world together. On March 15, 44 BCE ("**The Ides of March**") Julius Caesar is assassinated by Brutus and Cassius.

312 - 250 BCE  
SELEUCID

#### THE SELEUCID EMPIRE (312 - 250 BCE)

Alexander proclaimed himself Emperor of Persia. **Macedonian rule** in Iran lasted for 80 years until the arrival of the Parthians in 250 BCE.

50 BCE-400 CE. The **Cult of Mithras**, a corrupt version of the Zarathushti religion, based on the Sun God Mithra was popular across the Roman Empire. Several hundred Mithraic temples were built across Europe and in England. Had it not been for the advent of Christianity, the western world might well have been Mithraic.



Jesus Christ, the Messiah

4 BCE. **Jesus Christ** was born in Bethlehem and grew up in Nazareth. He was crucified by the Romans in 33 CE.

250 BCE to 227 CE  
PARTHIAN EMPIRE

#### THE PARTHIAN (OR ARSACID) EMPIRE (250 BCE - 227 CE)

**Arsaces**, a Scythian, invaded Iran and is crowned king in 247 BCE.

**Mithradates I the Great** (171-138 BCE) annexed Babylonia and Mesopotamia and Seleucia, to make Parthia a world empire.

**Mithradates II the Great** (123-87 BCE) retook Babylonia, captured Seistan and established his sovereignty over the steppes of the Caspian.

**Mnaskires** (89-77 BCE), **Sanatruces** (77-68 BCE), **Phraates III** (68-60 BCE), **Mithradates III** (60-55 BCE), **Orodes II** (55-37 BCE), **Phraates IV** (37-2 BCE).

**Phraates V** (2 BCE - 4 CE) was the ruler of Parthia when Jesus was born.





The **Three Wise Men** – Magi (Zarathushti priests) Balthasar, Melchior and Gaspar heralded the birth of Christ. The fourth Wise Man, in Henry Van Dyke's story is named Artaban (the name of several Parthian rulers).

31 BCE - 180 CE was the Golden Age of the Roman Empire under **Augustus** (31 BCE-14 CE), **Tiberius** (14-37 CE), **Gaius-Caligula** (37-41 CE), **Claudius** (41-54 CE) and **Nero** (54-68 CE).

23-79 CE. The Greek philosopher **Pliny** calls the Parthian ruler Tiridates a Magi.

70-100 CE. The first four books of the **New Testament**, the *Gospels of Mark, Luke, Mathew and John* were written (in that order). The young Christianity becomes a missionary church.

70 CE. **Fall of Jerusalem**. Romans destroy the 2nd Temple.

73 CE. Mass suicide of 960 Jews at **Masada** by the Dead Sea, in the face of Roman capture.

46 - 126 CE. Historian **Plutarch** records the Persian Greek wars.

180-284 CE. Political anarchy in the Roman Empire. **Valerian** becomes emperor in 254.

274 CE. **December 25th** was the date of a Mithraic festival in Rome, chosen by Emperor Aurelian to commemorate the birthday of the 'unconquered sun' (*natalis solis invicti*), which at the Winter Solstice, begins to ascend. Sometime before 336 CE, the church in Rome established the commemoration of the birthday of Christ, the sun of righteousness, on this same date. In 331, Constantine declared '**Sunday**' the "venerable day of the sun," as the official holy day.

312-337 CE. **Constantine**, emperor of Rome, converted to Christianity, and issued the **Edict of Milan** allowing tolerance of Christianity. Under his successors, Christianity became the state religion of the Roman Empire.

432 CE. **St. Patrick** introduced Christianity to Ireland.

400 - 1000 CE. The Roman Empire continued to prosper as the **Christian Byzantine Empire**.

## 250 BCE to 227 CE PARTHIANS (Contd)

**Vonones (4-16 CE), Artabanus III (16-42 CE), Vologeses I or Valakhsh (51-78 CE).**

In 63 CE. **Tiridates** traveled to Rome to receive the crown of Armenia from emperor Nero.

**Pacorus II (78-108), Chosroes (108-130), Vologeses II (130-148), Vologeses III (148-190 CE), Vologeses IV (190-208).** The last Parthian ruler was **Artabanus IV or Ardaban (213-224).**

The 500-year rule of the Parthians witnessed long drawn-out battles with the Romans.

**Mani** (b. 216 CE) founder of Manichaeism, a synthesis of the teachings of Zarathushtra, Buddha and Jesus. The Sasanian Behram I banned Manichaeism and had Mani executed.

488 CE. **Mazdak**, founder of Mazdakism. His communist teachings penetrated Iran until suppressed by the Sasanian King Khosrow Noshirwan and subsequently murdered.

## THE SASANIAN EMPIRE (226 TO 651 CE)

**Ardeshir I Papakan (224-249)** founded the Sasanian Dynasty. Ardeshir led prolonged wars with the Romans for Asia Minor and Mesopotamia. Ardeshir appointed **Tansar** as High Priest. A standard version of doctrine and practice of the Zarathushti religion was imposed as the state religion.

**Shapur I (241-270)** took advantage of the internal dissensions within the Romans, crossed into Mesopotamia and invaded Syria and Asia Minor. At the **Battle of Edessa** in 260, Roman Emperor Valerian was taken prisoner.

Shapur's high priest **Kirder (Kartir)** continued the consolidation of the religious texts. Religion now had become an integral part of government and Kirder's position as high priest grew in power through the reigns of five kings that followed. High Priest Kirder spent a lifetime defending the faith against the heretical Manichaens and missionary Christians and Buddhists.

**Khushrow II Parviz (591-628)** expanded the Persian Empire into Cappadocia, Phrygia, seized Damascus and advanced into Palestine and Egypt. He had a Christian wife, Shirin.

641 CE. The Arabs, zealous followers of the new Prophet Mohammed, dreamed of world conquest. The fate of the Sasanian Empire was finally sealed at the fierce **Battle of Nihavand** in 641, and sovereignty of the Iranian lands passed into the hands of Islamic Caliphs. ■

## 226 to 651 CE SASANIAN EMPIRE



# influence of zarathushtra in the world

*His Eminence Cardinal Franz Koenig, Archbishop of Vienna.*

[PHOTO COURTESY WWW.VOHUMAN.ORG]

**By His Eminence Cardinal Franz Koenig**  
**Translated from French by Jamshed R. Udvadia**

*Excerpts from a speech by Cardinal Franz Koenig, Archbishop of Vienna, at the University of Tehran, before a select audience of 300 including Catholic prelates as well as Western cultural and political figures, on October 24, 1968. The speech analyzes the influence of Zarathushti thought on Judeo-Christian religions and in general on the entire world.*

The first encounter of Iran with the Jewish religion was during the time of Cyrus, when the Jewish captives in Babylon were authorized, by his personal order, to return to their homeland. The Palestinian Jews were subject to the Persians for two centuries (539-311 BCE).

It is the tolerance of the Achae-menids which enabled the Jewish priest Esdras to represent Jewish interests at the court of Artaxerxes.

Bearing witness to this tolerance are the ancient Christian communities of your country, some of whose documents date back to the Arsacid dynasty, and the Iranian Christian synod, who, at Ctesiphon, in the second century of the Sasanid dynasty, confessed the *Credo de Nicée*, which is the ancient profession of faith of the Catholic church. Finally, the Catholic and other Christian communities existing today in Iran are living proof of this tolerance perpetuated through the ages.

Perhaps I should also mention that a good number of Catholics have contributed eminently to research in the field of Iranian and Zarathushti stud-

ies: among others the Frenchman Anquetil Duperron since the 18th century, Windishmann, Casartelli, G. Messina, the Dominican friar J. P. de Menasce, and the Englishman R. C. Zaehner.

**Western echo to Iranian religious thought.** All through its history, Iran has fascinated the European and Anglo-Saxon mind. I would like to limit my lecture to the religious aspects of this history, which I have specially studied for many years and which are connected to the name of Zartosht [1] (Zarathushtra in Avesta, Zoroastre in Greek).

For an Austrian, living in the sphere of German language and culture, it would be tempting also to describe our interest in the Sufi influences which run through Persian poetry. The influence of Hafiz (dead around 1390) on Goethe, von Platen and Ruckert, is a well known aspect of the intellectual links woven between Iran and German literature [2]. Those themes would be appropriate, not only to increase the mutual comprehension between Europe and Iran, but to put in perspective Iran's past and the creative impetus of other nations.

I wish however, to confine myself to the pre-Islamic period, to follow the trail of Zarathushti influences which, as shown by much research and publications, have spread to the European and Anglo-Saxon world.

Iranian studies in Europe and Anglo-Saxon countries have had many motives and origins. One of the causes was the spread of Iranian religious beliefs, which very quickly reached ancient bordering lands such as Armenia and Iraq.

Today, it is assumed that Zarathushtra's ideas spread from Asia Minor to Greece, and deeply influenced not only Plato but also the Gnostics. The case of the Mandeens is similar.

Considering the geographic extent of the Zarathushti tradition and knowledge, the orientalist concentrated on exploring the Avesta, Iranian dialects and, in our time, especially Pahlavi.

The extent and intensity of Iranian studies in Europe and Anglo-Saxon countries are shown by the big dictionary of ancient Iran produced at the beginning of the century by Bartholomae, by the wealth of specialized literature, by various period-



icals which discuss in English, French and German, philological problems and the interpretation of the Gathas, by the classical editions of historically important Iranian texts, and by studies putting these texts in relationship with Sanskrit research.

One must add the great importance given to the religious and intellectual evolution of Iran by historians of the religion, particularly in our century.

***The big question was to know if, and to what extent, the Zarathushti religious concepts had influenced Christianity by way of Judaism.*** In the first half of the twentieth century, the Iranian influence on the western cultures was emphasized, and several scholars spoke of a very great dependence of Islam and Christianity on Zarathushti ideas. A German, E. Kornemann, said: "Whoever wishes to understand Jesus and Mohammed ought to start with the religious universe of Zoroastre. In the history of religion, Iran plays a much greater role than is imagined today."

Iran and the Persians have fulfilled an historic mission on the political and religious plane; this mission, as also the cultural mission of the Greeks, has been fundamental in building European man and the family of European nations with its ideas based on government by our Godly religion [3].

The celebrated Swedish iranologue G. Widengren came to similar conclusions [4]. According to him the spiritual influence of Iran has not only influenced Judaism and Christianity, but also Islam: "When one considers the history of Judaism, Christianity and Islam," he wrote, "One has the very clear impression that, particularly since the Achaemenids, the Iranian religion has not ceased to exercise a decisive influence on the religious life of the Orient" [5]. For his part, the Dane, A. Christensen had stressed the dependence of Judaism on Iranian

thought: "The contacts with the Iranian world have notably influenced the Jewish religion."

With dualism, the concept of demons opposed to the sovereignty of God, Iranian eschatology, concepts of the last judgment, of hell etc. penetrated Judaism.

The messianic belief also is strongly modeled on Zarathushti ideas. In assuming the Jewish concept of the world, Christianity received these derivations of the Zarathushti system [6]. Although precise modern studies may have shown that such a degree of dependence of Christian holy scriptures on Zarathushti thought cannot be proved, these few quotations show the interest of European and American scholars in the creative intelligence of ancient Iran and the perennial fascination of the latter.

“ Whosoever wishes to understand Jesus and Mohammad ought to start with the religious universe of Zoroastre. In the history of religion, Iran plays a much greater role than is imagined today. ”

**The Zarathushti doctrine.** The Gathas tell us that there is a *supreme god, Ahura Mazda*, "the Wise Lord." He is the creator of the Heavens and the Earth, of the material and spiritual world; he is the source of light and darkness; he puts order in nature; he is the ruling center of all. In vain would one look for polytheistic traits such as are found in the connection to Vedas of India. Ahura Mazda has no partner, nor ties to subordinate gods, such as are seen in myths. He is surrounded by the Amesha Spentas, the six or seven benevolent immortals of whom he is the father or creator.

The Good Mind, Good Thought and Truth, Salvation and Immortality are qualities belonging to Ahura Mazda and also ought to be acquired by his followers.

Monotheism, manifest at first, is limited however by Ahriman, the adversary of the Wise Lord. Ahriman is the source of evil. But in the end, the Wise Lord will vanquish Ahriman and his followers, and will establish the *final triumph of justice*. To consider Mazdaism as involved in dualism would then be false. In one of his most recent works, Ugo Bianchi describes this state of things by the original term "dualistic monotheism."

According to the Zarathushti concept, the world is divided between the truth and the lie. The truth or justice (*asha*) created by the Wise Lord, is symbolized by fire: hence the central importance given to the fire altar.

In the Gathas, Zarathushtra continuously exhorts men to become adherents of the divine truth (*ashavan*). That is how one arrives face to face with the Wise Lord: "Having learnt to recognize just thought, when shall I see you as justice, and attain the abode of the all-powerful Wise Lord?" (12)

Opposed, there is falsehood and its terrestrial power. It is an emanation of Ahriman and in his domain plays the same role as truth in that of the Wise Lord. This dualism characterizes the entire structure of Mazdaen teaching, of Zarathushti thought. Man must choose between the two worlds and thus choose between Ahura Mazda and Ahriman. One does not find in India or in any other neighboring culture, such a forceful accent on the struggle which governs the world of the mind as well as the body.

***Man is free, and should freely choose between Ahura Mazda and Ahriman.*** Since man is free, he is also *responsible for his final destiny*. The good actions of the just (*ashavan*) will deserve an eternal reward i.e. salvation and immortality. But if a man chooses the lie, he becomes an evil-doer, condemned equally by his own conscience and by the judgment

of the wise Lord, and should expect the worst state of existence, that Christianity would call 'hell.'

Another element of Mazdaism is eschatological thought included in the Gathas. Almost each Gathic stanza mentions the hereafter which awaits man. Each action, word and thought is viewed in its connection to a future life, to which earthly existence is very naturally tied: the *good actions desired by the Wise Lord, are rewarded in the world to come, and the wicked actions punished*. This theme seems to have been at the center of the Zarathushti message.

After death, each man's soul (*Deana*) crosses the Separator's bridge (*Chinvat*), that is considered with fear and trembling. The soul of the liar (*drugvan*) is led to the house of darkness, the abode of Ahriman, to exist there in the worst possible state. Other sources place the seat of judgment on or after the bridge.

Later versions of Zarathushti religion, tell of a *resurrection of the dead*, and this could be founded on certain indications already contained in the Gathas. Eschatologically, the resurrection opens the ultimate drama, to know not only the final and permanent triumph of the Wise Lord and the corresponding destruction of the followers of Ahriman, but also the transfiguration and reorganization of the world, and also the end of dualism and *complete establishment of the rule of Ahura Mazda*.

**Is the Bible indebted to Iran?** This quick summary permits strange resemblances to be seen between Zarathushti religion and Christianity, which raises the question of possible historic connections between the two religions.

On this question, and in order to explain the similarities, different responses have indeed been given, none of which accept the possibility of a simple coincidence.

During the first centuries of our era, at the time of the Church Fathers, we already find diverse mentions of the teachings of Zarathushtra, especially his concept of God.

St. Justin, among others, reports several facts concerning the Zarathushti religion. Because of Mazdaen parallels to the Christian doctrine, Zarathushtra was considered as a witness of the Gospel among the heathens.

J. Duschesne-Guillemin [8] makes a good inventory of the different authors who are interested in the founder of the Persian religion since the beginning of Christianity. Among them, an Oxford scholar named Hyde, around 1700, collected all knowledge about Zarathushtra in his *De velere religione Persarum*.

“ We are inclined now to treat historical connections between the Christian Bible and the writings of Zarathushtra with more prudence than at the beginning of comparative religious history ... the ideas of Zarathushtra have made important contributions to shape European thought. ”

Hyde affirms that Zarathushtra was the teacher of Pythagoras, had several ideas borrowed by the Jewish priests, and had foretold the coming of Christ. But the question that interests him the most is this: “*cur Deus Persas prae aliis gentibus dignatus est favore tantae religionis?*” that is to say: “Why did God judge the Persians more worthy than other nations to receive the favor of such a religion?”

He replies that the Persians are the only ones who, in their dealings with the Jews and since the beginning, have conserved their knowledge of the true God. The disciples of Zarathushtra were monotheists, and this would explain the striking

resemblance of their religion to Christianity.

Voltaire accepted the ideas of his time about Zarathushtra. He wished to show that Moses had not been the sole prophet, and that one could find the truth of traditions exterior to Christianity. He finally made this wise remark: “They speak a lot of Zoroastre, and they will speak of him again.” [9]

Since the end of the 19th century, that is since the study of comparative history of religions began, the current has turned around. It is held now that Zarathushtra could not have drawn his ideas from some original revelation of the prophets of the Old Testament, but on the contrary Christianity had assimilated certain elements of Zarathushti ideas, through the Old Testament.

Schools of religious history, particularly in Germany, have developed this thesis, and tried to prove point by point that Christianity derives from Iran.

The well-known German historian Eduard Meyer is representative of the hypotheses of the Old Testament's dependence on Iran, which were current during the twenties in Europe. In the second volume of his great work on the origins and

beginning of Christianity, Meyer attempts to explain the religion of the Old Testament by an analysis in terms of history of religions.

He considers as established that the new religious concepts whose origin is not explainable starting from an established religious thought, must have been received from a foreign religion; hence his reasoning, as below. The experiences of the Babylonian captivity and the contacts (part known, part assumed) with the disciples of Zarathushtra led the Jews to deepen their personal ethics. They began to consider the power of evil and the undeniable persecution of the innocents as incompatible with the idea of God as a just judge. This



would present a problem which could not be solved in the context of the Jewish tradition and which in turn would push the Jews of the Captivity to search for a solution and at the same time would mature their thinking.

The response to the problem could only be based in a doctrine where good and evil are face to face as independent and separate powers. Such a belief had not appeared in the previous biblical books. Since then, writes the historian, “the religion of Zoroastre had opened the road to exercise an important influence on Judaism, which gave it a historic importance of worldwide dimensions.” [10]

“ The experiences of the Babylonian captivity and the contacts (part known, part assumed) with the disciples of Zarathushtra led the Jews to deepen their personal ethics. ”

Expected retribution is carried over from this life to a life after death; the judgment of God is no longer carried out on entire nations but on individuals, and Jewish prophetic eschatology is replaced by Zoroastrian style eschatology. [11]

These few examples suffice to show that Iran has, by the religion of Zarathushtra, influenced different cultures of the world. By dint of this religion, the history of proto-historic and Achaemenid Iran has exercised a triple fascination. First, the person of Zarathushtra and his ideas spread across the world; next, the still flourishing Zarathushti communities of Iran and India (the Parsis), whose roots go deep into the Zarathushti

inheritance with its customs and its ethics [12]; finally, iranology, which has furnished an abundance of themes to the European schools of religious history, for interpretation of the Bible.

To be sure we are inclined now to treat historical connections between the Christian Bible and the writings of Zarathushtra with more prudence than at the beginning of comparative religious history. Nevertheless it remains certain that Zarathushti influence is widely understood in space and time, and that the ideas of Zarathushtra have made important contributions to shape European thought.

One sees thereby confirmation that the history of the world is essentially fashioned by men of faith and by the force of religious ideas. ■

*The text of this speech, translated into French by G. Monnol, was provided by Dr. Khosro Khazai of European Center for Zoroastrian Studies, Brussels, courtesy of Creating Awareness e-group and [www.vohuman.org](http://www.vohuman.org). It was translated into English by Jamshed R. Udvardia.*

Cardinal Franz Koenig, PhD, became a university professor in Salzburg, Austria, in 1948. He was Vienna's archbishop from 1956 until 1958, when Pope John XXIII elevated him to cardinal. He died recently on March 13, 2004 at the age of 98.

Cardinal Franz Koenig, was Austria's highest moral authority and a former trendsetter for the Vatican's policy toward other religions and postwar communist regimes. In a move considered bold at the time, he participated in a conference in Bombay with representatives of three non-Christian religions in 1964.

Jamshed R. Udvardia is a retired computer programming supervisor and founder of the first series of Zarathushti religion classes for Michigan Zarathushtis in 1985. His pupils who are now grown, have recently started the second series of classes for the next generation. Jamshed holds a diploma in French from the Ecole Pratique of the Alliance Francaise.

## REFERENCES

- [1] “Zartosht”: abbreviated form of the Persian “Zarathushtra” (Note by translator).
- [2] Another important result of our research on the mystic poetry of Iran has been the translation of Pand Namé de Farid al-Din Attar (mort en 1230) by G.H.F. Nesselmann (Pendnâme, Das Buch des Guten Rates; Koenigsberg, 1871)
- [3] Weltgeschichte des Mittelmeer-Raumes, vol. I (München, 1948), pp. 58 et 61.
- [4] Stand und Aufgaben der iranischen Religionsgeschichte, dans Numen, (Leide, 1954), pp. 16-83; 2(1955), pp. 47-134.
- [5] Numen, 2 (1955), p. 131.
- [6] Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft, 1933, III, 1,3, p. 306.
- [7] Approximation of a Gatha [Ys. 28.5].
- [8] The Western Response to Zoroaster, Oxford, 1958.
- [9] Cf. J. Duchesne-Guillemin. Zoroastre, Paris, 1948, p. 15.
- [10] Ed. Meyer, Ursprung und Anfänge des Christentums, II: “Die Entwicklung des Judentums und Jesus von Nazareth” (Cotta, 1923), p. 51.
- [11] Ibid., p.114. A. von Gall follows these conjectures in his book Basileia tu theu, Heidelberg, 1926 (cf. p. 159), where he writes that reading Persian scriptures was easy for the Jews who knew Armenian, the language in which these books were written.
- [12] Miss Mary Boyce, who teaches at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, has spent a winter in the Zarathushti community of Kerman (S.E. Iran) and has extracted interesting articles from Eastern publications.

The religion of Zarathushtra is so little known in our times, though many Judeo-Christian traditions and beliefs have their origin in this ancient religion, which was so dominant and wide-spread in Persia before the birth of Christ.

We use words such as ‘satan,’ ‘paradise,’ ‘amen’ almost daily without knowing, however, their Zarathushti origin. We all know of the three magi that predicted the birth of Christ. So sad, however, is the state of our ignorance about this religion, that few are today aware that these magi from the East were none other than Zarathushti priests. Zarathushtis can thus proudly claim that they heralded Christianity to the world. Zarathushtis had a belief in the coming of a Savior, born of a virgin mother, centuries ago [*Vendidad 19.5 and Zamyad Yasht 19.92*].

**Mithraism and Christmas.** Most scholars agree that Christ was not born on December 25th, which was reckoned as the winter solstice in the Julian calendar. The Romans celebrated it very fervently as the Nativity of Mithra, the Sun-God that they adopted from Iran.

“ “ The Jews regarded Cyrus as a Messiah, and one who acted in Yahweh’s name and authority. ” ”

Mithraism was very popular among the Romans and many relics of Mithra temples, unearthed all over Europe, bear testimony to it. It was a corrupted and distorted form of the Zarathushti religion, but even in its corrupted form, it stood for certain basic Zarathushti values such as truth, justice, brotherhood, kindness and loyalty, which inspired allegiance among millions of Romans and Europeans. Franz Cumont, a noted authority on Mithraism, writes

# zarathushtra – source of the judeo-christian heritage

by Kersey H. Antia

Many of our Judeo-Christian traditions and beliefs have their origin in the ancient religion of Zarathushtra, which was so dominant and wide-spread in Persia before the birth of Christ.

in his book, “*The Mysteries of Mithra*”:

“Never perhaps, not even in the epoch of the Mussolman invasion, was Europe in greater danger of being Asianicized than in the third century of our era ... a sudden inundation of Iranian ... conceptions swept over the Occident, ... and when the flood subsided, it left behind in the consciousness of the people a deep sediment of Oriental beliefs, which have never been obliterated.”

It seems the early Christians absorbed many Mithraic traditions and festivals, but gave them a Christian significance, such as to Christmas on December 25th.

**Major contributions.** Among Zarathushtra’s major contributions to our present-day religious heritage, was a belief in an all-wise, all-powerful and eternal God, free will, heaven and hell, individual judgment, resurrection, last judgment, life everlasting for the reunited soul and body, the coming of a savior, strong ethics based on good thoughts, words and deeds, and equal rights and respect for women.

One of the chief attributes of the Lord is feminine – the name ‘Mazda’ itself having a feminine base and, of

the six amesha spentas, three are masculine and three feminine.

Words such as ‘paradise’ among others, are ancient Iranian.

Zarathushtra discovered that the whole universe was governed by a cosmic Law of Asha (righteousness) and enjoined upon his disciples to follow this law and make this earth a better place to live for all mankind. His scriptures revere the souls of all good men (as well as women) of all times and nations, even those at war with Iran, who follow this law and further the kingdom of God on this earth.

These teachings later became so familiar to the nations west of Iran. Nevertheless, it is only in the religion of Zarathushtra that these doctrines have retained their fullest logical relevance and purity, as Zarathushtra time and again emphasized the goodness of the physical world and human body, and the utter impartiality of divine justice.

Individual salvation he made repeatedly clear, depends on the sum of his or her thoughts, words and deeds, and how well one follows the Law of Asha. There could be no intervention whatsoever, whether compassionate or capricious, by any divine



being or priests to alter this. The Day of Judgment, therefore, has an overwhelming and pointed significance to a Zarathushti.

**Cyrus and the Jews.** How well Zarathushtra's doctrines shaped the conduct of his followers and how they in turn shaped the course of history is, however, most evident in the conduct of the most powerful emperors Iran has ever produced, namely Cyrus and Darius, who are also the greatest empire-builders known to recorded history. It was King Cyrus who freed the Jews from Babylonian captivity.

Cyrus (and his successors) made no attempt to impose the Zarathushti religion on his subjects but his inscriptions bear live witness to the fact that he encouraged each of his subjects to live a good life according to their own tenets. He allowed the Jews to rebuild their temple in Jerusalem. Dr. Mary Boyce observes in this regard [*Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, 1979, p. 51]:

"This was only one of many liberal acts recorded of Cyrus, but it was of particular moment for the religious history of mankind; for the Jews entertained warm feelings thereafter for the Persians, and this made them the more receptive to Zoroastrian influence."

The Jews regarded Cyrus as a Messiah, and therefore one who acted in Yahweh's name and authority. In the Old Testament [*Second Chronicles 36:22 and 23*] reads:

"In the first year of Cyrus, King of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the Lord, spoken by Jeremiah, the Lord moved the heart of Cyrus, King of Persia, to make a proclamation throughout his realm and to put it in writing. This is what Cyrus, King of Persia, says: 'The Lord, the God of Heaven, ... has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem.'"

Again in the Old Testament, the first verse of Ezra repeats this theme and

adds that King Cyrus returned to the Jews 5,400 articles of gold and silver which the Babylonians had taken away from their temple in Jerusalem.

Yahweh himself is represented as saying [*Isaiah 42: 1,4*]

"Behold my servant whom I uphold,"  
"Cyrus will bring forth justice to the nations ... he will not fail ... till he has established justice in the earth."

“ Zarathushti doctrines became disseminated throughout the Persian empire which extended from India to the Mediterranean. The Jews who were one of those peoples, found many congenial elements and similar ideas in their faith. ”

#### **Pre- and post exilic beliefs.**

Zarathushti doctrines became disseminated throughout the Persian empire which extended from India to the Mediterranean. The Jews who were one of these peoples found many congenial elements and similar ideas in their faith. Both had many common beliefs such as belief in one God, coming of a Messiah and a strict code of behavior and ethics. The Jews had progressed much in their ethical and spiritual conceptions during the Babylonian captivity. This progress happened to be for the most part in just those doctrines which were commonly held by millions of Zarathushtis among whom they lived.

Perhaps the foremost among these is the belief in a *future life*. Those portions of the Old Testament that were written before the Exile scarcely mention it. They knew no reward for their deeds other than what they found on this earth. Their hopes were centered around this world and prosperity in this life.

The Exile, however, made a great difference in the Jewish thinking in this regard, for it is during this period and thereafter that we find for the first time in their recorded history,

the expression of a hope in the other world. There is an entirely new note struck in the words such as these in the later Isaiah:

"Let thy dead live, let thy dead body rise. Awake and sing, ye shall dwell in the dust; for thy dew is the dew of heroes, and the earth shall cast forth the shades."

Also in Daniel:

"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

Even after the Exile this lesson about the immortality of the soul was not assimilated by all Jews, notably by the Sadducees. But the people who professed this new doctrine were called the Pharisees, meaning 'Persians' (according to some scholars). Zarathushti influence on the Dead Sea Scrolls has been unanimously accepted by historians.

As Dr. Boyce notes [*Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, 1979, p. 99]:

"So it was out of a Judaism enriched by five centuries of contact with Zoroastrianism that Christianity arose – a new religion with roots thus in two ancient faiths, one Semitic, the other Iranian. Doctrines taught perhaps a millennium and a half earlier by Zoroaster began in this way to reach fresh hearers: but again as in Judaism, they lost some of logic and coherence by their adoption into another creed; for the teachings of the Iranian prophet about creation, heaven and hell and the days of judgment, were less intellectually coherent when part of a religion proclaimed the existence of one omnipotent God, whose unrestricted rule was based not on justice but on love. They continued nevertheless, even in this new setting, to exert their powerful influence on men's strivings to be good."

**The authority of Zarathushtra.** The influence of Zarathushtra's teachings was so profound on western thought that the intellectuals in

Europe referred to him time and time again through the centuries. In one of Faust's stories Zarathushtra is depicted as the author of a book which Faust studies so well that he earns the title of a second Zoroaster. Later the book receives the same attention from his famous student, Christopher Wagner.

The Greeks made a practice of sheltering a philosophic or 'scientific' theory under the guise of Zarathushtra's authority. This practice was continued during the Renaissance with a book on Zarathushtra written by Jessenius, a physician to Franciscus Patricius, editor of the *Chaldean Oracles*:

"Zoroaster, first of all men, came near to laying the foundations, however rudimentary, of the Catholic faith."

In "Thus Spake Zarathushtra" in 1887, Nietzsche deliberately depicted Zarathushtra as exactly the opposite of what he was. His purpose in deliberately distorting the truth was lost on the readers, which frustrated him greatly. "I have not been asked," he exclaimed in *Ecce Homo*, "I should have been asked what the name Zarathushtra means in my mouth, in the mouth of the first immoralist: for what makes this Persian a fantastically unique figure in history, is just the opposite of it.

"Zarathushtra was the first to see in the battle of good and evil, the prime mover of all things: the translation of morals into metaphysics, as a power, cause and end in itself, was his work." [*Insel edition, p. 117*].

**European travelers.** When European travelers of India began writing about the existence and religion of Parsis in India, the West sent many scholars to study their religion to find an Iranian origin for Christianity. As Dr. Hinnells, Professor of Comparative Religion at the University of Manchester, observes: "The British respected the Parsis (greatly) because in them they saw, in a strange and foreign land, people who shared sim-

ilar morals, principles and even physical similarity."

The favorable reports of various European travellers had created such an interest in the religion that as early as in 1700 an Oxford professor, Thomas Hyde, wrote a book to prove that "Zoroastrianism was the Persianized form of an idealized Judaism." His great respect for Zarathushtis led him, rightly or wrongly, to seek in it resemblances to his own faith.

“ The influence of Zarathushtra's teachings was so profound on western thought ... the Greeks made a practice of sheltering a philosophic or 'scientific' theory under the guise of Zarathushtra's authority. ”

The Portuguese generally referred to the Parsis as Jews from the 16th century, which, as Prof. Hinnells maintains, was the best compliment the devout Europeans of the 16th century could give to any distant people by identifying them with their own religious traditions.

As Schaefer commented in his book on Goethe in 1938: "With the knowledge of the Avesta there arose a temptation to search the Iranian religion for the hidden sources of primitive Christianity." The French sent Anquetil Duperron to India to study the Avesta. He lived among the Parsis in Surat, India for many years and published his book, *Avesta*, in 1771.

How much the European philosophers were excited by Anquetil's trip to India and how much it raised their hopes, especially those of Voltaire and Diderot, to see anything in the Avesta that could be used against Christianity is depicted superbly by

Raymond Schwab in his book, *Vie de Anquetil - Duperron [Paris, 1934]*. The rivalry between the English and the French prompted the English scholars to reject Anquetil's findings summarily, but ultimately the truth prevailed, opening up the gilded door of Avestan studies in Europe.

Voltaire praised Anquetil for his courage to tell the truth; his famous comment will ring through the corridors of history: "People speak a lot about Zoroaster and will go on speaking about him forever." ■



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Zoroaster in Raphael's celebrated painting at the Vatican. Top, "*The School of Athens*" by Raphael (c. 1510), fresco at the Vatican Palace, Rome. Philosophers pictured include Plato and Aristotle in the center, and roughly from left to right: Zeno, Epicurus, Averroes, Pythagoras, Alcibiades, Xenophon, Aeschines, Parmenides, Socrates, Heraclitus, Diogenes, Euclid, Zoroaster [at far right, holding the globe] and Ptolemy. Above, detail showing Zoroaster [with beard], Ptolemy, the artist Raphael and Perugino.

One of the greatest paintings in the history of Western art, it represents an assembly of the greatest philosophers of all time, from hoary antiquity to the Renaissance. The artist wishes to convey how thought and reason are truly multicultural and trans-historical. For the first time, a painter was able to represent the harmonious unity underlying the diverse pursuits of human reason by portraying some of the rationalist tradition's most exemplary individuals, all at work in one mythical place and at one mythical time.

## Zarathushti Interlude in Armenia

Armenia [map page 79] had been subject to the Achaemenians (559 - 334 BCE) and as a satrapy, had experienced Persian influences, including, those of Zoroastrianism.

During the Seleucid period (312 - 250 BCE) founded by Alexander, the land was divided into several independent kingdoms under rulers with Persian names, who paid tribute to the Seleucids. The victory of the Roman Republic's army over Seleucid forces in 190 BCE extended Roman influence across Asia Minor; and subsequently Armenia became a buffer state between Parthia and Rome.

In 62 CE, the Parthian (Arsacid) king Vologeses put his brother Tiridates on the Armenian throne, and this branch of the Parthians ruled there into the Sasanian period.

Tiridates was himself a strictly observant Zoroastrian – Roman sources even call him a *magus* – and there is no doubt that during the latter part of the Parthian period Armenia was a predominantly Zoroastrian land.

Thereafter it embraced Christianity (partly, it seems, in defiance of the Sasanians), and it is mostly from Christian chronicles and saints' lives that information comes, through hostile allusions, about the older religion there.

These sources show that the Armenians worshipped 'Aramazd' (the Parthian form of Ahura Mazda); 'Spendaramet' was honored and the veneration of 'Haurvatat' and 'Ameretat' is directly attested. There were temples to 'Mihr' and 'Anahit' was much beloved.

The Armenian Zoroastrians were orthodox dualists, and the name 'Haraman' occurs, as well as references to 'devs'.

[Source: "Zoroastrians, their Religious Beliefs and Practices" by Mary Boyce, 1979].



# zarathushti doctrines in judaism and christianity *by Mary Boyce*

**Achaemenian period.** Cyrus sought to govern his vast new empire justly and well, in accordance with Asha. He made no attempt, however, to impose the Iranian religion on his alien subjects – indeed it would have been wholly impractical to attempt it, in view of their numbers, and the antiquity of their own faiths – but rather encouraged them to live orderly and devout lives according to their own tenets.

Among the many *anarya* who experienced his statesmanlike kindness were the Jews, whom he permitted to return from exile in Babylon and to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem.

This was only one of many liberal acts recorded of Cyrus, but it was of particular moment for the religious history of mankind; for the Jews entertained warm feelings thereafter for the Persians, and this made them the more receptive to Zoroastrian influences. Cyrus himself is hailed by ‘Second Isaiah’ (a nameless prophet of the Exilic period) as a messiah, that is, one who acted in Yahweh’s name and with his authority:

“Behold my servant whom I uphold”

Yahweh himself is represented as saying.

“(Cyrus) will bring forth justice to the nations ... He will not fail ... till he has established justice in the earth.”

*[Isaiah 42.1,4]*

The same prophet celebrates Yahweh for the first time in Jewish literature as Creator, as Ahura Mazda had been celebrated by Zarathushtra:

Possibly the most comprehensive studies of Zoroastrian influence on Judaism and Christianity have been presented by Mary Boyce in her numerous publications. Some notable excerpts are given here.

“I, Yahweh, who created all things ... I made the earth, and created man on it ... Let the skies rain down justice ... I, Yahweh, have created it.”

*[Isaiah 44.24, 45.8, 12].*

The parallels with Zoroastrian doctrine and scripture are so striking that these verses have been taken to represent the first imprint of that influence which Zoroastrianism was to exert so powerfully on post-Exilic Judaism.

