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The Zoroastrian World A Demographic Picture

PUBLICATION OF THE FEDERATION OF ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA

FEZANA JOURNAL

PUBLICATION OF THE FEDERATION OF ZOROASTRIAN
ASSOCIATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA

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ON THE COVER
Zarathushti children around the world.
Photos courtesy Cyrus Rivetna (India,
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Map: www.alabamamaps.ua.edu.

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Is it really twilight over Camelot? What can we do?

by Roshan Rivetna
Editor, FEZANA Journal

My editorial in the Spring 2004 issue of FEZANA Journal, which was on the theme of “Perpetuating the Religion and Strengthening the Community”, was entitled “Sunrise Over Camelot, Again.”

After spending the last few weeks collecting material for this issue on worldwide Zarathushti demographics, I cannot but feel in my heart, that, unless we sit up and do something, it could very well be the ‘sunset,’ if not the ‘twilight.’

The broad themes that emerge from this exercise on demographics are: the rueful declining numbers for Zarathushtis in the ‘homelands’ of Iran and the Indian sub-continent; the small numbers and threat of assimilation by dispersion in the diaspora communities; and the communal loss to inter-marriages around the world.

On the other hand, the emergence of new Zarathushti identities, mostly in the last decade or two, adds yet another dimension to the global picture. This will be explored in a future issue of FEZANA Journal.

Declining numbers. One does not have to be a statistician to grasp what the numbers portend for the homeland communities. It appears to be more than just writing on the wall – it is already starting to happen. The doleful figures from Iran [*Mobed Firouzgary*, p. 26; *Parviz Varjavand*, p. 28], India [*Armaity Desai*, p. 31; *Homi Dhalla*, p. 36; *BPP’s Godrej Dotivala*, p. 40] and Pakistan [*Toxy Cowasjee*, p. 50] tell their own story. “But the numbers are not declining, they are shifting with emigration”

some would say, “soon there will be more Zarathushtis in the ‘second diaspora,’ than in India and Iran.”

That was no doubt very true – as Zarathushtis, especially the young and enterprising, emigrated from India, starting in the 1960s, and from Iran, after the revolution in 1979, to the UK, North America, Australia, and more recently, New Zealand, leaving behind a disproportionately aged population in the homelands. Their stories are told in this issue [p. 53 ff.]

The diaspora has, no doubt, grown steadily over the last half a century. The question to ask now is whether the growth is from immigration alone (which then becomes a zero-sum game for the world population) or are the Zarathushtis in the new countries sustaining a natural growth in their population? Only time will tell.

Dispersion. If we had come to America in seven shiploads, landed on the eastern shores and set up our own colony around a darbe mehr, perhaps we may have fared better. But we came in twos and threes, and settled in pockets across the land. Our enterprising young men and women pursued opportunities in far places – up into Point Barrows, Alaska, the northernmost settlement in the USA and at Baffin Island, in the Arctic regions of Canada [p. 61].

We spread ourselves thin.

We were devout, traditional, practicing Zarathushtis; but how does one sustain a community when the near-

est Zarathushti neighbor is a thousand miles away?

Small numbers. There are many in the diaspora dedicated above and beyond the call of duty. More so than they ever were growing up in India or Iran. They build the darbe mehrs, serve as priests, teach the children,

maintain the traditions, keep ties with the homelands, travel 100 miles to come to class; committed to passing the torch.

They are trying hard. Very hard. But the numbers are few. Too few.

Apathy. While there is a committed core, for many of us in the diaspora, our religion and community was not the

top priority. We were too busy building our lives, seeking a foothold in the new land. Too many of us on the fringes. “Too busy” to come to community gatherings, or “live too far” or “turned off by bickering.” They “don’t know anyone,” “don’t feel comfortable.” “don’t think it matters” ... One may well be a devout, practicing Zarathushti family; but how does one sustain a community living as islands unto ourselves?

Inter-marriages and conversions. The numbers of mixed marriages are alarming [p. 25] and the trend is getting worse, in all countries of the world – be it in India (where acceptance is by paternal lineage) or in the diaspora (where, by and large, children of either Zarathushti spouse are accepted). There are too many married out, married in, re-married out, divorced, adopted children, gave up children.

Too many shades of grey. Too many lost from the community, unless ...

Then there are those (again in *all* countries of the world) converted out – unofficially turned Christian, or



Bahai, married Muslims (and converted), or followed some cult leader. Too many shades of grey. Too many lost from the community, unless ...

What will happen to the second, and third, and subsequent generations of these Zarathushtis?

What can we do?

Isn't it time we did something about the large numbers going out? Instead of getting all bent out of shape at the few wishing to come in? How do we keep Zarathushtis from drifting away?

To all those going out (be it through apathy or inter-marriage or conversion) can we appeal to their *sense of responsibility* to their religion and community (if not on grounds of religious belief or ethnic preservation or societal compatibility) to stay in?

To all those going out, rather than debar them, can we not, instead, 'lure' them into staying in – by *offering succor, spirituality and self-actualization* (ultimate fulfillment).

To all those on the fringes, can we not show them the *benefits of bonding and belonging* to our global Zarathushti fraternity?

The key is *Coming Together*.

Globalization, which led to our dispersion in the first place, may well now be bringing us together again: with a properly structured, sound and strong *world body* (without further ado please!) to keep the far flung pockets in the diaspora connected with our roots in the homelands; with *high tech* travel and communication; and by *meeting frequently*, locally at social and religious gatherings, and globally at conferences and congresses, across all ages and all interests.

With our personal and collective commitment, we *can* come together, grow together and stay together, in perpetuity.

Maybe we shall see sunrise over Camelot again. ■

Alarming demographics of our world Zarathushti community

By Khorshed Jungalwala
Chair, FEZANA Publications

This edition of the Journal has taken on a subject that is discussed within Zarathushti families and communities with trepidation and fear for the future. The statistics provided may not be exact in every case but given the progression of time, they have shown a trend that can certainly be considered alarming.

Diversity. The astounding diversity in doctrinal philosophy has given rise to groups trying to preserve, protect or proselytize in order to keep the faith alive and flourishing. There are the traditionalists who believe ethnicity and lineage are primary considerations; there are those who have the ethnic connection and now wish to revert to their ancestral religion; and there are the 'neo-Zarathushtis' who come into the faith of their own free-will, after much introspection. Groups in North America, Europe and Central Asia are currently active in initiating individuals into the faith.

The diaspora. Although many Zarathushtis have migrated to different parts of the world for various reasons, geographical boundaries should not be an impediment, since today we have the advantage of technological facilities of communication and ease of travel. However, the proximity and closeness of Zarathushtis living in *baugs* and concentrated areas in towns makes it advantageous to provide/receive support, thereby contributing to the enrichment of their indigenous society.

The question is "How do we, in the diaspora countries, build local communities when our nearest Zarathushti neighbor lives several hundred miles away?" Most Zarathushtis become part of the pluralistic society of the country to which they migrate and at the same time continue with their religious practices with varying degrees of apathy or fervor.

The homelands. A good number of those who have chosen to continue to



stay in the ancestral abode of their forefathers in Iran and India do not perceive an imminent threat based on statistics and are striving to preserve the philosophy and traditions based on ethnic purity and a proven history of survival and success through the ages.

They strongly believe that in spite of small numbers, they have survived, preserved and prospered, making major contributions to the society in which they exist. Mahatma Gandhi, speaking in England in 1940 stated, "I am proud of my country, India, for having produced the splendid Zoroastrian stock, in numbers beneath contempt, but in charity and philanthropy perhaps unequaled and certainly unsurpassed."

Declining numbers. Some may argue that the numbers of Zarathushtis are not declining but shifting with migration. This utopian thought holds no argument against the statistics that we have come to understand from various official and unofficial sources. Statistics tell us that inter-married Zarathushtis and their progeny are

[Continued on page 5]

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

Zarathushti demographics around the world

by Firdosh Mehta
 President, FEZANA

I take this opportunity of sharing my thoughts with you in this issue of FEZANA Journal – one that deals with Zarathushti demographics around the world. At the core of demographics lies the question: *Who is a Zarathushti?* In this column I will address the question in two parts, namely, what is FEZANA and its mission and share with you three dilemmas I face.

My dilemmas. What follows are my personal views and the dilemmas that I face as a resident of North America and the president of FEZANA.

Dilemma One: Who is a Zarathushti?

How do we know if an individual is a ‘Zarathushti?’ Some with

continuous lineage and navjotes performed, have discarded the practice of wearing sudreh-kushti and don’t follow any rituals. Others with no lineage at all have willingly adopted wearing sudreh-kushti with personal conviction and practice the faith.

Who can be counted as a Zarathushti? This has always been my dilemma in North America, when considering demographics.

Dilemma Two: What role should ethnicity play in the unfolding of the Zarathushti religion in North America?

The term Parsi/Irani Zoroastrian from the context of the Indian Sub-continent is quite well understood,

and even considered to be a long standing tradition for centuries, when this term was legally introduced as a judgment by justices Frank Beaman and Dinshaw Daver of the Bombay Presidency High Court, in the early 20th century. These legal stalwarts, on the one hand, established that the Parsi community, consisted of having a continuous paternal lineage of the original settlers from Persia, and practiced the Zoroastrian faith, thereby bestowing upon them a unique social recognition of ethnicity and race.

So, from the point of view of access to community infrastructure and establishments in India, one needs to be born to a Parsi/Irani Zoroastrian father and be duly initiated by an ordained priest, to avail of the privileges of the community assets.

Outside of the jurisdiction of the Indian sub-continent, no such conditions on privileges and access to infrastructure exist. Even though this concept is exported to the diaspora by many Parsi Zoroastrians of Indian upbringing, we find a higher degree of universal acceptance, especially amongst those of Iranian/Persian ancestry, of the word ‘Zarathushti or Zoroastrian.’ But both of the above take ‘birth’ as a necessary pre-requisite to be a Zarathushti.

The same justices, on the other hand, based on many presentations from scholars of the day, admitted in their ruling that “Zoroastrian Religion not only permits but enjoins conver-

sion,” indicating that Zarathushtra’s message is universal and not connected to ‘birth’ at all.

Dilemma Three: How should the North American community respond to neo-Zarathushtis?

In recent times we have seen individuals without any Zarathushti ancestry, adopt the religion of Zarathushtra as their faith and we see some degree of acceptance of the ‘neo-Zarathushtis’ or ‘Zarathushtis by Choice,’ in the diaspora.

The FEZANA position. The Purposes specified in the Constitution refer to:

“Promote the study, understanding and practice of the Zoroastrian faith”;

“Promote, perpetuate and teach the Zoroastrian religion”;

“Gather and disseminate information ... relating to the Zoroastrian faith.”

All of the above Purposes are ascribed to and agreed to by its Member Associations, which are registered non-profit organizations, and are first and foremost, Zoroastrian.

As one of the founding fathers, I can recall that these Purposes were not intended to be applied to non-Zarathushtis, but mainly to the community itself.

The Autonomy Clause of the Constitution states that :

“Nothing in this Article shall be construed to impair the religious and administrative autonomy of individual Associations or individual Zoroastrians.”

Hence, conversion or acceptance is left at the local community and individual levels.

Commentary. The integrity of FEZANA and the unity of its Member Associations are well served by the above policy, practiced by all the office bearers elected to the Executive so far. In furtherance of this policy the Executive welcomes the publication of this issue of FEZANA Journal with the caveat that in disseminating the information on demographics to the North American



community of Member Associations, it does not in any way take a position on defining who is a Zarathushti or promote any religious agenda.

Closing remarks. It is my hope that those who preside on the FEZANA Executive in future will embrace the policies that have facilitated the growth and success of FEZANA, which has so far held together in spite of my dilemmas expressed above. As to the dilemmas themselves – I do not have universally applicable answers to any of the dilemmas outlined above, which could be acceptable to the community-at-large. ■

Alarming demographics

[Continued from page 3]

already losing touch with their community, particularly in India.

The number of intra-marriages within the community are unflattering: the birth rate is conspicuously declining and more individuals prefer the single lifestyle. Some have converted out to other religions. Alas, too many are lost from the community. This dilemma has afflicted the Zarathushti community worldwide.

The time has come to deal with the situation regarding those who have through mixed marriage, conversion and outside proselytizing left the faith and community of their own free-will or through ostracism from within their own community.

The demographics given in this issue of the Journal provide a startling revelation and should alert us to the overall decline in numbers. Each of us have a responsibility to view the demographical profile objectively.

This is a very real challenge facing our community. Do we look the other way and hope the situation will improve in time, as it perhaps may have done in the past, or do we start, with Ahura Mazda's guidance, on the path of reversing the trend with diligence for the ultimate survival, preservation and prosperity of our faith? ■



FEZANA census of zarathushtis in North America

FEZANA, with the help of FEZANA Member Associations, has decided to undertake a census of Zarathushtis in North America. A draft census form is on the following page.

Why should Zarathushtis fill this form?

A proper census will allow us to document where members of our small community in North America reside. The results will help the FEZANA community identify where to locate services, for example, retirement communities, mutual help, etc. The data will also be used to compile the FEZANA Directory of *ONLY* those people who wish to be listed. The current FEZANA directory may be accessed at <http://www.fezana.org/pubs.zdir.htm> [see page 7].

Privacy in publication of census results

The data when collected will be tabulated and statistical information will be extracted. All forms which were filled out will then be destroyed to protect the privacy of people. All the answers will be kept strictly confidential. Data will be tabulated by each State or Province and only the statistical information will be published in the Journal.

Closing remarks

The cooperation of every Zarathushti is vital for the success of this project. We will be seeking the help of the FEZANA Member Associations in conducting the FEZANA census. A draft form is attached; comments are most welcome. We invite people who would like to work with us on this project. Please do contact us with your comments, concerns and most importantly if you wish to volunteer.

Noshir Jesung, Chair, FEZANA Census and Directory Committee
(7121 Nimrod Drive, Huntington Beach, CA 92647, njesung@socal.rr.com)

Farrokh Mistree (farrokh.mistree@lycos.com)

Dubious Distinction

The website www.adherents.com ranks 'Zoroastrianism,' with 150,000 adherents, as No. 22 [see table on p. 87] in number of adherents. It states:

"This religion is in every major comparative religion text book, yet it is actually listed in the latest *Guinness Book of World Records* as the "major religion nearest extinction." The Zoroastrians (or Parsis) are sometimes credited with being the first monotheists and having had significant influence in the formation of current, larger world religions.

"To whatever degree that is true, some observers believe Zoroastrianism is in a precarious state and its position as a major contemporary world religion is tenuous. Most of the Zoroastrians do not believe in allowing conversion. They have even stricter rules than Jews about whether or not children of mixed marriages are Zoroastrians. 200 thousand would be a generous estimate of their numbers. Most estimates for the world total of Zoroastrians are 100 to 125 thousand."

[Source: www.adherents.com]

FEZANA Survey for Year 2004

Please fill in all the information, it will help us in the survey. Details of this survey will be kept private.

☐ ☐ Which Z-Association do you belong to? _____ Check the box if we have your permission to Publish in Directory. If the box is unchecked then we will not print your information anywhere. ☐

Salutation: Mr. & Mrs. Dr. Last Name:
 & Mrs. Mr. Ms. Dr. Ervad
 Ervad & Mrss

First Name: Middle Name: Spouse Name: Spouse's Middle Name:
 Home Address: CITY: STATE:
 Address line 2: ZIP: COUNTRY:

Under the age of 18
 Children's Names
 separated by a Comma:

Your Home Phone (areacode) number: Your Mobil Phone (areacode) number: Your Home FAX (areacode) number:

Your Work Phone and Extension if any: Spouse's Work Phone and Extension if any:

Your E-mail: Spouse's E-mail:

Check this box if you are a Zarathushti: ☐

Check this box if your Spouse is a Zarathushti: ☐

What is your age group? Check one from the following:

- ☐ Is your age 18 or under?
- ☐ Is your age between 19 and 31?
- ☐ Is your age between 32 and 54?
- ☐ Is your age between 55 and 64?
- ☐ Are you 65 or older in age?

What is your Spouse's age group? Check one from the following:

- ☐ Is your Spouse 18 or under?
- ☐ Is your spouse between 19 and 31?
- ☐ Is your spouse between 32 and 54?
- ☐ Is your spouse between 55 and 64?
- ☐ Is your spouse 65 or older?

Choose your education level from below:

- ☐ Highschool or less
- ☐ Some College
- ☐ Bachalors degree or Tech school certification
- ☐ Masters degree
- ☐ Doctorate or Medical Dr.

Choose your Spouse's education level from below:

- ☐ Highschool or less
- ☐ Some College
- ☐ Bachalors degree or Tech school certification
- ☐ Masters degree
- ☐ Doctorate or Medical Dr.

What is your marital status? Choose one from below:

- ☐ Never Married
- ☐ Currently Married
- ☐ Separated or Divorced
- ☐ Widowed

For retirement planning, how would you rate the following, from 1 to 5 , 1 being most Preferred and 5 being least preferred:

Medical facilities should be nearby: _____ Easy access to shopping facilities nearby: _____

To be around Zarthushties: _____ Part time/full time employment opportunities. nearby: _____

Moderate winter area: _____

Where would you most prefer for retirement housing? Select one from below or add in Other.

- ☐ Houston
- ☐ Florida
- ☐ California
- ☐ Calgary
- ☐ Toronto
- ☐ Other.

What is your country of birth? Select one from below:

- ☐ Canada
- ☐ USA
- ☐ India
- ☐ Iran
- ☐ Pakistan
- ☐ Other

What is your Spouse's country of birth? Select one from below:

- ☐ Canada
- ☐ USA
- ☐ India
- ☐ Iran
- ☐ Pakistan
- ☐ Other

The secret of looking at the FEZANA directory free

Do you wish to search the online FEZANA directory for Zarathushtis in North America?

- (1) Go to the website <http://www.FEZANA.org>
- (2) Click on "North American Directory" in Published Information link.
- (3) Click on "Online Version": this is the PDF version.
- (4) You can search for names in the PDF version but will not have the ability to print it. The PDF is password-protected to prevent web search engines from opening the directory. To open the PDF file, you will need to use the password, which is: FEZANA

Note: The password is in ALL CAPS.

Do you wish to have this FEZANA directory on your computer?

A searchable CD version of the FEZANA directory is available for \$10.

To purchase the CD, please send an email to: farrok.mistree@lycos.com

You will also get free Zarathushti articles as a bonus.

You will also receive a free e-book regarding Zarathushti Religion.

You will also get images to make Zarathushti Cards.

SO HURRY AND ORDER YOUR CD NOW.

Do you wish to purchase a printed and bound version of the FEZANA directory?

To purchase the printed and bound version of the FEZANA directory, please send an email to: farrok.mistree@lycos.com

Do yourself (and us) a favor. Please take a few minutes to add/update your listing in the FEZANA directory.

- (1) Do the first 2 steps, above.
- (2) Then click on Adding/Updating your information,
- (3) Fill out the form as fully as possible.

**WE ALWAYS WELCOME SUGGESTIONS ABOUT IMPROVING OUR
DIRECTORY SO PLEASE GIVE US YOUR FEEDBACK.**

Do you have any questions, comments? Contact:

Noshir Jesung (njesung@socal.rr.com)

Farrokh Mistree (farrok.mistree@lycos.com)

ON THE NORTH
■ AMERICAN ■
■ SCENE ■

A laugh-a-minute at Houston fundraiser

The curtain fell, but hopefully for a brief interval. A new genre of players, seven members of the Zoroastrian Association of Houston, kept an audience enthralled in a laugh-a-minute situation *natak* this weekend. Eight hundred members in the audience promised to keep coming back for more. A king's ransom was collected from the evening's event. The entire proceeds were donated to the Zarathushti Heritage and Cultural Center of Houston.

Kako Atakyo Bhatrijo Latakyo a Gujarati play written, directed and acted by Nozer Buchia, is the story of the loud and crass uncle who lived in Africa but controlled his Bombay nephew's purse string. Adi (Peshotan Unwalla) the helpless, good natured nephew wants to lead a comfortable life without exerting himself, needs a raise in his allowance so he could marry. Minoo Kaka, the uncle, (Nozer Buchia) flew to Bombay for a fleeting visit to check things out for himself. The situation gets hilarious with mistaken identities of a friend and his wife (Kaizad Sunavala and Persis Buchia) that were spending the weekend at Adi's home. Along with Adi's girl friend (Yasmin Medhora) and Tehmul the friend (Noshir Medhora) who hits the bottle each time his mother-in-law comes to town, and Sundari (Kamalrukh Gandhi) the cast is complete.

In the spirit of giving-back to society Nozer Buchia is committed to take this show on the road and assist other associations to raise funds for charitable purposes. Being on stage is Nozer's passion and he has had a successful 30-year-career in India, Australia and in the US.

*From a posting by Aban Rustomji
on CreatingAwareness
@yahoogroups.com.*

FEZANA JOURNAL invites you to "Adopt-a-Reader"

There are interested anjumans, libraries and individuals in Iran and India who would like to read FEZANA JOURNAL but cannot afford it. Can you adopt a reader? All donations welcome. Please use the form on page 131.

Florida Zarathushtis weather the storms

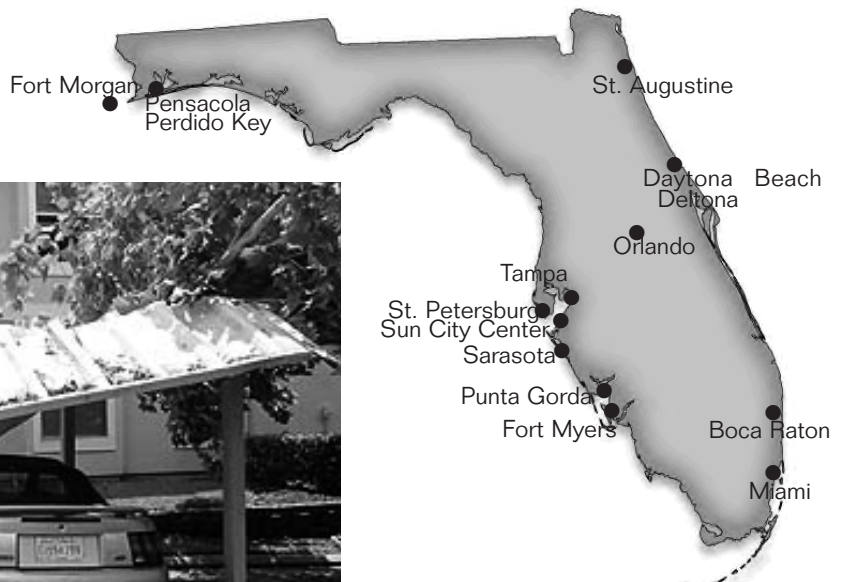


PHOTO COURTESY SOLI DASTUR



*Above, uprooted tree, in Orange County, Orlando in the wake of hurricane Charlie which swept through Florida on August 13, 2004. Right, the wind from the category 4 hurricane Ivan on September 14th, blew down the door of Nergish and Hoshi Aga's condo on a barrier island called Perdido Key, near **Pensacola** in the Florida panhandle. Ivan slammed into the Gulf Coast and made landfall near Fort Morgan, Alabama, less than 30 miles from the condo. Right, Hoshi Aga with their sailboat at Eden Marina, one of the few boats still afloat, after the powerful surge from Ivan pulled out the pilings to which it was tied.*



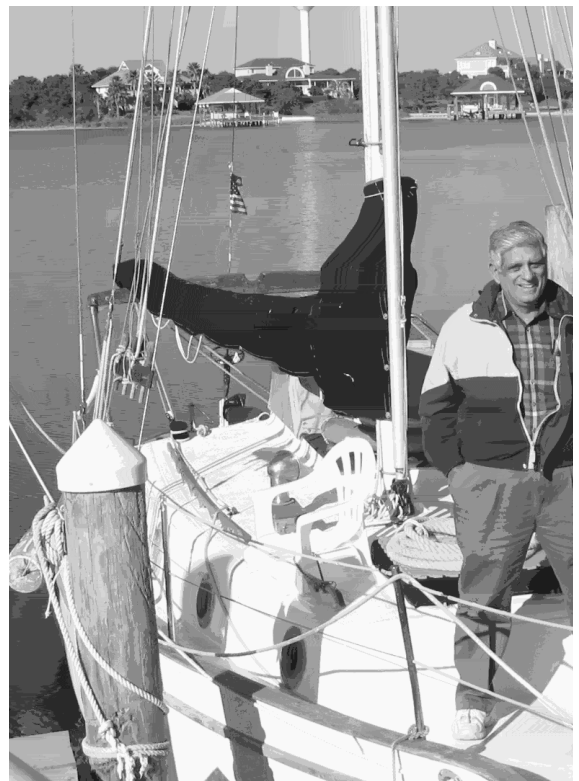
“Someone up there has been watching over all of us!” says Soli Dastur, as the Zarathushtis of Florida (284 per the count in this Journal) dodged an unprecedented four hurricanes that pummeled Florida in just one month – Charlie on August 13, Frances on September 4, Ivan on September 14 and Jeanne on September 25th.

Tampa Bay - Sarasota area. It was a long and anxious wait for Soli and his wife Joanne of Sarasota, who had decided not to evacuate. “We were spared – just some heavy winds” says Soli, as Charlie eluded forecasts for landfall in Tampa, then Sarasota, and changed course in the last hours, to land at Fort Myers and Punta Gorda, a few miles south.

In the Tampa area, Anahita and Hoshedar Tamboli evacuated their magnificent oceanfront mansion in Davis Islands. Niloufer and Rohinton Hathiram of St. Petersburg also evacuated, while Tehmi and Firdaus Dastoor though advised to evacuate, rode out Charlie. Hoshi Presswalla did not even lose power, just some fallen branches.

The hurricanes caused minimal damage to Sun City Center, seven miles from Tampa Bay, where Rustom and Yasmin Kevala have a second home, possibly because it lies in a protected area.

Karen and Shahrukh Marker of North Tampa were hit by Frances and Jeanne. They stayed in their home and protected the front doors with forty 40-lb bags of soil. “We felt powerless as the wind whistled like



a train,” writes Karen, “At one point it sounded like someone was knocking very loudly at the door.” Their home suffered considerable damage – the roof leaked, ceiling drywall collapsed, downstairs rooms flooded, and the stucco crumbled – “It looks like a car ran into the side of our house.” A remediation team has been at work knocking out walls and ceilings to combat possible mold.

Orlando area. Sarvar and Rustom Irani of Longwood, Orlando area were without power, water or phones for several days – they used the pool water to flush, took showers at nearby Mez and Meena Birdie’s and read with candles. The Iranis and Birdies went to Aspy and Anita Canteenwalla’s in the north Orlando area for nightly dinners and washing. Charlie missed the Lakeland area where Farrokh and Betty Ollia live, by just 20 miles. They had lots of rain and wind, but no damage.

On the **east coast**, several families in the Miami, Boca Raton and Jacksonville area were affected, primarily by hurricane Jeanne, but no serious damage was reported.

Hurricane Francis landed near Daytona Beach and then came roaring inland. Bokhtar and Sandra Gandhi of nearby Deltonia were lucky to only have a tree uprooted and were without power for a few days. Keki and Khorshed Mistry newcomers (from New Jersey) to the Palm Coast, south of St. Augustine, said “With Ahura Mazda’s blessings, we escaped with no damage. We are really lucky when we see how many Floridians have suffered. May Ahura Mazda bless our small community.”

“Whenever I begin to feel overwhelmed,” writes Karen Marker, as she sits writing this in her sitting room which has no walls now, “I think of the people that lost their homes and their lives. We feel very fortunate.” ■

[By Roshan Rivetna. Thanks to Soli Dastoor for compiling the information for most of Florida, and to Ner-gish Aga for Pensacola area.]



The new Board of Directors of ZANT (Zoroastrian Association of North Texas) elected for a two-year term in May 2004 are, from left, Jamshed Rivetna (vice president), Saghar Behrooz (secretary), Spenta Irani (director), Arbez Patel (social director), Behram Irani (president), Farieda Irani (director) and Kali Buhariwalla (treasurer).

ZANT was registered in 1989 to serve the Zarathushti community residing in the Dallas Fort Worth metroplex. Zarathushtis planning to move to the Dallas area, are welcome to contact any of the board members. We will be happy to introduce newcomers to the community and assist in their move any way we can. For information about ZANT and its activities, please visit www.zant.org.

Behram Irani, president@zant.org, (972) 867-0509



AGM in Alberta. Members of the Zoroastrian Association of Alberta at their Annual General Meeting in Edmonton, August 21, 2004. ZAA president Firdosh Mehta is seated at far right, with wife Rashna to his right.



Pateti celebration in Boston. On August 21st 2004, Zarathushtis in the Greater Boston Area celebrated Navroze/Pateti with a catered dinner in Westwood, MA. Families from New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts, along with many visiting parents from India and an energetic group of under 8 came together for the annual end of the summer event. Former ZAGBA president Nasswan Dossabhoy gave a talk on Zarathushtra highlighting "what are the facts." He presented a novel approach to the calendar issue by using the 7 days of the week to focus on each of the Amesha Spentas. The community brought images of Zarathushtra from their homes to commemorate Khordad Sal, the birthday of the prophet. The display included frames, magnets, etchings, silver carvings, books, paperweights, tiles, and cards. Jerry Kheradi, chair of FEZANA Funds and Finance presented FEZANA's recent financial activities and urged community members to continue to support the second Thousand Points of Light. Celeste Kheradi talked about FEZANA's Fund Raiser for Domestic Abuse and Violence. A raffle for Red Sox baseball tickets raised \$160 which, along with donations from generous donors, were given for this critical assistance fund. - Armin Choksey



At the ZYNA trip to New York, from left, Cyrus Chinoy, Afreed Mistry, Freyaz Shroff, Nina Deboo, Behin Yektashenas and Nahid Sorooshiyari.

ZYNA trip to NY. ZYNA organized a trip to New York city from July 30 to Aug 1, 2004. About 19 people made it to the events that weekend. We had youth from Florida, Detroit, Carolina, New York, Philadelphia, Washington and Toronto. The first night was spent introducing ourselves and getting to know each other. The small group made it possible to bond easily and many friendships were made. The weekend was spent shopping, checking out the city sights and dancing. Thanks to all the local New Yorkers that helped us make hotel arrangements in Manhattan and for taking us shopping.

Look out for the next ZYNA trip shortly after the California Congress. With ideas and suggestions. or to subscribe to our quarterly e-newsletter, contact ZYNAangels@aol.com. - Afreed Mistry



ZCC team: standing from left, Tauzer Dalal, Khushroo Wadia, Fred Irani, Sarosh Patel, Dinyar Medhora, Rumi Jasavala, Khushroo Bharda, Mahiyar Panthaky, Rohinton Bathena; kneeling, Farhad Nagarwalla, Zain Ghadially, Nusli Konkrawalla, Merwan Dubash. Squad members not in picture: Cambeez Mulla, Cyrus Gazdar, Behram Dubash, Mehervan Wadia, Paiman Farhadi, Farhad Nagarwalla and Nadir Irani.

Cricket in Ontario. The Zoroastrian Cricket Club (ZCC) in Ontario has been part of the Etobicoke Cricket League for over 15 years. The team has always comprised of a mixture of ages and talents making it exciting, challenging and fun.

This season was no different, except that by losing 5 key players to another team, it was a year of re-building. ZCC ended the season winning 11 out of their 16 games. We ended up 2nd in the division (div 3) and are now guaranteed promotion to division 2 for the 2005 season.

Best batting goes to Rumi Jasavala; best bowling to Merwan Dubash and Mahiyar Panthaky. Fielding this season has been at its best with outstanding performances from both Cyrus Gazdar and Khushroo Bharda.

*Rumi Jasavala
rumi.jasavala@mdsps.com*



Navroze picnic in Ohio. ZAKOI (Zoroastrian Association of Kentucky, Ohio and Indiana) hosted a Navroze picnic on 29th August, 2004 in the Sharon Woods Park in Cincinnati. Approximately 50 people from the three states attended the picnic. We had a cook-out of Tandoori chicken and hot dogs, with mango and chikoo icecreams. All had a great time mixing with one another, playing games and enjoying the great food. The photo shows some of us listening to an interesting talk by Jimmy and Pheruza Antia on their trip to Japan. ZAKOI send best wishes to all their fellow Zarathushtis around the world.
*Bakhtavar Desai, president
bfdesai@aol.com*



Above, OZCF Board of directors at the Gala which raised \$165,000 towards its vision of purchasing land to build a place of worship.

Left, over 280 guests celebrated Navroze with OZCF on August 21, with a jashan and an authentic lagan nu bhonu catered by Dolly Jain.



OZCF celebrations. Ontario Zoroastrian Community Foundation hosted an evening of elegance – its 3rd Annual Black Tie Gala fundraiser on September 18, 2004 at the spectacular St. Volodymyr Cultural Centre in Oakville. It was a smashing success as 430 patrons showed their support to this year's Gala, ably organized by Kermin Byramjee and Gulrukh Patel. OMNI television taped the entire evening and gave brief coverage on the news.

It was an evening of glamour and elegance – from the cocktails and hors d'oeuvres, silent and live auctions, card games, gold rush and complimentary photo studio, to the delicious seven-course gourmet dinner, dancing to a live band and late night desserts of delectable pastries and a chocolate fountain.

OZCF president Phil Sidhwa thanked the directors and volunteers. Among the distinguished guests was Her Worship Ann Mulvale, Mayor of Oakville. A message from Zubin Mehta read: "... It is so wonderful that our community is flourishing once again in its newly found home, North America ... my wife, Nancy, joins me in embracing one and all of you..."

The entire evening was generously sponsored, starting with the venue, dinner, bar, music, flowers, beautiful centerpieces, auction items, prizes and more. Due to the beneficence of all the supporters, the entire funds raised – a total of \$165,000 – will go directly towards this project. The monies raised at this event only, brings the final total to \$1,065,000, a step closer to attaining phase 1 of the project, i.e. to purchase the land.

OZCF continues to be focused on the vision to purchase land for a place of worship and a cultural centre to serve the needs of the growing Zarathushti community in the Greater Toronto Area and through its continuous fundraising efforts and events, the goals will be achieved. For further information and progress, visit www.ozcf.com.

- Roshan Davar



Pluralism Project Student Research Conference, Harvard



On October 27, 2004, Suzie Karani (Chicago, IL) presented her paper, "Current Zoroastrian Leaders in North America: Contemporary Issues and the Future of the Community," at the Pluralism Project Student Research Conference at Harvard University.

The conference featured student projects centered on the theme of 'pluralism' and spanning various religions and religious societies in North America.

This summer, Suzie received a grant from the Pluralism Project to conduct research on the North American Zoroastrian community. Her research includes interviews of 17 North American leaders, priests and youth.

A brief synopsis of Suzie's project can be found at: <http://www.pluralism.org/affiliates/student/karani/index.php>. Her findings will be posted on this site shortly. ■

Below, FEZANA delegates, from left, Homi Gandhi, Minoee Modi, Dinyar Patel, Shanaya Mistry and Behram Pastakia participate in a UN reception during the conference, where they had the chance to interact with NGO representatives from over 80 countries.

Right, Zarathushti participants in the General Assembly Hall of the UN, at the Opening Session of the 57th Annual DPI/NGO Conference. Interactive worldwide participation was made possible through the internet.



A Millennial Challenge

FEZANA participates in UN conference on ambitious development goals

by Dinyar Patel

How can Zarathushtis help halve global poverty and promote cooperation between the developed and developing world? Five North American community members explored the answers by participating at the United Nations' 57th annual DPI/NGO conference, which brought 2,700 representatives from over 700 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to New York, from 8–10th September.

Representing FEZANA, the Zarathushti delegates took part in workshops and sessions on achieving the Millennium Development Goals, an ambitious UN-sponsored program that targets major achievements in global health, poverty reduction, environmental sustainability, and gender equality by 2015.

The DPI/NGO conference focused on the role civil society could play in ensuring the success of the Goals campaign. FEZANA delegates therefore had an excellent opportunity to both brainstorm for their own

social projects and discuss ways that their ongoing efforts fit in with the mission of the UN.

Behram Pastakia, president of ZAMWI, and Homi Gandhi, president of ZAGNY, led the group, which included three youth members: Shanaya Mistry, a Toronto-based lawyer, Minoee Modi, a graduate student at Tufts University, and Dinyar Patel, a recent graduate of Stanford University.

While an impressive line of speakers – including UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and noted Columbia economist Jeffrey Sachs – captivated audiences, the highlights of the conference occurred in small group discussions and receptions where the FEZANA representatives were able to interact with other NGO officials and UN diplomats.

Behram Pastakia and Dinyar Patel, for example, spoke at length with Sherrill Kazan, chair of the 2002 DPI/NGO conference and a top-

ranking official within the UN NGO-outreach division. Together they explored ways that the Zarathushti community could participate in the UN's 60th anniversary celebrations in 2005.

The conference also helped delegates to revise and retool their strategies for helping the world's poor. "I came here with certain projects in mind but I think there needs to be some time for reflection because our viewpoints after the conference are different," commented Modi, who is interested in helping with food assistance programs in India. "I received a whole sea of information."

Further information on the Millennium Development Goals can be found online at: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>.

Dinyar Patel graduated in June 2004 from Stanford University with a BA in International Relations. He plans to pursue a PhD in Modern Indian History.



Hormuzd Katki at left at 'Tools Handoff' : Habitat for Humanity Build in NE Washington DC.

first Monday in October. This day has been set aside by the UN for the world to reflect on the state of human settlements and the basic right to adequate shelter and to remind the world of its collective responsibility for the future of the human habitat. Visit www.unhabitat.org/whd/2004/overview.asp. - *Behram Pastakia*.

ZAMWI youth in Habitat for Humanity project.

In April 2004, members of the Zarathushti community in Washington, DC took part in the Interfaith Youth Core's Habitat for Humanity house build as part of the National Day of Interfaith Youth Service. The day provided a unique milieu to further dialogue and deepen understanding between religiously diverse young people from across the city. The planned project for next year is on April 9th and 10th 2005. The Interfaith House build is a groundbreaking partnership project of DC Habitat for Humanity, the InterFaith Conference, the United Religions Initiative, the UN Association and the Points of Light Foundation in DC. Fifty-three homes are to be built over the next five years. To participate, contact Mike Goggin (www.ifcmw.org, tel: 202 234 6300) .

Every year, since 1985, when it was designated by the General Assembly, World Habitat Day has been celebrated on the



Illinois' first Gandhi statue. Illinois Lt. Governor Pat Quinn [left] unveiled the statue at Heritage Park in the Chicago suburb of Skokie on October 2, sponsored by the Indian American community.



Faith and Food. On September 20, in the House of Commons, London, Tolerance Limited launched www.faithandfood.com, that tells people what, why and where they can eat in accordance to their beliefs. Members of nine major faiths in UK, including ZTFE president Malcolm Deboo [in dagli] attended the buffet reception, co-hosted by Simon Cohen and Keith Vaz MP.



Alberta Government recognition of 3000th Anniversary of Zoroastrian Culture, in Edmonton. Display of Achaemenian and Sasanian posters, rituals setup, poster of jashan layout and calendar.

Voices against the world body

With a public meeting called by Khojeste Mistree, a letter signed by seven high priests, flyers posted in baugs and agiaries, letters to the BPP and the press, and vitriolic attacks in the email lists, the traditional lobby nixes the world body.

Public meeting

In a talk entitled "Is Parsi-ism under Threat?" **Khojeste Mistree**, with his powerful oratory, moved a 'standing room only' crowd, many bussed in from the baugs and colonies around Mumbai, at the Framji Cawasji Institute in Mumbai, on October 21, to rise in protest against the proposed world body.

"A conscious move is being made to de-link our ethnic identity from the religion, because Zoroastrians in North America and the UK want us to do so...If one divorces the Parsi/ Irani culture and way of life from the religion, which has already happened in the West...going to be disastrous.

"Many parts of the jigsaw form our identity. Race, physiognomy, mannerisms, language, dress, food habits, music, literature, all come together to form our cultural identity, our 'Parsi-panu.'

"There is no mention of the word 'Parsi' in the proposed world body. Why should we allow our leaders to drop the Parsi nomenclature [in favor of 'Zoroastrian']?

"Irrespective of caste and colour, outsiders have been taken into the Zoroastrian fold and allowed to become members of WZO and FEZANA. Today we have Brazilian Venezuelan, Belarussian, African Zoroastrians, and of course Tajiks and Kurds. We have large pockets of neo Zoroastrians whose numbers are rising ... WZO and FEZANA have given legitimacy to all these people.

"Our North American brethren are trying to push for an even more ambitious world body ... never before has this lethal combination come together – namely FEZANA, WZO, ZTFE and FPZAI (BPP) ...creating an organization which will marginalize and eclipse Parsi-ism totally...

Letter from the High Priests ...

Excerpts from letter of September 30, to BPP trustees, from high priests of India: Dastur Dr. Kaikhusroo M. JamaspAsa (Mumbai), Dastur Dr. Firoze M. Kotwal (Mumbai), Dastur Khurshed K. Dastoor (Udvada), Dastur Cyrus N. Dastur (Surat), Dastur Meherji K. Meherjirana (Navsari), Dastur Dr. Peshotan H. Mirza (Udvada), Dastur Nadirshah P. Unvalla (Bangalore).

"...Under no circumstances, should this over-1250 year old Anjuman of Parsees of India be equated and put on par with the pseudo-Zoroastrians, who now claim to profess the Zoroastrian faith, and whose increasing numbers abroad, will have the potential of marginalizing our community under the unfortunate auspices of a new world body.

"By joining a world body that condones and actively acknowledges conversion, by institutionalising it through the Constitution of the proposed world body, you are making the entire community a party to condoning that which is against the practice of the religion in India for over 1250 years.

"... A WB with this kind of mixed membership, now or in future, will not only threaten the religious identity of our community but will also endanger the survival of our race, religion and its institutions...

"We have survived and progressed in India for over a millennium under the divine protection of our Holy Iranshah Atashbehram and the other Padshah Sahebs enthroned in India. We did not need a WB to protect our "interests" then, and we do not see the need to have one now. We see no benefit accruing to the Parsees of India by our joining this World Body. In fact, if the BPP/FPZAI were to join, it would be a dangerous and foolish move.

"... we caution you that **this WB is a threat to our survival as a community and to our religious denomination. We reiterate that the formation of the World Body does not have our sanction and that it would be in the interest of the community to drop any move by FPZAI and/or BPP of joining such a WB, now or in the future.** Let not future generations of Parsees be deprived of the rich heritage passed on to us by our worthy ancestors ..." ■

"FPZAI represents 60% of Parsi/Irani Zoroastrians on planet earth! [yet] at no point have the BPP trustees asked for a 50% voting right nor have they asked for a veto power. FEZANA and ZTFE together do not have more than 20,000 members and yet they have a greater voting power than our FPZAI.

"Our leaders are bending over backwards to accommodate, include and

to increase the constituency of neo Zoroastrians...

"Why has the community been kept out of the picture, totally ... What does FPZAI have to hide?

"...the world body will interfere in the affairs of our Fire Temples, and dakhmas and our religious institutions... their [foreign federations] eye is to control our religious assets in India.

"Tajiks and other converts will enter our Agiaries and our baugs..."

"The Zoroastrians of North America have done nothing for the religion."

"To hell with them! We don't want them!" Mistree exclaimed, adding they were "wonderfully wealthy" but "in 40 years there is no enthroned fire in Canada, in the US."

Flyers

The Traditional Zoroastrian Mailing List (TZML) distributed a Warning: "the World Body... is actually created to officially bring in all the fake converts from Africa, Latin America and other parts of the world through the back door."

A one-page flyer showing inflammatory color photographs of "converts" in Latin America and Europe, wearing sudreh-kushti, urged readers to "register your opposition to such a cosmopolitan body."

E-group postings.

Vitriolic attacks flooded the traditional email groups on the dangers of the world body: "global monster that will swallow our rights," "the most damaging thing that can happen to us," "all these aliens are waiting to enter our holy places, and reduce us to a minority," "these interlopers will penetrate our trusts, funds and charities," "they will invade our agiaries in droves and defile and desecrate our holy fires..."

In unbridled language, unfit for publication, all were castigated – our elected leaders of BPP, FPZAI, FEZANA and WZO, as well as all those Zarathushtis living in the West.

A "**World Body Protest Group**" was formed (at protestagainstwb@hotmail.com) inviting protest letters which would be forwarded to the BPP trustees.

Letters of protest

In a letter to the BPP trustees, *Er. Jal N. Birdy*, VP of the Traditional Mazdayasni Zoroastrian Anjuman (president Tahamtan Aresh) writes;

"We are concerned that the acceptance of intermarriage, non-Zarthushti spouses, juddins and converts by the World Body will bring about the gradual destruction of our age old traditions, rituals ...

"In general, everything that is our unique way of life setting us apart as Parsi-Zarthushtis will be severely compromised or lost forever.

"What Alexander and the Arabs could not achieve, the World Body will bring about with one swift stroke through its political resolutions made by a handful of its officials. This forecasts a suicidal course for our microscopic community that is struggling to survive and safeguard the flame of its ancient religion from extinction in the currently turbulent waters of "change" and "freedom."

From the editor ...

Following the euphoria of the "July 2004 London meeting" [see *FEZANA Journal, Summer 2004*] when all stakeholders, FPZAI/BPP, FEZANA, ZTFE and WZO, came together at a common table, to chart the course of the world body, this is a blow from left field.

At this tenuous stage in the formation of the world body, such attacks – against the world body, against the venerable elected leaders of the BPP, FPZAI and FEZANA, against WZO, and in one fell swoop, against all Zarathushtis living in the western diaspora (North America in particular) – do nothing but stir up the emotions, cause a great schism in the community, and set us back two decades.

At this juncture in our history, facing the challenges we do [see *this issue of FEZANA Journal*] – of our diminishing numbers, our dispersion in the far corners of the globe, assimilation and loss of identity through inter-marriages and modernization – **there is nothing more important for our very survival, than to have the cohesive infrastructure of a world body, embracing all the far-flung diaspora and homeland communities.**

The key to our very existence is **Coming Together**.

To deny this Coming Together in a world body, is to slam the door in the face of many of us in the diaspora who are seeking and striving to stay connected with our roots in the homelands.

To summarily dismiss the western diaspora is a slap in the face of the many of us who are valiantly meeting the challenges, and succeeding beyond expectations, in practicing, preserving and perpetuating the religion and traditions in our homes and darbe mehrs.

It is a slap in the face to the youth of the western diaspora, who are rising up now, with trepidation, getting ready to carry the torch.

We can only hope that in our zeal to save our "Parsi-panu" we don't lose the Parsi.

- *Roshan Rivetna*

Teheyton B. Adenwalla of New Zealand expressed his fears:

"The paramount reason why BPP and FPZAI should not join the world body is that, with one stroke of the pen, the world body legitimizes conversion. Since conversion is not part of Zoroastrianism, these so-called 'converts' will always be non-Zoroastrians. One has to be born in the religion to be Zoroastrian.

"They will plan a full scale entry into our agiaries, atashbehras, dokhmas, prayer wells ..."

Pervin J. Mistry of Toronto, wrote a letter to BPP chair Minoo Shroff:

"It is your obligation to protect and preserve our millennia old religion, religious community and all our institutions specifically identified for the sole use of Parsi/Irani Zarathushtis! [We are] appealing to you, the Chair of the BPP, to withdraw from this cosmopolitan World Body that is not geared towards the preservation of our religion and community but only to accommodate the converts who masquerade as 'Neo-Zarathushtis.'

The World Body's main goal is to cause alteration to our revealed Mazdayasni Zarathushti Din.

“As neo-Zarathushtis, all converts will have full privilege of entry and use of our sacred religious institutions of which you and other BPP trustees are the custodians!

It is morally wrong for a trustee of the BPP to also become an official of the WZO or FEZANA, or this World Body that accepts converts as ‘Zarathushtis!’ This is conflict of interest and unethical.

“Will you go down in history as the Destroyer of the Mazdayasni Zarathushti Din?

“Soon, it is expected that the number of Zarathushtis worldwide will swell to 65 million! How will you protect our ethno-religious community of merely a hundred thousand against the millions who will swamp the true Zarathushtis out of existence by diluting and altering our religion?

“Instead of standing firm against the religiously untenable act of conversion, you are about to destroy our *tokham*, the unalterable tenets, scriptures, traditions and rituals of our revealed religion forever...

“We, the true Zarathushtis, appeal to you in the name of our religion and forefathers to please withdraw BPP’s membership from FPZAI thereby refusing to be a co-signatory to the formation of this cosmopolitan World Body.

“You are about to commit irreparable harm to your religion by becoming a co-signatory to the establishment of this World Body. I am positive that you, Mr. Shroff will reconsider your decision to make the BPP a partner to this irreligious, secular World Body.

Rustom Tirandaz, past-trustee of the BPP, proposed the formation of a new “World Parsi Irani Zoroastrian Confederation” in his talk on Sanjan Day, at Sanjan, November 19:

“... This proposed world body will be dominated by the so-called reformists, progressive non-Parsi neo-Zoroastrians. In their zeal to save the Zoroastrian religion from becoming extinct, because they believe that the Parsees are a dying race, they bend over backwards to admit all and sundry into the fold, just to increase our numbers by hook or by crook.

“The sanctity of our places of worship and disposal of the dead have always

been safeguarded, because that is the fundamental belief structure of the Parsi Irani Zoroastrians, that there shall be no dilution of our Tokham Kyani.

“There is an urgent need to form an exclusively Parsi Irani Zoroastrian World Body, of anjumans, federations, punchayets and trusts belonging to ‘born Parsi Irani Zoroastrians.’

“I am starting a new “**World Parsi Irani Zoroastrian Confederation (WPZIC)**” that will be a sort of rescue life boat for the traditional Parsis

worldwide. It shall be the anchor to which can be moored the small and large traditional institutions of the Born Parsi Irani Zoroastrians, who are presently sucked into the powerful propaganda machinery of the reformist movement. It will offer a platform for them to band together and swim against the tide of the cosmopolitan Zoroastrian forces, that are about to swamp the born Parsi Irani Zoroastrians under the surge and swell of twenty-first century reformism. ■

Reassurance from the chair of the BPP:

World Body of Zoroastrians

by Minoo R. Shroff

Reproduced from The BPP Review, Autumn 2003. Note this reassurance from the chair of the BPP addresses previous expressions of concern, preceding the October 2004 public meeting and letters described here.]

Serious concerns have been voiced in various communications addressed to the BPP and in the press about the proposed world body of Zoroastrians. The issue particularly agitating the minds of certain sections of the community, is regarding the definition of a Zoroastrian. This is due to the fact that in various parts of the world, several bodies representing Zoroastrians of those regions have adopted their particular definition, suiting the environment in which they live.

Based on current discussions, we would like to clarify as under: As and when the world body does get formed, it will have two arms (i) WZOI (World Zoroastrian Organization of Individuals) and (ii) WZOF (World Zoroastrian Organization of Federations).

Besides these, there will be an Apex Body, IZO. The object of the IZO will be to serve only as a link between the two Bodies. It will facilitate communication between WZOI and WZOF and be a repository of important information such as population, medical and social trends. It will have a totally separate Board comprising eminent senior representatives from WZOI and WZOF.

