



FEZANA JOURNAL

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Death and Beyond: Doctrine and Practice

Also Inside:

Doctrine of Afterlife

**Guide to Prayers and
Ceremonies**

Modes of Disposal



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ON THE COVER

*Detail from a 'lhai' sari, worn by Parsi
women in mourning. PHOTO: CYRUS
RIVETNA [see page 103]. Inset: Doonger-
wadi, Mumbai. PHOTO: SOONI TARA-
POREVALA [see page 98].*

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Death and the hereafter

In the Zarathushti religion death, the negation of life, is deemed to be the work of Ahriman, whose inherent nature is to destroy the good creations of Ahura Mazda. The fundamental strength of the Zarathushti doctrine lies in the fact that any activity perpetrated to generate chaos, disease, misery, destruction, suffering and ultimate death is not ordained by Ahura Mazda but by the hostile spirit, Ahriman. It follows that Ahura Mazda – who is the source of life, cannot be the destroyer of life as well.

Divine justice. The Gathas clearly state that man is given the assurance that divine justice will prevail for all in the spiritual world and no interceding agency can forgive the soul for its indiscretions. The implication is that if Ahura Mazda forgave all souls the abyss of hell would be quite redundant. The good or bad choices that an individual makes throughout his or her physical existence are taken into consideration in order to determine the fate of the soul after the individual's physical death. There is no pre-destined fate or forgiveness for misdeeds.

Reincarnation. Contrary to popular belief, there is no textual evidence supporting the theory of Reincarnation. The inequalities within the physical world are not deemed to be ordained by Ahura Mazda, rather the works of Ahriman (Evil Spirit/Mentality) perpetrating an imbalance in a *khordad* (perfect) world. Furthermore, if the soul was to reincarnate into another body it could not remain in the spiritual world as well. Since we direct our muktad and fravardegan prayers to the departed souls, they cannot possibly be in another physical body as well.

The afterlife. The Younger Avesta gives an account of the transition from this world to the next world,

and a place between heaven and hell where the souls with equal record of good and evil reside. It explains the rationale for the ceremonies performed on the occasion of an individual's death. The soul does not leave the body till after three days and nights. The prayers are essentially for the smooth transition of the soul to the next world.

Ceremonies for the departed. Today, Zarathushtis in the diaspora are looking to make adjustments to the age old established rituals and mode of disposal of the body with the intent to preserve as much of the tradition as possible.

As explained in the Guide to Funeral Ceremonies and Prayers [page 53] by Dr. Kersey Antia, as soon as death occurs, the family of the deceased is advised to light a *divo* and recite some basic prayers in the vicinity of the body. The mobeds also start reciting prayers and continue for four days, performing the *Gehsarna*, *Sarosh-nu-Patoo*, *Uthamna* and *Chahrum* ceremonies.

Historically, the mode of disposal of the physical body has been in the dokhma, but migration of Zarathushtis to other parts of the world away from Iran and India has necessitated the use of alternative methods like cremation or burial [pages 78 ff.].

The departed souls are remembered on several other specified days, such as the *Dasmu* (10th day), *Siroza* (30th day), *Masiso* (on the roz of death 30 days later), on the monthly roz anniversaries for the rest of the year, *Siroza* (the day before the first year anniversary), and Varsi (one year anniversary).

It is also essential to perform prayers for the departed souls during the Fravardegan (Muktad) ceremony of ten days when prayers are said for all departed souls.



Towards Frashokereti. The individual's soul reaches perfection, *haurvatat*, and eventually immortality, *Ameretat*, through positive acts of love and devotion. Zarathushti eschatology [pp. 32 ff.] supports the notion of the soul being everlasting. The body is annihilated, but the soul survives.

The goal of mankind is to achieve the final renovation of the world, *Frashokereti*, when good will completely triumph over evil.

It is believed that a messiah known as Saoshyant will be sent by Ahura Mazda several years prior to the end of time and render Ahriman ineffective. It is at this time that the Last Judgment and Resurrection will take place when all souls will reunite with those that were departed, in a perfect state in both the physical and spiritual worlds. ■

Khorshed Jungalwala
Chair, FEZANA Publications



*Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.*

From "Psalm of Life"
by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

An awesome responsibility

Life and afterlife. Last month I lost a very dear school friend. “Went to bed at night hale and hearty” they said, but she was never to wake up again – just slipped away into the eternal world beyond, leaving loved ones numb with pain and utter disbelief.

Life is so fleeting!

At such times where does one turn? How does one find solace in the midst of intense grief? Where is the healing balm?

Religious faith and belief in the doctrine of life and afterlife, where death is nothing more than a transition to “an eternal life higher and nobler than our thoughts can measure or our minds conceive,” as beautifully expounded in our theology, may perhaps bring some measure of comfort.

In this issue of FEZANA Journal we explore [pages 32 ff.] the Zarathushtri doctrine of life and beyond – the ascent of the soul, and everlasting life in *garothman behesht* when all souls will eventually be resurrected and become one with Ahura Mazda as *frashokereti* is achieved.

We get insights from learned scholars and respected priests Kersey Antia, Jehan Bagli, Jal Birdy, Pallan Ichaporlia, Daryoush Jahanian, Mehrborzin Soroushian, and gleanings from the writings of Jivanji Modi, Maneckji Dhalla, N. D. Minochehr-Homji and Ardeshir Azargoshab (presented by Keikhosrow Mobed) and others.

Prayers and ceremonies. Our religion is rich in customs and traditions honed over the centuries. An extensive repertoire of prayers and ceremonies is available to the faithful – for the onward progress of the departed soul, as well as to bring comfort and solace to the living.

However, as Dastur Minochehr-Homji used to say: “Prayers and ceremonies are like the river that flows; those who receive the benefit are the ones that draw from it, each to his liking and desire.”

So, for those who wish to draw, in this issue we present a Guide to Funeral Customs and Ceremonies [pages 53 ff.] along with a Guide to Suggested Prayers [pages 74 ff.] painstakingly researched and recorded by Dr. Kersey Antia.

Purpose of life. As always, earned and reflected a great deal in the making of this issue. I cease to be amazed at the wisdom of our ancient texts and its relevance even today.

We are here on earth for one fleeting moment in the continuum of time. It is for us to use it well, with acts of goodness and service, integrity and compassion, to be a helper (not a hinderer) and to actively fight evil. For it is our actions on earth, that will ensure us that state of bliss in the world beyond.

In fact, in the grand vision, man is the central hero, entrusted with the responsibility, during his short sojourn on earth, to move *all* of Creation forward toward frashokereti.

What an awesome responsibility; and one that gives such a grand meaning and purpose to life!

HAPPY READING!

Roshan Rivetna

Editor-in-Chief



*Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal;
"Dust thou art,
to dust returnest,"
Was not spoken of the soul.*

- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Thank you!
Thank you!

As I wrap up this, my last issue of the Journal as editor-in-chief, I feel truly blessed to have had the opportunity to serve the Journal since 1991. I cannot thank enough all the good folks that have made this such a joyful and fulfilling ride and who have shaped the Journal over the years.

Working with the gracious ***Khorshed Jungalwala*** as chair of FEZANA Publications since 1998, has been most pleasurable – she granted me the freedom to create when the sailing was smooth, yet was always there to take over and calm the waters when any problematic situation arose. The recognition of the Journal as an unbiased publication, presenting all perspectives with integrity and fairness, is largely due to Khorshed's innate good sense.

I must also thank former Publications chair **Dr. Rustom Kevala** (1991 - 1998) for his guidance in the formative years; and FEZANA presidents **Firdosh Mehta, Framroze Patel, Dr. Dolly Dastoor** and founding president **Rohinton Rivetna**, for each giving their inspiration and gentle direction, as the voice of FEZANA. I would also like to recognize **Dr. Jehan Bagli** for laying the groundwork and serving as the editor of the Journal for the first three years after the founding of FEZANA in June 1987.

For the technical quality and content, I am grateful to ***Khorshed Jungalwala*** and editors ***Farobag Cooper***, ***Dolly Malva*** and ***Jamshed Udvadia***, and formerly ***Adel Engineer***, for ensuring that the Journal lived up to the highest journalistic standards and to FEZANA Journal policy.

Nikan Khatibi editor of *Youthfully Speaking* (since 2000), and before him **Aaron Rustom** (1998 - 1999) and **Jim Engineer** (1992 - 1998) have brought a refreshing youth perspective to the Journal.

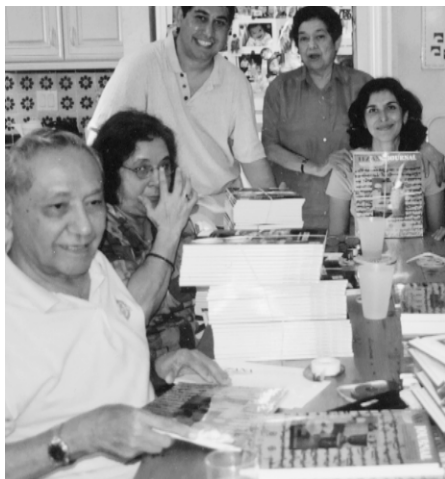
I am grateful to all the regular contributors: **Farishteh Khatibi** (Farsi Pages), **Jamshed Udvadia** (Laugh and Be Merry), **Shazneen Rabadi Gandhi** (Sunday Stories), **Dr. Jerry Kheradi** (Financial Corner), **Dr. Mehroo Patel** (Healthy Living), **Hosi Mehta**, **Houtoxi Contractor** and **Freyaz Shroff** (Critically Speaking), **Mahrukh Motafram** (Milestones) for covering their sections with care and diligence; and especially to **Dinaz Kutar Rogers** (Lest We Forget and My Mother Used to Say) for her contribution in recording stories and memories from our collective past.