Zoroastrian doctrines all came to be adopted by various Jewish schools in the post-Exilic period, for the Jews were one of the peoples, it seems, most open to Zoroastrian influences – a tiny minority, holding staunchly to their own beliefs, but evidently admiring their Persian benefactors, and finding congenial elements in their faith.

Worship of the one supreme God, and belief in the coming of a Messiah or Savior, together with adherence to a way of life which combined moral and spiritual aspirations with a strict code of behavior (including purity laws) were all matters in which Judaism and Zoroastrianism were in harmony; and it was this harmony, it seems, reinforced by the respect of a subject people for a great protective power, which allowed Zoroastrian doctrines to exert their influence.

**Parthian period.** The extent of this influence is best attested, however, by Jewish writings of the Parthian period, when Christianity and the Gnostic faiths, as well as northern Buddhism, all likewise bore witness to the profound effect which Zoroaster’s teachings had had throughout the lands of the Achaemenian empire.

“ So it was out of a Judaism enriched by five centuries of contact with Zoroastrianism that Christianity arose in the Parthian period, a new religion with roots thus in two ancient faiths, one Semitic, the other Iranian. ”

The Parthians not only tolerated the existence of different ecclesiastic traditions among the Zoroastrians whom they ruled, but also showed forbearance (in the Achaemenian tradition) to unbelievers within and beyond their borders. Iranian influences continued to be felt throughout the Middle East, perhaps even more



strongly than in the earlier period. One reason for this was that after the Macedonian conquest Greek became the *lingua franca* throughout the region, and provided a medium for the exchange of ideas.

Another political factor which strengthened the influence of the Parthians (and hence the Zoroastrian faith) was their armed resistance to the remorseless and generally resented encroachments of Rome.

One piece of evidence for this influence is the pervasiveness at this period of the Zoroastrian prophetic tradition. Longing for the coming of the Saoshyant must have intensified among Iranians in the dark period after Alexander's conquest, and a rich apocalyptic and prophetic literature appears to have developed then, which was widely imitated and which made the names of 'Zoroastres' and 'Hystaspes' familiar in the Greco-Roman world.

Iran continued to exert influence in other ways also on Jewish and Gnostic thought. The Parthians had good relations with the Jews, whether as overlords (of the Babylonian community) or neighbors; and a number of Jewish works composed at this time reflect Zoroastrian ideas.

So it was out of a Judaism enriched by five centuries of contact with Zoroastrianism that Christianity arose in the Parthian period, a new religion with roots thus in two ancient faiths, one Semitic, the other Iranian.

Doctrines taught perhaps a millennium and a half earlier by Zoroaster began in this way to reach fresh hearers; but again, as in Judaism, they lost some of their logic and coherence by their adoption into another creed; for the teachings of the Iranian prophet about creation, heaven and hell, and the day of judgment, were less intellectually coherent when part of a religion which proclaimed the existence of one omnipotent God, whose unrestricted rule was based not on justice but on love. They contin-

ued, nevertheless, even in this new setting, to exert their powerful influence on men's strivings to be good.

**Sasanian Period.** A single Zoroastrian church was created under the direct and authoritarian control of Persia; *Tansar* and later *Kirder* were long-lived and powerful prelates of the Sasanian empire. Kirder accompanied the Sasanian monarchs on their Roman campaigns – Syria and Cilicia, Cappadocia and Pontus, Armenia, Georgia and Albania – where he established sacred fires and priests tending them.

“ The parallels with Zoroastrian doctrine and scripture are so striking that these verses have been taken to represent the first imprint of that influence which Zoroastrianism was to exert so powerfully on post-Exilic Judaism. ”

During the reign of Shapur II the Great [309-379 CE] political considerations began to intensify religious animus, for it was then that Constantine freed Christianity from oppression, and it became virtually the state religion of the Roman Empire, Iran's most constant foe. Shapur accordingly imposed double taxation and tribute on his Christian subjects, partly because the Zoroastrians living under what was now Christian rule in Asia Minor also suffered. He launched an active persecution of Christians in 322, instigated by the Zoroastrian chief priests.

**Differences.** The confrontation of the two faiths brings out their striking differences in outlook and practice. Zarathushtra's teachings about the '*spenta*' nature of physical creation, and his vision of God's kingdom to come upon earth, kept Zoroastrianism almost as much a religion of this world as was ancient Judaism, which had no hopes for the hereafter; but the Persian Christians were ascetic, with their thoughts fixed almost exclusively upon the

life to come, and they shocked the Zoroastrians by their neglect of this world and its duties as well as its joys. Celibacy, exaltation of the contemplative life, the rejection of innocent pleasures ... were forms of religious expression wholly alien to the Zoroastrians. There were gulfs too between them and the Jews, who were also at times the victims of Sasanian persecution.

Yazdegird I's reign (399-421) was distinguished by marked clemency towards the Christians, who hailed him as good and blessed. Yazdegird II made a determined effort to win Armenia back from Christianity, and issued a proclamation summoning its inhabitants to return to the old faith.

Khusrow I (531-579) and his son Hormuzd IV (579-590) were just rulers and showed a broad tolerance to their infidel subjects. In a letter to to

Zoroastrian priests, when they urged him to persecute the Christians, he wrote: "Even as our royal throne cannot stand upon its two front legs without the back ones, so also our government cannot stand and be secure, if we incense the Christians and the adherents of other religions, who are not of our faith. Cease therefore to harass the Christians, but exert yourselves diligently in doing good works, so that the Christians and the adherents of other religions, may ... feel themselves drawn to our religion."

By the end of the Sasanian epoch, Iran was priest-ridden, and every man, rich or poor, could be subjected to pressures to pay for religious services, purification rites and penitentiary observances, all designed to help save his soul.

The subsequent history of the faith shows that many of the laity accepted such dues and obligations; but there must have been others who longed, like numbers of medieval Christians, to get the clergy off their backs. Zoroastrianism was ripe for reform, and a return to the simpler usages of

earlier days; but what in fact sprang up for the faith was not the reviving breeze of reformation, to give new life and strength, but instead the withering tempest of militant Islam.

**Hellenistic age.** Every inch of territory conquered by the Macedonian Alexander had been held before him by the Achaemenians, so that wherever Hellenistic culture established itself in his wake, it was on soil where Persians had been living, as members of the ruling people, for generations, and where accordingly, their religion had long been represented.

It was during the troubled times which immediately followed the Macedonian conquests (fourth century BCE) that Zoroastrians were most active in expressing religious and political thoughts evoked among them by the shock of those events. Among the distinctive elements of Zoroastrian doctrines were:

- Belief in God (Ahura Mazda), and in a wholly independent Spirit of evil (Angra Mainyu).
- Ahura Mazda created the world in order to destroy that Spirit.
- A struggle is being waged by celestial beings, just men and the whole good creation, against him who has malignly invaded the world.
- This struggle will end with the triumph of the good, which will mark the last day of measurable time and human history, known as *frashokereti*, the “making wonderful.”
- The dead will be raised, and all humanity, can undergo a last judgment by fiery ordeal.
- The wicked will be destroyed, and the earth, will be once more wholly good, as Ahura Mazda had created it.
- Then His kingdom will come in which the just, made immortal in the flesh, will live in bliss for ever.

Before the arrival of Zoroastrianism in the Near East, none of these beliefs is to be found in any religion there, still less was anything like Zoroaster’s coherent theological sys-

tem known – a system which has been justly characterized as “strikingly intellectual and lucid.”

Although the impact of Zoroastrianism appears to have been felt most profoundly among the Jews, the effect of some of its doctrines can be traced widely in the Hellenistic world. The concept of an end of time now emerges also in Babylonia and was adopted here and there by Greeks, together with the belief that some major part was then to be played by fire.

“ The respect felt for Zarathushtra by certain Greeks, notably those of the Platonic school, and the keen interest in the study of the heavens in Hellenistic times, combined to make him a much revered figure. ”

The respect felt for Zarathushtra by certain Greeks, notably those of the Platonic school, and the keen interest in the study of the heavens in Hellenistic times, combined to make him a much revered figure.

He was drawn into direct contact with the Greek philosophical tradition by a claim that he had been a teacher of Pythagoras. What Pythagoras is said to have learnt from “Zaratas” (an Aramaic form of Zoroaster’s name) is judged to represent in fact early Pythagorean doctrine as seen through the eyes of an early Aristotelian. The belief in a cosmic harmony was a cornerstone of that doctrine.

These developments could only have taken place because Irano-Greek exchanges were made easy in the Hellenistic age by the use of Greek as a common language. During the Hellenistic period, *Sibylline Oracles* (verses written in the name of a Persian Sibyl) became an important channel for the dissemination of ideas. Persian Sibyllists appear to have included the first setting down in written form of major Zoroastrian beliefs.

The most important Jewish writing of Hellenistic times, in that it was the only one to be accepted into the canon of scripture, is the *Book of Daniel*. It is partly in Hebrew, partly in Aramaic, and the Aramaic contains a striking number of Persian (as well as Greek) loan words. Among elements in the Daniel prophecy that reflect distinctive Zoroastrian beliefs are: “time of the end”, “end of the days” towards which all events are tending, bodily resurrection, to be followed by judgment, with blessedness for the just, but an evil lot for sinners.

Further, much of the angelology in Daniel, may be attributed to the infiltration of Iranian ideas. Thus, the seven archangels have their counterparts in the *Amesha Spentas*. The identification of the angels with the controlling spirits of natural phenomena accords strikingly with the concept of the *fravashis* and the *yazatas*.

Zoroastrian elements are also to be found in some early ‘*inter-testamental*’ writings (i.e. between the Jewish Old Testament, and the Christian New Testament) such as *Tobit* and *I and II Maccabees*.

The fame of Zoroaster in the Hellenistic age made him one of the illustrious figures whom the Jews sought to annex to their own tradition. One was simply to assert that it was in fact Abraham who had discovered astrology, which he then taught to Zoroaster. Another was to identify Zoroaster with diverse Old Testament characters: Nimrod (great-grandson of Noah), Seth (son of Adam), the divinely inspired seer Balaam, Baruch (the scribe of Jeremiah) and the prophet Ezekiel.

**Early Christianity.** Christianity, it is now generally agreed among scholars, has its origins in the Jewish sectarianism represented in its diversity in Daniel, II Maccabees and the inter-testamental literature, a kind of Jewish non-conformity which had developed during the Persian period and early Hellenistic times.

[Continued on page 68]



Zoroastrianism was a powerful presence in the Jewish world of the two centuries BCE and the first century CE, both in Israel and in the diaspora.

Studies of the inter-testamental period tend to look at Israel from a Europocentric perspective – the interaction of Judaism with Greece and Rome, almost as though lands to the east were at that time irrelevant. On the streets of Jerusalem at the turn of the millennium Parthian Iran would have appeared to be one of the two great powers, a force encountered in trade, diplomacy, liberation. Interfaith dialogue with what was then the most powerful religion in the known world is not merely plausible, but to be expected.

**Savior imagery.** The development in eschatological imagery in the Judeo-Christian inter-testamental period, a development which is usually attributed, in part at least, to Iranian influence, involves a corresponding development in the concept of the savior: he is said to defeat the demons, the dead are raised at his coming or by him, and he introduces and administers the eschatological judgment.

Precisely the same functions are carried out by the Zoroastrian savior Saoshyant, and since the apocalyptic setting of both is so similar one might reasonably conclude that the development in the Judeo-Christian savior imagery is indebted to Iranian influence.

One point should be noted. There does not seem to be one Jewish or Christian figure which has been taken over *in toto*. The influence is spread over a number of figures: the priestly savior and his defeat of the demons, the Elect One as judge, and the resurrection of the dead at the coming of the Son of Man or Messiah. It is in the New Testament that the various functions are attributed to one figure.

**Historical background.** In arguing for the influence of one religion or culture upon another it is important to



# zarathushti influence: some reflections

by John R. Hinnells

Reflections on the influence of Zoroastrianism on Judaism and Christianity – excerpts from a recent work by John Hinnells, distinguished scholar and long time friend of the Zarathushti community.

take into account the circumstances and conditions under which such influence was possible and likely.

Thus the increase in demonology in late Judaism is symptomatic of a radical change in their feelings about the world, and the resurrection doctrine appeared in Judaism at a time of great stress due to ruthless persecution from the Seleucids.

In 54 BCE, the forces of the Roman Crassus ravaged the land (Syria), invaded the Temple and stole the Temple treasure. Within a few months, Crassus took his army to Carrhae and although his troops outnumbered the Parthians 3:1, suffered a defeat on a scale almost unparalleled in Roman history.

It is not unreasonable to assume that this may well have appeared to the Jews as the hand of God at work. Their hopes must surely have been high for a Parthian invasion and a repetition of the Messianic role of Cyrus. These hopes were fanned by the unpopularity of the Roman-supported Idumaeen king of Jerusalem – King Herod. The looked-for Parthian invasion came in 40 BCE.

Just as there was a pro-Hellenic movement during the reign of the

Seleucids, so it can be supposed that before, during and after the Parthian invasion there would be a pro-Parthian party in Jerusalem. Perhaps it was among such circles that Apocalyptic speculation flourished.

These historical circumstances would certainly favor religious influence. An attempt to enforce one's own religion usually meets stubborn opposition, but a period of co-operation to liberate a country is perhaps more likely to stimulate an exchange of ideas, particularly Apocalyptic beliefs, of speculation about the coming of God's kingdom and the overthrow of evil, and savior imagery.

**Powerful presence.** In the decades immediately prior to the birth of Jesus, Zoroastrianism was not a distant or shadowy presence, but the world's most powerful religion, a religion which had a long record of support for Israel, and which was found in many parts of the regions where Jews traveled.

In Hellenism, Iran became thought of as the land of eastern wisdom, mystery and learning. Although the Zoroastrian Pseudepigrapha may not be Zoroastrian, they nevertheless indicate how Iranian authority was invoked for religious teachings.

It was because of this potent image that the Roman cult of Mithras claimed its teachings were derived from the Persian Zoroaster.

The point is, then, that the image of Iran and of Zoroastrianism was immensely powerful, as was its physical presence, at the very time that there was a surge in Jewish and Christian demonological thought.

“ In the decades immediately prior to the birth of Jesus, Zoroastrianism was not a distant or shadowy presence, but the world’s most powerful religion ... ”

The combination in time and location of this powerful, visible presence, of the widespread image of Iran as a source of religious knowledge and the close doctrinal parallels between Jewish, Christian and Zoroastrian teachings can hardly be dismissed as coincidental. ■

[Excerpted from “Zoroastrian and Parsi Studies, Selected Works of John R. Hinnells” by John R. Hinnells, Ashgate, 2000]

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***So it was out of a Judaism enriched by five centuries of contact with Zoroastrianism, that Christianity arose in the Parthian period, a new religion with roots thus in two ancient faiths.*** - Mary Boyce

# zoroastrianism & christianity: a comparison

Reflecting on the major similarities and differences between these two great religions. Comparison is based not only on theological ideas, but also on themes of ritual practice, institutions and values.

by Alan Williams

**Historical parallel.** In the course of their history, Zoroastrianism and Christianity have been adopted by mighty imperial dynasties. In Iran the Achaemenians, the Parthian and the Sasanian empires were Zoroastrian, with the Zoroastrian church playing an increasingly important role in the affairs of state. Christianity was adopted by the Roman empire at the beginning of the fourth century, the Byzantine empire from the 5th to the 11th, then by many and various medieval regimes, and in recent centuries by the colonial and imperialist nations of Europe and the United States, from which the influence of Christianity was spread by conquest and mission to the edges of imperial and colonial power. Each in its day has been immensely powerful.

In terms of religious doctrine, both religions preach goodness and humanity. Both teach that there is salvation from this troubled world in a next world, with God. Both have taught that wickedness is rewarded by the pains of hell. Both have a complex ritual life. Both have priests to carry out these rituals.

Prayers, scriptures, sacred languages, theology, ethics – in so many ways these two religions might at first

sight seem similar. To some extent they are, and there are good human, psychological and historical reasons for this. In human, psychological terms, maybe humankind everywhere seeks resolution of strife, and finds it in wisdom and love.

Historically, Zoroastrianism, the much more ancient faith, has influenced Christianity profoundly and in a number of ways.

**Scriptures.** For both religions the scriptures are of central importance: the Avesta, and the Gathas in particular, for the Zoroastrians, and the Bible, and Gospels in particular for the Christians. There is, however, a great difference in how those scriptures have been preserved. For thousands of years the Avesta was handed down in faithful oral transmission. Iranian languages changed a great deal over the millennia, but the scriptures were inscribed on the memories of priests and were preserved with remarkable accuracy.

The Christians, on the other hand, following the scribal traditions of the Jews and Romans, wrote down their religious teachings in books, closed the canon of scripture and fixed the creed into a written formula within a few centuries of the death of Christ.



The attitude to scripture is thus traditionally different. The Gathas are regarded as absolutely sacred words, and must be pronounced exactly, in Avestan, for their sacred power to be effected. They are living words. In ritual practice the same is true of other prayers in Avestan and Pahlavi. For Christians, the Bible is supremely authoritative but, above all, for them the person of Christ is the living word, the *logos* as it is known in Greek, and all the contents of the Gospels are a witness to and an account of that living word. Scripture is said to be the 'foundational revelation' but it is not the only form in which revelation comes to one.

“ Some of the most striking features of Zoroastrian thought are present in Christianity, and the reason is historical influence ... ”

In the life of the Holy Catholic Church, the liturgical, institutional, moral and cultural dimensions have claimed, equally with written scripture, the attention of Catholics, and the focus has been put on the two thousand years of development and growth of the Church and the tradition as the complete, living embodiment of the Word. For Protestants the Person of Christ has been sought in the New Testament scriptures and in personal commitment in relation to that Person of Christ.

**Two models of Divine revelation.** We have then, in the Protestant and the Catholic attitudes to scripture, two quite different models – the 'Seed' model and the 'Great Tree' model. The individual Protestant is charged with the responsibility of looking into the Gospels and finding for himself the seed of the 'living word' planted there by God. It is primarily a private and intimate rela-

tionship between the individual and God, through Jesus Christ.

The Catholic is born into a great community of Christians with a strong structure of authority which is held to be not merely human but also divine. Catholics are more like an ethnic community. They take pride in having an ancient heritage which has as its origin Christ himself. They are like a family which has existed for two thousand years.

Here is a similarity with Zoroastrianism: Catholics are not just members of a religion, they feel that they belong to a great holy family, a people with a common ancestry.

**The purpose of human life.** For Christians the purpose of human life is to come to the love of God through Jesus Christ. This is not an emotional love, but what is called a 'salvific' love, that is, a love which saves humankind from the sin into which all were born. This is a language which is private to Christians, for Zoroastrians do *not* believe that they were born in sin. Sins there may be, when one is old enough to get around to committing them, but it is not the Zoroastrian's intrinsic nature to be born in sin.

The Eastern Orthodox church has not developed the Augustinian doctrine of Original Sin, and Zoroastrians would perhaps find that they have more sympathy with the Orthodox understanding of human nature. The freedom the Zoroastrians possesses is to fight with a clear conscience against the powers of evil in their mind, their society, their world, because they know that evil is not part of their nature, but external to it. This fact alone has given the Zoroastrian a tremendous self-confidence and personal resilience which Christians may find hard to understand.

**God and Salvation.** Ahura Mazda is the Wise Lord, the God of Wisdom, the Creator of everything good, the Lord of the Good Creation, who is worshiped in grateful thanks for the gift of creation and the power and beauty he has given to the world. He

is aided by the presence of the six Blessed Immortals (*Amesha Spentas*) and the good spiritual beings, the *Yazatas*. One does not fear God, for God is wise and, above all, just and fair. God is the friend of the righteous human being. They work together, through thought, speech and action, to destroy all evil and to make the world perfectly free from harm.

The Christian God is understood in different ways by different churches. He is, above all, the Trinitarian God: the Father, the Person of the Son, and the mystery of the Holy Spirit. The purpose of the Trinitarian concept is not to pin God down to one almighty fact, but rather to 'express an insight into the mystery of God.' God becomes fully human in the person of Christ, and Christ is the Perfect One, the embodiment of God's love.

In Zoroastrianism every human is the embodiment of God's love and wisdom, so much that we could say that in principle each Zoroastrian soul has a Christ-like nature. In fact Christians believe this also, that we all share in the nature of Christ; but the emphasis in Christianity is put upon the historical and theological event of Christ's own death and resurrection. It is thus a once-and-for-all symbol of *salvation*.

The Zoroastrian process of salvation is different. Each person acts directly in relation to God. There is no mediator except one's own conscience and knowledge of God. One's thoughts, words and actions are one's own rewarder and punisher, and although the religion speaks of the three judges at the Bridge of the Separator, the judgment is made precisely according to what one has stored in one's spiritual account.

Just as Christians re-enact the saving event of the death and resurrection of Christ, so Zoroastrians re-consecrate the world in the Yasna and other sacred rituals. For Zoroastrians **Goodness is the Savior** (*Saoshyant*, 'the one who brings benefit'): for however small an action, every act of goodness helps to save the soul and the world.

**Death.** Christians share in the death of Christ. Zoroastrians abhor death. The central event of Christianity is the death and resurrection of the God-Man, and so the Christian understanding of death is complex and to the outsider, seemingly self-contradictory. Christ suffered on the cross, and therefore it has been part of Christian teaching that the way to salvation is through suffering.

“ Thus there are many points where Christians and Zoroastrians can ... share in their religious vision without conflict. ”

Zoroastrianism, like Judaism and Islam, has little time for what it sees as morose, self-indulgence in the contemplation of the death of the body. The body is a necessary garment which the soul wears in life in the physical world. When it is worn out, it perishes; there is no question but that the essence of life, the soul and the spirit, carries on in a spiritual world which is just as real as the physical world.

Without Christ, the Christian fears oblivion and utter destruction of the light of consciousness; their only refuge is the life that is to be found in Christ.

Zoroastrians are assured that in every act of goodness they are alive in the spiritual world, accompanied by a vast universe of other good beings who fight alongside them for life, light and wisdom. Though they must face responsibility alone, they know that they act *with* God, not apart from God. Life is not a *test* before God, it is a *contest* against evil, and human beings stand alongside one another against the common enemy – evil. In fact the Christian God is just such a loving, compassionate God who wishes the soul to be united with Him.

At the deeper level many of the differences between Zoroastrianism and Christianity begin to disappear. For in both concepts of the Christian God and Ahura Mazda, there is the overriding characteristic of the loving Creator.

**Influence.** Some of the most striking features of Zoroastrian thought are present in Christianity, and the reason is historical influence via Greek, Neoplatonic writers and also Jewish thought of the pre-Christian and early Christian period. Judaism inherited ideas of dualism in its texts in the middle Parthian period, and when Christianity was born the ideas of heaven and hell, cosmic messianism and the power of Satan came to be important in Christianity.

Christians believe that God is the maker of heaven and earth; so do Zoroastrians. He made all things visible and invisible, the Zoroastrian *getig* and *menog*. Christians believe in the resurrection of the dead and the judgment of all humankind; so do Zoroastrians. They believe in the cosmic savior; for them it is Christ, for the Zoroastrians, the Saoshyant. They believe the kingdom will have no end; so also, after the *frashokereti*, Zoroastrians believe Ahura Mazda and the spiritual beings will live with humankind and the physical creations in an eternity of perfection which is neither spiritual nor physical but a new state which is perfect.

Thus there are many points where Christians and Zoroastrians can understand each other and share in the common pursuit of their religious vision without conflict. ■

*[Excerpted from the paper “Zoroastrianism and Christianity” by Alan V. Williams, presented at the VII North American Congress, Houston, 1990].*

Alan Williams is professor of Comparative Religion at the University of Manchester and writes on Zoroastrian and Islamic literature in Iran and India.

## Zarathushti doctrines...

*[Continued from page 64]*

Elements in its beliefs which can be attributed ultimately to Zoroastrianism as an originating or fertilizing force, had long been assimilated into what was by then a fully Jewish tradition. Early Christian writings provide additional testimony for the vigor and persistence of certain essential doctrines of the Iranian religion, and hence for the continuing effectiveness of Zoroaster's thought.

In the New Testament, two distinct traditions are represented: that formed and handed down in the primitive Jewish-Christian community, which reached the Syrian diaspora; and that of the churches founded by St. Paul. This latter presentation of the new religion may well have gained it some genuine converts among the Zoroastrians of Asia Minor, for it embodied doctrines taught by their own faith, namely of a struggle between good and evil, an end of time, a coming world savior, and a last judgment.

In the regions where Christianity developed, Zoroastrianism was a living faith practiced by fellow-citizens of Iranian descent who were ministered to by the magi. Reality also included the fact that Zoroastrianism was the religion of imperial Iran, then represented politically by the Parthians, who as Rome's chief antagonists were looked on favorably by a number of Jews. They ruled, moreover, on the whole benignly, over the Jews of the eastern diaspora, who thus had still better opportunities to know something of Zoroastrians, and who maintained contact with Jerusalem. ■

*[Excerpted from “Zoroastrians, their Religious Beliefs and Practices” by Mary Boyce, 1979 and “A History of Zoroastrianism” Vol 3, by Mary Boyce and Frantz Grenet, 1991]*

Mary Boyce is professor emerita of Iranian Studies at the University of London and author of numerous works on Zoroastrianism.



## Christianity in Parthian and Sasanian Iran

**In the Parthian period.** Jesus was born during the reign of the Parthian king Phraates V. The people of Iranian origin, the Jews from Parthia, Media, Elam and Mesopotamia for the first time learnt about Christianity from the Pentecostal miracle in Jerusalem, as stated by Acts 2.9 from the Bible. We can safely surmise that in all probability, the starting point of Christianization was to the east of Euphrates. These groups played between the Roman and Parthian interests.

The young Christianity soon became a missionary church [see *Acts of the Apostles*] and so in the second century CE, the Younger Pliny, the Roman imperial representative in Pontus had to write for advice concerning the treatment of the Christians to Trajan Roman ruler [see, *Annals XV, 44, Loeb Classical Libraries*].

The general state of Christianity under Parthian rule was one of tolerance because of religious indifference until the Christians started their conversion movements and the Zoroastrian clergy had to be made strong, as was done by Vologeses I, with the codification of Zoroastrian scriptures and vigorous revival of the religion with deep learning by the priestly class.

The Parthian period was characterized by peace and quiet for the Christians and other non-Zoroastrian minorities. This peaceful period proved beneficial for Christianity in so far as it resulted in further consolidation of their missionary zeal. Conversion of Zoroastrians to Christianity increased significantly in the Sasanian period.

**In the Sasanian Period.** A new and vigorous dynasty, the Sasanian, was established in 225 CE, with greater devotion to Zoroastrianism resulting in justifiable anxiety for the Christians. They were, by this time, well spread in many main Iranian cities and were carrying out their missionary works among the Zoroastrians [E. Sachau, *Vom Christentum in der Persia, SPAW 1916, xxix*]. By 250, the number of Christians became very large forcing the Zoroastrian State to regard them as a potential element of unrest.

At the same time Mani, founder of Manichaeism appeared and his syncretistic Gnostic religion gave an enormous importance to Jesus. In his *Shaburgan*, Mani used as his own, the sayings of Jesus of the New Testament with direct quotations from Matthew 25.21 ff [The *Mid-Persian Turfan texts M475 and M477 in F. Muller Handschriften-Reste in Estrangelo-Shrift aus Turfan, Chinesisch-Turkistan II, APAW 1903, 2. Due thanks to Helmut Humbach for giving this reference.*] The intimate knowledge of Christianity found in the Manichaen texts was gained by Mani from the Christians in Babylonia, who represented the established and well organized Christian church.

Organized Christianity started propagating and becoming very strong. Over sixty Christian tombs were built in one year in an extremely small area – the island of Kharg, according to archeological investigation [E. Herzfeld, *Archaeological History of Iran, London, 1955 pp103-4*]. All these resulted in Kartir, the Sasanian Zoroastrian Church leader taking Christianity very seriously as it had become a sort of opponent to the State. This was justifiably so because, for example, on two occasions (256 and 260 CE) in the Sasanian wars against Rome, the Greek-speaking Christians in the Sasanian Empire supported and fought for the Romans [E. Honigsmann and A. Maricq, *Recherches sur les Res gestae divi Saporis, Brussels, 1953, p 131 ff*].

- By Pallan R. Ichaporia

## Laws of the Medes & Persians

*“The Laws of the Medes and Persians,”* oft mentioned in the Bible, notably in the Old Testament books of Daniel and Esther, has become a byword of judicial incorruptibility and a law that is inflexible and absolute.

In the story of Daniel in the lion’s den, the princes urge King Darius to invoke the “Laws of the Medes and Persians that cannot be repealed.”

“Please sign this,” they said, “and make it the Law of the Medes and Persians.”

“Remember, O king,” they said, “that according to the Law of the Medes and Persians no decree or edict that the king issues can be changed.”

In the Book of Esther, likewise, King Xerxes is asked “to make a royal decree, and let it be written according to the Laws of the Medes and Persians.”

Persian laws [see the ‘legal’ nasks, some summaries in book eight of *Denkard*] dealt with matters as diverse as: injuries, property, theft, cruelty to animals, military, church, family and descent, medical practice, business transactions, financial obligations, debt, purity, health, sanitation, agriculture, colonizing schemes, and laws of the heavenly kingdom and divine government.

All laws were enacted by the imperial legislature, and promulgated by the decree of the king. Severest penalties were meted out to those who sat in judgment and violated its sanctity by intentional miscarriage of justice. Judges were instructed to maintain with the greatest firmness absolute impartiality in judgment. They were to “cast out all consciousness of self in the judgment seat.”

[Sources: “*Laws of the Ancient Persians*” S. J. Bulsara, Bombay, 1937; [www.keyway.ca](http://www.keyway.ca); [www.bc.edu](http://www.bc.edu)]



Scholars and students comment on Zarathushtra's place in the development of western religious thought, through the ages.

*Prophet Zarathushtra, stained glass, Tata Agiary, Bandra, Mumbai.*

# zarathushtra's place

## What Zarathushtra has given to all mankind

by Robert Scott Nelson  
Lexington, Missouri



Hundreds and hundreds of years ago there was a righteous man who saw injustice in his world. He saw corrupt kings and priests, slavery and wantonness. He spoke out against these things, and changed the hearts of men toward One God, the God of Light and Wisdom. This man was not Asho Zarathushtra, he was the grandson of Abdul-Muttalib of Mecca; we call him Mohammed.

Hundreds of years before this, there was a righteous man who saw injustice in his world. He saw corrupt kings and priests, slavery and wantonness. He spoke out against these things and changed the hearts of men toward One God, the God of Light and Wisdom. His name was Yeshua ben Yousef. We call him Jesus.

Five hundred years before this, there was a righteous man in the East who spoke of the One God of Light and Wisdom, an emanation of pure Light that manifests in the souls of each of us. He turned the hearts of men *inward* in search of this God. This man's name was Gautama, the Buddha.

Hundreds of years before this, there was a righteous man who saw slavery and injustice in his world. He changed the hearts of his people towards the One true God of Light and Wisdom, and led them to freedom. This was Moses, the inheritor.

But before all of this, hundreds of years ago, came Zarathushtra, a righteous man who saw injustice in his world. He saw corrupt kings and priests, savagery and lawlessness. He spoke out against these things and changed the hearts of men toward One God, the God of Light and Wisdom, forever after. Such is the power and importance of Zarathushtra's message, that it echoes in the hearts and minds of men from the most ancient of times to this very day.

It was Zarathushtra who gave us the concept of One God, fashioned as the primal emanation of Power that creates all things and establishes the progressive nature of the universe. He taught us the law of Progressive Truth that manifests in all of us. He taught us the importance of freedom, equality and justice. How revolutionary were these concepts, espoused by Zarathushtra almost 4,000 years ago? So revolutionary that the western world did not comprehend them for thousands of years.

It is not only in the world of religion that Zarathushtra has made immeasurable impact. The philosophies of the West owe much to him. The followers of Plato, in fact, so venerated Zarathushtra that they assigned him to an age of great antiquity. The more modern philosophies of Leibniz, Schopenhauer, Hegel and Hume can be seen to closely parallel the metaphysics of Zarathushtra.



Even science is now confirming many of Zarathushtra's teachings. We are only now beginning to recognize the importance of the relationship between light and matter, and how light influences the way that matter manifests in the physical universe. We now recognize that all systems in the natural world are affected by elements of both order and chaos in an eternal struggle for supremacy. However, when any system tends toward chaos, patterns begin to emerge and order takes over, resulting in the ultimate triumph of order over chaos, good over evil, wisdom over ignorance.

Science is now telling us of the 'Butterfly Effect,' in which every action, no matter how small, affects every other action after that; a butterfly flapping its wings in Kansas affects the weather in Paris and everywhere else. Each time we take an action, it either works in harmony with nature or it works against the progressive nature of our universe, and therefore God.

Are these not the very truths that Asho Zarathushtra taught us, so long ago?

*[Excerpted from a talk in Kansas City, in 2004. Robert Scott Nelson [rrugby@hotmail.com] teaches philosophy, comparative religion, Russian and Spanish at Wentworth Military Academy in Lexington, Missouri.]*

## Zarathushtra – 500 years before the 'axis time of humanity'

by Nicholas Davidson, cfar1usa@aol.com  
 Frankestown, New Hampshire



A great change took place some 2,500 years ago, in what Eric Voegelin calls the "**axis time of humanity**." This began around 500 years before Christ and lasted for about a century and a half.

During this period there appeared the Greek philosophers, the Jewish prophet Isaiah, Siddhartha Gautama – the Buddha, Confucius and Lao Tze, and the composition of

some of the Upanishads in India. It was the immense extension and deepening of human understanding arising from the philosophers of the axis time that made possible the subsequent development of rational philosophy, empirical science, and the modern religions.

Zarathushtra lived some 500 years before the axis time.

**Contrasts in books of the Bible.** There are some striking contrasts in doctrine between the earlier books of the Bible and the later ones. I will mention here, one of the most central, concerning the intersection of ethics, soteriology and eschatology.

In the oldest books of the Hebrew Bible, the souls of the deceased are said to go to a place called Sheol, a gray and

cheerless limbo where they live without pain or pleasure for all eternity. There is no judgment of souls, no retribution of good or bad actions. The afterlife is the same for everybody. As a result, the meaning of human existence is focused on this life alone.

Similarly, there is no eschatology, that is, doctrine of the last things. The world was created by God, but on its ultimate destiny no information is given to us, whether that destiny is to result in cosmic catastrophe, in redemption, or simply in the continuance of things as they are.

In the later books, all this is changed. Humanity is divided into the righteous and the wicked, those who do good and those who do evil. Men will be judged after death for their actions in this life. The righteous will receive perfect happiness forever while the wicked will be condemned to the sufferings of hell.

The world is the theater of a struggle between good and evil in which every moral choice of man contributes to the victory of good or of evil. At the end, the forces of good will triumph. Evil will be annihilated and the world will become absolutely good.

Man's desire for individual salvation is thus enlisted in a cosmic struggle. The individual is led to transcend his individuality in the service of universal good.

This new or more fully revealed set of doctrines is first expressed in the Bible following the liberation of the Jews from Babylon by King Cyrus. All of these doctrines can be found in the Gathas of Zarathushtra, composed some three to five hundred years earlier. The Dead Sea Scrolls now provide an intermediate phase in which this 'Zoroastrianized Judaism' was setting the stage for the advent of Christianity.

*[Excerpted from "Remarks on the Influence of Zoroastrianism" by Nicholas Davidson, at the Parliament of the World's Religions, Barcelona, 2004. Nicholas is currently working on a translation of the Gathas. He has also produced a CD recording of the Gathas recited by Er. Rostam K. Bhedwar (2003).]*

## The origin of Israel's Faith, and its debt to Zarathushtra

by P. E. MacAllister  
 Indianapolis, Indiana



**Early Judaism.** In the pre-exilic period, the faith of Israel included little of what we would today call 'religion.' The system was based on fear, extensively ritualized and long on show and panoply, inculcating a cowering and timorous obeisance before the God (or gods). Mankind lived half afraid – all the time. Religion was about obedience, subservience, about

fearing for our immortal soul. Most astounding was that religion had nothing to do with morality. The issue of ethical conduct was never part of the package. If one part was revolutionary in terms of its monolatry, extensive law, intolerance of other religions, concept of sin; the other part was autocratic, arrogance of the priesthood, partnership with the throne, the endless ceremony and pageantry, the continuing sacrifice. Plus the distance established between the person and the God enforced by the ecclesiastical intermediary, add the continual element of fear, the ominous mystery surrounding the nature of the God.

Religion held little appeal and less promise, and when death came, all departed to the same abode, sheol, and roamed, like shades, in the netherworld.

What finally gave theology a heart was a major breakthrough starting in the 8th century by a class called the prophets. The wakeup call came from a shepherd named Amos in about 750 BCE. He wanted "Justice to roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream ... Seek good and not evil. Amos wanted kindness, tolerance, forgiveness, compassion and mercy. He spoke of the most revolutionary idea in their history: religion he demanded, has to be moral.