It will not exercise any control or influence whatsoever over the functioning of WZOI and WZOF.

If the world body is formed, it is obvious that only FPZAI will become a member of WZOF. The BPP will only be indirectly connected with WZOF, being the major constituent of FPZAI.

It will, thus, be abundantly clear that the question of any non-Zoroastrians exercising any influence on the functioning of its members (FPZAI in this case), or, for that matter, on BPP does not arise.

All the members of WZOF will have total autonomy within their regions and will be governed entirely by their own code and practices.

In the light of the above, the apprehension of a small section of the community that non-Zoroastrians will get the vantage position which will influence the functioning of WZOF is totally unwarranted.

We wish to assure the members of the community that the Trustees of the BPP exist for the welfare of the Parsi Zoroastrians, and therefore will do nothing which will harm in any way and/or prejudice the community’s interests. ■

From the editor, Jam-e-Jamshed

We have no doubt that the creation of the world body is a step in the right direction. The cementing of Parsee or Zoroastrian brotherhood at an international level is a positive development. The fears that neo/pseudo/converts will lay claim and eventually take over our religious institutions, our trust properties are all irrational fears of the mind.

The negotiations between the representatives of the various bodies have been conducted deftly with goodwill, understanding and cooperation. We do not see any danger to our community. We can see only progress and the strengthening of bonds between Zoroastrians throughout the world. Our worthy chairman of the BPP has given categorical assurances...

Those on the negotiating teams of BPP/FPZAI, FEZANA, ZTFE and WZO are to be complimented. They deserve appreciation from the entire Zoroastrian community for forging unity.

On the other hand, there are some in the community who see wrong in everything that others do. They think themselves to be the sole saviors of the community. They choose to criticize our leaders in everything, not realizing that their hidden agenda of creating dissent and destabilizing the community stands thoroughly exposed... [Excerpted from "World Body Facts v/s Fears" Jam-e-Jamshed, 12 Nov. 2004]

A Community Without Borders, Do we need a world body?

by Rohinton M. Rivetna

With the diaspora communities forming a significant proportion of the population now, the Zarathushti world today, unlike a generation ago, is no longer comprised of mainly Iran and the Indian subcontinent. It is not easy for those living in their ancestral homelands for centuries, to fully grasp this phenomenon – that today we are a **worldwide community without borders**.

The fear is that if we wait another decade, the next generation in the diaspora will have weaker ties with India and Iran, and succeeding generations even less. The responsibility lies squarely on our shoulders to strengthen those bonds now, so that our youth will inherit and continue the tradition. Time is of the essence.

In this evolving world, as our community is dispersing in the four corners of the globe, we are facing many challenges. Our brothers and sisters in Iran, in India, South Africa, North America ... all have special needs, deserving our joint attention. We can balance each other with our respective strengths and weaknesses. We have resources both human and material which pooled globally could be very effective.

With globalization none of us is going to remain insular. We will all be impacted sooner or later and we need to be prepared. We should set up our infrastructures to anticipate and prepare for the paradigm shifts that are coming upon us. If we stand together, in harmony, there is a good chance that we may be able to guide our destiny; singly we are sure to stumble and fall.

As a worldwide Community Without Borders, one of the very few one might venture to say, we are uniquely situated to make a difference in today's troubled world. Situated as we are, across the globe, we can, by our collective actions, regain our leadership in all walks of life, give pride to our younger generation, and ensure the flowering of our religion, culture and traditions.

Global infrastructure. All of us to a man, are proud of our cherished Parsi and Iranian institutions and traditions that nurtured us, and our even richer heritage, oftentimes little understood, which we anguish over losing. Hence this grueling back and forth for two decades, trying to form the global infrastructure, to preserve that which we all so cherish.

We hear the wise counsel of our vada dasturjis. The framers of this world body, the elected regional leaders **are** listening to and hearing all voices, all fears and all concerns, and, in their collective wisdom, will be taking measures to address them.

One must understand, however, that there is a process involved. First, there was a germ of an idea, the embryonic stage, put forth by a few. After many hard knocks, and countless meetings with world leaders and other interested persons, we have moved now, from utter divergence two decades ago, towards convergence, last July in London.

Out of this thrashing, there is now emerging a formula, phoenix-like, which is being worked on by the regional leaders, the very same whom we have elected and entrusted with our future. It is a work yet in progress. As soon as a semblance of convergence is reached among the leaders, and a draft is ready, it will be circulated to all constituents, for their review, critique and blessing.

Throughout this process, inputs have been encouraged; and appropriate safeguards and filters are being worked into the constitution, through the democratic process, to guard against 'takeovers'; to preserve regional autonomy, including and especially, our Parsi institutions and traditions; and to ensure a sound and strong structure for our fragile global community, that will stand the test of time.

Voices of dissent. We hear your anguish over losing our faith and traditions, our '*Parsi-panu*,' preserved by our ancestors over centuries, with untold sacrifices. Sometimes they are anguished, sometimes they are reasoned and sometimes they are hurtful. One must have the statesmanship to look beyond the hurt and, with appreciative inquiry, genuinely attempt to understand. No one should feel disenfranchised or disconnected. We must carry all sections of our community together.

COMING EVENTS

IN COMING ISSUES OF FEZANA JOURNAL

Spring 2005:

Vegetation on Earth

Guest Editor: Sam Kerr

Upcoming:

Treasures from the Avesta

Guest Editor: Pallan Ichaporria

Social Justice and Ethics

Suzie Karani & Freyaz Shroff

Neo-Zarathushtis

Focus on Youth

Guide to customs & festivals

Death and the Hereafter

Zoroastrian Symphony Orchestra

CALL FOR MUSICIANS

The ZSO invites musicians, professionals or amateurs, to participate at the Eighth World Zoroastrian Congress in London, UK, in June 2005. Composers and conductors are also invited to apply.

Contact cyrusmehta@aol.com

UN/NGO events

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

● **United Nations: Commission on the Status of Women**, Feb 28 - March 11, 2005 will focus on: (a) Review of the Beijing Platform and (b) Challenges and strategies for advancement and empowerment of women. Visit www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cs-w/49sess.htm.

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

Interested individuals may send CV to Homi Gandhi (Homi_Gandhi@usa.net) or Behram Pas-

Calendar of Festivals Dec - May

Death Anniversary of Zarathushtra

Mah Daye, Roz Khorshed Sun Dec 26 (F)

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)

Khordad Sal (Birthday of Zarathushtra)

Mah Fravardin, Roz Khordad Sat Mar 26 (F)

Pir e Herisht Festival

Mah Fravardin, Roz Amardad-Khorshed Sun Mar 27 - 31 (F)

Ava Ardavisoor nu Parab

Mah Avan, Roz Avan Fri Feb 25 (K)
Sun Mar 27 (S)

Fravardegan (Remembrance of the departed)

Mah Fravardin, Roz Fravardin Fri Apr 8 (F)

Jashne Ardibeheshtgan

Mah Ardibehesht, Roz Ardibehesht Fri Apr 22 (F)

Atash-nu-Parab

Mah Adar, Roz Adar Sat Mar 26 (K)
Mon Apr 25 (S)

Maidyozarem Gahambar

Mah Ardibehesht, Roz Khorshed - Daepmeher
Sat Apr 30 - Wed May 4 (F)

Zarathusht-no-Diso (Death anniversary of Zarathushtra)

Mah Daye, Roz Khorshed Wed Apr 27 (K)
Fri May 27 (S)

Daye Mah nu Jashan

Mah Daye, Roz Fravardin Thu May 5 (K)
Sat Jun 4 (S)

Maidhyarem Gahambar

Mah Daye, Roz Meher-Behram Mon May 2 - Fri May 6 (K)
Wed Jun 1 - Sun Jun 5 (S)

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



ZOROASTRIAN TRUST FUNDS OF EUROPE (INC)

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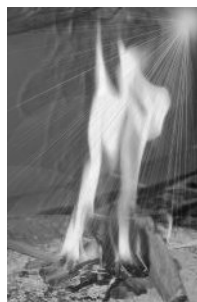


The Fourth World Zoroastrian Youth Congress

Back to the Future

University of Ballarat, Victoria, Australia

December 27, 2007 to January 3, 2008



Our dear Zoroastrians worldwide,

As this living flame of our jashan fire itself seems to reach out to Ahura Mazda, arms uplifted for His blessings, we, the executive committee appointed of the next World Zoroastrian Youth Congress, ask for His blessings on this very honourable venture of ours.

With your support and our honest endeavors, we hope to make this gathering of the clans, the **Best Congress Ever**, in true Aussie style! We pray that you will give us your invaluable assistance and make certain that many of your young Zoroastrians make the journey Downunder for some Fun in the Sun and a most rewarding and exhilarating life experience!

Shiraz J. Mistry
Chairman

Delara C. Mistry
Vice-chair

Shirin J. Mistry
Hon. secretary

Khushroo N. Patel
Financial controller

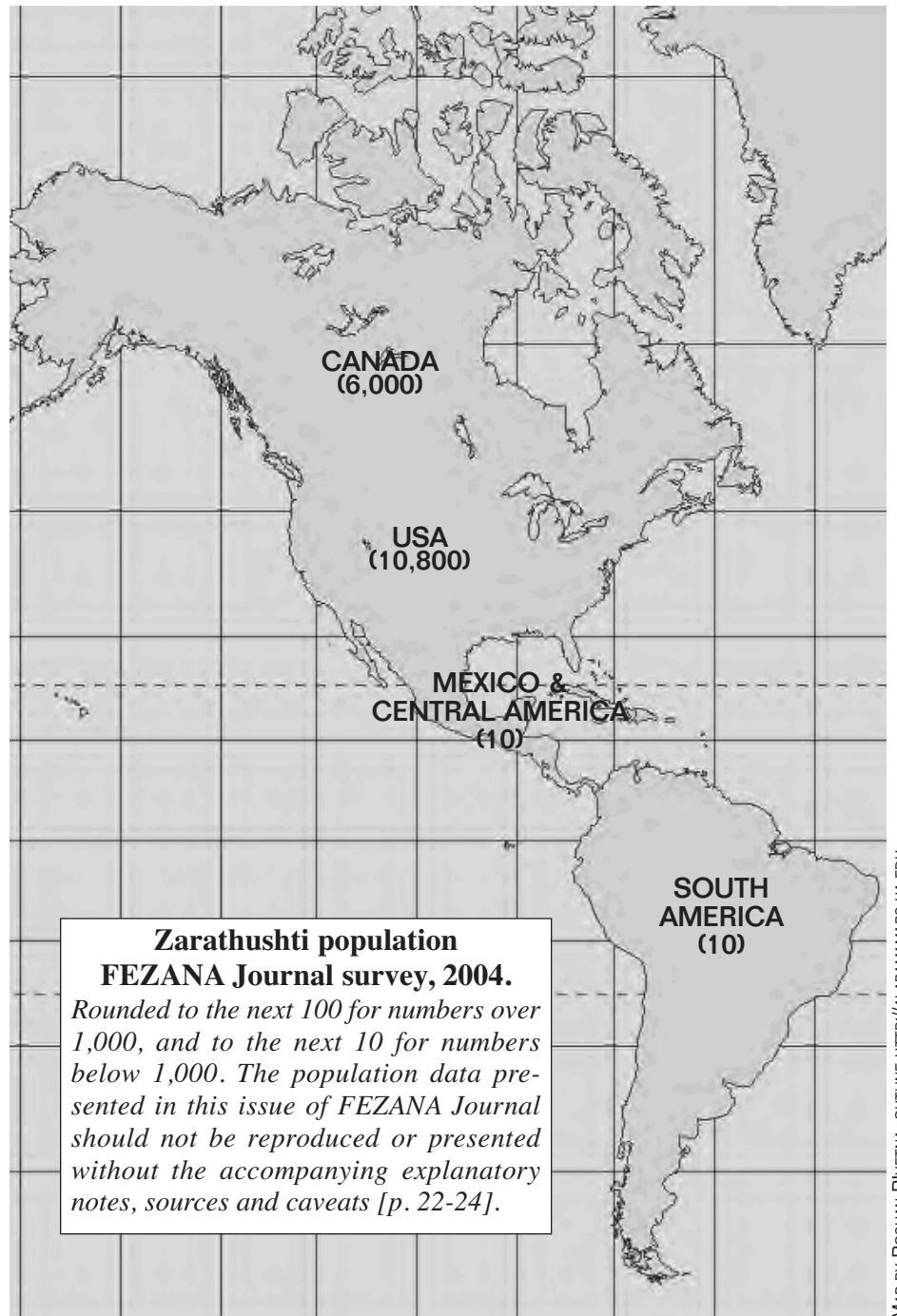
Tel: ++ 61 3 9562 0543 • Email: Smileysjm@optusnet.com.au

Presenting a present-day picture of world-wide Zarathushti population figures and demographics. Where do we live? When did we get there? Our marriage patterns and lifestyles.

While every effort has been made to reach Zarathushtis in all regions of the globe for accurate data, this quick “magazine survey” gives, at best, just a flavor of the demographics. It is not an officially conducted, statistically accurate census. The raw data, as received from respondents, is presented here, with no attempt at analyzing the data, forecasting trends or drawing conclusions.

Readers are invited to submit comments and suggestions, evoked by reading these articles. Comments and updates to the population figures, will be published in future issues of FEZANA Journal, as more accurate data is available.

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



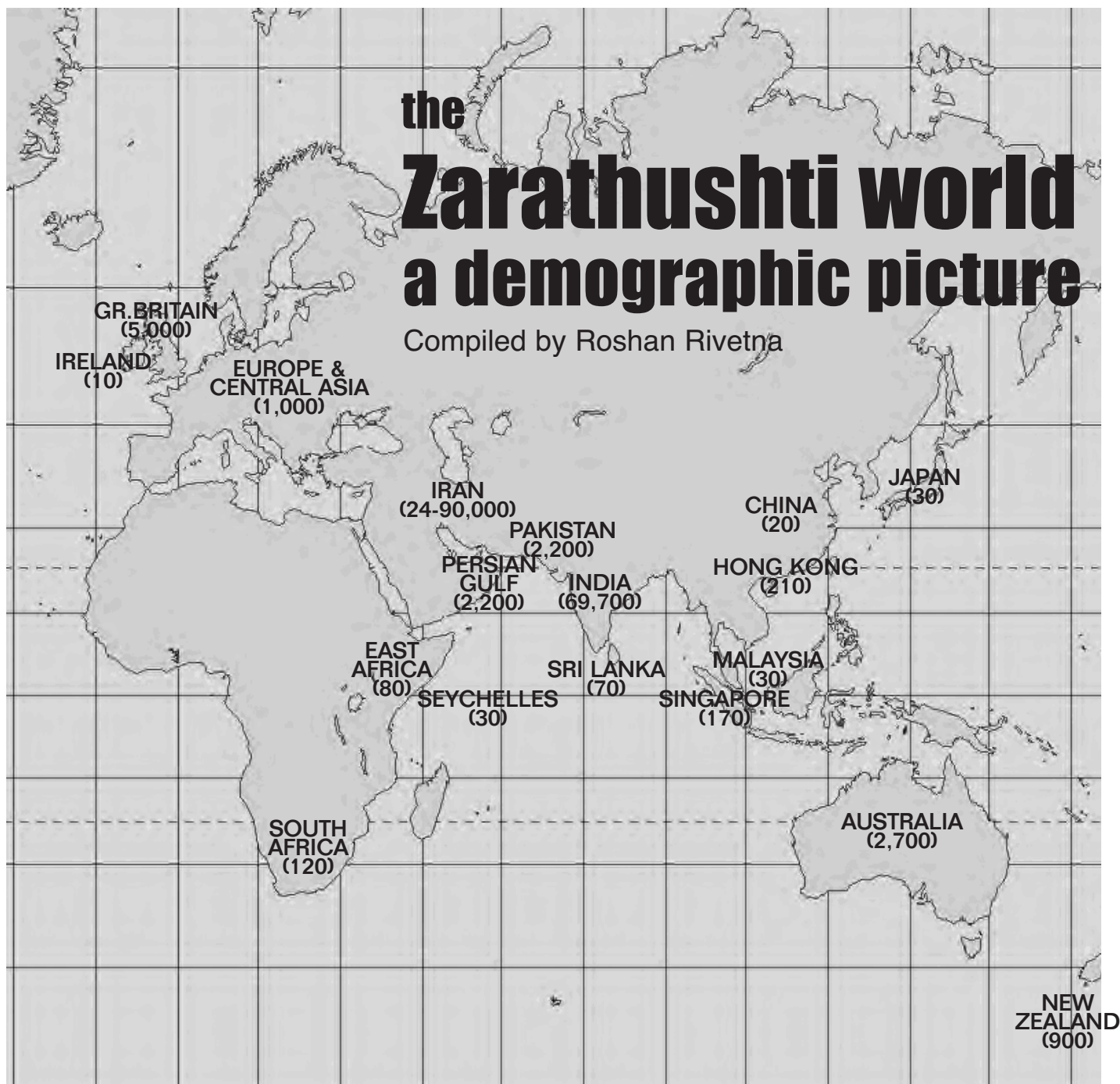
The genesis of this issue of FEZANA Journal on Zarathushti demographics, was the recent spate of articles in the press, reporting a decline in the Parsi population indicated in the 2001 Government of India census. Similar vibes were received from various quarters in regards to the population in Iran.

Concerned and curious, we undertook this survey, with the goal of collecting population data from all countries of the world where Zarathushtis are known to reside.

The process. For Iran and India, we invited papers addressing demographic issues in these two countries. [See p. 26 ff].

For each of the other countries we established a knowledgeable contact person – either an official of the local association or a long time resident.

For the larger ‘second diaspora’ countries – USA, Canada and Australia, we further, communicated directly with a contact person in *each* state or province.



The questionnaire basically asked for (a) the total count of Zarathushtis in that 'area' (country or state/province); (b) the total count of non-Zarathushti spouses; and (c) an estimate of how many more Zarathushtis there might be "out there" that were missed from the count. A short background history and interesting anecdotal information, is also presented for some countries.

The goal was to count all Zarathushtis in each country. Data was collected on a country/state/

province level, and not at an association level. Special efforts were made by each contact person to seek out and count Zarathushtis "on the fringes" – those who were not affiliated with any associations or recorded in any local databases or directories.

Guidelines. For consistency in responses, the following guidelines were established:

- Persons on temporary (for a few months only) professional assign-

ments were counted in their home state/country.

- College students away from home were counted in their home state/country.

- Transfer of families from one country/state/province to another may have resulted in some families being counted twice (in both states) and others dropped from the count (not counted in either state).

- For purposes of this survey, all children of mixed marriages were

counted as Zarathushtis, unless the children were definitely known to follow another religion.

● There were occasional (rather rare) cases of ‘born’ Zarathushtis having leanings towards other religions. For purposes of this survey, unless the person was officially known to have converted to another religion, he/she was counted.

The emergence of *Neo-Zarathushtis* (or ‘*Zarathushtis by choice*’) in recent decades is not covered here. A study and discussion of this topic will be presented in a future issue of FEZANA Journal, after consistent and comprehensive facts and figures have been gathered.

Caveats. Data gathered on population and marriages is presented in these tables [pp. 24 – 25], with copious explanatory notes in the articles on succeeding pages.

This data could be misleading, if reproduced out of context, without the accompanying explanations.

FEZANA Journal presents the raw data as submitted by each respondent. With the limited time and resources available, only minimal verification or validation of the submitted numbers, has been possible.

As such, there might be inconsistencies from respondent to respondent – in the counting process used as well as in the definitions of who is to be counted.

This data should be viewed as ‘a first draft,’ a work in progress. It can be safe to say that the population numbers presented here are a lower limit – of Zarathushtis that could be counted; the actual numbers could conceivably be much higher. Additions and corrections, if forthcoming, will be presented in future issues.

Again, FEZANA Journal wishes to reiterate that, while every effort has been made to seek out accurate information, the data presented here is not an official census, and gives, at best, just a flavor of The Zarathushti World. ■

WORLD ZARATHUSHTI POPULATION, 2004 (FEZANA Journal Survey)

Iran	30 to 90,000 or 24,000	Source: Parviz Varjavand [p. 28] Source: Mehraban Firouzgary based on Statistics Center of Iran census figures for 1986 and 1996, and current population estimates.
India	69,601	Government of India 2001 census. See analyses by Armaity Desai [p. 31], Homi Dhallal [p. 36] and Godrej Dotivala [p. 40].
USA	10,794	Survey of 50 US states by Roshan Rivetna, assisted by Noshir Jesung [p. 56 ff].
Canada	5,975	Survey of 10 Canadian provinces by Roshan Rivetna, assisted by Noshir Jesung [p. 55].
Great Britain	5,000	British Government 2001 census and estimates from Rusi Dalal, ZTFE, [p. 64]. England (4,900), Scotland (65), Northern Ireland (25) and Wales (<10)
Australia	2,601	Survey of 7 Australian states, coordinated by Sam Kerr [p. 76].
Persian Gulf	2,200	Source: Meher Bhesania [p. 70]. UAE (1,500), Oman (300), Bahrain (125), Kuwait (100), Saudi Arabia (100), Qatar (75).
Pakistan	2,121	Census by Karachi Zartoshti Banu Mandal, Hutoxi Cowasjee [p. 50].
Europe & Central Asia	1,000	Source: Dolly Dastoor [p. 66].
New Zealand	900	Source: Tehmus Mistry [p. 76].
Hongkong	210	Source: Jal Shroff and Yazdi Parekh [p. 80].
Singapore	162	Source: Russi Ghadialy and Nelly Doctor [p. 80].
Southern Africa	114	Source: Solly Shapurji [p. 72]. South Africa (83), Maputo (15), Swaziland (10), Botswana (4), Zambia (2)
East Africa	78	Source: Rusi Dalal [p. 72]. Kenya (60), Tanzania (18)
Sri Lanka	66	Source: Jamsheed Choksy [p. 51].
Malaysia	30	Source: Nelly Doctor [p. 80].
Japan	30	Source: Jal Shroff and Yazdi Parekh [p. 80].
Seychelles	21	Source: Soona Oliaji [p. 74].
China	20	Source: Jal Shroff and Yazdi Parekh [p. 80].
Ireland	10	Source: Rusi Dalal [p. 64].
Brazil, Venezuela	10	[p. 62]
Mexico, Central America, West Indies	10	[p. 62]
Total world population		= 124,953 (assuming Iran = 24,000) = 190,953 (assuming Iran = 90,000)

Non-Zarathushti Spouses as a % of the population	
Iran	n/a
India	n/a
USA	6.0%
Canada	4.5%
UK	5.2%
Australia	6.5%
Persian Gulf	0.1%
Pakistan (Karachi)	2.4%
Europe	n/a
New Zealand	2.9%
Hongkong	8.6%
Singapore	16.5%
South Africa	13.0%
East Africa	2.5%
Sri Lanka	13.2%
Malaysia	19.4%
Japan	16.7%
Seychelles	34.4%
China	9.0%

*Presented above is the 'percentage of non-Zarathushti spouses in the total population (including non-Zarathushti spouses).' This data gives only a cursory, relative measure for comparison. It is **not** a 'percentage of interfaith marriages.' For the source of each data item, refer to the population table [p. 23].*

Observations. We shall leave it to the statisticians to decipher this data further. However, the following observations do appear to be cause for alarm:

(1) In India there were 457 deaths per every 100 births, compared to only 60.6 deaths in North America.

(2) For India the percentage of interfaith marriages shows an increasing trend (from 20.5% in 1992 to 35.0% in 2004).

(3) For USA and Canada the percentage of interfaith marriages also shows an increasing trend (from 23.6% in 1992 to 46.2% in 2004).

- Roshan Rivetna

Comparison of births, deaths and marriages as reported in Parsiana (for Mumbai) and FEZANA Journal (for USA & Canada)

14 years: 1991 - 2004

Presented below are births, deaths and marriages (intra and inter) as recorded in FEZANA Journal (for USA and Canada) and Parsiana (for Mumbai). These figures only record the information submitted for publication, or collected from various association newsletters, the internet or personal knowledge; and are therefore only some (unknown) percentage of the actual numbers.

FEZANA JOURNAL				PARSIANA			
	Births	Deaths	Deaths per 100 births		Births	Deaths	Deaths per 100 births
1991-1992	70	36	51.4	1992	316	958	303
1993-1994	86	44	51.2	1993-1994	520	2,135	411
1995-1996	61	48	78.7	1995-1996	437	1,904	436
1997-1998	98	58	59.2	1997-1998	413	1,950	472
1999-2000	80	51	63.8	1999-2000	342	1,881	550
2001-2002	106	65	61.3	2001-2002	375	1,828	487
2003-Sep04	96	60	62.5	2003-Sep04	180	1,140	633
Total	597	362	60.6	Total	2,583	11,796	457

MARRIAGES – FEZANA JOURNAL				MARRIAGES – PARSIANA (Mumbai)			
USA & CANADA	Intra	Inter	%inter		Intra	Inter	%Inter
1991-1992	29	9	23.6%	1992	260	67	20.5%
1993-1994	37	15	28.9%	1993-1994	618	157	20.3%
1995-1996	36	20	35.7%	1995-1996	481	171	26.2%
1997-1998	38	17	30.9%	1997-1998	537	215	28.6%
1999-2000	36	18	33.3%	1999-2000	392	124	24.0%
2001-2002	33	25	43.1%	2001-2002	468	208	30.8%
2003-Sep04	35	30	46.2%	2003-Sep04	286	154	35.0%
Total	244	134	35.4%	Total	3,042	1,096	26.5%

Key. Table at top shows 'Number of births,' 'Number of deaths' and 'Number of deaths per 100 births.' Table above shows 'intrafaith marriages,' 'interfaith marriages' and 'interfaith marriages as a percentage of all marriages.'

Acknowledgments to Aban Vazifdar for tabulating the data from FEZANA Journal and to Roxana Driver for help with the data from Parsiana.

Estimated percentage of **interfaith families in UK**, based on a count of 45 non-Zarathushti spouses for 267 families (not counting single households) listed in the first 40 pages of the 125-page ZTFE directory = 16.9%. There is no equivalent metric for the other countries.

- Rusi Dalal



zarathushtis in iran - a demographic profile



by Mobed Mehraban Firouzgary
in cooperation with Dr. Mehran Sepehri,
Sharif University of Technology, Tehran,
for the statistical data.

In major Zarathushti cities of Iran – Tehran, Karaj, Yazd, Kerman, Shiraz, Isfahan, and Ahvaz – Zarathushtis continue to celebrate Nouruz and Mehrgan, to elect anjuman board members, and to carry out millennium-old traditions. However, many of their functions are now less crowded and are visibly lacking youth. Zarathushti neighborhoods in Kerman and Yazd are gradually being sold by outgoing emigrants and Zarathushti gatherings are less frequent and elaborate.

Iranian Zarathushtis do not accept new converts, while the Zarathushti population continues to decrease due to outside community marriages, emigration, and slow rate of marriage with fewer children. Although Zarathushtis are still visible after 1,400 years of Islamic rule and are recognized as an official minority in Iran, the numbers are rapidly dwindling. Many Zarathushtis seem to have lost their interests in anjuman membership and may not have been counted in official census data.

Official census numbers. The Statistics Center of Iran conducts and publishes the census and demography data in Iran. The official census is done every ten years, the last two

being in 1986 and 1996. The numbers available in official government publications and on the Statistics Center of Iran's website include summary numbers for Zarathushtis. The official figures from the government seem fairly reliable and believable [see table below].

While the general population of Iran has grown by 22% in ten years, the Zarathushti population has decreased by 15% in the same ten years.

As for relative numbers: in 1986, there was one Zarathushti for every 1,517 Iranians; in 1996, the number dropped to one Zarathushti for every 2150 Iranians – a 30% decrease in 10 years.

Projecting this trend of losing 466 Zarathushtis a year, we should be down to about 24,000 Zarathushtis in 2004.

General estimate. The general estimate for Zarathushtis living in Iran today is 24,000 [table next page]. It is estimated that over 60% of Zarathushtis now live in greater **Tehran province**, including Tehran city, Karaj and Tehran Pars. **Yazd province** including Sharifabad, Khoramabad, Nasrabad, Mahalat, and others, has about 6,000 Zarathushtis. **Kerman** province is third with 1,600 Zarathushtis, **Shiraz** 600 and **Isfahan** 300. The remaining 500 Zarathushtis are scattered in other Iranian cities.

Statistical Center of Iran Census Data, 1986 and 1996
[Source: <http://www.sci.org.ir/persia/>]

		Male	Female	Total
Zarathushtis	1986	16,666	15,923	32,589
Total Population	1986	25,280,961	24,164,049	49,445,010
Zarathushtis	1996	14,173	13,747	27,920
Total Population	1996	30,515,159	29,540,329	60,055,488

APPROXIMATE POPULATION ESTIMATES	
Tehran province	~15,000
Yazd province	~6,000
Kerman province	~1,600
Shiraz	~600
Isfahan	~300
Other cities	~500
Iran total	Approx. 24,000

EDUCATION LEVELS		
	Brides	Grooms
High School	67	43
Pre-graduates	3	2
Graduates	87	98
Post Graduates	22	27
Doctorates	8	17

MARRIAGE AGE		
	Brides	Grooms
20 - 24	57	7
25 - 29	84	69
30 - 35	86	59
36 - 40	5	33

Among the brides, there are also two 19 year-olds, two 42 year-olds and one 50 year-old.

Among the grooms, there are one 48-year-old, one 60 year-old and one 61-year old.

In the recent election of Majlis (the Iran Parliament), over 7,000 Zarathushti votes were cast. With eligibility voting age of 18 in Iran and about 50% participation, the general estimate of 24,000 Zarathushti seems fairly accurate.

Further, it is also estimated that the population has aged in the past two decades.

Marriages. In popular Zarathushti gatherings and weddings, sometimes up to 1,000 Zarathushtis attend.

I have the following statistics to offer from the records of my own office – “The Tehran Zartoshti Marriage Registration Office.” The sole authority for issuing (Iranian) Marriage Licenses, for those Zarathushti couples who choose my office (in Tehran), is bestowed upon me by the Justice Ministry of the Iranian Government. There are similar offices in Yazd and Kerman, as well.

From the time of my appointment, on May 11, 2003, to date, 187 couples have been married.

We do not have any divorce offices for Zarathushtis in Iran, however, during this period seven couples, all from older marriages, have managed to get civil divorces – a very difficult and long process for non-Muslims. Their verdict is sent to my office for recording.

The education levels and marriage age of the 187 couples is shown in the tables [at left]. No one is educated below high school graduation

(diploma). One can see that the marriage age for Zarathushtis has increased. The trend in getting married at older ages and worse than that, limiting children to two at the most, continues.

Inter-religious marriages. If an Iranian Muslim marries a non-Muslim, the latter must first convert to Islam before the marriage can be registered. There are rare cases where identities have been hidden and marriages registered without getting converted, however, such a marriage is unlawful and none of the rights allowed by law for separation, inheritance will apply.

As for myself, I am very strict in making sure that both the parties are Zarathushtis. A Zarathushti wanting to marry a Christian or a Jew, would again, be refused from my office. If other registration offices are used to get a marriage license, conflicts arise, usually, for religious rites as well as inheritance, etc.

Jashan at Azargoshasb Fire Temple. Over 200 Zarathushtis made the 7-hour bus trip from Tehran for a gahambar and jashan at the ancient Takht e Suleiman Azargoshasb fire temple. The jashan was performed by mobeds, [l. to r.] Dr. Rostam Vahidi, Mehraban Firouzgary, Dr. Ardeshir Khorshidian, Rashid Khorshidian and [not in picture] Hormosdyar Khorshidian, Pedram Soroushpour and Dr. Shahriar Banki. This historic site by the lake, in the province of Azerbaijan, was a popular resort city for Sasanian royalty. [SOURCE MEHRAN SEPEHRI, COURTESY CREATINGAWARENESS@YAHOOGROUPS.COM].



The incidence of such inter-religious marriages is very low, no more than two per year, on the average. The youth who have migrated abroad, however, are marrying outside the religion in far larger numbers.

Emigration. In the past twenty five years, since the Islamic revolution in Iran (in 1979) there has been growing emigration to the West. Many youth and their families, looking for better education and job opportunities, seeking a better standard of living away from religious discrimination, have been leaving everything behind and moving to new lands abroad. While those with education or funds and those with families abroad are able to easily move to the West, the less fortunate ones stay behind.

Official records from *Hias* immigration/refugee publications show that, for the past four years, over 100 Zarathushtis a year from Iran have been processed in Austria for immigration to the US. It is estimated that the same numbers emigrate to Canada, Australia and Europe. Thus, each year at least 400 Zarathushtis, mostly youth and the educated, leave Iran through the refugee process.

[Continued on page 48]

Mobed Mehraban Firouzgary [photo previous page] has served as a member of the managing board of the *Tehran Anjuman e Mobedan* (Kankash e Mobedan) for 27 years. Since May 2003, he has been authorized by the Justice Ministry of Iran as the sole Zarathushti marriage licence issuing authority in Tehran. Born in Yazd, Iran, he received his Electronics degree from St. Xavier's Tech. Institute, Mumbai. He worked at J. N. Marshall in India, and at IBM, Honeywell, a medical instrument distributor and glassware manufacturing plant in Iran. Mehraban was initiated as a navar in Iran, and learned Avesta under his brother Sohrabjee, a boywalla at Dadyseth Agiary, Mumbai.

the zarathushti religion in Iran today

by Parviz Varjavand

Exploring the transformations taking place in Iran and the demographic makeup of the Zarathushti population – an issue of enormous complexity.

Iran is now the heart of what was once the greater Persia. Zoroastrianism is native to Persia and the history of this religion and the land are totally intertwined. Even when Islam conquered Persia, we see that shades of Islam practiced in this region, (Shiism, Ismaili, Sufism, Irfan, Yazidi, Ali Alahi, etc.) are heavily influenced by Zoroastrianism.

Islamization. A reverse of this process has also taken place. Iranian Zoroastrianism has been subjugated to Islamic pressures for so long that it has become itself somewhat Islamized. In the past, the pressure upon Zartoshtis was external, aimed at making them abandon their religion and convert to Islam. That kind of pressure helped members of the religion solidify rank to expel the external threat.

Today the pressure comes from within the religion and mostly by the youth who consider themselves enlightened. They wish to change the religion so that Islam will respect it as a religion similar in basic structures to itself.

The heart of a religious community beats where its priesthood and schol-

ars of the religion dwell. It is not hard to observe that most of the present thinkers and scholars that impact Iranian Zoroastrianism come from the Islamic fold. These influential Muslim thinkers have worked as educators of religion directly impacting what is taught to Zartoshti children. Their impact upon the religion is direct because they write in Persian and act as mentors to many of the community's leaders and the youth.

The question whether it is Zoroastrianism that has colored the Islam of these thinkers or their Islam that has colored the Zoroastrianism of Iran remains an issue to be debated. Let us hope that neither has impacted the other in a negative way.

However the fact remains that at present, most Iranian Zartoshtis do not wear their sudreh and kushti or pay their respects to the remaining sacred fires with the deep devotions of their forefathers. Their posture is mostly defensive and intellectual rather than serene and faith oriented.

Changes in Iran. Iranian Zartoshtis have accepted many changes over the past hundred years of their history. For example, they almost all

follow the Fasli calendar. They do not have any open *dokhmas* and they bury their dead. They recite shorter versions of many of the longer prayers. They have mobedyars from non-mobed ancestry perform all the duties of a mobed, receiving equal pay and respect as mobeds. Non-Zartoshtis are not barred from attending their religious ceremonies or temples.

They cannot admit Muslim spouses of Zartoshtis or their children in their fold per the present laws of Iran, but when a person marries a non-Zartoshti of non-Muslim origin (like I did) they welcome the spouse and perform *sedreh pooshi* on that spouse and his/her children.

“ I see their dwindling numbers and their willingness to abandon the homeland and scatter to the four corners of the earth more as a result of this internal breakdown than any outside economic or financial pressure. ”

The big battle in Iran now is over the hearts and minds of Zartoshtis to see if these are enough logical changes, or should they go even further and throw out the *Izadan*, *Ameshasepandan*, *Pirs*, *Sofrehs*, and many more ways and customs still considered sacred out of the window too. I think that these changes, if implemented, will transform the nature and theology of an ancient and living religion in a way that will make it a totally reconstructed and altered religion.



The 3000th Anniversary of Zoroastrian Culture celebrations, in Tehran, in December 2003: Scholar and ordained mobed Dr. Rostam Vahidi, Mobed Mehraban Firouzgary, a past president of the Tehran Anjuman Dr. Boozarjomehr Mehr and current Tehran anjuman president Rostam Abadian. PHOTO: ZARIR NADJMI COURTESY MOBED FIROUZGARY.

Priesthood. The priesthood of the religion has become greatly weakened by the constant attacks of the intellectuals and scholars upon the sanctity and significance of their performed prayers and rituals. One generation ago, the sanctity of all their religious performances became a mockery when the new Fasli religious calendar was introduced. We are not debating whether the Fasli calendar is right or wrong; but rather the fact that it showed the priesthood as a caste that had attached so much sacredness to dates that were incorrect.

Reformists. Today “monotheism” is the issue pursued by the reformists. The recently understood book of Gathas is used to devastate the faith of the population in their classic prayers coming mostly from the book of Avesta. The *Izadan* and *Ameshasepandan* are associated with the *daevas* and purging them from the prayers is encouraged. One should realize that this is not a minor thing as these names occupy positions of reverence in all prayers and rituals as inherited from the past.

A Persian proverb says “You can accomplish more with a broken hand than with a broken heart”.

Breaking the heart of the Iranian Zartoshtis and turning them against ways that their ancestry considered sacred has demoralized them. I see their dwindling numbers and their willingness to abandon the homeland and scatter to the four corners of the earth more as a result of this internal breakdown than any outside economic or financial pressure.

Population figures. To follow the demographic makeup of the Zartoshti population of Iran has also become a question of enormous complexity.

These figures fluctuate between 90,000 to less than 30,000. The less than 30,000 is a number that the community does not wish to admit because if our numbers fall to less than 30,000 in a nation of seventy million, we lose our right to have the one representative that we get to send to the National Islamic Parliament.

One reason why the number of Zartoshtis is reported higher at times

when the census is taken is because no proof of religious affiliation is demanded by census takers. Many Iranians who may feel Zartoshti in their hearts report their religion as Zoroastrian, even though, if randomly examined, we find that their names are Muslim names.

“ I think that these changes, if implemented, will transform the nature and theology of an ancient and living religion in a way that will make it a totally reconstructed and altered religion. ”

The number of persons who ‘somehow feel’ they are Zartoshtis is very high in Iran. Yet when the pro-conversion elements approach them, they realize that these persons do not wish to officially convert. They rather remain in their own imagined fantasy land of “*True Zoroastrianism*” than convert to any recognized version. Intellectual affiliation to some fantasy norm is easy while actual devoted conversion to a religion with strong boundaries is hard.

Conversion and mixed marriages. Conversion to Zoroastrianism is forbidden under the present laws of Iran. But even if it was allowed, would it help relieve the stress upon the Zartoshti population here?

My answer would be Yes, it would. Zoroastrianism has been a one way street with going ‘out’ as the only option for too long. A great number of eligible men have left the country leaving the girls behind. What are these girls to do and who are they to marry?

The fresh members coming in cannot be against the older customs of the religion any more than the present youth of the community already are.

There were a number of conversions that took place some forty years ago, mostly in the provinces of Khuzestan and Mazendaran, but I do not know of a single one of those converts still affiliating themselves with the main body of the religion.

Mixed marriages in which the spouse or the children have come towards us have been much more successful. The law of this land requires that when a member of any other religion marries a Muslim, that person should convert to Islam and their children considered Muslim.

However, we have examples of persons who have officially converted to Islam in order to make their marriage

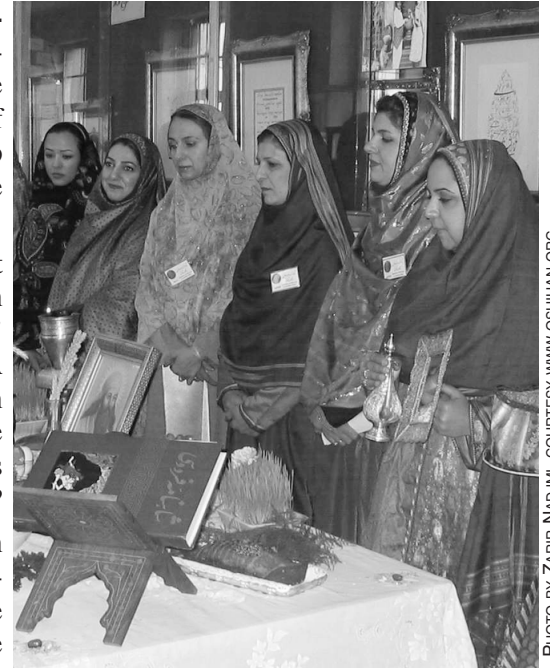


PHOTO BY ZARIR NADJMI, COURTESY WWW.OSHIHAN.ORG

Zarathushti ladies in traditional dress at 3000th Anniversary celebrations, Tehran.

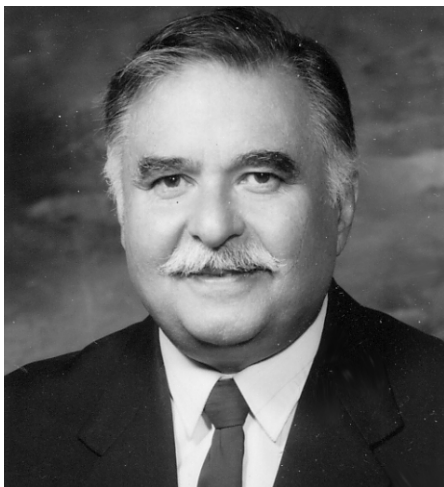
legal, yet instead of taking the family down the path of Islam, have actually brought it towards the Zartoshti fold. This however is a risky undertaking and would backfire should the number of persons doing it pass the number of fingers on both hands.

Converts from other lands such as Russia, Tajikistan or South America have not come to Iran yet, so it is hard to guess how they would be received here.

Most Iranian fire temples are open to visitors, so there would not be any problem with them praying in the temples.

I believe that the reformists, whose numbers are not small, would establish very cordial relationship with these converts should they venture a trip here. The reaction of the government officials and the orthodox Zartoshtis may not be as rosy however as they may feel a new threat to the delicately balanced status that exists here.

I am sorry if the picture I paint of our community in Iran is a rather gloomy one, but it is no gloomier than the fate of our whole planet earth and its future. ■



Parviz Varjavand is an architect. He was born in Tehran in 1940 and graduated from the University of California at Berkeley in 1965. Parviz works in Iran but resides in the USA. He collects artifacts related to Iran and Zoroastrianism. At present he is involved in the renovation and restoration of some old Zarathushti houses in the city of Yazd, Iran.



india: addressing population concerns and community response

by Armaity S. Desai

“It is apparent from the 2001 census results that urgent and drastic interventions are required by all concerned including possibly, the government and definitely by the Parsi community leaders to ensure survival of the Parsi population in India.” — J. K. Banthia, Census Commissioner of India

Advisor and coordinator for PARZOR Research on Demography and Health, Armaity S. Desai presents observations on the Government of India 2001 census results and offers a community response.

The 2001 Census was a unique one as the Census Commissioner, Mr. J. K. Banthia, who was very aware of the Parsi predicament, took considerable interest in the enumeration of the Parsis. He urged *PARZOR* [1] to convince the community that it is in their interest to collaborate with the census enumerators, as the data from the census can help us develop a response to the needs of the community. Publicity was done and we hope that the com-

munity gave a positive response. Only those data that are presently available, are quoted here.

They leave us wondering where the community is headed. Greater insights are required to understand the situation through micro research studies, to explain the macro level data. The *PARZOR* activities have taken this direction.

The message in the numbers

The data [next page] bring out the plight of the Parsis, which is not of recent genesis. Census figures for the last century and a decennial, indicate a clear population decline taking place in the Parsi community in India

going back to several decades of the last century.

Migration. While some figures could be explained by migration, micro studies are needed to establish the degree to which it adds to the losses sustained by natural decrease, which are obvious in the figures. The steep decline began in 1961 when migration abroad was not as much as in the last couple of decades.

Moreover, we may not be able to rely on the migrating population to ensure the survival of the community, because the second and third generation of migrants tend to marry the local population. There is a net loss to the community in terms of both

[Continued on page 34]

[1] *PARZOR* is a UNESCO-assisted project spearheaded by Dr. Shernaz Cama, New Delhi, to preserve and promote Zarathushti culture and heritage. Visit www.unescoparzor.com.

Some observations on the 2001 census of India

- The 1991 census had enumerated a **population** of 76,382, with a ratio of 1,024 females to 1,000 males. In 2001, we came down by 6,781 in one decade to 69,601, which is a decline of 9%.

- The 1991 census had a **sex ratio** of 1,024 females to 1,000 males. In 2001, it is 1,050 females to 1,000 males. This higher ratio of women to men is not because more girls are born than boys. In fact, it is to the contrary, because girls from 0 to 4 in this census are 941 to 1,000 boys. The difference is accounted for by the fact that more women generally live longer than men.

In the general population of the country, there were 927 females (in 1991) and 933 females (in 2001) to 1,000 males. The lower figures for the country as a whole suggest the use of sex selection tests (amniocentesis) in favor of the male child that does not exist among the Parsis. On the other hand, the data on Parsis show more women than men among the elderly, which have considerable bearing on the care-taking functions required by them, especially those living alone.

- Over the ten-year period, the average increase of **females** among the Parsis is 26 per 1000 males, whereas, in the general population, it is only 6.

- In the general population, the decadal increase in **growth rate** from 1991 to 2001 is 21%, whereas, among the Parsis, we have the opposite (-8.88%) a decrease in our population. We are .0069% of the Indian population of over a billion. The only other minority group reported with the lowest decadal increase was that of the Sikhs at 18.2%. Besides a poor sex ratio, the Sikhs have been migrating in large numbers, their migration to Canada being pegged at 2% of the Canadian population, the second highest location being the U.K. This is similar to the migration pattern of the Parsis.

- The percentage of Parsi **children** in the age group 0 to 6 is only 4.7% (0 to 4 is 3.2%), whereas, in the general population it is 15%. In 1901, the percentage of Parsi children in this age group was 9.5%. In one century, we have lost 4.8%, which means a loss of 50% in this vital age group that determines the demographic profile at other ages. The Sikhs, who have the lowest rate of population growth, have 12.8% in this age group, almost three times more than the Parsis.

- Our **crude birth rate** in the 2001 census is 6 to 7 per 1000. The respective figures for the population as a whole were 32.5 in 1991 and came down to 24.8 in 2001.

- Our **crude death rates** are 16 to 18 per 1000 as against 9 per 1000 in the general population. This means that we lose 10 persons per 1000, if we subtract 6 births from 16 deaths. ***This is the most telling figure of all to establish the fact of the decline, which cannot be explained by taking recourse to migration as the only reason for the decline,*** because it is not as if all our young couples have gone abroad to reproduce.

- We do not have information currently on the net replacement rate for Parsis in this Census, but it may be noted that from 1901 to 1926, the birth rate ranged from 24 births per

1000 population and peaked in 1911 to 29.2 per 1000. It may be noted that poor sanitation leading to epidemics such as plague and smallpox, and poor health services, would naturally lead to a high birth rate to ensure that some children survived till maturity. The first decline occurred in 1926 at 21.7 per 1000 and, from then on, there was a steady decline to 15.7 in 1943 for which figures are available to me [2]. This means that, though our population had peaked in 1941, in fact, the birth rate was 16.6 per 1,000, and the decline in fertility had started much earlier from 1926.

- Those **above the age of 60** constitute 31% of the total population, possibly the highest percentage in the world, even compared to western countries with 12.7% in the United States and 15.7% for the UK. The proportion in India is 7% which was the figure for the Parsis in 1931! [2]. This means that the Parsi population has been aging over a long period.

It is not recent history and both Desai [3] and Chandra Sekar [2] alerted us to it as far back as 1948 but we have not heeded it. The population of **those above 65** is 24.1%. The males are 22.7% and females are 25.7%. The Parsi population in Maharashtra is the highest. The census shows that there are 28.1% above 65 in the population, of whom, the males are 23.5% and females are 25.5%. The population in Gujarat shows a lesser percentage of those above 65, with a total of 20% Parsis. Males are 19.8% and females 21.7%. Women distinctly outlive men and this is the general biological phenomenon in India and in other countries.

- The **literacy rate** in the community is 97.9%, which is not surprising as education of Parsi children was emphasised as early as the late 19th century for both girls and boys. The Jains are second with a literacy rate of 94.1%, followed by Christians at 80.3%, while for the Sikhs it is 69.4%, nearer the national average of 64.8%.

- The **working population** of Parsis is reported as 35.2%, whereas, for the country as a whole, it is 39.3%. For Parsi males it is 48.2%, while for the country it is 51.9%. All communities except the Muslims, had a higher work participation rate than the Parsis. For females, it is 22.8%, while the national average is 25.6%; all except Muslims, Sikhs and Jains, who do not favour that their women work. All others have a higher percentage of women's work participation.

These lower figures for the Parsis may be due to the late age at starting to earn a living due to longer period of education, no child labour, and a smaller population in the working group, as we have a large dependency ratio of older people. If we just look at the gross population numbers in the various age groups, the number of dependents in the age group 19 and below is 17.9% and those above 60 is 30.9%, a total of 48.8%; whereas, the number in the age group 20-59 is 51.1%. We have an almost one-to-one ratio of dependents to the working population. The figures suggest that, because of the large percentage of the elderly in the population, many would not be shown as participating in work. However, micro studies on employment are very necessary to study the work participation rates among the Parsis who are averse to blue-collar work. ■

*Population distribution of Parsis from 1891 to 2001, showing
increases/decreases during the period in India, the State of Maharashtra and the city of Mumbai*

Year	India	Change	%	Maharashtra	Change	%	Mumbai	Change	%	% in Mumbai
1891	89,490	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
1901	94,140	+4,650	+5.20%	58,093	–	–	46,231	–	–	49.11%
1911	100,096	+5,956	+6.33%	63,860	+5,767	+9.93%	50,931	+4,700	+10.17%	50.88%
1921	101,778	+1682	+1.68%	65,493	+1633	+2.56%	52,234	+1,303	+2.56%	51.32%
1931	109,752	+7,974	+7.83%	71,627	+6,134	+9.37%	57,765	+5,531	+10.59%	52.63%
1941	114,890	+5,138	+4.68%	70,139	–1,488	–2.08%	59,813	+2,048	+3.55%	52.06%
1951	111,791	–3,099	–2.70%	79,606	+9,467	+13.50%	68,660	+8,847	+14.79%	61.42%
1961	100,772	–11,019	–9.86%	77,542	–2,064	–2.59%	70,065	+1,405	+2.05%	69.53%
1971	#91,378	–9,394	–9.32%	72,266	–5,276	–6.80%	64,669	–5,398	–7.70%	70.77%
1981	*71,630	–19,748	–21.61%	56,866	–5,380	–21.28%	50,053	–14,614	–22.60%	69.88%
1991	76,382	*+4752	+6.63%	60,501	*+3,635	+6.39%	53,794	+3,741	+7.47%	70.43%
		#–14,996	–16.41%	#–12,041	–16.66					
2001	69,601	–6,781	–8.88%	54,739	–5,762	–9.52%	46,557	–7,237	–13.45%	66.89%

A detailed analysis of the successive censuses of India for Parsis, from 1891 to 2001, yields some interesting perspectives on our growth and decline in population.