Over the years, we have been fortunate to have **guest editors** – the finest in their area of expertise, to cover the central theme. To each of them I am deeply grateful.

The icing on the cake – the glossy cover page, has been created by **Zenobia Damania** since we started color covers, in 1999.

Business and financials. Of course I cannot thank enough the folks that handle the business and financial end: our super-efficient subscription managers **Kershaw Khumbatta** and **Arnavaz Sethna**; our hard-working FEZANA treasurer **Rashid Mehin**; and the man who brings in the dough – advertising manager **Rusi Gandhi**; not to forget all our advertisers, notably **Farrokh Patel** who has purchased the back cover for his Pegasus Products-the Cover Company for so many years, with hardly a hope of ever getting any business from our reader base.

Mailing Day at the Rivetna's when Chicago area volunteers [named on page 1] gather every quarter to sort, stamp, paste, bundle, insert, package and bag all the Journals, and load up two wagons with mailbags for the Post Office.





*Editors,
from left,
Farobag
Cooper,
Dolly
Malva
and
Jamshed
Udvadia*

For providing the online ordering facility at www.fezana.org, I am grateful to website developer **Zubin Medora** and website manager **Dr. Farrokh Mistree**.

A big thank-you also to Gayle and Rob at **Whitehall Printing Company** (Naples, Florida, tel: 1-800-321-9290) who by now, I'm sure, know more about our religion, history, culture and community issues, than the average Zarathushti.

The most enjoyable part of the Journal cycle is **Mailing Day** [photos page 5] when **family** (especially **Dara, Dinsoo, Darius, Zenobia, Cyrus** and **Ness**) and many dear **friends** [some listed on page 1] come over for a day of sorting, labeling, bundling and filling the mailbags; I thank them all for taking time out of their busy lives, to help. Of course, none of this could have been possible without the constant help, support and endurance of my husband, **Rohinton**, who has been a pillar of rock through it all. Above all, I thank the Journal **readership** for their appreciation, which has made this job so worthwhile and fulfilling.

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

Roshan Rivetna

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Several good-hearted individuals overseas distribute the Journal to subscribers in their countries, often charging nothing at all, or at most local postage. Their help in keeping international mailing costs down is most deeply appreciated:

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*To each of the above who have
given so selflessly to FEZANA
Journal, THANK YOU!*

Welcome to Dr. Dolly Dastoor

There could be few persons better equipped to be editor-in-chief of FEZANA Journal than the dynamic and hard-working Dr. Dolly Dastoor, current president of the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec.

Having served in various positions in FEZANA since its inception – as its first secretary, and then president (1994 - 1998) responsible for producing the first Strategic Plan for the North American community, chair of FEZANA's Academic Scholarship Program and co-chair of the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress in Houston in 2000 – Dolly has a good feel of the pulse of FEZANA and the community and is amply qualified to serve at the helm of its publication.

Dolly served as associate editor of *Gavashni*, the precursor of FEZANA Journal edited by Dr. Jehan Bagli, has been a regular contributor to the Journal, and served as guest editor for several editions including the special millennium commemorative issue in Winter 2000. She has attended and presented significant papers at most North American and World Zoroas-



trian Congresses and the Parliament of World Religions. As a journalist, she writes with facility, and more important, Dolly has the drive and commitment to garner the necessary resources to get the job done, as she did when putting together the team to provide technical help with the design and production of the Journal.

Dolly is married to Dr. Phiroz Dastoor, and has three children: Dr. Farahad (Jean MacRae) Dastoor in Maine, Er. Zubin (Jasmine Cooper) Dastoor in Singapore, and Dr. Natasha (Adel) Irani in Houston; and four grandchildren.

Professionally, Dolly is a geriatric neuropsychologist, the Clinical-administrative Chief for the Program in Dementia with Psychiatric Co-morbidity; and assistant professor in psychiatry at McGill University.

About to retire shortly, Dolly will hopefully devote the newly freed-up time in her life towards taking the Journal to even greater heights.

- Khorshed Jungalwala and Roshan Rivetna

FEZANA Journal – a new chapter

A salute to Roshan Rivetna who is retiring after nurturing the Journal for 15 years; and a welcome to the dynamic new team with Dr. Dolly Dastoor as editor-in-chief to join the FEZANA Publications Committee.

by Khorshed Jungalwala
Chair, Publications Committee

ROSHAN RIVETNA RETIRES

FEZANA's supreme journalist – **Roshan R. Rivetna**, editor-in-chief of FEZANA Journal, who has spearheaded the task of providing the community with the highest quality and well-researched articles on Zarathushti religion and history, and raised the awareness of the community towards issues of the day – will be retiring after this Winter 2005 issue.

Since their arrival to the USA in 1966, Roshan and her husband Rohinton, a highly committed outstanding Zarathushti couple have given, not just the North American but the world Zarathushti community, their time and energies to bring the community together and connected, in harmony. **WE SALUTE YOU BOTH!**

The Journal. In the early years of FEZANA the Journal was published by Dr. Jehan Bagli from 1988 to 1990; prior to that Dr. Bagli edited a small magazine called *Gavashni*. In 1991 Roshan was appointed editor/publisher of the Journal with Dr. Rustom Kevala as Publications Committee chair, and in 1996 editor-in-chief by then president Dolly Dastoor. In 1998, then president Framroze Patel appointed Khorshed Jungalwala as Publications chair.

Over the years, largely under Roshan's stewardship, the Journal has grown from a fledgling newsletter into a world class publication. What makes the Journal unique is that each edition has a specific central theme, generally covered by a guest editor, who is a specialist on the topic. Well researched articles along with topical community news and views make the Journal a

vehicle for educating, informing and inspiring the community, and a valuable addition to any library.

Roshan's commitment to the integrity and technical excellence of the Journal is unmatched. Her all-encompassing approach covers conceptualizing and gathering materials, design and layout, technical formatting, production, mailing, distribution to all parts of the world, and much, much more. She also does a lot of the photographic material herself.

The whole series of the Journal from 1991 to 2005 may be ordered (for \$225 plus shipping) as an archival set for reference material.

Roshan is a lady of tremendous vision and hopes future issues of the Journal will continue to provide a forum for networking between the people in the diaspora and the homelands in a positive way, promoting and perpetuating the richness of our culture, traditions, customs, dogma, and theology.

Legacy of Zarathushtra. Roshan's other supreme achievements are the invaluable book *Legacy of Zarathushtra* and the flyer *Zoroastrians (Zarathushtis), followers of an Ancient Faith in a Modern World* [see page 160] both of which have had multiple reprints, and are continually in demand for showcasing the religion and community.

The toil, the creative energy, and work that Roshan has so outstandingly put forth in her work is nothing short of phenomenal. It is a beacon for the young and not so young to try to emulate. The North American and world Zarathushti community now wishes to salute Roshan R. Rivetna and thank her for her years of volunteer service as a most outstanding Zarathushti of our time!

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

We also wish to gratefully recognize members of our Publications Committee who have been extremely active, each within their own specialty to make the Journal and the website such a success:

President **Firdosh Mehta**, editors **Jamshed Udvadia**, **Dolly Malva** and **Farobag Cooper**, and those in charge of the various sections: **Mahrugh Motafram** (Milestones), **Fereshteh Khatibi** (Farsi), **Nikan Khatibi** and **Ushtavaity Davar** (Youthfully Speaking), **Jerry Kheradi** and **Rashid Mehin** (Financial), **Rohinton Rivetna** (WZCC), **Houtoxi Contractor**, **Hosi Mehta** and **Freyaz Shroff** (Critically Speaking), **Dinaz Kutar Rogers** (Lest we Forget), **Jamshed Udvadia** (Laugh and Be Merry), **Dr. Mehroo Patel** (Healthy Living), **Shazneen Rabadi Gandhi** (Sunday Stories) and **Zenobia Damania** for the front cover.

The business end is most ably and efficiently managed by **Kershaw Khumbatta**, **Arnavaz Sethna** and **Rusi Gandhi**. The many dedicated volunteers who have helped the Rivetna family in *mailing and distribution* of the Journal are listed on the masthead page [photos on page 5].

Website. The other media vehicle of FEZANA is its website, which is also under the jurisdiction of the Publications Committee. It was started by **Dr. Rustom Kevala** and volunteers, notably **Rita Kapadia**.

Currently, **Prof. Farrokh P. Mistree** is the website manager and **Zubin Medora** the website developer. We are deeply grateful for their help in spite of their busy schedules. We hope to shortly put the whole set of Journals on the website, along with a search facility.

INCOMING TEAM

With Roshan retiring, we now have a new team of enthusiastic individuals who have taken on the challenge for the continued success of the Journal.

With Roshan retiring, we now have a new team of enthusiastic individuals who have taken on the challenge for the continued success of the Journal.



Lylah Alphonse, an editor at the Boston Globe in Boston, MA, freelance writer, and author of *Triumph Over Discrimination: The Life Story of Farhang Mehr* will join the team as consultant editor.

A black and white portrait of a woman with dark, curly hair and glasses, smiling. She is wearing a light-colored top.

Marzi Byramjee, owner of *Regal Press Canada*.

FEZANA is truly blessed to get the willing services of all these good people, each one a professional in their area of expertise. We feel confident they will raise the bar set by Roshan even higher for FEZANA's flagship publication. ■

FEZANA JOURNAL – WINTER 2005



President's Message

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

A Report on the State of the proposed One World Body: IZO-WZOF-WZOI

awaiting the outcome of the Indian Federation (FPZAI) meeting in India in September 2005 to see if there was any paradigm shift in their "status quo" stand: i.e. all members at all levels of all organizations anticipated to be part of the proposed One World Body should be Parsi/Irani Zoroastrians.

The revised draft constitutions, along with explanations of the numerous safeguards introduced, were also presented by Rohinton Rivetna at the FPZAI meet in Mumbai [see report in FJ, Fall 2005].