But Amos did not prevail. He was booted out of Israel, and the prophetic voices suppressed.

**Fall of Jerusalem.** The age of the prophets (late 7th century) was an age of conflicts, first with Assyria and then Babylon. Jerusalem fell in 586 BCE. The Babylonians destroyed the city, ravaged the land, decimated the populace. The entire nation of David and Solomon was wiped off the map.

Miraculously, they survived. In the exile, they had time to read their own manuscripts and scrolls, reconstruct history, the works of the prophets. Soon, a class called the Pharisees and then the Sadducees, all religious lay experts and students augmented the elements of the faith. The laity took over the function of perpetuating the religion of Israel; add to this a growing body of knowledge – the Jewish scriptures, the Old Testament.

**Medo-Persian suzerainty.** The period of the exile and this metamorphosis brings us to a new element in the epic: an Aryan presence in the long history of the Semitic world. *Medo-Persian suzerainty was a refreshing breath of air in the Fertile Crescent.* In the monarch Cyrus the Great, we encounter a warrior, conqueror, and manager without the need to visit devastation on conquered people – the familiar pattern of Assyrian, Babylonian, Chaldean or Egyptian records.

The Old Testament books tell us that after Cyrus had subdued Babylon, he freed the Jews, encouraging a return to

their homeland to rebuild their nation. He returned the temple paraphernalia so they could reconstruct their faith, and he wanted them to rebuild their culture.

Maybe Cyrus and the Persians, showed a remarkable tolerance and magnanimity because of their religion, Zoroastrianism. Despite the obscure origins of this religion, the remarkable theological innovation he installed flowed freely and unobtrusively into other religions, including Israel, who lived under Persian rule from 538 to 330 BCE.

**Zarathushti thought in other religions.** There is an astounding amount of material derived from this ancient religion of Zarathushtra, transplanted to other religions.

“ The period of the exile brings us to a new element in the epic: an Aryan presence in the long history of the Semitic world. Medo-Persian suzerainty was a refreshing breath of air in the Fertile Crescent. ”

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

The most striking contribution was one which rejected the Hebrew premise that imputed all powers to Yahweh. Isaiah's

God says, "I am the source of good and I bring the bad." This bizarre premise makes God the source of wickedness, tragedy and deceit. So Zarathushtra offers a neat way out. We leave Yahweh in charge of righteousness but find another source for evil. Judaism revamped it's thinking, and now *Satan became the source of evil*. In Moses' day, upon death, all souls went into Sheol. The Persians resolved that point as well. If there are two forces at work, there are two destinies as well – *heaven* for the servants of Yahweh, *and hell*, for the servants of Satan.

Note too, Zarathushtra declaring a *moment of accountability*. A premise picked up by Jewish Pharisees in the first century CE, which held that the millennial age will be brought about, not by Ahura Mazda, but by the Messiah, who will meet the forces of Satan in a climactic battle, which the forces of good will win.

*Final judgment and afterlife* drifted into Christianity out of those faint echoes and suggestions of Judaism, borrowed from Zarathushtra.

We now know where the *Garden of Eden* theory originated and *the flood* and *the temptation*; and learn how all sorts of torment and pain came from Satan. We recall other divine beings like the angel Gabriel or Michael of Israel, the seraphim Isaiah described in the temple; the Satan in the Book of Job; the heavenly council referenced in Isaiah – all there in the religion of Zarathushtra. The spirit of God is similar to the *amesha spenta*, the immortal holy ones of Zarathushtra. We recall the *element of free will*, and saw it represented very early in the Garden of Eden and Eve. Elijah swept to heaven in a



fiery chariot, similar to the **bolt of lightning** which swept up Zarathushtra.

Christianity was built upon Judaism, refined and restated by Jesus, then fashioned into a theology by St. Paul. We are the legatees of that ancient journey and in debt to those ancient savants.

Today, our 21st century American society has become a model in the search for equality and freedom. Much of our nation's budget goes towards ministering to people. We educate our children, punish those who abuse, demand fair play, and encourage each one to develop his potential in hopes of gaining personal success and happiness. We give away billions for worthy causes endeavoring to ennoble our society. We have more volunteer organizations than the rest of the world combined.

In the scheme of human achievement, today we are standing on a pinnacle never before reached in mankind's experience. And it comes from a people motivated and conditioned by the Protestant work ethic as represented in the men who framed our nation and wrote our founding documents. They were different because of the ancient wisdom passed down in our western culture, a significant piece of their morality and national conscience coming from the sages of the east, primarily in Palestine and in ancient Persia.

*[Excerpted from a presentation by P. E. MacAllister in Indianapolis, Indiana (tel: 317-545-2151) at a seminar organized by Mr. Shapur Irani, in Indianapolis, in 2003]*

## A moment of historic significance

by Rabbi Herman E. Schaalman  
Chicago, Illinois



Upon learning that Cyrus the Great had been a Zoroastrian, and knowing what a decisive role he played in allowing Jewish exiles in former Babylonia to return to their own country and thus restart their own commonwealth, ***I want to express my personal gratitude and the indebtedness of my Jewish community to this great Zoroastrian personality of 2,500 years ago.***

Had this second commonwealth not been reconstituted, it is possible that Judaism and therefrom Christianity and Islam would have had an entirely different development, if any.

*[Excerpted from presentation by Rabbi Herbert E. Schaalman at the 12th North American Zoroastrian Congress in Chicago, 2002. Rabbi Schaalman serves on the board of many distinguished religious organizations including the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan*

*Chicago, the Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago and The Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions.]*

## Biblical Connections

by Daryoush Jahanian, M.D.  
Kansas City, Kansas



One of the significant events in ancient history is the conquest of Babylon by the Persian king, Cyrus the Great. On October 4, 539 BCE, the Persian army entered the city of Babylon, which was then the capital of the Babylonian state (in central Iraq). This was a bloodless campaign and no prisoner was taken. Later, on November 9, King Cyrus of Persia visited the city. Babylonian history tells us that Cyrus was greeted by the people who spread a pathway of green twigs before him as a sign of honor and peace. Cyrus greeted all Babylonians in peace and brought peace to their city.

On this great occasion, Cyrus issued a declaration inscribed on a clay barrel, which many have viewed as the "first declaration of human rights."

It shed light on the religio-political plight that had angered the people of Babylon and why they invited Cyrus' military campaign. The Babylonian king, Nabonidus eliminated the festival of new year and Nebo (one of the gods) was not brought into the city, and Bel (another god) was not taken in the festival procession. Also, the worship of Marduk, the king of gods, was changed to an abomination. Nabonidus tormented the inhabitants with yoke without relief. The sanctuaries of all their settlements were in ruins, and the inhabitants of Sumer and Akkad had become "like the living dead."

Marduk, king of the gods, searched for a righteous ruler, finally coming upon Cyrus (Ku-ra-as). He beheld with pleasure Cyrus' good deeds and upright mind and ordered him to march against Babylon. Earlier angry inhabitants of Akkad had revolted but were massacred by Nabonidus. All the inhabitants of Sumer and Akkad, including princes and governors, greeted Cyrus as a master who brought them back from a living death. All who had been spared damage and disaster revered his very name.

On this historic turning point, by order of Cyrus, all the captive nationalities held as slaves for generations in Babylon were freed and the return to their homelands was financed from the Imperial treasury. Among the liberated captives were 50,000 Jews held in Babylon for three generations. Contributions were given toward the rebuilding of their temples in Palestine, a policy that was continued by Darius and his successors. Some of the liberated Jews were invited to settle in Persia.

Because of his generous acts, Cyrus has been anointed in the Bible. He is the only gentile in the Bible, who has been titled Messiah, and is mentioned as the Lord's shepherd and as his anointed (Messiah). Other references to Cyrus are attested in Isaiah 45:4 where Cyrus is called by name and give a title of honor. He is also called to rebuild God's city and free His people [Is. 45:13] and is chosen by God [Is. 48:14-15].

[Excerpted from "The Zoroastrian Doctrine and Biblical Connections" by Daryoush Jahanian, M.D., 1997].

## Zarathushtra, Judaism and Christianity— influence or parallel development

by Hannah Shapero  
Falls Church, Virginia



As the Jewish religion was re-made after the catastrophe of the Exile, Zarathushti teachings began to filter into the Jewish religious culture.

Some venturesome scholars say that the Jewish idea of *monotheism* was inspired by contact with Zarathushti monotheism. While it is true that Jewish monotheistic ideas did change after the Exile, I do not believe that it was Zarathushti contact that inspired this change. Rather, it was the fact of the Exile itself ... the concept of a single God whom all nations would eventually worship evolved among a conquered and exiled people no longer assured of their divinely protected status. By the time of the Jewish contact it is unclear just what type of monotheism was believed by the Zarathushtis. Was it a true monotheism which worships only *ONE* God? This seems to be the monotheism of Zarathushtra, but not of the Achaemenid kings, who were able to incorporate veneration of subordinate divinities into their worship.

An important difference between Jewish and Zarathushti monotheism is that Jews recognize the one God as the source of both good and evil, light and darkness, while Zarathushtis think of God only as the source of Good, with Evil as a separate principle.

One of the most visible changes after the Exile is the emergence of a Jewish idea of *Heaven, Hell* and the *afterlife*. Before the Exile and Persian contact, Jews believed that the souls of the dead went to a dull, Hades-like place called 'Sheol.' After the Exile, the idea of a moralized afterlife, with heavenly rewards for the good and hellish punishment for the evil, appear in Judaism. One of the words for heaven in the Bible is 'Paradise' – from the ancient Iranian '*pairi-daeza*' (enclosed garden), is one of the few Persian loan-words in the Bible. This moral view of the afterlife is characteristic of Zarathushtian teaching.

As both Jewish and Persian savior-mythologies evolved, the Saoshyant and the Messiah, take on a special, individual, almost divine quality which would be very important in the birth of Christianity.

The conquests of Alexander created a global culture in which people, goods and ideas could circulate from southern Europe, through the Middle East, to Iran and India. It was in this cosmopolitan, Hellenistic world that Jews and Persians had further contact, and Zarathushti influence on Judaism became much stronger. This influence is clearly visible in the later Jewish writings such as the Book of Daniel and the 2nd century BCE books of the Maccabees.

An interesting (though probably fictional) Biblical account of Zarathushti-Jewish contact appears in the Second Book of the Maccabees, (dating from 124 BCE, which places it among the latest books of the Old Testament). There is a story of how the Jewish *altar fire* was restored to the Temple after the Captivity. Jewish Temple practice required a continuously burning flame at the altar [Exodus 27:20] though this flame did not have the special iconic quality of the Zarathushti sacred fire.

The Iranian influence continues to be evident in Jewish writings from the 'inter-testamental' period, that is, after the last canonical book of the Old Testament and before Christianity and the composition of the New Testament (150 BCE to 100 CE). These writings describe a complicated *hierarchy of angelic beings*, in an echo of the Zarathushti concept of the holy court of the highest guardian spirits of Zarathushti belief.

The Jewish and Christian idea of a personal '*guardian angel*' may also have been inspired by the Zarathushti figure of the fravashi, the divine guardian-spirit.

Zarathushti influence is also evident in the evolution of Jewish ideas about *good and evil*. In the Gathas, Zarathushtra describes the two conflicting principles of good and evil in what might be called 'ethical' terms; human beings are faced with the existence of good and evil within themselves. By the Hellenistic era, the Zarathushti religion had already developed its doctrine of 'cosmic dualism' – the idea that the universe is a battlefield between the One Good God, Ahura Mazda, and the separate Spirit of Evil, Ahriman. Both 'cosmic' and 'ethical' dualism coexist in Zarathushti thought. Reflections of both types of dualism are found in Jewish thinking. Deuteronomy [30:15-19] (which, like the other early books of the Old Testament, was re-edited and possibly re-written during and after the Exile) shows a Jewish version of ethical dualism.

Zarathushtis are often credited with introducing *eschatology*. Many of the Jewish apocalyptic writings survive from the inter-testamental period, such as the Book of Enoch, a compilation of spectacular visions about angels, demons, and the last judgment. The Jewish apocalyptic



idea of the *end of time*, as well as a *final judgment* by God when that end arrives, owes a great deal to Zarathushti thinking.

The Zarathushti connection becomes even more evident in the writings of Jewish sects, such as the Essenes of the *Dead Sea Scrolls*. Some of the beliefs of these ancient devotees show direct Zarathushti influence. This is especially true in the text *Essene Manual of Discipline*, which, like the apocalyptic texts, describes a war between the Spirit of Light and the Spirit of Darkness, and an ultimate end-time when the battle will be won.

It is from these Jewish sects, as well as the Jewish mainstream, that Christianity emerged. The claiming of *Jesus* as the awaited Messiah was meant to answer Jewish hopes. It is in the context of the coming Saoshyant that the story in the second chapter of Matthew's gospel, of the three magi should be read.

The famous prologue of the *Gospel of John* ("In the beginning was the Word ...") has many elements suggestive of Zarathushti influence, including ethical dualism, and the light/darkness metaphor so characteristic of Zarathushti beliefs.

It is also said that the figure of *Satan*, prince of evil, was inspired by Zarathushti teachings about Ahriman, the adversary of Ahura Mazda. But the Jewish idea of the adversary is not quite like the Zarathushti Ahriman. In the post-Exilic Book of Job, Satan is an adversary, but he is also God's loyal servant, doing God's work by testing a righteous man.

It is in Christianity that the doctrine of the devil is almost identical to the Zarathushti concept. The devil, or Satan, chose to be evil, through pride, just as Zarathushtra's evil spirit chose to do evil.

Christianity also adopted Jewish, and Zarathushti, apocalyptic myths about cosmic battles and the upcoming end of the world.

The Christian book of Revelation, the last book in the New Testament canon, is a later example of a form that goes back all the way through its Jewish sources to the distant, ancient worlds of Iran and Mesopotamia. ■

[Excerpted from Hannah Shapero's website at [www.pyracantha.com/zjc3.html](http://www.pyracantha.com/zjc3.html)]



***The close doctrinal parallels between Jewish, Christian and Zoroastrian teachings can hardly be dismissed as coincidental ... In the decades immediately prior to the birth of Jesus, Zoroastrianism was not a distant or shadowy presence, but the world's most powerful religion.***

- John Hinnells

## Christmas & Yalda (Yuletide)

**Christmas** – the birthday of Christ, on December 25th, and **Epiphany** – the 'Feast of the Holy Kings' and baptism of Christ, on January 6th, are transformed Roman (pagan) celebrations of the winter solstice. The festival of **Yalda** is celebrated by Iranians on the longest night of the year, around December 21st.

**Origins.** The 'growing' sun, signifying victory of light-goodness over darkness-evil was celebrated in many ancient cultures, including Persia and Egypt and in ancient Rome as the festival *Saturnalia* (after Saturn, the god of agriculture). December 25th was chosen in 274 CE by the Roman emperor Aurelian as the "birthday of the unconquered sun" (*natalis solis invicti*). At some point before 336 CE, the church of Rome established the commemoration of the birthday of Christ, the 'sun of righteousness,' on this same date [1].

Varjavand [2] derives 'Yalda' or 'Yalza' from 'yal' (pronounced 'yule' and 'joul' in Scandinavian) which means 'the strongest warrior' or 'the great one.' 'za' means birthing. Price [3] describes Yalda as a Syriac (SoriAni or Assyrian) word imported into the Persian language by the Syriac Christians, and meaning 'birth.'

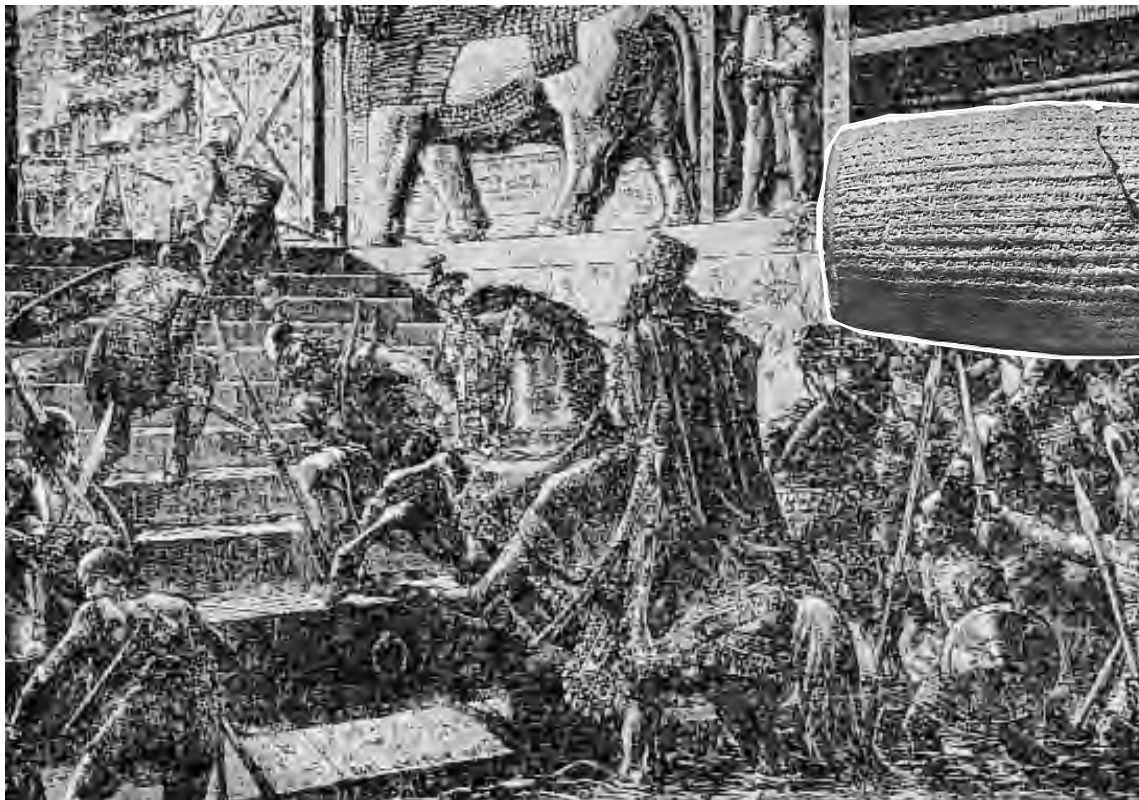
Ancient man, searching the ends of the earth to see where the sun came from, believed the sun arose from the sea and set in the sea; the goddess of waters, Anahita, was thus believed to be the mother of the sun god Mithra. It is of interest to note that some early Madonna and Child icons depict a baby Mithra with a halo of sun's rays in the arms of his mother, Anahita [2].

**Traditions.** Customs connected with Christmas have been derived from several sources as a result of the coincidence of the nativity of Christ and the Roman (pagan) agricultural and solar midwinter observances.

In the Roman world the *Saturnalia*, December 17 to 24 was a time of merry-making and exchange of presents, in honor of the Roman god Saturn. To these solstitial festivals, were added the Germano-Celtic *yule* rites. Fires and lights, symbols of warmth and lasting life, have always been associated with the winter festival. Iranians exchange branches of freshly-cut Cypress (Sarv). The evergreen symbolizes 'amordad' (eternal life); evergreens and the myrtle, as also the mistletoe and oleander, have a special place in Mithraism.

Yalda is celebrated with family reunions, sharing hot bowls of 'aash,' prayers, music, singing, dancing, telling of stories and reading of poetry, through the whole long night. Fires are kept burning and lights glowing to help the sun in its battle against darkness. Thus, common threads may be found in the origins and traditions of Christmas (yuletide) and Yalda. ■

By Roshan Rivetna. Sources: [1] *Encyclopedia Britannica*; [2] Parvez Varjavand; [3] Massoume Price].



*Top, clay tablet, bearing the "Edict of Cyrus," British Museum. Left, capture of the city of Babylon, 539 BCE.*

## A seminal moment in Judaic religious history ...

**P**ersian emperor Cyrus the Great's capture of Babylon, liberation of the Jews from Assyrian captivity, and his enlightened policy towards his subject peoples, was a moment of great import in the course of Judaic religious history.

**The capture of Babylon.** In 539 BCE, Cyrus defeated the Babylonian army near Opis (later renamed Ctesiphon) on the Tigris. By October 10th, the Persians were able to capture Sippar "without a battle." Herodotus indicates that the Persians gained entrance into Babylon by diverting the Euphrates (or one of the many canals that penetrated the city). Cyrus entered the city on October 29.

The inhabitants of Babylon greeted Cyrus not as a conqueror but as a liberator, and spread green branches before him. In the ensuing months, the Jews were allowed to return to their homelands and rebuild their temples.

**The Edict of Cyrus.** Cyrus' generous edict excavated in Babylon in 1879 is a significant historical record of this "benevolent conqueror" and his enlightened policy

towards his subject peoples. The clay cylinder, inscribed in Akkadian cuneiform, is now in the British Museum; a replica at the UN headquarters in New York acknowledges it as the world's first "Bill of Human Rights." It reads:

"... My numerous troops moved about undisturbed in the midst of Babylon. I did not allow any to terrorize the land ... I kept in view the needs of Babylon and all its sanctuaries to promote their well-being ... I gathered together all their inhabitants and restored (to them) their dilapidated dwellings ...

"With the help of (Ahura) Mazda I will respect the traditions, customs and religions of the nations of my empire ... I will impose my monarchy on no nation...

"I will never allow anyone to take possession of the property of another ... I prevent unpaid, forced labor and slavery ...

"I announce that everyone is free to choose a religion ... People are free to live in all regions ... I pray to (Ahura) Mazda..." ■

[Source: [www.btconnect.com/CAIS](http://www.btconnect.com/CAIS); SOAS, UK]



It was always drilled into me that the Zarathushti religion has had a significant impact on many other religions. Amongst others, I recall a Mr. Keki Chinoy who would sit, with snuff box at hand and handlebar moustache well waxed, on the verandah of the local gymkhana and make proclamations: one of which was that “even if the Zarathushti faith itself died out, it would still live on through many others.” (Most of his other proclamations, usually made over a club sandwich and glass of shandy, were of the more colorful but less accurate variety. But let that not detract from his one valid observation.)

Time was when I sought to understand the religion’s historic significance more than its spiritual essence. Uncomfortably locked out of the collective religious consciousness for the first time when I came to the US, I needed reinforcement. I needed to be told – and I needed the tools with which to tell others – that my religion was epic, pioneering and monumental. For a while I cruised public libraries solo with my notebook in hand. Copious notes of obscure facts gave me ammunition that I hurled at startled Christians, Jews, Moslems, Buddhists, Bahais, Rastafarians, Taoists, and Scientologists to show them the stuff my religion was really made of.

So it was with a sense of *déjà vu* – and some smugness – that I picked up Jon Berquist’s book, *Judaism in Persia’s Shadow* [Fortress Press]. Though some never admit it, and some no doubt never feel it, in many Parsi hearts lurks a silent competitiveness with the Jewish faith. Under contest is the prize for which one is *really* the world’s oldest revealed religion; and, it is a contest we Parsis usually lose. But being No. 2, we try harder, and so I read keenly how the two faiths had acted upon, and with, each other.

Berquist’s book is written to answer a simple question – how did the absorption of Judah (which the Persians called Yehud) into the Persian Empire affected its ideology, self-understanding and religion?



**Judaism in Persia's Shadow** by Jon L. Berquist, Fortress Press, 1995.

# judaism in persia's shadow

by Jehangir Pocha

## Synopsis and commentary on Jon L. Berquist's book "Judaism in Persia's Shadow."

The book is an investigation into the way the Achaemenian Empire of Cyrus the Great influenced and changed Judaism. It focuses on the secular influences – administrative, legal, military and social structures – brought by Cyrus and his successors.

**Post-Persian Judah.** Painting a vivid picture of the years from 539 BCE, when Judah first came under the rule of Cyrus the Great, to around 333 BCE when the Persian Empire fell to Alexander, Berquist takes us on a journey that unravels life just before and under the Achaemenians. The book begins with a simple premise – that society shapes people, and people create literature. As society changes, so does literature. The drive for his book, says Berquist, came from the radical change Judaic texts underwent between 539 BCE and 333 BCE when Judah was part of the Persian Empire.

“The most important difference is the element of universalism in the post-Persian texts,” Berquist explained. “Earlier Judaism was quite particularistic in many ways but the later writing is more embracing of differences.” More significantly, says Berquist, post-Persian Judaic writings reject idolatry and embrace a monotheistic,

priestly form of Yahwism for the first time.

In his precise but uninspiring chronicling of Judah, Berquist tells of how the Babylonians enslaved the Jews in 625 BCE and how Cyrus the Great freed them and returned them to their lands in 539 BCE. Under the Babylonians, Berquist writes, “the removal (through death or deportation) of the upper strata of Jerusalemite and Judaic society” devastated Jewish life.

In 539 BCE, the return of the Jews to Judah and the re-building of their temples that Cyrus funded and oversaw resulted in a regeneration of the Jewish faith.

“I found a richness in Persian Yehud that bedazzled me,” Berquist writes. “The Persian Empire produced a pluralistic context in which Jerusalem survived, grew and flourished, and the faith of Yahweh was never the same, in any of its expressions.”

Most significantly, we are told, Cyrus and subsequent Persian Emperors allowed the many faiths under their control to flourish and they themselves praised the beneficence of gods as diverse as Yahweh, Marduk and others.

Of course, as predictable in a book about Persians and Jews, the protag-

## The imperial trio and their place in Judaic history ...

PHOTO: CYRUS, "BABYLON, PAST PRESENT & FUTURE"



*Just before the creation of the Persian (Achaemenian) Empire, Israel and Judah had suffered a difficult history. In 722 BCE Assyria conquered Israel and eleven years later it occupied Judah. As the power of Assyria waned, the Egyptians, and later in 625 BCE, the Babylonians gained ascendancy over Judah, destroying much of Jerusalem and deporting huge numbers of Jews as slaves. Archeological data suggests that by 589 BCE the population of Jerusalem had dropped from 250,000 to about 20,000. As Berquist notes, "the removal (through death or deportation) of the upper strata of Jerusalemite and Judaic society," devastated Jewish life.*

### Cyrus the Great

By 550 BCE, Persia under Cyrus was expanding rapidly, a phenomenon not unnoticed by the Jews. Cyrus' tolerance of all faiths and his self-proclaimed intent to free all of Babylon's slaves, resonated widely with them. Indeed, Cyrus came to be revered by many as a mighty and virtuous Messiah and admiring mentions of him in Jewish writing increased significantly. Berquist reproduces and explains texts like the latter Book of Isaiah [Isaiah 40-55 and 56-66] written by Deutero-Isaiah.

"Thus says the Lord, your redeemer ... who says of Cyrus, 'He is my Shepherd, and he shall carry out all my purpose ...'" [From Isaiah 44:24-28]

Cyrus is proclaimed "the anointed, chosen one," a king without flaw, receiving God's complete and unquestioning support. As Berquist points out, texts portray Cyrus as a savior, and politically support the Persian Empire over all others. Deutero-Isaiah presents Persia as a wealthy and lush empire within which the Jews could safely return to Jerusalem and worship Yahweh freely again.

"Thus says the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and its maker: ... I have aroused Cyrus in righteousness, and I will make all his paths straight; he shall build my city and set my exiles free ..." [From Isaiah 45:9-13]

Isaiah 40-55 even invokes the exodus tradition of the Jews to equate Cyrus' rescue of the slaves from Babylon with Moses' rescue of the Jews from Egypt.

When in 539 BCE, Cyrus finally defeated the Babylonians and Judah itself passed into his hands, he kept his promise. He freed the Jewish and other slaves (including Phoenicians and Elamites) from Babylon and allowed them to return to their native lands.

Cyrus also sponsored the rebuilding of temples and the restoration of the ancient cities that had existed around them throughout Babylon, Assyria and Elam.

### Cambyses II

After Cyrus, his longtime heir apparent, the brilliant military commander Cambyses ruled the empire from 529 BCE to 522 BCE. Cambyses brought Egypt into the Persian Empire and "gave Yehud freedom to develop in most ways possible, immigration, reorganization and construction were all possible."

### Darius I the Great

Darius, the third Achaemenian emperor who ruled from 522 to 486 BCE (twice as long as either Cyrus or Cambyses) molded the now vast Empire into the new structures that shaped the rest of its existence. Darius organized the empire into 20 'satrapies' and decentralized governance by bringing local officials into his administrative system. Also, "whereas Cyrus and Cambyses ruled by *fiat* alone, Darius moved the empire toward a legal base" that while essentially Persian, incorporated regional practices from each of the empire's satrapies. Real power, however, remained with the ethnic Persians who had proven their absolute personal loyalty to the Emperor.

Darius was a beneficent ruler who inspired local populations to follow him, removing his need to conquer them. When Darius entered Egypt with the Persian army behind him, the Egyptians welcomed him and crowned him Pharaoh.

Although Cyrus is the more celebrated, "Darius' contributions to Yehud and the development of the Jewish religious tradition are vast" says Berquist. "He sponsored the publication of laws throughout the empire and may well have supported the codification of Israelite law as well. In addition to these influences, the time of Darius saw the writing of at least three prophetic texts from the Hebrew Bible: Haggai, Zechariah 1-8, and Isaiah 55-66."

[Synopsis by Jehangir Pocha from "Judaism in Persia's Shadow" by Jon L. Berquist]





*The Persian Empire of the Achaemenians (559 - 334 BCE) stretched from Greece and Egypt, into India.*

onists from these two races generally come off looking like valiant, gallant and wise servants of God trying to build a noble society in His real, intended way, while the Babylonians and Assyrians are mostly feckless, brutal wannabe's whose vision of life is woefully misguided.

Even as Berquist chronicles Cyrus' munificence succinctly, his explanation for why Cyrus acted as he did is incomplete.

In a section entitled "Cyrus' Interests," he offers up ease of administration, economic astuteness, the difficulty in maintaining a large empire, and a desire to focus on conquest, as the primary reasons for Cyrus' 'managerial philosophy.'

Of the later king, Darius, he writes that "he was a monotheist, possibly along the lines of Zoroaster" but that for political reasons "he maintained a pluralistic polytheistic empire."

Berquist fails to conceive, however, that Cyrus' and Darius' progressive ideas might have stemmed from their own religious beliefs, which might

have shaped their actions as much, if not more, than practical considerations. Though he himself, in later passages, talks of how the Persians introduced the element of universality into Jewish writing, he fails to see Cyrus' and Darius' actions as a manifestation of the universal ideal inherent in the religion of Zarathushtra.

**Liberty to grow.** Berquist also forms the interesting thesis that under secular Achaemenian rule Judaism was free to flourish without political constraints for the first time in its history. According to him, "the Persian Empire created controlled environments in which independent yet related cultures could grow."

By researching and investigating the administrative, military and social aspects of how Persia governed its new colony, Yehud, he explains how it left an enduring impact on the two key religions, Judaism and Christianity, that grew from there.

The separation of 'church' and 'state' allowed religious thoughts to thrive without imperial interference and

under the Achaemenians Judaic writing became highly diverse and pluralistic.

The canon of the *Torah* as well as other canonical scriptures developed, setting the stage for formative Judaism. Set off by a more pluralistic and universalist thinking, diverse views of Yahwehism flourished. Monotheism and the rejection of idol worship crept into Judaic consciousness. The role of the temple and the priesthood changed significantly and along Persian (Zoroastrian?) lines.

"Both formative Judaism and nascent Christianity developed within the context of a society and a religion that had been shaped by the Persian Empire," is his conclusion towards the end of the book. ■

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How do our two peoples, the Zarathushtis and the Jews, resemble each other; and how do we differ?

**Ancestors.** In modern times, the lowest common denominator amongst humans is, of course, our biological membership in a single species. In ancient times, though, the various branches of the human family were linked by the relationship of ancestors in mythology and legend. Erach and Salm in Iranian mythology were the eponymous ancestors of the Aryas and the Sairimas – two Iranian tribes – but in historical times, Salm was identified with the Biblical Shem, ancestor of the speakers of Semitic, the linguistic group to which Hebrew and Arabic belong.

The prophetic founders of our faiths, Zarathushtra and Abraham lived at about the same time, and are associated in legend: in the Parthian ‘Memorial of Zarer,’ Abraham is the scribe at the court of Vishtaspa, where Zarathushtra preached. In Islamic and medieval Zarathushtrian tradition, the Zarathushtis are sometimes called the *kesht-e Ibrahim*, the sect of Abraham, with whom the Iranian prophet was identified.

In Christian legend, the three magi who visited the infant Jesus are themselves descendants of Abraham.

**Historical contact.** Jews and Zarathushtis were in historical contact at various times. Many Jewish exiles of the early 6th century BCE were settled in Media, and Israel later became a province of the Achaemenian empire.

Talmudic texts mention Parthian Jews whose culture was thoroughly Iranian; and there is a large Iranian Jewish community to this day.

Jews under Roman rule looked to the Parthians as liberators; and the legend of the journey of the magi may be based in part upon historical visits of Parthian emissaries to Jerusalem. The later Sasanians sometimes persecuted religious minorities, including Jews, and the Pahlavi literature, perhaps reacting against the conversion

# zarathushtis & jews *by James Russell*

Both our peoples, the Zarathushtis and the Jews, are ancient, and our survival and adaptation to changing times arouse interest; whereas great nations have appeared on the stage of the world and gone, Hebrew and Avestan survive on the lips of the faithful.

of Iranians to Judaism, condemns the latter faith as a demonic creation. Despite this, Jews fared far better under Sasanian rule than in the neighboring Christian Byzantine Empire.

**Commonalities.** Both our peoples are ancient, and our survival and adaptation to changed times arouse interest. Whereas great nations have appeared on the stage of the world and gone, Hebrew and Avestan survive on the lips of the faithful.

Western visitors to the East have perceived similarities between Zarathushtis and Jews. The Parsis were called the ‘Jews of India.’ Both peoples are minorities who have shunned outsiders, linking religion to ethnicity, and have demonstrated extraordinary achievement, particularly in business and the professions.

The historical memories of both peoples, for all their glorious antiquity, have been strongly colored by persecution. The Parsis are the descendants of refugees from Islamic Iran, whilst amongst the Iranian Zarathushtis, extreme poverty, massacre, forced conversion and incessant humiliations reminiscent of the treatment of the Jews in Europe, are living memories.

If there is a single constant in Jewish history since the beginning of Chris-

tianity two thousand years ago, it is the problem of anti-Semitism. Jesus was a Jew, as were all his disciples and apostles; but Jews do not accept that he was the Messiah, nor that, as God incarnate, he had to be killed to save humanity from sin.

Early Christianity demonized Judaism, and in modern times this theological anti-Semitism was combined with demented racist ideology. The result was the Nazi holocaust.

Shi’ism both co-opted Iranian culture and demonized the Zarathushtis as creatures whose very blood and sweat is ritually impure, so in this sense, the relationship has been like that of Christians and Jews. An important difference is that many nominally Muslim Iranians are coming to recognize the religion of Zarathushtra as the core of their own national culture, and as a patrimony of which Islam has deprived them.

I do not take pleasure in dwelling on these dark subjects; but the trauma is deep, it affects us in ways we cannot even see, and we must confront it in order to heal it.

**Celebration of life.** Despite the frequent grimness of our historical position, our two peoples affirm, cherish, and celebrate life, rather than seeking to escape the world. Perhaps the



secret of our survival may inhere, to some degree, in this attitude.

Unlike our Christian and Muslim younger brothers, we deplore ascetism and celibacy, and prefer concrete acts to mere faith. We do not regard man as a fallen creature, utterly without hope save for the intervention of divine grace.

**Salvation.** Both our religions consider man a fundamentally good creation whose salvation is the result of a lifetime of work, of learning, of love. In Jewish belief, salvation is dependent on the individual's act of *teshuvah*, repentance, of turning to God in the conduct of life. Zarathushtis likewise, believe man can achieve salvation through their good deeds, which alone are judged.

**Conversion.** It is perhaps because our ancient faiths are rooted in a particular way of life, and tolerant of the diversity of the world around us, that we do not approach conversion with the missionary zeal of Christianity or Islam. It is a long time, also, since we have had the temporal power to impose our will on others in any case.

Both the religion of Zarathushtra and Judaism regard their revelatory scriptures as universally true, and consequently both religions have accepted, or even, on rare occasions, encouraged proselytes. Thus, the Parthian prince Izad of Adiaben and his mother Helene became Jews in the first century CE. Legends such as the Persian *Changraghach-nama*, which describes how an Indian Brahmin was persuaded at the court of Vishtaspa himself, to become a Zarathushti, indicate that outsiders were sometimes welcomed.

Judaism, particularly in the cosmopolitan Roman Empire in the later part of the Second Temple period, seems to have been far more receptive to converts than the Zarathushti religion, which was, for centuries, an imperial faith.