- There is an overall increase till 1941, which is the peak number attained.
- From 1951, there is a continuous decrease, although, in that year, it commenced with only a loss of –2.70%.
- There appears to be what looks like an aberration when the figures for 1971 showed a population of 91,378 (#), whereas, the next decennial census of 1981 showed a population of 71,630 (*). The loss appeared an astronomical 21.61%. The following decennial census, 1991, showed an increase of 6.63% (4,752). It is presumed that there was an undercount of the Parsis in 1981. This is borne out by the fact that the decline for the two decades from 1971 to 1991 is 16.41% (or 8.2% per decade) which fits in with the pattern of the roughly 8% decennial decline from 1961 onwards.
- Maharashtra showed a clear decline only from 1961, but it had a setback in 1941 with a loss of 2.08% of its population. 1941 was at the height of World War II and many Parsis went out of the major urban centres to various other locations in Gujarat. The Bombay Parsi Punchayet had evacuated Parsi children of school age to Navsari where a camp was set up for them. That can be a possible explanation for the decline. Sim-

ilarly, the period between 1911 and 1921 saw a very small increase of 2.56% due to a very severe influenza epidemic between 1918 and 1921 [3] and possibly, World War I. From 1961, it continued to decrease starting with a modest -2.5% to -9.52% in 2001.

- Mumbai follows the general trend in Maharashtra since a majority of Parsis are settled in this city. Thus, the 1911 to 1921 period similarly affected them with only a 2.56 increase as also 1931 to 1941 period, which showed only an increase of 3.55%. The increase in 1901 was 10.17%, in 1931, 10.59%. In 1951, it further rose to 14.79% in the aftermath of India's independence which brought about an expansion of industry, trade, commerce and banking. However, from 1961, the impact of the decrease in population affected the Parsis of Mumbai with the steepest decline, in 2001, of -13.45%.
- The population in Mumbai constitutes the major population of Maharashtra, which was less than 50% (49%) in 1901 but from 1911 it crossed 50%. It remained the same for the next two decades and then steadily increased till it was 70% in 1991. However, the 2001 census shows that it has declined to 67%. Besides the natural decline, some of it is also likely to be attributed to migration abroad. *It is for the first time in a hundred years that the percentage in Mumbai has taken a substantial downturn.* ■

[Continued from page 31]

the ethnic group of Parsis and the Zarathushti religion.

Mixed marriages. The situation is further aggravated by attitudes towards mixed marriages that have substantially increased in recent years, especially because of the bar on admitting the non-Zarathushti female spouse and the children of a Parsi mother married outside the religion, to the Zarathushti religion, even if not to the Parsi ethnic group.

Hence, we cannot be laid back and claim that the Parsis are in numbers worldwide and, therefore, there is no fear that we will become a lost culture.

“ The situation is further aggravated by attitudes towards mixed marriages ... especially because of the bar on admitting the non-Zarathushti spouse and the children of a Parsi mother...”

Genetic composition. Furthermore, we have had consanguineous marriages for centuries, possibly leading to genetic changes from the pool that the population brought with them from Iran. These may have resulted in problems such as increased sterility. Again, we need to have serious laboratory research on the Parsi genetic composition today to understand our present predicament.

Non-marriage and late age at marriage, or postponement of conception for a variety of reasons, some of them related to the adopted or aspired lifestyle, may be contributory factors. We do not know what are the precise factors impacting on our population concerns. We only have some

Excerpts from “The Census of India 2001, The First Report on Religion Data,” Jayant Kumar Banthia, IAS, Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India, New Delhi [1]:

“The Parsi population deserves an exceptional but definite mention and place in this volume due to their very small numbers; not only in India, but also in the world ... This is a clearly visible but extremely unfortunate decline of a rich civilization of Zarathushtis and its people.

“It is apparent from the 2001 census results that urgent and drastic interventions are required by all concerned including possibly, by the government and definitely by the Parsi community leaders to ensure survival of Parsi population in India.

“Fertility improvement innovative initiatives, rather than fertility control measures adopted by the community so far, are possibly the need of the hour before it reaches a point of no return.

“It is expected that this loud and clear message from 2001 census results awakens the country and the Parsi community from the deep slumber it is possibly in and have a beneficial effect for them.”

observations or guesses but not enough serious research to tease out the major factors.

The Parsi identity. The Parsis in India have created a unique place for themselves in India, contributing to the country beyond their small numbers. It is, therefore, necessary to take a very serious view of our current situation. We do not want the community to lose its presence in India that gave them succour and permitted them to flourish. It is a matter of concern as to whether the present day Parsis have problems of identity in a country of over a billion people and living as they do in the most cosmopolitan city in India.

There is a need to study their perception of themselves in an India that has changed tremendously since independence. Many Parsis have risen to the top in all walks of life in the last 55 years, and houses like the Tatas and Godrej have prospered. Hence, we cannot claim that opportunities are lacking, but the competition has certainly grown in more recent years. On the other hand, new opportunities are coming up. It is necessary to examine how prepared are the Parsis to grasp them. These matters require to be further explored in micro studies of the community.

The call. The message in the census figures cannot be more loud and clear. The trend has been observed from the forties, as pointed out by Sapur F. Desai [3] the late secretary of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet and by C. Chandra Sekar at the All India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health, Calcutta [2]. Let us take up the very vital challenge the message has placed before us, for the revival of the community.

The PARZOR response

Recognizing these dangerous trends, we in *PARZOR* felt we needed to go much deeper in understanding the reasons for this phenomenon from a multidisciplinary perspective – social economic, attitudinal, genetic and health.

In pursuance of this objective, *PARZOR* has commenced research projects [see next page] aimed at understanding the situation in all its complexities. The focus has to be on understanding the present situation in all its aspects and to identify the concerns of the community from its own voices. We believe that these studies would yield information for developing policies, planning and action on the issues. The data may also identify gaps in knowledge and the need for further research.

Family Genealogy. To trace the changes that have taken place over a period of time, a number of these studies trace patterns over three generations on marriage, reproductive history, illnesses, migration and such other parameters, which would alert us on the trends for taking suitable action.

Archival center. All the studies need to be housed under one roof that could serve as a valuable repository of information. The center should include archives of: demographic data, micro studies, data on medical and health related projects on Parsis, all tests on patients, and blood samples for genetic studies. We also need to develop a library and a documentation center.

Such a center would stimulate researchers to come forward and

generate studies. It would, however, need a very large sum of money to bring it to fruition with both capital and recurring expenditures, even if space were to be made available in a Parsi hospital.

Need for Support. We need the cooperation of the community:

- As respondents of the studies to help us understand the problems facing the community – social, economic, attitudinal and health.
- We need to understand the phenomenon of migration and its effects on the decline of population.
- The community is small and marriages have remained within it until recently. It could have effect on our genetic structure and consanguinity further affects it. We need to under-

take scientific studies on the genetic changes and their effects.

- We need researchers to come forward to undertake research.
- We need donors to finance these micro projects that can lead to enhanced understanding of our problems. Head count can alert us to the problems, but in-depth research is required for unfolding the issues.

“ We need to develop comparative studies between Parsis in India and those who have migrated, and identify the effects of migration on the communities settled in other cultures. ”

PARZOR Research Projects.

PARZOR has commenced seven studies, of which, five are funded by the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust and two by the Bombay Parsi Punchayet.

[1] *Demographic Transition Among the Parsis: A Study of the Marital and Socio-Psychological Dimensions*, by Dr. Shalini Bharat, TISS, of the Family Studies Research Unit. The focus is on the socio-economic profile of the family and its concerns such as marriage, children, housing, and migration.

[2] *A Study of Parsi Youth in India*, by Dr. Lata Narayan, Unit for Child and Youth Research, TISS. The focus is on youth, their socio-economic status, marriage, education and employment, their sense of identity in a pluralistic society, the problems they face and the issues they raise.

[3] *A Study of the Elderly in an Aging Community*, by Dr. Siva Raju, Research Unit for Urban Studies, TISS. The economic, psychosocial and health problems are specific to this age group. To identify the needs of this sizable group among Parsis, the study will be conducted all over India in collaboration with the Census Commission.

[4] *A Study of Medical Practitioners in Mumbai*, by Ms. Katy Gandevia, Department of Medical and Psychiatric Social Work, TISS. The respondents are Parsi doctors and others who treat Parsi patients. The study is aimed at identifying trends in the medical problems of the community.

[5] *Prevalence of Neurological Diseases and Hypertension in the Parsi Community* jointly by Dr. Nadir Bharucha and Dr. Thomas Kuruvilla of the Department of Neuro-epidemiology, Bombay Hospital. It is a follow up of a 1985 study of Parsis with hypertension and related neurological problems.

[6] *Haematological, Biological and Cytogenetic Study on Parsis* by Dr. P.K. Gadhia, Department of Biosciences, South Gujarat University. It is a study on blood samples of 50 Parsi families to study different genetic factors affecting the community with particular emphasis on chromosome disorders and other diseases.

[7] *Review of Genetic studies on the Parsis of India*, by Dr. J.V. Undevia, formerly at the Cancer Research Institute. Studies require to be brought together for a critical review as their data have not been fully understood and have a bearing on the incidence of systemic diseases.

[8] A study by Narendra Joshi on Cancer Among Parsi Women, at the Cancer Research Institute (funded by the Lady Meherbai Tata Trust).

Future Plans. We need to undertake several studies as we get new leads throwing light on this unfortunate problem of decreasing numbers.

We need to undertake studies on our diaspora in the United States, UK, Canada, Europe, Australia and New Zealand to develop comparative studies between Parsis in India and the Parsis who have migrated, and identify the effects of migration on the communities settled in other cultures.

We need to identify actionable matters from our studies and initiate programs that can make an impact. ■

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versity Grants Commission (1995 - 1999); director of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, offering post-graduate professional degrees in

social work, personnel management and industrial relations, health and hospital administration (1982 - 1995). Starting as a lecturer, Dr. Desai became principal of the College of Social Work (Nirmala Niketan), Mumbai (1957 - 1982).

Dr. Desai has been on the boards of numerous educational, governmental and non-governmental bodies, at the local, national and international level. She is currently a member of the PARZOR Board where she is the advisor and coordinator of research projects on demography and health.



Global NRI/PIO

Unofficial estimate of the number of Non-Resident Indians or People of Indian Origin living outside India.

Sri Lanka and Nepal	4.5 million
North America	2.8 million
Europe	2.5 million
Africa	2.5 million
Middle East	2.5 million
Far East	2.5 million
South America	2.0 million
Pacific Islands	0.7 million

[Source: GOPIO, Chicago]

is this the beginning of the end?

urgent need for a multi-dimensional approach to strategies for survival

by Homi B. Dhalla

Strategies for addressing the critical issue of declining numbers; formation of a 'think tank' to develop constructive actions on many fronts.

Is this the beginning of the end?

September 7, 2004 was a disheartening day for the Parsi community. The front-page headlines of the official Census of India in the *Times of India* screamed **PARSI NUMBERS PLUNGE**. The bitter truth continued:

"The Census report makes a special mention of Parsis, more specifically the 'signs of definite decline' in their population in the country. As per the 2001 census, the Parsi population in the country was 69,601 (33,949 males and 35,652 females) as against their population of 76,382 (37,736 males and 38,646 females) in the 1991 census."

Next day, the news was relatively heartening – the Parsis have the "stunningly high literacy rate of 97%." Of course, this was not startling news to many who knew about this demographic trend. There have been other surveys too but the skeptics did not take them very seriously.

But now it was official.

There were questions from many quarters – how serious was this threat? What steps would the com-

munity take in the given circumstances?

This paper deals with (a) the demographics issue, (b) it touches upon whether the children of Parsi women married to non-Parsis be admitted into our fold, and (c) strategies for survival, including the formation of a global 'think tank' to deal with this critical situation.

Demography

Austin Dobson had rightly said,

"Time goes, you say?"

Ah, no! Alas, Time stays, we go."

Grim facts. The Parsi population census table [page 33], shows the decline in the numbers for India from 76,382 in 1991 to 69,601 in 2001, and clearly shows the slippery demographic slope over the last hundred years. A few other grim numbers would help us obtain a realistic picture of the situation.

- In India a child is born every 1.8 seconds or about 48,000 every day. Out of the 17 million children born in India annually, only about 500 are Parsis.

Year	Births	Deaths	Excess
1955	788	878	90
1965	856	1037	181
1975	576	1010	434
1985	601	966	365
1995	367	936	569
2002	300	858	558

● The excess of deaths over births in the last five decades in Mumbai [see table above, from *The BPP Review, Summer 2004*] shows how critical the situation actually is. For example, in Pune, during 2002, there were 27 births and 76 deaths [*Parsiiana, August 2003*]; and in Hyderabad, during the year starting August 2002, there were 6 births and 29 deaths [*PZASH News Letter, August 2003*].

● By 2021 when the population of India will be 1.2 billion, the number of Parsis will drop from their current level of 55,000 in Mumbai to just 21,000 [*BPP Review, Summer 2004*]. If you extrapolate this figure, then by the year 2050 who knows?

● Mr. J. K. Banthia, I.A.S. Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India caustically commented at a recent Conference of Parsi representatives from all over India:

“At this rate a day will come when the birth of a Parsi would be a cause for national celebration and when a Parsi couple gets married it would make world news.”

Ghost towns and villages. There is only one term, which I find appropriate to describe the demographic situation today in some towns and villages, and that is ‘disaster.’ It is pertinent to note that Parsis flourished in these places some decades ago. They say that every cloud has a silver lining but I do not see any lining silver or otherwise.

There are about *thirty defunct anjumans* in different parts of India today [see table] [1]. The future of the community in these places is not

‘DEFUNCT’ ANJUMANS IN INDIA

Abu	The Anjuman has property
Amroli	Only 6 Parsis and many locked houses and a fire-temple
Cambay	Only 6 Parsis left and the Anjuman has lots of property
Deesa	Only 1 Parsi left and the Anjuman has property
Diu	No Parsis left but the Anjuman has property
Khajod	Only 1 Parsi family and the Anjuman has no property
Khergam	Only 4 Parsis left and the Anjuman has an Agiary and property including Dakhma encroached upon
Jamnagar	Only 8-10 Parsis left and the Anjuman has very valuable property
Junagadh	No Parsis left but the Anjuman has property
Nadiad	Only 1 Parsi
Surendranagar	No Parsis left but the Anjuman has property

In Karnataka

Amravati-Badnera	Only 10-15 Parsis left and the Anjuman has property
Carwar	No Parsis left but the Anjuman has an Aramgah
Dharwad	No Parsis left but the Anjuman has an Aramgah
Dhule	Only 3-4 Parsis left and the Anjuman has property
Gadag	No Parsis left but the Anjuman has property
Gulbarga	Only 8-10 Parsis left and the Anjuman has an Aramgah
Hubli	Only 8-10 Parsis left and the Anjuman has an Aramgah
Jalgaon	Only 15-20 Parsis left and the Anjuman has property
Jodhpur	Only 6 Parsis left and the Anjuman has property
Malegaon	No Parsis left but the Anjuman has property
Nanded	Only 2 Parsis left and the Anjuman has valuable property

In Madhya Pradesh

Bhopal	Only 6-7 Parsis and the Anjuman has an Aramgah
Chandrapur	No Parsis left but the Anjuman has property
Gwalior	Only 6 Parsis left and the Anjuman has property
Harda	No Parsis left but the Anjuman has property
Itarsi	No Parsis left but the Anjuman has an Aramgah
Khandva	No Parsis left but the Federation disposed the property
Neemuch	Only 15 Parsis left and the Anjuman has valuable property including Agiary and Dakhma
Rajula	No Parsis left but the Anjuman has a small property

hanging in the balance; I would call it a graveyard of ruined dreams. In almost all these villages/towns, the community owns property – but in many of these places, **there is not a single Parsi left** and in some only a handful. It is only a matter of time when other villages and towns will join the ranks of these ‘ghost towns.’ One example is the town of Diu (where our forefathers first landed upon arrival in India). Here our disused fire-temple is today being used as a Christian nunnery! [*Parsiiana, September 2004, p. 4*].

Other concerns are the aging of the population. For example, in Allahabad the Anjuman has 22 aged members; and the three trustees are

aged 71, 77 and 79 [*Parsiiana, August 2003, p. 58*].

When one studies the above demographical picture, we realize that the noose of extinction is gradually tightening. To reverse this trend will be a herculean task. Ms. C. P. Sujaya of the Centre for Women’s Development Studies states [2]:

“Demographic changes do not happen in a hurry. The transformation is a slow response to socio-economic progress that takes place over decades.”

Shah Behram Varzavand. There are some who believe that the problem of our extinction will be solved with the advent of the future savior, Shah Behram Varzavand. My question to them is simple: if this were so, why

have Parsis already died out in so many towns and villages? Why are we on the verge of extinction in many other cities and towns where we once lived in large numbers?

I ask, has not our Prophet taught that ours is a religion of *ACTION*? Should we not act to avert this imminent danger facing us? Should we not remove the stumbling blocks that hamper reform? Or should we wait indefinitely till the advent of Shah Behram Varzavand? I believe that there are no keys to the magic kingdom and it does not help us by clinging to a shaky theory.

Admitting children of Parsi women married to non-Parsis into our fold

The question about children of mixed marriages, which is so crucial to our demographic concerns, needs to be addressed. I am neither an orthodox nor a reformist but a pragmatist. I am not in favor of intermarriage and would not encourage it [3].

Today, however, when 35% of our youth in India intermarry (possibly higher in the West) [see data on page 25] and we have not been able to arrest this trend, we ought to examine this situation in a new light and with great discretion. Are we to discard the children of such marriages?

According to the Davar-Beaman judgment [Bombay, 1906] the offspring of Parsi fathers and non-Parsi mothers were to be admitted into our fold. But in the last 100 years much water has flowed. A number of important developments have taken place in the country and in our community, which have to be considered in order to obtain a holistic and balanced picture. Due to space constraints, only a summary is presented here. The full text of this paper may be requested [4].

- Prophet Zarathushtra, in propounding the very foundation of his religion, i.e. whilst explaining the nature of the Godhead, emphasized **absolute equality of the sexes**. Moreover, his followers later

accepted this thought of gender equity, when they put forth the concept of the Yazatas.

- In ancient *Iranian society*, the wife held a high position in the social as well as the spiritual spheres, which was not inferior to that of her husband in any way [5]. I am further reminded of the words of that great French savant, Prof. James Darmesteter who said: "The moral victory of Zoroastrianism is the work of a woman, and no picture of woman is nobler and higher than that which is drawn in the Avesta."

- *Human rights of women* cannot be ignored. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserts, "Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world..."

“ Today, when 35% of our youth in India intermarry (possibly higher in the West) and we have not been able to arrest this trend, we ought to examine this situation in a new light and with great discretion. ”

- The *Constitution of India* safeguards the rights of women: "human rights for women ... are inalienable, integral and an indivisible part of universal human rights ..."

- It is pertinent to examine the *views of Justice Sam Bharucha*, ex Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India. Inaugurating the meeting of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India at Jamshedpur on December 2, 2000 [The BPP Review, Spring 2001]:

"The Anjumans and Panchayats should consider the admission into

the faith, by the performance of the navjote, a child born to a Parsi mother and a non Parsi father, provided such child is the product of wedlock and the father is a consenting party. I know that a judgement delivered long back by the Bombay High Court would seem to be standing in the way, but if the Anjumans and Panchayats all resolve that this is the appropriate practice to adopt and the practice is challenged on the strength of that judgement, it can, given the change in the circumstances, be over-ruled."

- *Customs and rituals evolve over time*. Dr. Sir Jivanji Modi states [6]:

"The times are rapidly changing. As often said, the heresy of today becomes the orthodoxy of tomorrow; the liberalism of this year, the conservatism of the next. Many a ceremony, ritual or custom has been spoken of as having become obsolete or as being more honoured in the breach than in the observance. Many more will be obsolete in the course of a few years. Customs are often as despotic as fashions but they also change as fashions."

- *Lessons from other Religions and cultures*. In every religious tradition there have been practices and customs, which have been in existence for centuries, but have now been discarded. Why are some Parsis continuing to support gender discrimination even though it does not have scriptural sanction?

- *Differing standards*. Let us not forget that when Mr. R. D. Tata (father of JRD) evinced a desire to marry a French lady, Suzanne Briere, it was the learned high priest, Dastur Kaikhooshroo Jamaspji who performed her navjote ceremony.

There is also the instance of the navjote in Mumbai, of Mr. Neville Wadia (whose father Sir Ness Wadia had converted to Christianity and married a Christian lady) who had been baptized in the Church of England, and practiced Christianity until the age of 80. Our high priests considered this as an exception.

Why should our scriptures be interpreted to suit the convenience of a

millionaire (who was a Christian for 80 years of his life and had a non-Parsi mother and a father who had converted to Christianity) and the same right be denied to a child of a Parsi mother who has been practicing the religion faithfully all her life?

- The *patriarchal model is being challenged*. All around us, we are seeing the decline of patriarchy and the emergence of new models of gender equity and partnership. The sooner this small coterie that is upholding patrilineal lineage appreciates this, the better.

Dialogue is the cornerstone, flexibility is the key. Isn't it time, high time, that the orthodox and liberal should come to an understanding for the larger good of the community?

If the non-Parsi husband has no objection, let the child be initiated into the fold. I know that there will not be a flood, but under the circumstances every single child counts!

To buttress this argument further, I may state that Ms. Meher Amarsey, president of the Association of Inter-Married Zoroastrians (AIMZ) informs me that she is often approached by Parsi women who wish to have their children admitted into the fold as their husbands have no objection to this.

Every time an intermarried child is refused admission into the faith, it causes pain, anxiety and a sense of rejection in the confused mind of the mother (and child). Even when her non-Parsi spouse has no objection, the community slams the door into her face. Let us not forget that a mother has a large role to play, perhaps larger, in nurturing and ingraining the first seeds of religious fervor in her child.

Strategies for survival

We ought to have several strategies to tackle the problem of survival. These should be implementable ideas, which break new ground. I have put forward a few of these, which may be considered.

- Parents should instill a *sense of pride* in their children about being

Parsis and the urgent need to keep the community alive.

- BPP has about 5970 flats in Mumbai. Persuade the elderly and lone occupants to *move to smaller accommodation*, to help the youth.

“ I propose that we form a global Think Tank comprising of persons who can see the gathering storm and develop constructive steps on many fronts. ”

- The middle class and poor opt for larger families. Provide *housing for this class* at affordable rents.

- A *crash housing program* for youth who wish to marry should be embarked upon at the earliest. Flats should be offered at affordable rents.

- Encourage youth to seek employment and settle in other *cities besides Mumbai*. Initiate a dialogue with industrialists and leaders in other parts of India. The World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce should be involved.

- There should be more *interaction amongst the youth* not only in Mumbai but in various cities. Exchange programs should be arranged.

- Youth should be encouraged, especially the boys to go in for *higher education* so that they could offer a better standard of living when they enter matrimony.

- Youth should be encouraged to *start their own business* preferably in states which provide incentives.

- Encourage the youth to shoulder greater *responsibility* – they ought to be increasingly involved in decision-making activities, which deal with communal matters.

- Approach sethias of the community, viz., Seth Pallonji Mistry, Seth Keki Jokhi and Seth Naryman

Dubash with *long-term projects* for their cooperation, especially for launching housing projects.

- There are *48 agiaries* in Mumbai, many languishing due to paucity of funds. Implement the shifting (not merger) of some of these fires. The agiary in Lonavla is an excellent model to follow in Mumbai.

- A few fire temples in Mumbai have *large compounds*. Use this space for housing the needy and youth.

- The BPP spends Rs. 85 lacs annually on education. Other trusts also help the youth with education. How much are we willing to *spend for our survival*?

- *Offspring of non-Parsi fathers* and Parsi mothers should be admitted into our fold.

- Efforts should be made to bring down the *divorce rate*, which is today about 10%. In 2002, there were 340 marriages and 40 divorces [*Parsiana, June 2003, p.42*].

- *Births and navjotes* should be registered.

- *Marriage bureaus* should be set up in different parts of India where Parsis have settled.

- There are still a few Parsi families who possess land and have roots in Gujarat. Opportunities should be given to them to initiate *agricultural/dairy projects* in the rural areas.

- The amount offered by the BPP for the maintenance of the *third child* should be enhanced.

- The BPP should consider setting up a cell *dealing with demographics*.

- Community leaders, economists and trustees of various institutions should discuss in earnest, the *future of these institutions*.

- Create greater *awareness* among all sections of the community about the seriousness of the problem and explore ways and means as to how they could help the situation.

- Anjumans in India where there are very few Parsis left, should act

expeditiously to ensure that property under their control is not *lost to encroachers*.

- The BPP spends about Rs. 80 lacs on *medical expenses*. How much has the community set aside for its very survival?

- Appoint a '*Think Tank*' to study these problems.

Formation of a Think Tank. I propose that we form a global Think Tank comprising of persons who can see the gathering storm and develop constructive steps on many fronts. The community has a vast talent pool – let's tap it. I am fully aware of the fact that this will be a herculean task, but we cannot just accept defeat and do nothing about it.

The uncharted road is difficult, but then which road is easy? There may be some areas where we cannot succeed, but we have to forge ahead on other fronts, because I visualize this to be a multi-pronged venture.

Conclusion

Reality bites! Today, the very survival of our community is at stake. I am not alone in sensing this danger. Anyone who studies the demographic profile objectively can see the writing on the wall. Many of the towns/villages where we once prospered are not dying but dead. Our properties are encroached upon and in some cases even lost. What will happen to the large number of our fire-temples, housing colonies and charitable trusts in the next few decades?

This is the greatest challenge, which is facing the community today. Will the leaders and all concerned rise to the occasion and lead the community out of this morass, or are we going to bury our heads in the sand as the dust-storm spirals out of control? How long will we live in a state of denial?

If we are men and women of vision, wisdom and courage let us act now, as we have had enough of words. We need to explore other frontiers.

There should be a paradigm shift in our thinking.

Let not future generations say, we spoke too much, and did little. Let us remember that there are some problems to which Old Father Time brings his own solutions. ■

NOTES AND REFERENCES

[1] I am thankful to Mr. Sohrab Katpitia of Surat for furnishing the information on defunct Anjumans.

[2] Subrahmanian V., *Family of Fallacies*, The Times of India, Mumbai, August 19, 2003.

[3] Homi B. Dhalla, "A Brief Study of Intermarriage in America with reference to the Parsi Community," Memorial Volume, 1251 Anniversary of the Iran Shah Fire Temple, Bombay, 1972.

[4] The full text of this paper may be obtained from Dr. Homi B. Dhalla.

[5] Homi B. Dhalla, "Position of Women in Ancient India and Iran," Cyrus the Great Memorial Volume, Iran Culture House, Bombay, 1974.



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demo-graphic trends among-parsis

by Godrej N. Dotivala

Remedial measures offered by the BPP to arrest the precipitous slide in numbers.

The numbers. A recent demographic study predicts that by 2021 when the population of India will be 1.2 billion, the number of Parsis will drop from their current level of less than 55,000 in Mumbai to just 21,000.

Ours is an ageing community. Whereas in India 3% of the population is over 60 years of age, 33% of Zarathushtis in India are over 60.

During April 2001 to March 2002 an analysis of the 1,100 corpses consigned to Doongerwadi established the causes of death as: 27% cardiac arrest/respiratory failure, 16% cancer, 9% influenza/pneumonia, 4% septicaemia, 3% diabetes, and, **the largest group – 41% – passed away purely on account of old age (75+).**

In 2002, there were 300 births in Mumbai and 858 deaths.

If the Zarathushti community in India, is besieged by falling numbers, what hope do we have of survival elsewhere in the world? However, it is heartening to note that in some parts

of the western world the Zarathushti population is indeed increasing but, at present, that generally appears to be the result of migration from India; the quantities growing in terms of actual numbers are extremely modest and cannot counter balance the declining numbers in India.

Growth in real terms can only come about when each set of parents will be able to achieve a parent:child growth ratio of 2:3.

Causes of decline. The primary causes of the dwindling numbers are:

- Parsis prefer to marry only when they are well settled in life and by that time the child bearing age of the female may be over.
- There is a brain drain to the West and eligible single men are hard to find.
- By and large women are more educated than men, therefore suitable partners are not readily available.
- There is a high incidence of broken homes. Divorces are believed to be in the region of 10%.
- Almost one in four women marry outside the community and thereby are lost to the Zarathushti fold invariably. Just as many are spinsters.
- Housing in metro cities is also a problem because the young folk no longer believe in the joint family system and want to set up nuclear families.
- In India the Parsis/Iranis are a gerontological community – over 50% are above the age of 50. If the birth to death ratio is not substantially reversed in the near future it may well toll the death knell of the community.
- It is a startling but true revelation that 51% of our males and 37% of our females are single.

Back in history. If we go back in history we find that in 1802 the small pox epidemic was raging in Surat and the then religious leaders prevented the Parsis from taking the small pox vaccine for over 70 years

on the grounds that puncturing the skin with an injection and giving the small pox dose would defile the body. As a matter of fact the threat of ex-communication was meted out to those who disobeyed. Consequently many Parsis died during this period. Other pestilences like plague (1898, 1905), malaria (1908, 1910) and influenza (1918, 1919) also took a heavy toll of Parsi lives.

“ To arrest this precipitous slide in numbers, the Bombay Parsi Punchayet has taken certain remedial measures ”

Whereas in the 19th century, a number of Parsis died because of their refusal to accept life saving vaccine on religious grounds, in the 20th century the numbers came down heavily because a high percentage of Parsis refused to get married and most of those who got married either did not produce any children or stopped after one or two.

Remedial measures by BPP. To arrest this precipitous slide in numbers, the Bombay Parsi Punchayet has taken certain remedial measures:

- Providing housing on a special priority basis to newlyweds and young Parsis desirous of getting married.
- The “Third and Fourth Child assistance” scheme conceptualized by B.P.P. Chairman Emeritus Jamshed N. Guzder, came into effect on July 1, 1993. Rupees one thousand a month is given to 3rd and 4th children in a deserving family up to the age of 18. During the six-month period (October 2001 to March 2002), total support of Rs. 525,000 was given to 88 individuals. A couple from Indore who were blessed with triplets were given Rs.18,000/-.

- Disbursing extensive educational grants, loans and scholarships for further studies in India and abroad which during 2002–2003 was of the order of Rs. 8,064,000 (approx. \$183,270). This is a double edged sword because those who take up specialized studies in India migrate abroad and those who pursue studies in foreign lands often stay on there.

- Interactions of youth socially, culturally and religiously is being fostered effectively through seminars, symposia, conferences and get togethers like the ever popular Holiday Programme for Youth.

- Day care centers have been set up to assist working parents.

- A new initiative has been taken by the B.P.P. to promote family welfare activities. The program envisages services free of charge to Parsi couples to include: counselor and gynecologist services to examine any cause of male or female infertility; basic examination including sonography, semen analysis and requisite blood tests; evaluating and carrying out procedures to correct problems, if any; assisting couples to have healthy families.

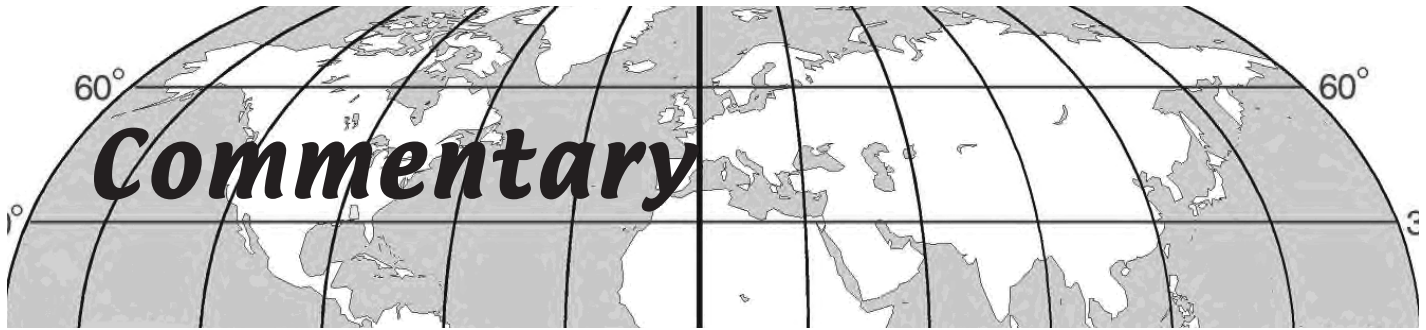
It is fervently anticipated that all these measures put together will turn the tide favorably for our Zarathushti brethren. ■

[Excerpts from a power point presentation by Godrej N. Dotivala, on June 4, 2004 at the Asian Civilizations Museum, Singapore, accompanied with visuals by Neville G. Dotivala.]

PHOTO: BPP REVIEW, AUTUMN 2001



Godrej N. Dotivala is Public Relations Officer of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet and editor of the quarterly BPP Review.



Presented here are a pot pourri of thoughts excerpted from the press and from miscellaneous articles and letters, pertaining to (and limited to) the issue of “declining numbers of Parsis.” Discussion of related burning issues, such as acceptance/conversion and ‘neo-Zarathushtis’ will be attempted in a more organized manner, in a future issue of FEZANA Journal. The reader is also referred to the “Open Forum” on Perpetuating the Religion and Strengthening the Zarathushti Community [FEZANA Journal, Spring 2004] - Ed.

Indian census shows decline of the Parsis

...Census authorities urged the government to take steps to stem the decline of the Parsis, or Zoroastrians, who fled to India from Persia more than 1,000 years ago. Though Parsis account for less than 1 per cent of India, the community controls more than 15 per cent of the market value on the main stock exchange. But the highly educated community is on the verge of extinction as its population ages, thanks to a low birth rate and strict rules about admitting people to the fold.

Reuters, September 8, 2004

www.dawn.com/2004/09/08/top13.htm

Parsi population declines

The first official religious census makes exceptional mention of Parsis, fearing “clearly visible but extremely unfortunate decline” of the miniscule community that has produced some of India’s finest in various fields.

“This is a clearly visible but extremely unfortunate decline of a rich civilization of Zoroastrians” the census report observed, giving a wake up call to the government as well as the community.

“Urgent and drastic interventions are required by all concerned including possibly by the government and definitely the Parsi community leaders to ensure survival of Parsi population in India.”

<http://www.payvand.com/news/04/sep/1055.html>

Is it the end of the road?

Leading population experts and demographers expressed concern at the shrinking number of Parsis in India and exhorted its community leaders to buttress measures for their survival ...

Professor Ashish Bose of the Institute of Economic Growth, did not mince words on the possibility of the

extinction of the Parsis. “They are perfectionists. The only solution is that the Parsis must marry and produce children,” he said ...

Prof. Bose said the Parsi community leaders had to seize the initiative to ensure that the talented community did not fade away. He hoped the Census figures would “help awaken the Parsi community from deep slumber.”

www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com

Where have all the Parsis gone?

India is richer today due to the contributions of a tiny community. In the sciences, the arts and industry, Parsis have given back more than a thousand-fold in return to the land that gave them shelter a thousand years ago. But, they are a dying community. With UNESCO stepping in to help preserve their heritage, their story is one that must be told, read and preserved.

Unlike other foreigners who came to India to plunder, loot and rule, the Parsis assimilated with a quiet dignity into India’s history and contributed their extraordinary genius in every walk of life ... Starting with business and industry, through law and literature, including the armed forces, and spanning the arts, music and nuclear science, Parsis always gave more than they took from their adopted land ...

Indian Parsis traveled to other parts of the world to settle down in every continent, yet, the total number of Parsis today is an alarming 70,000 ...

Bharati Sarkar, www.lifepositive.com

Parsis face problem of continuity

It is feared that by the year 2020 by which time India is likely to be the most populous country in the world, the number of Parsis will tumble to 23,000 ...

At a time when one in four Parsis is estimated to be marrying out of the community, mixed marriage is a major

culprit. The liberal faction, for example, decries the 'ridiculous rules' which debar children of Parsi mothers and non-Parsi fathers from entering the fold. Says Phiroze Palkhivala, a city lawyer, "We are dying because of our own idiocy." This stand is attacked by traditionalists, who maintain that a Parsi Zoroastrian is strictly someone whose parents are both Parsi Zoroastrians. "It is an ethnic and biological definition," says Marzban Hathiram, who has studied the religion and culture extensively.

Emigration is also responsible for falling figures. Pointing out that the diaspora in countries like the US and Canada is expanding, many believe that the future of the community lies in the North American continent. "What do the kids who grow up there know of their heritage," demands Mr. Hathiram, pointing out that merely tying a sudreh-kushti on a lamp post does not a Parsi make... "Most members of the diaspora are Parsis only in name, not practice."

Is the future then entirely bleak? "Certainly not," counters Godrej Dotivala, PRO of the BPP. "Our story began in India with a few thousand individuals. There is no reason why 50,000 of us cannot, if we work towards it, ensure the continuity of the Parsis."

Shabnam Minwalla, Times of India, August 9, 2001

UNESCO to play savior to Parsis

Strange, but true. In this land of a billion people, when experts are fighting for effective birth control, a small community is declining so rapidly that the UNESCO has stepped in. It is assisting a project called PARZOR, Preservation of Parsi-Zoroastrian Heritage.

The roots of the predicament lie in large-scale migration to foreign countries, single or no child families, late marriages or no marriage at all, since there is no peer pressure to marry. "When they married outside the community, they were virtually thrown out since the spouse was not allowed into the fold," explains Adi M. Sethna of the Minorities Commission.

Realizing the dangers of such orthodoxy, the Delhi Anjuman of which Sethna is the president "made amendments in the late 1970s whereby, if either spouse is a Parsi, both were members of the Anjuman though the non-Parsi could not enter the fire temple, claim burial ground in Navroz Baug, or be a trustee." This model is also being followed in Chennai.

Times News Network, New Delhi

Part and Parsi

... After almost 1400 years in India we have managed somehow to preserve a separate and distinct identity. But now, with emigration to greener lands, with a low birth rate and above all with increasing inter-community marriages, Parsis could soon disappear, leaving in their wake, only a whiff of *dhansak*.

Nergis Dalal, www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com

Parsis: India's 'molecularity'

Currently 36% of Parsis are in mixed marriages, the number equal for men and women. In places with much smaller Parsi populations such as Chennai or Delhi, three in every four marriages is to a non-Parsi.

The Diaspora's promise of a more dynamic and fecund community is unfounded. Jehangir Patel, editor of the objective *Parsiana*, puts the total number of Parsis globally at "not more than a lakh." Abroad, ethnic purity has to bow to practicality. The 'Parsi father only' rule has been unceremoniously dispensed with. Conversion is still banned, but is happening abroad.

The Bombay Parsi Punchayet has tried all kinds of sops from 'Houses for Spouses' to monthly subsidies for the third child. Today the move is away from building more housing – who will be left to occupy these flats? – and resources diverted to more long-term measures at upgrading the community, and desperately creating opportunities for young Parsis to meet each other.

It's the penalty of progressiveness.

Bachi Karkaria

Times News Network, September 9, 2004

Community at the Crossroads

...If we are to survive and thrive as a community we now need to think not as individuals but as a community. We must have the courage to realize the clear and present danger that we find ourselves in. We must dialogue on the best strategies to perpetuate our pristine religion and our community. We must have the maturity to discuss and address these many burning issues. Each continent has its own set of specific problems, which need to be tackled collectively and maturely at a global level.

India's 1,000,000,000 (one billion) people - at a glance

In the decade from 1991 to 2001:

- The Hindu population of India grew 20.3 %, to 800 million. They are 80 % of India's population. Four out of five Indians are Hindus.
- The Muslim population grew 36 % to 138 million people. They are 13% of India's population.
- The number of Christians rose 23% to 24 million. They are 2.4% of India's population.
- The number of Sikhs is 19 million. They are 1.9% of India's population.
- **The number of Parsis, declined by 8.8% to 69,601. They are .007 % of India's population.**

- www.rediff.com/news/2004/sep/06close.htm

To survive as a community, we shall need to consider change in many diverse directions. Change is the only thing that remains constant in life. Change not for the sake of change, but when thrust upon us by nature has to be accepted. If we avoid changes that nature wishes to impose, we can only consign ourselves to the dustbin of history.

A depressing feature that has recently emerged is that our levels of tolerance have begun to dip sharply...The intolerance that is now displayed in various matters big and small with so much frequency needs to be cast off, if we are to survive.

Our incessant controversies on various issues have all but disillusioned our youth.

I would urge our present day leaders to remember that they are expected to lead as far as they can and then vanish. Their ashes should not choke the fires that they have themselves lit.

We Parsis will have to realize that to survive, we shall need to live in unity, with peace, harmony, understanding and appreciating diverse viewpoints, with mutual respect for one another.

Let it not come to pass that whilst the Zarathushti Deen as a religion will flourish, Parsis as a race will perish.

Dinshaw Kaiki Tamboly, chairman, WZO Trust Funds and trustee, Bombay Parsi Punchayet. For the full text of this paper see FEZANA Journal, Spring 2004.

Some relevant issues ...

... instead of spending vast amounts of time and energy on rituals for the dead, and their mode of disposal, on how to keep ourselves isolated from non-Parsis and issues which are **negative**, we need to spend more time on **positive** issues. Issues about the living and not the dead. Let us not reduce the whole concept of Parsi Zoroastrians into a racial tight-jacket, and turn our face away from the realities of the present situation.

Admitted that the practice of conversion was not practiced after Parsis came to India, but to give it doctrinal sanction and thereby spurn mixed couples and their children is not only doctrinally incorrect, morally regrettable but above all, demographically it adds an extra nail into our coffin.

Avan Khullar, presented at 3000th Anniversary of Zoroastrian Culture, Singapore, June 2004.

Formula for survival

If we do not heed historical evidence, soon we will become history! Groups of Zarthushtis who left Iran after the Arab conquest and sought shelter in Europe and China (except the group that landed on the west coast of India) perished because they accepted intermarriage and assimilated with the local people. Consequently, reli-

gious disciplines were altered and diluted and these groups ceased to be practicing Zarthushtis. In those days there was no instantaneous dissemination of ideology through cyber space and other media. In India and Iran, segregation ensured the survival and continuation of our religion without it being diluted or altered.

Winds of 'change' may blow in recent years but change is not always spiritually progressive. In fact, it is time to stand firm, oppose detrimental changes and boldly teach the spiritually suffering humanity that our religious community has survived peacefully and with distinction in India and Iran without a land of our own, and without numbers, because we have lived by the principle of the Charter of Human Rights that Asho Zarathushtra taught and Cyrus the Great and his successors upheld! We have not accepted proselytes nor interfered religiously or politically with any other community. These are our glorious trademarks and the proven formula for our survival. We will survive if we adhere to these proven ways of socializing yet retaining our religious and ethnic perspective and identity!

Pervin J. Mistry, Toronto, Ontario

The Jews of Western India

The only Jewish community I ever knew, were, I say **WERE**, the Jews of Western India. They maintained their exclusivity as a religious group, mixing socially and otherwise with their Indian hosts, but keeping their religion to themselves, to an inordinately great extent.

Many of them were so staunch in their belief that they must marry only other Jews, that often, not finding suitable partners within India, they would go to the extent of traveling to Europe, America and latterly to Israel, to find their grooms and brides.

They were scholars, traders, doctors, great lawyers, merchants, musicians, successful businessmen, industrialists, bankers, munificent philanthropists, highly regarded citizens, opening most of their institutional charities to their entire town, or even their adoptive country, India.

Much like the Zarathushtis.

But they were too few, you see? Too few! Far too few!

All the more reason for them to keep to themselves, they said. Keep the original seed. Maintain racial purity, or perish.

They were mostly in Cochin. There were also thousands of them in Central Bombay; and in Poona; and the great hill resorts!

Of course, their once awe-inspiring synagogues in Cochin are now run down.

First thriving, Then managing somehow.

Today, the great Jewish homes and synagogues in Cochin are finished; the priceless treasures, the ancient *mez-*

zuzahs, menorahs and invaluable hand illuminated texts with jeweled covers, sold off.

This proud, isolated community is dead!

Too few, too few! Too few to matter!

What about Bombay? Surely the Jewish community in Bombay has enough people? Enough clout? Surely, they are carrying on?

No, not all. (Though not for lack of tremendous, dedicated service on the part of many of them!) Once, there were indeed thousands.

But the numbers kept falling, falling!

Numbers matter!

A few years ago, the community organized itself into groups, and on high days, rushed around from synagogue to synagogue so that *minyans* (the minimum number of ten men required to conduct a service) could be formed, and ceremonies held in all of them.

Then, in most of them.

Then, in some of them.

Then, in at least one or two of them.

Today, I really do not know. There does not seem anyone left to ask!

Nariman Wadia, Mumbai, India

Time tested rules for survival

After migrating to India, the Parsis have followed a set of unwritten faith-based rules for the last thirteen centuries, which have enabled them not only to preserve their Zarathushti faith but also to prosper and be recognized as a progressive model community in a vast sea of different Indian cultures:

(1) Always speaking the truth and being clean and righteous in one's dealings (*Asha*); (2) Wearing the *sudreh/kushti* at all times; (3) Showing reverence to Fire as the instrument of all Ahura Mazda's creations; (4) Reciting only the holy *manthras* prescribed by their faith; (5) Practicing religious festivals such as *gahambars*; (6) Avoiding pollution of the environment, e.g., the practice of *dokhmenashini*; (7) Preserving the Parsi-Zarathushti lineage by marrying within the fold.

To assist them in following these rules and remain as a distinct entity, Parsis built their own places of worship, schools, charitable institutions, libraries, hospitals, etc. They have practiced their faith in their own quiet way without fanfare or enticing others from different faiths to convert. They have thus earned respect and trust from the indigenous population of India.

There has been a great pressure for us to change ever since we arrived on this continent. Words like "be more open minded," "compromise," "move with the times," "shed outdated ideas," "be realistic," etc., are constantly

bandied around to shame the Parsis into giving up their time tested rules.

We must bear in mind, however, that unless we have in place rules modified to suit our present environment, but that are as effective as our forefathers devised on the Indian sub-continent, our chances of survival as a Parsi community beyond a couple of generations are minimal.

The process of assimilation is insidious, i.e., it is so subtle that it will be going on under your nose for decades and you will not notice it until it is too late. It is not easy for a microscopic community like ours to survive without disciplining ourselves into following some tough rules, especially in an open western society. Once our identity is lost, our faith will go the same way.

*Jal N. Birdy, past president,
North American Mobeds' Council, Corona, California*

Our depleting population

The single biggest problem we have today, is our fast dwindling population ... I am sorry to say that the suggestions put forward by some, of augmenting the population by sperm banks, early marriages, and producing at least four children per couple, is utter nonsense and neither practical or economical.

If we do not wish to become like the antique Incas of South America, the only way out is to allow Parsis, both men and women, who marry outside the community to take their children into our fold without any reservations. The statement made by some to preserve the race and not the tribe, as that will tarnish our 'pure' Zoroastrian blue blood, is to say the least, ridiculous.

Is it not realized that only a miniscule number of us came to India from Iran, and in this short time, we could not have engineered our present population without marrying outside and including their children into our fold. In fact, this matter is so serious that, apart from inter-marriage and adoption, we may have to seriously think of even converting!

I feel that the time has come when all our future meetings, whether by FPZAI, the WZO, FEZANA, or the various conferences and congresses, should have the declining population as its main and central theme, and not waste time deliberating items like whether to use the Fasli or Gregorian calendar; or abstract matters like "vision for the third millennium."

Brig. Noshir B. Grant, Pune, India

Awaiting a second flowering

Calling all Parsees. Calling All Parsees. Are you there? Hang on. India needs you...India must heed that urgent distress signal. It wept when there was genocide of Sikhs in Delhi 1984 and then of Muslims in Gujarat 2002. Can we then remain silent in the face of the euthanasia of a proud Indian Parsee-Zoroastrian community, a strand of world civilization, before our very eyes?

The community may face extinction in another 50 years. The extinction of a great people is an unimaginable prospect and would imply the end of a glorious and unbroken world civilization going back 2,500 years. The Parsees came from Persia to India centuries ago and are part of the warp and woof of the extraordinarily rich Indian tapestry.

What is India? It is not just a geographical expression or a compendium of histories. Nor even the simple sum of the 4,700 communities listed in the monumental *People of India* series that make up the sovereign 'we' who gave ourselves a Constitution in 1950. It is all this and more. It is an idea, a tradition and a value make up of a myriad streams and subtle fragrances that have mingled to make us what we are.

India is a unique amalgam. It is home to all but one or two of the extant world religions. Hindu, Buddhist, Jain and Sikh faiths were born in this country. Christianity came to the shores of Malabar in 52 CE with St Thomas the Apostle. Islam came to India in the lifetime of the Prophet, to the Malabar coast with Arab traders who sailed the monsoon. Judaism also came to India in two or more waves in very early times and took root around Cochin and Bombay. The Zoroastrians came to Gujarat 1,000 years ago and sought refuge from a Hindu ruler who was moved by their plea that far from crowding his territories or depriving his subjects of their living, they would add to the sweetness of their lives much as a grain of sugar in a tumbler of water.

India needs the Parsees to remain in India. That grain of sugar once given as a token of communion and a continuing civilizational compact cannot now be unilaterally withdrawn.

There can be a second Parsee flowering. Those Parsees fatalistically awaiting euthanasia must know that it is unacceptable that they fade into the sunset.

Excerpted from "Awaiting a Second Flowering" by B. G. Verghese, Indian Express, December 2004]

Turning back to Zarathushtra

We are raising a storm about preserving/breeding vultures, building new flats, building agiaries ... Do we not realize that in the next 60 years or so, there will not be any Parsis left for the vultures to eat? Who is going to occupy the new flats, and go to the agiaries?

So is there a remedy? Yes, of course there is.

Our only solution is to turn back to Asho Zarathushtra and follow His teachings. In the last decades the home fire, *topi*, *sudreh-kushti*, *farajyat* have all come under the axe. Let us introduce them into our lives with devotion. Bring back the total faith in Ahura Mazda through the Mazdayasni Deen, as we have done for the last 9,000 years.

We have tried everything to increase our numbers ... but all have been to no avail. Let us now do the right thing. Turn back to Zarathushtra and to him alone.

Er. Jal N. Kootar, Mumbai

The Vanishing Breed

The Parsis, once indomitable figures in India's political, economical and social life, are locked in an emotional debate over how best to preserve their community, while also moving with the times.