“ The “status quo” stand: all members at all levels of all organizations anticipated to be part of the proposed One World Body should be Parsi/Irani Zoroastrians. ”

Unfortunately the same position, even more strongly, was expressed at the September meet, i.e. *if there is no Parsi/Zoroastrian definition meeting the FPZAI criteria, at all levels, FPZAI would not join with the proposed world body.*

This stance from an overwhelming number of FPZAI member associations did not appear to be changing and to some extent was even more entrenched, at and after the September meet.

Since then, we have also been informed that due to the sad demise of

Mrs. Silloo Kavarana, a highly respected and long standing BPP trustee, the focus of the FPZAI/BPP leadership is shifted towards the elections of a new trustee. Besides that there are other local issues that require their attention on the home front. As a result, the proposed One World Body will have to take a back seat.

Position of FEZANA. At this point in time FEZANA leadership has taken a position that without FPZAI there would not be much to be gained by establishing the proposed One World Body. ZTFE has informed us that they are of a similar opinion.

So, if we do not hear a favorable change in the position of the majority of FPZAI member associations, then essentially this activity will be on hold, in abeyance until we hear otherwise.

Response from Iran. There is no response from Iran so far, except that they have received the charter documents and are getting Farsi translations done, and that they will respond after their various anjumans have reviewed them. However, with the recent developments in India, Iran may also hold off on proceeding in this direction.

FEZANA World Body Ad Hoc Committee. Presently the FEZANA WB ad hoc committee has no further work at hand; hence that committee's task is fulfilled. However, they will continue until the next AGM (in Atlanta in May 2006), in case we hear anything from FPZAI to get the process moving. After the AGM, the

newly elected president will decide on all committees.

I would like to thank Khorshed Jungalwala, Farrokh Mistree, Homi Gandhi, Sarosh Collector and Purvez Rustomji for their efforts since we requested them to review the drafts of the charters in early 2005, their sincere effort at the Pittsburgh AGM in May 2005 and at the London Congress in June 2005, to help us move towards consensus. We are very grateful to them.

Regrettably, their supportive efforts at the London congress did not bear the results we expected from the 'status-quo' group.

WHAT'S NEXT ON THE WORLD BODY FRONT?

Presently we are hoping for a breakthrough in the FPZAI understanding and await their response.

However, there are many other possibilities also being explored as discussed amongst many individuals.

If your Association has a suggestion regarding how to resolve this impasse and move forward, we would like to hear from you.

I regret we have come to a situation where we do not see an early resolution of this predicament.

I take full responsibility for our actions in this matter. It was encouraging to see, after so many years of trying so hard, a consensus being reached amongst the leadership of WZO, FPZAI, ZTFE and FEZANA, and lately even positive comments

[Continued on page 11]



PHOTOS COURTESY ROSHAN DAVAR

Historic jashan to inaugurate OZCF's new 10.1 acre property at Oakville in western Toronto area.

A New Dawning – OZCF Inaugural jashan *by Roshan Davar*

“This land is a small sparkling jewel for Zoroastrians of Ontario, but one large ray of hope for Zoroastrians around the world.” - OZCF president, Phil Sidhwa

September 18, 2005 will go down in the history books as a day of celebration for Ontario Zarathushtis as they achieved the distinction of becoming property owners of the largest parcel of land owned by any Zarathushti community in North America.

Over 600 Zarathushtis and friends came together to witness a dream become a reality, and show their support to the Ontario Zoroastrian Community Foundation (OZCF) for their

purchase of the 10.1 acre property in Oakville, in the Western Greater Toronto Area.

It was indeed thrilling to witness the inaugural jashan as the collective voice of prayers and blessings, uttered by 16 mobeds, consecrated the property. A soft breeze wafted the fragrance of sukhad-loban through the air along with the vibration of the prayers. The jashan ended with an inspiring rendition of “Oh

Canada” by Tasha Hira, followed by “Chhaiye Hame Zarthoshti” sung by the entire audience.

There was a sense of friendship, joy, unity and energy in the air that day. Divas and sukhad were made available, and refreshments – delightful finger foods, sandwiches, and an array of desserts of sev, dahi, malido, ravo, mithai, cakes and more – were laid out on long tables with white tablecloths.

High spirits, joy, camaraderie and a sense of achievement was felt throughout the day. Waves of happy emotions flowed through the crowd, for it was the biggest day in the history of Zarathushtis of Ontario. Many were inspired to sign up for OZCF membership to support the vision.

OZCF president Phil Sidhwa welcomed everyone and pointed out the large number of children present, as a reflection of the make-up and vision of the OZCF to ensure the success of future generations of Zarathushtis in North America.

It was wonderful to hear the joyous sounds of young and old playing soccer and volleyball, children picking fruits from the many fruit trees and running around the vast property, simply enjoying the sense of belonging to this place.

For weeks leading to September 18th, hundreds of volunteers transformed the house, garden, garage and the entire property – be it cleaning, painting, renovating, laying new wood floors, plumbing, gardening or landscaping. The finishing touches of a *dana ni toran*, floral garlands, vases of flowers and furniture made the property very inviting.

But this is only the beginning ... ■

To view the photos, visit www.billimoriadesign.com/ozcf/index.htm

President's Message

[Continued from page 9]

from Iran. It is unfortunate that the opportunity to form the One World Body, which almost seemed within our grasp, seems to have slipped away from us.

I thank you all for your support, patience and encouraging words. If you need any further information or explanation, please do not hesitate to contact me.

This is a situation created by our past, we will continue to work in the present, so that hopefully our future will be more rewarding. ■



Michigan youth group. On August 23, the Michigan Zoroastrian Youth Group came together for their first ever Sports Day, at Maybury State Park. Over 30 children of all ages participated in relay races, games of tag and softball, and enjoyed pizza, salad, cookies and brownies after a fun filled afternoon. Thanks to Shernaz Minwalla, Bepsi Sanjana and Shireen Ghandhi for another successful event for the Michigan Zoroastrian Youth Group. ■



Parsi musical skit by ZANC members from left, Er. Kobad Jamshed, Perin Marawala and Zinaida Engineer.

set up and a Haft-seen Nouruz table were exhibited. Walls were decorated with collages of notable Parsis, the Wadia ship builders, Tatas, Dadabhoy Naoroji to Freddy Mercury, Madame Cama and Field Marshal Manekshaw. The 'sugar and milk' story, collages of a navjote and wedding ceremony, and Parsi saris, garas, jhablas and kors were displayed.

Over 200 persons crowded into ICC's Taj Mahal Hall on August 28th, to enjoy a rendition of *Chhaiye Hame Zarathushti*, a garba and a musical skit. A 20-minute powerpoint presentation showcased the story of the Parsis in India and the achievements of this small community. The presentation was followed by a lunch of dhansak, vegetable stew and cutlets, topped off with a delicious mango custard. ZANC was honored to be given the opportunity to showcase Parsi culture at the ICC center. [Submitted by Nazneen Spliedt]

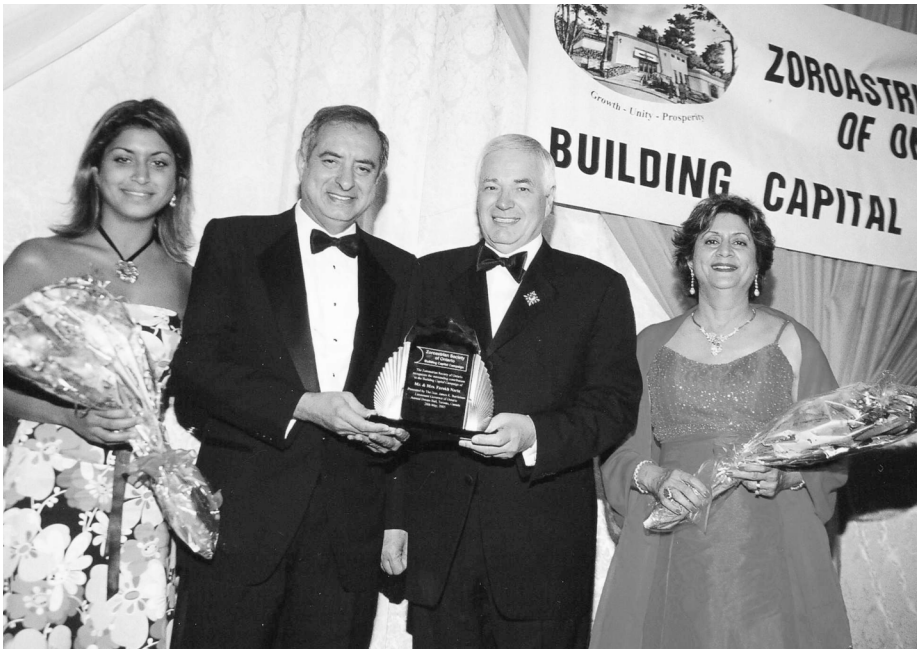
Bay Area ICC celebrates Parsi Month

The Zarathushti Anjuman of Northern California was invited by the India Community Center, which serves the huge Indian community of the San Francisco Bay area, to organize a celebration of Parsi culture during August 2005 at their center in Milpitas, California. The Bay area is home to about 600 Parsi and Iranian Zarathushti families.

A chronological journey *Kisseh-i-Sanjan* on large posters was displayed at the Center, starting with the life of Zarathushtra to the landing at Sanjan and the continuing saga of the achievements of the small but significant Parsi community over the last couple of centuries until the present day. A typical Jashan

ZSO's dream to be a reality soon *by Nilufer Mama*

Zoroastrian Society of Ontario is close to its goal of raising \$2.2 million to build a new center at the existing darbe mehr site.



At the Dream Ball, from left, Dr. Sabrena Noria, Farokh Noria, the lieutenant Governor of Ontario Hon. James K. Bartleman and Dr. Dhun Noria.