It was Manichaeism, not the religion of Zarathushtra, which emerged as the home-grown "Romantic" faith

attempting to conquer souls of the multi-national Sasanian Empire. And ultimately, Christianity and not Judaism was the proselytizing force of the Roman west.

In the new environment of secular, democratic society, where intermarriage is common and religious belief and practice more a matter of personal preference than of birth, conversion arises as an important issue, but one for which neither Judaism nor Zarathushtrianism, has had many precedents, for at least a thousand years. Neither faith has a universally accepted hierarchical authority which might decide competently on a single policy.

Both Judaism and Zarathushtrianism, I think, have influenced profoundly the development of liberal humanist

“ Despite the frequent grimness of our historical position, our two peoples affirm, cherish, and celebrate life, rather than seeking to escape the world. Perhaps the secret of our survival may inhere, in some degree, to this attitude. ”

ideas in the west. Some of the major thinkers of the Renaissance were, as Frances Yates has shown, also Kabbalists and magicians. One of the teachers of the wisdom of the magi (magic) was of course, the *priscus theologus*, or earliest theologian, Zarathushtra. The so-called "*Chaldean Oracles of Zoroaster*" to which the Renaissance philosophers turned is in fact a neoplatonic text, but some of the "Zoroastrian" teachings to which they adhered, such as the radical difference between good and evil, the symbolism of light and wisdom, and the innate dignity of man, seem to be genuinely Iranian.

In ancient Rome, the Iranian god *Mithra* was the center of a religious fraternity to whom he represented, as in Iran, the Sun, justice, and the friendship of equals. In Mithraic art, the god is shown in a red *Phrygian cap*. Since emperors and slaves met as brother in

the Mithraic temple, the red cap came to be a symbol of freedom.

**The freemasons**, a religious brotherhood with some resemblances to Mithraism whose present structure can be traced at least to the early 17th century, adopt a number of ancient symbols of Persian and Egyptian origin. One of these was the red Phrygian cap of Mithra. It appears as the symbol of revolution in France in 1789. After that, the Liberty Cap can be seen on most state seals in the Americas; until recent decades, it appeared on US coins. We have ancient Iran and Israel to thank for some of the roots of our democratic heritage as Americans.

**Doctrine of good and evil.** There is one difference between Judaism and the religion of Zarathushtra, of considerable importance: their respective doctrines concerning good and evil. Zarathushtra taught that there are two primal spirits, the good God and an evil demon, creator and destroyer, wisdom and stupidity, light and darkness. In the cosmic conflict, it is an article of faith that the good

will emerge victorious, Man must fight on the side of the Creator, despite all reversals and temptations. This is the familiar, basic doctrine of the Zarathushti religion.

Judaism is irreconcilably different. It is an uncompromisingly monotheistic faith. The Muslim credal assertion that both good and evil must emanate from one God can be traced as far back as the Prophet Isaiah. In this respect, as in their rejection of the idea of God incarnate, Jews and Muslims have no theological disagreement.

In Judaism, Satan plays no role in the earliest strata of the Torah. God is omnipotent. As in the story of Job itself, which is much earlier in origin, Satan never appears. God is also the source of evil temptations. From around the 2nd century BCE and on, Jewish texts such as the Apocrypha

and the Dead Sea Scrolls present a world in which Satan is a distinct prince of darkness. At this same time, the chief of Satan's hosts is named Ashmedai, that is, the Iranian Aeshma Daeva, the demon of wrath, and clear Iranian motifs can be seen in contemporary texts such as the Book of Esther, the Testament of Abraham, and the Ascension of Isaiah.

It is no coincidence that the most abundant evidence for dualism in Jewish texts corresponds to the mid-Parthian period, when Iranian-Jewish relations were closest. Christianity was born at this time, too, and the ideas of heaven and hell, cosmic messianism, and the nearly independent power of Satan, inherited from some strains of Jewish teaching, came to be much more important in the new faith than they are in modern, mainstream Judaism. Dualism

solves the problem of the origin of evil and the logic of divine justice, but Judaism ultimately rejected it.

The Zarathushti and Christian traditions have rich apocalyptic visions and elaborate descriptions of heaven and hell. Here too, Judaism is strangely and obstinately silent.

Judaism has no visible symbols of divinity. Our Temple no longer stands, and there is no priesthood to offer sacrifice. Ours is an intellectual religion which tends to prefer hard thinking to simple answers. Our communal act of sanctification is the study of the infinitely enigmatic Holy Scripture and Oral Law.

The first Jewish academies of Talmudic learning were founded in Parthian and Sasanian Babylonia. Jews had good times, basking in the Sun of the Persian lion. ■

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***"No era in the history of religion was more diverse or creative than late antiquity in Iran (including Babylonia and Mesopotamia)"***

*When we consider the maelstrom of religious activity in this brief period, we see extraordinary signs of creativity and vitality. In a small area of no more than 200 miles in length and 50 in breadth, events, each of them of lasting importance, were taking place. Within a brief period, from circa 220 to 250 CE, Manichaeism, Rabbinic Judaism, Mazdaism (Zoroastrianism), and Christianity, were all taking form. Their effects would play themselves out for the next four hundred years, until the rise of Islam.*

First, and most important, the resurgence of a conquering proselytizing **Mazdaism (Zoroastrianism)** propagated by the Sasanian state under Ardashir, and established (if in a tolerant manner) as the state religion under Shapur with its exponent, Kartir (Kirder).

Second, the development of an Iranian gnostic syncretism by prophet Mani, who, at the time of the redecoration of the Dura synagogue, proclaimed a new religion, called **Manichaeism**, and in the next decades attracted a wide following in Iran and in the Roman Empire as well.

Third, the advance of **Christianity** into the Mesopotamian valley from Edessa, where by 201, it had become well established.

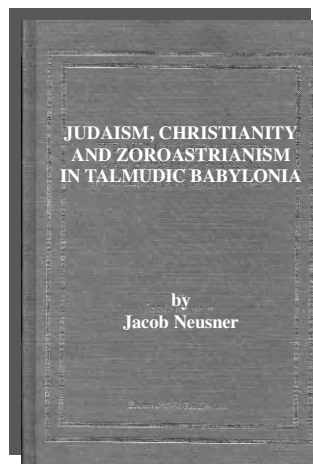
Fourth, the great expansion of cults within the Iranian idiom, in particular **Mithraism**, in both Iran and the

Roman Empire, to the point where Mithraism was perhaps the single most popular religion on the Roman side of the frontier;

Fifth, the beginnings of a revolution in **Babylonian Judaism**, which transformed the earlier indigenous religion into a fair representation of the ideas of the Palestinian Tannan, and which must have created a tremendous upheaval in Babylonian Jewry.

Sixth, the conversion of significant numbers of local inhabitants to Christianity and the establishment of **Christian bishoprics** through the region.

*[Excerpted from "Judaism, Christianity and Zoroastrianism in Talmudic Babylonia" by Jacob Neusner, Program in Judaic Studies, Brown University]*



**Judaism, Christianity and Zoroastrianism in Talmudic Babylonia, by Jacob Neusner, Brown Judaic Studies 204, Brown University, Scholars Press, 1990**





*The court of King Xerxes I (Hebrew: Ahasuerus) dressed in Parthian trousers seated on a throne, with Queen Esther [far right]. From the celebrated wall painting at the synagogue in Dura Europos in Syria, Parthian era, c. 245 CE. COURTESY "PERSIA AND THE BIBLE" BY EDWIN YAMAUCHI.*

## The story of Esther – Persian connections

Persian connections in the Old Testament 'Book of Esther,' and the feast of 'Purim.'

The Old Testament Book of Esther relates legendary events supposed to shed light on the origin and name of the Jewish festival of Purim.

There is evidence that the stories related originated among the Persians and Babylonians.

**The story of Esther.** The story is set in Susa, city of the Persian kings. The book narrates that Haman, the vizier and favorite of King Ahasuerus (which is the Hebrew name for Xerxes) or Xerxes I, who reigned 486 - 465 BCE, determined by lots, the 13th of Adar [1] as the day on which the Jews living in the Persian empire were to be slain. Esther, a beautiful Jewess (whom the king had chosen as queen after repudiating Queen Vashti), and her cousin and foster father Mordecai, were able, however, to frustrate Haman's designs. (Mordecai's name is derived from Marduk, the god of Babylon.)

His scheme to have Mordecai hanged resulted in Haman's being sent to the gallows erected for Mordecai, and

the Jews throughout the empire were given permission to defend themselves on the day set for their extermination. The governors supported the Jews in the fight.

In the provinces, the Jews celebrated their victory on the following day (14th of Adar), but at Susa, they rested a day, and celebrated their success a day later. Thereupon Esther and Mordecai issued a decree obligating the Jews henceforth to commemorate these events on the 14th and 15th of Adar.

**The feast of Purim (farvardegan?).** The celebration has been called by different names. II Maccabees calls it the "Mardukian Day", apparently defining it as a festival of the Babylonian god Marduk. Instead of the word 'purim' (or 'casting of lots') Josephus' *Antiquities* (1st century CE), uses the word *phrurai* or *phru-raia*.

The origins of this term, which is neither Aramaic nor Hebrew, seems to be an adaptation of the vocable 'fer-ver,' from the name '*farvardegan*,' the Persian festival observed in the same season as the Jewish festival of Purim.

**Esther and Ishtar.** Esther's name is derived from the name of the Babylonian god Ishtar. Susa, before becoming a residence of the Persian kings, was the capital of the kingdom of Elam. Around 600 BCE, it was under the "Chaldean" kings of Babylonia, and its population thenceforth included Babylonians. The Babylonian goddess *Ishtar* figures frequently in the religious literature of the Babylonians, and is believed to be another name for *Esther*.

Even scholars who regard Esther as a historical novel (and not fact) concede that the author is intimately acquainted with the Persian background of the period.

The tombs of Esther and Mordecai are located in Hamadan (ancient Ecbatana) in present-day western Iran. Xerxes I's tomb is one of four tombs of Achaemenian monarchs in the cliffside monuments at Naqsh-e-Rustom, near Persepolis in Iran. ■

- by Roshan Rivetna

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- [1] *Encyclopedia Britannica*
- [2] "*Persia and the Bible*" by Edwin M. Yamauchi, 1990.

Note [1]. The names of some Jewish months, such as "Adar" are the same as Zarathushti months.

**Discovery.** In 1947, a Bedouin shepherd discovered ancient scrolls rolled up in leather and cloth in a cave to the northwest of the Dead Sea in the Qumran Valley. This initial find led to the discovery of a collection of Hebrew and Aramaic manuscripts, in quick succession. These ancient texts, which include the Book of Isaiah in its entirety and fragments from all other books of the Old Testament (except the Book of Esther), turned out to be over 1,000 years older than any other known Hebrew texts. The scrolls, written between 250 BCE and 68 CE [1] have changed scholars' understanding of early Judaism and Christianity.

**Background history.** In 70 CE, the Romans destroyed the settlements of Qumran. The period of Jewish history when the scrolls were written is complex, with frequent upheavals, revolt and violence. There were three main groups: the Pharisees, Saducees and Essenes. The Essenes are believed to be the author of the Dead Sea Scrolls. They were spread all over the country, but a sub-group lived in exile in a settled community in the deserts of the Dead Sea. The Essenes regarded themselves as the only true Israelites and remained separate from other Jews. They rejected sacrificial service of the Temple and offered their own sacrifices themselves [2].

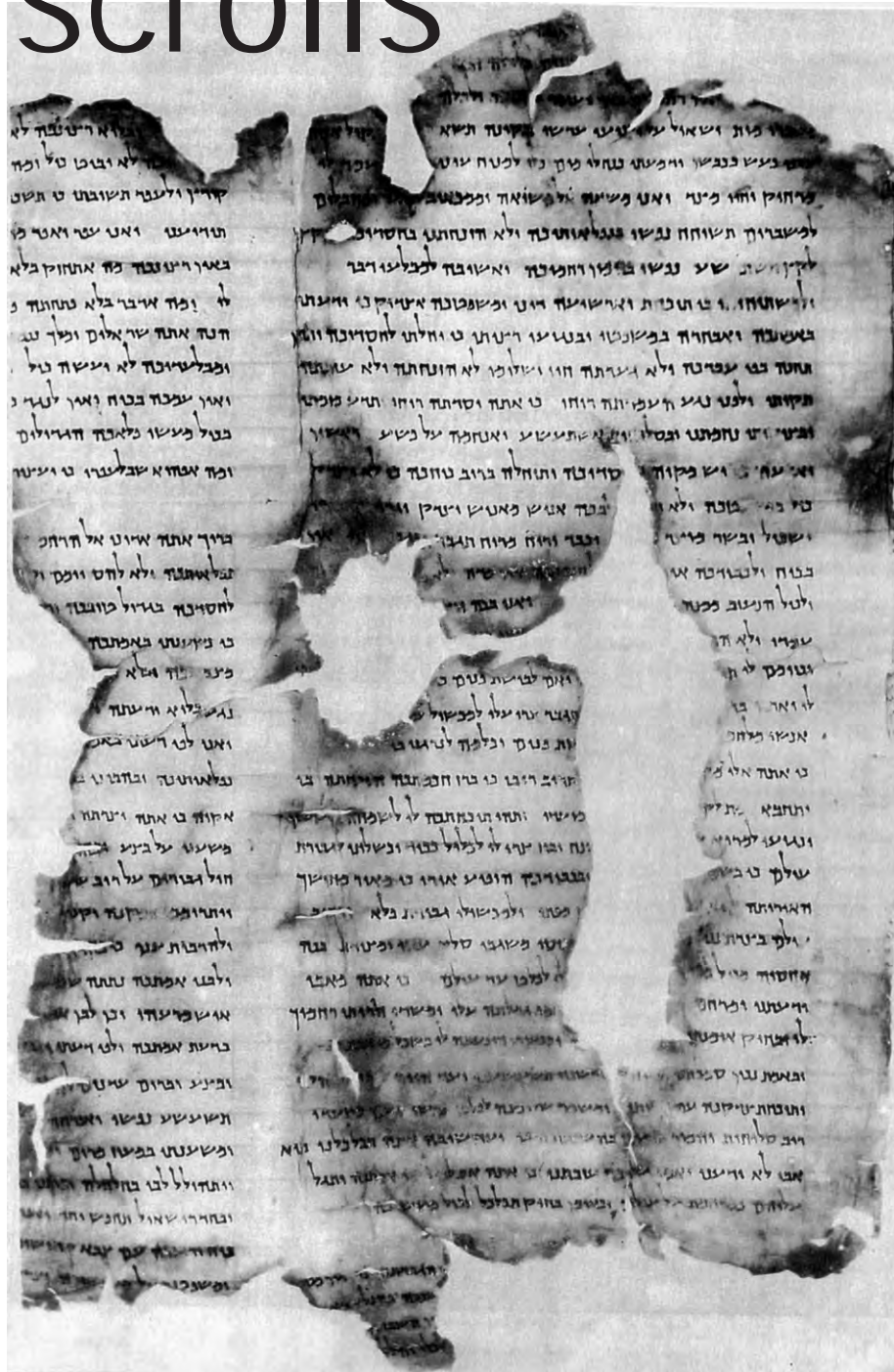
**The Rule of Community and the Gathas.** The Rule of Community (Document No. 1QS) originally known as the Manual of Discipline, is the first document among the three belonging to the same scroll found in Cave No. 1. It was followed by the Rule of the Congregation (1QSa) and then the Blessings (1QSB). Rule of Community gives the laws, regulations and theology of the community of Essenes. It was composed before 75 CE [3], being the theological works of the sect which is to be taught to new entrants in their first two years.

**Similarities with the Gathas.** This theology is similar to Gathic theology in the sense that at one end, both

Theological similarities and differences between the Gathas of Zarathushtra and the 'Rule of Community' documents in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

# the dead sea scrolls

by Pallan R. Ichaporia



Scroll fragment from the Manual of Discipline also known as the Rule of the Community [Document No. 1QS). PHOTO ARCHIVE PALLAN R. ICHAPORIA.



are dominated by monotheism, but on the other end, there is the concept of cosmic and ethical dualism.

**God the sole Creator.** Rule of Community, states [1QS3.15]:

From the God of knowledge comes all that is occurring and shall occur.

In a similar vein, Zarathushtra says:

Him I wish to gratify with good thought, Him who at will produces for us fortune and mis-fortune [4].

[*Ushtavaiti Gatha, Ys. 45.9*]

and

Here we worship Mazda Ahura (God of Wisdom), who created the waters, the good plants ... who created the lights and the earth and all good things [5]. [*Ys. 37.1*]

**Torment of Humanity.** In the Rule of Community, humanity is torn by the cosmic struggle between two powerful angels, the 'Angel of Light' and the 'Angel of Darkness.' This is clear in the Qumran Horoscopes [4Q186].

In the Gathas, Zarathushtra declared two spirits, one is good while the other is evil/bad:

They are existing from the beginning and are in a state of conflict. Being adversary they fight with each other for every single person in order to win him/her over to their respective side, thus producing torment in each single individual.

[*Ahunavaiti Gatha, Ys. 30.4*]

**Fundamental dualism.** Column 3 of the Rule of Community states:

17. He created the human for the domain of
18. the world, designing two spirits in which to walk until the appointed time for his visitation, namely the spirits of
19. truth and deceit. In a spirit of light emanates the nature of truth and from a well of darkness emerges the nature of deceit.
20. In the hand of the Prince of Lights (is) the domain of all the Sons of Righteousness; in the ways of light they walk. But in the hands of the Angel of
21. Darkness (is) the Domain of the Sons of Deceit; and in the ways of

Darkness they walk. By the Angel of Darkness comes the aberration of

22. all the Sons of Righteousness; and all their sins, their iniquities, their guilt, and their iniquitous works (are caused) by his dominion,
  23. according to God's mysteries, until his end. And all their afflictions and the appointed times of their sufferings (are caused) by the dominion of his hostility.
  24. And all the spirits of his lot cause to stumble the Sons of Light; but the God of Israel and his Angel of truth help all
  25. the Sons of Light. He created the spirits of light and darkness, and upon them he founded every work.
- Col. 4, the Rule of Community says:
18. But God in his mysterious understanding and his glorious wisdom, has set an end for the existence of deceit. At the appointed time
  19. for visitation He will destroy it for ever. Then Truth will appear forever (in) the world which has polluted itself by the ways of ungodliness during the domain of deceit until
  20. the appointed time for judgment which has been decided. Then God will purify by his truth all the works of man and purge for himself the sons of man. He will utterly destroy the spirit of deceit from the veins of his flesh [6].

In the Gathas of Zarathushtra, similar theology, with some variations, is found. Zarathushtra says:

There are two spirits (existing) in the beginning, twins who have been heard as the two dreams, the two thoughts, the two words, and the two actions, the better and the evil. Between these two, the munificent discriminate rightly but not those who give bad gifts (i.e. those who are maleficent) [7].

[*Ahunavaiti Gatha, Ys. 30.3*]

When these two spirits confront each other (to fight for a person, then that person) determines (his/her) first existence (with) vitality or lack of vitality, and how his/her existence will be in the end. (The existence) of the deceitful will be very bad, but best thought will be (in store) for the truthful one [8].

[*Ahunavaiti Gatha, Ys. 30.4*]

Of these two spirits the deceitful one chooses to do the worst things, but the most holy spirit, clothed in the hardest stones, (chooses) truth, (as do those) who, with true actions, devotedly gratify (Mazda Ahura (Lord of Wisdom) [9].

[*Ahunavaiti Gatha, Ys. 30.5*]

Now I shall proclaim the two spirits in the first stage of existence, of whom the holy one shall address the harmful one as follows: "Neither our thoughts nor pronouncements, neither intellect nor choices, neither utterances nor actions, nor religious views, nor our souls, are in agreement [10].

[*Ushtavaiti Gatha, Ys. 45.2*]

### Differences with the Gathas.

Although the Gathic doctrine of two spirits has much in common with the ethical and eschatological dualism of the Rule of Community, there are differences.

**Pre-destination vs. choice.** The most prominent difference is the idea of predestination found in the Jewish document, which is alien to the free choice found in the religion of Zarathushtra. Choosing someone or something is central to the Zoroastrian religion.

Men and women choose [*Ys. 43.16*]:

O Ahura (Lord), this one, Zarathushtra chooses that very spirit which is your most holy one.

Daevas, the false gods choose [*Ys. 32.6*]:

The Daevas choose the most evil spirit.

Ahura Mazda (Lord of Wisdom) Himself chooses, as when addressing the truthful who have assembled to worship him [*Ys. 32.2*]:

Mazda Ahura, being associated with good thought and being a good friend of sun-like truth, answers them by virtue of His power: "We choose your holy and good rightmindedness

In the theology of the Gathas nothing is predestined. Humans, false gods and God are expected to choose the concepts preferred by them.

For the identification of the good spirit with light and the evil spirit with

darkness, one has to examine the Zurvanite myth, a later heretic development in Iranian religious thought, and totally a non-Gathic source – a myth of the god of time or destiny, the father of light Ormazd and dark Ahri-man. This is the form under which the Jews of the first century BCE may a priori be presumed to have known the Iranian religion. This connection has been seen by Michaud [11].

**The final victory of Truth.** There is also the difference in the interpretation of the final victory of Truth as found in the Rule of Community and the Gathic final restoration and renovation of the world.

The Rule of Community [sections 1QS418 and 1QS419] state:

...God in His mysterious understanding and glorious wisdom ending the existence of evil and purifying by His truth all the works of man and ... truth will appear forever ...

The Gathas [Ys. 34.15] state:

...Through Your power, O Mazda make real, this existence which is brilliant in value [12].

Zarathushtra declares that the final renovation and restoration of the world, with the complete defeat of evil will occur when, through His power, Ahura Mazda makes existence brilliant and together with Him, the truthful adherents, guided by Prophet Zarathushtra, will help in bringing this final restoration:

Thus may we be those who make existence brilliant [13].

[Ahunavaiti Gatha, Ys. 30.9]

**Conclusion.** To Zarathushtra, the whole world is filled with the struggle of the holy spirit and the harmful spirit until the latter's annihilation and former's triumph. The similarities as well as differences as seen within the theologies of the Rule of Community in the Dead Sea Scrolls and of the early stage of the Zarathushti religion at the time of Prophet Zarathushtra are discussed here briefly. Further research is needed to throw more light on the interactions of these two religions.

Which one influenced the other is secondary in importance. At the same time it is worthwhile not to seek for a Hebrew influence on Zarathushtra's revelation and the religion he established in Iran. This is untenable as Zarathushtra lived in the eastern Iranian lands and had no contact with Judaism in the west.

“ The Gathic doctrine of two spirits has much in common with the ethical and eschatological dualism of the Rule of Community. ”

It is unlikely that Jewish monotheism influenced Zarathushtra's Gathas. Zarathushtra composed his Gathas long before the reign of the Achaemenian king, Cyrus, who brought forth the liberation of Jews from Babylonian captivity. There is a wide difference in Jewish theology before and after the Exile.

Zarathushtra's religion is considered as the dualistic religion par excellence, i.e. a religion in which evil in the world is not attributed to God's inscrutable ways or God's mysterious understanding (as found in the Rule of Community) and as is necessary in the strict monotheistic faiths like Christianity and Islam.

In the Zarathushti religion God's antagonists are blamed for it. As a matter of fact, the life of the world is a continuous conflict between the principle of truth and that of deceit, between good and evil, between the truthful and deceitful.

Yet, for the following reason, the dualistic interpretation must be modified: In the Gathas, Ahura Mazda has no individual antagonist, such as "evil spirit." This is a very monotheistic aspect of Zarathushtra's teachings. The picture, at the end of this material world, drawn by the prophet, is even purely monotheistic. By renovation and transfiguration of

the world, called its "brilliant-making," Ahura Mazda and the truthful, guided by the prophet, will finally succeed in eliminating evil, restoring paradise on earth and securing Ahura Mazda's rule forever [14]. ■

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- [2] Op cit, p. 24.
- [3] Elisha Qimron and James Charlesworth, *The Dead Sea Scroll, Rule of the Community*, Tubingen: JCB Mohr, 1994, p. 2.
- [4] Helmut Humbach & Pallan Ichaporia, *The Heritage of Zarathushtra*, Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag, 1994, p. 75.
- [5] Op cit, p. 55.
- [6] All translations of the Dead Sea Scrolls are from Qimron and Charlesworth.
- [7] See Humbach and Ichaporia, p. 31.
- [8] Op cit, p. 73.
- [9] Op cit, p. 31.
- [10] Op cit, p. 73.
- [11] H. Michaud, *Un Mythe Zervanite dans un des MSS de Qumran*, Vetus Testamentum, London, 1955, p. 94.
- [12] See Humbach and Ichaporia, p. 51.
- [13] Op cit, p. 31.
- [14] Op cit, p. 16.

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# Uncovering the dead sea scrolls

**Scrolls withheld.** As claimed by the authors, this is the first complete translation and interpretation of 50 key documents of the Dead Sea Scrolls, withheld for over 35 years. The first discovery of the scrolls along the shores of the Dead Sea was made by accident, in 1947 in the Qumran cave, with subsequent findings in other caves.

The most important cave for the authors' purpose was Cave 4 discovered in 1954 after the partition of Palestine. After the 1967 war, research was facilitated under the jurisdiction of the Israeli government. Yet nothing was done to speed up their translation.

The authors describe their heroic efforts to make an overall study of *all* the Qumran scrolls. Even philological efforts, at times, they claim, are inaccurate if one does not compare the relationship of one scroll with another.

The authors claim their research has now brought into focus certain theological constructs which St. Paul makes with regard to 'cursing' and the meaning of the crucifixion of Christ.

**Dawn of Christianity.** In these scrolls there is nothing less than a picture of the movement from which Christianity sprang. The reader however, will not be able to recognize it because it will seem virtually the opposite of the Christianity with which one is familiar today.

The authors describe the scrolls as describing the "Messianic movement" in Palestine. Because of religious differences, the Messianic elite chose to retreat in the wilderness where they were preparing for the final apocalyptic war against all evil on this earth.

**Echoes of Zarathushti origin.** The author makes no mention of the 'Prince of 83

Light' and the 'Prince of Darkness,' which, along with the idea of the Messiah to come, and the final battle against evil, betray echoes of Zarathushti origin.

However, everything else seems so un-Zoroastrian about this sect – they believed in extreme austerity and the ascetic life. One fails to discern any significant similarity between this sect and the ever-optimistic, world-affirming, life-loving Zarathushtis. Even the concept in common, as cited above, must have come down from the time of Kings Cyrus and Darius. ■

*Book review by Kersey H. Antia*



*Heraclius' war against Sasanian King Khusrow II in 628. Subsequently the True Cross is restored to Jerusalem. Fresco by Piero della Francesca, at the Church San Francesco in Arezzo, Italy. 15th century.*

## King Khusrow II and the True Cross of Christ

Sasanian emperor Khusrow II (591-628) extended the Persian Empire, capturing the Roman provinces of Cappadocia and Phrygia, seized Damascus, Antioch, Tarsus and advanced on Palestine. Jerusalem was captured in 614, The wood of the "True Cross" on which Christ was crucified, was taken as booty to Ctesiphon and given to King Khusrow's wife Maria, a Christian, and daughter of Roman Emperor Maurice. In 628, eastern Emperor Heraclius waged war on King Khusrow, and having defeated him, returned to Jerusalem with the cross. Heraclius' recovery and restoration of the true cross to Jerusalem is celebrated by a feast in the Eastern churches – "Holy Cross Day" on September 14.

*[Sources: "Outlines of Parsi History" by Hormazdyar Mirza; [www.bartleby.com](http://www.bartleby.com); Encyclopedia of World History]*

Although the name “Zoroaster” or “Zarathushtra” is never mentioned, the Bible does cite a significant number of Zarathushtis, beginning with the good Zarathushti king Cyrus the Great who freed the Jews from Babylon [*Ezra 1:1 - 11*] and including the early Christian movement [*Acts 2: 9*]. Most students of comparative religion are quite aware that Zarathushti ideas and imagery are present throughout the pages of the Bible, but not many could have guessed the number of Zarathushtis included in its pages!

In searching the Bible for Zarathushtis, my methodology was that of a social scientist. (Over the past fifty years, many universities have moved the study of history from the humanities department to the social science department.) This technique gives credence to the weight of scholarly opinion on a subject. For example, scholars debate whether Cyrus the Great of Persia was a Zarathushti, but the majority of scholars throughout history agree that he was. Another academic argument involves the presence of the magi at the birth of Jesus. Most think they were, although modern liberal scholars such as the Jesus Seminar consider the event entirely mythical while affirming that the magi were ‘imagined’ as Zarathushti priests.

“ The history and theology of the two great monotheistic religions ... are inextricably intertwined. In our pluralistic world, it is reassuring to recall this valued kinship. ”

In analyzing the Bible, one must keep in mind that some portions are historically accurate while other parts are more ambiguous, written long after the events described. An

# all the zarathushtis in the bible

by Ken R. Vincent

Although the name ‘Zoroaster’ or ‘Zarathushtra’ is never mentioned, the Bible does cite a significant number of Zarathushtis, notably Persian monarchs and nobility, and touch upon numerous Zarathushti ideas and imagery.

example of the former is the description of Cyrus’ freeing of the Jews from captivity in Babylon. An example of the latter is found in Daniel where the author appears somewhat confused about historical events relating to Cyrus and Darius. (In fact, the Darius mentioned in Daniel is most likely not Darius I but Darius the Mede, a minor king.) Esther presents a problem because there is no historical record for a queen of all Persia by this name. However, the king of Persia had many wives, and having Esther called a ‘main queen’ in Jewish scripture probably just reflects the viewpoint of the Jewish author. In addition, there is some disagreement among scholars as to whether Esther was queen to Xerxes I (known in Esther as Ahasuerus) or Artaxerxes I (as used in the later Greek translation of Esther). Esther’s credibility derives from its author’s accurate depictions of the Persian court and familiarity with Persian customs.

**Texts searched.** It is important to note that the following lists include Zarathushtis from the Hebrew Bible, Jewish Apocrypha and Christian New Testament. The Apocrypha is familiar and an integral part of the

canon to the vast majority of the world’s Christians (Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Eastern Orthodox and Coptic). Research related to the Dead Sea Scrolls indicated that the apocryphal books were in the Bible at the time of Jesus and that they were definitely part of the Bible used by the early Christians.

For the 20-25% of Christian Protestants, the Apocrypha is considered a lesser religious text. Curiously, the deletion of the Apocrypha from the Protestant Bible first occurred in the mid-19th Century when American printers were trying to save printing costs; today, some Protestant Bibles contain the Apocrypha, but most do not.

While we have a rough estimate of the number of Zarathushtis in the Sasanian Empire, the farther we go back in history, the less certainty there is regarding the percentage of people who were Zarathushti. Historically, it has been assumed that the majority of the Achaemenian and Sasanian Empires were Zarathushti but that somehow the Zarathushtis had magically ‘gone away’ during the Parthian Empire. However, recent research has shown that this is not true of the Parthian period.



**Definite Zarathushtis.** Zarathushtis in the Bible whose authenticity can be historically verified are listed in the chart [right].

**Probable Zarathushtis.** The methodology used dictates that persons who were Zarathushti would in all probability have Persian names and individuals within the Persian Empire who were of some other religious/ethnic group would not have Persian names.

It is easier to see how this applies when we consider contemporary populations. For instance, 85% of residents in the US are Christian, so probability dictates that a person in the US with a European name like Jane Smith is Christian. Since 85% of residents of India are Hindu, a person named Krishna Gupta is most likely Hindu. Likewise, an American named Rachael Leibowitz is probably Jewish, and an individual named Mohammad Ali is probably a Moslem whether he lives in India or the US.

Several persons with Persian names are mentioned in the Book of Esther. **Haman**, chief minister to the King of Kings of Persia is named, as is Haman's father (**Hammedatha**), wife (**Zeresh**) and ten sons. Other probable Zarathushtis named include seven **chamberlains** (high officers, stewards) in the Royal Court, two **doorkeepers**, and five of the seven **princes** of Persia.

**Zarathushtis in groups.** Zarathushti priests, **the magi**, are mentioned in the Bible in two places. The more famous, of course, is the nativity story of Jesus [Matthew 2: 1 - 12], while the other is in Daniel [2: 12, 18, 24, 27, 48; 5:15]. **Parthians** and **Medes** are mentioned as groups of visitors in Jerusalem during the early days of Christianity [Acts 2:9].

**Supernatural Zarathushtis.** The Bible mentions the **Angel of Persia** [Daniel 10:13, 20]. Some years ago when I was speaking at the Zarathushti Center in Houston, I asked which angel they thought this might be, and the group overwhelmingly agreed it was Sraosha! Most

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Chart 1. Definite Zarathushtis</i>  <i>Zarathushtis in the Bible whose authenticity can be historically verified.</i></p>		
Name	References	Comments
Ahasuerus	Daniel 9:1	Father of Darius the Mede, a minor king
Apphaxad	Judith 1:1, 5, 13-15	King of Media, 6th Century BCE
Arsaces	I Maccabees 15:22	King of Parthia, 2nd Century BCE
Artaxerxes I	Nehemiah 1:1, 2:1 Some scholars also use Ezra 4:6-24, 6:14, though this passage may refer to Artaxerxes II; Esther 11, 12, 13, 16, II Maccabees 1:20-36	King of Kings, Persian Empire
Artaxerxes II	Ezra 4:6-24, 6:14	King of Kings, Persian Empire
Cyrus II the Great	Isaiah 44:28, 45:1, Ezra 1, 4:3, 5:13-17, 6:3, Daniel 1:21, 6:28, 10:1, II Chronicles 36:22-23	King of Kings, Persian Empire. <i>Note:</i> Cyrus is declared "the Anointed One of God," i.e., Messiah/Christ in Isaiah 45:1 and "Shepherd of the Lord" in Isaiah 44:28.
Darius I	Ezra 4 - 6; Haggai 1:1, 15; 2:10, Zechariah 1:1, 7:1	King of Kings, Persian Empire
Darius II	Nehemiah 12:22	King of Kings, Persian Empire
Darius III	I Maccabees 1:1	King of Kings, Persian Empire
Darius the Mede	Daniel 5:30, 6, 9:1, 11:1	Minor king, 6th Century BCE
Mithredah	Ezra 1:8)	Treasurer to Cyrus the Great (name means "Given by Mithra")
Mithredah	Ezra 4:7	A Persian official in Jerusalem
Shethar-Bozenai	Ezra 5:3, 6; 6:6, 13	Persian official in Judah
Vashti	Esther 1: 9 - 22, 2: 1, 4, 17	Queen of Persia
Xerxes I	Ezra 4:6; Esther 1, 2, 3, 6-10 though this passage in Esther may refer to Artaxerxes I	King of Kings, Persian Empire

scholars agree that the Biblical demon *Asmodeus* found in *Tobit* 3:7, 17 is the Zarathushti demon *Aeshma*.

Of course, *Ahura Mazda* is referred to in the Bible as *Yahweh* (I am), *El* (God) or *Abba* (Father). *Spenta Mainyu* is the *Holy Spirit* in the Bible. Finally, *Angra Mainyu* or *Ahriman*, referred to in the Bible as *Satan* or the *Devil*, needs no introduction to Zarathushtis!

**Possible Zarathushtis.** Everyone knows someone who has changed his or her name. My former department chair (a Taoist) adopted an American name (Joanne) for professional use rather than use her Taiwanese name (Chiehwen). In the Bible, Queen Esther of Persia (a Jew) is called by her Persian name, although we are told that her Hebrew name was Hadassah. The two Biblical names falling into this category are *Marsena* and *Tarshish* [*Esther* 1:14]; both are called "Princes of Persia" although their names are not Persian.

**Prominent role.** As you can see, Zarathushtis play a prominent role in the text of the Bible. There can be no dispute that the history and theology of the two great monotheistic religions of the ancient world (monotheistic dualism of the Zarathushtis and tribal monotheism of the ancient Hebrews) are inextricably intertwined. In our pluralistic world, it is reassuring to recall this valued kinship!

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### References to Persian and Zarathushti people and ideas in the Bible

*Compiled by Mark Agnini*

*Given below are references to Persian and Zarathushti (Zoroastrian) people and ideas in the Christian Bible. References are topical, as indicated, and each topic is cross-referenced. Books are cited in the order in which they appear in the Bible.*

**Persia:** 2 Chronicles 20-23; Ezra 1:1-8, 3:7, 4:3-24, 6:14, 7:1, 9:9; Esther 1: 3-18, 10:12; Ezekiel 27:10, 38:5; Daniel 8:20, 10:1-20, 11:2.

**Persian:** Nehemiah 12:22; Daniel 6:28.

**Persians:** Esther 1:19; Daniel 5:28, 6:8-15.

**Darius:** Ezra 4:5, 4:24, 5:5-7, 6:1-15; Nehemiah 12:22; Daniel 5:31, 6:1-28, 9:1, 11:1; Haggai 1:1-15, 2:10; Zechariah 1:1-7, 7:1.