"We must become more broad-minded and welcome children of mixed parents into our community," says Khushroo Madon, a self-described reformist priest in Mumbai. To Zoroastrian conservatives, this is heresy. "Purity is more important than numbers," says Khojeste Mistree, a Zoroastrian scholar in Mumbai. "Our religion is interwoven with our ethnicity (and) can only be passed on through a Zoroastrian father."

The seeming contradiction between this myopic ethno-religious conservatism and the socio-economic progressiveness of the Parsis is rooted in their refugee mentality, says Mani Kamerkar, a Zoroastrian historian. Though Parsis assimilated peacefully into Indian life, they did not intermarry with local communities and maintained their faith against overwhelming odds. "Now Zoroastrians have become obsessed with the idea of saving themselves, keeping apart from the 'Other'," says Kamerkar, who is married to a non-Parsi.

Many modern Parsis are increasingly pushing for change, but conservatives such as Mistree say their "over-westernization and over-secularization is killing our Parsipanu," or way of life.

This fear of change and lack of initiative is partly rooted in Parsi philanthropy. Wealthy Parsis have endowed the community with free housing, education, health care and religious infrastructure worth more than \$500 million, according to Minoo Shroff, chairman of the Bombay Parsi Panchayat. Kamerkar says that over the years the assurance of inheriting free homes and a social safety net has robbed the community of motivation and fuelled a selfish desire not to dilute resources by accepting new converts.

From amid the swelter and flour-scented air of the cosily antique Yazdani bakery in Mumbai, Zend M. Zend, baker extraordinaire and an Irani well known for his earthy philosophical views, says the time has come for the Parsis to stop "this moaning and groaning" about survival. "Zoroastrianism has been left dead many times. Each time it was our zest for life, our life-celebrating attitude that saw us through," he says, "As long as we have that, we'll be fine."

Excerpted from "A Vanishing Breed" by Jehangir S. Pocha, in The Boston Globe, September 5, 2004.

This is who we are ...

Reading Jehangir Pocha's article [*previous page*] I am reminded of a childhood *bawaji* friend who went on a once-in-a-lifetime trip to the Swiss Alps with his older brother. On his return when asked what he did on the Alps he said that whilst his brother went up the mountain, he looked after their suitcase! Which of course begs the question: Why would you take a suitcase to the Alps? But this is who we are!

Our moribund numbers show that at this moment in history we may well be at the *paydust* ceremony of an ancient civilization but here we are, doing everything possible to keep the vultures alive so that we can properly dispose off our dead! That's genius! We constantly preen at the achievements of our forefathers whilst doing little in the present to ensure a future for our children.

But wait, let's not lose our *himmat*! Towards the end of Pocha's article one of our more famous Irani bakers assuages us worry-worts ... "Zoroastrianism has been left for dead many times (uh? I knew we were famous but immortal?) . Each time it was our zest for life, our life-celebrating attitude that saw us through ... as long as we have that, we'll be fine."

Three cheers for 'em *mawa* cakes! Let's stop piffing; let's shoot the iconoclasts among us. In fact let's make a toast, add some strawberry jam and say bottoms up to the future!

And whilst we are at it, somebody please placate the naysayers by reminding them that thanks to the wonders of modern medicine, whatever happens, our place in posterity is guaranteed. Folks, all it takes is a test tube, two drops of our pure bred lineage ... ahem ... and the freezer compartment of a Godrej refrigerator!

Sharookh Daroowala
North Vancouver, British Columbia

Parsi Dilemma of Life and Death

Parsis appear to be in a dilemma of both the issues of life and survival, and of the dead's disposal ... To an amused outsider, it would seem to be the image of an endangered and confused species (Parsi Zoroastrians) in concerned pursuit of a near extinct species of bird – not in life's survival process, but in the rituals of death ...

The fundamental question is: how will this declining community survive with its basic Zoroastrian values in the flood of growing humanity (now over 6 billion), and in a modernizing, multi-cultural diasporic world of the 21st century? ...

With the exception of a handful of cities (Mumbai, Tehran, Toronto, London) themselves limited 'bio-diversity pools,' the rest are too small to offer biologic prospects of growth. Almost the entire community is in low, far flung discontinuous islands, and a sizable minor-

ity – maybe a third – are already married out ... Could we be hitting those minimum biological levels beyond which there is inevitable population decline and extinction?

The issue of the community's healthy survival appears to have fallen between three stools. First, those who got caught up in the egos and power politics of World Zoroastrian bodies. Second, the ritually pure among us, who claim "quality is more important than quantity," forgetting the quality of majestic tigers, nevertheless declining. The third group with a pathetic belief in history – if we have survived for a thousand years, we shall survive for many centuries yet ...

Claiming no expertise in either demography, the genetics of bio-diversity, the biology of vultures, or Zoroastrian ritual, may I, nevertheless, offer the following:

- A respect for modern science in the pursuit of Asha.
- Far greater thought and resources for our children's education and competitiveness in a globalizing world, rather than the disposal of the likes of me.
- Scientific study of the causes of the decline and the realities, with the application of scientific "bio-diversity factors in the diminishing clusters" thesis.
- Closer merging and intermarriage of Parsis and Iranian Zoroastrians. There will be larger complementary strength in that Parsi-Irani merger, despite differences in history and social environments.
- Big-minded, Gatha-led thinking on the open acceptance of the children of mixed marriages, subject to consent of the parents and desire of the child.

Let us remember the basic biological finding that survival of both 'quality' and 'quantity' is in reproducible numbers and in sizeable clusters of any species, e.g. 100 tigers in 10 clusters of 10 each will be far more vulnerable than 2 clusters of 50 each. Even the quality and quantity of the majestic tiger has fast deteriorated in diminishing habitat clusters. Not to speak of the less majestic species of *dhansak*-eaters!

Aspy Moddie, Mumbai

Parsi to Past-si

... Kekoo Kaka, 83, ambled in humming the Parsi theme song, 'Bachelor Boy.' That jolly gentleman, with a gleam in his eye and glaucoma, was determined to uphold the community's philosophy of "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die out."

No, Sir, they wouldn't just wither away; they would go out in a burst of farce and *murghi na farcha*. Kekoo Kaka decided right then that on this New Year's Eve at the Willingdon Club, he would not sing something as depressing as 'Auld Lang Syne-off.' Instead, he pulled out his father's gold-nibbed Mont Blanc, and composed

an adaptation of a more cheerful song of the season. To 'Rudolph's' jaunty tune, he would belt out:

Rustom, the hook-nosed Parsi, Had a very distinct nose.
And if you ever saw it, You might even think it grewed.
All of the other Indians, Used to laugh and call him names.
They never let poor Rustom, Join in any desi games.
Then one stormy Census eve, Banthia came to say,
"Rustom, with your numbers' plight
I will spell your doom tonight."
So all the other Parsis, Jumped up and down with glee.
They said to long-nosed Rustom,
We'll pass into his-to-ry!"

*Excerpted from Bachi Karkaria, Editorial,
Times of India, September 12, 2004*

Spark of Iranshah

I am a wild person, with wild thoughts. We are now at a point where we will have to make some wild decisions.

If only we could get a spark (not even a big flame, but just a spark) from our Iranshah in Udvarda, and bring it to North America.

We will kindle it with our heart's desire, and fan the flame into a roaring fire, so that we can say:

**"This is our Lineage,
Our Fire, Our Light!"**

*Shapur K. Irani,
Indianapolis, Indiana*

Zarathushtis in Iran

[Continued from page 28]

Another 400 leave every year with education or tourist visas. The majority of them never return.

The same level of emigration exists from smaller cities to larger ones and to the capital (Tehran) for the past two generations. Many Zarathushti stronghold cities are left with just a few Zarathushti families and with the older generation.

It is estimated that for every ten Zarathushti deaths, there are only 4-5 new births.

Conversions. Zarathushtis in Iran, by nature and by law, have abstained from preaching and promoting their religion to non-Zarathushtis, particularly since establishment of the Islamic republic. Although there is widespread interest in the ancient Iranian culture, there is no official conversion to Zoroastrianism in Iran.

By law, any Muslim leaving Islam is considered guilty of *mortad*, and may be punishable by death. Most Zarathushti gatherings are marked closed to outsiders, unless a government permit is issued.

These all point to a very dangerous decline in our Zarathushti population in Iran. Previous optimistic estimates of much higher numbers proved to have no factual basis. ■

Never Underestimate a Parsi

Jamshedji Dinshawji Ardeshir is a Parsi!

One day, Jamshedji was bragging to his boss "You know, I know everyone there is to know. Just name someone, anyone, and I know them."

His boss called his bluff, "OK, Jamshedji how about Tom Cruise?"

"Sure, yes, Tom and I are old friends, and I can prove it."

So Jamshedji and his boss fly out to Hollywood and knock on Tom Cruise's door, and sure enough, Tom Cruise shouts,

"Jamshedji Bawa! Great to see you! Come right in and join me for lunch!"

Although impressed, Jamshedji's boss is still skeptical. He tells Jamshedji that he thinks this was just luck.

"No, no, just name anyone else", Jamshedji says.

"President Clinton," his boss quickly retorts.

"Yes," says Jamshedji, "I know him, let's fly out to Washington." At the White House, Clinton spots Jamshedji on the tour and motions him and his boss over, "Jamshedji Bawaji, what a surprise, I was just on my way to a meeting, but come on in and let's have a cup of coffee first and catch up."

The boss is very shaken by now, but still not totally convinced. After they leave the White House, he expresses his doubts to Jamshedji, who again implores him to name anyone else.

"The Pope," his boss replies. "Sure!" says Jamshedji.

"I have a lot of friends in Italy, and I've known the Pope for a long time." So off they fly to Rome.

Jamshedji and his boss are assembled with the masses in Vatican Square when Jamshedji says, "This will never work. I can't catch the Pope's eye among all these people. Tell you what, I know all the guards, so let me just go upstairs and I'll come out on the balcony with the Pope."

So he disappears into the crowd, headed toward the Vatican. Sure enough, half an hour later Jamshedji emerges with the Pope on the balcony.

When Jamshedji returns, he finds his boss on the ground, surrounded by paramedics. He had had a heart attack.

Working his way to his boss' side, Jamshedji asks him, "What happened?"

His boss looks up and says, "I was doing fine until you and the Pope came out on the balcony and the man next to me said,

"Who's that on the balcony with Jamshedji?"

Moral of the story: Don't underestimate the Parsis.

Submitted by Bomi Damkevala

History and demographics of Zarathushtis in Pakistan

zarathushtis in pakistan



PHOTO: WWW.MAPSOFWORLD.COM

Zarathushti presence in Pakistan

By Virasp Mehta

Zarathushtis in Pakistan settled in waves. In the 16th century, a Zarathushti settlement existed in Sind, which had been a part of the Achaemenian Empire. Then around 1830 to 1840, our ancestors left the hamlets of Gujarat and trudged towards the sand dunes of Sind, some for trading, while many more for a better livelihood.

“ Though living in an Islamic country, we have moved with the times and have earned recognition for benevolence, service, love and charity ... One problem our community must strive to overcome is our declining numerical strength. ”

flourished in Sind, with all its infrastructure of anjumans, charitable trusts, schools, hospitals, centers of social, culture and sports, fire temples and towers of silence.

After the partition, whatever the conditions in store for them after August 14, 1947, the Zarathushtis were faithful to their new country and identified their own interests with those of the country where their lot happened to be cast.

We who chose to stay in Pakistan, felt the void of those whom we knew across the border, but we also realized that in this void lay the openings of commerce and opportunities for jobs. Gradually over the years, the community by and large, enjoyed unprecedented affluence. From a lower middle class community we have become a rich community of upper-middle class.



Virasp Mehta, managing trustee of Informal Religious Meetings, publishes an electronic bulletin on the Zarathushti religion, “Ushao”. Honorary secretary of the Dastur Dr. Dhalla Memorial Institute and honorary treasurer of the Zoroastrian Association of Pakistan, he also writes poems, songs and plays.

Infrastructure. Culturally, we try to be a little different from the main stream Muslim community by wearing traditional Parsi dress (*daglo feta*) and women by wearing saris on occasions. The community as a whole has not adopted Muslim customs, however, minor influences have crept in e.g. the custom of ‘*mehndhi*’ in a few homes.

Socially, we are more active than ever before, institutionally as well as individually. A community of little over 2000 has about a dozen institutions/clubs to cater for social, cultural, educational and sports needs.

Though living in an Islamic country, we have moved with the times, and have earned recognition for benevolence, service, love and charity.

Great leaders. We are blessed because we had the good fortune to have great leaders. Notably among them was **Dastur Dr. Maneckji Nusserwanji Dhalla** whose humility and scholarship exercised a wholesome influence on the religious thinking of the community for 47 long years from 1909 to 1956 while he held the Dasturship of Karachi Parsis. The other luminary was **Jamshed Nusserwanjee**, the ‘Mod-

ern Maker of Karachi'. His life of selfless service spurred many a youth for social service within the community as well as for non-communal organizations.

We are a practical people, capable of reaching great material and even ethical heights, but one problem our community must strive to overcome is its declining numerical strength which in the next quarter of this century, will leave us with a mere handful of hundreds. ■

Demographics of Zarathushtis in Pakistan

By Toxy Cowasjee

[Meticulous demographic records for Zarathushtis in Pakistan are maintained by Toxy Cowasjee, past president of the Karachi Zarathoshti Banu Mandal. "These figures are not guestimates," says Cowasjee, "they are accurate, down to the last child."]

Jehangir Punthakey in his invaluable book, "*The Karachi Zoroastrian Calendar*" published by him in 1919 mentions at the end, interesting figures of the Parsi population in Sind. (The area occupied by Sind a former province of India, now falls within Pakistan which was formed after the partition of India in 1947).

The population of Parsis in Sind for the years 1881, 1891 and 1911 is shown in Table 1.

A break down of the Parsis by location, obtained from each district of Sind by Mr Punthakey, is shown in Table 2.

Mr Punthakey mentions that with the absence of a "proper census study" he could not give an exact figure of Parsis in Sind in 1918 but felt it would be about 3,300, with 3,000 residing in Karachi.

Table 1. PARSIS IN SIND

Year	Male	Female	Married	Unmarried	Widow	Total
1881	605	458	479	507	77	1063
1891	843	691	656	783	95	1534
1911	1259	1152	479	507	77	2411

Table 2. PARSIS IN SIND, 1911

	Male	Female	Total
Karachi	1146	1056	2202
Hyderabad	54	42	96
Larkana	5	1	6
Sukkur	46	50	96
Tharparkar	5	1	6
Upper Sind Frontier	3	2	5
Total Parsis in Sind	1259	1152	2411



Centenary of the Bai Avabai Cooper Agiary in Lahore, Pakistan, was celebrated with a jashan, talks, banquet and the navjote of Laisha Cooper. PHOTO PARSIANA, MAY 1993.

I am not aware of any further censuses taken by Parsis, but was informed one was taken in either the late 1950s or early 1960s, but the findings are not available to me.

In 1995 a nationwide census was undertaken by Karachi Zarathoshti Banu Mandal which I am confident in saying is 100% accurate [see Table 3].

In 1995 there were 1327 males and 1504 females, for a total of 2831 Zarathushtis in Pakistan.

Since 1995, we have an address and telephone directory that includes all Zarathushtis residing in Pakistan and to keep the census correct and up to date, meticulous record is maintained of relocation, births, marriages and deaths. This directory is republished every couple of years or so, for our community.

The figures for October of 2001 and for today (September 21, 2004) are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. CENSUS DATA

	1995	Oct 2001	Sep 2004
Karachi	2647	2220	2012
Lahore	94	72	46
Quetta	45	32	30
Islamabad/ Rawalpindi	30	36	30
Multan	8	7	2
Sargoda	—	5	—
Peshawar	7	3	1
Gujranwalla	—	3	—
Pakistan	2831	2378	2121
The percentage of non-Zarathushti spouses in Karachi is 2.4% (50/(2012+50))			

Zarathushtis in Sri Lanka

Ancient Times to 2004

by Jamsheed K. Choksy

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PERMISSION OF ARCHIVE J.K. CHOKSY



Navroz-Baug, prayer hall in Colombo, where votive rituals are conducted with a dadgah or hearth fire.

History. Sasanian-era stamp seals recovered from archaeological excavations between 1886 and 1984 at the port site of Mantai on the northwest coast of Sri Lanka [see map page 31] suggest that Iranian traders and Zarathushti magi or priests who accompanied them may have resided there at least temporarily. Certainly members of another Iranian confessional community, the Nestorian Christians, were present in medieval Sri Lanka then known as Serendipa or Serendib and Taprobane. A Sanskrit history, authored during the fifteenth century, on the construction of the royal citadel at the north central locale of Sigiriya during the reigns of the Sinhalese kings Dhatusena (455–473) and his patricidal son Kassapa I (473–491), suggests that a magus from Iran oversaw construction of the palace and garden complex on the rock's summit.

In premodern and modern times, Zarathushti settlers came from India. Gravestones attest that Parsi Zarathushti sailors and maritime merchants reached the British colonial island of Ceylon around 1603 as the result of trade between India, the Maldives, Africa, and China. Those initial, poorly documented, settlements in Ceylon continued during the 18th century, adding to the mercantile community that was arising there.

The first well documented presence of Parsi Zarathushtis in British Ceylon dates to 1803. Thereafter the community played an ever-increasing role in Ceylon's administration, economy, and society. Initially, they worked as planters on coffee and tea estates in the central province or hill country, near Kandy and Nuwara Eliya, and as merchants, particularly in the Fort of Colombo. Then they moved into professions such as law and medicine, becoming societally prominent and financially affluent. Parsi women, like the men, routinely completed secondary education at secular schools and began graduating from Ceylonese universities.

After Ceylon became independent in 1947, nearly 50% of the community chose to return to India and gain Indian citizenship. The rest became citizens of Ceylon. When Sinhalese became the official language of Ceylon in 1956, many Zarathushtis, not fluent in that local language began migrating to Australia. Emigration from Ceylon, which became the Republic of Sri Lanka in 1972, has continued as Zarathushtis seek educational and economic opportunities in the USA and Canada. By-and-large, the ethno-religious conflict between Sinhalese and Tamils, Buddhists and Hindus, has not affected the Zarathushti community directly.

Community organizations and properties. The Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) Parsi Anjuman was established in 1939 to consolidate control and administration of the hitherto separate trust funds such as those for priests and rituals, funerary sites and sports. The Anjuman address (40 Fifth Lane, Kollupitiya, Colombo 3, Sri Lanka, tel: 94-11-2573404) is the location of the community's prayer hall called Navroz-Baug. At present, the three trustees are Mr. K. N. Choksy, Mr. P. M. Lakdawalla, and Mr. P.

Pakistan ... [Continued from previous page]

There are 40 females and 10 males, married out of the community and living in Karachi. There may be more females but we are not aware of them. Many of our youth who went abroad to study have married out, and are living in Canada, USA, UK, Australia and New Zealand. They have not been counted here.

Since 9/11 a few individuals, mainly retired persons, have returned to Pakistan but the emigration continues. Sadly our community now comprises mainly of senior citizens. ■

Toxy Cowasjee is presently editor of "Hamazor," publication of the World Zoroastrian Organization. Toxy was president of the Karachi Zartoshti Banu Mandal for seven years, secretary for 15 years, and Child Welfare chairman for six years. Toxy compiled and edited KZBM's first publication, "Manna of the Angels", a Parsi traditional cook book.



Sri Lanka Demographics



The total number of Zarathushtis (men, women and children) within Sri Lanka in 2004 is approximately sixty-one. Fifty-six individuals are on the Anjuman's list, about five have not listed themselves with the Anjuman. They are all Parsis, with no Iranians and no converts.

The Anjuman defines a Zarathushti as a person whose father was a Zarathushti and who, if an adult, has undergone the navjote initiation. The number of non-Zarathushti spouses (husbands and wives) of Zarathushtis is approximately ten. Children of non-Zarathushti husbands number around five, but those children are not recognized by the Anjuman's trust deed as Zarathushtis. Following the guidelines [page 24] for this survey:

The total number of Zarathushtis = 66 (61 + 5); and

The percentage of non-Zarathushti spouses is 13.2% (10)/(66+10).

A report to the Bombay Parsi Panchayat noted the population of Parsi Zarathushtis in Ceylon during 1901 as 95 individuals. The 1911 census of India recorded that 181 Parsi Zarathushtis resided in Ceylon. Between 1930 and 1950, the Zarathushti population – mainly Parsis – ranged around 350.

Most Zarathushtis in Sri Lanka have residences in Colombo, even though some of them work and reside in other parts of the country like Kandy. Professionally they range from architects, attorneys, educators, engineers, entrepreneurs, industrialists, and journalists to military officers, physicians, politicians, sportsmen, and social workers. They continue to contribute in an exemplary fashion not only professionally but also charitably – for example, to hospitals and social organizations – to Sri Lankan society. ■

Pestonjee. The Anjuman has written records relating to rites and sites of the Zarathushti community since its establishment. The Anjuman continuously retains the services of one Parsi mobed, appropriately trained and inducted in India, who conducts rituals for the behdins. Occasionally, other mobeds are also present among the community although those priests engage in other professions.

The Parsi **Priest Maintenance fund** had been started in 1910 to pay for rental of prayer halls for the community and residential quarters for mobeds. The first resident mobed was hired in 1912.

A permanent location for Zarathushti devotions was endowed in 1927 and is known as the **Navroz-Baug**. Administered by the Anjuman, Navroz-Baug is the prayer hall where votive rituals are conducted with a dadgah or hearth fire [see photos previous page]. Navroz-Baug includes living quarters for the mobed, his family and staff.

Many of the regular or outer rituals such as jashan or thanksgiving service, *farokhshi* or recitation for the fravashis, and navjote or initiation rite, continue to be performed.

A **funerary site** also is administered by the Anjuman. Property was donated in 1826 for construction of a dakhma or funerary tower at Bloemendhal Road, Kotahena, Colombo. By the mid 1800s, exposure was phased out because of complaints from nearby residents that predatory and scavenging birds attracted to the human corpses were attacking pets. Inhumation or burial was introduced in an *aramgah* ('place of repose' that is, burial ground or cemetery) on the same property. By 1861, the dakhma and aramgah at Bloemendhal Road were closed and walled-off.

In 1885, land was purchased at Jawatta Road, Thimbirigasyaya, Colombo, for a new aramgah and for a bungli or pavilion to perform final rites with a sagri or fire room, a well, storage rooms for biers, and a resi-

dence for a caretaker. This aramgah was enclosed by a circular wall with one entrance so that it visually resembled a dakhma. The base of the burial area was lined with granulated rock, topped with six to seven feet of sand in which the corpses are buried individually, in rows irrespective of gender and age, to protect the environment from ritual pollution.

The first burial occurred at the Jawatta Road aramgah in 1894. When that aramgah became filled to capacity with graves, another one was constructed in 1921 along similar architectural lines. Yet another aramgah now is scheduled for construction at the Jawatta Road property following the pattern of the previous two ones.

The **Parsi Sports Club** began as the Parsi Youth's Sports Club in 1927. Since 1947, it has occupied the Parasmani Hall, on Palm Grove, Kollupitiya, Colombo. That hall, a single-story community building with banquet and sports facilities, also falls under the Anjuman's administration.

Additionally, the Anjuman also owns a few commercial buildings adjacent to the prayer hall that are leased to businesses. ■

Jamsheed K. Choksy is Professor of Central Eurasian Studies,



Professor of History, Adjunct Professor of Religious Studies at Indiana University. Professor Choksy grew up in Sri Lanka where his parents and

one younger brother still reside. His great-grandfather immigrated to Ceylon from Surat and Bombay in 1884. His father served as the Minister of Constitutional Affairs and the Minister of Finance of the Republic of Sri Lanka.

Results from a survey of population figures in each state in the USA and each province in Canada.

zarathushtis in usa & canada

by Roshan Rivetna

The stories of the early settlers in North America is recorded in a special issue of FEZANA Journal, "Coming to North America" [FJ, Spring 1997]. Some excerpts are given here.

A "separate Colony of Parsis" – in America

During the first half of the nineteenth century, fewer than 200 persons of Indian origin had emigrated to the USA. America was far away, and half-way round the world; but incredible as it may sound, in 1876, the Parsis of Baroda were considering emigrating to the US, en masse. They wrote to the American Consul [1]:

"Many enterprising and intelligent Parsis are desirous of emigrating to the New World and of establishing themselves as colonists on the same plan and system as the European settlers.

"It is a thought uppermost in the minds of some of our Community to form themselves into a body and invest a certain amount of their own Capital in purchasing Cultivable lands of Considerable Area.



"The principal object of such an investment is to found a separate Colony of Parsis only, in a land which has been, from time immemorial, the fostering nurse of many an enterprising and needy adventurer and well-to-do Capitalist where they can, without the slightest impediment, preserve and follow the religion of their forefathers ...

"A settlement in America at the earliest opportunity has become the subject of our grave considerations..."

This was, perhaps, the only attempt ever made by Indians to emigrate in a group to the New World. It is not known what came of it.

First Zarathushti settlers in USA and Canada

The first Zarathushti who came for permanent settlement to North America was **Pestonji Framji Daver** in 1892. He came and settled in San Francisco. His son **Jamshed** was the first Zarathushti born in North America. Both the father and son were

“ The first person to come for permanent settlement to America was Pestonji Framji Daver in 1892. He came and settled in San Francisco. His son Jamshed was the first Zarathushti born in North America. ”

millionaires. Jamshed died in 1982 as James Edward Daver, a Roman Catholic. According to the will of Pestonji Daver, after the demise of his son, his estate, amounting to Rs. 5.6 million went to the Bombay Parsi Punchayet. The son's million dollar estate went to his church [2].

In 1866, Barkerville, 450 miles north of Vancouver, was the third largest city (pop. 60,000) in North America, and the *Gold Rush* was on. Bark-

erville attracted people from all over the world, and adventurous as our worthy ancestors were, there came to Barkerville, a Zarathushti also. *Parsi Prakash* records *Maneckji Faramji Javeri* was prospecting gold in California at that time, and it is possible that he could be the one who came to Barkerville. He would indeed be the first Zarathushti in Canada [2].

Phiroze Dorabji Saklatwala [photo top] brother of Shapurji Saklatwala, M.P. came to New York in 1904. He embarked upon his own business and became the majority owner of an oil company's share on the Big Board in New York and was known as the 'Parsi Oil King.' He was the first Parsi Consul-General for Persia in the USA [3].

The *first Zoroastrian Association of New York* was born in the living room of Phiroze Saklatwala on West 11th Street, on November 10, 1929. As fate would have it, the affluent Zoroastrians were wiped out in the great depression and so also, the original Zoroastrian Association [2].

In southern New Jersey, in the town of Malaga, there is a street named Dinshaw Drive, named after **Dinshaw P. Ghadiali** [photo above] medical healer, scientist, inventor, author, aviator, and a man of many avocations [4].

At a New York city parade of foreign born Americans, in 1919, Dinshaw, dressed in jama and pichori, proudly led the parade carrying a banner which read "Parsi Zoroastrian Amer-

ican Forever." There were two other Zoroastrians — Kaikhushroo Hormuz and Kaikhushroo Bam, both American veterans of World War I in the parade [2].

Immigration battles.

It was as early as November 1900 that **Bhicaji F. Balsara** arrived in the US and settled in New York. His claim to fame, however, was his success in becoming the first Zarathushti naturalized as a citizen of the US after fighting his case before two courts. Objections to Mr. Balsara's petition were based on a requirement that only "free white persons" could be admitted to citizenship. In his petition, Mr. Balsara claimed that his "color is white and his complexion dark" [5].

The Court had a serious objection to accepting "white persons" to include all branches of the race known as Aryan, Indo-European, or Caucasian. It, however, allowed Mr Balsara's petition noting that "he was a gentleman of high character and exceptional intelligence."

The US government appealed the decision and filed a 145-page brief arguing why a Parsee could not be considered a 'white person.' In the decision in *United States v. Balsara*, 1910, Judge Ward offered the following description of the Parsis:

"... They constitute a settlement by themselves of intelligent and well-to-do persons, principally engaged in commerce ..."

In the opinion of the court, Parsis do belong to the white race and it was

agreed that Mr. Balsara was properly admitted to US citizenship [5].

In 1917, the US Congress passed the Asian Exclusion Act, which excluded all natives of Asia including India from admission as immigrants to the US. When the naturalization authorities therefore moved to cancel the citizenship of Dinshaw Ghadiali, he quoted from various anthropological works to defend his status, which was subsequently upheld by the Court [2].

“ In the opinion of the court, Parsis do belong to the white race and it was agreed that Mr. Balsara was properly admitted to US citizenship. ”

These same cases were cited by Rustomji Wadia in his long battle for US citizenship in 1933. Rustomji, possibly the earliest resident of New York, passed away in 1992.

Population growth. When Dastur Dr. Dhalla came to New York in 1905, for Avestan studies at Columbia, he noted there were eight Zoroastrian businesses in the US, and the population "does not exceed 12 or 15 at any single period."

In 1948, Indian immigration was placed on a quota basis by the US and Zarathushtis came to the US without the difficulties experienced by the pioneer settlers.

What started as a mere handful through the 1950s, immigration to the US and Canada, mostly from the Indian subcontinent and to a lesser extent from Iran, picked up in the 1960s and has continued in the decades since. There was an influx of Iranians following the revolution in Iran in 1979, with a large proportion settling in California.

[Continued on page 60]



Phiroze Saklatwala
"Oil King of America"
PHOTO: PARSEE LUSTRE
ON INDIAN SOIL



Dinshaw Ghadiali
PHOTO: DARIUS DINSHAW,
COURTESY KERSI B. SHROFF.



Upcoming FEZANA census

The data presented here should be viewed as informal, preliminary survey results, pending an official FEZANA census. The FEZANA Census and Directory Committee, chaired by Noshir Jesung plans to conduct an official, statistically accurate census of USA and Canada, in the near future [read more about it on page 5].

Population survey data for each province in Canada and each State in the USA, is shown below.

ZARATHUSHTI POPULATION OF CANADA, 2004

State	Zs on record	Estim'd Max	Non-Z Spouses	Source and Comments
Ontario (Toronto, Ottawa)	3,802	4,300	180	Sam Vesuna, ZSO president. As recorded in local database, including members of OZCF and the Iranian Kankash.
British Columbia (Vancouver)	1,089	1,189	30	Homi Italia, ZSBC president. As recorded in local database. Breakdown as follows: Total families = 425; Males = 335; Females = 335; daughters = 178; sons = 217; seniors in household = 24.
Quebec (Montreal)	243	263	16	Ness Lakdawala, ZAQ president and Pheroze M. Austin, ZAQ secretary. Comment: "We estimate there might be about 20 more, based on the current trend of people contacting ZAQ for information on joining our community. Nearly all who inquire consider themselves 'Zoroastrian' – we do not validate such status."
Alberta (Calgary, Edmonton)	134	138	19	Firdosh Mehta, ZAA president. As recorded in local database.
Manitoba (Winnipeg)	25	35	3	Khorshed Karai-Jones, MB. Personal knowledge.
Nova Scotia (Halifax)	35	35	3	Shirin Jagosh, ZAAC president. ZAAC had the distinction of being the only association with 100% readership of FEZANA Journal – every single family in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Newfoundland is a paid-up subscriber.
Saskatchewan (Regina, Saskatoon)	5	6	0	Saros Cowasjee, Professor Emeritus at University of Regina.
New Brunswick (Riverview)	4	4	0	Shirin Jagosh, ZAAC president. As recorded in ZAAC database.
Newfoundland (St. Johns)	4	5	1	Shirin Jagosh, ZAAC president. As recorded in ZAAC database.
Northwest Territories (Iqaluit)	0	0	0	Noshir and Jai Panthaky moved from Baffin Island to Toronto in 2000 [see page 62]. They are not aware of any Zarathushtis living in the Northwest Territories or Nanavut now.
TOTAL CANADA	5,341	5,975	252	
Percentage of non-Z spouses in the total population on record is =4.5% (252/(5,341+252))				



ZARATHUSHTI POPULATION OF USA, 2004

State	Zs on record	Est'd Max	Non-Z Spouses	Source and Comments
Alabama (Birmingham, Huntsville)	11	13	2	Nergish and Hoshi Aga of Birmingham, AL. Personal knowledge.
Alaska (Anchorage)	8	8	1	Kavasji and Pouruchisti Dadachanji [see page 61]. Personal knowledge.
Arizona (Phoenix, Tucson)	133	143	25	Roshan Bhappu, a founder of ZAA (Arizona). As recorded in local databases. Dr. Bhappu has been in the US since 1948. He has served the mining industry for the last 50 years as a professional engineer.
Arkansas (Little Rock)	10	10	1	Dr. Feraydoon Bahrassa, AR. Personal knowledge.
California (Los Angeles, San Francisco)	2,709	2,729	88	Noshir Jesung, chair, FEZANA Census - Directory Committee. Breakdown: 1140 (mostly) Iranians and 60 non-Z spouses, from CZC directory (including N. California); 1569 (mostly) Parsis and 28 non-Z spouses from ZAC & TMZA directories (including N. California).
Colorado (Denver)	58	62	7	Rumi Engineer, president, ZARM (Rocky Mountains). Personal knowledge. Comment: "It certainly surprises me that we have so many Zarathushtis in Colorado. It is a shame they do not mingle."
Connecticut				See New York.
Delaware (Wilmington)	44	46	2	Diana Dadachanji, Philadelphia, PA. Personal knowledge.
Florida (Miami, Boca Raton, Orlando, Tampa Bay)	273	284	35	Soli Dastoor, Sarasota, FL. Breakdown: ZATAMBAY (Tampa) = 35 Zarathushtis plus 10 non-Zarathushti spouses; Orlando-Jacksonville = 71 plus 9; ZAF (Boca Raton-Miami) = 156 plus 15; Other areas = 11 plus 1. In Florida there are 105 males and 76 females; 50 sons and 42 daughters; 10 non-Z husbands and 25 non-Z wives. We estimate an additional 4% (11 Zs) at the Universities in Florida who are not on our records.

ZARATHUSHTI POPULATION OF USA, 2004 (Contd.)

State	Zs on record	Est'd Max	Non-Z Spouses	Source and Comments
Georgia (Atlanta)	133	145	17	Gulshan B. Deboo, Sherry Unwala and Cyrus Aidun. On record in AZA database. Breakdown: 97 adults and 36 children.
Hawaii (Honolulu)	9	11	3	Meheroo Jussawalla, Honolulu, researcher and educator in economics and telecommunications. Personal knowledge.
Idaho (Boise, Idaho Falls)	12	15	3	Khurshed M. Tengra, Boise, ID. Personal knowledge.
Illinois (Chicago)	540	590	66	Aban Vazifdar, Bolingbrook, IL. On record in ZAC database.
Indiana (Indianapolis)	85	100	11	Shapur Irani, long-time "Irani Tea" merchant in Indianapolis and Ness Shroff, professor, Purdue University. Personal knowledge.
Iowa (Des Moines)	3	6	1	ZAC (Chicago) database.
Kansas (Kansas City)	85	115	5	Rustom Ferzandi, ZAK president. On record in ZAK database. Residents of Kansas City, MO were counted in Kansas.
Kentucky (Lexington and Louisville)	30	47	3	Zavera Kanga, Lexington, KY. Personal knowledge.
Louisiana (New Orleans, Shreveport)	46	58	1	Rohinton K. Tarapore, New Orleans. Personal knowledge. Breakdown: Parsis = 36 adults and 4 children; Iranians = 6 adults.
Maine (Bangor, Portland, Orono)	3	3	1	Sherazade Mehta, ZAGBA president. Personal knowledge.
Massachusetts (Boston)	203	223	24	Sherazade Mehta, ZAGBA president. On record in ZAGBA database. Comment: "There is a large student base (approx. 30) from other parts of USA, that are not counted here. There are about 6 students from India that were counted here."
Maryland				See Washington, DC.
Michigan (Detroit)	189	200	17	Jamshed R. Udvardia, MI. Personal knowledge. 70 males, 55 females and 64 children.
Minnesota (Minneapolis-St. Paul)	82	102	14	Khurshid and Jehangir Rudina, MN. Personal knowledge.
Mississippi (Jackson)	0	0	0	None at present. One family in Hattiesburg has moved.
Missouri (St. Louis)	36	40	7	Persis Mehta, St. Louis. Personal knowledge.
Montana	0	0	0	No Zarathushtis of record.
Nebraska (Lincoln, Omaha)	9	12	3	Roshan Pajnigar, Lincoln, NB. Personal knowledge.
Nevada (Las Vegas)	12	16	1	Kaizad Yazdani, Las Vegas. Personal knowledge.
New Hampshire (Manchester, Nashua)	9	11	3	Sherazade Mehta, ZAGBA president. Personal knowledge.
New Jersey				See New York. Zarathushtis cluster in the northern towns near New York city or in the southern towns near Philadelphia.
New Mexico (Albuquerque)	30	35	6	Feroza Jussawalla Dasenbrook, Las Cruces, NM, professor of English at University of New Mexico.

ZARATHUSHTI POPULATION OF USA, 2004 (Contd.)

State	Zs on record	Est'd Max	Non-Z Spouses	Source and Comments
New York +Connecticut +New Jersey	1,097	2,194	97	Homi Gandhi, ZAGNY president compiled data for the Tri-State area (CT, NJ and NY). Based on the DMZT (Darbe Mehr Zoroastrian Trust) database which includes ZAGNY and IZA members and non-members living in the tri-state area, updated with current information from other lists including ZAGNY, Youth Adults and Inter-married Group. Comment: "My estimate has always been that we know about only 50% of the community, Hence our numbers could be double of those on record."
North Carolina (Charlotte, Durham, Raleigh)	75	85	10	Tehmi Dalal, NC (now moved to Cocoa Beach, FL). Personal knowledge.
North Dakota	1	1	0	Shiavax Cowasjee of Mcville, is the sole resident of North Dakota.
Ohio Cincinnati, Cleveland	147	157	12	Kamal Mehta, Cleveland, OH. Personal knowledge. Comment: "... only the same core group comes to our gatherings. There are others – 'nominal Zoroastrians,' even those whose navjotes have been done – who never show up."
Oklahoma (Oklahoma City, Tulsa)	27	32	3	Manek Anklesaria, Tulsa, OK. Personal knowledge.
Oregon (Portland, Eugene)	74	89	6	Dinaz Kutar Rogers, Albany, OR. Personal knowledge. Breakdown: 39 Parsis and 30 Iranians. Comment: "...Several Zarathushtis are out of the 'Z-loop' and don't come; on the other hand, there are some non-Z spouses who are active, knowledgeable and make positive contributions to our faith and people." The International Mazdayasnan Order, headed by Dr. Behest Najad (Parthava) is based in Springfield, OR. For over the last forty years, a few dozen (mostly) Iranian expatriates come together to participate in ceremonies, celebrations and study of Persia's history and culture [see FJ, Spring 1999].
Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, Pittsburgh)	220	235	22	Houtoxi Contractor, ZAPA president (Pittsburgh area) and Diana Dadachanji (Eastern PA - Philadelphia area). As recorded in local databases. Breakdown: Pittsburgh has 92 Zs and 8 non-Z spouses. Philadelphia has 128 Zs and 14 non-Z spouses.
Rhode Island (Providence)	13	15	5	Jerry and Celeste Kheradi, RI. Personal knowledge.
South Carolina (Myrtle Beach)	24	29	5	Rohinton Sarkari, Myrtle Beach, SC. Personal knowledge.
South Dakota	4	4	0	1 family, resident for 20 years, possibly moving to Texas.
Tennessee (Nashville, Memphis)	18	30	3	Minoo Wadia, TN. Personal knowledge.
Texas (Houston, Dallas)	1,021	1,071	69	Anahita Sidhwa (Dallas area) and Arnavaz Sethna (Houston area). On record in local databases. Breakdown: Houston = 655 Zarathushtis and 33 non-Z spouses. Dallas = 366 (256 adults and 110 children) and 36 non-Z spouses.
Utah (Salt Lake City)	9	12	1	Farhid Hafezi, UT. Personal knowledge.
Vermont	4	4	0	Sherazade Mehta, ZAGBA president. Personal knowledge.
Virginia				See Washington, DC.
Washington	82	112	3	Khoosnam Commissariat, WA. Personal knowledge.

ZARATHUSHTI POPULATION OF USA, 2004 (Contd.)

State	Zs on record	Est'd Max	Non-Z Spouses	Source and Comments
Washington, DC + Maryland + Virginia	1,500	1,600	N/A	Behram Pastakia, ZAMWI president compiled data for Maryland, Virginia and Washington, DC. The figure is an estimate, arrived at after consultation with members of ZAMWI Council of Elders, and the present and most recent prior ZAMWI Board of trustees, by email, telephone and personal interviews. The population clusters include suburbs of Baltimore and Rockville, MD, and suburbs of Richmond, VA, Zarathushtis are predominantly in the suburbs of Washington DC. The consensus after hearing the advice of the Council of Elders was to respect the privacy of families and exercise restraint in posing questions which may be construed as intrusive.
Wisconsin (Milwaukee)	71	91	5	Mahrukh Motafram, WI. Personal knowledge.
West Virginia (Weirton)	3	3	0	Adi and Jasmine Tamboli. The only family in the State.
Wyoming (Gillette)	6	6	0	Neville and Zarin Sarkari. The only family in the State.
TOTAL USA	9,158	10,794	588	
Percentage of non-Z spouses in the total population on record is = 6.0% (588/(9158 + 588))				

Key to column headings.. ‘Zs on record’ are the number of Zarathushtis counted based on local databases/directories and through personal knowledge. Special efforts were made by each contact person to seek out and count as many Zarathushtis as possible, including those who were not members and those who were not recorded in any directory. “Est’d Max” is the estimated maximum number, including a ‘gut-feeling’ number of those who might be ‘out there’ but were missed from the count.” It may be viewed as an upper limit of the number of Zarathushtis in the state/province. “Non-Z Spouses” is the number of non-Zarathushti spouses on record.

Process and guidelines. The data collection process and guidelines for Canada and USA are as described for all other countries [see page 23]. Additionally, each contact person was provided with a starter list of Zarathushtis in the state/province, compiled from the FEZANA directory 2004 by FEZANA Census and Directory chair Noshir Jesung. Data was collected strictly on a state/province level, regardless of association affiliation.

Canada and America

Geography has made us neighbors. History has made us friends. Economics has made us partners, and necessity has made us allies. Those whom God has joined together, let no man put asunder.

- John F. Kennedy, address
Canadian Parliament, May 17, 1961.

America is God’s crucible, the great melting pot, where all the races are melting and re-forming – into the crucible. God is making the American.

Israel Zangwill, *The Melting Pot*, 1908

The genius of America is that out of the many, we became one.

Jesse Jackson, *Democratic National Convention, Atlanta, GA, 1988.*

Special thanks to:

- **Noshir Jesung**, chairperson of the FEZANA Census and Directory Committee for assistance in designing the survey questionnaire for US and Canada, and for providing the starter lists of Zarathushtis in each state/province, derived from the online FEZANA directory [see page 5].

- **All the contact persons** for each state/province, as recognized in the above tables, who worked diligently to compile the data from all available sources, taking great pains to seek out Zarathustis who were not members of any association, and those who were not recorded on any local databases.

[Continued from page 54]

Zarathushtis in North America today

It was after the 1960s that these early immigrants, many of whom came with a scarce \$20 in their pockets, put themselves through college, got jobs, opened businesses, raised families, and started building their community structures.

“ When Dastur Dr. Dhalla came to New York in 1905, he noted the population “does not exceed 12 or 15 at any single period.” ”

Infrastructure. Within the short span of barely half a century since the first generation arrived in Canada and the USA, Zarathushtis are building their local and national infrastructure. There are now, largely through the munificence of Arbab Rustam and Morvarid Khanum Guiv, two darbe mehrs in Canada – in Toronto (1978) and Vancouver(1985) and six in the USA – in New York (1977), Chicago (1983), San Jose (1986), Los Angeles (1987), Washington DC (1990) and Houston (1996).

There are two mobed councils – the Council of Iranian Mobeds of North America and the North American Mobeds' Council; 24 formally registered Associations; over a dozen informally organized 'small groups'; a youth organization – *Zoroastrian Youth of North America*; and a national organization FEZANA (born in 1986). For founding stories of these organizations and the darbe mehrs, see the FEZANA Tenth Anniversary issue [*FEZANA Journal, Summer 1996*].

Businesses and professionals. While a few stars have blazed the trail in their chosen field, such as music conductor Zubin Mehta and acclaimed author Rohinton Mistry,

each in his or her own niche, has taken giant strides, at tremendous financial and personal risk, weathering good times and bad, each weaving Zarathushti values of integrity and industry into the fabric of North America.

Within the short span of 40-50 years, they are building a reputation and beginning to have an impact on the business and professional scene. The stories of these entrepreneurs and professionals – from architects and artists, accountants, doctors, engineers, lawyers and scientists to business owners, franchisees, high-tech consultants, internet services and manufacturers – are given in special issues of FEZANA Journal [*“Zarathushti Business and Enterprise”*, FJ Winter 1995 and *“Zarathushti Professionals in North America”* by Dolly Dastoor, FJ Summer 1997].

The *World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce*, spawned in North America, with the mission to “energize the entrepreneurial spirit,” provides

unparalleled networking opportunities for Zarathushti businesses and professionals worldwide.

Coming Together. Overcoming the dispersion and the distances, Zarathushtis in North America are a vibrant community, ever eager to bond with their homelands and others in the diaspora, to bring about a Zarathushti renaissance. ■

- [1] S. Chandrasekhar, *“From India to America”*, Population Review Books, 8976 Cliffridge Avenue, La Jolla, CA 92037, \$25.
- [2] Jamshed Pavri, *“Contributions of Zoroastrians to the North American Society,”* 4th North American Zoroastrian Congress, Montreal, 1982.
- [3] H. D. Darukhanawala, *“Parsi Lustre on Indian Soil,”* 1939.
- [4] Kersi B. Shroff, “Dinshaw Ghadiali, Genius of Malaga,” FEZANA Journal, Vol. X, No. 1, Spring 1997.
- [5] Kersi B. Shroff, *“Bhiccaji Balsara, First Zarathushti US Citizen,”* FEZANA Journal, Vol. X No. 1, Spring 1997.

Counting the crows in Delhi - an Akbar Birbal story

This FEZANA Journal population survey reminds FEZANA Directory and Census Committee chair, Noshir Jesung, of the following classic Akbar and Birbal story. The wit and wisdom of Moghul Emperor Akbar's vizier, Birbal, were, of course, of world renown, and have endeared the pair to generations of story-lovers.

One day Emperor Akbar and his vizier, Birbal, were taking a walk in the palace gardens. It was a nice summer morning and there were plenty of crows happily playing around the pond. While watching the crows, a question came into Akbar's head. He wondered how many crows there were in all of Delhi.

Next day Akbar asked this question in his court. After a moment's thought, Birbal replied, "There are ninety-five thousand, four hundred and sixty-three crows in Delhi."

Amazed by his quick response, Akbar challenged him, “What if there are more crows than you answered?”

Without hesitating Birbal replied, “If there are more crows than my answer, then some of their friends and relatives are visiting from Agra.

“And what if there are less crows?” Akbar asked.

“Then some crows from Delhi have gone to visit Agra!

[Adapted from www.indiaparenting.com]

Living in far-away places ...

Jobs opportunities have drawn Zarathushtis to all corners of North America. Here are the stories of two enterprising families who may possibly have the distinction of being the 'northernmost' Zarathushtis in USA (at Point Barrows, Alaska) and Canada (at Baffin Island in Nanavut, the Northwest Territories).

Life in Alaska

After receiving my MBA from the University of Portland in Feb 1974, I was offered the first controller's position with the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation in Point Barrow, Alaska. I had no idea what to expect, but a sense of curiosity about the Arctic drove me to explore what it all meant, so off I went for what I thought would be a two week adventure. Little did I know that I would spend 22 eventful years in Alaska!

The company I worked for was established by an act of Congress to settle the Native Alaska Inupiat Eskimo claims, and became the recipient of several million dollars in cash settlement and 5 million acres of land with subsurface rights (tons of oil and coal reserves). The company, having sold options to major oil companies for drilling purposes, is today perhaps the richest corporation in Alaska, and would rank in the top Fortune 500. I was later promoted to executive director of the Housing Authority and a special trouble shooter for the mayor of the North Slope Borough (of the size of Pennsylvania).

Incidentally, Alaska is two and a half times the size of Texas. **Point Barrow** [see map p. 53] is the northern most community in North America, and on the Arctic Ocean. There are no roads to the North Slope. The ocean is frozen for most of the year except for a brief period of a month, when the ice breaks up and the northern passage may open sometimes with the help of icebreakers. As the ocean freezes, the water forms pressure ridges seven feet high, pushing on to the beaches. It is truly the land of the midnight sun as the sun sets on November 18 and does not rise until late January.

A highlight of my trip was to accompany the Eskimos as they hunted for whales in small kayaks. The diet varied between caribou, reindeer, moose, walrus and whale, among other traditional foods. Temperatures can well drop below -30°F with wind chill factors equivalent to -60°F.

In 1979 I moved to Anchorage and began my career with Merrill Lynch and later UBS PaineWebber, until 1997 when I moved to California.

Interestingly, we Zarathushtis could learn a lot about demographics from the varied experiences of the native American Indian and Eskimo tribes! [Cont'd next page]



Top, the Exit Glacier on the Harding icefield at Seward. The Dadachanjis hiked on this icefield, thought to be at least 10,000 years old. Below, sons Faridun, Cyrus and Kaivan by their house. Inset, Kavasji with wife Chisti, an electrical engineer, who joined him in Alaska in 1982.

Kavasji Dadachanji is president of Integrity Investment Advisors, a registered investment advisory firm based in Del Mar, CA, providing professional portfolio management and comprehensive wealth management services. Visit www.iiadv.com.



Aerial view of Iqaluit, where the Panthakys made their home, in a one-bedroom apartment on the top floor of the eight-storeyed building, the highest structure in town. This is the scene that greeted Noshir Panthaky when he flew in for his interview.

Living on the Arctic Circle

Originally an architect from Bombay, Noshir Panthaky moved to the Northwest Territories in June 1994, with his wife, Jai, from Toronto, to take up a position as project officer with the Government of the NWT.

At a latitude of 64° north, the town of Iqaluit that the Panthakys called home for six years (they are now back in Toronto) on Baffin Island [see map page 53], is just a few miles south of the Arctic Circle at 67°.

Iqaluit has one main road going through town. There are no trees here, and the ground is perma-frost a few feet below the surface. All necessities are flown in daily, and costs are high. Two liters of milk cost \$6.97 and a loaf of bread is \$2.75.

When the bay starts melting, in late July, some ships come bringing heavy materials, equipment, building supplies, etc., but within a few months it freezes again. Even in summer, in June, temperatures are around 10°C, windy and chilly, and there are over 16 hours of daylight. In January, the mean temperature is -30°C, with only a half hour of daylight every day. With 3,500 inhabitants, Iqaluit, in the heart of the circumpolar world, is the gateway to the Eastern Arctic.