Dr. Dhun Noria, Chair of the Building Capital Committee is extremely pleased to announce that over 85% of the funds for the Building Project has been achieved. \$1.9 million have been raised and only \$300,000 remains to complete the project. Zarathushtis from Ontario and around the world have helped achieve this dream. Special thanks go to our major donors Farokh and Dhun Noria \$320,000, The Zoroastrian Charity Funds of Hongkong, Canton and Macao \$250,000 and Keki and Javer Jokhi of Hongkong \$100,000.

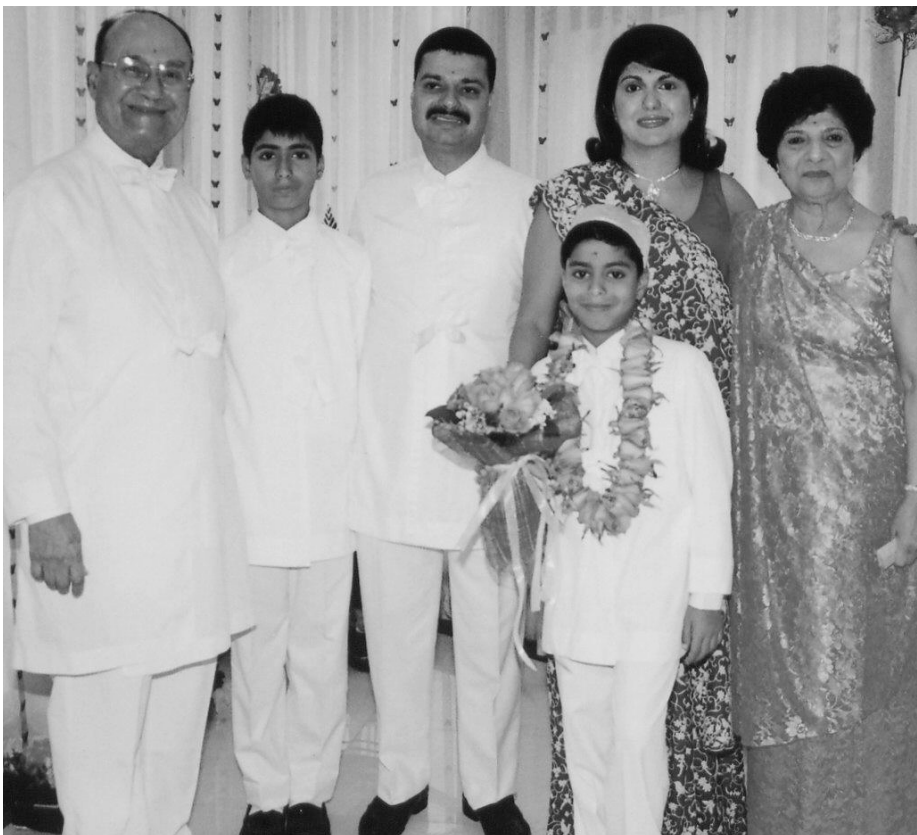
The major event this year was the **Dream Ball** attended by over 500 guests, and the Hon. James K. Bartleman the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario [photo left]. In his address he applauded the various contributions of Zarathushtis around the world. Over \$200,000 was raised at the Ball.

The third annual **Walkathon** was a success with the "Magnificent 7" [photo next page] who completed the 75 km walk once again. Special thanks to Russi Surti and Jehangir Behboodi for providing the leadership.

The Toronto Talent Team performed the hilarious natak "Behram Ni Sasoo" [photo next page] on September 10th to an audience of 500 guests. This was a comedy of errors, as Mani (Aimee Karanjia) the *jabri Sasoo* visits her daughter Mehroo (Piloo Deboo) and simple Behram's (Noshir Mistry) large home by the sea. He is chased around by his penniless friend Dr. Madan (Baji Langdana) who constantly aims for a handout. Special thanks go to the director Niloufer Kavarana and the Event Leader Noshir Mistry.

The 3rd ZSO Golf Classic [photo left, middle] was held on September

[Continued on page 14]



Generous donors, the Jokhi family, from left, Mr. Keki Jokhi, Farhad, Rustom, Roxy, Mrs. Javer Jokhi and, in front, Daryus.



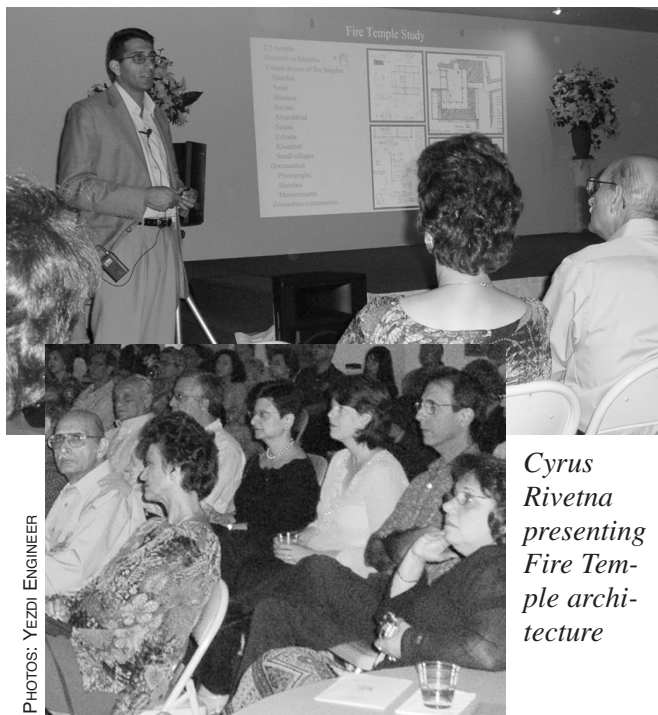
The "Magnificent Seven" Zarathushtis who walked the entire 75 kms, from left, Mandana Zandian, Nousheen and Roshni Bastani, Adil and Mona Antia, Russi Surti, Dara Panthakee (route marshall) and Farshid Bastani.



Zubin Noria [third from left] with happy golfers at the ZSO Golf Classic fundraiser for the Building.



At the hilarious fundraiser natak "Behram ni Sasoo," from left, Baji Langdana, Anahita Daryushnejad, Rati Mistry, Dara Homavazir and Adi Anary. The natak was written by the late Phiroze Antia of Mumbai and directed by Niloufer Kavarana. The Toronto Talent Team would consider staging this production for other Zoroastrian Associations. Contact Dr. Dhun Noria, noria2@rogers.com.



Cyrus Rivetna presenting Fire Temple architecture

Houston Gala *by Jangoo Mistry*

The Library Committee of the Zoroastrian Association of Houston (ZAH) held its annual gala function on October 15 at the ZAH Center in Houston.

Fire temple architecture. This year's event featured **Cyrus Rivetna**, an architect from Chicago, who presented a unique and fascinating evolution of Zarathushti fire temples over the last 2,300 years. His presentation was accompanied with some really interesting photographs and sketches gathered during his four month tour of India in 2003, and his visit to Iran in 1998.

From the early religious structures near Persepolis, Cyrus traced the link to the Iranshah in Udvada and the building of over two hundred fire temples throughout India, and explained the inside layout of today's fire temples. Cyrus concluded his presentation with the relatively recent constructions of darbe mehrs outside of India and how they have been designed to fulfill the needs of our communities in the Western diaspora.

Showcasing ZAH history. The Library room displayed "**ZAH Tapestry**," an exhibition of photographs and other historical tidbits that traced the creation and growth of ZAH and the construction of the Center.

"The Zarathushti Heritage and Cultural Center of Houston is a labor of love, a symbol of our unity, and a source of pride for all Houstonians; and ZAH is the glue and catalyst that made it all possible," remarked Aban Rustomji, the driving force and chairperson of the Library Committee. The history of ZAH and ZHCC came alive as we celebrated our accomplishments and also preserved our heritage through this most interesting and important effort.



At the ZIG event, from left, Dina Thakarar, Joseph Ball, Jasmine Dukandar, Khorshed F. Jungalwala and Prof. Kaikhosrov D. Irani.

ZAGNY Intermarried Group Open Forum

The ZAGNY Intermarried Group sponsors an evening of learning and sharing in it's first community forum blending cultures and community.

by Pearl Satarawala

The open forum on November 19, 2005, sponsored by the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York's Intermarried Group (ZIG) was an evening of electrifying, thought-provoking and heart-warming speeches and discussion. Facilitator Viraf Ghadially explained the purpose of ZIG which was formed in 2003 to encourage intermarried couples to stay involved in the community, to form friendships and to serve as a catalyst for dialogue and discussion.

Professor Kaikhosrov D. Irani began the forum with *"The Variety of Religious Commitments"* noting that Zarathushtra was the first to preach a universal message of moral good. The choice all humans must make is between Spenta Mainyu – the Spirit of Truth – and the corruption arising from the Spirit of Evil and Negation. Prof. Irani referred to the Prophet Zarathustra asking his own daughter, "Have you made the choice?" The implication is that religion, like ethics, is a matter of personal choice and commitment, not a matter of the "tribe" into which one is born.

Khorshed F. Jungalwala spoke next on *"Developments of Gender Roles in Zarathushti Society Through the Ages."* Giving specific examples from as early as the time of the Prophet Zarathustra, through the modern period, Khorshed observed that the relative role of men and women has been more an ebb and flow than a steady movement toward gender equality. One constant, however, has been the presence of outstanding women who have served as role models to others. As a long-time leader in the Zarathushti community, Khorshed Jungalwala is certainly among those role models!

Three members of ZIG continued the forum. **Dina Thakarar** addressed the topic *"Sometimes it's not enough to just have faith,"* describing her experiences growing up in an intermarried family. In her heart and in her life, she strongly believes she has upheld the core beliefs of the Zarathushti religion. After much soul searching Dina, at 27, has come to her decision to formalize her commitment and faith by asking for the navjote initiation ceremony.