**Cyrus:** 2 Chronicles 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-8, 3:7, 4:3-5, 5:13-17, 6:13-14; Isaiah 44:28, 45:1; Daniel 1:21, 6:28, 10:1.

**Satan:** 1 Chronicles 21:1; Job 1:6-12, 2:1-7; Psalms 109:6; Zechariah 3:1-2; Matthew 4:10, 12:26, 16:23; Mark 1:13, 3:23-26, 4:15, 8:33; Luke 4:8, 10:18, 11:18, 13:16, 22:3, 22:31; John 13:27; Acts 5:3, 26:18; Romans 16:20; 1 Corinthians 5:5, 7:5; 2 Corinthians 2:11, 11:14, 12:7, 1 Thessalonians 2:18; 2 Thessalonians 2:9; 1 Timothy 1:20, 5:15; Revelation 2:9-24, 3:9, 12:9, 20:2-7.

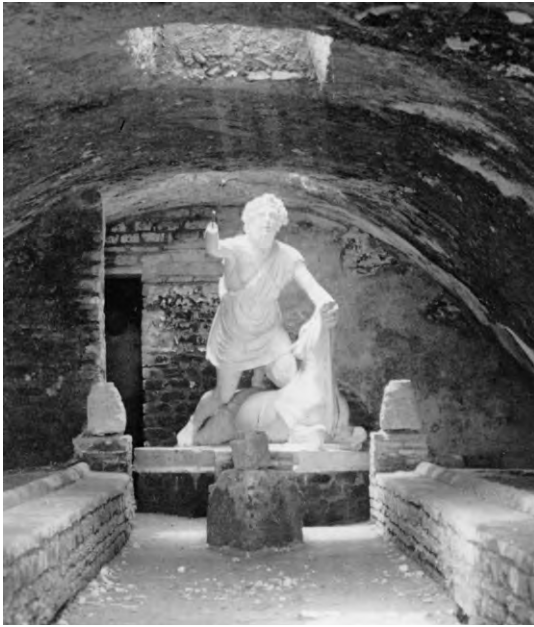
**Magi ("Wise Men"):** Matthew 2:1-18.

**Light (as God):** Exodus 13:21; Nehemiah 9:12-19; Esther 8:16; Job 3:9, 3:20-23, 12:25, 18:5-18, 24:13, 24:16, 25:3, 29:3, 30:26, 33:28-30, 38:15-24, 41:18; Psalms 27:1, 37:6, 43:3, 49:19, 97:11, 104:2, 112:4, 118:27, 119:130, 143:30; Proverbs 4:18, 6:23, 13:9, 11:7; Isaiah 8:20, 9:2, 10:17, Isaiah 42:6, 58:8-10, 60:1-20; Jeremiah 4:23, 13:16; Daniel 2:22, 5:11-14; Micah 7:8; Luke 16:8; John 1:4-9, 3:19-21, 8:12, 12:35-36; Acts 9:3, 12:7, 22:6-11, 13:12, 2 Corinthians 11:14; Ephesians 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:5; 1 John 1:5, 2:8-10.

**Fire (as God):** Exodus 3:2, 9:23-24, 13:21-22, 14:24, 19:18; Numbers 9:15-16; Deuteronomy 4:24, 4:36, 5:22-26, 9:13; 1 Kings 18:24, 18:38, 19:12; 1 Chronicles 21:26; Isaiah 10:16-17, 31:9, 50:11, 66:15; Ezekiel 1:13, 8:2; Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16; Acts 2:3, 7:30.

*[From private communication with Rohinton Rivetna in 1983]*





*Left, a Mithraeum from Ostia, near Rome, built in the foundations of the Baths of Trajan (mid-second century) with a characteristic statue of the 'tauroctomy' or bull-slaying; right, an altar with the figure of Mithra, the sun god, from a Mithraic temple on Hadrian's Wall in northern England; below, head of Mithras from the Walbrook Mithraeum, London.*

## Mithraism – the mysterious cult prevalent in the Roman Empire when Christ was born

In hundreds of underground temples scattered across the territory of the Roman Empire stretching from England to Syria, modern archeologists have uncovered paintings and statues of a young man killing a bull. The significance of this picture, the central icon of Mithraism, a secretive religion, has been one of the unsolved archeological mysteries of this century.

The crucial scene is the so-called 'tauroctony', or bull-slaying, in which Mithras, accompanied by various figures, is shown in the act of killing a bull. A tauroctony is found in virtually every Mithraic temple. What mythical event is depicted by these figures? What clues does this icon yield about the teachings of the cult?

Mithraism was one of the most important and certainly one of the most intriguing of the religions that arose just before and at the same time as Christianity. It came into existence in the 1st century BCE, and was especially popular among the Romans, Plutarch writes. Mithraism reached its peak in the 3rd century and finally succumbed to the expansion of Christianity in the late 4th century, about the time that the western Roman Empire was falling.

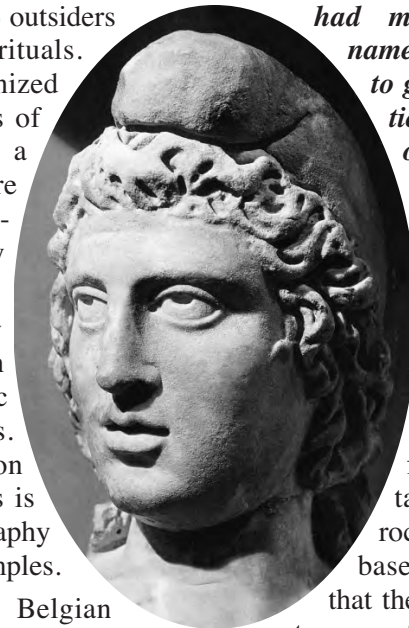
Mithraism limited its membership to those who had passed through a secret initiation ritual. Initiates were forbidden to speak to outsiders about the secret rituals. Mithraism was organized around seven grades of initiation, forming a hierarchical structure through which members gradually ascended.

Mithraism's secrecy meant that no written record of Mithraic doctrines survives. The only information available to scholars is the elaborate iconography that decorates the temples.

Franz Cumont, the Belgian historian of religion interpreted the fact that Mithras is the Greek and Latin name of the much older Iranian (Zoroastrian) diety Mithra. Cumont concluded that Mithraism was imported from the ancient Iranian diety that represented light and truth.

Several scholars, including John Hinnells of the University of Manchester suggest that *Mithraism had in*

*fact been created as a completely new religion somewhere in the Greco-Roman world and that it had merely adopted the name of the Iranian diety to give itself an authentic flavor and an aura of antiquity.*



If the tauroctony did not represent any Iranian myth, what did it represent? In the 1970s, several scholars, including Stanley Insler of Yale University, put forward new interpretations of the tauroctony and Mithraism, based on the hypothesis

that the picture is actually a star map of the constellations: a dog for Canis Minor, a snake for Hydra, a raven for Corvus, a scorpion for Scorpio, a lion for Leo, and a cup for Crator, with the bull paralleled by Taurus. No Zoroastrian scholar has so far come forward with any explanation. ■

*[Excerpted by Roshan Rivetna from Scientific American, 1989]*



# the 'other wise man' and the real magi

By Ken R. Vincent

Author of "The Magi: from Zoroaster to the 'Three Wise Men'"

A little over a hundred years ago, Prof. Henry Van Dyke re-introduced the western world to the real magi in a beautiful fictional book, *The Story of the Other Wise Man*. Knowledge of the magi as priests of the Zarathushti religion had been forgotten after the Muslim conquest of the Middle East but had re-emerged during the 19th century.

Prof. Van Dyke's 'Other Wise Man,' like the more famous 'Three Wise Men' who brought gifts to honor the baby Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew, were magi. Theirs was the only religion in the ancient world other than Judaism to worship one God, and their prophet Zarathushtra had predicted the coming of future saviors from "the nations."

The magi believed that salvation is attained through good thoughts, good words, and good deeds. In *The Story of the Other Wise Man*, the fourth magi is delayed in his attempt to join the others in their search for the savior because he repeatedly interrupts his journey to care for the sick and needy. At the end of his life, he experiences a vision of the crucified Jesus who assures him that in performing good works for "the least of my brethren, you have done it to me" [Matthew 25:31-46].

Like many scholars of his time, Prof. Van Dyke was fascinated by the real magi. Although early Christian artwork had pictured the magi accurately in priestly Persian attire, their appearance became transformed by later legend into opulently clad kings. St. Matthew doesn't call them kings; he calls them 'magi.' Modern translations of the New Testament often use 'Wise Men.'

Prof. John Hinnells of the University of London notes that St. Matthew, who is thought to have written his Gospel in Antioch, Syria, would have been familiar with



the beliefs of the magi, whom history locates in that community in the first century. More than any other gospel writer, Matthew cites texts from the

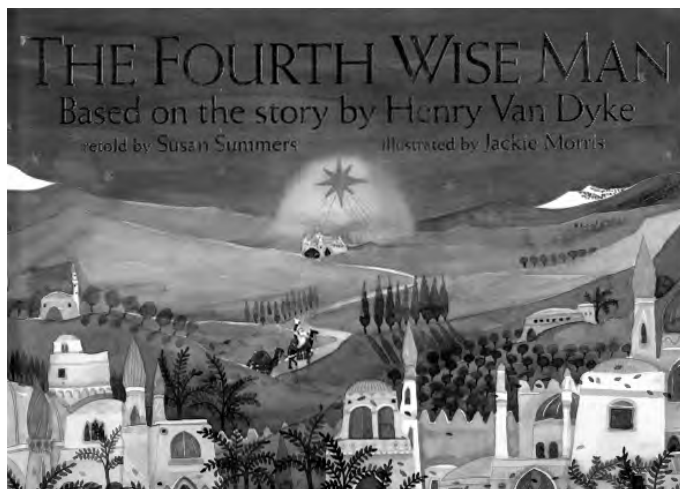
Hebrew Bible to prove that Jesus was the Messiah, but in this instance, Matthew tells us that priests from a religion other than Judaism followed the guiding star to Jesus. Why?

“ At the time of the birth of Jesus, the religion of the magi was the dominant religion in Babylon. ”

One answer given is that the Zarathushtis were known to be astrologers. Remember that Balaam, another non-Jew in the Hebrew Bible [Numbers 24:17] predicted that "a star shall come forth out of Jacob and a scepter shall rise out of Israel..." But many other religions of the first century practiced astrology.

A related answer sometimes voiced is that the magi were Chaldaens; Chaldaea, another name for Babylon, was where western astrology was invented. At the time of the birth of Jesus, the religion of the magi was the dominant religion in Babylon.





*THE FOURTH WISE MAN* by Susan Summers. Hardcover, color, ISBN 0-8037-2312-1, publisher Dial Books for Young Readers, Penguin Putnam.

# The Fourth Wise Man

*By Susan Summers*

AT LAST, a storybook for little children that actually refers to the magi as “Zoroastrians”. This inspiring story is based on a work by Henry Van Dyke, *The Story of the Other Wise Man* written over 100 years ago. It recounts the adventures of the fourth magi, Artaban, who “lived in the city of Ecbatana” (modern Hamadan in Iran) in the days when King Herod reigned in Jerusalem. He is described in the opening paragraph as “a follower of the faith of Zoroaster, studying the eternal struggle between the forces of good and evil, and exploring the secrets of nature ...” It is a beautiful tale of faith and devotion, about Artaban’s lifelong search for virtue.

*By Roshan Rivetna*

[Acknowledgements to Khurshid Bapasola of The Zoroastrian Shop, for ‘discovering’ this book.]

The primary importance of the magi was the enormity of their influence in the world of the first century. Their religion was dominant in the first Persian Empire prior to Alexander and in the Parthian Persian Empire, which was much larger than modern-day Persia (Iran) and included (modern-day) Iraq, the eastern half of Syria, southeast Turkey, Armenia, and half of Turkmenistan.

The Zarathushti Persians were once rulers in Palestine and remained “next-door neighbors” of Roman Palestine at the time of Jesus’ birth. Additionally, their main language was Aramaic, which was the language of Jesus. Some magi even resided in pre-Islamic Southern Arabia where the frankincense and myrrh were grown and traded. So it was the Magi who worshiped the one God of Light, called Ahura Mazda (the Wise Lord), who were at the birth of Jesus. St. Matthew was declaring to the non-Jewish world, especially the world of the east, “Jesus is your Savior too!”

The magi at the nativity of Jesus was not the first communication between the Zarathushti and the Jewish religions. By the time of Jesus’ birth, the Jews had been acquainted with the religion of the magi for over 500 years! Indeed, the magian kings Darius and Xerxes are mentioned fondly in the Hebrew Bible; the good Persian

King Cyrus the Great was responsible for allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem from their Babylonian exile with the treasures from their Temple.

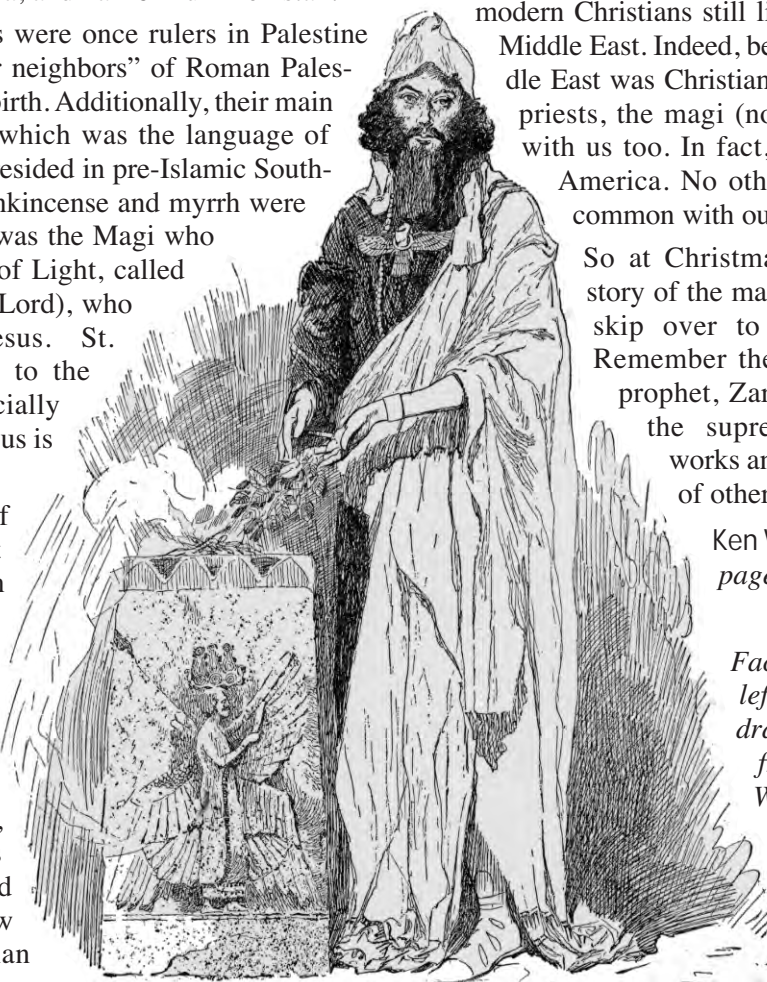
It is likely that the magi would have known of the Jewish prophecy of a savior similar to their own.

We in the west forget that early Christians lived and modern Christians still live in Africa, India, and the Middle East. Indeed, before Islam, 10% of the Middle East was Christian. The Zarathushtis and their priests, the magi (now called mobeds) are still with us too. In fact, there are 25,000 in North America. No other religion has as much in common with our Judeo-Christian heritage.

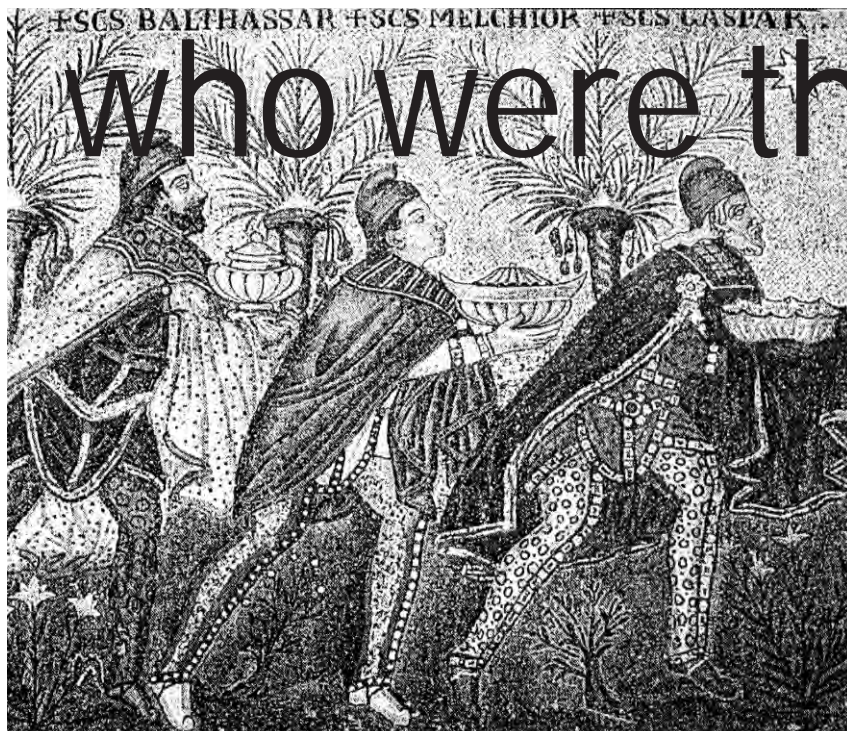
So at Christmastime, after you read the story of the magi in Chapter 2 of Matthew, skip over to Chapter 25 (vs. 31-46). Remember the *Other Wise Man* and his prophet, Zarathushtra, who also taught the supreme importance of good works and who predicted the coming of other saviors. ■

Ken Vincent’s profile is on page 90.

*Facing page, three wise men; left, the ‘other’ wise man. Line drawings by J. R. Flanagan from “The Story of the Other Wise Man” by Henry Van Dyke, courtesy “The Magi, from Zoroaster to the ‘Three Wise Men’” by Ken R. Vincent, Bibal Press, 1999.*







# who were the magi?

*Left, detail from the Ravenna mosaic showing the three magi, Balthasar, Melchior and Gaspar in Persian attire carrying gifts for the baby Jesus. The pointed caps are similar to those seen in Parthian coins. San Apollinare Nuovo Basilica, Ravenna, Italy, 6th century. PHOTO: ALMUT HINTZE, COURTESY "A ZOROASTRIAN TAPESTRY, ART, RELIGION AND CULTURE" ED. PHEROZA J. GODREJ AND FIROZA PUNTHAKY MISTREE.*

*Facing page, detail from the Adoration of the Magi by Ghir Landaro. Spedale degli Innocenti, Florence, 1485. PHOTO COURTESY WWW.KFKI.HU*

The magi have remained one of the most enduring of Christian motifs, yet their connection with the faith of Zarathushtra is not well understood. In this article scholars and students comment on the magi (rendered 'wise men' in most English Bibles, 'astrologers' in the New English Bible) who came to Bethlehem from 'the East' to pay homage to the infant Christ [*Matt. ii, 1-12*]

## The Magi and their Christmas connection

by Edwin Yamauchi

According to Herodotus, the magi (Greek *majos*) were originally one of the tribes of the Medes who functioned as priests and diviners under the Achaemenian Persians (6th to 4th centuries BCE). Other classical writers [*Strabo; Xenophon*] knew that the magi served before fire altars.

The Persians continued to use derivations from the word *magus* as a word for 'priest' down to the end of the Sasanian era around 650 CE. An ordinary priest was called *mog*, and the chief priest *magupat*, "master of the magi". Present day Zoroastrian priests are called *mobed*.

The relationship of the magi to Zoroaster and his teachings is a complex and controversial issue. The magi are strikingly absent from the Avesta with one possible exception. The Zoroastrians and magi were probably initially in conflict for two reasons: the magi appear to have been polytheistic whereas Zoroaster's own teachings about Ahura Mazda were either monotheistic or dualistic; and Zoroaster was from the northeast and the magi were established in northwestern Iran.

The religion of the magi under the Achaemenian kings is another area of controversy. Arthur Nock's judgment on this matter is cautiously stated: "The balance of probability seems to indicate that Zoroaster's Gathas had been accepted by *some* of the Magi as inspired and that their phraseology and ideas had exercised *some* influence on them ..."

The classical writers Plato, Pliny the Elder and Plutarch maintained that Zoroaster himself was a magos and that the magi were his followers.

Among the functions of the Persian magi was their work as diviners. In the Hellenistic age magi in the West continued to have a reputation for foretelling the future. Cicero records that when Alexander was born the magi interpreted a spontaneous fire in the temple of Artemis at Ephesus as a sign that a great calamity for Asia had been born.

From the fourth century BCE on, the magi were increasingly associated with the Chaldeans as astrologers.

**The Christmas magi.** Gherardo Gnoli asserts: "The Zoroastrian doctrine of the Savior of the Future [Saoshyant] was the basis for the story of the coming of the Magi of Bethlehem in the Gospel of Matthew [2:1-12]." The argument for this unlikely thesis has been developed by Giuseppe Messina. Messina first denies





Bethlehem star. Still other planets such as Saturn, Mars, and even Uranus have been suggested.

Finally, the difficulty of explaining the guidance of the magi to the place where the Christ child lay, has persuaded others that the passage in Matthew was intended to describe a supernatural and not a natural phenomenon.

[Excerpted from "Persia and the Bible" by Edwin M. Yamauchi, Baker Book House, 1990]

## Names of the Magi

by Bruce M. Metzger

Both in the East and in the West a variety of traditions developed concerning the number of the Wise Men, their names, dress, appearance, and age. Although it is usually assumed that the magi were three in number, three is by no means the only tradition – that they were twelve in number was

also rather widely held in the East, particularly in Syria.

The earliest reference to the names of the magi occurs in the 6th century document *Latina Barbari*, as the familiar triad of **Balthasar**, **Melchior** and **Gaspar**. The same names can be seen above the heads of the three magi, in the celebrated 6th century mosaic at Ravenna [photo above]. These names prevailed in the west, despite some occasional divergences, such as: Dionysius, Rusticus and Eleutherius; or Ator, Sator and Peratoras; or Enoch, Elijah and Melchizedek.

When one turns to the east, one finds in Syriac, Coptic, Ethiopic, Armenian, Georgian and Persian sources, a still wider variety of traditions concerning the number and names of the magi.

In the sixth-century Syriac work *Cave of Treasures*, which is a history of the world from the Creation to the Crucifixion, the magi are said to have been kings:

1. **Hormizdah** of Makhozdi, king of Persia
2. **Izgarad (Yazdegerd)**, the king of Sabha.
3. **Perozadh**, the king of Sheba, which is in the East.

Yet other names have been given as: Bathezora, Melchior and Thaddias (Coptic); Hor – king of the Persians, Basanater – king of Saba and Karsudan – king of the East (Ethiopic); Matathilata, Thesba and Salahotatha (Armenian); Melchon – king of the Persians, Gaspar – king of the Indians and Baldassar – king of the Arabs.

Among the names of twelve magi on the authority of the metropolitan bishop in Armenia, are: Zarwandad – son of Artaban, Hormizdad, Gushnasaph, Iryaho – son of Khosrau ...

[Excerpted from "Names for the Nameless in the New Testament" by Bruce M. Metzger, *Kyriakon*, Vol 1]

that the magi were a Median priestly caste. He views them as adherents of Zoroaster, who came into conflict with Darius for that reason! To suggest that the Christmas magi were Zoroastrians who were responding to Zoroastrian apocalyptic prophecy, Messina cites such sources as the Oracle of Hystaspes, the Arabic infancy gospel, Theodore Bar Konai and Bar Hebraeus. He is assuming that the Zoroastrian doctrine of the Saoshyant inspired Matthew. This overlooks the profound differences in the concepts of savior and salvation in Zoroastrianism and Christianity.

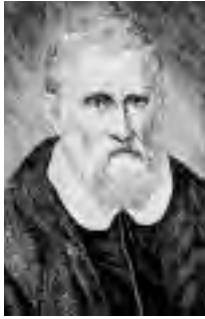
Despite the fact that some of the church fathers (for example, Clement of Alexandria) believed the Christmas magi were Zoroastrians, it is clear from the history of the magi and the biblical context that they were astrologers who were probably from Mesopotamia.

**The Christmas star.** Much has been written on the subject of the 'star,' offering a variety of explanations of the celestial light that guided the magi.

Some have suggested the idea of a nova – a star that suddenly increases in brightness. Chinese records indicate that a nova was visible near the star Alpha Aquilae for seventy days in 5 BCE. Others have suggested the possibility of a comet. Some have focussed on Halley's comet, which appeared in 12 BCE.

Johannes Kepler, the great astronomer of the seventeenth century, calculated that the triple conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, which took place before the supernova of 1604, must have also taken place in 7 BCE in the constellation Pisces. David Hughes argued this triple conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter was the Christmas star. Ernest Martin has favored identifying Jupiter with the

## Marco Polo's magi story



*Venetian traveler Marco Polo [left] crossed Iran in 1272 on his way to China, and in 1294 on his homeward journey. In his "Travels," he recounts his visit to the tombs of the magi and the "castle of the fire-worshippers":*

Persia is a very extensive province, anciently very rich and flourishing, but now in a great degree wasted and destroyed by the Tartars. It contains a city called Sava, whence the three Magi came to adore Jesus Christ when born at Bethlehem.

In that city are buried the three, in separate tombs, above which is a square house carefully preserved. Their hearts are still entire, with their hair and beards. One was named Balthazar, the other Gaspar, the third Melchior. Marco Polo inquired often in their city about these three magi, but no one could tell him anything, except that they were ancient kings.

They informed him however, that three days' journey farther was a tower called the Castle of the Fire-worshippers, because the men there venerate fire, and for the following reason.

They say that anciently three kings of that country went to adore a certain prophet, newly born, and carried three offerings: gold, incense and myrrh, to know if he was a king, a god or a sage. For they said that if he took gold, he was a king; if incense, he was a god; if myrrh, he was a sage. They went in one after another, and though they were of different ages and fashions, he appeared to each of them exactly like himself ... They presented to him the three offerings and he took them all, whence they concluded that he was at once god, king and sage.

He presented to them a closed box. After traveling a number of days, they were curious to see what was in the box, and opened it. They found only a stone, which was meant to express that they should remain firm in the faith which they had received. They did not understand this meaning, and despising the gift, threw it into a well.

Immediately, a great fire came down from heaven and began to burn brightly. When they saw this wonder, they took a portion of the fire, carried it to their country, and placed it in their church, where they kept it continually burning.

They revere it as a god, and when at any time it goes out, they repair to that well where the fire is never extinguished, and from it bring a fresh supply. This is what all the people of that country tell, and Messer Marco was assured of it by those of the castle [of fire worshippers], and therefore it is the truth. ■

*[Marco Polo's Travels, ed. Hugh Murray]*

## The Wise Men in Oriental Traditions

by Leonardo Olschki

**Marco Polo's story.** The story related by Marco Polo [see left] is characteristic of the religious eclecticism and legendary amalgamation of different traditions in the last Persian shrines of Zoroaster's creed.

It tells us that the magi set out to worship a prophet that was born. They carried with them gold, frankincense and myrrh in order to ascertain whether that prophet was God, an earthly king, or a physician. When the child accepted all three, they said within themselves that he was "the true God, and the true king, and the true physician."

This report is captivating in many respects. It has no parallel in contemporary western literature. Moreover it contains the only example of an active Zoroastrian community mentioned by any Christian traveler in the Middle Ages.

In Marco Polo's day, the worship of fire had long ceased to be Iran's national religion and lingered only in isolated temples. The fire temple mentioned by Marco Polo is an authentic element in the story he heard from the inhabitants of the village. The other details of that episode disclose revealing symptoms of the intricate religious traditions in that part of Asia.

**Significance of the gifts.** While the significance of gold as a royal attribute and of frankincense as a symbol of worship are self-evident, myrrh is the most problematic of the three gifts. In the Scriptures it appears as one of the "principal spices" used for "a compound after the art of the apothecary," as a perfume, and as an embalming herb; but is never recorded as a symbol of medicine. The idea of Jesus as a physician is alien to Christian doctrine, but more intimately related to the Zoroastrian sphere of religious imagination. The mission of a savior as a healer was conceived by Zoroaster, who designated himself as the Healer of Life.

The significance of the three gifts must have been evident in the earliest Christian communities of the near East, where Zoroastrian concepts and beliefs had been for a long time tenacious and ubiquitous. A small provincial group of Persian 'worshippers of fire' kept for a millennium the unaltered, original symbolism of a Biblical episode in which myrrh represents the human and divine power of healing the sick and wounded, a power already attributed to Zoroaster and finally transferred to Jesus.

**Mythical interchange.** Marco Polo's story is an example from innermost Persia of the frequent formation of religious and dynastic legends around historical monuments, whose original purpose and character were forgotten or altered to suit local interests and the vagaries of an epic imagination.

The Christian legend must soon have been accepted into Zoroastrian mythology and developed in a variety of fables of which the story handed down in Marco Polo's book is an offspring. One of the beliefs which con-





## A comment on the 'Three Wise Men'

by Cyrus R. Pangborn

The accounts of Jesus and the "Three Wise Men" must be read with critical understanding of the difference between the credulous mind of the 1st century and the empirical mind of our time.

**Differing accounts.** The empirical mind notes that there is no account of the birth or early years of Jesus in Mark's Gospel, the first to be written, ca. 70 CE. The same is true of John's Gospel, generally believed to be the latest of the four Gospels. In between, there are the Gospels of Luke and Matthew, both probably written between 85 and 100 CE.

By the time that Luke and Matthew were writing, there were virtually no devotees of Jesus in the "Holy Land." The Christian movement was developing entirely in the Gentile lands of Greece and Rome where it had been introduced by the Apostle Paul and, in part, by Peter, a disciple of Jesus. If there was curiosity about the birth and early life of Jesus among the new converts, there was thus some one to tell them enough to satisfy. But when *their* converts succeeded them as leaders after 70 CE, the curiosity of new recruits was not to be satisfied by a few anecdotes told by persons who had not even lived in Jesus' time. Some authoritative accounts alone would satisfy; and Luke and Matthew by that time had some oral tales available that could be committed to writing.

It is important to recognize that Luke and Matthew had very different thoughts about what material to use. Luke used stories about birth in a lowly stable, anonymous angels, shepherds, the plebeian mothers of John the Baptist and Jesus, and simple but pious elderly people as his witnesses to the coming importance of Jesus. Matthew, by contrast, told of birth in a house, the anxious and jealous concern of a cruel king (Herod), testimony by named angels of high position in the heavenly realm, a traveling star, and three wise men (who, some think, were Zoroastrian priests high in courtly circles of the Parthian, nominally Zoroastrian rulers of Iran).

Except that both writers made Bethlehem the town of birth and Nazareth the town where Jesus grew to manhood, the accounts are entirely different in details. Note that they are different in pattern as well. Luke seemed to be writing for the common man; Matthew for persons of importance and high position.

What then, are we to believe? Not much more than that Jesus made so great an impression, eventually, on the Gentile world that it *seemed* he must have had an origin as impressive as his adult teaching proved to be in others' lives.

**The Star of Bethlehem.** What do we make, then, of the 'Star of Bethlehem?' Well, if there was some unusual phenomenon that our astronomers can yet identify as having occurred at about the time of Jesus' birth, it can

scarcely have had any exclusive connection with Jesus; and star in the sky so high would have seemed to point to any of a number of sites.

We don't know from whom Matthew inherited the tale, but his aristocratic bias must have shaped his choice to use it. Any serious Christian, however, must base his allegiance on agreement with the message taught by Jesus, and not by bowing to the mandates of naive piety.

Cyrus R. Pangborn is on the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Department of Religion, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ.

## The Magi and their Christmas connection

by John R. Hinnells

Christian legend treats the Wise Men as kings, but that is a later development. Matthew, the only Gospel-writer to refer to this episode, calls them *magi*. He is generally thought to have written in the city of Antioch, a place where we know there was a well-established community of magi at the time [see Downey, "A History of Antioch in Syria"], as part of the Parthian overseas trade-military network in the first century; so the point is that Matthew would have known what a *magus* was.

Throughout his Gospel Matthew stresses that Jesus fulfilled the Jewish scriptural prophecies; of all the Gospels, his being the one with the strongest Jewish background, but his eschatology was also clearly influenced by Zoroastrianism. This is especially true of the first two chapters where every episode is tied to a passage in the Old Testament. The only exception is the story of the magi. Why?

My hypothesis is that writing from Antioch, where Zoroastrianism was a recognized presence, and remembering that at the time Zoroastrianism was the most powerful of the religions of the day (ruling an empire stretching from Turkey to India) Matthew was trying to argue that Christianity was the fulfillment of Zoroastrianism as well as of Judaism. That just as Jesus fulfilled Jewish scripture, so also the magi, the priests of the great religion of the day, came to lay their treasures at the feet of Jesus.

The story thus represents Jesus and Christianity as incorporating the treasures, the inheritance, of the great religion of the day. I am not saying that the story really happened. It is part of a Jewish tradition to tell a story, a parable, to illustrate an abstract truth. 'Making up' such a story would not be considered dishonest but a normal literary convention to make a point. ■

Author and scholar John Hinnells was on the faculty of the Department of Comparative Religion, University of Manchester and of SOAS, London. His latest book, on the Zoroastrian Diaspora is forthcoming.





# Lest We Forget

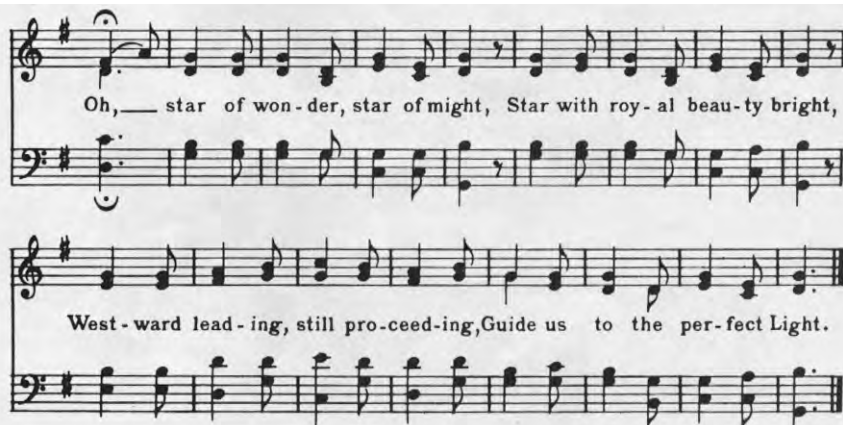
By Dinaz Kutar Rogers

## Do you remember any stories or sayings?

"Lest We Forget" is hosted by Dinaz Kutar Rogers, a high-school biology teacher and published writer. Readers are invited to contribute their stories, lores, legends and memories related to our faith, community, Iran, India, that we grew up with as young children. Jot down those sayings your mother used to say, and send them in, with your version of the meanings, to Dinaz at 1240 Takena SW, Albany, Oregon 97321, tel: (541) 967-1911, email: droger-sor@msn.com.

## Of Magi, Myths & Myrrh

"WE THREE KINGS OF ORIENT ARE" BY JOHN HOPKINS



*O star of wonder, star of night  
Star with royal beauty bright  
Westward leading, still proceeding,  
Guide us to thy perfect light.*

I love to watch the sky by night, lit up with luminaries like Venus, Jupiter, Mars and Saturn. I see astounding tales of ancient times as narrated by twinkling of stars in countless constellations. This passion for stargazing, I believe, is a legacy of my Iranian heritage, made even more appreciable by clear Oregon nights. I often tell the old stories of my people to family and friends; now with great joy I can add this to

our vast and distinguished heritage and proclaim once more the immeasurable influence the religion of Zarathushtra has had on human history, thought and belief.

At Christmastime there are articles about the magi. Who were they and why and where did they travel from? Many scholars, archaeologists and other professionals believe that the magi were Zarathushti priests. Ever since Zarathushtra prophesied that the birth of a savior would be heralded by a bright beacon in the night sky, stargazing in ancient Iran had been an annual winter ritual.

According to Zarathushti records, the magi kept an annual, two-week vigil over the night skies from a fire temple atop a mountain. In Siestan, in southeastern Iran, archaeologists have identified that mountain and unearthed the remains of a fire temple along with brick buildings that could be traced to the Iranian general Surena Pahlav.

Surena Pahlav defeated the Roman armies a few months before the nativity, and advanced triumphantly into Jerusalem to unseat and oust King Herod. But history and fate had an altogether different story to tell; Surena Pahlav was assassinated by his resentful opponents and the leaderless Persian army departed Jerusalem for their homeland. This void was filled in by the Roman army and Christ was born, not under the Persian but the Roman banner.