The local *Inuit* people sustain a culture that has changed little for thousands of years. With the passage of a bill in June 1993, the Inuit took a large step to regain control of their ancestral homeland. A new territory of 'Nanavut' (or 'Our Land') was created in 1999, encompassing about 20% of Canada in the Eastern Arctic Region.

Life in this northern land was a change for this couple who grew up in the warm climate of Bombay.

Says Panthaky: "We all think the North is a cold place, but actually we think it is warmer than most in terms of the human heart. People are always smiling here. And we are grateful to Ahura Mazda for the job."

– Roshan Rivetna



Very few, if any Zarathushtis have made permanent settlement in South or Central America, Mexico, or the Islands of the West Indies.

While there have been a handful of Zarathushtis of Indian/Iranian origin on business and professional assignments, very few if any have settled in Mexico, South or Central America or the islands – Bahamas, Cuba, Bermuda, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, Virgin Islands [see map p. 53]. One family is known to live in Venezuela, one in US Virgin Islands and one in Brazil.

Since the late 1990s, the Los Angeles based Zarathushtrian Assembly, headed by Ali A. Jafarey has led missions into Venezuela, Mexico, Chile and Brazil to propagate the message of Zarathushtra. There is a sizeable following and some have been initiated, but official facts and figures are not available.

– Roshan Rivetna

RELIGIONS IN NORTH AMERICA		
	Canada	USA
Pop. 2001	29,639,030	293,027,571
Christianity	72%	76.5%
Atheist/Agnostic/No rel.	16.2%	8.2%
Islam	2.0%	0.5%
Judaism	1.1%	1.3%
Buddhism	1.0%	0.5%
Hinduism	1.0%	0.4%
Sikhism	0.9%	n/a
Unitarian Universalist	n/a	0.3%
Wiccan/Pagan/Druid	n/a	0.1%
Spiritualist	n/a	<0.1%
Native American	n/a	<0.1%
Bahai	< 0.1%	< 0.1%
Zoroastrianism [1]	0.02%	0.004%

Source: www.religioustolerance.org and www.adherents.com. Zoroastrianism is not listed on any of the population websites. [1] Added by FEZANA Jour-

diaspora in the UK

The Zartoshty Brothers Hall at the Zoroastrian Centre in North London, purchased by the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE) in 2000.



PHOTO COURTESY ZTFE

From Cama to Cobra – a tale of enterprise, courage and success

by Dorab Erach Mistry

When HRH Prince Edward visited the New Zoroastrian Centre for Europe in Harrow on 26th June 2002, it was the first visit by a member of the Royal Family to the Zarathushtis. On that splendid occasion, celebrating the Golden Jubilee of Her Majesty, the Prince said “I am sorry it took us 141 years to get here, but the next visit will not be so long in coming.” He had just been hearing of the enormous contribution of the Zarathushti community towards Britain.

First Asian in UK. It was a Zoroastrian Rustom Maneck Sett who obtained from the Moghul Emperor Aurangzeb for the British East India Company the license to trade in India. In 1724, his son **Nowroji Sett** became the first Asian as well as the first Zarathushti to visit the UK. It then took over a 100 years for the first Asian firm and also the first Zarathushti firm to be established in the UK. That happened in 1855 when Cama & Company was set up by **Mancherjee Hormusjee Cama**. His family was the illustrious Cama family who owned and ran Asia's



PHOTO COURTESY BPP REVIEW

ZTFE president Dorab Mistry [standing] with Countess Sophie and HRH Prince Edward, at the Zoroastrian Centre on June 26, 2002.

oldest newspaper The Bombay Samachar in India.

During the period 1890 to 1935, the Zoroastrians in UK also enjoyed great success in Britain's political life with no less than three Zarathushtis (also the first three Asians) getting elected to the House of Commons – **Dadabhai Naoroji** (Liberal), **Sir Muncherjee Bhownagree** (Conservative) and **Shapurji Saklatvala** (Labour and Communist). However, this success in the political field was

never replicated in the field of business in the UK. The Zarathushtis who achieved baronetcy in the UK did so on account of their successes in India, Pakistan, Hongkong or Aden.

The most prosperous Parsi family in the UK were **Lady Freny** and **Sir Dhunjishaw Bomanji Kalfati**. The family lived in opulent luxury in a large estate along the banks of the Thames at Windsor named appropriately as The Willows. The current seat of the family is at Harrogate.



Demographics of Great Britain

Great Britain (or the United Kingdom) comprises of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The British Isles include Ireland and Great Britain.

Population. In 2001, the National Statistics Office conducted a census for England and Wales. A committee of representatives from nine major faiths – Bahais, Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jains, Jews, Muslims, Sikhs and Zoroastrians (represented by Rusi Dalal and Malcolm Deboo) recommended that the British government include the question of “Religious Affiliation” on the census form. The recommendation was accepted; however the Bahais, Jains and Zoroastrians were grouped together under the category of “Other Religions”, with an accompanying write-in box to specify the religion. It may be assumed that some of those who did not write in their religion (approx. 19,000 persons) could well be Zoroastrians.

The official 2001 National Statistics Office census count of Zarathushtis in England and Wales was **3,738** [see table page 65] rounded, in consultation with the census office, to **4,000** to account for those who did not write in their religious affiliation.

Based on these census figures, the ZTFE estimate for Zarathushtis in the British Isles is shown below:

Zarathushtis in the British Isles - 2004	
Great Britain:	5,000
Wales:	Less than 10
Northern Ireland:	25
Scotland:	65
England:	4,900
Republic of Ireland:	10

Not including visitors, one may safely say that there could possibly be up to 1,000 additional Zarathushtis that are not included in these estimates.

By far the largest concentration of Zarathushtis (possibly 99%) are in the Greater London and surrounding areas. After World War II, in the mid-1940s, the Zarathushti population was about 250–300. More Zarathushtis found abode within the UK, beginning with emigration from India and Pakistan in the 1950s, and the arrival of Zarathushti colonials mainly from East Africa in the 1960s. The exodus of Iranian Zarathushtis, following the revolution in 1979, swelled the numbers to some estimated 5,000 and higher.

Marriages. The first 40 pages of the 125-page ZTFE directory were sampled. This directory also includes Zarathushtis residing in Europe where, due to isolated families, the percentage of interfaith marriage may be higher.

The total number of individual names is 867 (822 Zarathushtis and 45 non-Zarathushti spouses).

The total number of families is 367 (90 single-person households and 277 multiple-person households).

The percentage of non-Zarathushti spouses in the population is 5.2% (45/867). The percentage of families with a non-Zarathushti spouse is 16.3% (45/(367-90)).

Rusi Dalal.



Britain's most famous Zarathushti was undoubtedly **Freddie Mercury** of the rock band **Queen**. Britain's most famous Zarathushti businessman is **Keki Dadiseth** an executive director of the multi-billion pound conglomerate Unilever. In sport, cricketer **Ronnie Irani** captains Essex and dons the colors of the MCC.

The Zarathushti community in the UK is largely into the professions though a few have ventured into businesses such as hospitality and catering. The most prominent Zarathushti businessman of recent times is undoubtedly the young entrepreneur **Karan Bilimoria** (voted Asian of the Year 2002) whose Cobra Beer has propelled him into the select league of one of Britain's best known brand names. Cobra Beer Ltd. now extends into General Bilimoria Wines and a publishing business too.

The Zarathushti community in the UK is organized under its anjuman called The Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE) which was founded in 1861 by Mancherjee Cama, Dadabhai Naoroji and others. The ZTFE has seen amongst its membership a galaxy of stalwarts from the Camas, the Tatas, the Cowasjee Jehangirs, the Godrejs, the Wadias and the Zartoshtys. It can truly be said that From Cama to Cobra has been an exciting odyssey of enterprise, courage and success. Mother India can be proud of her Zarathushti diaspora. ■

Dorab Erach Mistry qualified as a chartered accountant in Mumbai in 1976 and joined the Godrej organization, where he is now a director. He is a life member and (since 1997) president of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE).

Zarathushti Impact and Influence in Britain

by *Rusi K. Dalal*

Zarathushtis have enjoyed the hospitality of the shores of the British Isles for nearly three hundred years. The early settlers relished their standing in the local communities and began to exert their influence in society.

The three hereditary peerages (Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, Cowasji Jehangir and Dinshaw Petit) bestowed on Zarathushti families bear the hallmark of Zarathushti power and influence in UK. The strong representations successfully led by Bhownagree as president of the Zoroastrian Association, to the Shah of Iran in the early 1900s for greater social freedom for Zarathushtis in Iran is well documented.

A memorial in Regents Park, London, of Parsi gratitude to the British,

Nowroji Rustom Maneck Sett (1663 – 1732) was the first Zarathushti (and first Asian) to visit UK, in 1724.



PHOTO: PARSEE LUSTRE ON INDIAN SOIL. DARUKHANAWALA

donated by Cowasji Jehangirji Readymoney, still bears testament of a small but influential Zarathushti community of that era in Britain.

Present diaspora. The role of Zarathushtis today has no doubt transformed from that of traders, merchants and business houses of the earlier era, to that of being professionals and service providers today.

Over a period of the last generation or so, the emphasis has been swung towards the revival of the old Zarathushti virtues and identity. This enthusiasm has been spearheaded by the educational program nationally promoted by ZTFE with great vigor over the last almost two decades. This program included, first, teaching and familiarizing ourselves to be Zarathushtis, and second, informing and letting others know who Zarathushtis are, and what we can contribute to society as Zarathushtis.

Impact of migration. Recent migration of Zarathushtis has been global on a massive scale. There are now Zarathushtis in almost every major city of the world, with just one or two families in some places. This implies that we have spread out far too thinly to be able to sustain our identity. Adding up all the numbers, the migration has severely dented the fabric of Zarathushti society in our original strongholds of Iran and India. It is prudent that the migrant communities, particularly in the West, must look back and sustain the foothold of the communities which they left behind, on a much larger scale.

Unification. Wherever Zarathushtis have set up their roots, they have generally bonded together by establishing an anjuman or a center with the aim of cohering their similarities. These establishments can federate within their own geographical framework, facilitating a pyramidal structure for a global unit.

Such a structure must encompass a unified social, cultural, economic, political and most importantly, a religious base with power to deliver a

unity of purpose, for the unification of world Zarathushtis.

Let individuals stand alongside to form a square and support a pyramidal structure, for only then the participation from the apex downwards can be evenly shared to the base, and the load sustained – much like in a Sadhu's back resting on a bed of nails. ■

Rusi K. Dalal was born in Zanzibar, came to England in 1959, where he established his Civil and Structural



Engineering firm. Deeply involved with Zarathushti affairs, Rusi has served as president of ZTFE and represented

Zarathushtis at national, governmental and interfaith levels. He has been a candidate for local government elections, and is a member of the Civic Forum, Greater London Assembly.



Religions in Britain

Britons follow more than 170 different faiths or belief systems, as revealed in the 2001 census, the first national count of religious affiliation. Many of the faiths reflect the multicultural society that Britain has become. Some are shown below.

RELIGIONS IN BRITAIN

Christian (71%)	37,046,500
None	7,274,290
Muslim	1,546,626
Hindu	552,421
Sikh	329,358
Jewish	259,927
Buddhist	144,453
Jains	15,132
Rastafarians	4,692
Bahai	4,645
Zoroastrians	3,738

[www.telegraph.co.uk, Dec. 12, 2004. Also see Demographics, page 64.]



PHOTO: WWW.ALABAMAMAPS.UA.EDU

Estimates of population figures for about twenty countries in Europe and Central Asia where Zarathushtis are known to reside

Zarathushtis are a very enterprising and dynamic community always ready for new challenges. In the early part of the 20th century many left the shores of India and Iran to seek new opportunities and settled in different countries of Europe. Some got assimilated and others maintained their identity. Some chose not to seek out their co-religionists and others hungered for contact.

We have many anecdotal stories and information about Zarathushtis in different countries in Europe and Central Asia, but in an effort to maintain objectivity and obtain authentic figures (to the extent possible with our limited resources) we contacted many sources by email and telephone. Some responded to our request and some ignored us. Of the 45 countries of various sizes that make up Europe, we were able to obtain population figures for less than 20 where Zarathushtis have been residing. I am convinced that there are many more Zarathushtis than the figures we have obtained, but have no specific proof. In order for us to be counted, each and every one of us needs to make a concerted effort to obtain names and numbers of people living in the diaspora.

Table 1 [facing page] gives population counts for Zarathushtis of Parsi or Iranian origin, along with the source of the data and explanatory notes. Much of the data was provided by Rusi Dalal, past president of ZTFE.

Table 1. ZARATHUSHTI POPULATION OF EUROPE

Country	Number	Source and Comments
Germany (Bonn, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Dusseldorf)	250	Rusi Dalal. Historically, Parsi and Iranian Zarathushtis have had trade and commerce with Germany, being a leading industrial nation. There was even a Parsi cemetery in Berlin until the 1940s.
Sweden (Stockholm, Gothenburg)	175	Mobed Kamran Jamshidi (president of Zoroastrian Community (Zoroastriska Centret) and Bahram Mondegari, president of Anjoman of Zoroastrians of Sweden (Sveriges Zoroastriska Förening). Most members are of Iranian origin. Starting with one or two 25–30 years ago, the number has increased steadily. They came to Sweden to study, to get married, to work, but, says Mobed Jamshidi, "... most of us came here to live outside the Islamic Republic." H. Rad, resident of The Hague, estimates there are over 200 Zarathushtis in Sweden. Rusi Dalal estimates 6 Parsis.
France (Paris)	150	Mrs. Mehrafzoun Sassanfar, president, Zoroastrian Association of France (40 Avenue de Saxe, 75007 Paris, tel: 01.56.68.00.65, fax: 01.56.68.00.81.) About 70 live in Paris, the rest in other towns. 50% are of Iranian origin who left Iran after the revolution (1979). The Zarathushti population in France has been growing because of a number of Iranians who are leaving Iran and coming to Europe for business and in industries or as students. H. Rad estimates there are presently over 200 Zarathushtis in France.
Switzerland (Geneva, Basel, Zurich)	35	Behram Irani, longtime resident of Switzerland. There are 20 Zarathushtis in Geneva and another 10-15 in Basel and Zurich.
Spain (Costa Brava)	30	Rusi Dalal. Parsis. H. Rad estimates 15 in Spain.
Portugal (Lisbon, Porto)	20	Rusi Dalal (3–4 Parsi families).
Austria (Vienna)	12	Rusi Dalal. Parsis.
Greece (Athens)	12	Rusi Dalal (2 Parsi families in Athens).
Denmark (Copenhagen)	10	Rusi Dalal. Parsis.
Russia (Moscow)	7	Burzin Atashband, an ordained priest from India, settled in Kiev. There are 7 Zarathushtis from Iran, Pakistan, USA and India, based in Russia.
Norway (Oslo)	6	Rusi Dalal knows 4 Parsis. Kurosh Aryana knows two Iranian 'born' Zarathushtis.
Netherlands (Holland) (The Hague, Amsterdam)	6	Rusi Dalal.
Ukraine (Kiev)	5	Burzin Atashband. There are 5 Zarathushtis from Iran and India based in Kiev, Ukraine.
Italy (Rome)	4	Rusi Dalal. Parsis.
Belgium (Brussels)	2	Rusi Dalal. Parsis.
Malta	1	Rusi Dalal. Parsi.
Czech Republic (Prague)	1	Rusi Dalal. Parsi.
TOTAL EUROPE =	726, rounded to 1,000	



‘Neo Zarathushtis’ or ‘Zarathushtis by choice’. Mobed Kamran Jamshidi, president of the Sweden-based Zoroastrian Community (ZC), informs: “My best guess for the total number of Zarathushtis in Europe (without Great Britain) is around 1,000. The number is growing, mostly by the number of neo-Zarathushtis for which I do not have any exact or even estimated number. However, we can give ZC’s definite statistic that 80 persons spread over Europe and Central Asia have been initiated through ZC.”

Table 2 shows ‘Zarathushtis by choice’ who have been formally initiated by an ordained Zarathushti priest. Though difficult to separate, to the best of our knowledge it appears that at present, a quarter of the total are of non-Iranian origin.

According to each of the survey respondents, there are many more (in the hundreds) who believe and follow the religion ‘internally,’ but have not been counted in Table 2, because they have not been formally initiated.

Further data and discussion of the emergence of neo-Zarathushtis will be forthcoming in a future issue of FEZANA Journal.

Table 2.

Russia	30	B. Atashband.
Sweden	25	Kamran Jamshidi.
Tajikistan	20	E. Azarmehr.
Ukraine	20	B. Atashband.
Belgium	11	Khosro Khazai, European Centre for Zoroastrian Studies.
France	7	M. Sassanfar.
Belarus	6	Jamshid Zartoshti.
Norway	5	Kurosh Aryana
Italy	1	Michele Moramarco.

TOTAL 125

In addition, the *St. Petersburg Zoroastrian Community* has 43 members, initiated by Pavel Globa and Mikhail Chistiakov of St. Petersburg, Russia. The *Mazdayasnish Zarathushtrish Anjuman of Uzbekistan*, Tashkent, headed by Rustam Abdukamilov, has 400 members, not formally initiated.

Conclusion. We realize that this is not as in-depth a demographic profile of Zarathushtis in Europe and Central Asia as we would have liked. Nevertheless it gives us an estimate of the strength of our community and is a good starting point to build on.

Personal experience in Gothenburg, Sweden

In July 2002, I arrived at the railway station in Gothenburg after a long journey by train and boat from Moscow. I got into a taxi and gave the name of my hotel. The taxi driver gets a call on his cell phone and when he opens his phone, there in the identity area of the phone, was the picture of a *farohar*.

I asked him whether he was a Zarathushti and he said “No, not yet, but I am from Iran and follow Avesta.” We got into a small conversation in broken English before he dropped me at the hotel.

A few days later I took another taxi in Gothenburg, to visit Mobed Jamshidi, and this driver also had a *farohar* sticker on his dashboard. This driver who was also from Iran, was not too talkative and said he has the symbol because he likes it.

– Dolly Dastoor

Dolly Dastoor, PhD, is a clinical psychologist and an Assistant



Professor in Psychiatry at McGill University. She is currently co-director of the program in Dementia with Psychiatric Co-Morbidity at Douglas

Hospital, Montreal. Dolly was president of the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec, and the secretary and then President (1994-98) of FEZANA, responsible for developing the Strategic Plan for the North American Community. She was co-chair of the very successful 7th World Zoroastrian Congress in Houston, 2000, and the recipient of the Outstanding Zarathushti Award in 1994. She was Governor, Zonta International, District 2, 2002-2004.

How to be a Parsi in Paris

Survival in exile is an old Parsi credo and the 60-odd families, which comprise the community in Paris, refuse to give that up.

[Excerpted from “How to be a Parsi in Paris” by Ranvir Nayar, Outlook Magazine, www.outlookindia.com, 2002. Submitted by Shahrokh Mehta]

What do you do in a foreign country where your community barely totals 60 families, and you want to cling on desperately to your religious and cultural traditions? What can you do to ensure your barely visible community does not suffer hemorrhage and die? Indeed, in what way can a Parsi in Paris hope to survive the sweeping global culture and the influence of the West and stave off extinction? Not much, you'd say, just pray and hope for the best.

These aren't the only things Kersi Kapadia is doing to preserve the tradition of Parsis in France. Says he: "It's an uphill battle that we face. We are so few left and so dispersed; but perhaps that is precisely the reason why we are fighting hard to preserve our roots."

Kersi migrated to France four years ago. He and his family have dedicated themselves to preserving Parsi heritage and explaining the religion to the new generation, brought up in a land culturally rather distant from theirs.

This is an acute problem for the community which isn't particularly young. Parsis in France are basically of two types: those young professionals who came here in pursuit of their careers, and those who are descendants of families settled here in the first decade of the last century.

Among the most prominent were the Tatas; its modern icon JRD was born in Paris in 1904, and spent his childhood here in the care of his French mother, Sooni. Subsequently, he'd often come down to Paris where in its famous cemetery Pere LaChaise lay buried JRD's ancestors, including his

father and mother. It's here JRD's ashes too are entombed.

Yet another prominent Parsi to have lived in Paris was Bhikaiji Cama, who's credited to have designed the Indian flag. Cama fled London for Paris in 1920, dodging British police which wanted to arrest her for her links with the freedom movement.

The biggest wave of Parsi migration from India to France came around 1910. Then a motley group of Jain and Parsi jewelers from Bombay arrived in Paris, hoping to tap the market for natural pearls. Among them was Dhanjishah Cooper.

Cooper established his business of pearls in Paris in 1910, joined subsequently by his brother Shavak Sohrabji. Their business flourished; another brother too joined them. "Thus the Cooper family began its foundations in Paris," says Shavak's daughter Rati Cooper. Soon, there were about 30 Parsi families in Paris, most of them choosing to settle down in the ninth arrondissement (district) of the metropolis. Every evening, after business hours, the group would gather for a few drinks at the famous Cafe de la Paix in the locality.

It was Shavak who became the community leader, attaching tremendous importance to keeping the Parsi tradition alive. His twin daughters were diligently taught about their religion and tradition. Recalls Rati, "Our parents were very conservative and very religious. They taught us how to pray and told us about our religion and culture. Even if at that time, I did not fully understand the importance of the religion or share my parents' fervor, today I find I am a very staunch Parsi."

Almost all tried to keep the Parsi tradition alive. Take famous painter and sculptor Jehangir Bhowmagary, who says, "Despite having spent so much time outside India and away from my culture, I feel very much a Parsi. I have followed the traditions and tried to bring up our children according to the Parsi tradition."

"That's a big lacuna in our community, that we don't have a priest in Paris. For every occasion, we have to bring a priest over from London or elsewhere," Bhowmagary laments.

What the community lacks today the most is a place of religious significance in or around Paris. "If we had a place like an agiary, it would have gone a long way in building the community and helping the young people understand and develop an affinity towards the religion" says Kersi.

There is a large population of co-religionists from Iran who are also part of the AZF (Zoroastrian Association of France), but the relationship between them and Indian Parsis remain ambivalent.

For the moment, the community has set itself modest targets. As Rati elaborates, "If we can just ensure that the community is there and united and that our children are aware of their religion and its importance, then this in itself will be a good place to start from."

Nearly a century after they settled down in France, and with the fourth generation coming into its own, it is indeed ironical to find the community grappling with the same problems that their ancestors had faced of how not to forget their roots and keep alive their tradition. ■



diaspora in the persian gulf

by Meher Bhesania

Sitting on top of the greatest pool of oil reserves in the world, the Gulf region offers good job and business opportunities.

In the year 1979 when my husband and I left the shores of India with our little son to settle down in Dubai the resident population of Zarathushtis in the United Arab Emirates was 300.

Today the population of the Zarathushti diaspora in the countries of the Persian Gulf has grown to 2,200 [see table below]. Most of them have come from India, Pakistan and Iran. They are either accountants, engineers, doctors, software experts, management consultants, architects, or people with special skills. They work in respectable positions in local and multinational companies. Some

Zarathushtis have their own businesses and are doing well.

The arrival of the Zarathushtis in the Gulf Region can be traced back to the last three decades when oil was discovered in the Middle East region in late 1960s. Since then, many Zarathushtis have settled down in major cities like Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Bahrain, Kuwait, Muscat and Jeddah as these places offer good job and business opportunities. The trend still continues as Persian Gulf countries sit on top of the greatest pool of oil reserves in the world.

Undoubtedly, the Zarathushtis living in the Gulf countries are a happy lot.

Unlike the popular perception, the Gulf countries allow far more freedom as they are embarking on programs of modernization. The Zarathushtis meet friends and relatives for pot lucks and dinners over weekends. At festivals they meet for dinner parties in hotels. They go on picnics to the beaches.

There is no agiary in the Gulf region but Zarathushtis follow the religion in their homes. There are a few mobeds who perform jashan ceremonies on auspicious occasions. A few navjote ceremonies have also taken place in Dubai.

Zarathushtis in the Persian Gulf Region

United Arab Emirates	1,500
Oman	300
Bahrain	125
Kuwait	100
Saudi Arabia	100
Qatar	75
TOTAL GULF	2,200

The number of non-Zarathushti spouses is miniscule – only 2 or 3. The percentage of non-Zarathushti spouses in the population is an encouraging 0.1%

Regional director Meher Bhesania [standing, center] with board members of the World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce (Middle East)



One of the prominent families in Dubai is the **Motiwalla family** (Cawas, Noshir, Rohinton and Bomi), who arrived after the political unrest began in Aden in 1967. Since their arrival they have set up several businesses in the UAE. Presently, Noshir's son Rusi is setting up the flagship store Saks Fifth Avenue in Dubai, while his other son Dadi Motiwalla is the owner of **Mot2iwalla (mt2)**, a dedicated multimedia production facility established in Dubai since 1981. The company has emerged as a leader in the field of inter-active multimedia production, with an unmatched track record and wealth of experience in the Middle East.

The first Zarathushti chartered accountant with international operations to arrive in Dubai was **Russi Patel**, also in the year 1967 from Aden. After 36 years of successful operation, **BDO Patel and Saleh** is still a reputed professional accounting firm in the UAE and Oman.

Thereafter several families have come to the UAE and set up their own businesses in this progressive country. **Soli Dastur** runs an Engineering and Architectural Consultants Company in Abu Dhabi, **Kersy Bhesania** runs a contracting company specializing in central air conditioning and electromechanical works, **Minoo Jamaji** has a construction company in Dubai and **Mickey Bamboat** and **Minoo Minwalla** have a leading freight forwarding company. Several others are doing successful businesses in fields of shipping, IT, medicine, trading, restaurant business and events management.



Speaking of the Parsis ...

“We may be stupidly xenophobic. We may not pay any heed to doomsday demographics. We may be the most foolish of all Zoroastrians. We may continue to persist with the Towers of Silence even when there is not a single vulture. We may be cantankerous. We may totter on the lunatic fringe ...

“But none can fault our sense of humor – natural, original, open, unmalicious and self deprecatory.”

- Bombay Samachar, August 1, 2004 (quote from Aban Rustomji)

In Muscat, Shapoorji Pallonji & Company have made a noteworthy contribution in the field of construction. They built the main palace for the ruler of Muscat in the early 1980s and several other palaces in Oman. These monuments are marvels of architecture. This contribution has earned a lot of respect and goodwill for the community.

In Bahrain there is a ‘Zarathushti Association.’ The story goes that about 40 to 50 years ago the Amir of Bahrain wanted to gift a piece of land to the Zarathustis so that they could build an *aramgah*. As the land could not be gifted to a single individual, the Zarathushtis formed an association and until today the place is being safeguarded by them.

To those who have not visited this region, the Persian Gulf still remains a mysterious land. However, the truth is – this is the land of opportunity.

As one Zarathushti would say to another – “May God prolong our stay in the Gulf Region.” ■

Meher Bhesania [photo previous page] originally from India, has settled in Dubai for 25 years. A qualified banker with a career spanning over 25 years, she has worked for leading banks in India and the UAE. Her expertise lies in bank mergers, setting up local and overseas branch operations, call centers and management training. Meher's husband Kersy is a businessman and son Firdosh a Lead Program Manager for Microsoft Corporation in Seattle, USA.

Interlude in Aden

The story of Zarathushtis in Aden [see map page 72] goes back to the mid nineteenth century, when Seth Cowasjee Dinshaw arrived in Aden and laid the foundation of a flourishing business.

According to a Port of Aden Annual, Cowasji Dinshaw started by selling milk, in 1844, to the British troops in Aden (a port strategically placed at the north end of the Red Sea, at the present-day Suez Canal). Twenty-one years later, a letter from Col. Merryweather, the Assistant Political Resident, described Cowasji as one of the most influential men in Aden.

Cowasji's success was mainly due to his uncanny knack of investing in essentials for the British troops and passing ships. He was the first to purchase a printing machine, a water condenser to produce clean water in the desert, an ice-producing machine, a steam laundry and a European bakery.

By 1895, Cowasji Dinshaw & Bros. had become stevedores for shipping companies, acquired cargo ships and barges, were government bankers and obtained agencies for goods from all over the world.

The Zarathushti population of Aden grew, over the first half of the 20th century to **over 1300**.

In 1967, Aden was handed over to the Peoples Democratic Republic of Southern Yemen and so went all the properties in the town. The Zarathushti population quickly dwindled as people began leaving.

The holy Atash enthroned in the Aden agiary for over nine decades, since 1883, was ceremoniously transported by air in a chartered Boeing, and installed in the agiary at Lonavla with proper spiritual regimen, in November 1976.

Thus closed the chapter for Zarathushtis in Aden. ■

[Excerpted from FEZANA Journal, Fall 1999 and Spring 2000]



The first wave of immigrants 1870-1900. It is believed that the Parsi pilgrim fathers that ventured to the southern tip of the then dark continent of Africa in about 1870 were

In December 1896, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and his family returned from India on one of Dada

Abdoolah's ships. He was the young lawyer that the Transvaal and Durban Indians had hired to fight the discriminatory laws of the British government. On disembarking the ship, Gandhi was besieged by a mob of white colonial agitators. The timely intervention by Parsi Rustomjee allowed Gandhi to escape with his



The Randeria family's United Shipping business office in Durban: from left, brothers Adi, Maneck (Mac) and late Dara, and son Naval [standing]. When founded by grandfather Randeria in 1931, United Shipping was the first Indian-owned clearing and forwarding agency in the country.

life. This incident strengthened the bonds of friendship between Gandhi and Rustomjee.

The first Zarathushti to settle in the Transvaal province of South Africa, in 1871, was **Dorabji Dhunjibhai Talati** (1840–1912). He was an entrepreneur, well respected by the British and the Boers. It is said that President Paul Kruger of the Boer (Afrikaner) Republic in the Transvaal, often stayed at Talati's hotel and tavern in Pretoria.

From elders we have been told that the first wave of immigrants numbered about 30 and came from Mumbai, Navsari, Tavdi, Surat and Bharuch.

Second wave of immigrants 1900–1940. In 1920 the Parsis in South Africa numbered about 200 individuals. These paid passengers mostly came from Mumbai, Navsari, Tavdi, Bodhan, Billimora, Porbunder. Some were professionals and most were businessmen who were called by relatives and friends in Johannesburg and Durban.

Sorabji Shapurjee Adajania (1880–1924) from Adajan was a bril-

liant advocate called by the Parsis in 1905 to help them fight the discriminatory immigration act of 1905 that prohibited Indians from entering the Transvaal without a valid permit. He, together with Mahatma Gandhi launched many *satyagraha* marches in defiance of other restrictive and inhuman laws. He courted arrest and jail many times in his short lived career.

Population decline. The population of Parsis in South Africa has decreased steadily from 200 in 1920 to the present 83. The restrictive and discriminatory laws passed by Britain (1820-1910), the union of

South Africa (1910-1945) and the infamous apartheid laws of the nationalist government (1948-1993) were the chief causes of the community not thriving. Many emigrated and some went into exile to escape these dehumanizing laws. Many remained single (due to the law banning Indian brides).

In recent years the octogenarians are passing away of old age, adding to the negative growth rate with an excess of deaths over births. Since 1994 there has been hardly any immigration of young Parsis to the new South Africa. The few that have come are on temporary contracts with Indian firms.

This negative trend is also seen in Maputo and other African countries. Reasons for the decline include a large number of the aged, marrying out of the community, lack of immigration into Africa, and emigration to the West.

Although miniscule in numbers, these Parsi pioneers in Africa and their offspring have played a very valuable and significant commercial, socio-economic, health and political role in the developmental history



of southern Africa and the African continent.

Worthy of note, of course, is **Dr. Frene Ginwala**, 72, honorable Speaker in the



Sohrab Framrose Shapurjee, grandson of Shapurjee Cawasjee Patel, an early Parsi pioneer in South Africa, is an anaesthetist, and head of the Department of Anaesthesia at Natalspruit Hospital in Johannesburg. In 1979, he became the 2nd Zarathushti to be allowed by the government to bring his bride, Mahrookh Jal Awari, into the country, that too, after a 2-year stay in independent Transkei. Sohrab and Mahrookh, an ophthalmologist, have 4 daughters, Shanaz (an exponent of Bharat Natyam), Zarin, Roxan and Yasmin.

new democratically elected National Assembly in South Africa and the first woman Speaker ever in the South African parliament. A strong political activist in the African liberation movement, Ginwala was in exile for 3 decades (1960 – 1990) in Tanganika, Mozambique and England.

No less illustrious is Frene's sister, **Dr. Khorshed Ginwala**, who was appointed democratic South Africa's first ambassador to Italy in 1994.

It is paradoxical that the first world religion revealed to mankind by Zarathustra, which influenced the major religions of the world, may possibly face extinction in India and Africa. There should be a major concerted effort to keep alive the Zoroastrian religion in its pristine purity in the new millennium. ■

Presence in eastern Africa

by **Rusi Dalal**

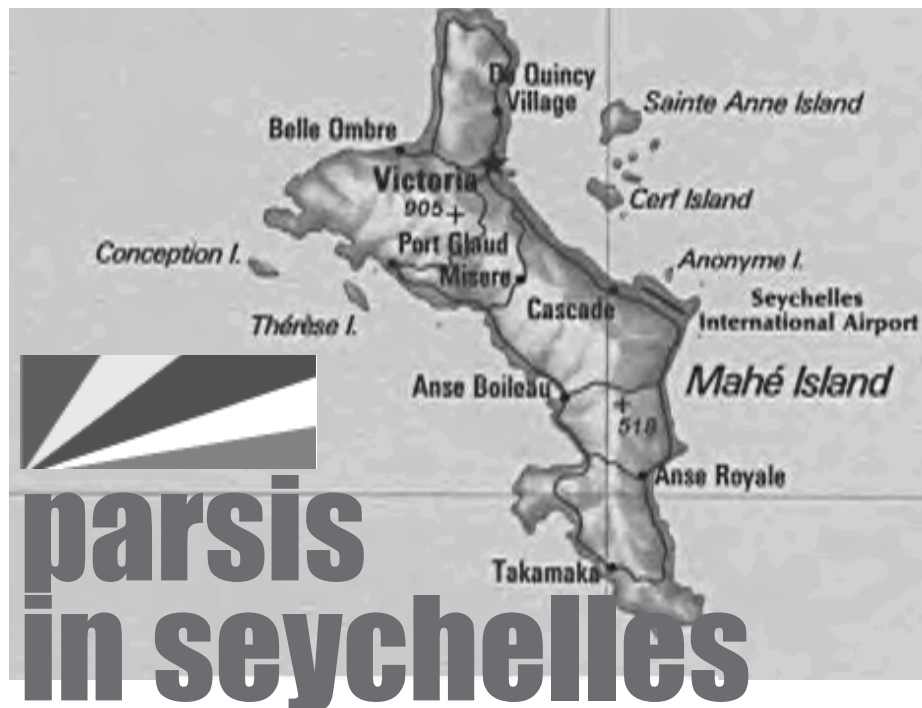
Before the revolution in Zanzibar in 1963, about 250–300 Zarathushtis, almost all of Parsi origin, made their residence on the island of Zanzibar, off the coast of Tanzania in eastern Africa. There was also a sizeable population in Kenya.

Most Zarathushtis were in civil service, business or the professions.

There were two agiaries in Africa – in Aden and Zanzibar. An aramgah was also maintained in Zanzibar. The Aden fire was ceremoniously moved to the Lonavla Agiary in 1976, when Zarathushtis left Aden following handover to Southern Yemen [see page 71].

In 1963, following the revolution, most residents of Zanzibar left for the UK, and thence to USA, Canada or India.

The fire temple and aramgah in Zanzibar though now defunct (the fire was extinguished in 1969) continue to be maintained by erstwhile residents. ■



by **Soona Oliaji**

How did the Parsis, one of the smallest communities in the world come to these islands, 2,400 miles from the shores of India?

Seychelles is an archipelago of 112 islands, northeast of Madagascar. Most of the population, including the Parsis, live in the largest of the islands, Mahé [see map above].

First arrivals. There is no record in Seychelles Archives of the arrival of the first Parsi trader, but it is thought that the first two Parsis, Mr. Temooljee and Mr. M. Kapadia, came around 1880. They sailed across the Indian Ocean in Arab *dhow*s (sailing vessels) in the spirit of adventure and enterprise, which is the hallmark of the Parsi community in India and in the world.

Mr. Kapadia went into a business partnership with a Moosa (Muslim family) – even in those days there was a spirit of friendship and trust between various Indian communities in Seychelles. After a few years Mr. Kapadia returned to India but continued to help and encourage other Parsi young men to venture forth and sail the seas.

One of those tempted to try his fortune abroad was Sorab Olia, who in

1900 was working in Mazagoan Docks of Bombay. In a spirit of rebellion, to escape an authoritarian and restrictive father, he boarded a *dhow* – history does not record whether Seychelles was his planned destination, or merely a stop on the ship's route to Africa. When Sorab Olia landed in Seychelles he took employment with Mr. Temooljee as a general shop assistant and was then promoted to an account clerk (and after 6 pm an aerated water bottle filler).

Some time before the Great War of 1914 Mr. Temooljee returned to Bombay and never came back to Seychelles. He sent his nephew Mr. Hormusji Mistry to replace him. Later he agreed to sell off his business to the two young assistants, Sorab and Hormusji.

From then on what is now Temooljee & Co. prospered. The business acquired properties on Mahé and also several outlying islands, which were run as coconut plantations. At a time when there were no banks in Seychelles, Temooljee was appointed correspondent of Standard Bank and agent of Thomas Cook. It became one of the leading exporters of copra, cinnamon, vanilla and patchouli.

As the business grew Mr. Olia invited several of his nephews from India to join and later made them partners. The first to come, in 1930, was Burjor Wadia, accompanied by his wife Pilla. Theirs was thus the first Parsi family in Seychelles.

Demographics. By the 1960s there were six Parsi families, as well as two or three Seychellois families with Parsi fathers. There were also several young single men, employed by Sorab Olia, who were referred to as 'the Bachelors.' These latter were very popular with the young ladies of Seychelles.

At its peak the Parsi community had 34 members in all. At present there are 18 Parsi adults in Seychelles, most of them born and brought up in Seychelles. Most have studied abroad and acquired high qualifications but opted to come back to Seychelles. Among them are teachers, teaching advisors, company directors, an attorney and a pharmacist. Sadly *all* the marriages of the second generation in Seychelles have been inter-faith, and among the population of 18 adult Parsis, there are 11 non-Zarathushti spouses ($11/(18+3+11) = 34.4\%$). Only 3 of the 16 children of school age are being brought up as Parsis.

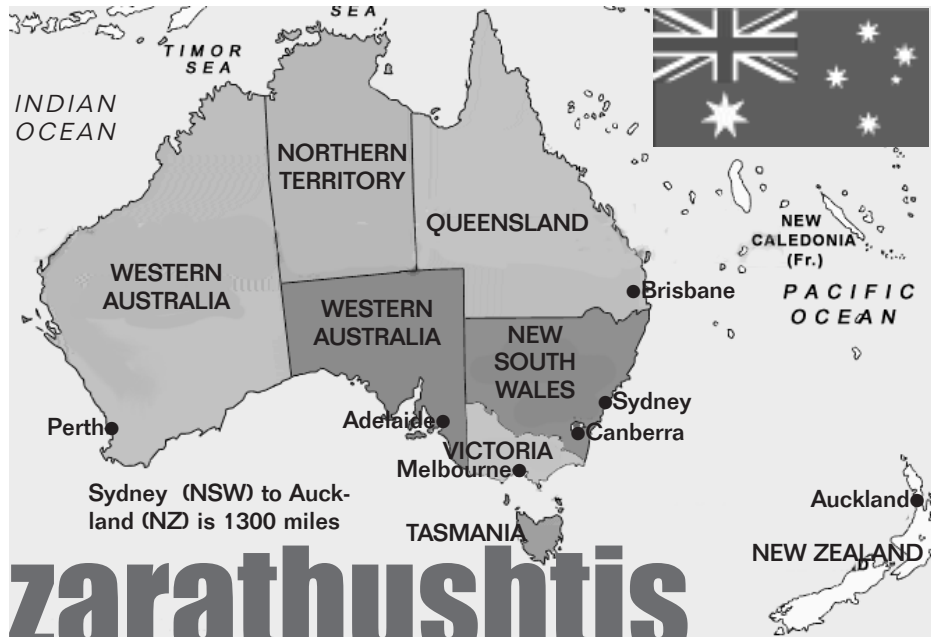
Like Parsis all over the world our numbers are fast dwindling mainly due to marriages with local partners of other faiths. However, all of us are proud of our cultural heritage and equally proud to be integrated as Seychellois. ■

Soona Oliaji, who came to Seychelles in 1958 when she married



Sohrab Olia's son, Jamshed, is the matriarch of the Parsis in Seychelles, actively involved in managing family businesses – real estate holdings and 'Tehmoolji's,' the largest privately-owned general merchandise store on the island.

PHOTO: WWW.ALABAMAMAPS.UA.EDU



zarathushtis 'down under'

Australia, with an area as large as the USA (without Alaska) has three registered associations, in Sydney (NSW), Melbourne (Victoria) and Perth (WA). The island of New Zealand has seen rapid growth in Zarathushti population in recent years.

New South Wales (NSW)

Zarathushtis first came to NSW as migrants during the 1950s. Previously, some intermarried Zarathushtis came from UK and Maoist China. In 1968 there were just three migrant families in Sydney. Over the ensuing decades, this number has grown steadily.

The majority are working in an employed capacity. Next are professionals – accountants, IT workers, very few in law, and medicos (doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, pharmacists). There are some small businesses, e.g. printers, shop keepers, computer-works, and trades people.

The Australian Zoroastrian Association (AZA) Darbe Mehr is our formal place of worship [see *Committee photo next page*]. AZA House is

located at 196 Annangrove Road, Annangrove, NSW 2154.

I am happy to say that our diverse population consisting of Indian, Persian and Pakistani Zarathushtis are united and able to live in harmony with each other, and celebrate together as one people.

Fariborz Jamshidi Kalantary is vice president of AZA and has lived in Australia for 20 years, with his wife and three children.

Victoria

Melbourne, the capital of Victoria, the smallest state in Australia, is a relatively young city. It sprang up on the banks of the Yarra River, in around 1835 as an illegal settlement and is now the thriving cultural capital of Australia, boasting a very multicultural population.

ZARATHUSHTI POPULATION OF AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

State	Zs on record	Est'd Max	Non-Z Spouses	Source and Comments
New South Wales (Sydney)	1356	1850	85+	Fariborz Jamshedi Kalantary and Sam Kerr. 364 families registered with AZA. 85% Parsi and 15% Persians. Majority live in Sydney.
Victoria (Melbourne)	400	420	30	Arnavaz Chubb. Based on ZAV membership database and personal knowledge. Two-thirds are Parsis, and one-third Iranians (mostly from India)
Western Australia (Perth)	175	200	10	Farida Madan. 75% are Parsis and 25% Iranian. Majority lives in Perth and 5 in Kalgoorlie, 7 in Mandurah and 4 in Karatha..
South Australia (Adelaide)	78	78	9	Keki Mehta. All are Parsis in this count.
Queensland (Brisbane)	45	50	10	Roshani Khodaiji. Personal knowledge. Majority in Brisbane. There are some in Towomba and further north. Most are between 40–65 years, with some young adults and very few children under 10 years.
Tasmania	3	3	0	Sam Kerr. Possibly only 1 family, in Hobart.
ACT and NT	–	–	–	Sam Kerr. Families of ACT (Australian Capital Territory, capital Canberra) are included with AZA (NSW). NT (Northern Territory) families move on after a short stay.
TOTAL Australia	2,057	2,601	144	
Percentage of non-Z spouses in the total population on record = 6.5% (144/(2057+144))				
New Zealand	840	900	25	Tehmus Mistry. 90% live in Auckland, with 4% in Wellington, 2% in Christchurch, and the remaining 4% in different cities of NZ. Approx. 94% are Parsi, 4% Iranians from India and 2% Iranians from Iran. Numbers have rapidly increased from 17 in 1986.
Percentage of non-Z spouses in the total population on record = 2.9% (25/(840 + 25))				

Key to column headings. ‘Zs on record’ are the number of Zarathushtis counted based on local directories and through personal knowledge. “Est’d Max” is the estimated maximum number, including a ‘gut-feeling’ number of those who might be ‘out there’ but were missed from the count. It may be viewed as an upper limit of the number of Zarathushtis in the state. “Non-Z Spouses” is the number of non-Zarathushti spouses on record.

Acknowledgments. Special thanks to all the contact persons for each state, as recognized in the above tables, who worked diligently to compile the data from all available sources; and especially to **Sam Kerr** for providing the contact names and for coordinating the data collection for all states.



Left, Persian Cultural Festival, 1994. Dr. Mehraban Shahrivini at unveiling of Cyrus the Great statue, Bicentennial Park, Sydney.

Facing page, top: Zoroastrian Association, Sydney, NSW, committee members, Mahzad Kermani, Tim Desai (president), Khodarahm Behmardi, Filita Abadi, Fariborz Jamshidi Kalantari (vice president) and Shahram Jamshidi; below, Zoroastrian Association of Western Australia (ZAWA) Committee members, from left, Jasper Daruwalla, Perlin Salaskar (secretary), Armin Ghaswalla (treasurer), Mahrukh Bhamgara, Vizak Irani (vice president), Farida Madan (president) and Dilshad Buhariwalla.



The migrants that came in the 1960s were professionals in the academic, legal and medical fields. Most of the current population are employed in professional occupations. A few are set up in their own business.

As yet there is no place of worship or even a meeting place of our own. ZAV rents premises for its functions and meetings that are held 4 or 5 times a year. Monthly religious education and prayer sessions are held.

By and large the Zarathushti community in Victoria is a cohesive group, brought closer and kept together by our small numbers and the desire to foster this spirit of unity and cultural pride in our youth.

Arnavaz Chubb is vice-president of the Zoroastrian Association of Victoria. An M.A. in Avesta-Pahlavi, she conducts the religious education sessions of the ZAV.

Western Australia (WA)

The first Zarathushti came to WA in 1959. Over the years the population has grown, mostly since 1980. They come here for a better quality of life, good prospects, family reunion, for business and professions, and as students. They come, of course, to settle down in a country of 'milk and honey.'

Today's population has a mix of business, public and private service, students, engineers, the self-employed and those who are retired. Seventy-five percent are Parsis and twenty-five percent are Iranians, however we call ourselves Zoroastrians and do not differentiate.

WA has a Zoroastrian Association of Western Australia (ZAWA, website: www.zawa.asn.au) [see Committee photo facing page].

Farida Madon is president of the Zoroastrian Association of Western Australia.

South Australia (SA)

The first Zarathushti to come to South Australia was the captain of a ship, possibly attracted by the shipping industry in the port of Adelaide

The first modern-day Zarathushti migrants came to Melbourne in the early 1960s and from then on a steady and growing stream of Parsi and Irani Zarathushtis have made Melbourne their home.

In 1978 a group of the early migrants formed the Zoroastrian Association of Victoria Inc. (ZAV Inc., P. O. Box 807, Kew, Victoria 3103. Website: www.zav.org.au).

While immigration of families continues at a steady pace, in recent years the numbers have been further boosted by students pursuing university or professional education.

The majority of ZAV members are Parsis. On account of cultural and linguistic differences Iranians have, by and large, gravitated towards other Iranian organizations that are

not solely for Zarathushtis, but do attend ZAV religious classes.

The earliest Zarathushti to arrive in the area, however, has been dated back to 1890, when Dossabhoy Cooverji (aka Charlie) Patell, the great grandfather of one of our current Melbourne Zarathushtis, stowed away on a ship from Aden. Escaping a hard life serving British soldiers in an Aden bar, and without informing his family, he set sail for Australia. Mid voyage the stowaway was discovered and made to scrub decks to pay his passage. He eventually set up a business selling ice cream to miners in Broken Hill. Dossabhoy had a wife and two children. His daughter died at a young age and has been buried in Broken Hill. Dossabhoy left Australia in 1926 to return to Singapore in India.

on the south coast of Australia. He was the only one for ten years. The population has now grown to 78. Most are professionals in the shipping and IT industries, a few have businesses and some are students.

***Keki Mehta** is a surgeon, practicing in South Australia for the past 33 years. He has four children, and lives with his wife Syloo in Adelaide.*

Queensland (QLD)

Zarathushtis first came to Brisbane, Queensland, about 25–30 years ago, in the 1970s. Our growth is slow compared to other cities of Australia. Some of the pioneers have now moved elsewhere. However, of late we have had some young single Parsi overseas students. There are sometimes Zarathushtis who are sent for a temporary outpost position, whom we may have missed in our counts. We have a good employment record. Most are in some sort of service industry or self-employed.

We do not have any association and do not plan to in the future. We are a very close-knit group and enjoy our interaction in the community and with the other Australian cultures.

My husband, Fharad and I migrated from New Zealand in 1997, where we had lived for 7 years, since our arrival from Mumbai in 1990. Both countries have made us feel at home; we have thoroughly enjoyed the different cultures and this beautiful part of the world.

***Fharad and Roshani Khodaiji** are self-employed, and have lived with their two children in Brisbane since 1997.*

Tasmania

The island of Tasmania is off the south coast of Victoria. There might be just one family living there now, in Hobart.

ACT and NT

Families of ACT (Australian Capital Territory, capital Canberra) are included with AZA (NSW). NT (Northern Territory) families move on after a short stay. ■



Zarathushtis gathered for a talk and fortnightly children's prayer classes, at the Rivereena school hall in Auckland, New Zealand.

Growth in Zarathushti population of New Zealand

The first known Zarathushti to come to New Zealand was Hormuzji Ratanjee Shroff. He was a businessman who had earned an MA degree from Oxford University in England. He migrated to New Zealand in 1877 with his wife and 3 children. He set up a hardware supply business 'Shroff and Sons' in Auckland, New Zealand which is still run by his descendants.

Growth. Not much is known about Zarathushtis migrating to New Zealand until the 1960s. Those that came were educated professionals in search for a better life. In 1986 there were about 17 Zarathushtis in New Zealand. In 1990 the number increased to approximately 45 Zarathushtis. By 1995 there were about 160 Zarathushtis. In February 2000 there were about 300 Zarathushtis. Today (2004) there are approximately 840.

Majority of the new migrants were originally from Mumbai, India. However, we have migrants who have come from the Middle East, Pakistan, Malaysia, Canada and the USA.

A majority of the Zarathushtis in New Zealand are salaried workers. However we do have a few who own their own businesses. Like most immigrants, some are just making ends meet and some are doing better than others. No one has reached the stage of being called mega millionaire although we do have a handful of millionaires.

There are two associations in New Zealand: the Zarathushtrian Association of New Zealand (ZANZ, website: www.zanz.org.nz) and the Traditional Mazdayasni Zarathustee Anjuman of New Zealand (TMZANZ, website: www.tmzanz.org.nz). The former is the larger of the two.

In 2004 a room housing an atash dadgah has been built at Parsiana Lodge (a private boarding and lodging establishment). This atash dadgah is open for worship to all Zarathushtis [see next page].