Dina looks forward to raising her children and her grandchildren in the tenets of our great religion.

Joseph Ball, who is married to Pearl Satarawala, has been a devoted student and teacher of World Religions for thirty-five years and a graduate of Harvard Divinity School. Joseph gave his "one man's opinion" on the topic "Are all religions the same?" He defined religion as a set of beliefs through which adherents are provided with an opportunity to find meaning in life by recognizing the existence of that which they consider Sacred. While excessive focus on dogma and ritual can cause religions to become divisive, Joe expressed the belief that focusing on the Divine Light that underlies all religions is a way to see what is universal and unifying in all faith traditions.

Sixteen year old **Jasmine Dukandar** concluded the evening with a beautiful, personal testimony of her experience being raised in an intermarried household. In her talk *"Blending Cultures,"* she spoke eloquently about her desire to learn and experience from both sides of her family heritage (Zarathushti and Catholic) and challenged the issues surrounding intermarriage in the Zarathushti community.

It was an uplifting and memorable evening of learning.

The ZIG group meets periodically several times a year to discuss issues and challenges that pertain to intermarried couples. Contact knavder@hunter.cuny.edu. ■

ZSO's dream ...

[Contd. from page 12]

19th at the Kleinburg Golf Club. The weather was made to order and over 120 golfers enjoyed the day golfing, and the delicious Steak dinner at the Club. Danny Mama, Khodayar Jam and Dhun Noria provided the leadership.

We are so close to our goal of \$ 2.2 million to build a new home for the Ontario Zarathushtis. We would welcome any donations to this worthy cause from around the world. **THANK YOU!** [Contact Building Capital Campaign chair Dr. Dhun Noria at noria@rogers.com] ■

PERSONAL PROFILE

Felicitatation reception

by Kamalrukh Katrak

[Kamalrukh Katrak is an architect with Verus Architects, Inc. in Chicago]

As the temperatures suggested a change from summer to fall, Zarathushtis across North America received an invitation to a felicitatation on October 22, 2005. Organized by the Friends of Jehan Committee, sponsored by Zoroastrian Association of Quebec and supported by FEZANA, WZO, ZAGNY, ZSO and OZCF the event was to honor Jehan Bagli.

The day will go down in history as one on which many traveled from all over North America to honor Jehan Bagli – the man, the father, the friend, the student, the priest, the teacher, the scientist.

Humanity gathered to appreciate Jehan the human, and to applaud the divinity within him.

Why? One may ask.

Well, because as the Ancient Korean Heavenly Code says:

Through the study of Principles, he realizes Truth.

Through the study of Practice, he unifies Knowledge with Action.

Through the study of Living, he makes truth a reality in his life.

Jehan thanked the humanity for honoring the divinity not just within him, but within all of us. He thanked Ahura Mazda for his life, his wife for being the constant pillar of support, and the family and friends for helping him through the journey.

Why did an unassuming man like Jehan agree to such a felicitatation? Well, because the award money could be put to good use.

A donation in honor of Jehan and Freny Bagli, in memory of their dear daughter Shiraz Bagli was made to **Manjari Sankurathri Memorial Foundation** (www.msmf.ca) a regis-



Jehan Bagli, left, receiving a trophy from past presidents of ZAQ Edul Kanga, Gev Karkaria, Khushroo Mirza and Rohinton Marolia. Presidents not in the picture are Late Adi Daruwalla, Dolly Dastoor, Ness Lakdawalla and Nari Madon.

Honoring Er. Dr. Jehan Bagli

Zarathushtis of North America pay tribute to an illustrious community leader, priest and scholar

tered Canadian charity that promotes rural community development in India, through education, healthcare and disaster relief programs. The award was graciously accepted by Dr. Peter Kertes.

The evening. It was a well organized event, capturing the spirit of the occasion and honor. The Mehraban Guiv Darbe Mehr in Toronto was packed to capacity, and messages of felicitatation were received from around the world. A wonderful slideshow showcased a beautiful life, delicious food, great generosity for a great cause and much love and affection.

To commemorate the occasion, token gifts including a scroll were presented by a grateful community. The highlight of the event was the musical tribute from son Darius, a pediatric surgeon and accomplished pianist, to father Jehan – which did not allow for a dry eye in the house. It was described very simply in the evening's program as:

A Musical Gift –

What words cannot express

For my Dad

Dedicated with All My Love

Darius

We all went home feeling as if each one of us had been rewarded in some profound way.

Jehan Bagli - a profile

by Dolly Dastoor

Jehan Bagli was born in Mumbai, September 25, 1928, to Dhunmai and Ervad Framroz Bagli.

Schooling. Jehan obtained a BSc and BSc (Tech) in Technology of Pharmaceuticals and Fine Chemicals from Sir J.J. P.B. Institution and St. Xavier's College in 1951 and was recipient of the Gold Medal from the Indian Pharmaceutical Association. He then went to University of London as a J. N. Tata Scholar and obtained his doctorate in Medicinal Chemistry. He did postdoctoral research at John Hopkins University in Baltimore, receiving fellowships

During his professional life Jehan lived in London, Baltimore, Laval, Montreal and Princeton, retiring in Toronto to be near their children. Unfortunately soon after their arrival, in August 2000, their beloved daughter Shiraz was diagnosed with cancer, an illness she bore bravely till her death in July 2004.

Mobeds Council. Jehan was one of the founding members of the North American Mobeds' Council and is currently its president. Jehan was responsible for spearheading three projects: the Mobedyar program with Er.

Er. Dr. Jehan Bagli at the felicitation reception with event organizer Dr. Dolly Dastoor [at left] and wife Freny.

“The Zarathushtis of North America once again reaffirmed their homage to one of their illustrious luminaries on this continent, a priest of unstinting devotion, faith and knowledge, an analytic thinker, an erudite speaker, and a bridge builder between different and differing points of view. Jehan has truly left an indelible mark on the face of the Zarathushti community in North America. For me it was a personal satisfaction as there is no greater honor that a community can bestow on one of their own, than to acknowledge during their lifetime, their contributions for enriching the lives of others.” *Dr. Dolly Dastoor, friend and event organizer*

“A very deserving recognition of Er. Dr. Jehan Bagli by the community, an extremely well organized program by Dolly Dastoor and friends, we all had a great time.” **Firdosh Mehta**, friend and FEZANA president

Darius Bagli, loving son

Behram Panthaki of Washington, and co-authoring two books with Er. Adi Unwalla – “*Understanding and Practice of Jashan Ceremony*” and “*Understanding and Practice of Obsequies*” [see page 156]. Jehan has successfully conducted two religious seminars: in Toronto in 2003 and New York in 2005.

Community leadership. Jehan was: founding president of the *first* association in North America, the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec, setting the bench mark for the Zarathushti community in North America; editor of *Gavashni*, the first periodical in North America which served as the community’s voice for many years until the advent of FEZANA Journal, of which too, Er. Bagli was the first editor; chair of the FEZANA Research and Preservation Committee; coordinator of the very successful Global Scholastic Competition for the WZC2000; chair of the ZSO lecture committee and represented them on the Ontario Multifaith Council.

In 2003 Jehan was elected to the WZO International Board. He played a key role in the 3000th anniversary celebrations of Zoroastrian culture, instrumental in organizing the lecture series at the Royal Ontario Museum; and was invited to the Library of Congress in Washington DC to make a presentation in their lecture series.

A much sought after speaker at Zoroastrian congresses, he has authored articles and lectures on a variety of topics related to duality, rituals, the calendar, priesthood, jashan, navjote, fire, universality and Judaism as they relate to the Zarathushti religion.

He is committed to the cause of perpetuation of the Zarathushtian faith as a universal way of life on this continent and around the world. But his enduring passion is the unification of the Zarathushti calendar for which he has made strong pleas across the Zarathushti world. ■



PHOTO: RFP NEWSLETTER, COURTESY BEHRAM PASTAKIA

At the UN Chapel for the opening of the 58th Annual DPI/NGO conference, on September 7th, FEZANA representatives, from left Homi Gandhi, Bomi Patel and Laila Contractor. Not in the picture are Behram Pastakia and Roshni Kasad.

FEZANA representatives participate in the 58th Annual United Nations DPI/NGO Conference in New York, September 7-9.

Experiencing the United Nations DPI/NGO conference *by Laila Contractor*

Five representatives from FEZANA attended the 58th Annual DPI/NGO Conference at UN Headquarters, NY, September 7-9: FEZANA UN Committee co-chairs Homi Gandhi and Behram Pastakia, FEZANA vice president Bomi Patel and youth representatives Laila Contractor and Roshni Kasad.

“If the 21st century wishes to free itself from the cycle of violence, acts of terror and war, there is no other way except by understanding and putting into practice human rights for all mankind irrespective of race, gender, faith, nationality or social status.”

These are the words of Shirin Ebadi, president of the Tehran-based Human Rights Defence Centre and winner of the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize. I was honored to meet Ms. Ebadi at the 58th Annual DPI/NGO Conference at the United Nations in New York.

The agenda of the conference was filled with think tank sessions, keynote addresses by Kofi Annan and other prominent peace activists, and panel discussions, all of which shared the underlying theme of improving the human condition through peace and partnerships.

The three-day event was an enlightening experience, partly because I was in the presence of several public servants who have dedicated their lives for others. I was humbled in the presence of Wahu Kaara, an anti-poverty and social justice activist

Laila Contractor meets Shirin Ebadi: a life-touching experience.



PHOTO: HOMI GANDHI



Nobel Prize winner for Peace from Iran, Shirin Ebadi, with Roshni Kasad [left] from Berkeley, California and Behram Pastakia [right] from Bethesda, Maryland, after the concluding session of the 58th Annual DPI/NGO Conference at United Nations Headquarters, New York.