*We three Kings of Orient are,  
Bearing gifts we traverse afar  
Field and fountain,  
Moor and mountain,  
Following yonder star.*

It has been asked why these magi were a little late in their arrival at the nativity scene. According to popular Iranian legend, these gift-bearing wise men, because of their strict religious injunction against defilement of water by wading through it, had to avoid crossing rivers; hence they took the old land route. Their journey from Siestan to Bethlehem compelled them to trek through Kashan, an oasis by the Qom-Kerman road along the bounds of the Kavir (Salt) Desert, and then via Saveh – a small trading town near modern-day Tehran – they travelled west.

*Frankincense to offer have I,  
Incense owns a Deity night;  
Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume  
Breathes a life in gathering gloom.*

In the sanctum sanctorum of all Zarathushti temples that only an ordained Zarathushti priest can enter, there stands in the middle, on a pedestal, a five-foot silver *afargan* (urn). At prescribed times of the day,

following the movement of the sun, the priest offers prayers and rings the bell to usher in a new watch of the day. With a *chamach* (long-handled flat spoon) he places sticks of sandalwood on a bed of glowing ashes. Over this, he sprinkles frankincense and myrrh while reciting appropriate prayers – just as it was done in the days of old!

Books, in the later parts of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament), reiterate the duration, when the Promised Land was under Persian rule, and affirmed in the frequent reference to “the Law of the Medes and the Persians.”

In today’s Iran, children reenact with great joy, the visit of the magi to the cradle of Jesus of Nazareth. ■

*Author’s Note:* Even though I have scoured books and Surena Pahlav websites, about the above incident, it was only in William G. Forbis’ *Fall of the Peacock Throne*, that I read of this event. Mr. Forbis introduces this subject with caveats like “Persian history and legends suggest ...” or “popular legend in Iran relates...” For his book, Mr. Forbis interviewed hundreds of Iranians – common and famous – including the late Shah of Iran and government officials.

Usually myths and legends are based on facts which makes this unsung, unheard wonder of our Iranian heritage and influence plausible and possible. I was unable to figure out the source in Mr. Forbis’ (un-annotated) bibliography. Perhaps the author gained this knowledge from the aforementioned interviewees. ■

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[1] Forbis, William H. *Fall of the Peacock Throne. The Story of Iran*. McGraw-Hill. 1981.

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## Parthian hero, Surena Pahlav



**Eran Spahbodh Rustaham Suren-Pahlav** of the Parthian clan of Suren, was born in 84 BCE. His name is secured among the heroes in the Kayanian part of the Shah Nameh, and he has been compared to the legendary hero Rustom. It is believed that some of Suren-Pahlav’s feats could have been transferred to another Shah Nameh hero, Key Kavus.

Plutarch describes the great Suren as “mightiest of the Iranian Paladins.”

“... For Suren was no ordinary person; but in fortune, family and honor the first after the

king; and in point of courage and capacity, as well as size and beauty, superior to the Parthians of his time. If he went only on an excursion into the country, he had a thousand camels to carry his baggage and two hundred carriages for his concubines. He was attended by a thousand heavy-armed horse, and many more of the light-armed rode before him. Indeed his vassals and slaves made up a body of cavalry little less than ten thousand.

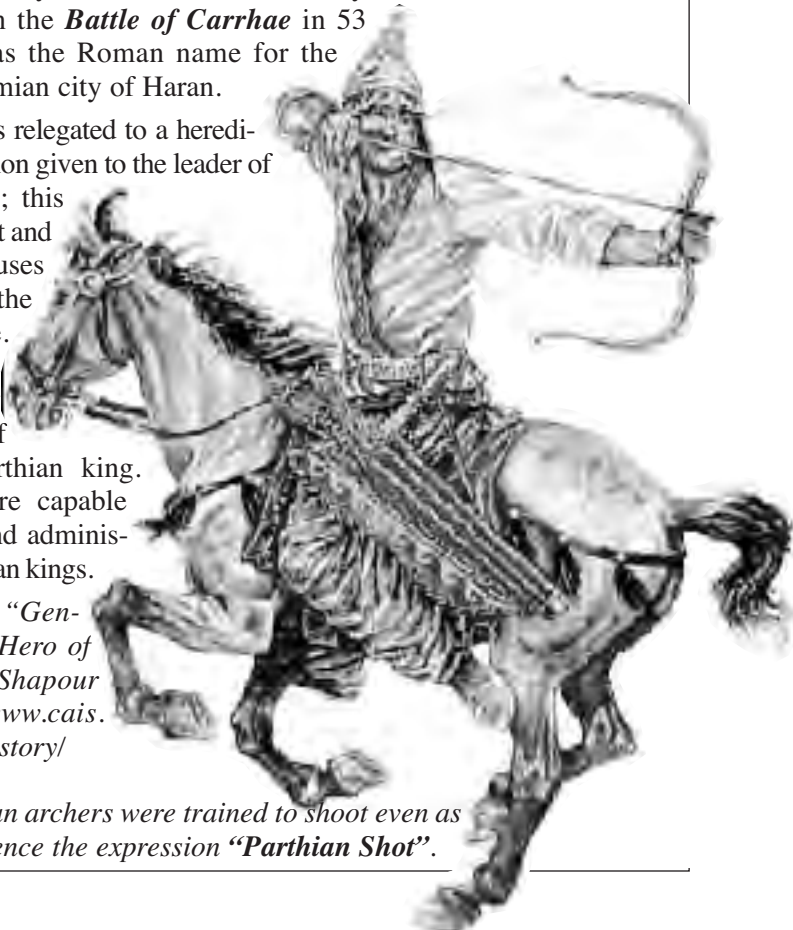
“He had the hereditary privilege in his family of putting the diadem upon the king’s head, when he was crowned. When Orodes was driven from throne, he restored him; and it was he who conquered for him the great city of Selucia, being the first to scale the wall, and beating off the enemy with his own hand. Though he was not then thirty years old, his discernment was strong, and his counsel esteemed the best.”

The Achaemenids’ nemesis was the Greeks; for the Parthians it was the Romans. It was Rome that took the offensive against Iran and the invading Roman governor of Syria, Crassus, was routed by the Parthian leader, Suren and his archers in the **Battle of Carrhae** in 53 BCE. Carrhae was the Roman name for the ancient Mesopotamian city of Haran.

Later on Suren was relegated to a hereditary title of distinction given to the leader of the clan of Suren; this was one of the great and powerful houses among many in the Parthian Empire. The Suren had the inherent family honor and power of crowning the Parthian king. Many Surens were capable military leaders and administrators to the Parthian kings.

Excerpted from “General Surena. The Hero of Carrhae,” by Shapour Suren-Pahlav, [www.cais.soas.com/CAIS/History/](http://www.cais.soas.com/CAIS/History/)

The fabled Parthian archers were trained to shoot even as they retreated – hence the expression “**Parthian Shot**”.





# Offering of frankincense and sandalwood - a Zarathushti ritual *by Dinaz Kutar Rogers*

In the failing evening light as my mother, with her head covered for this ritual, carried the *afargan* from one room to the other and then into the kitchen, she sprinkled a little bit of *loban* (incense) over the glowing sandalwood. With one hand, mother waved the aromatic smoke in the direction that she wanted it to drift. She stopped before other family members so that if they were bare-headed they could cover their heads with one hand and with the other touch the *afargan*, bow and try to direct the smoke toward them and recite the *Ashem Vohu* and *Yatha ahu Vairyo* prayers, or just say “*Dadar Hormuzd*”.

One day when I was very young, I asked her “Why...?”

“*Dadajee-ney majeno pum-rat ganoj ga-may.*” My mother went on to explain further that besides Dadar Ahura Mazda’s love of a good fragrance, such pleasant aromas please Him greatly and also stand in for an offering. Besides, she added, such heavenly fragrances dispel any bad odors lingering in the house.

To which my grandmother added, “It also keeps evil away as evil hates anything that has a *majeno soj-joe pum-rat* (pleasant scent)!” She followed this by snapping her fingers as she recited, three times, a part of our kushti prayer against evil, “*sa-kus-tey, sa-kus-tey say-taan.*”

Zarathushtra asked Ahura Mazda [*Vendidad XIX, 20-24*]:

“O thou, all-knowing Ahura mazda! ...  
Vohu Manah gets directly defiled.  
Vohu Manah gets indirectly defiled;  
the *daevas* defile him from the bodies  
smitten by the *daevas*. Let Vohu  
Manah be made clean.”

Ahura Mazda answered:

“When nine nights have passed away,  
thou shalt bring libations unto the fire,  
thou shalt bring hard wood unto the  
fire, thou shalt bring incense of *Vohu-  
gaona* unto the fire, and thou shalt  
perfume Vohu Manah therewith.”

My mother and grandmother were quite right in their interpretations. They were following the injunctions in the Zend Avesta, passed orally since ancient times from generation to generation, affirming that Iran’s ancient faith had been carried, from Iran to India in an unbroken chain of rites, rituals, traditions and legends.

**Ancient practice.** The practice of burning perfumed substances in religious services and rites is practiced in many ancient and modern faiths, and is closely associated with offerings and prayers. Even today as it was in the past, pleasant-smelling materials – bark, wood and roots of trees; herbs, aromatic plants, seeds, flowers and even pleasant-smelling earth – have been burned on altars. Since antiquity, incense and sandalwood have been used in Zarathushti religious ceremonies and ignited in the fire receptacles five times a day.

According to Herodotus, the Arabs paid 1000 talents of frankincense to Darius the Great as tariff; and the king sometimes burned about 300 talents of frankincense at the fire altar. In ancient days frankincense and myrrh were literally worth more than their weight in gold! ■

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- [2] “The Lost City of Arabia(Ubar).” Nova (PBS). Aired Oct, 8 1996; re-aired July 8, 1997.
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- [4] Oller, David. “Sandalwood.” 1999. [www.oller.net/sandalwood.htm](http://www.oller.net/sandalwood.htm).
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*Mobed tending the fire with frankincense and sandalwood in a Zarathushti fire temple.*

Since ancient times Frankincense and Myrrh have been used to make incense, commonly used to this day, in Zarathushti rituals.

**Frankincense** (*Boswellia carterii*), also known as *olibanum*, is a leafy tree that grows in Yemen, Oman, parts of Saudi Arabia and on the rocky shores of Somalia. In Arabic it is called *luban*. It is the resin from this tree, air dried to rock-like brown-yellow, tear drops, that is used in Zarathushti fire temples and Zarathushti homes.

**Myrrh** (*Commiphora*), like frankincense, is hardened tree sap.

**Sandalwood** (*Santalum album*) is a tree that grows in parts of South India, Timor Island (Indonesia) and other countries. It takes almost 70 years for the tree to reach maturity. In the region of Mysore, India, sandalwood trees have been felled in their immature stages by poachers and dacoits; and there is a constant battle between them and the government. The Madras region has more mature trees and forests yielding high-quality oil and wood. ■



From left, Frankincense (*Boswellia carterii* Birdw.) twig and flowers; a twig of myrrh, *Commiphora abyssinica* Engl.; a twig of *Santalum album* L. sandalwood.  
[PHOTOS COURTESY ARDESHIR DAMANIA]

## On Frankincense, Myrrh and Sandalwood

*The body soon dissolv'd, and all around  
Perfum'd with heav'nly fragrances the ground,  
A sacrifice for Gods up-rose from thence,  
A sweet, delightful tree of frankincense*

Publius Ovidius Naso (43 BC - 18 CE)

**Frankincense and myrrh**, the aromatic resins from spindly trees, were once highly prized from Rome to India (all along the Silk Road), and deemed essential for a host of uses ranging from religious to cosmetic to medicinal. According to Christian belief, the three wise men, who traveled to Bethlehem from Kashan in Persia to greet the infant Jesus brought gold, frankincense and myrrh as gifts. The three wise men are now widely believed to be Zoroastrian magis (priests). Hence we know that frankincense and myrrh were valued as much as gold in those days.

Thanks to the domestication of the camel around 1200 BCE, a complex trade network evolved to transport the two priceless resins from the remote valleys, where the trees grew, to the markets where sheiks, kings and emperors vied for the finest grades. The Arabs used the milky sap of the frankincense tree, and called it '*al lubán*', from the Arabic word for milk yogurt. The same word gave rise to the name of Lebanon (or '*Lubnan*' in Arabic) whose mountains were always capped by milky snow each winter. '*Al lubán*' became anglicized to *olibanum*, which is the common English name for frankincense. The latter name refers to the pre-eminence of this resin, the true or 'frank' incense.

Myrrh is a resin that has a bitter taste; its name is derived from Hebrew *murr* or *maror*, meaning bitter. Frankincense came mainly from the Dhofari region of Oman, and the best of this fragrant oleoresin source still characterizes this remote region. Myrrh traditionally came from Punt; this area was probably in Somalia, Ethiopia or Eritrea, but it may have been in Yemen, Oman or Southern Arabia.

**Sandalwood**, *Santalum album* L. The true sandalwood tree grows exclusively in the forests of Karnataka, followed by Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh in India and the Timor Islands in Indonesia. The oil distilled from the wood shavings is used in the formulation of perfumes, lotions, soap and candles. Mashed into a paste, it is used in folk medicine. Sandalwood pieces are burnt as incense and offerings in Zarathushti rituals.

[Excerpted from "The Eternal Lure of Frankincense, Myrrh and Sandalwood," by Ardeshir Damania, to be published.]

### Rev. Dr. Lawrence Mills' works on the antiquity and influence of the Avesta

Rev. Lawrence H. Mills, professor of Zend Philology at the University of Oxford, has compiled an excellent 2-volume treatise on the "influence of the Avesta."

In Volume I – *Zarathushtra and the Greeks* (1904) Mills discusses the relation existing between the Ameshaspentas and the *Logos* of the Greek philosophical writers - Heraclitus, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics and others. Of the "venerable documents" of the Avesta, Mills says:

"No subject in the range of ancient oriental literature should be considered more important [as the Avesta] ... the remote age of its earlier portions make it, perhaps the most astonishing phenomenon of its kind among the present possessions of our race, excepting the aesthetics and dialectics of incomparable Greece, and the moral earnestness of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures."

In Volume II, *Zarathushtra, Philo, the Achaemenids and Israel* (1906), Mills discusses the "relation existing between the Avesta, the Achaemenids and their inscriptions and the once-captive tribes of Israel and Exilic Semitic scriptures."

Mills develops "solid proofs of the close connection of Jewish thought with that of Babylonian Persia." He offers statements in the Books of Ezra, Chronicles and Isaiah to "really prove a close historical relation." He compares biblical language with the extant inscriptions of the Persians, and then proceeds to "consider how intimately connected the inscriptions are to the Avesta."

[By Roshan Rivetna. A very precious copy of Mill's book, signed by the author in Oxford, in 1913, was presented by Soli Jal Mullan of the Dadar Athornan Madressa to the Rivetnas' private library. Thanks to Nicholas Davidson for bringing this book to our attention for this issue of FEZANA Journal]



*These articles are excerpted here, on account of the striking similarities in the challenges faced by the Jews and Zarathushtis in the matter of interfaith marriages, conversion and descent.*

# Becoming a ‘Jew-by-Choice’

**W**hen Nancy Kelly married Ed Kleinman, they weren’t sure who would show up at the wedding. Neither family was pleased: Nancy was a Roman Catholic, and Ed had once dreamed of becoming a Rabbi. Ten years later, this week, Nancy will immerse herself three times in a *mikvah* – the bath of ritual purification – pronounce herself “a daughter of Abraham” and become a Jew.

Nancy represents a new strand of American Judaism: “Jews-by-choice,” most of whom probably would not have converted except for interfaith marriages. Mixed marriages are on the rise – between 30 and 40% of American Jews now take vows with gentiles, compared with only 7 % in the 1950s – and in 3 out of every 10 of these unions, the gentile spouse converts.

But even after conversion, Jews-by-choice often experience painful problems – strained relations with parents, lack of full acceptance by “born Jews” and rejection by strict constructionists of Jewish law (*Halakha*).

Only last week Orthodox legislators in the Knesset, the Israeli Parliament, tried to amend the Law of Return to exclude all Jews-by-choice except those converted by Orthodox rabbis. The motion was defeated, but not before emotional public arguments – in the US as well as in Israel – over the central question: “*who is a Jew?*”

The traditional answer is that a Jew is anyone born of a Jewish mother – or who converts to Judaism. But Orthodox rabbis do not recognize converts to Conservative or Reform Judaism. (Conservative and Reform rabbis accept gentile spouses for conversion if, after study, it appears that personal conviction – not just the pressures of a mixed marriage – is the true motive.)

The Reform rabbis broke with tradition two years ago when they enlarged the definition of Jewishness to include the children of marriages in which the father alone is Jewish, so long as they have been raised as religious Jews. They also created a national “outreach” program, employing religious instruction and counseling as means of welcoming converts and of encouraging interfaith couples to raise their children as Jews.

**Outreach Program.** In proposing such a program, in 1978, Rabbi Schindler also called on Jews to propagate their faith vigorously among the religiously uncommitted.

“After Christianity became the state religion of the Roman Empire and, later again, when Islam conquered the world,” he recalled, “Jews were forbidden to seek converts or accept them.” In America, he urged, Jews should use their religious freedom to

welcome seekers after God – and to replenish the community.

In truth, the Jewish population in the United States has been in a no-growth phase for the past 10 years, partly due to losses through intermarriage. But if Jews can offset those losses through conversions, intermarriage could work in their favor. Already, the outreach effort “is making Jews think about their Jewishness more in faith terms than in ethnic terms.”

Indeed, converts have a special role to play among born Jews: to convert unobservant Jews-by-birth to active Judaism, and thus make every Jew a Jew-by-Choice.

KENNETH L. WOODWARD with DAN PEDERSON, JERRY BUCKLEY and LEESA FINE in Jerusalem.

*[Excerpted from NEWSWEEK, January 1985].*

## Rabbis to wrestle with patrilineal descent issue

The nation’s Reform rabbis will tackle a major controversial issue later this month when they try to decide whether the child of a Jewish father and non-Jewish mother should be considered Jewish.

Traditionally, Jews have traced Jewish descent through the child’s mother. Under the principle of matrilineal descent, the child of a Jewish mother and a non-Jewish father automatically is considered a Jew.

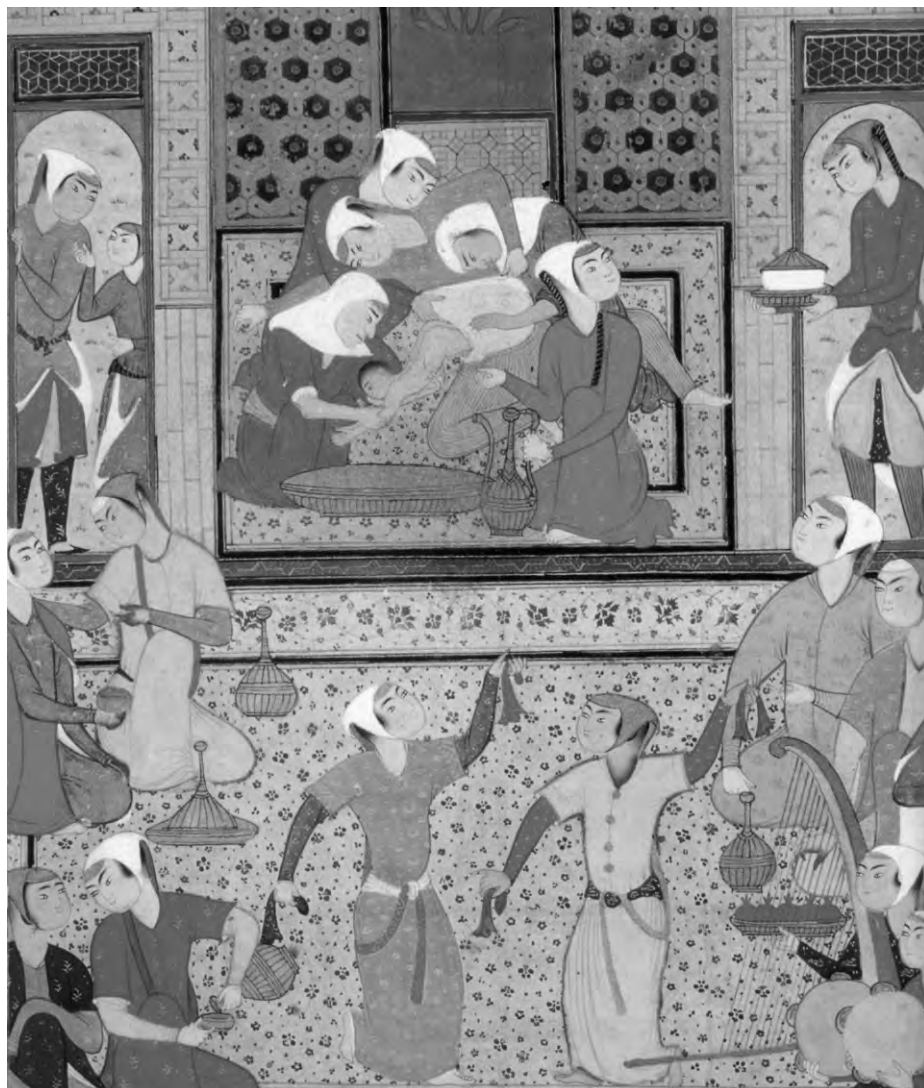
The Central Conference of American Rabbis is scheduled to debate and vote on a resolution framed by its Committee on Patrilineal Descent. Chairing the debate is Chicago’s Rabbi Herman Schaalman ... Reports indicate that CCRR will not

approve this major break with Jewish tradition without prolonged and intense debate.

Behind the debate is the rapidly growing number of interfaith marriages; 31.7% of American Jews who married did so with a non-Jewish partner... Two out of every three Jews who intermarry are male. Hence the timeliness of the debate over patrilineal descent.

In its final form, the resolution is expected to state that Jewish descent is derivable from one parent, either the mother or the father, when the Jewish parent is involved in Jewish life.

*[Excerpted from LAS VEGAS SUN, JUNE 13, 1982.]*



*The birth of Rostam.* [PHOTO: DETAIL FROM FOLIO 54R. BRITISH LIBRARY. COURTESY "THE LION AND THE THRONE, EHSAN YARSHETAR, DICK DAVIS, STUART CARY WELCH, MAGE PUBLISHERS, 1998].

## Rostam is born

Zal and Rudabeh were happily married and soon afterward the kingdom rejoiced at the news that Rudabeh was to give birth to a son. Even though she was happy to be with child, this was a difficult time for Rudabeh. The child was heavy and carrying him for nine months made Rudabeh weak. When the time came for her to give birth, the doctors became fearful for Rudabeh's life.

Rudabeh survived and gave birth to a big baby boy, who was named Rostam. Celebrations of Rostam's birth were held throughout the kingdom. Because he was so big, people knew he was destined to be a great warrior. A poet wrote [1]:

He was a lion cub, a noble son,  
Tall and handsome,  
lovely to look upon;  
And all who saw  
this mammoth baby gazed  
In wonder at him,  
murmuring and amazed.

Rostam was not like any other child. Even as a baby he ate as much as five grown men! He grew incredibly fast and by the time he was six, he was as tall as his father, Zal. He learned all about the art of war; by eight, Rostam was living like a warrior and hero.

There was no one of his age who could equal Rostam in bravery and strength. He reminded everyone of his grandfather, the great warrior, Salm.

## White elephant

One day when Rostam was asleep in his bedchamber, he was suddenly awakened by a huge commotion in the palace grounds. A palace guard informed him that Zal's white elephant had burst from his bonds and was running about the grounds. Everyone was scared and running helter skelter.

# SUNDAY STORIES

## 9. The young Rustam

By Shazneen Rabadi Gandhi

Celebrations of Rostam's birth were held throughout the kingdom. People knew he was destined to be a great warrior. As a child, no one of his age could equal Rostam's bravery and strength.



Rustom grabbed his father's mace and set off to confront the beast. The guards tried to stop him, but to no avail [1]:

Raging, he rushed onward,  
wild as the sea. He looked, and saw  
the beast's immensity,  
As if it were a mountain roaring  
there, Pounding the quaking earth;  
its baleful glare  
Scattered all Rostam's friends –  
they ran to hide, Like sheep that see  
a wolf at eventide.

Rostam strode forward, yelled his  
battle cry, Intrepid and fearless,  
his head held high; Then, as the beast  
caught sight of him, it strove To trap  
him, like a mountain on the move.  
It lashed out with its trunk,  
but Rostam raised His mace and  
struck its head; trembling and dazed,  
The mammoth body toppled, fell full  
length, Harmless and helpless  
and bereft of strength.

Zal was amazed by Rostam's triumph over the elephant. This was no ordinary elephant: the animal was hardened in battle and had stomped over many men who had attacked it. Zal's bravest soldiers had run in panic when they saw the animal free. Yet, Rustom had conquered the elephant!

Zal summoned Rustam to him and said, "My dear son, although you are still a child, you have no equal in strength and courage among men and warriors. So before you become a renowned warrior with enemies of your own, you must avenge Nariman, our ancestor, who was a great warrior, and take revenge against his enemies in the White Mountain."

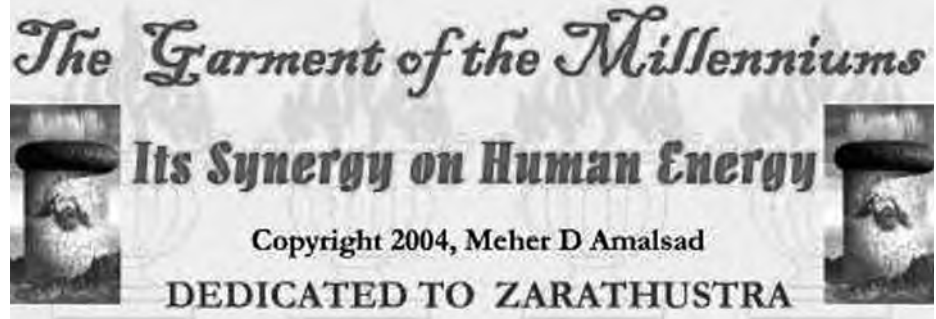
So it came to be that Rostam's life as a warrior of Iran began. ■

*Next time:* Rostam's Adventures in the White Mountain and beyond.

[1] "The Lion and the Throne," by Ehsan Yarshater, Dick Davis and Stuart Cary Welch, Mage Publishers, 1998.

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

## PRAYER CORNER



### PART 2 OF THE 3-PART SERIES

The topic of Sudreh and Kushti has always fascinated me and 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. In this three-part series, I will be sharing this information, along with experiential exercises and rare pictures that have touched the spiritual dimension of my consciousness.

(: With Blessings of LOVE and LIGHT always from Meher Amalsad :)

For more Z-inspiration, visit: [www.Bread4theHead.com](http://www.Bread4theHead.com)

Let us examine the numerological understanding of the following numbers:

**The number 72** is said to represent:

- 72 minutes before sunrise, which is 'Hoshbaum'.
- 72 'ha' of the Yezashne or the chapters of Yasna.
- 72 years for the sun to cross one degree.
- 72 as the normal pulse rate for a healthy human body.
- 72 hours for the soul to resurrect from its corporeal body into the spiritual world, after death.

Amazingly, even today in the investment world the magic number of 72 is used to calculate the doubling effect of investments.

**The number 9** is said to represent:

- 9 minutes is the approximate time, in the Zarathushti faith for sunlight to reach the earth.
- 9 components of an individual [Yezashne Ha 55.1].
- 9 vibrationary wavebands: 7 rainbow colors, ultra-violet and infrared.
- 9 is linked with the perfection of the divine creation.

The number 12 is said to represent:

- 12 words of Ashem Vohu.
  - 12 houses of the Zodiac or months in a year.
  - 12 muscles required for human beings to smile.
  - 12-hour universal am-pm time system.
  - 12 years after Zarathushtra was inspired, for King Vishtasp to become a Zarathushti.
- Amazingly, the number 12 is also universally used for one dozen.

#### THE CHAKHRA SYSTEM

My good friend Ervad K. N. Dastoor from India presents an interesting model by saying that the 16 *chakhras* can be viewed as a cart with 16 wheels pulled by five horses, which represent the five senses. The mind is the rider. If any wheel gets squeaky, it starts affecting the efficiency and effectiveness of the other wheels as well as the health of the horses. Eventually if that squeaky wheel is neglected, it starts weakening the horses and deforming the other wheels. Now imagine the toll that it puts on the horses and the stress on other wheels when one of the wheels starts spinning in the opposite direction.

Many years ago, the impact of violence via television on children was

studied through the chakhra system. If an adult and a child (under the age of 8 years) together watched violence on TV before going to bed, their energy chakhras reverse. When the adult gets up in the morning, his or her chakhras go back to the original rotation. But the child's chakhras do not go back to the original rotation. It is because their chakhras have not matured yet. That is why the effect of violence is much stronger on the psyche of the child than that of an adult.

It is interesting to note that the special design of the sudreh and kushti has a significant connection with the locations of the chakhras within the human body. Sudreh-kushti is designed to draw the divine energy from within, and also to absorb divine energy from the cosmos. The constitution of the sudreh and kushti has something to do with the location of chakhras from where the energy is drawn out. The sudreh and kushti are devised in such a way that they become the material media for the light to enter into the chakhras.

The chakhras are like light lamps on a wire circuit and are capable of emanating from them that kind of energy, which can bestow on us the inherent strength of light. Along its circuit are 16 energy points, where there is concentration of power. It seems like the resultant current depends on which flow is more powerful: clockwise or anti-clockwise, social or anti-social, productive or counter-productive. It's like an electrical circuit. The current flows in one direction and the resistance in the opposite direction. The higher the resistance, the smaller is the value of the current. The key is to create the path of least resistance for liberation and manifestation.

Anodea Judith in "Eastern Body, Western Mind," writes:

"Liberation is the path of transcendence. Manifestation is the path of immanence. Both lead to the same place: the divine."

I believe that in the dimension of consciousness, transfer of ideas into form is the "manifesting current," whereas the transfer of form into ideas is the "liberating current." These two forces that are constantly running through the body are linked with the chakhras.

Thus, it is important to note that sudreh and kushti should not be treated as merely wearing a shirt or putting on a belt because they are not just external symbols of Zarathushti identity.

#### EFFECT OF ENERGY AND ROTATION

Let us start with an *experiential exercise*. Somehow it actually happens.

*Step 1.* While sitting at your desk make clockwise circles with your right foot.

*Step 2.* While doing this, draw the number "6" in the air with your right hand.

Your foot will change direction. How's that for turning your light bulb on!

Now, you will need a partner to try the following *two energy-testing exercises*:



**Clockwise Spiral**

**Anticlockwise Spiral**

Use your right hand to make a circle with the tips of the index finger and thumb. Press these two tips as hard as you can throughout the two exercises (for all steps 1-4).

*Step 1:* Place the tip of the index finger of your left hand on Point A at the tip of the clockwise spiral.

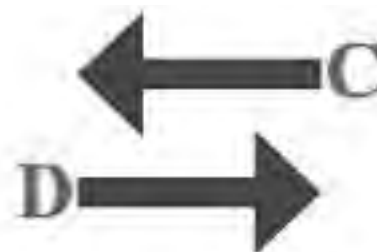
Ask your partner to pull apart the circle made by the index finger and thumb of your right hand.

*Step 2:* Place the tip of the index finger of your left hand on Point B at the tip of the anti-clockwise spiral.

Ask your partner to pull apart the circle made by the index finger and thumb of your right hand.

Did you sense any difference in Step 1 and Step 2?

This is the *effect of Rotation* on the energy system of the human aura and chakhra.



*Step 3:* Place the tip of the index finger of your left hand on Point C at the tail of the leftward arrow.

Ask your partner to pull apart the circle made by the index finger and thumb of your right hand.

*Step 4:* Place the tip of the index finger of your left hand on Point D at the tail of the rightward arrow.

Ask your partner to pull apart the circle made by the index finger and thumb of your right hand.

Did you sense any difference in Step 3 and Step 4?

This is the *effect of Direction* on the energy system of the human aura and chakhra.

Direction and Rotation affect your energy system. I believe that this basic principle was kept in mind when designing the constitution of the sudreh and kushti.

#### CONSTITUTION OF THE SUDREH

The sudreh is made of *white cotton*, which is said to refract the harmful rays of sunlight. Also, cotton being a natural fiber retains the divine vibrations of the *manthras* that form a protective shield around the body. The color white is for purity. It is the emblem of our Zarathushti religion. White color – the universal energy is used for healing all chakhras. It protects the body and the soul by absorbing the different vibrationary wave bands of light colors and only allow-



ing those colors and vibrations to pass that are not harmful for the human body and soul. This allows your body chakras to function more effectively.

The sudreh must be made from **one continuous strip of cloth**, reminding the wearer that everything that exists is interdependent, and is created by the Divine. It also represents the universal sisterhood and brotherhood that exists in nature.

Both, the sudreh and kushti have an interesting relationship with **the number 9**.

The sudreh has 9 seams, which relates to 9 vibrationary wavebands of the human body. The 9 seams of the sudreh have a very spiritual bearing. The number 9 reminds the wearer that he or she is a very integral part and an offspring of the divine universe, which works through the 9 corresponding parts into which an individual is divided.

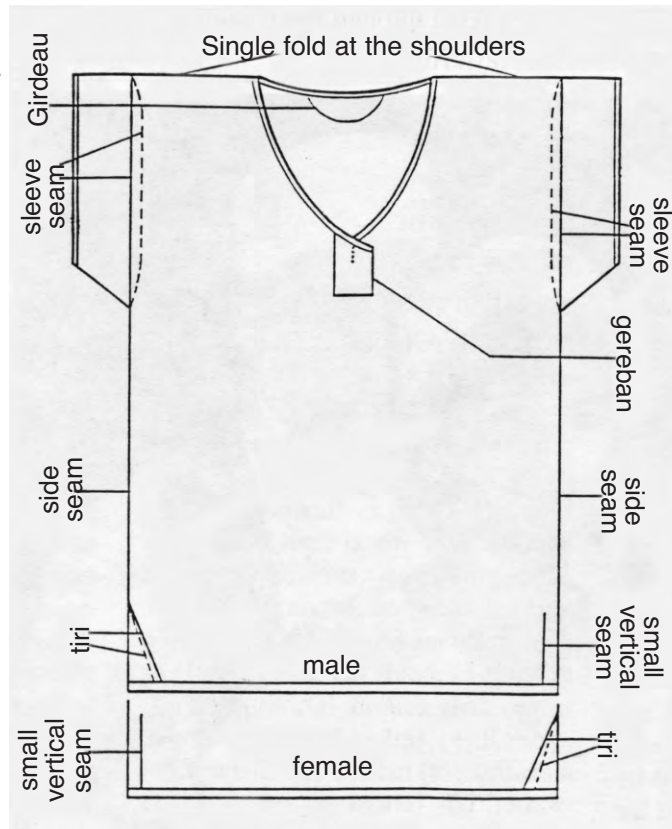
The sudreh starts with the 9th chakra and ends with the 15th chakra. There is an energetic connection between these two chakras.

The **first seam, girdeau**, is at the back of the 9th chakra. It represents the lessons we have learnt from our past, so that we can act responsibly in the present and the future. The 9th chakra is also called the Communication or throat chakra. This chakra is influenced by our sense of hearing, smelling and tasting.

The Girdeau at the nape of the neck reminds the wearer to perform good deeds. It is placed in a position close to the center of spiritual energy located in the throat, and acts as a constant reminder to utter kind words and to speak the truth.

**The two sleeve seams (2nd and 3rd)** are at the right and left sleeve. The one on the right, for the law of polarity (producing effect of opposition)

and the one on the left, for the law of duality (producing effect of cooperation). Together they remind us that we have to follow the Path of Light.



COURTESY "AN 'ALAT' OF THE ZARATHUSHTI RELIGION: SUDREH AND KUSHTI" BY PERVIN MISTRY, FEZANA JOURNAL, WINTER 1997.

The **4th seam is the gereban** – our pocket of good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, also known as 'Kess-e-Kerfeh.' The gereban is the keeper of the conscience. It is said that the soul resides here.

The gereban of the sudreh is situated on the 10th chakra also called the Heart chakra and the chakra of the Daena, Moral Conscience or Divine Love. The 10th chakra is the main link to all 16 chakras. This chakra has 12 small vortices or energy spokes.

The gereban is a tiny pocket, near the heart, the main center of spiritual energy where we store the good deeds of our conscience. The voice of Sraosha resides in the soul/heart.

**The 5th and 6th seams (side seams)** join the front and the back of the sudreh on both sides. This reminds us that the universe comprises of 'hasti'

– the immortal; and 'nisti' – the mortal world.