***Tehmus Mistry** has been living in Auckland since 1990. He was one of the founding members of ZANZ, and has served in various Committee positions, including president.*

A large gold farohar adorns the facade of the HK\$200 million 'Zoroastrian Building' at 101 Leighton Road in downtown Hong Kong, possibly the most valuable Zarathushti asset in the world today.

zarathushtis in the far east

China and Hong Kong

by Yazdi Parekh

Persians in China. Zarathushtis are first recorded to have come to China around 100 BC as emissaries of the Parthian Dynasty. There was significant overland trade between the two countries and Zarathushti merchants must have visited as well. In the sixth century CE, Zarathushti merchants also began sailing to China.

During the seventh and eighth centuries, Zarathushtis, including the son of Yazdegard III, took refuge in China to avoid Muslim persecution. While the number of Zarathushti refugees is unknown, there were many large Zarathushti villages, including temples, in southern China.

Zarathushti tombs have also been unearthed in central China. The number of Zarathushtis probably grew until the late ninth century when China began suppressing foreign religions. There are no records of Zarathushtis in China past the mid tenth century.

Trade with India. Zarathushti merchants once again came to China in the 18th century. The Parsis of India began a thriving trade along the China coast. Parsi firms established warehouses and residences around Canton as far back as the 1790s. They began settling in the Portuguese colony of Macao in the 1820s.

Parsis were present when the British first claimed Hong Kong in 1841 and



From Pakuranga to Parsiranga

On August 1, 2004, the Zarathushtis of New Zealand saw their dream come true as ten priests performed a jashan to bless the atash dadgah installed in a new prayer room built on the grounds of Parsiana Lodge (82 Pakuranga Road, Auckland, NZ). Dreamchild of Aspi and Dolly Shahlori (shahlori@xtra.co.nz), Parsiana Lodge, with lodging and home-cooked meals, provides a haven for new immigrants. "The Zarathushti community is growing by leaps and bounds in Pakuranga, earning it the label of Parsiranga," says Farida Master, "They can now get their *maachis* and other prayers done here ... with *bui* by a dastur twice a day, the new flame of hope burns bright." ■



Parsi Road, a name familiar to most Singaporeans, in the prime business district of Shenton Way in Singapore, is a tribute to the achievements of the small Parsi community in Singapore.

For key to column headings in the table, see page 76.

ZARATHUSHTI POPULATION OF THE FAR EAST

State	Zs on record	Est'd Max	Non-Z Spouses	Source and Comments
Hongkong (Hongkong)	200	210	19	Jal Shroff, president and Yazdi Parekh, Zoroastrian Charity Funds of Hongkong, Canton and Macao (101 Leighton Road, GPO Box 7305, Hong Kong, Shroff@fossil.com, kpparekh@aol.com). Mostly Parsis. Population has steadily grown since World War II.
Japan (Tokyo, Kobe)	20	30	4	Jal Shroff, Yazdi Parekh. 15 in Tokyo and 5 in Kobe.
China (Beijing, Canton)	10	20	1	Jal Shroff, Yazdi Parekh. 8 in Beijing and 1 in Canton. Canton had 40 in early 1900s, Shanghai had 130 in 1930s.
Singapore	152	162	30	Russi Ghadiali, president, The Parsi Zoroastrian Association of South East Asia (19 Grange Road, #20-21 Grange Heights, Singapore 23967, tel: (65) 6737-8504, rghadial1@irf.com)
Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh, Penang)	25	30	6	Nelly Doctor of Singapore and her brother, Rumi Manecksha, a lawyer in Penang.
Indonesia	0	0	0	Navaz Dastur, past resident of Jakarta. Godrej Company used to have a plant in Bandung, which is now closed. There are no known resident Zarathushtis here.
Myanmar (Burma) (Rangoon)	0	0	0	No known resident Zarathushtis [see p. 83].
Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Korea, Phillipines, Thailand ...				No known resident Zarathushtis
TOTAL	407	452	60	
Percentage of non-Z spouses in the total population on record = 12.8% (60/(407+60))				



*From left: The Mistri's at **Mistri Road** in Singapore, named after self-made businessman and philanthropist Navroji Mistri, who made his fortune in soft-drinks. **Mody Road** in Hong Kong is named after Sir Hormusjee Mody, president of the Trust in the 1890s, one of the principal founders of Hong Kong University. **Ruttonjee Hospital** bears the name of Jehangir Ruttonjee who gave an initial donation of HK\$800,000 in 1949. **Bisney Road** and **Kotewall Road** in Hong Kong are also named after Parsis. In Macao, the cemetery is located on **Estradia dos Parses**.*

began settling there afterwards. They began settling in Shanghai in 1847 after it was opened to foreigners.

In the first 25 years of Hong Kong's history as a British colony, as many as a quarter of all foreign firms in Hong Kong belonged to Parsis.

Later Parsis settled in other Chinese cities including Beijing and Hangkow. However, Zarathushtis in all these locations were exclusively male. Wives and children continued to live in India until the later 1800s when they began to join their husbands.

As the center of trade in southern China increasingly moved to Hong Kong, first Macao lost its Parsi population. Next the number of Parsis in Canton began a slow decline from around 40 people in the early 1900s. Parsis in Shanghai had grown to over 120 people in the 1930s, however World War II and the Communist takeover saw a complete exodus from Shanghai and all other parts of China.

In contrast, Hong Kong saw an increase of Zarathushtis, not just from China but from India as well. After World War II the Hong Kong population has been generally increasing and has reached a high of

[Continued on page 82]

Profile of Parsis in Singapore by Russi Ghadiali

The first Parsi known to have arrived in Singapore was Mr. Muncherjee. When he fell seriously ill in 1929, Parsi traders in China purchased a burial place for Zarathushtis in Shenton Way and in 1948 adjacent land was bought for a Parsi Lodge for transiting merchants.

Early settlers. Parsis attracted to Singapore in the mid 19th century included Fromurzee Sorabji whose son Cursetjee founded Little Cursetjee & Co., later known as John Little & Co. In 1889, the Parsi Lodge Charity was formed and Mr. Pestonjee and Mr. Muncherjee became its first Parsi trustees. Income from the trust was used for charity and upkeep of the burial ground.

Notable Parsis of the late 1800s and early 1900s served on the Grand Jury, opened an English school, had a Masonic Lodge named after them, started a Chinese newspaper, and became editors of a press syndicate. Some made their fortunes – in aerated water factories, shipping, timber and paints businesses.

Charity. The saying, 'Parsi, thy name is charity' is well exemplified

in Singapore. Pesi Davar's trust annually disburses about \$200,000 for charitable and educational purposes. Navroji Mistri, who died a millionaire bachelor in 1953, donated a million dollars to build the Mistri Wing for children at the Singapore General Hospital.

The Parsi Association, formed in May 1954, took over the management of the Parsi Lodge Charity. Income from the trust is annually spent on the improvement and upkeep of the burial ground, religious ceremonies, deserving charities and scholarships for both Parsi and non-Parsi children of Singapore.

1960s and 1970s. As Singapore's fortune took off in the 1960s and 1970s, more Parsis arrived to work in shipping, accountancy and in aviation – many as pilots and engineers with Singapore Airlines. More recently, the computer and information technology boom is attracting young professionals. At present, there are approximately two hundred Parsis in Singapore.

Notable Parsis of the period include the late Mr. Soli Setna, a director of

Neptune Oriental Lines, Singapore; Dr. Rustom Cooper, president of the Rotary Club of Singapore, Dr. Pesi Chacha, head of Orthopedic Surgery at National University of Singapore. Jamshed Medora was awarded the Public Service Medal and Public Service Star for social service. Orthopedic surgeon Dr Jimmy Daruwalla is founder-president of the Dyslexia Association of Singapore and was president of the Rotary Club of Raffles City.

Current president of the Parsi Association, Russi Ghadiali, was president of the Rotary Club of Raffles City and president of the Inter Religious Organization (IRO). Jimmy Doctor was president of the Lions Club of Singapore and president of Rotary Club of Marina City. Kai Nargolwala is Group Executive Director for Wholesale Banking, Standard Chartered Bank.

The fairer sex has also been in the forefront. Late Roshen Daruwalla, was a tireless fundraiser for the Dyslexia Association and helped in community projects of the Lions Club. Shirin Ghadiali was president of the Inner Wheel Club; and toastmaster District 51 Governor. Roshan Mistri and Nelly Doctor were presidents of the Inner Wheel Club. Zenobia Aspar was president of Thomson Toastmaster's Club and the Division 'S' Governor of District 51. Parsi youth have made a name for themselves in sports – in gymnastics, tennis, squash and cricket.

The Zoroastrian religion is one of the nine religions of the Inter Religious Organization, and enjoys the same status as other major religions. Although small, the Parsi community continues to grow, flourish and contribute to the development of Singapore. ■

Russi Ghadiali is president of the *Parsi Zoroastrian Association of South East Asia – Singapore.*

An indulgent minority – in Malaysia by R. J. Manecksha

Parsis are relatively unknown, even to some communities among which they live. Because of their very limited numbers in Malaysia (about 25–30 at the present time), the Parsis are compliant and therefore indulgent to the society in which they live.

Unlike other migrants who marched into foreign countries and continued application of their piety and custom in transparent display in the midst of the indigenous people, the Parsis were reticent due to their tiny numbers. One could say they slipped into territories quietly and unobtrusively and whatever they accomplished was with minimal fuss.

Early opportunities. The establishment of trading centers by the East India Company in India and elsewhere provided the community the option of leaving India to seek fortune elsewhere. British commercial and judicial intervention from China to Southeast Asia, South Africa and East Africa precipitated the setting up of small communities, and sometimes of only one family, of Parsis in the pursuit of wealth in those territories. These were the adventurers who came in search of commerce and fortune or who just desired to get out of the morass of their existence.

Illustrious citizens. One such Parsi merchant was *Manecksha Mistri*. He was born in Bombay in 1885. At 20, he took the first of several steps out of India. He first set up business

in Batavia, Dutch East Indies, trading in jewelry and silverware imported from the UK. The spread of British maritime empire to southeast Asia motivated him to leave Batavia and set up his jewelry business in Penang. Besides his family, there were a handful of Parsis in Penang. He prospered and purchased rubber estates near Taiping, where he finally settled and became sufficiently well entrenched to have a road named after him.

In 1959, his son *Jal Manecksha* was bestowed the title 'Dato' by HRH, the Sultan of Perak, being the first person of Indian descent to be so honored. His second son, *Rustom*, a well known businessman was conferred the honor of 'Ahli Manku Negara' by the federal government. The third son, *Jehangir*, was in government service. The Sultan of Perak conferred the *Pingkat Jasa Kebaktian* upon him for his industrious contribution towards civil engineering projects that enriched the state.

In the early 1900s, the industry and dedication of surgeon *Dr. Homi Mehta*, earned him a medal from the Crown.

The descendants of these two illustrious Parsis, citizens of Malaysia, were privileged in contributing to the momentous changes this country has made since 1957. ■

Rumi J. Manecksha is a lawyer in Penang.

China and Hong Kong ...

about 200 Zarathushtis today. With the liberalization of China in the 1980s, there have again been a few Zarathushtis living in China.

While in the past most Zarathushtis were traders, the majority now are professionals including managers, bankers, doctors, lawyers, professors, and flight attendants.

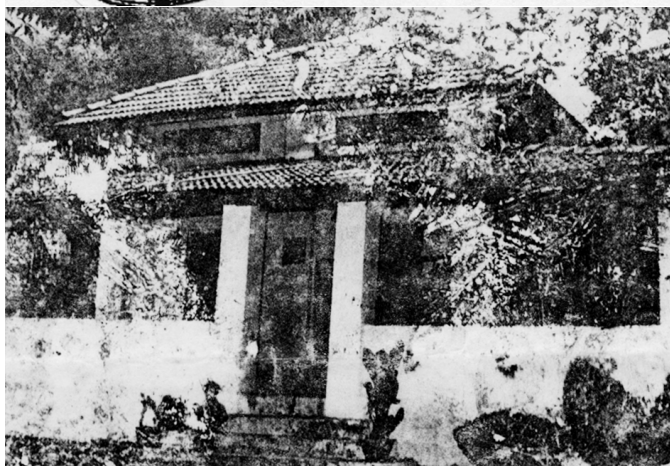
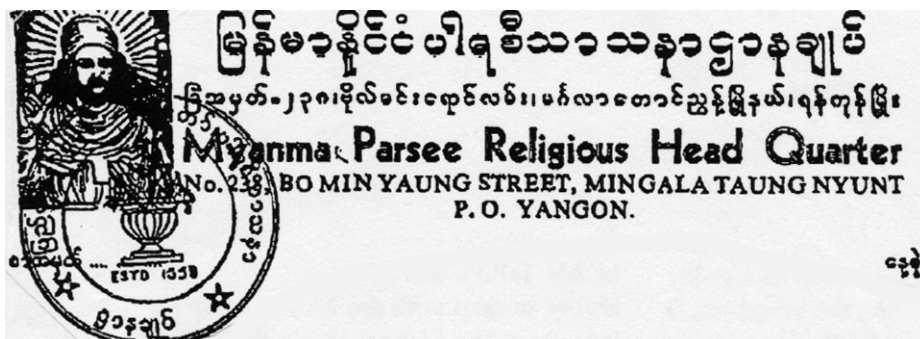
The name *Zoroastrian Charity Funds of Hong Kong, Canton and Macao*

[Continued from page 81]

first came into existence in 1874 and was incorporated in 1989.

Though the number of Parsis in Hong Kong has rarely exceeded 200, their contributions and charities to Hong Kong and the worldwide Zarathushti community have been significant. ■

Yazdi Viraf Parekh is the third generation of a family that has lived in Hong Kong since 1933. He currently resides there with his wife Chermeen and daughter Sanaya.



House adjoining the "Parsee Fire Temple" in Yangon, Myanmar (formerly Rangoon, Burma) [see map page 80]. The temple, burial grounds and properties, serving the once sizeable population of Zarathushtis, are now in disuse.

Vestiges of Zarathushti presence in Yangon, Myanmar (formerly Rangoon, Burma)

In 1995, president Daw Nyunt Nyunt Hormujee, of the "Myanmar Parsee Religious Headquarter" (238 Bo Min Yaung Street, Mingala Taung Nyunt, P.O. Yangon, Myanmar) wrote to FEZANA to help them save their "Fire Temple and Burial grounds" from being moved by the government to make way for modern construction:

"The burial ground was granted to our fore-fathers in 1858 for religious purposes. Due to the rules and regulations of the Managing Trust, we are responsible for the Society and the inheritances of Parsee Fire Temple and properties ... the one and only Parsee Fire Temple was situated on this land. We agreed to move the burial ground but not to give up the Temple land.

"Parsee families who were living in the Yangon area were: Hormusjee, Cooper, Rustomjee, Writer, Kawasjee, Burjorjee, Bamonjee, Driver and Masani.

"We need help from Parsee Societies abroad to save our religious heritage."

A letter from vice-president Ismail Khen Parsi, in 1999, stated:

"We have been engaged in a legal battle with the government to regain our Fire Temple ... Now the law is in our favor and we are bound to get it back.

"We are endeavoring to launch a major repairing and renovation of the Temple and earnestly request you for financial help... We assure you that we will safeguard and preserve our Parsee religious and traditional heritage in Myanmar."

The validity of these appeals has not been verified.

Rangoon Parsees. There was a sizeable community of Parsis in Rangoon in the early 1900s, in the services or in business. During World War II, almost all the Parsis left, mostly for India, and many did not return.

A descendant of the Burjorjees (mentioned in the appeal letters) confirms that there are no Parsis living in Myanmar now. - Roshan Rivetna

A small Zarathushti presence in Japan

There has been a small Parsi presence in Japan since the late nineteenth century. The original Zarathushtis seem to have mostly been merchants and traders based in the trading centers of Kobe and Yokohama, and probably never numbered more than a handful.

In the Yokohama Foreigner's Cemetery there is one tombstone for a Cowasjee.

While never establishing a solid communal presence, it seems there have always been at least a few families present. Some are children of long-time residents who were born in Japan and are intimately familiar with the language and culture. There is a Parsi lady who was born here, is a Japanese citizen, and runs a Horse Riding Center near Tokyo.

Most of the rest are expatriates, each with their own story – a professor, a technical writer, a sprinkling of managers from western multinational corporations, a journalist – examples of how Zarathushtis have found a niche for themselves in Japan.

The community feeling here is relatively limited. One reason may be that the Zarathushtis here are a varied lot. Amongst us, at least six different passports are represented; there are people of all ages and social backgrounds, and there is not much incentive for people to socialize with one another.

As the community is primarily expatriates, they are not intent on putting deep roots here and there may be no need for any kind of association or community center.

There are possibly some Iranian Zarathushtis here also.

There is also a smaller but more long-term presence in the Kobe-Osaka area, about whom I have scanty knowledge. ■

[Excerpted from "Zarathushti Presence in Japan" by Cyrus Daboo, FEZANA Journal, Spring 1996].



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.

The Heirloom

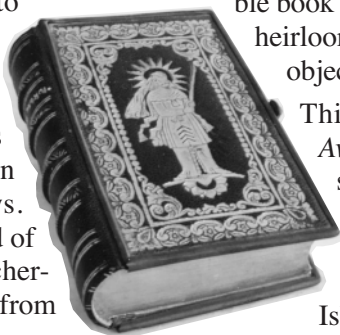
An enduring legacy of courage and remembrance

Fragrant sandal wood and incense are burnt in a small urn near the head of the deceased and for three additional days after the body has been removed. This is the goodness of fire... in destroying the germs lingering, lest decomposition set in and any lingering odors from the same.

*The Zend Avesta, Vendidad, Fargard VIII, I (1-3)
Purification of the house where a man has died.*

A death takes place somewhere in Ariyana Vaeja, the ancient name of Iran. In this house, shutters are drawn, doors and windows are bolted shut. This is not to prevent the spirit of the departed from taking leave of the house, but to prevent curious bystanders from looking in through the windows. Incense is lit near the head of the deceased, and an old, cherished book is brought out from its secret hiding place.

By now reduced to a few tattered pages, the book is moved again and again, through the aromatic incense fumes, by family members. No one in the family is able to read the text,



written in a now dead language, and the meaning of its contents have been obscured. Yet they regard this ragged, unreadable, incomprehensible book – a mysterious relic, an heirloom – as the most sacred object in the world [1]!

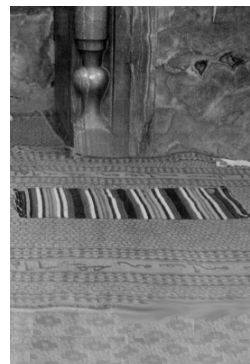
This book, the *Zend Avesta* [photo left] is still revered in utmost secrecy by some old Iranian families forced to convert to Islam centuries ago.

This ritual using the *Zend Avesta* is a symbolic remembrance of Iran's Zarathushti past. In the early days after conversion, covert acts of defiance must have been common, but they have now dwindled to a few,

like this gesture at the deathbed. As if these modern-day ancients are saying, "You can tell me all my life long how to live, but in death when you cannot reach and punish me, I can at last acknowledge my legacy and the faith that was stolen from me."

After this private family ritual, the doors and windows are opened and the funeral is performed in accordance with the prescribed Muslim laws. ■

[1] *From Persia to Iran*. Photographs by Inge Morath. Text by Edouard Sablier. The Viking Press, 1960 [see below].



From Persia to Iran

Photographs by Inge Morath.

Text by Edouard Sablier

The Viking Press, 1960.

From Persia to Iran done in brilliant color and stark black and white photographs by Inge Morath accompanied by Edouard Sablier's elegant prose, takes the reader on a unique journey through Iran's geography, ancient architectural ruins and its people.

The photographs of the Gheber villages in Kerman and Yazd speak to the poverty yet they also illustrate the pride and devotion of these Iranians to their Zarathushti faith that they have practiced, through many hardships, over the last 1,200 years of Islamic rule.

- Dinaz Rogers



Future ages will wonder at us, as the present age wonders at us now.

- Pericles 431 BCE

My mother used to say ...

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

"Sher ney maa(n)they savaa sher."

One and a quarter kilos is superior to just one kilo in weight. A remark made when a dominant person meets his match.

"Gai vaat no shokh na karvo."

Don't grieve over past events. Don't cry over spilt milk. Let bygones be bygones.

"Teepey, teepey sarovar bharaaey."

Kaa(n)krey, kaa(n)krey paal bandhaaey"

Drop by drop the lake becomes full. Piece by piece the parapet is built. Great achievements occur through steady progress.

"Karni tevi bharni."

As your action so is the reaction. As you sow, so shall you reap.

"Tarat daan, mahaa poon."

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

"Daan kartaa dayaa bhali."

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

"Nahi bolyaa naa nav goon."

There are nine good qualities in not saying anything. Silence is golden. At times keeping your mouth shut has its own rewards.

"Garajey ghadheraaney baap kahevo pade."

When in a need, one might have to call a donkey, one's father. Necessity might force one to say or do strange things.

"Gher, gher maati naa chooolaa."

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

"Dookh vinaa sookh nahi."

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

"Jungle maa mungle."

Brightness in the forest. A bright spot in a generally gloomy circumstance.

"Baarey divus kai sarkhaa jayyey?"

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

"Dhiraj naa phal mitthaa."

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

"Naadaan nee dosti, ney jaan no jokham."

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

"Boley teynaa bor vechaaey."

One who talks about his 'bor' (fruit, berry), sells them. One who speaks out, gets things done.

- by Sam Kerr

READERS' FORUM

Readers may submit letters (under 250 words) to the editor on topics of general interest. The Journal reserves the right to edit materials for suitability, clarity and space.

On past issues

I enjoyed reading the Fall 2004 FEZANA Journal; the cover theme about roots of Zoroastrianism in Judaism and Christianity was very interesting. When I worked in 1965 for a 73-year old Jewish accountant in Pittsburgh, he often used to open the Torah and show me verses where our religions met. Each year, at the feast of Purim, he brought the little triangular cookies with poppy-seeds, thanks to Xerxes and Esther.

I also enjoyed the story about Rohinton going to Dadar Naka with his rice *theli* during the Bombay explosion. I had read about gold bars landing miles away after the explosion. One went through the roof of a Parsi gentleman, Burjorji Motivala's third-floor apartment in Girgaum. He promptly returned it, and was compensated Rs. 999.00, which he donated for relief work.

Nergish Aga
Birmingham, Alabama

The pheto and the faith

Here is an interesting connection between the Parsis and the Swaminarayan faith.

During the very early days of establishing the Swaminarayan faith, Sahjanand Maharaj, travelled all over India. When in Surat he was offered hospitality and protected by Ardeshir Kotwal, who was noted at the time, for establishing law and order in the city. When Sahjanand Maharaj left Surat, he presented his *pheto* (cap) to

Ardeshir as a gesture of appreciation and fraternity.

Since then the pheto has been in the Kotwal family home. A regular *arti* (Hindu psalm of praise) is performed during the festival of *Bhai Beej* and the pheto is displayed for all. Members of all communities pay homage to this holy relic, as it is also considered to have divine grace and powers.

A photo of the pheto will soon be presented to the Mandir at Neasden, UK.

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

Congress agenda

At the World Congress in Houston in December 2000, the agenda focused

on items such as history, rituals, religious education and abstract matters like 'vision for the third millennium.'

Nowhere in the agenda were included burning items which are affecting the community today, such as, the insistence of our dead to be disposed off in dokhmas when there are no birds left on our Towers of Silence; the refusal to accept non-Parsis to see the face of the dead after *sachkar*; our refusal to accept inter-religious marriages, and our reluctance to accept their children into our fold, and last but the most important, our rapidly depleting population.

I feel that the time has come when all our future meetings, whether by FPZAI, the WZO, FEZANA or the various conferences we hold in all parts of the world, should have the declining population as its main and

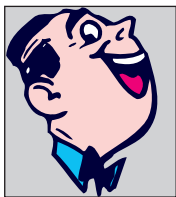
central theme, and not waste time in deliberating items like whether to use the Fasli or Gregorian calendar.

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

Improving the status of our mobeds

I read an article in the Jam-e-Jamshed [August 15, 2004] by Captain Hormazdiar N. M. Desai, which so much reinforces what I have been saying, that I will summarize it here.

The major deterrents for athornans to take up mobedi, according to Captain Desai are: **the dress** - putting on the *jama-pichori-pugree*, and sitting in front of the fire is to say the least, most uncomfortable; **our prayers** - ceremonies and prayers are too long and very repetitive, e.g. in Sarosh



Laugh and be Merry

By Jamshed Udvadia



A Zarathushti decided to write a book about temples and churches around the world. He started by visiting a church in London where he began taking photographs and notes. He spotted a golden telephone on the vestibule wall with a sign which read: "\$1,000 a minute." He approached the Pastor who explained that the golden phone was a long-distance line direct to Heaven and if he paid the price he could talk directly to God. The man thanked the pastor and continued on his way. Next he visited a Jewish temple in Israel, a mosque in Arabia and a Shinto temple in Japan where he saw similar telephones with high-priced connections to the Almighty.

Finally, he arrived in Mumbai, and entered an Atash Behram where he saw the usual golden telephone but the sign read: "Calls to Ahura Mazda: 1 Rupee." Intrigued, he talked to the *panthaky* (administrative head).

"Panthaky Saheb, I have been to various places of worship around the world and in each I have found this golden telephone. I have been told it is a direct line to God, but the cost was usually \$1,000 a minute. Your sign reads 1 Rupee. Why?"

The panthaky, smiling modestly, replied, "Son, you realize you are in a Zarathushti place of worship. For us it's a local call."

[Submitted by Roshan Rivetna, Hinsdale, IL]

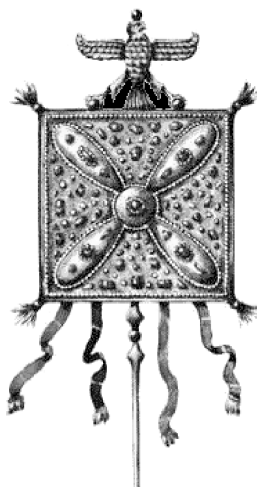
A popular bar had a new robotic bartender installed. A fellow came in for a drink and the robot asked him, "What's your IQ?" The man replied: 150. So the robot proceeded to make conversation about Quantum physics, string theory, atomic chemistry, and so on. The man listened intently and thought: "This is really cool."

To test the robot, the man walked out of the bar, turned around and came back in for another drink. Again, the robot asked him, "What's your IQ?" The man responded: 100. So the robot started talking about football, baseball, and so on. The man thought to himself: "Wow, this is really cool."

The man went out and came back a third time. As before, the robot asked him, "What's your IQ?"

The man replied: 50. The robot asked: "So, did you vote for Bush again?"

[Submitted by Rusi J. Tavadia, Novi, MI]



Persian Symbol

This symbol was prominently displayed at the Persian Parade, held on Nouruz 2004 in New York. I have been able to determine that “the symbol carries elements of *Drafsh Kavian* supposedly used by Kaveh the blacksmith who used his apron as a flag to rally an uprising to dethrone Zohak. It was made into a war banner by the Sasanians.”

The Zarathushtis of Iranian origin in the diaspora have a great fondness for it. It might be interesting to investigate this symbol further. Maybe your readers might know more about it.

Behram Pastakia
Bethesda, Maryland

Yasht Vadi, one full-page paragraph is repeated thirteen times!

“... we must shorten our prayers, eliminating repetition and restricting our rituals and ceremonial prayers to, say, fifteen minutes or so. We should be adoring only the one Supreme Being – Ahura Mazda ... Even our obsequial and other rituals and ceremonies need to be shortened and made pragmatic to suit the changing conditions ... that would keep mobedi going.”

“I would plead that at a time when we still have reputed Avestan scholars, our Akbars may set up a Panel of Progressive Athornans, well-versed in our religion and scriptures to take a close look at our rituals, ceremonial and other prayers, purely with a view to ensuring that in the centuries to follow, our practices and heritage continue.

“We must improve the status of our mobeds. They should be respected as our spiritual guides ...”

It is getting quite difficult to procure *jama*, *pichori*, *paghadi*, as the older generation is not visiting India as often as before. When I visited Iran last year, the dasturs there had greatly

simplified their dress code. I saw no dastur in *jama*, *paghadi* or *pichori*, though they did wear all-white attire.

We are blessed with many volunteer priests in North America today, but this situation will change drastically in the next generation. Many have come to regard volunteerism by the priests as granted.

Navar Fund. Moreover, we need a steady supply of mobeds for the future, but how can we ensure it, if the *navar* ceremony costs so much, that priests cannot afford it? I had started a Navar Fund for this reason and appealed for funds in your Journal. I have donated all my *ashodads* to it. The Navar Fund has helped three young priests soon after it started.

All donations for this worthy cause will be gratefully accepted. Please make your checks in the name of “ZAC Navar Fund,” and mail to Kersey H. Antia, 8318 West 138th Place, Orland Park, Illinois 60462, USA.

Kersey H. Antia
Orland Park, Illinois



Fastest growing religion

The second-largest religion in the world after Christianity, Islam is also the fastest-growing religion. IN the US, for example, nearly 80% of the more than 1,200 mosques have been built in the past 12 years. - www.cnn.com

Shi’a Muslims make up 89% of the population of Iran, followed by Sunni Muslims (9%) and minority religions Zoroastrians, Jews, Christians and Bahai (2%). The distribution in Pakistan is Sunni Muslims (77%), Shi’a Muslims (20%) and Other (3%). - www.adherents.com

ERRATA

FEZANA Journal regrets the following inadvertant errors in Fall 2004:

- The reference number in Cardinal Koenig’s article [*page 55, column 3*] should be (7) instead of (12).
- The article “Relationships in Our Scriptures” by Kersey H. Antia was inadvertently ommitted from the contents page [*page 2*].
- In the FEZANA AGM report [*photo caption, p. 21*], Khushroo Lakdawalla’s wife’s name was listed incorrectly. It is Farida.

Major Religions ranked by number of adherents

Zoroastrianism, at 150,000 and .0025% of the world population of 6 billion, ranks No. 22 in the listing of faiths ranked by numbers. [*Source: www.adherents.com, 2002*]

Number of Followers		
Christianity	2 B	33%
Islam	1.3 B	22%
Hinduism	900 M	15%
Nonreligious (atheist, agnostic)	850 M	14%
Buddhism	360 M	6%
Chinese trad.	225 M	3.8%
Primal-indegenous	150 M	2.5%
African trad.	95 M	1.6%
Sikhism	23 M	0.3%
Juche (Korean)	19 M	0.3%
Spiritism	14 M	0.2%
Judaism	14 M	0.2%
Shinto, Cao Dai	9.4 M	0.15%
Bahai	6 M	0.1%
Jainism	4 M	<0.1%
Neo-Paganism	1 M	<0.1%
Unitarian-Univers.	800 Th	<0.1%
Rastafarianism	700 Th	<0.1%
Scientology	600 Th	<0.1%
Zoroastrianism	150 Th	<0.1%

Zoroastri-what?

By Ana Mazdyasni
16, CLEVELAND HS

Growing up, [in Van Nuys, CA] I was pretty immersed in Zoroastrianism. I attended temple, took part in Farsi plays and performed Persian dances with my Zoroastrian friends. Every other weekend there were get-togethers with my many cousins.

There was also a Zoroastrian sleep-away camp in San Jose for a week every summer ... it was there that Zoroastrian beliefs were annually reinforced by the priests and teen counselors.

Culturally and religiously, I was Zoroastrian—except with my friends. Was I ashamed to be Zoroastrian? No. Was I ashamed to be open about it? Yes.

Later things changed, though. My Jewish friends shared Hanukkah with me and I realized I could share the Persian New Year with them.

Once I entered middle school ... for the first time, I made friends with people from different cultures and religious backgrounds. I became more comfortable being Zoroastrian



PHOTO: BY FARROKH MAZDEYASNA

It was a proud day when Ana (left) and her brother, Cameron, were initiated into the Zoroastrian religion. The ceremonial table holds sacred items for Nouruz.

with them ... My friend Sara told me how lucky I was to have a community like my temple and have such a large family ... I belong to a community of Zoroastrians that will always be there in my life and my children's lives. It made me realize the Zoroastrian part of my life was never something to be ashamed of. My grandma used to say, "Marry anyone you want, as long as he is Zoroastrian." I

think this is because keeping the community close-knit ensures that the religion will be preserved.

I hope my children will be fortunate enough to be a part of the supportive, active community of Zoroastrian families and friends we have.

EXCERPTED FROM A TWO-PAGE ARTICLE IN L.A. YOUTH, MAY 2004, A NEWSPAPER BY AND ABOUT TEENAGERS.

The Australian government has a clear "nonessential travel not advised" to Pakistan edict, says Howard Mould. Yet when the International Reading Association invited him to help conduct a teacher training workshop there, he readily agreed. "I went to Karachi because I believe education comes under the 'essential travel' rubric," he says.

Mould, along with Aban Rustomji, a library media specialist at Spring Woods High School in Houston, Texas conducted the workshop in January as part of the Educational Sector Reform Action project, funded by USAID ... Having lived for 18 years in Baluchistan, Rustomji saw this project as a "wonderful opportunity for personal growth, research, and service." The program will run for four years and influence thousands of teachers.

FROM "READING TODAY, A NEWSPAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL READING ASSOCIATION; WWW.READING.ORG.

"Essential travel"

IRA members journey to Pakistan to conduct teacher training workshop



Howard Mould and Aban Rustomji at workshop in Pakistan.



Nikan H. Khatibi
Eml: Nikan2@aol.com
Wbg: www.JoinNikan.com
Tel: 949-984-9628



realm of our community and share that knowledge through congresses, books, the internet, chats and I understand and appreciate this – but what about maintaining the vitality of our religion through social networking. This is another reason why it is important to organize more congresses that in my opinion, not only stimulate our academic senses, but are geared towards actual social interactions and opportunities for our youth to befriend one another.

As a youth looking at what parents have done, I must continue to encourage all parents to motivate their youth to marry within the religion. Most importantly, as parents, you must take an active role to help your youth meet other Zarathushtis who they can befriend and get to know better for their future. Simply taking an active role in your youth's social life takes us one step closer to maintaining the vitality of our religion. Secondly, I have not seen enough support from the Zarathushti associations towards social networking for our youth. We must realize that marrying within the religion should be held to the highest of priorities and every aspect of our local community must address this situation. Associations must work more effectively and efficiently to create programs and events where our youth can come together and meet. Finally, we youth must do our best to attend events and congresses, no matter if you do not find them up to your expectations, because it allows you to interact with members of your own community and gain a personal insight into your past.

Now for those youth who are destined or who have already chosen a path to marry outside the religion, I encourage you to extend your circle to include this community. Share with your family the greatness that our religion stands for. Just because you have chosen a partner who is not a Zarathushti does not mean that you are forced to lose ties with your community.



Nikan H. Khatibi
Eml: Nikan2@aol.com
Wbg: www.JoinNikan.com
Tel: 949-984-9628



Instead, now is the time to strengthen your connection with the community and more importantly, bring your family alongside. It is your duty as a Zarathushti to share your knowledge of the religion and the message of Zarathushtra and allow others to righteously choose their own path of worship.

Youthful Readers, when it comes down to it, I understand it is very hard for us to meet other Zarathushtis with similar likes and dislikes as we do. What we can do to improve our situation is to involve ourselves in local events, congresses, and really take an active role in the community to widen our horizons and likelihood of making other Zarathushti friends.

Attention: All Youth Group Presidents

We here at 'Youthfully Speaking' want to publish what's going on with your youth group. Please send us an email with a picture of a recent activity or group picture and let us know what's going on in your city?

Also, include any comments on events that you feel have been successful in your community. We'll be waiting...



These Zarathushti youth have gathered at a local event in Washington DC.

PRAYER CORNER

The Garment of the Millenniums



Its Synergy on Human Energy

Copyright 2004, Meher D Amalsad

DEDICATED TO ZARATHUSTRA



PART 3 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

Each morning the sunflower faces the light of the sun and continues to do so throughout the day as the direction of the sun changes. Its main stalk has 7 branches or twigs, symbolizing 7 days of the week. Each flower has 52 petals, symbolizing 52 weeks of the year. In the center of each flower, there are 365 seeds representing 365 days of our calendar year.

So, is that a coincidence?

As you think about it, take a look at the rare photos about the construction of the kushti [next page].

CONSTITUTION OF THE KUSHTI

The kushti [picture at right] is made of white lamb's wool, taken from a part closest to the heart.

Lamb symbolizes innocence, which reminds us to be gentle, whereas wool depicts an innate ability to store energy. It is because lambs by natural instinct eat only such greeneries that produce magnetism in them. The lamb may die but this magnetism remains preserved in its wool. The wool retains the vibrations of the manthras, which guide us on the path of *Asha*. One does not have to be a 'clairaudient' to be able to appreciate and benefit from the

energy of these vibrations. Also, lamb is said to be under the influence of Jupiter and the Sun.

The kushti is woven by Zarathushti men and women from the priestly family, while continuously reciting the three most important prayers in the Avesta, namely *Ashem Vohu*, *Yatha Ahu Vairyo* and *Yenghe Hatam*.

Significance of the numbers. The weaving begins with 144 threads, twisted and spun together to make 72 strands. This interlacing of threads reminds us of the spiritual interrelationship we have with each other and with every creation.

It is passed around the loom 72 times, divided into 6 strands, each of 12 threads. After consecration by a priest the kushti is finished by hand. It is turned inside out and three tassels of 24 threads each are formed at each end.

24 threads symbolize the 24 kardas of the Visperad. Twenty-four also depicts the 24 time zones in the world.

The human body is divided into 9 vibratory wavebands, namely seven rainbow colors, ultra-violet and infrared.

144 is the square of 12, which represents the 12 words of *Ashem Vohu*. $144 = 1+4+4 = 9$; and $72 = 7+2 = 9$.

The 3 tassels are further divided into 3 each ($3 \times 3 = 9$). Since the kushti has two ends, $9 + 9 = 18$ and again, $1 + 8 = 9$.

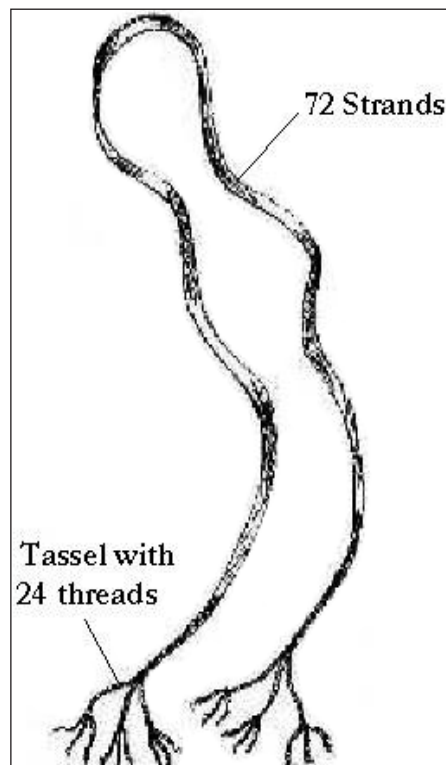
The 6 *gahambars* represent the creation and evolution of the universe. The *gahambars* are not only linked with the seasons but they also signify the divine creation and evolution, namely: birth, growth, shaping, maturity, reproduction or bearing fruit, and spiritual transition.

The *Yenghe Hatam* prayer has 15 words, $1 + 5 = 6$. There are 33 *Yazatas*, $3+3 = 6$.

Again, there are 3 tassels on both sides. $3 + 3 = 6$. ($12 \times 6 = 72$) These 6 tassels are further split into 3, representing the 3 Good Thoughts, Words and Deeds. That's why we pray 3 *Ashem Vohu* at the end of many Avesta prayers.

The kushti knots. The kushti knot is a reef knot. Because of its strength and reliability, the reef knot is also used universally in the practice of first aid. Two knots together make one reef knot.

[Continued on page 98]





1



2



3



4



5



6



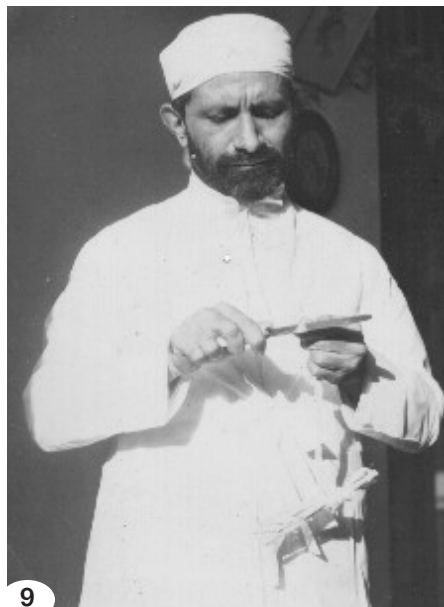
7

Some rare photos about the construction of the kushti from root to fruit

Homai and late Maneck Vyarawalla took these photos in India. They were sent to me by the daughter of a boywalla of the adaran of the Wadiaji Atash-Behram in India. When I first received these pictures along with their respective descriptions, I noticed that it depicted a 16-step process. I wonder if it had any correlation with the 16 *chakhras* that were discussed earlier.

Step 1: Sheep's wool from which kushti is made. As sheep is innocent, docile and modest, the wearer of kushti should be obedient, innocent and modest. **Step 2:** The wool is combed. **Step 3:** Paraphernalia for spinning and weaving the wool-spindle (*chatri*), ball of woolen thread, etc. **Step 4:** Wool is spun and the thread is taken out on spindle (*chatri*).

Step 5: Doubling is performed. Threads from two spindles are combined together in one ball of wool. **Step 6:** Yarn is twisted and strengthened (*val devu*). **Step 7:** The thread is passed around the loom (*jantar*) 72 times, divided into 6 strands, each of 12 threads. It is twisted and so kushti is begun with 144 threads.



The number 144 represents immortality as it adds up to the mystical number 9 ($1+4+4$).

72 strands represent the 72 chapters of Yasna.

Step 8: Threads are assembled together with Khangu-visu. **Step 9:** Weaving is done with kateli and shuttle. **Step 10:** When the weaving is finished, kushti is removed from the loom and handed to the mobed (priest) to be cut. Priest prays a special prayer (nirang) and cuts the kushti. **Step 11:** Kushti is inverted. It is hollow and it represents the two worlds – physical and spiritual. **Step 12:** Rest of the weaving is done by hand.



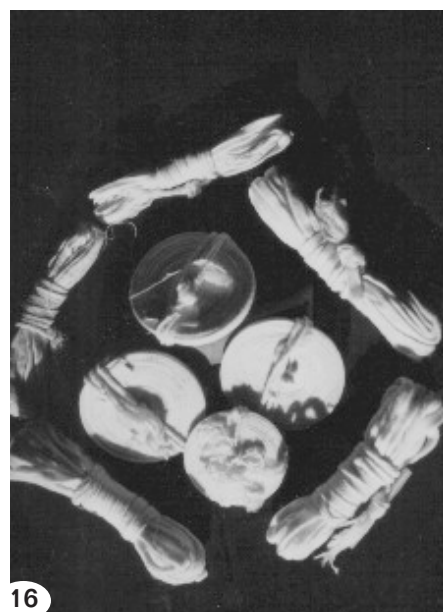
Two lars and 6 laris ending in tassels are woven.

The 6 sections of 12 strands each represent 6 Amesha Spentas.

The 12 strands represent 12 months of the year and 12 words of Ashem Vohu prayer.

The 6 tassels (3 at each end) represent 6 gahambars linked to 6 creations of God.

Step 13: Kushti is washed. When dry, it is fumigated with sulphur smoke. **Step 14:** Setting the kushti. It is properly flattened and plaited. **Step 15:** Folding the kushti. **Step 16:** Ready for use.



[Continued from page 95]

The 4 knots remind us of 4 directions and 4 affirmations namely Ahura Mazda, Asho Zarathushtra, Our Mazdayasni Zarathushti Din, and practicing the principles of Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds.

The first knot and the second knot in the front are tied at the word, “*shyaothananam*” (while reciting the Yatha ahu Vairyo prayer). The thought to be whirled in the mind is “I remember Ahura Mazda whose instrument I wish to become of my work, *shyaothna*.”

While reciting the Ashem Vohu prayer, the two back knots are tied at the words *Ushta asti* and *Ushta Ahmai*, which means “I am experiencing Divine Bliss and Divine Love in the process of attuning on the path of Asha.”

The kushti knot is tied on the navel, where the 12th chakhra is located. This Gut Chakhra is connected with Jupiter under whose influence is the Zarathushti faith.

The Throat (9th) Chakhra and the Heart (10th) Chakhra (through the sudreh) along with the Gut (12th) Chakhra (through the kushti) create a triad. This divides the upper half of the body with the lower half, thereby preventing any counterproductive energy from the lower half to enter the upper half.

Personally, I do not find this knot as a binding knot. Rather, I see it as a bonding knot that bonds us with the divine spirit.

I do not see this knot as something there to knot us down by trying to put a lid on our creativity. Instead, I see this knot that sometimes picks up the lid to see if everything is cooking OK, and if anything needs to be added to enhance the flavor.

Dialog with the divine. The kushti is tied three times to represent the 3 good thoughts, words and deeds; and it is tied in the middle of the body on the waist signifying that we should follow the moderate path in life. They represent 3 triads in 3 cate-

gories, namely the physical, the ultra physical, and the immortal. The body, mind, and spirit, each further subdivided into 3 parts.

There are 3 worlds in Ahura’s creation that are outside us. They are *hasti* – the divine world, *nisti* – the non-physical or ultra-physical world, and *geti* – the physical world.

A part of this mechanism consists of 16 centers of spiritual energy called *chakhras*. The spiritual energies of different intensities and textures are zooming in the centers. These energies can be invoked, awakened, and made to come out and spread all over in the living cells of the physical body. This process activates our mind to focus on good thoughts, good words, and good deeds. Chakhras can be viewed as centers of spiritual energy.

Ashem Vohu begins with Asha and ends with Asha. Thus the last two knots may signify our resolve to begin and end our life with Asha. To focus on Asha in everything we begin and end. There is *Asha, Vohuman* and *Ushta* in Mazda’s creation. Ushta is to those who use their Vohuman to be on the path of Asha.

The whole kushti prayer is a dialog of Ushta with the divine Ahura. It is a storehouse of devotion.

God bless my grandmother for introducing me to the power of sudreh and kushti because I have realized that the constitution of the sudreh and kushti has a link with harmonizing the human aura as well as balancing the human chakhras.

AHU-NA-VAR AND OM-AH-HUM

I was trying to study the correlation between the three syllables of the words *AHU-NA-VAR* and *OM-AH-HUM*.

OM is the essence of enlightened form, the body of energy and compassion.

AH is the essence of sound or radiant nature. It is a universal, non-denominational heart sound that when pro-

jected with focused energy is extremely powerful and effective.

HUM is the essence of mind or the mind of enlightenment.

These three syllables collectively represent the transformative blessings of body, speech, and mind of all divine creation. By reciting this mantra you are purifying the environment, as well as yourself and all other beings within it.

OM purifies all perceptions, *AH* all sounds, and *HUM*, the mind, its thoughts and emotions. This sound is the universal sound of all heavenly bodies in the solar system. It is the primordial sound of the Uni-verse (‘One-Verse’) and its galaxies.

In the religion of Zarathushtra, the *AHU-NA-VAR* manthra corresponds to this *OM-AH-HUM* mantra.

I will conclude by sharing this story that was published in the June 1968 issue of the *Science Journal*.

Hans Jenny of Switzerland devised an instrument called the tonoscope. A word is uttered into a microphone; the sound enters the instrument and by this ingenious device is converted into three-dimensional patterns of inert material, which are made visible on a screen. The sound of the word is thus made visible.

One of the several baffling observations was on the letter ‘O.’ When someone spoke the sound of the letter O into the microphone, it produced a perfect spherical pattern. We all know that the sphere is one of nature’s basic forms, but it is startling to discover that the shape produced by the frequency of the O sound is exactly the same we have chosen to represent it pictorially in our script.

I know that words have the power to shape human destiny, but this clearly indicates that words have shapes and properties of their own. They have subtle effects in nature and some words can have very special visible effects.

Like wise, personally, I have experienced the spiritual effects in the man-

thric composition of the words in our Avesta prayers.

There is a small passage in our *niyayesh* and *yasht* prayers starting with the words "Haoma yo gava..." and ending with "vaghzi biyo." It says that the human tongue has two main purposes: to speak the truth and to recite the prayers.

When I put these two purposes together, I conclude that during our communication with others, we must, at all times, use our words in such a way, as if we are praying to the divine. Only then we will be able to transform peeling relationships into healing relationships.

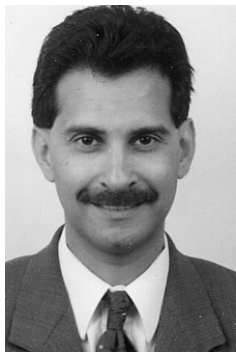
In the spirit of prayer, I remain with love and light to all humanity. ■

This concludes the 3-part series. **Parts 1** and **2** were published in FJ, Summer 2004 and Fall 2004.

SOURCES

Sources and resources for the entire 3-part series, are gratefully acknowledged in Part 1.

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, 2002, 2003 and 2004. 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/>



**Instead of fighting
things in life,
Start lighting
things in life.**

- Meher Amalsad,
author of Bread for the Head™

ZARATHUSHTI ENTERPRISE ■ PRODUCTS AND SERVICES ■

WZCC Business Digest

Pakistan region. With the election of **Nowsherwan Irani** of Industrial Technical Services, Karachi (industec@cyber.net.pk) as WZCC Regional Director for Pakistan, all regions of the world are now represented on the WZCC board of directors.

Consolidation. The harder task of consolidation and finding synergies within and among the far flung units is ahead of us. The WZCC structure and networking capabilities offer immense potential and opportunities for WZCC members, and thence to the Zarathushti communities at large.

Website. Our website has grown by leaps and bounds with, I am told, 50 visitors per day, in the capable hands of our Technical Director Yazdi Tantra of On-Lyne Services, Mumbai and VP Homi Davier. The bonds of connectedness it fosters are simply astounding.

Community without borders. As one browses through the website, dis-

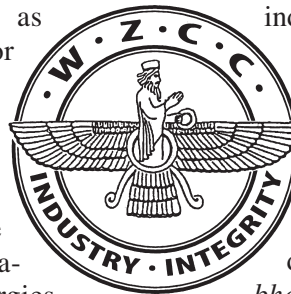
tances and borders melt away and our worldwide Zarathushti 'Community Without Borders' emerges. It is indeed remarkable and gives one a sense of comfort and joy to see how connected we are with each other across the globe.

WZCC Journal. Meher Bhesania (director, Middle East Region, meher_bhesania@hotmail.com) has

accepted the challenge of producing a new publication for WZCC, with international editors from all regions. Under her leadership, WZCC-ME is playing a pivotal role in the growth of WZCC.

Business as an option. All the varied activities at chapter level, some of which are mentioned in these pages, give one special pride. When our youth begin to look at business as an option to getting a job, we shall have fulfilled our mission of truly energizing the entrepreneurial spirit within our community.

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



DO VISIT THE REVAMPED WZCC WEBSITE

New and improved WZCC website offers exciting new features and ease of networking.