“We all know that significant human accomplishments often begin with a dream.” Shirin Ebadi, September 9, 2005

Nobel Peace Prize Winner delivers hard hitting speech on Human Rights at United Nations. The session, moderated by Shashi Tharoor, Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information of the United Nations, started with a keynote address by UN Secretary-General **Kofi Annan**. The theme: “*Our Challenge: Voices for Peace, Partnerships and Renewal*” galvanized the worldwide NGO community to attend in record numbers on this 60th Anniversary year of the founding of the United Nations.

Webcasts of key presentations are at: <http://www.undpingoconference.org>. The transcript of Ms. Ebadi’s speech is at: <http://www.ngodpiexecom.org/conference05/resources/speeches/Shirin%20Ebadi1.doc>. - Behram Pastakia

that should serve as a wake up call to us Zarathushtis is the fact that Ms. Ebadi was educated at a Zoroastrian school. In my meeting with her, I was obviously deeply inspired by all that she has done and awed by trying to imagine how many lives this one soul has touched.

There was also a certain amount of pride that came from knowing that much of what she stood for is outlined in our religion. The fact that there is a large possibility that much of what she is today and the ideals that she stands for may have been a by-product of Zarathushti teachings instilled in her at a young age, is something that makes me realize the value of the heritage that has been passed down to me.

At the same time, I began to ask myself a very important question: How many of us have been passed the heritage of our religion only to take it for granted? We have all heard stories of how the Zarathushti faith and its principles have inspired some of the world’s greatest philanthropists and human rights advocates. We have all heard the ancient stories of King Cyrus and are more than aware of the generous donations of Andrew Carnegie.

“ Perhaps Shirin Ebadi is just one more non-Zarathushti touched by the teachings of the world’s oldest religion ”

Perhaps Shirin Ebadi is just one more non-Zarathushti, touched by the teachings of the world’s oldest religion and putting them into practice. However, as Zarathushtis, we may forget these teachings on a daily basis. We wake up in the morning, say our prayers, and do it so routinely that we may be taking for granted the very essence of what they represent. I feel that the examples of King

from Nairobi, and Jean Ping noted for his contribution to restoring peace in Central Africa. But, of all my momentous experiences, the one that I would like to share with you is my brief, but life-touching introduction to Shirin Ebadi.

Meeting Shirin Ebadi. Ms. Ebadi is well known for promoting peaceful, democratic solutions to serious societal concerns and for advocating freedom of speech. She is an icon of Reformed Islam and argues for a new interpretation of Islamic law, one that

is in harmony with basic human rights. As part of her campaign to improve legal rights for refugees, she has defended various victims of child abuse and drafted the original text of a 1992 child abuse protection law.

Due to her activism in an intolerant country, Shirin Ebadi has been imprisoned several times. Yet, her spirit never waned and she continues to dedicate her life to the betterment of those around her.

This is the Shirin Ebadi that many people know; but, the part about her

Altogether, my experience at the 58th Annual DPI/NGO brought me to the realization that I was in the presence of more than just eloquent speakers who could inspire a crowd; I was in the presence of those who actually live the very words they speak. On a daily basis, I am reminded, through my memories, of the power of my heritage. We all have been blessed with a heritage that has inspired greatness. Try to remember it everyday and use it. ■

A horizontal line of 18 small, dark, diamond-shaped symbols arranged in a row, used as a section separator.

The 58th Annual DPI/NGO conference highlights efforts to eradicate poverty, promote human rights, and enhance collective human security through multilateral cooperation and deeper partnerships within civil society. The conference focussed on concerns addressed in Secretary-General Kofi Annan's 2005 report, in which he emphasized:

FEZANA strives to connect with other NGOs to collaborate in efforts to promote peace and justice for all of humanity. Through their interactions with the UN and other NGOs, FEZANA delegates endeavor to learn how Zarathushtis can better serve the world at large.

FEZANA JOURNAL – WINTER 2005



“As we pass by this wall in the days and years to come, let it serve as a source for the resurrection of hope as we strive to meet the greatest prayer of man: that which asks not for victory, but for peace.”

UN/NGO events. Zarathushtis interested in participating on the FEZANA team in future UN/NGO activities may send their CV to Homi Gandhi (*Homi_Gandhi@usa.net*) or Behram Pastakia (*bpastakia@aol.com*).



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Roxana Mirza [third from left in the second row] representing the FEZANA UN/NGO team at WCRP Religious Youth Leaders Summit in New York.

WCRP Youth Leaders Summit *by Roxanna Mirza*

Every religion preaches morality and respect, yet violence still exists in the world, with acts of religious persecution in the name of defending one's religion. Zarathushti doctrine teaches that each individual has a responsibility to respect every creation and maintain a universal balance; however, if we believe that no religion promotes or tolerates intentional harm upon one's self or others, then the question arises as to why such violent acts occur.



WCRP preliminary meeting. The UN body of the World Conference of Religions for Peace (WCRP) has chosen to explore this issue at their upcoming World Youth Conference in Kyoto, Japan in August 2006. I had the fortunate opportunity to represent FEZANA's UN/NGO team at WCRP's preliminary meeting at the Summit of North American Religious Youth Leaders on November 1, 2005 in New York, to discuss this matter of violence with 53 other religious youth delegates.

A very inspiring message was read from WCRP's International Moderator HRH Prince Hassan of Jordan pointing out the vital role our youth have to play in encouraging the idea of universal acceptance and intolerance of crime. WCRP's Reverend Leonid Kishkovsky set the tone of the Summit by reminding us that interfaith dialogue does not mean leaving one's own faith and convictions aside, but rather it is more productive to bring forth the religious integrity of our traditions while remembering we all preach a commonality of respect to all.

The main issues discussed were: (1) What are the root causes of violence, and (2) Solutions/strategies to overcome problems of violence. Issues of ignorance, biases in education, and socio-econopolitical circumstances were repetitive themes that arose. It was also interesting to hear the various projects congregations and associations have implemented to overcome these issues.

My representation at the meeting was unique: (1) being one of only three Canadians present, (2) having to explain the Zarathushti religion to most del-

egates present, and (3) not having any full-time role in the organization (FEZANA) that I represented, which most other delegates had.

The basic tenets of any religion teach us morality with respect to the individual, family, local and global community. Therefore, it is contradictory for anyone to commit an act of ill-intent and still claim to be believers of faith. Likewise, by not preventing others from performing criminal acts, we fail in our responsibilities in the preservation of our universe.

This logic may sound like common sense, but if that is true, the question remains, why do we see the stance for morality so seldom practiced?

Humata, hukhta, and huvareshtha are not principles meant solely for Zarathushtis to live by, but for Zarathushtis to help others live by as well. Inter-religious dialogue helps us understand our neighbors.

Understanding leads to enlightenment, and enlightenment to peace. ■

Roxanna Mirza of Toronto is on the FEZANA UN-NGO team. Contact roxannamirza@yahoo.com.



National Days of Interfaith Youth Service

Plan now to celebrate the National Days of Interfaith Youth Service during April 22-23, 2006.

Set up or tie in a service event in your neighborhood.

A Quick Start Toolkit, and Organizer's Toolkit, and a training DVD are available.

Visit the Interfaith Youth Core website for more information:

www.ysa.org

(Click on Awards and Grants)



*At the SEEN conference in Albania: senior religious leaders representing southeast Europe's historic religions including Christianity and Judaism, Islam. **Jehangir Sarosh**, Moderator for Religions for Peace - Europe, is in the second row, standing behind the Baktashi Sheik in white.*

RELIGIONS for PEACE

RFP facilitates landmark meeting in Albania. An important milestone in inter-religious cooperation was reached at the second conference of the South East Europe Inter-religious Network (SEEN) in Tirana, Albania from 16-18 November, around the theme: "Advancing Peace and Stability through Regional Cooperation." Over fifty senior religious leaders from Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, Kosovo and Macedonia attended the gathering to develop joint strategies for strengthening the role of religious communities in building peace and stability in the region. They committed to strengthen the South East Europe Inter-religious Network in partnership with Religions for Peace, including its pan-European affiliates Religions for Peace/Europe, and the European Council of Religious Leaders.

Founded in 1970 as an international, nonsectarian organization, Religions for Peace is now the largest coalition of the world's religious communities, with affiliated Inter-religious Councils in four regions and fifty five countries. Moderator for the Europe Region of WCRP, Jehangir Sarosh of London, writes:

"Zoroastrianism is well known and respected by the Orthodox and Eastern Christianity and thus Zoroastrians are trusted in matters of mediation in this volatile Balkan region. The people from this region are now spread all over the world, often as refugees and it is our duty to afford them an opportunity to come together and for the region to see that we can all live in harmony."

Congress in Spain. Jehangir Sarosh also facilitated the International Congress on Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue in Bilbao, Spain, December 11-13, convened by RFP to promote peace through cooperative action among the Basque separatists in Spain. Sarosh writes: "Zarathushtra's wisdom and influence on other faiths was often referred to, duly considered and played a valuable function in the deliberations, especially on the element of *responsibility*."

[Source: Jehangir Sarosh, wcrp@btconnect.com]



RFP-USA Gathering in Chicago. Rohinton Rivetna participated as the FEZANA delegate at the National Gathering of Religious Leaders organized by Religions for Peace - USA, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Chicago, January 23-25. A diverse array of US religious leaders gathered for relationship-building and interfaith visioning, to foster societal progress, to identify where religious leaders have "deeply held and widely shared" beliefs about common challenges in US society, to define some of the future work of RFP-USA, and to foster its capacity as an organization to be of service to US religious communities.

This meeting was also a preparatory event for the VIII World Assembly of Religions for Peace, in Hiroshima and Kyoto in August 2006.