The **7th seam (small vertical seam)** on the front left for men and front right for women, reminds us of the divine oneness and that one has to attain the exalted state of becoming **WHOLE** by balancing their masculine and feminine energies. It is because the human soul has no gender or sex. The divine spark resides in every one, man and woman alike. Thus, they should both be equally valued. The soul trails down from the immortal (hasti) to the mortal (nisti) world. During this transition, the transformation from spirit to matter takes place. Before the soul reaches the earth, it is bifurcated into two sexes or genders: male and female.

The **8th and the 9th seams (tiri)** form a triangle at the hem, reminding us to practice the three 'G's (Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds) to create a moral Divine order.

The sudreh must be of **length** up to the wearer's knee – the 15th chakra.

## SOURCES

Sources and resources, gratefully acknowledged for the entire 3-Part series are listed in Part 1.

**Part 1** was published in FEZANA Journal, Summer 2004. **Part 3** will be in FEZANA Journal, Winter 2004.

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

# 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

As always, the Spring 2004 issue of FEZANA Journal was very interesting, enjoyable and thought-provoking. I specially felt Roshan Rivetna's editorial ("Sunrise on Camelot, Again") to be very relevant.

In our community here as well, we have people who have lived here for decades without ever interacting, even for a "once-a-year Nouruz function" as she says.

Nazneen Ehler

San Francisco, California

Please continue to send FEZANA Journal to us. We are very glad to get information about our community. We circulate the Journal amongst us – we are about 20 families here in Bahrain – thanks very much for keeping us in touch with our community.

Mahabano Mistry, president

BZA, maha\_mistry@hotmail.com

Congratulations on the excellent issue of FEZANA Journal [Summer 2004] on the Niyayishns and Yashts. There is so much to learn from it, especially about our prayers which we recite daily without understanding their true meaning. I wonder if there is any translation of the Zend Bahman Yasht which has so much controversy about it.

Meheroo Jussawalla

Honolulu, Hawaii

Guest editor Jamsheed K. Choksy responds with two references:

[1] Behramgore T. Anklesaria, edited and translated, *Zand-i Vohuman Yasn and Two Pahlavi Fragments*, Bombay, 1957.

[2] Carlo G. Cereti, edited and translated, *The Zand i Wahman Yasn: A Zoroastrian Apocalypse*, Rome, 1995.

Congratulations on the wonderful FEZANA Journal. It is a gold mine of information on the Parsi diaspora in North America, along with snippets from all over the world. We like to be kept updated on significant events in your part of the world.

Godrej N. Dotivala,

Public Relations Officer

Bombay Parsi Punchayet

Please let me commend you on the excellent FEZANA Journal. We love reading all the articles, and look forward to receiving it every quarter. Keep up the fantastic work and thanks for giving so much of your time to the community.

Farida Major

Davie, Florida

## Queen Esther research anyone?

I am not a Zarathushti, but to say the least, I am in sympathy with your faith, and think myself as being part Zarathushti. My primary interest is the study of Mesopotamian religions.

Enclosed is an article I wrote on Queen Esther. I would like to add some more information from Zarathushti sources, than was available to me, when I wrote this last year.

What I especially hope is that you might be able to put me in touch with someone interested in pursuing Esther research. Although the subject is somewhat specialized, it clearly has major significance since, of course, Esther is in the Judeo-Christian Bible and provides witness to the worth of Zarathushti and ancient Mesopotamian religion.

My personal belief is that if this ever became common knowledge among Jews and Christians, there would be a revolution in consciousness among them.

What is also implied is the need for college level courses in religious studies to feature the Persian and Mesopotamian dimension. While you may find a mention here and there, this aspect is generally ignored, which is obviously unjustifiable.

Billy Rojas

PO Box 282

Eugene, Oregon 97440

[Readers interested in Esther research (or any other matter of interest) are invited to communicate with Mr. Rojas at the above address.]

## Why 'Obsequies'?

We hear the book Understanding and Practice of Obsequies will go to press shortly. I humbly request the authors to simplify the title. Why this pretentious use of the word 'obsequies' when the basic term 'funeral rites' would suffice. Please keep it simple for the community to understand its contents.

Dina Austin, dinzu@hotmail.com

Bramalea, Ontario

[This letter has been forwarded to author of "Obsequies," Er. Jehan Bagli, president of the North American Mobeds Council]

## Parsis and 'parjat'

The resolution passed at the Parsee Voice Public Awareness Meeting in Mumbai [FEZANA Journal, Spring 2004, p. 26] about adoption and the status of inter-married Parsi mothers, is truly very saddening to say the least.

Even after 1300 years of being granted refuge and hospitality, Parsis still dwell on the most objectionable, nefarious and immoral concept of non-Parsis being 'parjat,' literally outcast. They would do well to remember that it was the same 'parjat' that gave them haven, when they were driven out of their original lands.

I am willing to donate \$100 to any Zarathushti charity if any Parsi – scholar, historian, theologian or priest – can show me in any of Zarathush-



tra's teaching that his religion was for Parsis only.

*Kersi Rustumji  
Lavington, NSW, Australia  
rustumji@austarnet.com.au*

### **Tribute to President Reagan**

I would like to submit this special dedication, "Building a 5-star Zarathushti" in memory of President Reagan, a shining star, as a token of appreciation of this great man.

... It is important to note that:

"We must first *be*  
what we want to *see*,  
to continue to *see*  
what we want to *be*."

President Ronald Reagan on board Air Force One was once briefed: "Mr. President, we were told that the head of the country we are visiting next, is planning to put you down to bring

himself up. But don't worry, since you are going to speak first, we will prepare a speech for you that would be so strong and bashful that they won't have a chance."

To which Reagan graciously responded: "Oh No! We are going to do the exact opposite. We will prepare a speech in which we will say so many nice things about them that they will be embarrassed to say any bad things about us."

This trait truly depicts the characteristic of a 5-star Zarathushti.

Using good thoughts, good words and good deeds to spread so much consciousness that there is no room for viciousness.

President Reagan also wisely said:

"A great leader is not the one who does great things; but the one who inspires others to do great things."

I like to rephrase this wisdom by stating that:

"A 5-star Zarathushti is not only the one who does great things; but also the one who inspires others to do great things."

President Reagan was also one of those exceptional human beings who after being shot, prayed first for the person who shot him, before he prayed for himself.

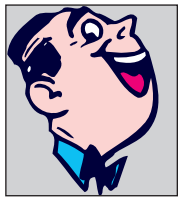
It was because he believed and lived the following philosophy:

"Never make an adversary into an enemy."

Something that I find to be an exemplary icon of a 5-star Zarathushti.

*Meher Dadabhoy Amalsad  
Author of Bread for the Head  
www.bread4thehead.com*

*[The full text of Meher Amalsad's paper may be requested from him].*



## **Laugh and be Merry**

**By Jamshed Udvadia**



The aspiring candidate was canvassing for the Native American vote on a reservation. He promised to improve the schools on the reservation. The audience shouted: "Hoya, hoyo." The candidate thought that must be the native word for 'Hear, hear.' Encouraged by the audience reaction he promised to establish a Chair at the university for Native American studies. This time there was a raising of fists as the crowd shouted "Hoya! Hoya!"

Now he knew he was on a roll. He promised to have funds set aside to make vast improvements to their living conditions, which would eventually make this a model city in the US. This time the crowd rose and stamped their feet with frenzied shouts of "Hoya! Hoya!" The candidate, pleased with his ability to touch the crowd, smirked as he dreamed how high he could rise in the political arena.

Later, on a tour of the reservation the candidate praised their stock of horses and asked if he could take a closer look at those fine animals. "Sure," said the Chief, "but you have such nice shoes, so be careful not to step in the Hoya."

A little boy wanted \$100 for a bicycle and prayed for weeks, but nothing happened. Finally he decided to write God a letter requesting the money. When the postal authorities received the letter addressed to God, they decided to forward it to the president of the United States as a joke. The president was so amused, that he instructed his secretary to send the little boy a \$20 bill. The president thought this would appear to be a lot of money to a little boy.

The little boy was delighted with the \$20 bill, and decided to write a thank you note to God, which read:

"Dear God: Thank you very much for sending the money. However, I noticed that you sent it through the White House in Washington, DC ... and those rascals deducted \$80.00 in taxes.

*[Submitted by Freny J. Deboo, Sterling Heights, MI]*

*Little girl:* Do all fairy tales begin with 'Once upon a time...'?

*Daddy:* No. There is a whole series of fairy tales that begin with 'If elected, I promise ...'

# Relationships in Our Scriptures

By Kersey H. Antia

Relationships in our scriptures is a vast topic, but I'll give only a succinct account here, since I am often asked about it.

Our religion is based on making the right choice and facing the consequences of bad choices. So, personal responsibility is of paramount importance. We cannot be saved by anything or anyone other than our own actions in the service of Ahura Mazda, to help Him destroy evil from this world.

**Marriage** is sacred, as good progeny helps carry out the work of Mazda. Therefore a married woman is preferred by Mazda over an unmarried woman or a virgin, and the same is true for man. Marriage is enjoined on the priests as well, and only a married priest can marry others.

Not marrying and so not reproducing is also frowned upon as a sin. Upto my grandfather's time, childless persons had to adopt someone as their son before they died. For this reason, the religion of Zarathushtra allowed only Nestorian Christianity after it allowed its priests to marry at the request of Zarathushti (Sasanian) kings.

Up until the 19th century, it was common for a Parsi man to have a second wife, after getting the punchayet's permission, if he had no children by his first wife. But he had to provide for both.

**Sex** is to be employed to further the cause of *frashokereti* planned by God and any sex for selfish or other reasons is not approved. Thus pre-marital sex, cohabitation outside marriage and adultery, are not allowed. *Patet Pashemani* [Karda 10] even looks down upon anyone looking with lust or bad intention on another. It also disapproves illicit intercourse, fornication, prostitution, sodomy among many other things – including not wearing a kushti, speaking during

meal times, eating meals without prayer and excessive grieving over the dead.

**Repentance** is required, which actually led to the institution of the Patet prayer, but unlike in Christianity, repentance by itself does not set one free. One has to counterbalance all the bad things done by one, by doing good acts that will outweigh the bad. Only then can one pass the 'Chinvat Bridge.'

**Salvation.** The religion of Zarathushtra is a religion of optimism, of hope – as long as we have life in us, we can achieve our salvation through our good deeds. The Zarathushti motto is "*Dum spiro, dum spero*" (As long as I breathe, I hope). No wonder the ever-optimistic Sir Homi Modi chose it to name his splendid residence in Bombay.

**Divorce** has always been allowed in the religion of Zarathushtra – both for men and women. Divorcees can remarry and carry on again the work of God by giving birth to children and bring them up as good Zarathushtis. Man has to provide for the welfare of his wife and children after divorce, whenever necessary.

**Abortion.** Since children were so much prized for establishing the kingdom of God (*Vohu Kshathra*) on earth, abortion was looked down upon. Even when an infant was born of illicit relations, it was enjoined upon the father to provide for the child, failing which the community was required to support the baby and accept him/her into the Zarathushti fold.

**Homosexuality.** Since it does not lead to procreation, which is so fundamental for furthering *frashokereti*, it is severely frowned upon and is considered a major sin in the *Patet*. However, since we are told that we could qualify for heaven if our good thoughts, words and deeds outweigh

our bad ones, and since we are not told that this universal rule does not apply to homosexuals or any other sinners, they seem to have the same opportunity to attain heaven as anyone else by working for God.

**Suicide.** It is seen as acting against the will and plan of God for us, and the soul, therefore, remains in severe agony after death.

Relationship is a vast topic as noted at the outset. Ahura Mazda created the physical world in the image of the spiritual world and His spirit permeates all good things on the earth, even in plants, animals and the environment.

*Buzorgan Afrin* begins as well as ends with advice to "Be as efficient as Ahura Mazda in caring for His creation." *Arda Viraf Nameh* describes the punishment meted out to those who were not diligent in caring for His creatures. *Yasna 34.1* advises us to emulate God in everything we do, say and yearn for. ■

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## Errata

FEZANA Journal regrets these errors in the Summer 2004 issue:

Mr. **Firdosh Mehta**, Manager, Advanced Medical Practice Management, New Jersey was on the panel of speakers at the WZCC (New York) seminar on February 29. He presented "Survive/Prevent Downsizing, Reinvent Yourself." Rusi Gandhi, WZCC (New York) chapter chair regrets the omission.

The birthdate was incorrect in the *obituary for Shirin Tata* [page 102] Mrs. Tata was born on March 4, 1914, and celebrated her nintieth birthday on March 5, 2004.

The names of Morvarid Behziz' parents, Mahbanou and Hormazdiar Behziz were inadvertently omitted in the *engagement announcement* [on page 101] of Morvarid Behziz to Sassan Nadjmi, in October 2003.

Mr. **Marzban Giara's email** was printed incorrectly. The correct email address is [giara@vsnl.com](mailto:giara@vsnl.com). ■





Recalling the Great Bombay Explosion of 1944. The stories of the heroic roles played by several Zarathushtis in this catastrophe has perhaps never been fully told.

*Bombay, April 14, 1944. The docks on fire (from Sandhurst Road railway station upper level). PHOTO COURTESY: "THE GREAT BOMBAY EXPLOSION," BY JOHN ENNIS, DUELL, SLOAN AND PEARCE, NEW YORK, 1959.*

by  
**Ardeshir B. Damania**

## The day Bombay rocked

The third anniversary of the tragic events of September 11, 2001 is fast approaching. While thinking about it and still traumatized by the scenes seen on live television, my thoughts turned to a similar but accidentally started disaster that overtook the city of my birth, Bombay, 60 years ago. A great deal has subsequently been written about that fateful day in April 1944, but the story of several Parsi Zarathushtis who played heroic roles has perhaps never been fully told.

**Dangerous cargo.** Friday April 14, 1944 was like any other hot summer day in Bombay. The temperature was 98° F. World War II was at its height with battles raging in Europe and the Pacific. The Allied cargo ship *Fort Stikine* (7,142 tons), under the command of Capt. Alexander J. Naismith, had arrived from Berkinhead, England, via Karachi, on April 12 and was moored at No. 1 Victoria Docks and about to unload her cargo.

Known to only but a few due to war time need for secrecy, the ship was carrying a lethal combination of cargo of dried fish manure, rice, sulfur, lubricating oil, cotton bales (loaded from Karachi), and steel, 1400 tons of ammunition including canon shells, gun powder, land mines, magnesium flares, and incendiary bombs.

The ship also had 31 small wooden crates, with each crate holding 4 gold bars. Each gold bar (15x3x1.5 inches) weighed exactly 28 lbs and was worth US\$145,600 at today's prices!

The first Parsi to come into the picture was one **Shapoorjee Cawasjee Desai**. Desai who was a working foreman at Victoria Docks was informed by the stevedores, Messrs. Killick, Nixon & Co., that the *Fort Stikine* needed five gangs and five dock cranes at No. 1 berth in Victoria Docks. The Company had told him nothing about the cargo of explosives or the gold on board.

As the ship approached its moorings Desai had marked the spots for the dock-side cranes to be placed, and a fitter moved them into position. It was only when Desai went on board the ship did he learn of the dangerous cocktail of the cargo the ship was carrying. Nevertheless, he was a professional and it made little difference to him, but he did tell his men to be extra careful.

At that point Capt. Naismith and his chief officer approached Desai with a request to unload the stinking fish manure first rather than devote attention to the more dangerous cargo of live ordinance. Desai, like a *pukka* Parsi wrinkled his nose and spoke to his boss, **Keki Jal Godiwalla**, supervisor at Killick Nixon and they decided to employ an extra gang of un-loaders that worked through the night of the 13th and got rid of the dried fish. But the explosives, cotton and the gold, among other cargo still

# Epitome of Courage

In 1936 **Rustom P. D. Palamkote** became the first Parsi Fire Officer; sixty years ago on April 14, 1944, this gallant young man went well beyond the call of duty and sacrificed his life in the horrendous dock explosions which engulfed South Bombay.

An epitome of courage, Palamkote was the recipient of numerous awards in the short span of life the Almighty had ordained for him – the Honour of Jerusalem Medal bestowed by the St. John Ambulance Brigade Parsi Division and two Medallions of Bravery given posthumously.



PHOTO: THE BPP REVIEW

He was a member of the First Sea Scout under Captain Petigara. At the age of 14, as a boy scout, he performed the feat of walking from Bombay to Broach, a distance of 205 miles in 10 days. A fine athlete and swimmer he had won several cups and medals.

Men like him never die. They live in our hearts for ever.

[From *The BPP Review*, Spring 2004]

## A little boy's 'explosion' experience

On the afternoon of April 14, 1944, Rohinton Rivetna, then 9 years old had come home from school and left again to run an errand for his grandmother. With a 'theli' (cloth bag) of rice in his hands, he was on his way to the 'chukki' (flour mill) at the 'naka' (corner) to get the rice ground into flour for the evening's 'rotlis' (bread).

As he stepped out, the quiet, tree-lined Dadar Parsi colony street was shaken with the sounds of an explosion. (As the crow flies, the Victoria Docks, where the explosions occurred were about 5 or 6 miles away). Startled, he dropped the bag, spilling the rice all over the street. Fearful of his grandma's wrath, he quickly scooped up the rice into the bag and went on with his task.

From the mill, the gathering crowds could now see the black, billowing smoke and rumors were rampant. Rohinton heard the full story later that night, when his uncle, who worked in the dock area, came home (walking, since the trams and buses were not working), and his face ashen, related how he had seen dead and dying people and body parts flying past him.

At dinner that night, grandma did grumble about the amount of 'kankri' (grit and stones) in the *rotli*, threatening to talk to the 'chukki-walla' about it. But with larger issues at hand, the matter was, thankfully, forgotten. ■

- by Roshan Rivetna

remained on board. The gold, for safety and easy recovery in case the ship was torpedoed, had been welded shut in an inch thick steel tank.

**Explosion.** At around 12 noon, it was stifling hot when a seaman from a nearby ship 100 yards away noticed smoke coming out from one of the ventilators of the No. 2 hold of the *Fort Stikine*. By quarter to four, despite all the efforts of the Bombay Port Trust fire brigade and the pouring of almost 900 tons of water into the holds of the ship the fire had not been contained.

Then at ten minutes to four, a great tongue of flame shot up from the hold reaching the height of the ship's mast and in less than 15 minutes there was a terrific explosion; it was 4:05 pm. The *Fort Stikine* almost broke into half, but surprisingly her rear portion was still afloat. It was only then that the principals in the docks realized that this was no ordinary fire. The entire Bombay fire brigade was alerted and engines rushed to the scene from its headquarters at Byculla.

“ Today, only the memorial to the 300 odd fire fighters killed on duty remains near the clock tower in Victoria Docks. ”

After this first explosion in which a major part of the dock's and Bombay Fire Salvage Corps fire fighters and the ship's officers were killed, the city's fire brigade led by fire officer in charge of Motor Pump No. 13, **Rustomji Palamkote**, answered the call to duty within minutes.

Someone noticed the change in the color of the smoke from black and gray to a greenish brown: that meant only one thing; the gunpowder had been ignited! Despite this danger or oblivious to it, Palamkote himself courageously entered the No. 4 hold of the burning ship to inspect the cause of the first explosion when



there was a second, more devastating blast. It came at 4:36 pm, merely 31 minutes after the first. Out of 156 officers and firemen who had joined the fire fight, 66 were killed instantly (including Palamkote), 80 were severely injured and only 10 escaped, badly shaken but unhurt. Over 1500 dock workers and others in the vicinity of the docks also lost their lives.

**Lovejoy (Lovji) Secil Dadee Mehervanjee** is perhaps the only surviving fire officer who actually participated in the Bombay dock explosion. He was standing by the ship manning one of the trailer water pumps when the ground rumbled under him and he was flung several hundred feet but managed to survive. He, then only 19 years old, was rushed to the St. George's Hospital for medical treatment.

**Gold bars.** For a little while after the first explosion, **Burjorji Cooverji Motivala**, a retired civil engineer of the Bombay Dyeing Co., was watching the smoke from the fire from the balcony of his third floor flat in Kukana House, Girgaum Road (near Albless Baug), more than a mile from the docks as the crow flies. A few seconds after the second explosion, the 70-year old Motivala noticed a missile strike the roof of his building, pierce the floor of the flat above him and landed at his feet.

He picked up the hot blackened metal piece and could see markings of the Bank of England and the No. Z13256 stamped on it. It was one of the 28 lb. gold bars from the sealed iron tank that held the bullion shipment! He promptly handed over the bar to the police without another thought. He donated his entire reward of Rs. 999, in true Zarathushti spirit, to the relief fund set up for the victims of the explosion.

**Water pressure.** In the second explosion a huge piece of jagged metal 22 feet long landed on Frere Road and pierced the pavement. Below was the 24-inch water main that supplied all of the dock area with water. **E. A. Nadirshaw**, the Bombay Municipal Corporation's chief



Above, Fire Officer Rustom Palamkote and his fire brigade.

PHOTO COURTESY PARSIANA, JUNE 2002.

Left, helmet of a fallen Bombay Fire Brigade hero. PHOTO COURTESY BOMBAY PORT TRUST.

hydraulic engineer, had already taken charge of the task of keeping the water pressure up for the fire fighters. This Parsi engineer worked tirelessly all night, single-handedly opening and shutting valves to divert water to the areas where it was most needed. He, like many others, was one of the un-sung heroes of the tragedy.

My father, **Behramji M. Damania**, drove at break-neck speed from Dharavi, about 10 miles from the docks to meet with my cousin **Rustomji (Rusi) J. Medhora** who was working at Chinch Bunder, merely 800 yards and in direct westward line from the *Fort Stikine*. Father talked about the fateful day in great detail, but Rusi understandably was very badly shaken by the two explosions and rarely spoke about it.

**Coast Guard journal.** Lt Edward F. Oliver of the U.S. Coast Guard, wrote in his journal:

"Few have ever heard of the greatest dynamite gunpowder explosion of WWII – a blow to the Allied war machine beyond the wildest dreams

of a potential saboteur. The explosion nearly wiped out the Gateway of India, and damaged or destroyed nearly 1,00,000 tons of Allied shipping. The cost of the disaster has been put at more than a billion dollars. In terms of human lives, the figure is more difficult to arrive at."

Today, only the memorial to the 300 odd fire fighters killed on duty remains near the clock tower in Victoria Docks. A mute testimony to the bravery, courage and devotion to duty not unlike what we saw on September 11, 2001 in New York. ■

Ardeshir B. Damania works for the state-wide Genetic Resources Conservation Program which is part of the Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources at University of California,



Davis. If readers want to know more about this incident they may contact Dr. Damania at email:



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By popular demand, **Travelsource Network** is arranging the **Second Annual Zoroastrian Cruise**. This grand voyage promises to be more exciting and enjoyable than ever. We sail the mighty **Amazon**, aboard the luxury liner "**Marco Polo**" of Orient Lines.

**Destination: Amazon – 13 days commencing March 12, 2005.**

Manaus (Brazil), Boca da Valeria (Brazil), Santarem (Brazil), Cruise the Amazon River, Devil's Island (French Guiana), Scarborough (Tobago), St. George's (Grenada), Castries (St. Lucia), Bridgetown (Barbados).

Visit three ports on the world's greatest river, then sail from Brazil to Barbados via the above mentioned ports. This promises to be a once in a lifetime cruise with our kith, kin and friends, with wine and song etc, etc.

Special prices have been negotiated for a limited number of cabins starting from \$3165 Canadian (US 2360 approx). **Please book early.**



## ZARATHUSHTI ENTERPRISE PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

### WZCC Business Digest

Since its fledgling start at the Houston World Congress in December 2000, our organization has grown by leaps and bounds. We need to continually review and fine-tune our operations to ensure that WZCC is built on a strong foundation, in perpetuity. WZCC directors, **Bomi Boyce** and **Hoshang Karani** are reviewing the WZCC charter to ensure we have a solid base.

The latest addition to the WZCC family, was the **chapter in Australia**. Read chapter chair Filli Madon's report of the inaugural [page 116]. Talks are underway to form a chapter in **Pakistan**. We are looking for a committed person to spearhead that chapter.

Through the committed efforts of **Yazdi Tantra** (WZCC -India) and

**Homi Davier** (VP and website manager) the **WZCC website** has been revamped with all world chapters now under one roof, and addition of several new and exciting features [see box below]. **Zareen Araoz**



continues to very ably administer the **zchamber e-group**. To join, send an email to [zchamber-subscribe@yahoo-groups.com](mailto:zchamber-subscribe@yahoo-groups.com). All are invited to avail of these networking opportunities.

WZCC is accepting nominations for the **2004 WZCC Recognitions** [see right]. Members are urged to seek out and submit nominations of worthy entrepreneurs and professionals.

All business persons and professionals are urged to register for the **Business Conference** and **Business**

**Luncheon**, at the NA Congress in December [see right]. WZCC (San Francisco) member **Jamshed Gandhi** has lined up an interesting program of speakers, business showcase and workshops. The **2004 AGM** and **Board meeting** will also be held there [see box below].

WZCC plans to take a **business delegation to Iran** in April 2005. All interested persons are invited to join.

Contact WZCC corporate secretary Edul Daver at (732) 469-1866, [daver@acupowder.com](mailto:daver@acupowder.com) or visit [www.wzcc.net](http://www.wzcc.net) ■

**Rohinton Rivetna**, President, WZCC  
[Rivetna@aol.com](mailto:Rivetna@aol.com), (630) 325-5383.

#### CALL FOR NOMINATIONS 2004 WZCC Recognitions

Nominations are invited for:

- A. Outstanding Zarathushti Entrepreneur.
- B. Outstanding Zarathushti Professional.
- C. Outstanding young (35 or younger) Zarathushti Entrepreneur/Professional.

Nomination forms are available from [www.wzcc.net](http://www.wzcc.net). Nomination deadline is **December 31, 2004**.

Contact: Homee Shroff at [homabs2004@yahoo.com](mailto:homabs2004@yahoo.com)

#### DO VISIT THE REVAMPED WZCC WEBSITE

The newly revamped WZCC website offers exciting new features and ease of networking.

We are glad to announce the newly revamped WZCC website – incorporating **all** the world chapters under one roof. All activities, contact details, committee details and member details of WZCC chapters across the world, are now available on-line at the WZCC website:

**[www.wzcc.net](http://www.wzcc.net)**

A brand new **Classifieds Section** has been added. Members are encouraged to post brief classified advertisements, for their requirements or offerings of products, services, man-power needs etc. This section is totally free; members are encouraged to avail of this offer, in large numbers. Members can contact other members through the **Yellow Pages** section which has now been totally revamped and gives focused search options. Members are also invited to send in items of business interest to Zarathushtis all over the world. All chapter chairs are requested to send in their material for forthcoming and past events, to keep their respective chapters details current on-line.

All this and much more, is now happening at <http://www.wzcc.net>. All business persons as well as professionals are invited to visit the site.

With queries, suggestions and recommendations, please contact **Yazdi Tantra** at [yazdi@on-lyne.com](mailto:yazdi@on-lyne.com) or **Homi Davier** at [davier@CapricornTravel.com](mailto:davier@CapricornTravel.com).

#### The XIII North American Zoroastrian Congress and WZCC announce:

##### One-day Business Conference on "Energizing the Zarathushti Entrepreneurial Spirit":

December 28, 2004, 9 am - 5 pm,  
at the Doubletree Hotel, San Jose.  
\$70 (lunch included)\*\*\*.

##### Business Luncheon:

December 31, 2004, 12 - 2 pm, at  
the Doubletree Hotel, San Jose.  
\$40\*\*\*.

[\*\*\* or \$100 for both events]

##### AGM & Board Meeting:

December 27 (5-9 pm) & 28, 2004

**Visit:** [www.zanc.org/congress](http://www.zanc.org/congress) or  
[www.wzcc.net](http://www.wzcc.net).

## Inaugural of WZCC chapter 'down under'

About 50 people came to the inauguration of the new WZCC chapter in Australia, on May 16, 2004, at AZA (Australian Zoroastrian Association) House, in Sydney. After opening remarks by Tim Desai, reading of a message from WZCC president Rohinton Rivetna by Adil Sarkari, and a welcome by chapter chair Filli Madon, keynote speaker Pervez Kolsawalla addressed the gathering.

About fifteen people signed up as members, including an excited 15-year-old. There were several young folks who showed interest. Farrokh Batliwala, a CPA has offered to help with the accounts.

We plan to send information about WZCC to the Zarathushtis in Melbourne as well.

By Filli Madon, Sydney  
(pars09@yahoo.com)

## WZCC (UK) meetings

UNILEVER director Mr. Keki Dadiseth, was keynote speaker at the WZCC-UK special event on March 9, 2004 in Central London. The chapter plans to invite prominent speakers who could share their knowledge and experience and encourage, inspire and celebrate their success. It was also proposed to create affiliate membership with TIE, the Asian Business Association, and other such business-oriented groups.

Over 100 professionals attended the Tata Centenary Event, organized by WZCC-UK at Café Spice Namaste, on July 5th. Speakers included Mr. Phiroze Vandrevalla, Exec. VP, Tata Consultancy Services and BPP chairman Mr. Minoo Shroff.

WZCC-UK chair Karan Bilimoria (of Cobra Beer fame) recounted his own experiences and Cyrus Todiwala gave a rousing speech about his business career as a restaurateur in London.

For information on WZCC-UK, contact Jhaneen Cambatta at jcam-batta@cobrabeer.com.

## WZCC (NY) seminar

WZCC (New York) sponsored a well-attended seminar on "Health and Wellness" on May 23rd. Distinguished speakers included Prof. Khursheed Navder (Nutrition and Weight Management), Dr. Satish Modi (Lasik surgery and Crystalens implants) and Vispi Kanga (Skin Care and Cosmetic Surgery).

[Contact Rusi Gandhi (rusi@garden.net) Noshir Dutia (noshd@hotmail.com) or Arnaz Maneckshana (amanecksha@aol.com)]

## Student Jobs

The US Office of Personnel Management website offers information on opportunities offered by the US federal government. Visit <http://www.studentjobs.gov/e-scholar.asp>

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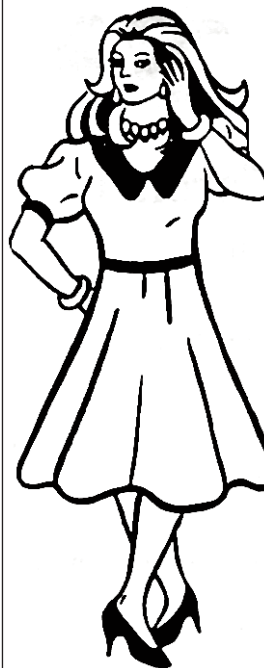
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## OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

If you know of any opportunities available, please post them in:

- This column, or
- The WZCC e-group
- [zchamber@yahoogroups.com](mailto:zchamber@yahoogroups.com),  
The wzcc website  
[www.wzcc.net](http://www.wzcc.net)

### Opportunities for nurses.

National Institutes of Health, invites applications from nurses and others in allied areas. For information visit <http://careerhere.nih.gov>.

**Positions in Central Asia.** Overseas assignments in support of Eastern European, Balkan and Central Asian democratization projects for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. US citizens only. Apply at [www.pae-react.com](http://www.pae-react.com), or call Leslie Smith at 703-248-1674.

## OPPORTUNITIES WANTED

Please assist these Zarathushtis in their job search.

● Fariborz has completed his **doctorate in Computer Science** at Georgia Tech. He also has a M.S. degree in **Civil Engineering**. Looking for assistance in finding a suitable position. Contact [ff@cc.gatech.edu](mailto:ff@cc.gatech.edu), tel: 404-459-8734.

● Farah has an associate degree in **hospitality management**, presently working as an intern at a hotel in West Palm Beach, Florida. Seeking an employer in hotel/motel/restaurant business, to sponsor her for an H-1 visa. Email: [farah.ardeshir@ritz.edu](mailto:farah.ardeshir@ritz.edu) or [fardeshir@hotmail.com](mailto:fardeshir@hotmail.com).



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Visit [www.roshansinspirations.com](http://www.roshansinspirations.com), email: [yezdi@bom3.vsnl.net.in](mailto:yezdi@bom3.vsnl.net.in). Some hand-embroidered blouses and antique original Chinese gasas have just arrived in Vancouver. Contact Mr. Daver at (604) 301-2096, email: [hidaver@shaw.ca](mailto:hidaver@shaw.ca).



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SEPTEMBER 2003

"Niki's Indian Food" restaurant in California

**Sohrab Irani** and his son-in-law have recently jointly acquired **Niki's Indian Food**, an Indian fast food establishment that has been in existence for 17 plus years. This restaurant has been Voted #1 "**the Best Indian Food in Orange County**" for 8 years. It caters the zero oil tandoori chicken and leavened *naan* slowly grilled in clay ovens, along with a host of North Indian mouth-watering vegetable delicacies. The owners take pride in serving "food for the soul that excites the palate and ignites the mind ..." without hurting your pockets. They also accept catering orders for Indian, Chinese and Parsi dishes.

**Niki's Indian Food** is at 2031 E. 1st Street, Suite A2, Santa Ana, CA 92705, tel: (714) 542-2969, email: [nikisfood@yahoo.com](mailto:nikisfood@yahoo.com).





*Karan Bilimoria, CBE*

Yet more honors  
for Cobra Beer

CEO Karan Bilimoria

WZCC (UK) chairperson, Karan Bilimoria was among two dozen NRIs chosen for the Queen of England's birthday honors on June 12th.

Bilimoria, 41, founder and CEO of Cobra Beer Ltd, one of Britain's fastest-growing companies, was made a **CBE (Commander of the British Empire)**. The CBE, which is just one step below knighthood (KBE), was awarded "for his services to business," reads the citation.

Following this honor, in August, Karan Bilimoria, CBE, was among two entrepreneurs (the other being Dr. Herman Hauser) appointed by Cambridge University as the first honorary **Visiting Entrepreneurs** in the 800-year history of the university. They will "teach entrepreneurship through sharing their experiences and inspiring future entrepreneurs" at Cambridge.

Among other prestigious honors garnered by Karan Bilimoria are the **Pride of India Gold medal** at NRI Day, January 2003 in New Delhi; "**Asian of the Year 2002**"; **Ernst & Young** enterprise award; and the acclaimed Brussels **Monde** Selection Award for product excellence. ■

[See profile in *FJ*, Spring 2003]

## Financial Progress Report: Thousand Points of Light Campaign II



Dr. Jerry M. Kheradi *chair of FEZANA Funds and Finance*

community needs first, we could achieve so much more. The large charities mentioned above all receive large donations and endowments from millions of people from across the country. Our small Zarathushti community does not have access to these funds. We need to make our community our top priority and support the **Thousand Points of Light Campaign II** by donating to the various FEZANA Funds.

**Tax breaks.** With the help of Ahura Mazda, our community has been blessed with many professionals and well-to-do families. Anyone who has high net worth should consider making charitable contributions to FEZANA. Federal law encourages philanthropy by providing individuals with a number of tax breaks for their charitable gifts (income tax deduction, capital gains tax avoidance and estate tax reduction) depending on the type of asset and giving method. Not only do these gifts support a great cause, but also heavy estate taxes may be greatly reduced or eliminated because the money passes tax-free to the charity.

**Consider making a donation.** Though we never see the faces or know the names of the people our gift has touched, we can be assured of the enduring impact it has on the lives of others in our community. If we want our community to prosper and grow then we need to support and help in any way we can. Your donations no matter what size go a long way in helping the community; we have a long way to go and many goals to reach. Kindly consider making a donation to any of the FEZANA Funds: General, Welfare/Critical Assistance, Religious Education, Scholarship and Journal fund. **Make your check payable to FEZANA, indicate the fund/funds of your choice and mail to: Rashid Mehin, Treasurer, 583 Beverly Place, San Marcos, CA 92069.**

Thank you for 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,  
**Kia Kaviani**, DMD, **Celeste Kheradi**.