The new and improved WZCC website, developed by Yazdi Tantra's company On-Lyne Services, Mumbai, has grown by leaps and bounds, and is now attracting over 50 visitors per day. All chapter announcements, activities, news items, contacts, committee details, and member details of WZCC chapters around the world, as well as employment and business opportunities, a new Classifieds section and Yellow Pages, are now available under one roof at the WZCC website.

www.wzcc.net or www.wzcc.org

**All business persons and professionals are invited.
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Contact **Yazdi Tantra** at yazdi@on-lyne.com or
Homi Davier at davier@CapricornTravel.com.



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Consul general of India Mr. Pramathesh Rath [at right] with WZCC (NY) chapter chair Rusi Gandhi.

Consul General at WZCC-NY meeting

The New York chapter of WZCC (chair Rusi Gandhi, rusi@garden.net) set yet another standard of excellence in programming, with an interesting and very informative presentation by Mr. Pramathesh Rath, **consul general of India in New York**, at the darbe mehr in Pomona, on November 14.

Speaking in laudatory terms of the accomplishments of Indians living in the US, Mr. Rath observed that the ideal way for ex-pats to contribute to India would be to bring their expertise rather than their capital to India to assist in building the country's infrastructure. He noted that the experiences of Indians in the US had given the new

liberal India renewed confidence in its ability to compete with the West in the new era of globalization. To learn about new rules governing PIOs and NRIs, Mr. Rath directed people to visit the website www.indiaday.com.

He acknowledged that outsourcing jobs to India was an emotional issue for Americans; the economic benefits of outsourcing and Indo-American relations make outsourcing inevitable. He concluded that both China and India will be leading producers of goods and services.

Refreshments were provided by ZAGNY member Sheroo Kanga. The meeting was filmed by TV Asia. ■

WZCC-Houston hosts Dale Carnegie seminar

The Houston chapter of WZCC (chair Zarir Sethna, zarirs@sbcglobal.net) hosted an interactive, motivational and confidence-building seminar "You Got to Make it Happen," at Pavani Indian Cuisine, in Houston, on December 1, 2004.

The seminar, conducted by Sue Kazor, was based on **Dale Carnegie** principles outlined in bestsellers, "How to Win Friends and Influence People," "Quick and Easy Ways to Effective Speaking," and "How to Stop Worrying and Start Living."

Real Estate Seminar. At an earlier seminar, WZCC-Houston had a seminar on "**How to Profit in the Real Estate Market.**" Feroze Bhandara spoke about market cycles, with personal experiences; Kersi Engineer spoke about acquisition and resale of real estate investments; and Jon Schmid spoke about the financing of projects. ■

New team elected at WZCC-Toronto

WZCC-Toronto elected a new team of officers on September 9: president - Sam Meer (sam_meer@devencoregva.com) VP - Xerxes Wania (xwania@rogers.com) [photo below] VP - Ron Patel (ron.michelle@cogeco.ca) and secretary-treasurer - Armaity Bamji (armaity.bamji@rbccm.com).



Programs have included **starting a franchise**, and making it into a profitable entity by successful entrepreneurs,

Amy and Sohrab Ghadially; and an **Open Forum** on November 11, to discuss: investment/business opportunities, e.g. a retirement/long term care facility; stock trading; other networking forums, eg. Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce. The chapter invites

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 at

www.wzcc.net.

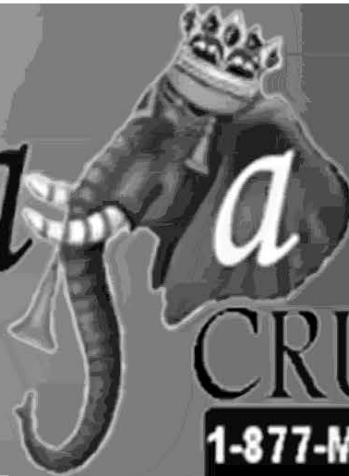
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WZCC-UK team, Dorab Mistry (Godrej), Perses Sethna (BT), Shernaz Engineer, president Karan Bilimoria (Cobra Beer), chief guest Keki Dadiseth (Unilever), Jimmy Contractor (Tata), Dynshaw Italia, Jhaneen Cambatta, Jeremy Mistry and Cyrus Todiwala (restaurateur), at WZCC-UK's first public event in March 2004, at La Porte des Indes. [PHOTO COURTESY MEHER BHESANIA]

WZCC-UK events

Cobra Beer czar Karan Bilimoria [photo above] who has also founded General Bilimoria Wines, Tandoori magazine and chairs Cobrabyte Technologies, is founder-president of WZCC-UK and leading its successful activities. Over 110 guests attended the inaugural event, with guest speaker Keki Dadiseth, director of Home and Personal Care at Unilever Plc, on March 9, 2004.

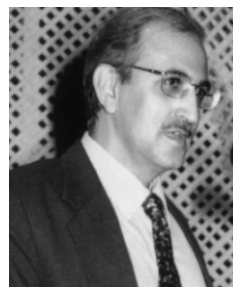
The venue was La Porte des Indes, in Marble Arch, London, whose executive chef is Mehernosh Mody [at left with Shirin Mody].

Dadiseth's success at Unilever was because he made "talented and motivated people feel valued and made them trust each other."

WZCC-India looks back on first year

The first AGM of WZCC-India was held on September 12, 2004, coincidentally at the same venue (the West End Hotel) where the idea was first proposed by WZCC president Rohinton Rivetna, in 2003.

President Minoo Shroff reported that the *Delhi chapter* was the first to be organized, spearheaded by Dadi Mistry. It has 55 members and is presently headed by Rustom Daroga.



The official inaugural of the *Mumbai Chapter* was held on June 8, 2003 at Banaji Atash Behram. The chapter has 336 members, under

the dynamic leadership of Kersi Limathwala [photo above].

The Pune chapter was inaugurated on November 15, 2003 under the leadership of Adi Engineer. It has 40 members today.

On April 25, 2004, the Ahmedabad chapter, under the leadership of Jehangir Cama was inaugurated, and has 25 members.

Office space with part-time staff has been arranged by BPP, at the Polyclinic at Gamadia Colony, furnished and equipped through generous donations. This office facility is available for membership administration for all WZCC chapters.

WZCC-ME newsletter



Under the dynamic leadership of Meher Bhesania (meher_bhesania@hotmail.com)

WZCC-ME is the first among the chapters to publish a professional newsletter. This swanky, publication, produced by Burjor Patel, on

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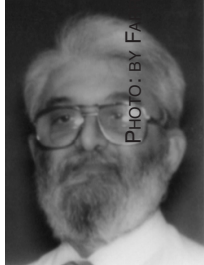
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glossy full color pages, features news and business profiles of WZCC chapters and members around the world.

The Middle East chapter has accepted the challenge of producing the new WZCC journal (name yet to be determined, by a contest), with international editors to be circulated to all members of WZCC.

Meher Bhesania promises to make it "one of the most prestigious publica-

OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

tions for businessmen and professionals in the Zarathushti world." ■

If you know of any opportunities available, please post them in:

- This column, or
- The WZCC e-group
zchamber@yahoo.com,
- The wzcc website
www.wzcc.net

● *US government student jobs.*

The USA Office of Personnel Management e-Scholar website provides students (high school and higher), parents, and career professionals information on educational opportunities offered by Federal government departments and agencies. Visit: www.studentjobs.gov/e-scholar.asp.

● *IT jobs*, for 1-year project in Chicago. Java architect, GUI designer, developers, document creation, Websphere/Java/Oracle. Rummy Mohta, www.RITTSCORP.com, tel: 804-763-5688.

● *Audit manager* position in a multi-national securities company in

OPPORTUNITIES WANTED

the financial services industry. MBA or CPA with 2/3 years experience in securities business. NY area. Contact homi_gandhi@usa.net.

Young Iranian, currently in New Zealand, seeking financial help to pursue studies in New Zealand, or

NEW BUSINESSES

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Immigration and Naturalization Services

Dr. Homee F. E. Shroff has opened a law practice in Tucson, Arizona specializing in all *immigration and naturalization cases/services*. He comes with experience practicing in Chicago working with private firms in Chicago and the Cook County State's Attorney's office. Immigration cases/services include: labor certifications, permanent residency, citizenship, visas; deportations, marriages and family.

Contact: *Law Offices of Homee F. Shroff*, PLLC, 2625 N. Vuelta Vista Campestre, Tucson, AZ 85715, Tel: 520-979-6697, Fax: 520-749-8403, e-mail: homabs2004@yahoo.com



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Skin care services

Skin analysis, using the latest technology called SAM (Skin Analyzer Magnifier Machine) and *skin care* for problems such as dryness, circles around the eyes, acne, wrinkles, etc. are offered by Yasmin Crawford. Contact: 773-818-0711, email: sam_clinique@yahoo.com. ■

"Woodlands" restaurant San Francisco, California

Owner of south Indian vegetarian restaurant, *Woodlands, Zarir Bhandara*, is constantly trying to innovate with the menu, and has recently introduced some Chinese dishes (such as Gobi Manchurian).

"Our focus is on healing foods," says Bhandara, who also a mobed, and practices healing through prayer. His dishes contain turmeric, which studies have shown, lowers cholesterol, blocks Alzheimer's, stops cancer, heals wounds and soothes the colon.

The restaurant has now introduced 'blessed food.' Bhandara explains, "Upon request, we will bless food with prayer, which then activates healing qualities in the body, enhances healing receptors in the brain and creates a balance in the body."

Woodlands is at 11833 Artesia Blvd., Artesia, CA, tel: 562-860-6500. ■

**On Success**

"Success is transforming *stumbling blocks* into *stepping stones*."

"Success comes when you change *impossible* to *I'm possible*."

"Working *right* is more important than working *smart* or working *hard*."

- Meher Amalsad,
author of *Bread for the Head™*



Above, at the "Dream Ball" fundraiser for the ZSO Building Capital Campaign: chair Dr. Dhun Noria, son Zubin, president of Hydra Exports, daughter Sabrena, about to complete her MD, and husband Farokh, an entrepreneur and visionary founder of Normak Fashions.



Left, at the ICCA Awards Gala on June 19, at the Metro Convention Centre in Toronto: Sun Life executive Gary Comerford, Dr. Noria, and chief guest, the Hon. Mr. Dalton McGuinty, premier of Ontario.

Indo-Canadian Business Award for Dr. Dhun Noria

The Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce annually recognizes the achievements of Indo Canadians. The prestigious ICCA **2004 Business Woman of the Year** award was presented to Dr. Dhun Noria at a glittering gala with the premier of Ontario as chief guest.

Dr. Dhun Noria is known as a renaissance woman among her friends and colleagues. Her corporate achievements are in the health care sector as owner and operator of Eglinton Medical Laboratories since 1985.

She also owns and operates a Sleep Disorders Diagnostic Center, a pulmonary Function Lab, Andrology Lab as well as a state of the art medi-

cal building, which won an award as the Best Medical Building in 1996.

Dr. Noria is medical director of Scarborough Hospital, one of the largest in Canada. She also teaches medical students at University of Toronto. She was chair of Toronto District Health Council, which is an advisory body to the Minister of Health.

Dr. Noria's involvement in the community is far-reaching. She chairs ZSO's Building Capital Campaign, with a mandate to raise \$2.2 million, of which she has raised \$1.2 in a little over a year.

Dhun Noria, and her family does the Zarathushti community proud. ■

Three Entrepreneurs/Professionals Recognized

The World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce (WZCC) annually recognizes Zarathushtis from around the world in three categories. WZCC is proud to announce the recipients of the 2003 recognition of outstanding Zarathushti entrepreneurs and professionals:

Outstanding Zarathushti Entrepreneur of the Year:
Farrokh R. Patel (New Jersey, USA)

Outstanding Zarathushti Professional of the Year:
Dr. Zarin Turel (Mumbai, India)

Outstanding Young Zarathushti Professional/Entrepreneur of the Year
Zenobia and Zubin Tantra (Illinois, USA)

Nominees are sponsored by an individual or organization that knows them on a professional and/or personal basis. The applicants are judged on the basis of merit by elected judges. Applicants of preceding years who have not been selected may be reviewed by judges for the next year. Application forms for 2004 may be obtained from www.wzcc.org or by contacting Homee F. Shroff at homabs2004@yahoo.com.

have now grown to a 50,000 sq. foot complex, soon to be expanded to 80,000 sq. feet. In 2000, Farrokh formed yet another company known as **Breeze Corporation** which sells free-standing above ground swimming pool kits. In addition to managing 30 full-time and 15 seasonal employees, Farrokh is also a consultant.

His community service includes outsourcing work through a work-study program to a school for disadvantage children, and serves on its board of directors. He was active in the formation of ZAGNY and in the New York darbe-meher; and is a generous supporter of FEZANA Journal, through his long-standing advertisement on the back cover. He is married, to Gool, for 33 years and has three daughters. Daughter Roshan has joined her father in the business, and Shernaz will be doing so shortly. ■

Outstanding Zarathushti Professional - Zarin Turel

Prof. Dr. Zarin R. Turel is the Honorary Professor of Nuclear Chemistry and Dean of Science Studies and was holding the K.C. Mahindra Chair of Nuclear Chemistry and Head of the Division for the last 23 years, at the prestigious Institute of Science in Mumbai, India.

She has outstanding achievements in the field of Nuclear Chemistry and Radiochemistry. Dr. Turel has been a pioneer in multi-disciplinary field of neutron activation analysis as a potential tool. Her research contributions include areas in medicine (cancer research), environmental and agriculture studies, and geology.

Amongst Dr. Turel's numerous awards include the All India Institute of Medical Sciences Silver Jubilee Award, the Best Teacher of Mumbai University Award and the Dr. M.V. Ramaniah Life Time Achievement Award. She has published more than 175 research papers, and has presented in various countries including Belgium, Brazil, Denmark, Japan, Sweden, UK and USA. ■



Above, Farrokh Patel's 50,000 sq. ft. (soon to be expanded to 80,000 sq. ft.) office building and production facility for Pegasus Products and The Cover Company, in Branchburg, NJ. Right, computerized pool cover manufacturing facility.

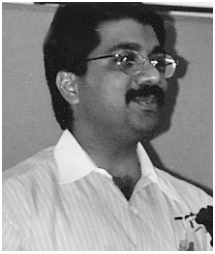


Outstanding Zarathushti Entrepreneur - Farrokh Patel

Farrokh R. Patel began his early career with Union Carbide (India and USA), Coca Cola's Tenneco Division, and Harte and Company of Diamond Shamrock. In 1982, Farrokh opened

Pegasus Products, Inc. a custom swimming pool liner fabrication company where the sales in the first year alone exceeded a quarter of a million dollars. In 1992, Farrokh formed **The Cover Company** manufacturing pool safety covers. Starting with an 800 sq. ft. rented space in 1982, the office building and manufacturing facilities

Outstanding Young Zarathushti Entrepreneurs – Zubin and Zenobia Tantra



Sincere, dedicated and passionate about their work, **Zubin [left] and Zenobia Tantra** have grown their enterprise from one physical ther-

apy clinic to four (with a fifth in the works) in just 5 years.

Zubin has been a licensed physical therapist in the Chicago area since 1992 specializing in orthopedic and neurologic physical therapy. Zenobia has worked with a variety of orthopedic cases. Her special interest include patients with soft tissue injuries and Fibromyalgia.

In 1999, when the right opportunity came along, the Tantra's started their first clinic, **Lake County Physical Therapy LLC** at a medical clinic in Round Lake Beach, IL. Within a few months, the medical group approached the Tantras to start a second location, in Wheeling, IL. Initially, they both held on to their jobs, but, in April 2000, Zubin took the plunge and left his job as director for outpatient rehab at a nursing home. Zenobia followed a few months later.

Personal care and a commitment to success helped develop a lasting bond with patients and referring doctors. By January 2003, two more clinics were added, and staff grew from just Zenobia and Zubin, to 11 others. A fifth location, in Arlington Heights, providing niche services, is in the works.

Zubin and Zenobia, while living the American dream, epitomize the Zarathushti (and WZCC) values of industry, integrity and charity. They have always kept their roots in mind and shared their financial success with the community.

"Our motto – allow us to exceed your highest expectation – is not just hype," says Zubin, "It is the reason for our survival and our success." ■

Ringin in the New Year – at the New York Stock Exchange

Last fall, Zarathushti were proud to see two of their own on TV, ringing The Opening Bell at the NYSE: Homi Gandhi on August 19th, Parsi pateti (new year's eve), and Ratan Tata a month later.



NYSE recognizes Homi Gandhi's contribution to the community.

On August 19, 2004, the bell that marks the beginning of the trading day at the New York Stock Exchange was rung by ZAGNY president Homi Gandhi [third from left] and five other employees of the NYSE. Homi and his associates were nominated by their colleagues in recognition of their community service work.



In honor of Tata Motors Limited (NYSE-Limited TTM) listing on the New York Stock Exchange, Ratan Tata [center] chairman of Tata Motors, rings The Opening Bell on September 27.

Tata Motors is the second largest player in the domestic (Indian) car. Interviewed on the floor of the NYSE on Sept 27th, Ratan Tata commented: "There is a large market for affordable (as low as \$2,200) cars in India, where people can go from riding with their entire family on an open two-wheeler to riding in a covered, all-weather vehicle."



Delna Bhesania of Bardel Entertainment Inc., makes the cover of Mehfil, "the magazine for today's Indo-Canadian."

Delna Bhesania featured in Mehfil

Delna Bhesania, daughter of Behram and Sheraz Bhesania, of Vancouver, was featured in a four-page cover-story in the March 2004 issue of Canada's *Mehfil* magazine.

The article entitled "The animated World of Bardel's Delna Bhesania" by Robin Roberts recounts the beginning (in 1987) and growth of **Bardel Entertainment, Inc.**, one of the foremost animation companies in Canada, named after Delna and husband Barry Ward.

Launched in 1987, from a spare bedroom in their apartment, Bardel today is a thriving 100-person business, that partners with conglomerates such as Disney, Dreamworks, Sony, Fox and Warner Bros.

Their first job was to produce a live action show for TV called *Beans Baxter* for a local company. The show got canceled for Monday Night Football. Undaunted, the pair soldiered on.

Since then, they have provided creative services for 35 TV series, a dozen feature films, and products for the Internet and video games. ■

FINANCIAL CORNER

Financial Progress Report:



Dr. Jerry M. Kheradi chair of FEZANA Funds and Finance

It gives me great pleasure to inform all of you that our Welfare Committee has been able to collect **\$30,000 for FEZANA's Welfare Funds**. Chaired by Hosi Mehta and Houtoxi Contractor a sub-committee called the "Domestic Abuse Program" was formed under the Welfare Committee. They took on a big challenge to raise funds for the Domestic Abuse Fund which was started in the spring of this year. Both Hosi and Houtoxi have been receiving numerous calls for assistance from our community members with issues relating to domestic abuse and hence the formation of this sub-committee.

Facing a great challenge and going full steam ahead, Hosi and Houtoxi were able to round up a committee of volunteers who worked all summer arranging, planning and getting contributions for the Welfare Gala Fund Raising Event. On September 4, 2004 the Dinner Dance function was held in Chicago with great success. People from all of North America participated including our present FEZANA president, Firdosh Mehta and past presidents Framroze Patel and Rohinton Rivetna. The delicious food, lively music and dancing along with the much participated 'silent auction' for all the items donated by our Zarathushti community from all over the country made for an evening of fun; and let us not forget the hilarious *natak* performed by volunteers from ZAGNY.

This Gala fund raising evening was a perfect example of our true Zarathushti spirit of giving. The hard work of the group of volunteers came to fruition with an outpouring of financial and moral support from everyone across the country. To paraphrase the words of Hosi Mehta, more than the money made is the value built up in goodwill, togetherness, caring and compassion that people feel because we all connected for a worthy cause. Thanks to the efforts of these hard working volunteers we were able to raise over \$30,000 for the Welfare Fund. I would like to thank all the volunteers and everyone who supported this fund raising event.

Donations of \$100 or greater will be acknowledged in the Thousand Points of Light chart; all other donations will be noted in the Grateful Thanks column. We continue to accept donations for this worthy cause and for any of the other FEZANA Funds (General, Religious Education, Academic Education Scholarship, Performing and Creative Arts Scholarship, Welfare, Critical Assistance and Journal). Kindly make your check payable to FEZANA, indicate the fund you wish to support, and mail to **Rashid Mehini, Treasurer, 583 Beverly Place, San Marcos, CA 92069**.

Thank you for all your support and may you and your family be showered with the blessings of Ahura Mazda.

Jerry Kheradi, MD, FACC, chairperson, Funds and Finance Committee. Committee: **Rashid Mehini** (treasurer), **Rustom Kevala**, PhD, **Celeste Kheradi**, **Kia Kaviani**, DMD (Dr. Kaviani lives in Orlando, FL and has a very successful dental practice. We welcome him as a new member to our committee.)

FINANCIAL CORNER

Thousand Points of Light	2001-3	2004	Total		2001-3	2004	Total
Anonymous, FL	5		5	Maneck Dastoor		G	1
Anonymous, IL		J	5	Farrokh N Dastur, CA	1		1
Anonymous, NY	G	1	1	Meher N. Dastur, CA	2		2
Anonymous	R	1	1	Khurshed Jehangir Dastur, PA		(g)	1
A Wellwisher, MI	1		1	Nari & Dinoo Dastur, CT	1		1
Dr Babak Abadi, PA	W	2	2	Er. Soli & JoAnn Dastur, FL	J	3	R
Noshir & Kashmira Antia		C	1	Adi & Parvin Davar, VA		S,W	2
Shiraz Antia, CT		C	2	Edu & Niloufer Daver, NJ	G	2	G
Parviz & Simin Ardeshirpour, NC	S	2	2	Homi & Nargish Davier, TX	1		1
Jim Arjani, CA		C	1	Farrokh M. Deboo, CT		R	2
Dr. Cyrus F Austin, AZ	G,W	19	19	Jimmy & Freny Deboo family, MI	1		1
Porus Austin and Khar, CA	W	4	4	Dectron		G	3
Gulnar Balsara, PA		C	1	Afsaneh Dehghanian		W	1
Zubin & Silvia Balsara, AR	G	1	1	Jimmy F. Dholoo, MD		(f)	5
Edu & Tehnaz Bamji, NJ	W	1	1	Ross Dinyari	G	1	1
Beaudette family, RI		(l)	5	Yezdi N Dordi, CA		5	5
Dolly & Pesi Bavadam	C,W	2	2	Jimmy and Mary Dubash, VA	G,W	4	4
Thritee, Soozan & Trista Baxter, NY	(e)	1	1	Jamshid & Parastu Dubash, MA		C	2
Beach Cigar Group, FL	C,W	29	C,W 61	Mina Dubash, IN		G	1
Zazu & Tinaaz Bhandara, CA	G	2	2	J. H. Dudha, TX		C	1
Firdaus & Jasmin Bhathena, MA	1		1	Noshir Dutia, NJ		C	1
Rustom & Sheroo Bhathena, OH	1		1	Manek R. Dustoor, MI	2		2
Meena S. Birdie, FL	G	1	1	A.D. & G.A. Dutia, AL	G	4	4
Mezdie R. Birdie, FL	G	1	G	1			1
Jal Birdy, CA	C	1	1	Tony & Swati Elavia, MA	1		1
Kobad & Nancy Bugwadia, CA		C	1	Freddy Engineer, CA	1		1
Homi & Ellen Byramji, NJ	1		1	Rumi Engineer, CO	C,S,W	3	3
Kershaw & Bakhtawar Byramji		C	3	Adil Feroz,GA	1		1
Dr. Lovji D. Cama, NJ	7		7	Sami R. Framjee	W	10	10
Kamal E. Campbell, GA	C,W	1	1	Rusi D Gandhi, NJ	1		1
Dr. & Mrs. Nadir Camay, CA	G	2	2	Golmeher B. Gandi	(j)	2	2
Sohrab D. Charna	C	1	1	Cecilia & Sorab Gandhi, CA	5		5
Homiyar Choksi, VA	1		1	Hanoz & Shahznee Rabadi Gandhi		C,W	8
Coating Engineers, TX		S(n)	2	Navroz Gandhi, MD		C,W	10
Cyra & Lyla Contractor, PA	1		1	Eugene Gauger, MI	1		1
Dr Farhad & Hutoxi Contractor	(g)(h)C	6	G	1	Jamshed & Yasmin Ghadiali, NJ	2	2
Dr. & Mrs. Farokh Contractor	C,R,W	5	C,G,R,W	5	Rashna Ghadiali, IL	1	1
Cowas A. Cooper		G	1	1	Mr. & Mrs. Sorab K. Ghadiali	3	3
Katy & Farrokh Cooper, CA	2	W	1	3	Soonu & Jal Godiwalla, TX	1	1
Phil F. Cooper, CA	G,W	2	2	1	Behli H. Hansotia, VA		C
Tommy and Nairika Cornett, GA	1		1	1	Noshir L Hansotia, MO	1	C, (f)
Tammy & Behram Dalal, NC	G	2	G	1	Piloo E. Ilavia, TX	C	1
Keki Dalal	C	1	1	1	International Access, WA		G
Phiroze H. Dalal, CA	C	5	5	1	Behram K & Farieda Irani, TX	C,R,W	15
Dr Ardeshir & Parvin Damania, CA	2		2	1	Hormuz & Shahdookht Irani, GA	G	14
Diana Damkevala, CA	1		1	1	Mervan and Katayoun Irani, MD	1	1
Maneck Daroovala, NY	G	2	2	1	Shapur K. Irani, IN		C
Adil Daruwala, CA	G	2	2	1	Minoo S. Italia	G	1
Khushroo Daruwala		G	1	1	Rohinton Boman Irani, NY	G	1
Dolly Dastoor, QE	S	1	1	1	Rustam H. Irani, MA	1	1
				1	Rustom and Sarvar Irani, FL	G	1
				1	Irani Family Foundation	C,G,R,S,W	10
				1	Minoo & Ruby Italia, TX		G
				1	Jim & Homai Jagus, PA	5	5
				1	Daryoush & Mahin Jahanian, KS		G
				1	Iraj Jahanian, MO	G	4
				1	Khurshid & J.J. Jamadar, TX	2	2
				1	Rumi & Kashmira Jamsetjee, IL	1	1

"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 July 25 to October 24, 2004 are shown in bold. Funds: C=Critical Assistance, G=General, J=Journal, R=Religious Ed.; S=Scholarship, W=Welfare.

FINANCIAL CORNER

Thousand Points of Light [Contd]

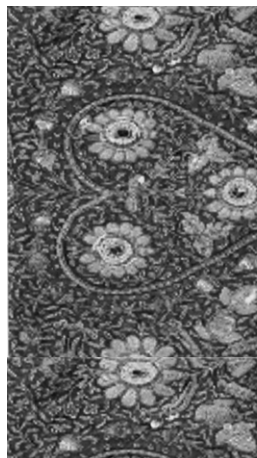
	2001-3	2004	Total
Cyrus D. Jilla, VA	G	1	1
Dinshaw & Goolcher Joshi, MD	C 4		4
Khorshed & Dr Firoze Jungalwala, MA	(d) 1		1
Afried Farokh Kamdin, NY	W 2		2
Jamshed & Rita Kapadia, MA	R, W 7		7
Homi & Shireen Kapadia, PA	5		5
Erach & Lily Karanjawala, CA	W	1	1
Dr Natasha Karanjia, PA	C 2	R 1	3
Aspandiar 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
Yasmin & Shapur Pavri, TX	S 3	S 10	13
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

	2001-3	2004	Total
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
Behram Shroff, VA	C, W 2	W 2	4
Dr Burjis & Hovi Shroff, FL	5	C, G 2	7
Dr Nariman & Parrin Shroff, FL	2		2
Zubeen Shroff, NY	1		1
Fali Sidhva, 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
Farah & Matthew Speer, IL		(f) 1	1
Nazneen & Ehler Spliedt, CA	1		1
Arnavaz Sukhia, NJ	G 1		1
Cyrus Subawalla, IL	C 2		2
Karrus Tarapore		G 1	1
Bella Tata, BC	1		1
Khurshed M Tengra, ID	G 2		2
Mahnaz K. Tengra, ID		C G 2	2
Jamshed Udvardia, MI	5		5
Perry Unwalla, FL	1	C, G, R, S 6	7
Rayomand J Unwalla, PA	1	G 1	2
Minoo & Shirin Vaghaiwalla, FL	(m) 1		1
Taera M. Wakil, 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
Total Points	883	336	1219

[Please see the key on next page]

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 & Morvorid 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 Performing and Creative Arts Scholarship
- (n) In memory of Dinshaw Joshi ■



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Benefits of a Roth IRA

by Kia Kaviani
Orlando, Florida

Roth IRAs (Individual Retirement Accounts) are tax-favored accounts to which qualified taxpayers can make after-tax contributions. Contributions to the account can grow tax-free, and neither the contribution nor the earnings on them are subject to tax when a Roth IRA owner makes withdrawals from the account.

Although a Roth IRA is designed to help a taxpayer save for retirement, it is inaccurate to characterize a Roth IRA as just a retirement savings vehicle. A Roth IRA can offer tax, estate planning, and financial planning advantages that are not available with respect to a traditional IRA.

Advantages of Roth IRAs

- Individuals can make contributions to a Roth IRA regardless of age.
- Withdrawals can be made completely tax free (may be made 5 years after the contribution or the owner has reached the age of 59 1/2, dies or becomes disabled, or the purchase of a first home).

- The owner is not required to take lifetime distributions, so the tax-free buildup can continue throughout the owner's life.

- Distributions of the contributions are always tax free, no matter when made.

Disadvantages of Traditional IRAs

- Contributions to a traditional IRA cannot be made by a person who has attained age 70 1/2 by the end of the year.

- Withdrawals are fully taxable and are subject to the minimum distribution rules.

- The owner must begin receiving distributions in the year following the year in which the owner turns 70 1/2 and take them over a prescribed period.

The facts speak for themselves. Roth IRAs are a better investment for the savvy investor. ■

Kia Kaviani, DMD lives in Orlando, FL and has a very successful dental practice.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
PLEASE GIVE FROM
YOUR HEART
■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

DONATIONS & APPEALS

Donations. Unless specified otherwise, please send all donations to: **Rashid Mehini, 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, Academic and Creative/Performing Arts 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.

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At the Gala Musical Night fundraiser, on September 4, at the Arbab Guiv Darbe Mehr in Chicago, from left, FEZANA Welfare Committee chairs Houtoxi Contractor and Hosi P. Mehta, FEZANA VP Mahrukh Motafram and FEZANA president Firdosh Mehta.

This fundraiser was the first step in a campaign undertaken by the Critical Assistance Committee, to increase awareness of domestic violence in our community. Over \$30,000 was raised, all of which will be used exclusively to provide assistance to those in distress.

Answering the cry for help

Being a member of the Zarathushti community is truly a blessing. There is a certain amount of pride that we can take from knowing that the universal principles of morality and ethical conduct that have survived through eons of time first originated from the teachings of our divinely inspired prophet. Even greater pride originates from the fact that today, after so many centuries, these principles are still practiced in our every day lives.

A pioneering entrepreneurial spirit, an unquenchable thirst to serve humanity, a dedication to living life in moderation – these are a few of the principles that have endured.

Critical Assistance Committee. In this greatness, we sometimes tend to believe that our community is perfect, or, even if we recognize that there are imperfections, we forget to address them with the urgency they command. Taking a proactive attitude to solve this problem, FEZANA established the Critical Assistance Committee. Its mission: To provide assistance to individuals, families, and organizations facing temporary difficulties due to medical emergencies, natural disasters, violence, or legal issues.

Domestic violence. There are still some who feel that our community is

immune to some of the most virulent socio-economic diseases that plague others. On September 4, the Critical Assistance Committee, with the support of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago, hosted a fundraising Gala Musical Night, with the primary purpose to increase awareness of domestic violence within our community.

In a community where the shouts of greatness ring so loudly, it is almost impossible to hear a cry for help.

Critical Assistance hotline. The Critical Assistance Committee has launched a confidential, toll-free hot line, effective May 27, 2004. To date it has assisted a handful of victims of domestic violence and their children. The Committee has answered the cry for help.

The Gala fundraiser. The events of September 4, culminated in a resounding triumph for the Critical Assistance Committee. A silent auction and donations helped in raising over \$30,000 for the cause, while entertainment by a Parsi natak, “*Tehmulji in Turmoil*” by members of ZAGNY who flew in for the occasion, and the live Indian band *Malhar*, created a night for celebration.

A celebration it was indeed. We celebrated the fact that our community has what it takes to ensure its own

vitality, not because we are a community with no problems, but because we are a community dedicated to solving its own problems. The bonds that were formed in working for the betterment of our own people were priceless, and no one can put a dollar value to that.

The spirit of serving humanity is still very much alive in our community and the outcome of September 4, proved that Zarathushtis are dedicated to serving their own community and preserving its greatness for centuries more to come.

Houtoxi F. Contractor

Hosi P. Mehta

Welfare Committee chairs

Thank You! Thank You!

It is inconceivable but true that the expenses for the whole gala with a Parsi natak, delicious traditional dinner and and live band were under \$3,000. We cannot thank enough, all the willing helpers and generous donors for giving of their time, money, auction items, talents and heart to make this such a memorable event:

- **Zoroastrian Association of Chicago** and all the **ZAC volunteers**, for the event, organization, decorations, dinner, bar and more.
- The **natak troupe** from ZAGNY.
- **Celeste and Jerry Kheradi** for their trust, confidence and support and FEZANA president **Firdosh Mehta** and VP **Mahrukh Motafram** for their presence and support.
- Generous donors and buyers of the many valuable **auction items**: vacation and resort packages, airline tickets, art works, original oil paintings and water colors, Parsi saris and *kors*, hand-embroidered items, gift baskets, gift certificates for jewelry, professional services, home accessories and much, much more.
- **All the generous donors.** Donations over \$100 will be added to the “1000 Points of Light” program:
 Ansheekh Inc. IL (\$100)
 Antia, Jamshed IL (\$100)
 Balaporia, Zahir WI (\$50)

Bamboat, Kewmars IN (\$90)
 Bedford, Bruce IL (\$30)
 Best Western Crystal Palace Inn CA (\$500)
 Bhajiwalla, Yasmin IL (\$120)
 Bhalala, Gopal IL (\$100)
 Bharucha, Cyrus IL (\$105)
 Bhathena, Katy & Noshir IL (\$200)
 Bhathena, Noshir WI (\$50)
 Bilimoria, Bachi IL (\$101)
 Billimoria, Farokh IL (\$100)
 Billimoria, Neville WI (\$25)
 Billimoria, Godrej IL (\$90)
 Billimoria, Yaz & Firoza IN (\$200)
 Bulsara, Cyrus TX (\$260)
 Cama, Farhad PA (\$200)
 Cambata, Shahrookh IL (\$5000)
 Chinoy, Minoo MI (\$50)
 Choksey, Kersi IL (\$60)
 Choksi, Niranjana IL (\$200)
 Choksi, Vijay IL (\$200)
 Contractor, Farokh LA (\$200)
 Contractor, Laila & Cyra PA (\$300)
 Contractor, Farhad & Houtoxi PA (\$3457)
 Cooper, Farobag IL (\$180)
 Daboo, Aspy and Aban IL (\$60)
 Dadabhoy, Porus IL (\$140)
 Damkevala, Boman IL (\$130)
 Darukhanavala, Phiroz & Niloufer IL (\$235)
 Daruwala, Farida & Ron IN (\$100)
 Daruwalla, Noshir & Katy IL (\$202)
 Dastur, Lily & Aspi PA (\$200)
 Davar, Usheen NJ (\$200)
 Daver, Edul NJ (\$200)
 Davier, Homi & Nargish TX (\$101)
 Deboo, Gulestan & Farrokh CT (\$501)
 Desai, Suresh IL (\$150)
 Dholakia, Ashok IL (\$51)
 Dhunjisha, Faroukh & Freya IL (\$230)
 Dhutia, Anil IL (\$60)
 Dhutia, Geeta IL (\$330)
 Dua, Dr. K WI (\$460)
 Dubash, Roxana IL (\$45)
 Elavia, Ann IL (\$200)
 Engineer, Beverly IL (\$1000)
 Engineer, Rustom & Yasmin TX (\$101)
 Engineer, Yezdi TX (\$60)
 Four Diamonds Enterprises, Inc. NV (\$500)
 Ghandhi, Burjor MI (\$75)
 Gandhi, Rusi NJ (\$201)
 Ghadiali, Yasmin & Jamshed NY (\$150)
 Ghandhi, Burjor & Behroze MI (\$150)
 Ghandhi, Hanoz & Shazneen NY (\$100)
 Ghaswala, S IL (\$60)
 Godiwalla, Arnavaaz TX (\$51)
 Grant, Cyrus IL (\$30)
 Jamsetjee, Rumi IL (\$25)
 Irani, Behram & Farieda TX (\$200)
 K and K Pharmacy IL (\$100)
 Karani, Hoshang IL (\$485)
 Karanjia, Minoo & Behroze PA (\$101)
 Khambatta, Sarosh IL (\$60)
 Khambatta, Sunita WI (\$200)
 Kheradi, Jerry & Celeste RI (\$1380)
 Krishnayya, Meghan IL (\$75)
 Madhavan, Jyoti IL (\$210)
 Malhotra, Inc. IL (\$100)
 Marfatia, Firdous IL (\$120)
 Mazda, Sherenaz IL (\$250)
 Mehta, Firdosh & Rashna AB (\$101)
 Mehta, Sherazade, MA (\$90)
 Mehta, Hosi & Kim IL (\$1675)
 Mehta, K IL (\$180)
 Mincherhomjee, Ardaviraf IL (\$717)
 Mistry, Aloo (\$50)
 Modi, Jamshed & Navaz IL (\$60)
 Motafaram, Mahrukh & Feroze WI (\$200)
 Nagarwalla, Pheroze & Renate IL (\$200)
 Parabia, Nekzad WI (\$140)
 Parabia, Sam & Perin CA (\$1000)
 Patel Builders, Inc. IL (\$100)
 Patel, Hemendra IL (\$60)
 Patel, Jyoti & Navin IL (\$101)
 Patel, Perviz IL (\$180)
 Patel, Roda & Khushroo IL (\$210)
 Patel, Rohit IL (\$60)
 Patel, Roshan IL (\$50)
 Patel, Vimesh IL (\$300)
 Pavri, Yasmin & Shapur TX (\$501)
 Press, Minoo & Zarin IL (\$200)
 Rao, Murali IL (\$500)
 Rivetna, Cyrus IL (\$30)
 Rivetna, Dara & Dinsoo IL (\$550)
 Rivetna, Rohinton & Roshan IL (\$470)
 Rustomji, Eric IL (\$350)
 Sabawalla, Hoshang PA (\$30)
 Seker, Shanti & Jawahar IL (\$51)
 Sengal, Lakshman IL (\$30)
 Shah, Sonal IL (\$215)
 Shah, Bharat IL (\$60)
 Sharyari, Houshmand IL (\$60)
 Shetty, Bharathi IL (\$30)
 Shetty, Behroze MI (\$75)
 Singhi, Santosh IL (\$60)
 Shroff, Neeve & Kurush SC (\$500)
 Sidhwa, Bapsy TX (\$100)
 Tamboli, Hoshedar & Anahita FL (\$500)
 Tantra, Zubin IL (\$50)
 Tata, Bella BC (\$30)
 Tavadia, Rusi MI (\$25)
 Vazifdar, Pesi and Aban IL (\$60)
 Wadia, Gool & Dinyar CT (\$400)
 Weber, Ken and Dinaz IL (\$500)
 Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago IL (\$105)
 ZAGBA MA (\$151)
 Zarthoshti Anjuman of Northern California (\$200)
 Zoroastrian Society of BC (\$200)
 Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania (\$201)

Grateful thanks!

FEZANA gratefully acknowledges donations (over \$50) received from July 25 through October 24, 2004.

General Fund: Sherazade F. Mehta, MA (\$75); Khursheed Palkhiwala, NJ (\$60). **Scholarship Fund:** Dolly Dastoor, QE (\$178). **Critical Assistance Fund:** Roshan & Perin Bhappu, AZ (\$50). **Journal Fund** (for reprinting Zoroastrian flyers): Sarosh Collector, TX (\$750).

FEZANA SCHOLARSHIPS

The FEZANA Academic Scholarship Program Committee takes great pride in announcing 2004-2005 scholarship recipients:

Mehraban & Morvorid Kheradi Endowment Scholarship for Merit— FEZANA Scholar

Minoo Modi Tufts University, MA (Moral and Political Philosophy)

FEZANA Scholarships

Rodabe Amaria University of Colorado (Medicine)

Zebalda Bamji Howard University. (Human Genetics/Genetic Counselling)

Kaiser Cooper Colorado State University (Accounting CPA)

Anahita Dua St. George School of Medicine (Medicine/Public health)

Ayesha Dua University of Wisconsin (Chemistry)

Nina Godiwalla Wharton School of Business (Business)

Arya Goudarzi University of California (Engineering)

Noushin Isadvastar San Jose State University (Industrial Engineering)

Parendi Mehta Brown University (Economics/International Relations)

Tushna Soonawalla University of Alberta (Engineering Management)

Application forms for next year will be available at www.fezana.org or from Dr. Dolly Dastoor (dollydastoor@sympatico.ca) as of March 2005. Application deadline is August 1, 2005.

Scholarships available

A list of miscellaneous scholarships is given below:

- **FEZANA Scholarships** and **Mehraban & Morvord Kheradi Endowment Scholarship for Merit – FEZANA Scholar** for students at institutions of higher learning in USA/Canada. Dr. Dolly Dastoor, dollydastoor@sympatico.ca, tel: 450-656-2036, www.fezana.org.
- **Moobed Faridoon Zardoshty Religion Education Scholarships** for higher studies/research in Zarathushti religion at an institution of higher education anywhere in the world. Kayomars P. Mehta, kayomehta@aol.com, tel: 708-974-1238, www.fezana.org.
- **Fali Chothia Charitable Trust** scholarships for students in 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 in UK. www.marshallscholarship.org.
- **Fulbright exchange programs**. Visit www.fulbrightexchanges.org/base/grant.asp.

Sources of funds for preserving cultural heritage

- The Global Heritage Fund. www.globalheritagefund.org/home.html.
- International Council of Monuments and Sites. http://www.icomos.org/ICOMOS_Main_Page.html.
- The Getty Conservation Institute. www.getty.edu/conservation/institute/
- World Monuments Fund. http://www.wmf.org/
- Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation. http://exchanges.state.gov/culprop/afcp/other.htm.

Submitted by Behram Pastakia

Music grants

The Nippon Music Foundation (NMF) offers grants to support musical projects, such as concerts, workshops and seminars. Through close relations with international conservatories and music-related organizations, NMF aims to develop an international network of music and stimulate international cultural exchange.

A main aim of NMF is to promote musical exchange, that enables people of different cultures to share in the enjoyment of each other's music.

A Japanese music group performed at Persepolis last October, and there may be interest in collaboration with Zarathushtis, given the history and culture of Japan, influenced by the ancient Silk Route, and the focus of this foundation in promoting international collaboration. Visit http://www.nippon-foundation.or.jp/eng/who/affiliated_10.html.

- Behram Pastakia

Zoroastrian Symphony Orchestra Fund

❖ Special Premium ❖

Are you interested in having a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be on the podium and conduct the ZSO in a short work at the 2005 World Congress in London?

A donor of over \$5000 can have such an experience! Only a dose of love and courage is requisite. The Music Director will introduce this person to the art and craft of leading an orchestra and will work towards ensuring an enriching experience.

FEZANA has established the ZSO Fund to assist with the Orchestra's performance at the 2005 World Congress in London. Donations are 100% tax-deductible and high visibility is assured.

Please send your check payable to FEZANA marked "ZSO Fund." Contact Farobag Homi Cooper at cpas@chicago-philharmonia.org. ■



Surat Atash Behram

The *Sheth Dadabhoy Nasarvanji Modi Atash Behram* in Surat was consecrated in 1823, and was the first fire temple in Surat. Nearly 20,000 Zarathushtis came from all over India to attend the consecration ceremonies. It was built by Jaijee, Sheth Dadabhoy's widow, who was a grand daughter of Lovjee Wadia, founder of the house of Wadias.

This atash behram continues to perform many of the religious ceremonies that have been discontinued elsewhere, such as *nirangdin*, *vendidad*, *yazeshne*, *navar* and *martab*.

A 'Nibhav (maintenance) Fund' was started in 1915. With costs escalating trustees are finding it difficult to make ends meet and to remunerate the mobeds in the manner they deserve. President Davar Dr. Darius T. Modi appeals to "all Zoroastrians, wherever they reside, to contribute to our Nibhav Fund."

For information, contact Pervin Jariwala at pervins58@hotmail.com. Please send donations payable to "FEZANA" [see page 114] marked "Surat Atash Behram."

Dadar Food Scheme

The Food Scheme run by the Mancherji Joshi Memorial Trust, delivers home-cooked meals to needy and infirm Zarathushtis in Dadar, Mumbai. At present, the scheme serves 24 old Zarathushtis who have no one to take care of them. Most are frail and bedridden, forgotten by society, "praying that the scheme continues to give them food till they are alive." They also give a square meal a day to 31 needy school children.

To feed one person the cost is Rs. 1200 (\$26) per month or Rs. 14,400 (\$310) per year. The total annual cost of feeding 24 aged and 31 students is Rs. 4.5 lacs (about \$10,000).

"We shall be grateful for whatever assistance you can give, to enable us to continue the Food Scheme, that gives Hope to the Hopeless."

Contact Mithoo Jesia at mithoojimi@rediffmail.com. Please send donations payable to "FEZANA" [see page 114] marked "Dadar Food Scheme."

Calling all alumni of Queen Mary's, Mumbai

Rati Wadia, principal (retired) of Queen Mary School in Mumbai, has sent a fund-raising appeal in support of past principal Miss Shelton's organization, *Valathi Outreach Ministries* in Chennai. Miss Shelton was the last missionary principal, and was mainly responsible for raising the quality of education and moulding the characters of thousands of Queen Marians over two decades. After retiring, Miss Shelton has been doing God's good work in poor villages where the villagers live in subhuman conditions. She has given her life to uplift these depressed people, with medical and educational projects.

Please send donations payable to Miss Shelton, VOCM, c/o Rati Wadia, G 1/5 Shapur Baug, VP Road, Mumbai 400 004, tel: 91 22 5604 8347.

Besides the opportunities for giving listed in this section, other worthy projects seeking funding described elsewhere in this Journal, are:

- **Ontario Zoroastrian Community Foundation (OZCF)** for a new center in Greater Toronto Area [p. 12].
- **Navar Fund** for performing the navar ceremony [p. 87].
- FEZANA's "**1000 Points of Light**" campaign [p. 109].
- Cassette of *Monajats* [p. 129].
- **Shiraz Bagli Memorial Fund - Ovarian Cancer Research** [p. 123].
- **Documentary "Zoroastrianism: Ancient Religion, Modern Decisions,"** by Tenaz Dubash [p. 131].
- **Zoroastrian Society of Ontario** for larger premises [back cover].

■ MATRIMONIALS ■

FEZANA will coordinate initial contacts between interested parties; we do not assume any responsibility for verifying credentials. Contact Roshan Rivetna [see inside cover].

Female 46, 5' 3", medical technologist, fun loving, interested in traveling, dancing, good sense of humor, never married, well settled in Canada. Interested in well settled, Zarathushti male up to 52 years (no divorce please) with caring nature and strong family values. 416-225-6283, jer.tehmul@rogers.com.

[F04-23]

Attractive female, 'young' 56, educated, fun loving, good sense of humor. Interested in meeting professional gentleman under 65 from USA or Canada. Contact pearlbibi@yahoo.com.

[F04-24] ■

Looking for a soulmate?

<http://matrimonial.zoroastrianism.com/>
or
www.shaadi.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 a line from this country song that says, “You’ve got to stand for something or you’ll fall for anything.” If you think about it isn’t that really true? Your values are your “platform,” they are what guide you every day. What is your platform? What do you value? I suppose the initial answers are easy, with elements such as family and friends and components such as honesty and trust. Take a minute; think about it! Now, my question is where did you fall on that list? If I look at myself a little closer I often forget to value who I am as a person and honor what it is that makes me so uniquely me!

Okay, so I’m only 29 and it’s not that I come with infinite wisdom, but I have learned in my very young life that knowing who I am and what I believe in allows those around me to understand me and how I would like to be treated. Although I’m not sure all of us live in a perfect world, I do hope that those around you have learned to treat you with kindness, understanding and above all respect.

Help Line. Houtoxi Contractor of Pittsburgh, and Hosi Mehta of Chicago, Illinois are the chairs of the FEZANA Welfare committee and have in the recent past been overwhelmed with cases of domestic crisis in our community. Their base of compassion moved them to create a telephone line where members of our community can seek out information in relation to domestic violence counselors, shelters and safe houses. Information is also available on rape crisis centers, counselors and family therapists.

If you find yourself in a situation of crisis, they would like you to know that there is help available. This informational line is toll free and confidential. Partnerships with the victims advocacy group, local shelters and counselors will hopefully allow them to point you in the right direction to know who you are, so that you may more clearly define for those around you how you would like to be treated.

The information line number is 877-265-7273.

Remember who you are depends oh so much on what you believe!

Houtoxi Contractor (412-367-2948 or HFMC31@aol.com)

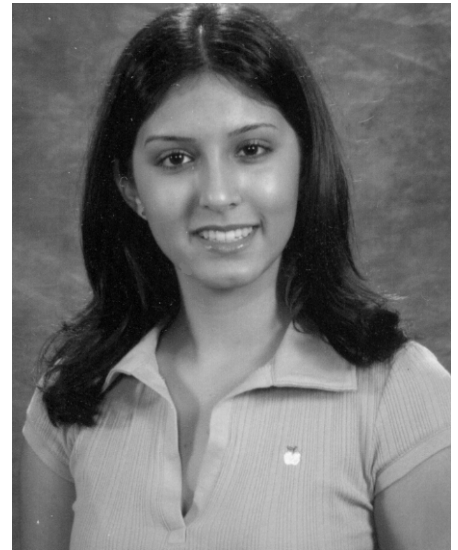
Hosi Mehta (630-833-6923 or hosi mehta@aol.com)

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.

EVENTS AND HONORS



Anahita M. Amalsad, 14, daughter of Ketayoon and Meher Amalsad was selected for membership in The National Society of High School Scholars, 2004. The Society invites only those students who have superior academic achievement and are among the top scholars in the nation. Anahita, a junior at Cornelia Connelly High School, is on the National Honor Roll, in “Who’s Who Among High School Students,” in the US President’s Education Award Program, and All American Scholars Directory. She is also a gifted flautist, artist and author, and has received awards at science and engineering fairs.

Deena Minu Patel, daughter of Drs. Mehroo and Minu Patel of Chicago, has accepted a post-doctoral research fellowship at the University of Michigan. She received a PhD in Theoretical Physics at the University of California at Santa Barbara. Deena’s research is on ‘Soft, Condensed Matter.’ Deena graduated with a BS in Physics and a BS in Mathematics, both *cum laude* with highest distinction, from the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.