FEZANA and Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago hosted an Evening Social at the Crowne Plaza for all delegates, with Parsi-Iranian refreshments, Firdowsi poetry reading by Farida Sharyari *[shown at left with Freya Dhunjisha and Rohinton Rivetna]* and Zarathushti devotional songs by the ZAC Choir. Also participating were Viraf and Viloo Darukhanawalla and Maharukh and Dara Patel. *[Contact Rohinton Rivetna at rivetna@aol.com].* ■

Kayzad Namdarian on BBC-TV. After being “discovered” by the BBC producers when he wrote a short piece on UN Reform on BBC.co.uk, **Kayzad Namdarian** of Australia, a member of the FEZANA UN/NGO team, was interviewed on BBC’s “Talking Point” program in November. Kayzad said:



“I think the UN needs to do two things. One is to differentiate the apolitical organs of the UN from its political components, like departments of a national government; because that’s what causes management problems. Secondly, it needs to promote to Member states that their individual optimal wealth will only come from the optimal universal wealth of humanity.

“Essentially, I think human relations are heading in a direction towards greater globalization and unity which will mean harmony and prosperity. The UN is an indispensable component to this, just as the Sun is to the Earth.”

Trita Parsi Comments on anti-Israel remarks. **Trita Parsi**, a Middle East specialist at Johns Hopkins University’s School of Advanced International Studies, was interviewed on NPR News’ program “All Things Considered,” on October 28. Commenting on Iranian President Ahmadinejad’s remarks, quoting Ayatollah Khomeini who had said that Israel must be wiped off the map, Parsi said:



“...there’s a difference between Iranian rhetoric and Iranian policies ... Khatami, who came to power in 1997, started to tone down the rhetoric on Israel, realizing that it was only causing more problems for the Iranian state.

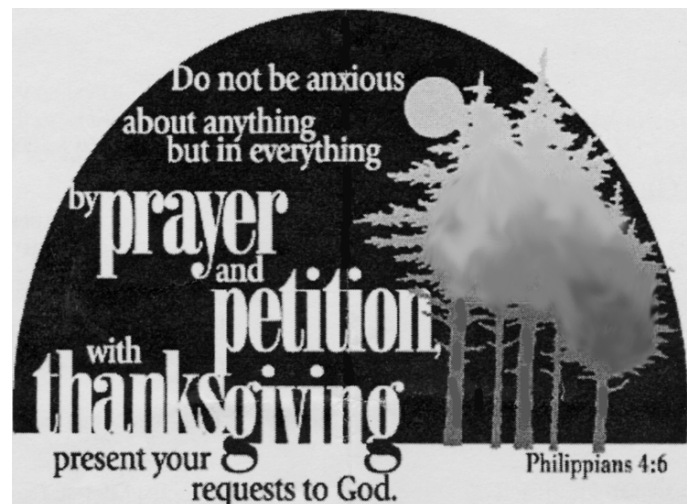
“... no one as high up in the Iranian government, in such an official position, has said something like this for the last seven years. But if we go back only 10 years, statements like this were not uncommon ... the statement has, at least not yet and probably will not, be translated into actual policy.

“... this president is very inexperienced and he has already, during these three months that he’s been in power, made quite a few blunders, and this is just the latest one... already Iranian diplomats are trying to do damage control, trying to reassure the world that this is a statement; it is not a policy indication.

“But the Iranians really have to start to understand that the world looks at statements as indications of policy and not just as empty words.



Farohar on ICGR logo. The farohar symbol has now been added to the logo of the Interfaith Council of Greater Richmond, due to the diligent efforts of Richmond, VA resident **Rumy Mohta**. “The logo is also displayed in the interfaith prayer room at Richmond International Airport,” writes Mohta, who serves as the Zarathushti representative on the ICGR Board. The purpose of the ICGR, organized in 1929, is to develop understanding, respect and cooperation among the over 21 different religious denominations in the city of Richmond and address basic human needs through cooperative community service.



Los Angeles area interfaith councils. In November, **Maneck Bhujwala** of Huntington Beach was invited as a representative of the Zarathushti faith for thanksgiving services at two interfaith organizations in the Los Angeles area: The Greater Huntington Beach Interfaith Council and the Interfaith Council of Garden Grove, Stanton and Westminster. Maneck presented a reading of the Yatha Ahu Vairyo prayer with its translation.■



This is to have succeeded...

To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty, to find the best in others; to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived.

This is to have succeeded.

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

COMING EVENTS

National Days of Interfaith Youth Service

The National Days of Interfaith Youth Service are April 22-23. To participate, visit the Interfaith Youth Core www.ysa.org. [See page 20].

FEZANA AGM, 2006

The 19th **FEZANA AGM** will be held May 27-28, 2006 in Atlanta, GA, hosted by Atlanta Zoroastrian Association (AZA). Contact Rita Engineer, secretary, RitaEngineer@yahoo.com. tel: 561-487-4343.

WZCC Conference Atlanta 2006

Atlanta chapter of the World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce, will hold a **Business Seminar** in Atlanta, GA, on Sunday, May 28th afternoon, following the FEZANA AGM, Contact WZCC-Atlanta chapter chair Rustom Kanga rkanga@gmail.com. [See page 120].

SSZ Conference - 2006

SSZ Conference 2006, organized by the Society of Scholars of Zoroastrianism and hosted by ZAC (Chicago), will be held in Chicago, June 30 - July 2, 2006. Contact Rohinton Rivetna, rivetna@aol.com, tel: (630) 325-5383. [See page 26].

10th Zarathushti Games

The **Tenth Zarathushti Games** will be held July 1-4, 2006 in Los Angeles. Contact the Zoroastrian Sports Committee of FEZANA at www.fezana.org, email: zsc@fezana.org [See page 24].

Conference at Oxford

The **Centenary Conference** on the Iranian Constitutional Revolution will be held July 30 - Aug 2, 2006 at Oxford University. Contact Heritage Foundation, London, tel: 44 20 7499 9293, info@iranheritage.org.

World Religions meet

A Global Congress on World's Religions will be held in Montreal, September 11-15, 2006. Er. Dr. Jehan Bagli and Dr. Dolly Dastoor will present a panel discussion with Roshni Kasad, Nikan Khatibi, Farishta Dinshaw and Jehangir Sarosh. www.fezana.org

Calendar of Festivals

December - May

Death Anniversary of Zarathushtra

Mah Daye, Roz Khorshed Mon Dec 26 (F)

Maidhyarem Gahambar

Mah Dae, Roz Meher -Bahram Sat Dec 31 - Wed Jan 4 (F)

Jashne Daegan

Mah Dae, Roz Daepdin Sat Jan 7 (F)

Jashne Bahmangan

Mah Bahman, Roz Bahman Mon Jan 16 (F)

Paitishem Gahambar

Mah Sheherevar, Roz Astad - Aneran
Thu Jan 12 - Mon Jan 16 (K)
Sat Feb 11 - Wed Feb 15 (S)

Jashne Sadeh

Mah Bahman, Roz Meher Mon Jan 30 (F)

Ayathrem Gahambar

Mah Meher, Roz Astad - Aneran Sat Feb 11 - Wed Feb 15 (K)
Mon Mar 13 - Fri Mar 17 (S)

Fravardegan/Panjeh/Hamaspathmedayem Gahambar

Five Gatha days Thu Mar 16 - Mon Mar 20 (F)

Char-Shanbe-Soori (Heralding the New Year)

Tuesday prior to Nouruz Tue Mar 14 (F)

Nouruz or Jamshedi Navroz (New Year)

Mah Fravardin, Roz Hormazd Tue Mar 21

Khordad Sal (Birthday of Zarathushtra)

Mah Fravardin, Roz Khordad Sun Mar 26 (F)

Pir e Herisht Festival

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

Ava Ardavisoor nu Parab

Mah Avan, Roz Avan Sat Feb 25 (K)
Mon Mar 27 (S)

Fravardegan (Remembrance of the departed)

Mah Fravardin, Roz Fravardin Sat Apr 8 (F)

Jashne Ardibeheshtgan

Mah Ardibehesht, Roz Ardibehesht Sat Apr 22 (F)

Atash-nu-Parab

Mah Adar, Roz Adar Sun Mar 26 (K)
Tue Apr 25 (S)

Maidyozarem Gahambar

Mah Ardibehesht, Roz Khorshed - Daepmeher
Sun Apr 30 - Thu May 4 (F)

Zarathusht-no-Diso (Death anniversary of Zarathushtra)

Mah Daye, Roz Khorshed Thu Apr 27 (K)
Sat May 27 (S)

Daye Mah nu Jashan

Mah Daye, Roz Fravardin Fri May 5 (K)
Sun Jun 4 (S)

Maidhyarem Gahambar

Mah Daye, Roz Meher-Behram Tue May 2 - Sat May 6 (K)
Thu Jun 1 - Mon Jun 5 (S)

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

WorldsReligionsAfter911.com, or email dollydastoor@sympatico.ca.

Conference at SOAS

The *Sixth Biennial Conference on Iranian Studies*, organized by the International Society for Iranian Studies, Iran Heritage Foundation and London Middle East Institute, will be held at SOAS, London, August 3-5, 2006. Tel: 44 20 7499-9293, info@iranheritage.org, www.iranheritage.org/sixthbiennial.

"Year of Aryan Civilization", Tajikistan, 2006

President Rahmonov of Tajikistan has declared year 2006 as "The *Year of Aryan Civilization* to further protect and value the intellectual treasures of our ancestors ... and strengthen the national identity of the future Tajik generation" [*FEZANA Journal*, Winter 2003, page 37].

WZCC AGM, 2006

The 2006 World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce (WZCC) AGM will be held January 5-7, 2007, tentatively planned to be in Khandala or Lonavla, near Mumbai, India. Visit www.wzcc.net. [See page 119].