# FINANCIAL CORNER

Thousand Points of Light	2001-3	2004	Total		2001-3	2004	Total
Anonymous, FL	5		5	Farrokh N Dastur, CA	1		1
<b>Anonymous, IL</b>		<b>J</b>	<b>5</b>	Meher N. Dastur, CA	2		2
Anonymous, NY	G 1		1	Khurshed Jehangir Dastur, PA		(g)	1
Anonymous	R 1		1	Nari & Dino Dastur, CT	1		1
A Wellwisher, MI	1		1	<b>Er. Soli &amp; JoAnn Dastur, FL</b>	<b>J 3</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>3</b>
Dr Babak Abadi, PA	W 2		2	Adi & Parvin Davar, VA		S,W	2
Noshir & Kashmira Antia		C	1	Edul & Niloufer Daver, NJ	G 2	G	1
Shiraz Antia, CT		C	2	Homi & Nargish Davier, TX	1		1
Parviz & Simin Ardeshirpour, NC	S 2		2	Farrokh M. Deboo, CT		R	2
Jim Arjani, CA		C	1	Jimmy & Freny Deboo family, MI	1		1
Dr. Cyrus F Austin, AZ	G,W 19		19	<b>Afsaneh Dehghanian</b>		<b>W</b>	<b>1</b>
Porus Austin and Khar, CA	W 4		4	<b>Jimmy F. Dholoo, MD</b>		<b>(f)</b>	<b>5</b>
Gulnar Balsara, PA		C	1	Ross Dinyari	G 1		1
Zubin & Silvia Balsara, AR	G 1		1	Yezdi N Dordi, CA	5		5
Edul & Tehnaz Bamji, NJ	W 1		1	Jimmy and Mary Dubash, VA	G,W 4		4
<b>Beaudette family, RI</b>		<b>(l)</b>	<b>5</b>	J. H. Dudha, TX		C	1
Dolly & Pesi Bavadam	C,W 2		2	Manek R. Dustoor, MI	2		2
Thritee, Soozan & Trista Baxter, NY	(e) 1		1	A.D. & G.A. Dutia, AL	G 4		4
<b>Beach Cigar Group, FL</b>	C,W 29	<b>C,W</b>	<b>29</b>	Tony & Swati Elavia, MA	1		1
Zazu & Tinaaz Bhandara, CA	G 2		2	Freddy Engineer, CA	1		1
Firdaus & Jasmin Bhathena, MA	1		1	Rumi Engineer, CO	C,S,W 3		3
Rustom & Sheroo Bhathena, OH	1		1	Adil Feroz, GA	1		1
Meena S. Birdie, FL	G 1		1	Sami R. Framjee	W 10		10
Mezdie R. Birdie, FL	G 1		1	Rusi D Gandhi, NJ	1		1
Jal Birdy, CA	C 1		1	Golmeher B. Gandhi	(j) 2		2
Kobad & Nancy Bugwadia, CA		C	1	Cecilia & Sorab Gandhi, CA	5		5
Homi & Ellen Byramji, NJ	1		1	Hanoz & Shahzdeen Rabadi Gandhi		C,W	8
Kershaw & Bakhtawar Byramji		C	3	Navroz Gandhi, MD		C,W	10
Dr. Lovji D. Cama, NJ	7		7	Eugene Gauger, MI	1		1
Kamal E. Campbell, GA	C,W 1		1	Jamshed & Yasmin Ghadiali, NJ	2		2
Dr. & Mrs. Nadir Camay, CA	G 2		2	Rashna Ghadiali, IL	1		1
Sohrab D. Charna	C 1		1	Mr. & Mrs. Sorab K. Ghadiali	3		3
Homiyar Choksi, VA	1		1	Soonu & Jal Godiwalla, TX	1		1
Coating Engineers, TX		S(n)	2	Behli H. Hansotia, VA		C	1
Cyra & Lyla Contractor, PA	1		1	Noshir L Hansotia, MO	1		1
Dr Farhad & Hutoxi Contractor, PA	(g)(h)C 6		6	Piloo E. Ilavia, TX	C 1		1
Dr. & Mrs. Farokh Contractor, LA	C,R,W 5	C,G,R,W 4	9	<b>International Access, WA</b>		<b>G</b>	<b>77</b>
Katy & Farrokh Cooper, CA	2	W	1	<b>Behram K &amp; Farieda Irani, TX</b>	C,R,W 15	<b>C,R,W</b>	<b>5</b>
Phil F. Cooper, CA	G,W 2		2	Hormuz & Shahdookht Irani, GA	G 14		14
Tommy and Nairika Cornett, GA	1		1	Mervan and Katayoun Irani, MD	1		1
Tammy & Behram Dalal, NC	G 2	G	1	Shapur K. Irani, IN		C	1
Keki Dalal	C 1		1	Minoo S. Italia	G 1		1
Phiroze H. Dalal, CA	C 5		5	Rohinton Boman Irani, NY	G 1		1
Dr Ardeshir & Parvin Damania, CA	2		2	Rustam H. Irani, MA	1		1
Diana Damkevala, CA	1		1	Rustom and Sarvar Irani, FL	G 1		1
Maneck Daroovala, NY	G 2		2	Irani Family Foundation	C,G,R,S,W 10		10
Adil Daruwala, CA	G 2		2	Minoo & Ruby Italia, TX		G	1
<b>Khushroo Daruwala</b>		<b>G</b>	<b>1</b>	Jim & Homai Jagus, PA	5		5
Dolly Dastoor, QE	S 1		1	Daryoush & Mahin Jahanian, KS		G	3
<b>Maneck Dastoor</b>		<b>G</b>	<b>1</b>	Iraj Jahanian, MO	G 4	G	1
				Khurshid & J.J. Jamadar, TX	2		2
				Rumi & Kashmira Jamsetjee, IL	1		1
				Dinshaw & Goolcher Joshi, MD	C 4		4
				Khorshed & Dr Firoze Jungalwala, MA	(d) 1		1
				Afried Farokh Kamdin, NY	W 2		2
				Jamshed & Rita Kapadia, MA	R,W 7		7
				Homi & Shireen Kapadia, PA	5		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 April 25 to July 24, 2004 are shown in bold. Funds: C=Critical Assistance, G=General, J=Journal, R=Religious Education; S=Scholarship, W=Welfare.

[Continued on next page]



# FINANCIAL CORNER

## Thousand Points of Light [Contd]

	2001-3	2004	Total
Dr Natasha Karanjia, PA	C 2	R 1	3
Aspandiar G. Katki		C 2	2
Roya Kaviani, NJ		C 1	1
Dolly Kerawalla, CA	1		1
Mr & Mrs K.S. Kermani, NY	(a) 5		5
Dr Rustom & Yasmin Kevala, MD	(f) J, W 4	(k) 1	5
Purvez & Aban Khambatta, OH		G 1	1
Nazneen Kharas		S 10	10
Delara Kheradi, NY	(f) 6		6
Celeste Kheradi, RI	(f) 15	(f) (k) 13	28
Dr Jerry Kheradi, RI	(f) 70		70
Sohrab Kheradi, NY		(f) 5	5
Kershaw & Nazneen Khumbatta, TX	1		1
Jasmin & Maneck Kotwal, NJ	2		2
Kaizad Kotwal, OH	G 1		1
Zenobia & Shahrookh Lala, MI	1	C 1	2
Mathew Lungen, NY	(f) 1		1
Kaizad & Jinobya Machhi, WI	C 1	C 2	3
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
Farahnaz Mehdiabadi, TX	1	C 1	2
Hosi & Kim Mehta, IL	1		1
Kersi & Kamal Mehta, OH		J 1	1
Merwan and Rukshana Mehta, MO	1		1
Shahrokh & Gool Mehta, NY	2	G 1	3
Hoshi & Nawaz Merchant, NJ	2		2
Mehraban & Mahbanoo Mehr	G 1		1
Sherazade Mehta, MA		(m) 1	1
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
Edul D. Nakra, MA		S 1	1
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
Homi Patel, IL		G 2	2
Mr & Mrs Randolph Paulling, GA	(d) 1		1
<b>Yasmin &amp; Shapur Pavri, TX</b>	S 3	<b>S 10</b>	<b>13</b>
Dr Parvez Pohowalla, OR	1		1
Godrej & Piloo Randeria, TX	G 1	R 1	2
Dr. Minocher Reporter, OR	1	R 1	2
Jamshed & Tamara Rivetna, TX	1		1
Rohinton & Roshan Rivetna, IL	2	J 1	3
Dinaz & Dan Rogers, OR	J 4	J 2	6
Villoo & Solee Rudina, TX	1		1
Purvez & Aban Rustomji, TX	(d) 2		2
Neville Sarkari, WY	1		1
Nargesh & Aspi Sethna, TX	1		1
Prochy Sethna, CA	W 15	W 5	20
Houshmand Sharyari, IL		W 1	1

	2001-3	2004	Total
Behram Shroff, VA	C, W 2		2
Dr Burjis & Hovi Shroff, FL	5	C 1	6
Dr Nariman & Parrin Shroff, FL	2		2
Zubeen Shroff, NY	1		1
Fali Sidhwa, OR		C 1	1
Feroze & Anahita Sidhwa, TX	C, S, W 10	S 10	20
Timothy Robert Smith		G 1	1
Erach & Vahbeez Songadwala, TX		G 1	1
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
<b>Karrus Tarapore</b>		<b>G 1</b>	<b>1</b>
Bella Tata, BC	1		1
Khurshed M Tengra, ID	G 2		2
Mahnaz K. Tengra, ID		G 1	1
Jamshed Udvardia, MI	5		5
<b>Perry Unwalla, FL</b>	1	<b>C, G, R, S 6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Rayomand J Unwalla, PA</b>	1	<b>G 1</b>	<b>2</b>
Minoo & Shirin Vaghaiwalla, FL	(m) 1		1
Taera M. Vakil, FL	G 1		1
Cainaz Vakharia, VA	W 1	C 2	3
Dick & Sheroo Vazir, FL	2		2
Jer Vijan, AZ	1		1
Dr. M. Darius Vohman, GA	G 1		1
Homey & Bachi Writer, CA		G 1	1
Parviz & Parvin Yeganegi, BC	4		4
ZAPANJ, DE, PA & NJ	2		2
Farangis Zardoshty & family, AZ	R(c) 326	G 10	336
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
Z Assoc of N Calif, CA	2	C, G, W 3	5
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>285</b>	<b>1168</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 Morvorid Kheradi
- (m) ZYNA Art Scholarship
- (n) In memory of Dinshaw Joshi

## 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. Kayomarsh P. Mehta, kayomehta@aol.com, tel: 708-974-1238, www.fezana.org.

**Fali Chothia Charitable Trust** scholarships for students in NA universities. fer-ozafitch@lexicongraphics.net, tel: 301-564-3726, www.zamwi.org/about/2001FCCT.pdf

**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 seeking admission to a university. Homi Italia, (604) 438-2076, www.zsbc.org.

**Performing Arts Scholarship** offered by FEZANA/ZYNA (Zoroastrian Youth of North America). Anahita Sidhwa, afsidhwa@dcccd.edu, www.fezana.org.

**Paul and Daisy Soros Fellowships** support graduate education for immigrants and children of immigrants. www.pdsoros.org.

**Houtan Scholarship Foundation** offers a scholarship of \$2,500 per semester for studies in Iranian language and culture. Visit www.houtan.org.

**Indo American Community Foundation** offers scholarships of \$2,000 per year to Indian Americans. Visit www.upakar.org.

**Individual Advanced Research Opportunities (IARO)** scholarships, for research in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (Tajikistan). www.irex.org/programs/iaro. Also visit www.irex.org/programs/roberts for study grants in Iran.

**Institute of International Education's** Scholar Rescue Fund offers fellowships to scholars from any country and in any discipline, whose life, security or work is threatened in their home regions. Visit www.iie.org/SRF.

**Harvard's Pluralism Project** offers research grants. staff@pluralism.org, or www.pluralism.org/research/student\_grant.php.

**National Science Foundation** offers grants for documenting endangered languages. Visit www.fedgrants.gov/Applicants/NSF/OIRM/HQ/04-605/Grant.html.

**Gates Millenium Scholars Program** offers awards for science studies. www.gatesfoundation.org/Education/Scholarships/Announcements/Announce-040607.htm.

Global Environment Facility of the **World Bank** and **YES**, offers fellowships for entrepreneurs in field of renewable energy. Visit http://www.projects.takingitglobal.org/Scholarships for **Commonwealth citizens**. www.csfp-online.org/hostcountries/uk/

**Royal Society scholarships** in science. www.royalsoc.ac.uk/funding/

**Marshall scholarships** for Americans to study in UK. www.marshallscholarship.org.

**Fulbright exchange programs**. Visit www.fulbrightexchanges.org/base/grant.asp. ■

## FEZANA-ZYNA Performing-Creative Arts Scholarship

ZYNA (Zoroastrian Youth of North America) has set up a FEZANA /ZYNA Performing-Creative Arts Scholarship Fund. A new ad hoc committee to administer this scholarship is being formed. Donations towards this fund will be gratefully accepted. Please send your donation to FEZANA [see above] marked "Performing-Creative Arts Scholarship." Scholarship applications will be available at www.fezana.org. Contact Anahita Sidhwa at afsidhwa@dcccd.edu or Sherazade Mehta at Sherazadem@yahoo.com. ■

PLEASE GIVE FROM  
YOUR HEART

## DONATIONS & 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.**

Make checks payable to "FEZANA", specifying the fund (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 information, visit: **www.fezana.org.**

## Zoroastrian Symphony Orchestra Fund

**Attn: Patrons**

FEZANA has established the **Zoroastrian Symphony Orchestra (ZSO) Fund** to assist with the Orchestra's performance at the 2005 World Congress in London. All donations are 100% tax-deductible and high visibility is assured for corporate sponsors.

Please send your donation check payable to "FEZANA" [see above] marked "ZSO Fund". Contact: cyrusmehta@aol.com. ■



## Appeals

### Appeals for aid

Here are a few of the large number of appeals for aid received recently. Please give generously. Please send your donations to "FEZANA," [see page 122].

**15-year-old Mitra**, from Mumbai, got HIV through blood transfusion. Her father, who is now out of a job due to a fall and operation, appeals for donations for antiretroviral drug treatment, which is very expensive and has to be taken life long. Please mark your checks "Mitra."

Father of **14-year-old handicapped girl**, from Mumbai appeals for financial help towards treatments (physiotherapy, craniosacral therapy, and medicines for spasticity/cerebral palsy) for his daughter. Please mark your checks "Handicapped daughter."

**21-year-old Farhad** of Mumbai, sustained a severe head injury in a motorcycle accident. Doctors at UCLA Medical Center have advised brain surgery, estimated to cost at least \$80,000. The family is desperately seeking help from charitable organizations and individuals. Please mark your checks "Farhad-surgery."

### Hyderabad agiary

The Bai Maneckbai Nusserwanji Chenoy Agiary in Hyderabad [photo below] celebrated its centenary in September 2004, with a jashan, gahambar and formal evening function. The Trust also maintains 37 residential blocks for Parsis in the agiary compound. President of the trust, Mr.



Yadgar F. S. Chenoy appeals for funds to "meet repairs and renovation expenses," to "maintain the residential flats," and to "organize the celebrations of this momentous event." Please send your donations to "FEZANA" [see page 122] marked "Hyderabad Agiary."

### Kanpur Agiary



**The Byramji Nowroji Javeri Dare-Meher in Kanpur, UP** (Estd. 1930) the only functioning agiary in the state. The agiary building and residential quarters need major repairs. The only priest is 70 years old and gets a meagre salary. No other priests are available. There is also an *aramgah* (graveyard) managed by the Anjuman, whose wall has partially collapsed; estimated repair costs are Rs. 1,75,000. Secretary Mr. Adil Byramji, and former Kanpur residents Minoo Patel of Chicago (Varava family) and Kamal Mehta of Ohio (Sadri family) are appealing to Zarathushtis everywhere, to give generously for the agiary and aramgah.

Please send your donations to "FEZANA" [see page 122] marked "Kanpur Agiary."

### Parsi General Hospital

The 18th annual fundraiser for the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital is underway, spearheaded by Yasmin and Jamshed Ghadiali. Last year, they collected and sent \$22,750 to the hospital and \$700 for the Parsi Ambulance Division. Funds are needed for distributing free medicine for poor Zarathushtis at the hospital. For information or to make a donation, please contact Yasmin Ghadiali at (516) 378-4516, ghad@aol.com. ■

## ■ 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 gentleman, 39, 6'**, having own business, well-established in USA, seeks matrimonial alliance with pretty, good-natured Parsi girl from USA. (301) 978-9816. [M04-12]

**Attractive female, 32**, BS-elementary education, caring, fun-loving, intelligent, loves music and sports. Seeks successful, well-settled man with a caring nature, strong family values and good sense of humor. Contact (407) 234-9611. [F04-13]

**Attractive Parsi female, 43, 5'3"**, working in Washington, DC. Contact (604) 299-2958. [F04-14]

**Female, 24**, in medical school, enjoys outdoor activities and traveling; born and raised in USA. Interested in meeting Parsi males 24-30. Contact vagusn7@yahoo.com. [F04-15]

We are a traditional Zarathushti family residing in USA. We seek in matrimony, a young lady for our highly-educated (MS, MD, General Surgery resident) and **well-established son, 29**. If you are 24-29, with a winning smile and a warm heart, willing to reside in USA, please respond with a photograph, to potg1@hotmail.com. [M04-16]

**Fun-loving, attractive female, 24**, working as an engineer in the mid-west. Seeking a highly-qualified Parsi professional in USA/Canada. Pouruchista5@yahoo.com. [F04-17]

**Male, 57, physician**, in USA, with good sense of humor, focused on family, likes to travel and enjoys carrying on a conversation on world affairs. Interested in meeting a worthy Zarathushti lady, looking to meet your match and sincerely interested in marriage. Contact mehrmira@hotmail.com. [M04-18]

**Attractive Parsi female, 30**, BA, BEd, school teacher in USA, traditional family upbringing. Prefers educated, professional with strong family values, 30-35. Contact (403) 203-2722, zg4zb@yahoo.ca. [F04-19]

**Female, 28, English major**, good work ethics and family values. Please contact parents in California at rdamanian@aol.com. [F04-20]

**Parsi gentleman, 40**, tall, web designer. (604) 299-2958. [M04-21]

Uncle in California invites correspondence from professionals in USA (even previously divorced without encumbrances) for **attractive niece, 40**, from Mumbai, divorced without encumbrances, Masters degree, senior corporate accounts manager. Respond with photograph. godrej@juno.com. [F04-22] ■

Looking for  
a soulmate?

[http://matrimonial.  
zoroastrianism.com/](http://matrimonial.zoroastrianism.com/)  
or  
[www.shaadi.com](http://www.shaadi.com)

## PERSONALS

**Feroza Kanga** of Rawalpindi, Pakistan is trying to locate her cousin **Khorshed Davar**, daughter of **Minoo Kaikhushrow Davar** (who was in the navy) and **Jeenni Motiwalla** (maiden name). Khorshed would be 50-plus years now, and have a different married name. With any information, please contact feroza\_kanga@opi.com.pk and psidhwa@aol.com.

### Information on Adoption

FEZANA Journal will coordinate sharing of information in regards to adoption. Complete confidentiality will be maintained. Zarathushti families willing to share their experience in adopting a child as well as those families interested in adoption, may please contact Roshan Rivetna at RRRivetna@aol.com.

## criticallyspeaking



This new column is brought to you by Freyaz Shroff. Freyaz is from Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. She has a BA in sociology and a minor in psychology, and has also completed her MBA.

Left, FEZANA Welfare Committee, l. to r., Freyaz Shroff and co-chairs Hosi Mehta and Houtoxi Contractor.

**“Believe in the strength that comes from one hand holding another through times of trouble...”** - anonymous

There is truth in the healing that comes from laughter, tears and stories shared, wisdom in the bonds that are formed out of trust and honesty and miracles that are born from perfectly timed hugs and smiles. I believe in them all – healing, wisdom and miracles. I believe most however in the strength that comes from one hand holding another during times of trouble.

My name is Freyaz Shroff, and am writing to you on behalf of FEZANA’s critical assistance committee chairs, Houtoxi Contractor from Pittsburgh, and Hosi Mehta from Chicago, who have hearts that share the sentiments of respect, understanding and empathy. **The main objectives of the critical assistance sub-committee are to provide assistance and information in relation to domestic violence counselors, shelters and safe houses. Information will also be available on rape crisis centers, counselors and family therapists.**

We live in a society, which is faced with violent situations. Keeping in mind the uniqueness of our community and the comfort that comes from being with and working within a framework that is familiar, in other words, working “with your own” we have formed a toll free, confidential, phone line that will allow community members to share with us, how we may help them in their times of need. The line is available to our community members 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. 877-265-7273

Please know that we are here for you, if you need us. Thanks to some amazing volunteers we have information on domestic violence and rape crisis centers across the USA and Canada. We have worked with various professionals to obtain information on support, legal and financial assistance programs. We have worked with the national victims advocacy organization and have completed several months of due diligence so that we may assist you completely, correctly and always with kindness and compassion. 877-265-7273

It is our hope, through this column to educate our community about domestic violence, rape, criminal violence and other critical areas of need and growth, for it is ultimately only with education that we can grow in wisdom and hopefully someday eliminate the problems.

Until next time, please know we are here for you! **Houtoxi Contractor** (412-367-2948 or HFMC31@aol.com), **Hosi Mehta** (630-833-6923 or hosi.mehta@aol.com), **Freyaz Shroff** (843-281-8010) or Freyaz@aol.com.

**Toll free, confidential, phone line  
877-265-7273**

Available to our Zarathushti community members in their time of need,  
24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.



## MILESTONES

Submit "Milestones" to **Mahrugh Motafram**, 2390 Chanticleer Drive, Brookfield, WI 53045. (262)821-5296, [mmotafram@msn.com](mailto:mmotafram@msn.com).

### BIRTHS

**Liam Rustom Best**, a boy, to Tanya and Carl Best; grandson to Behram and Sheraz Bhesania, in Vancouver, on August 9.

**Feroza Boyce**, a girl, to Rustom and Delna Boyce of San Francisco, on Jan 13.

**Isabell Grace Calderon**, a girl, to Firoza and Joshua Calderon of Chico, CA, granddaughter to Hilla and Peshotan Irani of Hollister, CA on March 5.

**Tayte Chesley Choudhury**, a girl, to Tenaz and Chesley Choudhury in Houston on April 12.

**Cyrus Dadyburjor**, a boy, to Dinaz and Khush Dadyburjor, brother to Darius, nephew to Anahita Bhathena and grandson to Sheroo and Minoo Bhathena of Toronto, and Banoo and Adi Kanga of Mumbai, in Toronto, on April 12.

**Samuel Kelsan Golub**, a boy, to Pareez and Michael Golub, grandson to Fatima and Erach Patel, on December 12.

**Kashmira Marie Hurd**, a girl, to Navaz and Dan Hurd, granddaughter to Nergish Noshir Daruwala in Southern California on November 1.

**Ainsley Zarin Irani**, a girl to Ann and Rustom Irani, of Cullman, AL, granddaughter to Hilla and Peshotan Irani of Hollister, CA on May 18.

**Keivan Kamdar**, a boy to Jahangir and Behnaz Kamdar, in North Vancouver, on March 25.

**Xarah Master**, a girl, to Kashmira and Jimmy Master, granddaughter to Silloo and Dinshaw Patel, niece to Shenaz Patel, in Mentica, CA on April 12.

**Jehan Patel**, a boy, to Jamshed and Shanaz Patel of Redwood Shores, CA, on March 16; a brother to Zoey.

**Zarina Eleanor (Ellie) Speer**, a girl, to Farah and Matthew Speer of Oak Park, IL; granddaughter to Cyrus and Rashné Bulsara of Plano, TX, on June 27.

### NAVJOTES, SEDREH-PUSHI

**Darnesh Alleck**, son of Yasmin and Antish Alleck, in Chicago, on July 10.

**Danesh Bam**, son of Keshmira and Mehelly Bam, in Mumbai on June 5.

**Tandis, Yasmin, and Yasaman Iranfar**, in Burnaby, BC on March 25.

**Anita Mahava**, daughter of Viraf and Irene Mahava, sister of Hufrish and Ferzin in Orleans, Ontario on May 23.

**Yazmin Rustomji**, daughter of Dilnaaz and Eruch Rustomji, in Chicago, June 12.

### WEDDINGS

#### The Basis of Wedded Life

To a Zarathushti, marriage should mean neither enjoyment nor profit. Both partners enter this sacred state "for increasing each one's potential for doing good."

Wedlock is a life-long union of two souls. The basic virtue to permeate married life is '*khaetwadath*' or selflessness. Each one is to forget one's self-interest, and commit to making the other happy. It is an opportunity for giving, rather than receiving ... True love is based on voluntary sacrifice "that giveth his life for another."

Lust is grasping and selfish; love is renouncing and selfless.

[From "Message of Zarathushtra" by Dastur K. S. Dabu, courtesy Informal Religious Meetings, Pakistan]

**Jehangir Jungalwala**, son of Firoze and Khorshed Jungalwala of Sudbury, MA, to **Pamela Kocher**, daughter of Jerry and Carol Kocher of Wellesley, MA, in Chatham, Cape Cod, MA, on June 19. The Jungalwalas gave a reception on August 7, in Burlington, MA. The couple now resides in Quincy, MA.

**Aseena Jehangir Shroff** to **Damon Ryan Kade** in Houston, TX on May 21.

**Naju Patel**, daughter of Dr. Jiji and Silloo Patel to **Rajiv Kumar Madra**, in Northern California on June 19.

**Morvarid Behziz**, daughter of Mahbanou and Hormazdiar Behziz, of Hacienda Heights, CA, to **Sassan Nadjmi**, son of Manijeh and Borzoo Nadjmi, in Los Angeles, on June 18.

**Shenaya Goebel**, daughter of Persees and John Goebel to **Greg Schwartz**, in Eugene, OR on August 3.

**Roxanne Patel**, daughter of Fatima and Erach Patel of West Chester, PA, to **Dan**

**Shepelavy**, at The Franklin Institute Science Museum, in Philadelphia, on March 27. The couple will reside in Philadelphia.

**Nekzad Shroff**, of Northern California, to **Roxanne**, in Mumbai, in December.

### DEATHS

**Shiraz Bagli**, 43, wife of Alistair MacFarlane, daughter of Jehan and Freny Bagli, sister of Darius, daughter-in-law of Barrie and Duncan MacFarlane, in Toronto, on July 28 [see obituary].

**Hilla Behramfram**, 88, mother of Lily Umrigar of Richmond, BC, Pes Behramfram of Marl, Germany, Tehmi Marsh of Surrey, BC, Silloo Mistry of Richmond, BC, and Sam Behramfram of Richmond, BC, in Richmond, BC, on March 14.

**Laal Bekhradnia**, 82, wife of Shahriar Bekhradnia of Oxford, England, mother of Dr. Behram Bekhradnia and Justice Shahin Bekhradnia of Oxford, England, sister of late Dr. Kaikhosrow Shahrvin and Homa Shahrvin of England and Dr. Mehraban Shahrvin of West Vancouver, in Oxford, England on March 27.

**Daulat Chothia**, mother of Yasmin Rustam Engineer, Houston, TX, and Nargis Homi Cooper, grandmother of Eric, Diana, Burjis and Firoze, in Mumbai on June 26.

**Thrity Sarosh Contractor**, 69, wife of Sarosh Nariman Contractor, mother of Noshir Contractor of Urbana-Champaign, IL and Terzeen Mishra of Mumbai, in Vadodara, India on July 1.

**Bakhtiyar Jamshed Dubash**, 59, husband of Dinoo, father of Percy (Karishma) of Mumbai and Rayan (Zenobia) of Doha, Qatar; brother of Aban (Aspy) Daboo of Aurora, IL; uncle of Behram (Roxanne) Daboo of Aurora, IL and Shirin (Firoz) Gandhi of Novi, MI; in a car accident on the Bombay-Udvada highway, on July 8.

**Khorshed Irani**, wife of Dr. Phiroze Irani, mother of Sharmeen Jilla of Houston, TX, in Singapore, on March 21.

**Dr. J. M. Jehangir**, husband of Veatrice, father of Rustam and Jamshed, of Downers Grove, IL, in a traffic accident, on May 5.

**Kaki Khambatta**, father of Zarine (Neville) Batliwalla, grandfather of Zeena and Shyla, of Northern California, in Mumbai, on April 14.



**Morvorid M. Kheradi** [left] 91, wife of Mehraban Dorab Kheradi, mother of Rostam Kheradi of Rockville, MD, Sohrab Kheradi of Riverdale, NY and Dr.

Jehangir Kheradi of Providence, RI, Farangis Izedian of Chestnut Hill, MA and Manijeh Nadjmi of Lincoln, RI; grandmother of 11 and great-grandmother of 15; on June 10.

**Ervad Homi Kotwal**, brother of Ervad Boman Kotwal of Toronto, in Navsari, India, on June 25.

**Jerbanoo Rustomji Malva**, 97, mother of Dr. Ruby (John) Malva Norwood of New York, Dolly Malva and Roshan Malva of Downey, CA, Zarin Malva of Mumbai, Er. Cowsie (Jeroo) Malva of Redlands, CA, and Aban (Hosi) Kapadia of Downey, CA. Grandmother of Daniella and Erica Norwood of New York, and Samanaz and Diana Kapadia of Downey, CA, in Los Angeles, on June 8.

**Perin Masani**, wife of late Rustom Masani, mother of Pauru Chaturvedi of Toronto, and grandmother of Namit, in Mumbai on June 12.

**Ballan Jehangir Mistry**, mother of Zarine (Dr. Nadir) Camay of Southern California, grandmother of Michelle and Nina, in Mumbai on May 17.

**Dhun Dara Motafram**, 78, mother of Shirine (Gev) Karkaria of Montreal, and Feroze (Mahrukh) Motafram of Milwaukee, sister of Nergis (Adi) Unvala of Marlton, NJ, sister-in-law of Homi Unwalla of Riverside, CA and grandmother of Zal, Zia, Freya and Jamsheed, in Mumbai, on May 29.

**Mehroo Gustadji Patel**, 89, mother of Cowas (Perviz) of San Dimas, CA, Dinshaw (Silloo) of Montebello, CA, Hilla (late Baji) Poonagar of FL, Roshan (Bomi) Gazdar of Houston, and Rupy Maravalla of London, UK; grandmother of Rohinton, Banoo, Shenaz, Kashmira, Sherry, Minoo, Dilnavaz, Jimmy and Persis, in San Dimas, CA, on June 9.

**Roda Keki Randeria**, mother of Niloofar Firdausi Desai, in Mumbai on June 25.

**Homi Sanjana**, 82, husband of Piloo, father of Pesi Sanjana of MI and Berzin of SC, grandfather of Kevan, Perin, Avvan, and Darayus, in Mumbai on April 17.

**Aspi Phirojshaw Sethna**, husband of Nargesh, father of Darayus, brother of Dinshaw, in Houston, on May 26. Aspi was the senior-most member of ZAH who came to Houston in 1971.

**Burjor Vaghaiwalla**, husband of Alamai, father of Dr. Armaity Vaghaiwalla of Phoenix, AZ, Dr. Freny (Cyrus) Mody of Los Angeles, Dr. Behram (Marina) Vaghaiwalla of Los Angeles, CA, and Dr. Rati (Nadir) Godrej of Mumbai; grandfather of Bahman, Kaizeen, Burjis, Sohrab and Hormazd, in LA, on July 3.

**Nilufer Vania**, 52, wife of Darab, mother of Neville and Narissa, sister of Kersi Mistry of Toronto, in Northern California, on May 9.

**Cawas Writer**, 86, husband of Khorshed, father of Dinar Dinyar Pavri, grandfather of Rezwan, Azarmeen, and Numazer, and great grandfather of Farah, in Northern California, on June 8.

**Shirin Zarolia**, 93, wife of late Sheriarji Zarolia, mother of Kobad Zarolia of Toronto, Cyrus Zarolia, Sarosh Dastoor and Mithoo Motawara, and late Rustom and late Dhun Zarolia, in Mumbai, on June 7.

Shiraz Bagli  
DEVOTED WIFE, LOVING  
DAUGHTER, SWEET SISTER

**Shiraz Bagli**, devoted loving wife of Alistair MacFarlane, loving daughter of Jehan and Freny, sweet sister of Darius, devoted daughter-in-law of Barrie and Duncan MacFarlane, and 'mommy' of Islay (her pet), has peacefully ended her journey to this world on July 28, 2004, and the soul has initiated its sojourn to the spiritual domain of eternal peace.

We are grateful to Ahura Mazda for the 43 glorious years of joy and happiness she added to our life. With each passing day, Shiraz weaved together a tapestry of friends who became a part of her family, and who grew to love her company, her laughter, and her spirit, as she did theirs.

Shiraz was an important part of our life. We have lost a part of our existence. It will not be easy for us to reconstruct our lives without her physical presence. Nevertheless, her love and affection will be the scaffolding on which we hope to build.



Shiraz Bagli

fold on which we hope to build. She has left in our hearts and in our minds, a treasure of memories through which she will always remain with us in all our actions through our lives. Her strong will and determination not to compromise the the quality of life in the face heavy odds, will be the our strength. It will help us seek the best in ourselves and in each other. Rather than grieve the loss, we will attempt to celebrate her life through our actions, and fulfill our lives for her sake with her spirit.

She now rests in peaceful eternity, and we bid her farewell till we meet again.

With peace and love from Ahura Mazda,

*Jehan, Freny, Darius and Alistair*  
*Shiraz's family gratefully requests that donations be made by mail or phone to the: Shiraz Bagli Memorial Fund for Basic Research in Ovarian Cancer, Princess Margret Hospital, 610 University Avenue, Toronto, M5G 2M9, Tel: 419-946-6566.*

#### An apology

Due to extreme shortage of space in this issue, we regret we have had to skip the following sections: Healthy Living, Arts & Entertainment, Events and Honors and Books and Such. We apologise to the authors of items submitted for those sections, and will give them priority in the next issue. - Ed.





A monumental work on Zoroastrian heritage

**"A Zoroastrian Tapestry: Art Religion & Culture"**  
by Pheroza J. Godrej and Firoza Punthakey Mistree

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1. Publication Title <i>Fezana Journal</i>		2. Publication Number <i>021-495</i>		3. Filing Date <i>9/7/04</i>	
4. Issue Frequency <i>Quarterly</i>		5. Number of Issues Published Annually <i>4</i>		6. Annual Subscription Price <i>\$15, \$20, \$30</i> <i>(US - Canada - For)</i>	
7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer) (Street, city, county, state, and ZIP+4) <i>5750 S. Jackson Str, Hinsdale, IL 60521</i>					
9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank) <i>Roshan Rivetna, 5750 S. Jackson Str. Hinsdale, IL 60521</i>					
15. Extent and Nature of Circulation		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months		No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date	
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(4) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS <i>Per. For GPM</i>		<i>1367</i>		<i>1326</i>	
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g. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c. and 15f.)		<i>1477</i>		<i>1435</i>	
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j. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (15c. divided by 15g. times 100)		<i>92.55%</i>		<i>92.40%</i>	
16. Publication of Statement of Ownership <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Publication required. Will be printed in the <i>Fall 2004</i> issue of this publication. <input type="checkbox"/> Publication not required.					
17. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner <i>Roshan Rivetna</i>				Date <i>9/7/04</i>	

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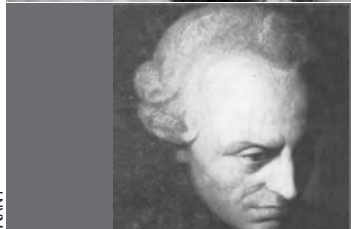
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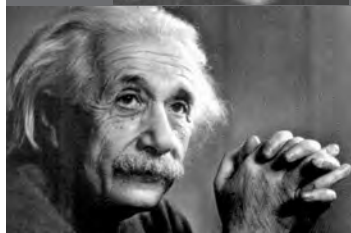
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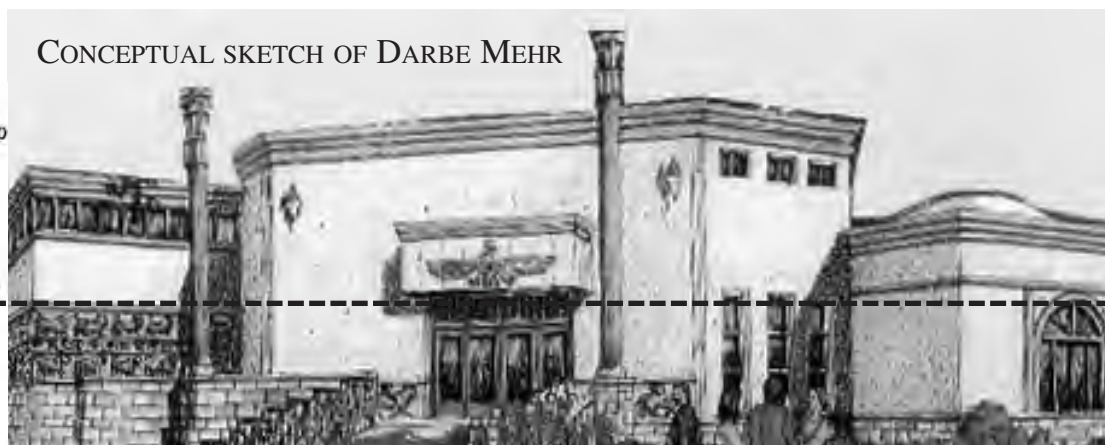
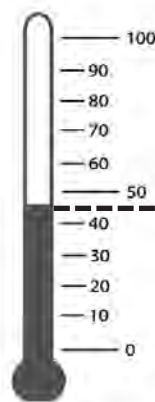
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