Zubin Major, son of Farida and Jimmy Major of Davie, Florida, was commissioned in the navy and has started his pilot training, completing four solo hours [see photo of the family above, at the commissioning ceremony with Captain Pokorny]. When Zubin gets his wings in two years, he could possibly be the first Parsi pilot in the US navy. ■



Nikan Khatibi stands for Laguna Niguel City Council

FEZANA Journal youth editor, **Nikan Khatibi** qualified and ran for the Laguna Niguel (California) City Council as a Republican candidate along with the 2004 Presidential elections on November 2nd.

"Trusted experience, proven leadership and a dedication to improve the quality of life in Laguna Niguel," said Nikan, speaking at the Candidate Forum sponsored by the Laguna Niguel Rotary Club, "I am running for city council because I want to continue to bring a fresh vision that balances progress with fiscal responsibility." He spent many months knocking on doors and listening to the concerns of residents.

Nikan did not win this time, but we wish him many successes in the future. ■

Two youth receive Good Life awards

The *Good Life* religious emblem program, organized by ZAGNY is offered to all Zarathushti youth in North America for recognition of religious learning from a Zarathushti congregation. The program consists of a textbook-guided learning of basic tenets of the religion, and completion of a work book under the supervision of an assigned counselor. The program also encourages several community-oriented service projects to teach good citizenship. Additionally, the program is linked with the Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts of America and an emblem is presented upon successful completion of this program.

For information contact Temilyn Ghadially tghad@hotmail.com



*Good Life award recipient **Danesh Modi** [center] with, l. to r., Viraf Ghadially, Temilyn Ghadially, and his parents Phiroza and Satish Modi. The award was presented by ZAGNY coordinator Viraf Ghadially, on behalf of Danesh's mentor Diana Dadachanji of ZAPANJ.*

Danesh Modi graduated with distinction from the University of Pennsylvania, with a BA in psychology and spanish and plans to attend medical school. He is very active in ZAGNY and ZAPANJ, and served as president of the Penn Zoroastrian Society. His service projects include volunteering at Penn Hospital, Red Cross, Soup Kitchen, math tutor to inner-city students, teaching english to international students.

Monaz Kanga, 18, was an honor roll student during her entire four years at Cherry Hill High School. She participated in numerous high school organizations, activities and sports. She is currently enrolled as a freshman at Syracuse University. She has done various community service projects and assembled a booklet of papers on the Zarathushti religion written by herself and previous GLE awardees. ■



***Monaz Kanga**, daughter of Percy and Roshni Kanga of Cherry Hill, NJ, accepting the Good Life emblem at the ZAPANJ Nouruz function in August 2004.*



*This column on living a healthy and balanced Zarathushti life, is brought to you by **Mehroo M. Patel, MD, FRCS(Ed.), FAAFP**. Dr. Patel has a family practice in Chicago since 1978 and practiced as a cardiothoracic surgeon in Mumbai and UK. A fellow of the American Academy of Family Physicians, she was nominated twice as Illinois Family Physician of the Year.*

Depression: you find it only when you look for it by Dr. Murli Rao

There's a general lack of information in the community about depression, in spite of an explosion in commercials for antidepressant medications in all media. What is important is the recognition of these disorders throughout the age spectrum. Clinical depression should be differentiated from normal sadness based on the following:

- (a) Clinical depression is severe
- (b) Lasts longer than expected
- (c) Affects patients daily functioning.

It is also important to recognize that a depressed individual may present various other complaints such as: pain (headache, backache), lethargy, excessive worry/anxiety, feeling of irritability, sexual complaints (e.g. loss of libido), and frequent medical consultations.

The link between pain and depression is gaining greater recognition and understanding. Depression in children on the other hand may have a totally different presentation in terms of conduct problems, school refusal or deterioration in academic performance or substance abuse.

When you see the people you know start withdrawing, not able to function at school or work, not able to join in their social life, become increasingly irritable or isolative, not enjoy their life as they were known to do, then we really need to have the alarm bells ringing, signaling possibility of depression – whether it be at home, school or at work.

The symptoms of loss of energy, sleep, enthusiasm, appetite, loss of general sense of well being, vague aches and pains, worrisomeness, guilt, preoccupation with some negative thoughts, hopelessness and in some cases suicidal thinking, should not all be discounted as just a case of the blues or some personal weakness. There is no need to wait till they turn into more serious problems affecting health, fitness, relationships or job performance, drug and alcohol use, and at the other extreme, even loss of life to suicide.

Depression is increasingly being studied to occur as a prelude to some catastrophic cardiovascular or cerebrovascular events and even as consequence of such disorders, hindering the recovery process. So is the importance of recognizing depression early for prevention of such life threatening disasters.

Equally important is to recognize depression if coexistent with a chronic medical illness such as hypertension or diabetes, as the treatment has a direct bearing on successful management of those maladies. As Maudsley, a famous British psychiatrist once said "The sorrow which has no vent in tears may make other organs weep."

Elderly depression particularly is very important to recognize and treat as it makes a false dementia picture and makes early dementia appear worse. Unfortunately, depression in

the elderly remains underdiagnosed and undertreated. When recognized and treated it is as responsive to treatment as depression in the younger age groups.

Clearly there's a need for all responsible people in the community – parents, family members, friends, school teachers – when they see these behaviors to ask themselves the question, is this a depressive illness, is this an emotional problem, and support and encourage such individuals to seek professional help and care.

The point to remember is not to let the 'understanding' of 'reasons to be depressed' interfere with the decision to seek professional help – even in the face of a loss of a loved one (especially when grief seems prolonged), medical illness, or 'getting old.'

One may be surprised to know that clinical depression is twice more responsive to successful treatment than hypertension. This is another very good reason to seek professional help, especially with the newer group of antidepressants that are considerably safer with fewer drug interactions even when taken with most other prescribed medications, and when combined with psychotherapy.

Useful web sites with screening assessment tool and information, are: www.moodchange.info and www.dbsalliance.org. ■

Next Time in Healthy Living:
Carbohydrate Confusion

Murli Rao, MD, FAPA, is an associate professor and vice chair of the department of psychiatry and behavioral neurosciences at Loyola University and Stritch School of Medicine. He was recently honored as a distinguished fellow at the American Psychiatric Association. Dr. Rao, wife Mani and daughter Anita, are active members of ZAC, Chicago.



Fighting depression

Nowadays, with many people out of jobs because of the bad economy, depression can affect many people, young and old, and it can help if they reach out and talk to someone, and strengthen their faith in religion and prayer.

I read an article in the *San Jose Mercury News* [July 7, 2003] "Fighting Depression" by Julie Patel, that I have excerpted for your readers.

According to a new study by the National Institutes of Health, more than 32 million Americans experience depression severe enough to warrant treatment. The study also showed that more young adults, 18 to 29, have experienced depression within the past year than any other age group. Young adults are also the least likely to get help for depression.

Thomas Plante, a professor of psychology at Santa Clara University, said the pressure on young people to achieve, combined with insecurity, is a volatile combination.

"We're bombarded with these kinds of messages that suggest you can achieve anything, you can look like anything, you can be the next American idol," says psychology professor Thomas Plante. "We expect a lot in terms of 'making it' – academically, financially, appearance ... Expectations can be high when people build their lives around achieving particular, sometimes all-consuming goals."

"When they work hard and get there, they expect nirvana," he said. The problem is that many of these goals, especially material ones, turn out feeling empty once they've been achieved.

Symptoms. Ian Gottlib, professor of psychology at Stanford, describes a major depressive disorder as marked by a depressed mood or a loss of interest or pleasure in daily activities, experienced for two weeks. Additionally, several of the following symptoms must also be evident: increased or decreased appetite; sleep loss or excessive sleeping;

fatigue or loss of energy; inability to concentrate or recall; feelings of worthlessness or guilt and even suicidal thoughts.

Depression sufferers benefit greatly from getting professional help and therapy; from having support from a community that knows you and likes you; and from reaching out to help others because it typically helps them connect better with people and adds meaning to their life.

- by Maneck Bhujwala

■ MILESTONES ■

Submit "Milestones" to Mahrukh Motafrah, 2390 Chanticleer Drive, Brookfield, WI 53045. (262)821-5296, mmotafrah@msn.com.

BIRTHS

Aria Shanaiya Appoo, a girl, to Jehangir and Betty Appoo, on October 1.

Jesil, a girl, to Jamshed and Aneha Bharucha, in Houston, on October 20.

Nathan Dhunjisha, a boy, to Beth and Feroze Dhunjisha, grandson to Freya and Farrokh Dhunjisha of Wheaton, IL and Tracy and Russ Panepinto of Lockport, IL, in Newtown, PA on October 15.

Cyrus Gazder, a boy, to Prochi and Adil Gazdar, brother to Rohaan, grandson to Homai and Homi Gazder of Toronto and grandson to Perin and late Naval Sukeshwala of Mumbai, in Toronto on August 31.

Natasha Hazel, a girl, to Shanaz and Alex Hazel, granddaughter to Maruk and Farrokh Khambatta in Northern California on July 2.

Anushé Irani, a girl to Rayomand Irani and Arianne Teherani in Palo Alto, CA, on August 24. Arianne is a past chair of ZYNA.

Zachary and Sam Irani, twin boys, to Zena and Jhangir Irani, grandsons to Roshan and Jimmy Bharucha of Rosemont, PA and Arnavaz and Gustad Irani of Boca Raton, FL, in Bryn Mawr, PA, on September 22.

Keana Mahava, a girl, to Percy and Katherine Mahava, granddaughter to Mehru and Eruch Mahava of Toronto, in San Jose on June 8.



Cyrus Engineer Mooney, son of Jiji and Bert Mooney of Sherwood, OR, grandson of Dossabhoy and late Katie Engineer of Los Gatos, CA, nephew of Arnavaz Gandhi and Zarina Kaji, was initiated into the Zarathushti faith. Er. Kobad Jamshed and Er. Rohinton Bhandari performed the navjote, in Santa Clara, CA, on August 14.

Mikayla Mistry, a girl, to Zubin and Patrizia Mistry, granddaughter to Rati and Noshir Mistry in Toronto on May 28.

John Darius O'Halloran, a boy, to Rukhzen and John O'Halloran, grandson to Darius and Pervin Bhathena in Toronto, on July 29.

Brandon Patel, a boy, to Michelle and Ron Patel, grandson to Yezdi and Roshan Engineer of Houston and Cawas and Gulrukh Patel of Toronto, a brother to Shanaya, in Toronto, on November 16.

Dominic Ratan, a boy, to Oufreez and Peter Argenta, brother to Maya Freny, grandson to Jamshed R. (and late Freny J.) Udvadia of Lansing, MI and Ginger and Louis Argenta of Winston/Salem NC, in Minneapolis, MN on November 2.

NAVJOTES, SEDREH-PUSHI

Karishma Anita, daughter of Farzana and Hector Antia of Toronto on July 24

Cyra Asli, daughter of Anita and Rustom Asli of Mississauga, ON, on July 4.



Zoe Elizabeth Sheraz Ward, daughter of Delna Bhesania and Barry Ward, granddaughter of Behram and Sheraz Bhesania, had her navjote performed by Dastoor Adil Antia, at the Mount Seymore Country Club in Vancouver on April 17. Sheraz Bhesania writes about granddaughter Zoe's navjote.

It was my husband Behram's dream that our grandchildren be brought into our religion if possible, and I am proud to let the whole world know that his dream has now come true. My three son-in-laws, all non-Parsis, are the most wonderful boys. They wear the asho farohar around their neck, believe in our prayers and respect our religion. For each new Studio that my daughter Delna and her husband Barry opened [read about their growing animation company on page 109] a jashan was done. Last year at my granddaughter Zoe's school, the class studied Zoroastrianism. On Nou-ruz day, I was invited to the school; I did divo-kushti, chalk, lit some sukhad-loban, and took some sev and ravo.

From childhood, seeing Behram and me pray and do divo, loban, and seeing our jashans and celebrations, the children have learned to pray with us. So when my granddaughter Zoe asked for her navjote, my daughter Delna and her husband Barry did not hesitate for a moment.

Barry designed and painted the invitations. Delna organized all the clothes, food and flowers. It was at the Seymore Golf Club with a few close Parsi friends and Zoe's classmates, their families and teacher. The day before, Delna bought flowers from an auction, and there were 8 little girls, Zoe's classmates, stringing the flowers for the backdrop, other ladies making bouquets and garlands and torans.

On navjote day, Zoe and her friends did the chalk and we had breakfast of sev and ravo. All the Canadian ladies had bought sarees and were dressed with the help of our two dear friends Sherna and Nina. The stage was set, we even had the little basket of flowers overhead, which opened after the *tandarosti*. The whole ceremony had been printed with explanations for the guests. A few of our Parsi friends were in daglis, and others, who could not fit into theirs, in suits. Delna and Barry had ordered silver Zarathushtra coins, which we gave out as thank-you's to each family. Later on, Zoe read a thank-you speech on *Why I Want to be a Zoroastrian*, opening with "I believe in the teachings of good thoughts, good words and good deeds." The evening went off beautifully and we now have one more Zarathushti in our fold, who wears her sudreh-kushti diligently and does a divo in her new silver tray with all the trimmings given by grandpa and grandma.

I wish our elders in India would stop thinking of us as the purest race, and start accepting our children, son-in-laws and daughter-in-laws who are interested in our beautiful religion and want to be a part of our culture. This is the way to keep our wonderful religion alive and vibrant forever. I am sure it will be so, thanks to our many religious-minded people who have settled in North America and who still pray daily and follow our customs, traditions and culture so diligently.■



First navjote in Seattle.

Cyrus Commissariat, son of Khoosnam and Cawas Commissariat, brother of Ava, had his navjote performed in Seattle, WA, on August 21. This was, possibly the first navjote performed in Seattle. Ervad Rattanshaw Vakil, who was visiting from Dallas, TX, officiated. A large group of family and friends enjoyed the festivities that followed.

"We are very grateful to Er. Vakil for performing four house jashan ceremonies while he was here – for the Jamula, Ghadiali, Commissariat and Merchant families," writes Khoosnam, "It was very encouraging to participate in these Zarathushti traditions in Washington State."

Rustam Daroga, son of Rashna and Ferzad Daroga of Toronto, in Karachi, on July 31.

Ashley Divecha, daughter of Phee and Jal Divecha of Markham, ON, on August 27.

Daniel Divecha, son of Villy and Aspi Divecha in Richmond Hill, ON, on September 18.

Sherezade Javat, daughter of Teenaz and Mahveer Javat of Mississauga, ON, on July 9.

Rushad Medhora, son of Shernaz and Dosu Medhora of Mississauga, ON, on July 31.

Alina Patel, daughter of Farah and Darius Patel of Mississauga, ON, on July 16.

Delnaz Rabadi, daughter of Vera and Neville Rabadi of Kingston, ON, on August 28.

Zubin and Zenia Sethna, children of Anaheet and Farhad Sethna of Markham, ON, on July 10.

Natasha, Ninoshka and Kyra Singh, at the darbe mehr in Toronto, in August [*From ZAPANJ newsletter*].

Roxanne Trissel, daughter of Yasmen Mehta and Adam Trissel, in San Francisco Bay area. The navjote was officiated by Er. Kobad Jamshed.

WEDDINGS

Zubin Bamji, son of Thrity and Xerxes Bamji, to **Shannon**, daughter of Elizabeth Porter and David Smith, in Milton, ON, on September 24.

Shehnaz Pardiwala, daughter of Perin and Soli Pardiwala to **Joe Amato** in Toronto on August 7.

Rustom Bhathena, son of Kersi and Katy Bhathena of Chicago, to **Parivash Golwala**, daughter of Banoo and Homi Golwala of Toronto, in Chicago on September 3.

Raina Shroff, daughter of Rohinton and Farida Shroff of Naperville, IL to **Nick Blake**, in Chicago, on September 5.

Teenaz Patel, daughter of Kety and Vispi Patel, to **Vikas Kalra**, in Toronto, on July 10.

Mahyar Hansotia, son of Shiraz and Kersi Hansotia to **Nazneen Bamboat**, daughter of Yasmin and Cherag Bamboat, in Toronto, on October 10.

Daraius Mistry, son of Kavas and Kashmira Mistry, to **Christina Schoeneman**,

daughter of David and Cheryl Schoeneman, in Dallas on September 19.

Jasmine Dotiwalla, daughter of Phiroze and Dinaz Dotiwalla to **Cambeez Mulla**, son of Katy and Noshir Mulla in Toronto on August 1.

Simin Godiwalla, daughter of Soonu and (late) Jal Godiwalla of Texas, to **Rehan Engineer**, son of Rita Engineer of Boca Raton, FL, on October 16. Ervads Soli Dastur and Ratan Vakil performed the wedding ceremony.

Mahtab Challa, daughter of Soonu Challa, to **Vishal Narayan** of Northern California.

Neville Panthaky, son of Rati and Gustad Panthaki to **Karin Lienerth**, daughter of Eva and Michael Lienerth in Toronto on August 27.

Rayomand Sattha, son of Mehroo Rohinton Chothia and Maneck Sattha, to **Sandra Faria**, daughter of Osvaldo and Maria Faria, in Toronto, on October 9.

RECOVERING

Dasturji Nadirshah Unvalla, high priest of Bangalore, after suffering third degree burns in an accident at the agiary in Bangalore.

DEATHS

Perviz F. Andhjarujina, 66, wife of (late) Mobed Faramroze Jamshedji Andhjarujina, mother of Hormuzd, Havovi (Fareedoon) Minwalla of Toronto, and Darayus, grandmother of narius, Farish-tae and Nasha F. Minwalla, in Karachi, on August 24.

Dhanjishaw Billimoria, father of Khorshed Mistry, in Mumbai.

Perviz F. Dastur, 74, mother of Yasmin (Kerman) Nowsherwanji and grandchildren Huzvak, Paricheher and Parizad (all of Toronto), and Armin (Mahrukh) Dastur and granddaughter Katy of Georgia; in Nagpur, India, on September 3.

Feroze Divecha, 64, son of Mani and (late) Sohrab, brother of Pesi, Shahvir, Rohinton, Aspi, Sam, and Jaloo of Toronto, and Kersi of Karachi and late Gev and Bakhtavar; of internal head injuries from a fall; in Toronto on July 20.

Sarvar Kaboli (Morshed), mother of Khodarahm (Shirin) Bonshahi, grandmother of Siamak, Mitra, Manijeh and Niloufer, of Northbrook, IL, in Tehran.

Vera Katrak, 69, wife of Rustam Katrak of Mumbai, mother of Kamalrukh

Katrak of Chicago, Aban of Austin, TX and Cyrus of Cleveland, OH; sister of Tehmi Dara Gotla of Nagpur, India, in Mumbai on October 14.

Parviz Khodadadi, son-in-law of Mobed Khorshidian, of a brain aneurysm, on September 22 in California. Condolences to his wife and two young children.

Dr. James K. Lovelace, husband of Rubina J. Patel, father of Jamsheed; in Silver Spring, MD, at Walter Reed Army Hospital, Washington, DC, on November 8.

Najamai D. Mavalwala, mother of Avan, Jamshed, Khorshed and Kumi (in Canada), Bajun (in USA), Fraine, Farokh, Ghavare, Homai and Tehmi (in India); of Alzheimer's, in Lucknow, India, on June 27. The family owes a deep debt of gratitude to oldest sister Fraine who looked after Najamai for the past 15 years.

Rohinton J. Meherjee, husband of Khorshed, father of Khushamin (Hormuzd) Chothia and Cyrus, grandfather of Taronish, in Mumbai, on October 10.

Roda H. Mistry, 75, mother of Tehmina M. (Gerard) Alphonse of Princeton, NJ and Nauzer H. (Kathleen) Mistry of Great Falls, VA; grandmother of Lylah M. (Michael Saunders) Alphonse of Westford, MA, Navroze M. (Jessica B.) Alphonse of Montclair, NJ and Cyrus M. Alphonse of Boston, MA; great-grandmother of Dylan Mistry Alphonse; and step-great-grandmother of Savannah, Athena, and Gavin Saunders; in Hyderabad, on June 29. A service with State honors was held after which Mrs. Mistry was taken to the Towers of Silence in Hyderabad [*see obituary p. 126*].

Mobed e Mobedan Dr. 'Timsar' Jehangir Oshidari, 84, of prostrate cancer, in Tehran, on October 22. He is survived by his wife, three sons and three daughters, all of whom are married and live in Tehran [*see obituary p. 125*].

Minoo Behramshah Pardiwala, father of Khushrooh (Hutokshi) Pardiwala of Dallas, in Mumbai on August 2.

Dr. Ardeshtir Pooladi-Darvish, 72, husband of Goolcher; father of Parinaz (Ranbir) of India, Mehran (Behrokh) and Rostam (Nooshin) of Calgary, Alberta, grandfather of Arman and Arshya, in Calgary, Alberta on August 19. Dr. Ardeshtir was born in Yazd, Iran where

he trained as a pediatrician at the Tehran University medical school.

Timsar (General) Khodarahm Shahryary, husband of Irandokht, brother of Parvin, father of Farhad, Bahram and Shirin, father-in-law of Linda, Mandana and Khodi Abadian, grandfather of Mitra, Aria, Deena, Faranak, Kian, Dara, Neda and Dawna, on November 8, in Washington DC area [see obituary p. 124].

Thrity Sidhwa, mother of Khurshed Sidhwa, in Mississauga on August 22.

Tehmina Tehsildar, 87, of Pune, India, wife of (late) Jamshed Merwanji Tehsildar, mother of Tehmtan (Taruna) Tehsildar of New Jersey, Freya (Robert) Loftus of Maryland, grandmother of Simone and Zareen, of a massive brain hemorrhage, in Chevy Chase, MD, on October 25. ■

Jamshed Mirza

SCHOLAR AND GENTLEMAN

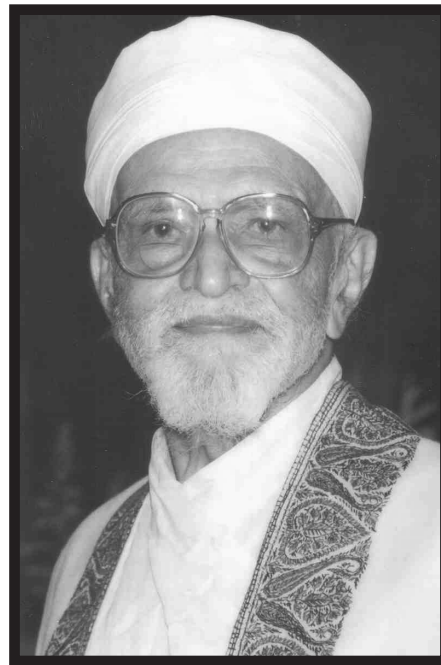
Jamshed Mirza, 52, son of Dastur Hormazdyar Mirza [see obituary this page] was a Distinguished Engineer with IBM, New York. [see FJ, Summer 2004, p. 101] He made many significant contributions to IBM and to his profession, but what set him apart from the crowd was his equilibrium in life, his generosity, his humility, his collaborative spirit and his genuine desire to help.

He was a key contributor to IBM's supercomputing program in the 1990s. He was passionately dedicated to advancing an area of computing that is helping solve important problems relative to all of us. Many of his ideas are alive in products yet to come and will continue to have an impact on the field.

He was sought after as a speaker at conferences around the world and was in great demand by important customers. Why? Because Jamshed lived by the highest standards of professional integrity. He was a scholar and a gentleman and a team player par excellence.

Dr. Tilak Agerwal
Vice President, Systems
IBM Research Center, NY

Dastur Dr. Hormazdyar Dastur Kayoji Mirza (1907 – 2004) HIGH PRIEST OF THE IRANSHAH ATASH BEHRAM



With the passing of Dastur Dr. Hormazdyar Dastur Kayoji Mirza [FJ, Summer 2004] the Zarathushti community has lost one of the most revered and respected high priests. A PhD from SOAS, London, he was ordained Vada Dasturji (high priest) of Iranshah Atash Behram by the Udvarda anjuman in 1945. He touched thousands of lives during his long service to the community both as a high priest (for 59 years) and as a scholar.

We, his family, have lost a loving and caring father and grandfather. My dad was a gentle, noble soul, who devoted his entire life to humanity and to the cause of religious education and higher learning. He was always willing to help everyone in their hour of need, and yet was shy in asking for help for himself.

He truly believed that life was a gift from Ahura Mazda and we have a duty to lead that life in service to God. We learned important values in life and the true meaning of *Humata, Hukhta, Huvareshtha*, not just by his words, but more by his actions and example. He was a man of principle, never ashamed to stand up for what he believed in, and yet was very

pragmatic. He opined and wrote on many religious and social issues. He strongly argued for his orthodox beliefs, yet never let his arguments get personal.

My father was a great believer in education. He encouraged all of us to study hard, do our very best and pursue our own interests. He himself was very knowledgeable and well read in not just our religion, but could discuss any topic intelligently. He leaves behind a wealth of knowledge in his books and writings.

Yet he was very quiet and humble. He was dignified, yet unassuming, never seeking recognition for himself or his hard work. In fact, I think he was happiest when he was working. At the age of 90+, when he started losing his sight, his biggest regret was that he could not work on his research anymore.

My dad was a loving husband, father, grandfather and indeed a guiding star in our lives, and will live in our hearts forever.

Meher Khurshed Dastur
Pittsburgh, PA

Shiraz Bagli Memorial

"Although she's gone [see FJ, Fall 2004] Shiraz Bagli's spirit continues to inspire us. Her joie de vivre, wit and fabulous laugh will resonate within these walls forever."

- Colleagues at Homemakers magazine, where Shiraz worked as an associate art director.

Shiraz was not alone in her struggle against ovarian cancer. 2,300 Canadian women face this harrowing diagnosis each year. Shiraz's family has set up the **Shiraz Bagli Memorial Fund for Basic Research in Ovarian Cancer**, Princess Margaret Hospital, 610 University Avenue, Toronto M5G 2M9, tel: 416-946-6560. For information, contact Jehan Bagli at 905-855-1132, email jbagli@rogers.com.

The passing of an Icon: General Khodarahm Shahryary

The eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, a moment inured in military history, saw the commencement of prayers for the funeral service for General Khodarahm 'Timsar' Shahryary. Earlier in the morning, the Uthamna ceremony was performed by Er. Zubin Dastoor, son of past FEZANA president, Dolly Dastoor. The funeral procession from where the prayers were concluded to the grave site, was perhaps the largest in ZAMWI history. In a remarkable show of force, police officers from the town of Vienna, Virginia, provided right of way to the General on his last earthly journey. The gravesite, witnessed a poignant farewell from our soldier-priest, Er. Brig. Behram Panthaki as one officer to another bid adieu with a sharp salute to the flag-draped coffin in true military tradition. The flag was removed, folded and handed over in a touching ceremony to his wife, the bereft Irandokht; a handful of earth from Iran fell on the now flower-bedecked coffin as it was lowered into the ground.

General Khodarahm Shahryary passed away on November 7, 2004 in Bethesda, Maryland [see page 123]

He was born on March 1, 1925 in Kerman, Iran. He graduated from the Military Academy in 1949, and attended various military schools including the War College and training sessions with US armed forces at Westpoint.

His positions in the Imperial Iranian Army included Chief of staff 1st Guard Division and Deputy Brigadier Commander of the military academy in Tehran. His last post was Commander of 23rd Division of Armed Forces in Kordestan near the Iraqi border.

For the past 15 years, in cooperation with the office of Secretariat of Reza Pahlavi, son of the late Shah of Iran, he helped innumerable Iranians fleeing persecution. He spent countless hours preparing letters and documents in support of the refugees who obtained sanctuary in foreign countries across the world.

In 1988, he was requested by the Guiv Foundation to oversee construction of the Zarathushti center



General Khodarahm Shahryary (1925 – 2004)

PHOTO: FARHAD SHARYARY,
COURTESY CREATING AWARENESS @YAHOOGROUPS.COM

and dar-e-mehr in the Washington metropolitan area; a difficult task he accepted with an open heart.

From then on, he was consumed with this goal. He was instrumental in purchasing the land and developing the construction plans for the Center.

Cashing in on his immense network, he raised a goodly sum, and received pledges of financial support. Sad indeed, that he will not physically be present to see the fruits of his labor. His spirit will bless us from on high, when the task is complete.

He escaped death during the Iranian revolution because he was loved and respected by so many. As a General in the Imperial Army, he was a prime candidate for execution. While many of his colleagues were being prosecuted by the revolutionary guards, he was rescued by his former soldiers.

Two days after the failed Nojeh Coup D'etas, he walked to the airport by himself to leave Iran, and was recognized by some of the security officers who served under him. They waved at him and wished him luck. One man hugged and kissed him goodbye and said "General, may God be with you."

General Shahryary was a gracious and generous man. His passing is a great loss for the Zarathushti and Iranian communities. May Ahura Mazda rest his soul in the abode of songs. ■

by Bahram Shahryary, Mandana Dehghanian and Behram Pastakia

Mobedan e Mobed Jahangir Oshidari (1920 – 2004)
HEAD OF IRAN'S KANKASH E MOBEDAN (COUNCIL OF MOBEDS)

Mobedan e Mobed of Iran, Dr. 'Timsar' (General) Jahangir Oshidari passed away in Tehran on 1st of Aban 1383, October 22, 2004, after a long battle with prostrate cancer [see page 123].

Jahangir Oshidari was born in Ganatestan village of Kerman in 1920 in a Zarathushti priestly family. He graduated as a veterinary surgeon from Tehran University at age 22, and immediately joined the Iranian army; later he headed the Army's veterinary division.

In 1973, Dr. Oshidari retired with distinction, having attained the rank of General, and has been living in Tehran since then.



Following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, he was ordained as mobed and served the community for over sixty years. He was a member of the executive board of the Tehran Anjuman for two terms.

An active member of Iran's Kankash e Mobedan (Council of Mobeds) since 1981, Dr. Oshidari was appointed head of the Mobed Council for the past two terms, since the demise of the previous Mobedan e Mobed, Rustom Shahzadi.

Dr. Oshidari has spoken at several Zarathushti congresses, including the ones held in Tehran in recent years, as well as at the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago in 1993, and the Interfaith congress in Thailand three years ago.

He published numerous scientific and religious articles, and frequently wrote in Hukht, Faravahar, and Amordad magazines, giving valuable insight into the history and religion of the Zarathushtis. He is the author of 15 books, including *Zoroastrians of Iran and the Pahlavi Dynasty* and *Records of Arbab Kaikhosrow Shahrokh*. He has received many awards and recognitions.

[From a posting by Dr. Mehran Sepehri on *CreatingAwareness@yahooogroups.com*].

Mobed Jahangir Oshidari at the Parliament of the World's Religions, in Chicago in 1993. His imposing personality garnered the respect of all, and lent stature to the Zarathushti delegation.

Remembering Aspi Uncle

Loved and respected by all in Houston and one that will be missed from our extended family circle this year is **Aspi Sethna** [see *Milestones in Fezana Journal, Fall 2004*]. A man of few words, Aspi had high ethical standards. Right was right and wrong was simply unacceptable. Aspi was special. He was always behind the scene to make things right. Each of us needs to simply look around the corner and remember our own Aspi. In this spirit I asked my daughter, Nerina Rustomji to share here memories of Aspi Uncle. She writes:

"When we arrived in America, it was at the Sethna residence that my brother and I learned about America; and it was from the Sethnas that we learned what it meant to live our new lives with old world values.

"The Sethnas – Nargesh Aunty, Aspi Uncle and their son Darius – have been an institution in Houston since they immigrated in 1971. They have opened their homes to countless Parsis who had chosen to immigrate to the States.

"My family was one of those lucky immigrants. I remember arriving in Houston in September 1979 at the Sethna home where we would stay for the next month. Each family member taught me something. Nargesh Aunty amazed me with her pineapple-upside down cake, which seemed to me to be the most marvelous creation. Darius introduced my brother Arish and me to the latest and coolest of music: Devo's Whip-it. But it was Aspi Uncle who became my first uncle in the new world. With his wit and piety, he was a model of honesty and purity. For me, Aspi Uncle was not just a guide and a loving uncle, but he embodied what

America seemed to mean: working hard, living honestly, and being kind. "Yet, Aspi Uncle also represented what it meant to be a Parsi Zarathushti too. When we moved into our first new home, it was Aspi Uncle who in his customary dagli performed a jashan ..."

The Zoroastrian Association of Houston was started in the Sethna

home in 1975 and remained the registered office till 1997. Monthly meetings were held there and it was the center of ZAH activities. Nargesh Sethna continues to be the first person to reach out and welcome new Zarathushtis to the community.

by Aban Rustomji on Creating Awareness@yahooogroups.com]

Roda H. Mistry (1928 – 2004)

FIRST ZARATHUSHTI ELECTED TO INDIA'S NATIONAL ASSEMBLY



Roda H. Mistry, the first Zarathushti elected to the National Assembly of India's Parliament, died June 29th, in Hyderabad, India, after a short illness [see page 122]. She was 75.

Mrs. Mistry was born October 16, 1928, in Secunderabad, India. She attended school at St. Mary's convent and, in 1945, married Homi P. Mistry.

A devout Zarathushti and a tireless champion of women's and children's welfare, Mrs. Mistry began her career with the Indian Council of Social Welfare in Andhra Pradesh in 1955. She was the organization's President Emeritus at the time of her death.

In 1959, she was allotted a Congress ticket by Jawaharlal Nehru, becoming a member of the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly. In 1980, she became the first Zarathushti to be

elected to the Rajya Sabha (National Assembly), serving there until 1986.

Her long list of accomplishments includes launching Aram Ghar, a group home for disabled people; starting a mid-day meal program for poor schoolchildren in Hyderabad; serving as Minister of Tourism in Andhra Pradesh; and serving on the Board of the World Zoroastrian Association.

She set up legal cells to rescue women and children forced into prostitution and hard labor, and initiated the Womens Employment Scheme, giving widows and other women who had been cast aside by society the opportunity to learn a trade and earn a living. She founded the Roda Mistry College of Social Work and Research Center in Hyderabad, which is now one of only a handful of doctoral research programs in the country.

In 2000, she was inducted into the Daughters of Mashyani Hall of Fame at the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress in Houston, TX.

- Lylah Mistry Alphonse

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ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT



Penaz Masani: best ghazal singer in India

The name of Penaz Masani is well established in the world of Indian music today. First noticed after she won the Sur Singar Samsad contest in 1978, Penaz took her first steps into the arena of ghazal music – the domain of veterans – in 1981. Since then she has cut over 20 discs and sung in 10 languages in cities across India, the Middle East, Latin America, the US, Australia and UK. She is the first female artiste who has held a record number of over 500 solo performances in India alone.

Penaz has shaped her repertoire to include the mod beat as well. She entered the realm of pop music with her album 'Tu Dil De De' which topped the charts on Asian TV's Channel V. MTV Channels Music for this highly successful album, which placed Penaz among the top-ranking pop artistes of today, was composed by Canada-based Rehman Rajan, and the album recorded in Toronto.

One of the first ghazal singers to be awarded a platinum disc, Penaz is recognized as the best ghazal singer in India today.

From India Journal, August 27, 2004, submitted by Maneck Bhujwala



'Alexander' not-so-great

Oliver Stone's movie, *Alexander* depicts historical revisions that leave the blood of Zarathushtis boiling.

The protests among Zarathushti circles started long before Oliver Stone's "*Alexander*" opened, on November 24th. While some, like Sharookh Daroowala thought it to be a storm in a teacup, there was, nevertheless, a flurry of letters in the Zarathushti press and newsgroups denouncing the film promo that aired on national TV, showing a farohar in the background.

"Showing Alexander's name on the farohar symbol is insulting to the Zarathushti community," said Sam Billimoria of California, "It is like showing a picture of Atilla the Hun or Genghis Khan, with the holy cross as the backdrop."

"Our religious symbol must in no way, be associated with a barbarian, an illiterate and a cruel man," wrote Pervaze Rabadi.

Maneck Bhujwala (and others) wrote to Warner Brothers, explaining that "the farohar symbol is used to represent the divine spark of God," and that Alexander, "who destroyed our scriptures, killed our priests and plundered Persepolis," should not be associated with our sacred symbol.

Finally, it was after a personal phone call from 'Apro' Zubin Mehta to

Oliver Stone, that the offending symbol was promptly removed from subsequent airings of the promo.

As feared, and expected, the movie left a lot of Zarathushtis very upset.

"It was all about how great and courageous Alexander was, in contrast to the dumb, cruel Persian king, Darius," fumed Bahareh on the internet, "They try to show how Alexander saved western civilization from the nasty, barbaric Persians."

A review by Trita Parsi, a PhD candidate at Johns Hopkins University SAIS [at www.iranian.com/Parsi/2004/November] was scathing.

"My purpose for reviewing *Alexander* was to point out the film's historical inaccuracies. While these errors were abundant, never did I expect to leave the cinema feeling sorry for the director. Fortunately for Stone, every aspect of this movie is so miserably lousy that one can't but forgive him for his historical slip-ups.

"I will leave the film-reviewing to the film-reviewers. Instead, I will discuss the historical revisions that leave the blood of Iranians boiling.

"In proud Hollywood tradition, Stone uses blond Scandinavians to

While top billing is given to the Greeks: Alexander (Collin Farrell), his mother Olympias (Angelina Jolie), his father Philip (Val Kilmer), his Bactrian wife Roxane (Rosario Dawson), his commander Hephaiston (Jared Leto), and trusted general Ptolemy (Anthony Hopkins), there is ne'er a mention of any Persian, not even King Darius.

depict heroic ancient Greeks, while the darker, modern-day Greeks are left to portray slaves and extras.

"Early in the movie, we see Aristotle teaching Alexander and his peers about the "racial superiority" of the Macedonians and the inferiority of the Persians, despised by the Greeks as unsophisticated brutes

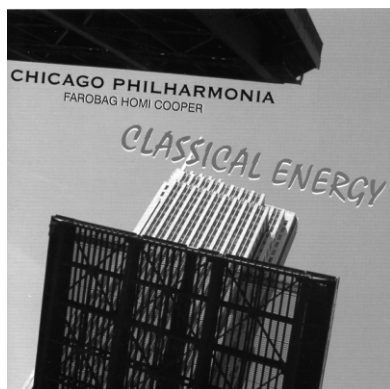
"The problem is, however, that the ancient Greeks weren't racist. Their obsession with the East was driven by their fascination for Eastern civilization, philosophy and science. The Greeks learned from the Egyptians, admired the Babylonians and studied Zoroaster.

But as early European racism was beginning to unfold in the 18th century, the need to posit Europe and the "white race" as origins of human civilization gave way to a tradition of historical revisionism blindly followed by Stone.

"Throughout the movie Stone portrays Persians not from the eyes of the ancient Greeks, but from the perspective of 18th century Europeans. Persian warriors are swarmed with flies as they await battles, they are oppressed, inferior, and secretly yearning to be liberated by the personification of Western superiority, Alexander.

"Stone's deliberate description of Alexander as a liberator of the East who brings Western values of freedom and liberty to the oppressed masses of the Orient, may either be an attempt at political correctness reflective of our neo-colonial times, or an innocent revelation of Stone's ignorance. Either way, it makes an already lousy movie even worse."

- by Roshan Rivetna



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Review by Sorab Modi

The irrepressible Sir Thomas Beecham had compilation discs in the early days which were marketed as “Lollipops.” This CD featuring the playing of the Chicago Philharmonia (CP) now in its twentieth season, under its Karachi-born founding-conductor, Farobag Homi Cooper, is a really mixed bag of musical tidbits. The music ranges from Saint-Saens’ *Bacchanale* from his opera *Samson et Delilah* (1877) to the *Te Deum* (1858) of Bizet. In between, we have works by Mozart, Tchaikovsky, Sibelius, and the CP’s composer-in-residence, Helmuth Fuchs. All this musical cornucopia is under the high-sounding title, *Classical Energy*, on the Triton label.

I always regard this type of title packaging with a great deal of suspicion. Admittedly, the CP has its marketing eye on reaching a segment of the CD-buying public who may just be at the beginning of their purchas-

ing spree. The choice of the *Bacchanale*, to begin the disc and the *Te Deum* extract to end it, juxtaposes the “profane and the pious.”

Lets begin with the work by Helmuth Fuchs – *Chicago Fantasie Overture*. The work demands a strong brass section. Listen to the burnished sounds of the horns and tuba – and if you detect nods to Shostakovich, Mahler and Richard Strauss, and perhaps a bit of the Czech element – you know just how the past is often absorbed, subconsciously, into a new present by every generation of composer. This is the reviewer’s first brush with the music of Fuchs and it is obvious that he has a great affinity for orchestral timbres. The CP and Cooper give a vivid and bright performance, revealing the full colors of the music.

The Saint-Saens is invested with a good measure of oriental warmth and does evoke a clutch of gyrating belly

dancers in diaphanous harem clothes. The coda is a bit rushed. Energy? I doubt !

The two excerpts from *Karelia Suite* (1893) are early Sibelius. The *Intermezzo*, written for a standard full orchestra including third trumpet and tuba, is a gem and comes in for an exhilarating reading. The other excerpt, *Alla Marcia*, is less successful. It has little energy and is marred by scraggy string playing.

Mozart is represented by the Finale of the *Jupiter* and the Overture to the *Marriage of Figaro*. For the Orchestra to choose just the Finale in a recording venture is risky. The rather boxy sound, particularly in the lower voices mars the clarity of the musical line. The Overture, however, receives a robust and well-balanced reading, perhaps the best cut.

Completing the CD are two excerpts from *Carmen* that are played with great swagger, while the *Polonaise* from Tchaikovsky’s *Eugene Onegin* has enough drive.

Sorab Modi, of Washington, DC, contributing writer to *Opera News*, *Strad*, and the *New Grove Dictionary of American Music*, has lectured on musical motifs at major institutions, including the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington Opera, Catholic University of America, and the Italian Cultural Institute.

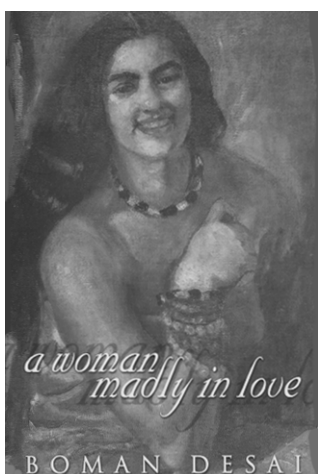


Violinist **Farhad Billimoria** performs with the Mitteldeutschen Kammerphilharmonie (Middle German Chamber Philharmonic) in Schoenbecker, Germany. The photo is from the Schoenbecker General Anzeiger newspaper of November 2003. The article reads: “Thunderous applause for solo by the concertmaster. Farhad Billimoria brilliant at the concert. Soloist of the evening, Farhad Billimoria took the public under his spell. The audience thanked the Indian-born artist with long applause ...”



Cassette of monajats. Mehernosh Kapadia of Pune, India writes: "We have a choir, mostly children that sings monajats like *Khodavand Khavind* and *Bandagi Shambal*. We would like to record this unique aspect of our cultural heritage on cassette. We have collected Rs. 10,000 (approx. \$220) of the total cost of Rs. 1,00,000 (approx. \$2200) for recording these cassettes. If anyone in FEZANA finds our cause of preserving our Parsi-Zarathushti culture and heritage through music and these beautiful monajats worthy of promoting, please consider helping us." Contact Mehernosh at m.kapadia@tacogroup.com.

BOOKS AND SUCH



a woman madly in love

by **Boman Desai**

Roli Books. ISBN 81-7436-307-6, 419 pp, \$20.
Available from Amazon.com.

Other books by Boman Desai include: "The Memory of Elephants," "Asylum, USA," and his latest – "Trio" (Book One) a panoramic novel about the Schumanns and Brahms.

Review by Bapsi Sidhwa

Boman Desai is one of our most adept and prolific novelists. I doubt he'll ever suffer from that dreaded thing called writer's block. Confront him with a blank page – or a blank monitor – and he will turn it into a whopping 400 page novel. With *A Woman Madly In Love*, Boman Desai has achieved a remarkable feat; he has written an erudite and literary novel which is also a pot-boiler. In an interview Desai said: 'The seed for the novel was sown way back in 1967 when a 17 year old boy in my high school started dating an attractive teacher in her early 30s.' Unloved by her parents and beset by treachery, Farida Cooper, the poor-little-rich girl, evolves into a head-turning, globe-trotting nymphet and fledgling novelist. Much is made of the Cooper family's wealth and renown. In Chicago she becomes the young wife of an academic who is obsessed with Joyce. But it turns out

he has a kinky bond with his ex-wife. Heartbroken and feeling betrayed, Farida returns to Bombay - to fall madly in love with young art student Darius Katrak. Courted by the socially ambitious Katrak family to begin with, she is reviled by them when their affair is discovered. After a tragic accident for which she blames herself, Farida is racked by guilt and self-doubt, and decides to end her relationship with Darius. She secludes herself and is counseled by the one person who has loved and nurtured her; her wise aunt, Kaki. Cheated out of her inheritance by her mother Farida returns to Chicago. She finally finds comfort and love with gentle old Percy Faber, who happens to have a Parsi father.

Although Farida's romances are central to the story there are other narrative strands in this lush, multi faceted novel. Boman Desai is well-versed in the arts and formidably well read. As

a writer I found myself cheering for Farida as she wages war on the deconstructionists who favor sterile theories of literature over literature and strip fine writing of its magic and beauty.

Farida is a feisty, courageous and engaging character and each time she emerges, like a phoenix from the ashes, she has something to teach us.

Distinguished international writer **Bapsi Sidhwa** has published four novels: *An American Brat*, *Cracking India* (made into the film *Earth*), *The Bride and The Crow Eaters*, and has been translated into several European and Asian languages.

New Books

The following new books are available from Parsiana Bookshop tel: 91 22 2207 4335, parsiana@vsnl.net:

● *For the Love of India, the Life and Times of Jamsetji Tata* by R. M. Lala, hardcover, illustrated, Rs. 395/-.

● *The Creation of Wealth. The Tatas from the 19th to the 21st Century* by R. M. Lala. Revised ed. Rs. 450/-

● *The Parsis and Indian Classical Music. An Unsung Contribution* by Dr. Aban E. Mistry. 140 pp, hard-bound, illustrated, Rs. 300. Rare and factual details of the legacy bequeathed by Parsis to Indian music – classical, vocal, instrumental, dance, film, drama and records.

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"Sooni's book is an intimate epic. A monumental book, magnificent in its sweep yet always retaining its love for the particular. This is a remarkable marriage of heart and mind—a book of photographs that tells many good stories alongside." —**MIRA NAIR**

"As a writer, I am grateful to Sooni Taraporevala for launching us on this photographic journey of contemporary Parsi life, and for providing a book I can wholeheartedly recommend to those who want to know more about my community. Her book has a place of pride in my home." —**BAPSI SIDHWA**

"Sooni Taraporevala's stunning achievement lies in providing Parsis with a vibrant visual identity that has often been overlooked in celebrations of contemporary Indian cultures and communities. Taraporevala has mastered the art of capturing, with an unerring eye, what is both personal and communitarian in the Parsi world. As a Parsi, these remarkable photographs bring to life the vivid pageant of living amongst my people." —**HOMI K. BHABHA**

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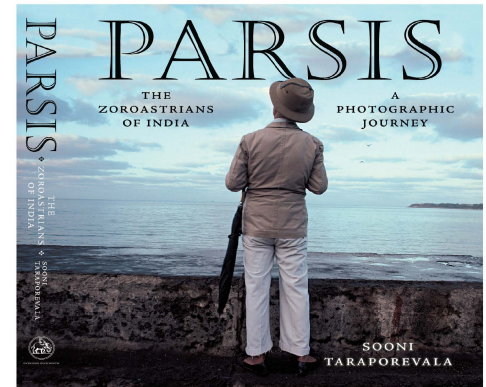
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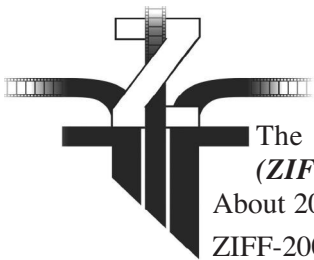
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ZIFF Film Festival

The *Third Zarathushti and Iranian Culture Film Festival* (ZIFF), was held in Vancouver, November 13 – 14, 2004. About 200 people watched the 19 short and long films presented. ZIFF-2004 Crystal Cedar Trophies were presented to:

- ❖ **Behzad Khodavaishi** for “*Tower of Silence*.”
Following his return to his homeland after 20 years, a Zarathushti boy is determined to take his father’s body to the old Zarathushti graveyard, but now it is forbidden to bury the corpse there.
- ❖ **MJ Bagheri Nia** for “*Hiromba*.”
On a trip to Yazd, a girl faces the significance of her roots, heritage and struggles for the changes.
- ❖ **Khosrov Sinaee** for “*A Short Story of Milleniums*.”
Khosrov Sinaee, a prominent director in Iran, shows the effect of our beliefs on the creation of artistic works.
- ❖ **Mehrdad Oskooeyee** for “*My Mother’s Home, Lagoon*.”
An old fisher-woman who is taking care of her mother, struggles for her daily life near a lagoon in Northern Iran.
- ❖ **Aryana Farshad** for “*Mystic Iran*.”
A modern woman’s life-changing journey deep into the heart of her native Iran, in search of spiritual rites and rituals, hidden for centuries.

Appreciation tablets were presented to: **Babak Hojati** for “*Anahita Temple*,” **Shahrzad Rastani** for “*Nozoodi*,” and **Khosrov Haidary** for “*Hoom*”

The ZIFF-2002 trophy winners were: **Cyrus Bharucha**, **Tenaz Dubash**, **Pedram Akbari** and **Shahriar Shahriari/Shervin Shahriari**.

by Fereidoon Demehri, ZIFF, fdemehri@hotmail.com, Vancouver, BC

“Zoroastrianism: Ancient Religion, Modern Decisions”

This hour-long documentary will re-introduce our ancient heritage and our current community to the world. WGBH, Boston’s PBS station (with 120 million national viewers), has expressed possible interest in broadcasting this film.

Trying to capitalize on this wonderful opportunity, producer/director **Tenaz H. Dubash** is seeking corporate and individual sponsors to help raise \$35,000. If accepted, WGBH will match this amount.

Benefactor:	\$5,000
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The trailer will be screened at a fundraiser in NYC on February 5th. The project is fiscally sponsored by ZAGBA, so contributions are tax-deductible. Contact Tenaz at 212-486-8959, tdubash@aol.com, www.tdfilms.info. ■

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Stories for Zoroastrian Youth



Stories for Zoroastrian Youth

By Diana Dadachanji for ZAMWI.

Dedicated to the memory of Darius Dadachanji. 1998, 12 pp. \$2

A Compilation of Good Life Emblem Essays

By Monaz Kanga

Dedicated to Villy H. Gandhi. Essays by Natasha Singh, Roshni Cooper, Monaz Kanga, Zal Chapgar, Ninoshka Singh. 36 pp, \$5.

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