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas

The *Fifth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas*, where the Government of India reaches out to the worldwide Indian diaspora, will be held in India, in January 2007.

North American Congress, Toronto 2007

The XIV North American Zoroastrian Congress will be in Toronto, July 1-4, 2007, hosted by Zoroastrian Society of Ontario. Contact sam.vesuna@sympatico.ca.

5th Zarathushti Unity Cup Soccer, 2007

The *5th Soccer tournament* will be held on Labor Day weekend, 2007. Venue to be announced. Contact zsc@fezana.org.

World Youth Congress, Australia, 2007

The *Fourth World Zoroastrian Youth Congress* will be held Decem-



10TH ZARATHUSHTI GAMES

JULY 1-4, 2006

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

at Loyola Marymount University

Registration Information Coming Soon

Visit us at: www.fezana.org

or

Email us at: ZSC@fezana.org

Zoroastrian Sports Committee (ZSC) is the Sports Committee of
The Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America
● ZSC, P. O. Box 66828 ● Los Angeles, CA 90066 ● www.fezana.org ●

UN/NGO events

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

Interested individuals may send CV to Homi Gandhi (Homi_Gandhi@usa.net) or Behram Pastakia (bpastakia@aol.com).

ber 27, 2007 to January 3, 2008, at the University of Ballarat, in Victoria, Australia. Contact Shiraz Mistry at Smileysjm@optusnet.com.au [See page 25].

World Zoroastrian Congress, 2009

The 9th World Zoroastrian Congress, with the theme "Unity Through the Sands of Time," will be held in Dubai, UAE, December 28 - 31, 2009. Contact chair Meher Bhesania at bhesania@emirates.net.ae [See page 25]. ■

IN COMING ISSUES OF FEZANA JOURNAL

Spring 2006:

Generation Why

Guest Editor: Mahrukh Motafram

Summer 2006:

Archeological Excavations

Guest Editor: Dr. Homi Dhalla
(wzcf@bom8.vsnl.net.in)

Fall 2006:

Preservation of Manuscripts

Guest Editor: Nawaz Mody
(nawazmody@hotmail.com)

Winter 2006:

**Social Justice in the
Religion of Zarathushtra**

Guest Editors: Shireen Cama
and Vishtasp Soroushian

Upcoming:

**Guide to rituals,
customs & festivals**

Guest Editor: Roshan Rivetna ■

Rustam Guiv Foundation

announces
a writing contest
on

“What I have learned from the Gathas”

Rules:

- Participant's age should be between 15 - 30 years.
- Essays should not exceed two pages.
- Essays can be in English or Persian
- Enclose a brief biography of the writer, not to exceed half a page.

Deadline:

September 1, 2006.

Prize:

The participant who receives the highest score from the judges, will be awarded \$1,000.

Mail the essays to:

Rustam Guiv Foundation
c/o Daryoush Jahanian, MD
1835 N. 78th Place
Kansas City, Kansas 66112



9th World Zoroastrian Congress

“Unity Through the Sands of Time”

December 28 - 31, 2009

Dubai, UAE

“It gives me great pride in confirming that the 9th World Zoroastrian Congress will be held in Dubai from December 28 - 31, 2009. Formal permission to host the Congress has been received by us from His Excellency Shaikh Hasher Maktoum, Director General, Department of Information, Government of Dubai.

“The Committee seeks your valuable inputs to make the Congress a purposeful and meaningful event. Please submit names of persons from your area to serve on the extended Congress team. We are also seeking individual and corporate sponsors to keep the fee structure low. Dubai being the centre of commerce and trade, sponsoring companies will receive tremendous benefits.

“We, the Zarathushtis of Dubai welcome you all, our Mobeds, heads of various anjumans, community visionaries and Zarathushtis around the world to Congress 2009.”

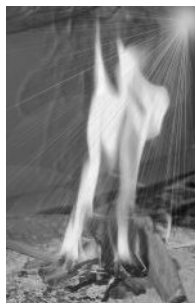
With blessings of Ahura Mazda,
Meher Bhesania, Chair, Congress 2009
bhesania@emirates.net.ae

The Fourth World Zoroastrian Youth Congress

Back to the Future

University of Ballarat, Victoria, Australia

December 27, 2007 to January 3, 2008



An invitation. Team 2007 hopes to bring our far-flung youth together in the most conducive of surroundings, to mix and mingle, sharing their hopes and dreams for a great tomorrow, and to make these Youth Congresses truly inter-continental.

All are invited to this once in a life-time, glorious occasion in Zarathushti History.

Visit: www.4wsyz.org

A sponsorship appeal. We appeal to the magnanimity of our community leaders to donate sufficient funds to meet the many expenses and cost outlays that a Congress of this magnitude entails. All donations and sponsorships will be acknowledged in print in the official Congress Brochure.

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

FEZANA AGM - 2006

Wingate Inn Atlanta/Buckhead
May 26 - 28, 2006

Hosted by Zoroastrian Association of Atlanta

● Association delegates invited ● Observers welcome ●

Visit: www.fezana.org

Secretary: ritaengineer@yahoo.com

The Society for Scholars of Zoroastrianism

is pleased to announce

SSZ Conference - 2006

Chicago, June 30 - July 3, 2006

Hosted by the

Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago
at the Arbab Rustom Guiv Darbe Mehr

GOAL:

Provide a forum for community members and religious leaders to dialogue with academicians and scholars.

PROGRAM:

Friday, June 30:

- Welcome dinner

Saturday, July 1:

- Presentations by academicians and response by religious leaders/community members. Academic speakers will include (tentative list):
 - Jamsheed Choksy (Indiana University)
 - Touraj Daryaee (California State University)
 - Richard Frye (Harvard University)
 - Helmut Humbach (Mainz University)
(paper to be read)
 - Pallan Ichaporia (Mainz University)
 - William Malandra (University of Texas, Austin)
- Gala dinner at the Darbe Mehr

Sunday, July 2:

- Presentations by religious leaders and community members: Kersey Antia, Suzie Karani, Sarosh Manekshaw, Kayomars Mehta ...
- Round Table discussion with academicians and community members.

Monday, July 3:

- Visit to the Oriental Institute, Chicago
- Chicago Architectural Tour/Chicago River Trip

RESERVATIONS:

Suzie Karani (karani_suzie@yahoo.com)

INFORMATION:

Pallan Ichaporia (PRIchaporia@aol.com)

Rohinton Rivetna (RRRivetna@aol.com)

AROUND THE WORLD

Australia-2005

Ervad Dr. Jehan Bagli's 3-week
'Down Under' lecture tour to
Sydney, Perth and Melbourne

By Jehangir R. Mehta

Perth, Western Australia

Mankind in its quest for spiritual truth continually tries to analyze and distinguish truth from untruth. For some it may take a whole lifetime. So how do we proceed in our own search for truth? We have to be objective, which means looking at both sides of the coin, which is hard to do because we all have our own personal biases and leanings. That in itself is a test that we all have to undergo in order to satisfy our spiritual needs.

In September, the Zarathushti communities of Sydney, Perth and Melbourne benefited with the visit of Er. Dr. Jehan Bagli and Freny; a trip meticulously planned by the Zoroastrian Association of New South Wales (ZANSW), Zoroastrian Association of Western Australia (ZAWA), and Zoroastrian Association of Victoria (ZAV).

Sydney. Dr. Bagli presented "Universality of the Zarathushti faith" at the Dar e Meher on September 16th.



PHOTO: SAM KERR

"The teachings of Zarathushtra are devoid of ethnicity," he said, "The Gathic hymns attest to the fact that Zarathushtra's God transcends the borders of race, color and creed, bringing together entire humanity under its single banner of communion."

His second lecture was "Is Conversion a reality?" On the question of whether Zarathushtra did convert people his response was

Planting a Cypress at the Dar e Meher in Sydney. "It depends on how one interprets conversion. Today we relate it to religion, but conversion is also when one changes a characteristic of an individual. Zarathushtra was trying to bring mankind on the path of truth, of being in peace and harmony with nature. In that sense, yes, Zarathushtra did convert ..."

This lecture was followed by a Cypress tree planting ceremony on the grounds of the Dar e Meher.

Dr. Sam Kerr wrote "... Dr. Bagli spelt out his understanding of the scriptures in a stepwise and orderly fash-

ion in his two lectures in Sydney. Thankfully in our settlement in Sydney we have, over three and half decades, learnt to exercise a tolerant attitude and to live and let live. To any thinking mind, the purpose of having a guest speaker, whatever the agenda of the speaker may be, is a healthy exchange of views, hopefully leading to further discussions in an open and tolerant manner."

PHOTO: BEHRAM COOPER



Er. Bagli and Freny with the committee of the Zoroastrian Association of Western Australia, Perth.

Perth. In Perth, Ervad Bagli engaged in talks on three topics: "Time, Homeland and Teachings of Zarathushtra," "Universality of Zarathushtrian religion" and "Religiosity and Spirituality."

A humble yet powerful message that penetrated the minds and hearts of the small group that came to listen to Ervad Bagli was simple yet relevant in today's global village: "Every individual has his or her own unique spiritual needs just like we have our physical needs. To some of us doing *kushti* and reciting Avestan prayers may be quite sufficient, while others might pursue spirituality over and above their Zarathushti faith by other means."

Melbourne. Over four days in Melbourne, Ervad Bagli spoke on topics as varied as "Time, Homeland and Teachings of Zarathushtra," Yasna Haptanhaiti, the Zarathushtrian calendar and Zarathushtrian Universality. Sunday School at the Glen Waverly suburb hall in Melbourne became the venue for yet another round of talks

PHOTO: KURUSH ZAWALA



Audience for Dr. Bagli's lectures in Melbourne

and discussions on "Significance of Zarathushtrian Rituals" and "The Gathic Vision and Later Tradition."

Perviz Dubash, president of the Zoroastrian Association of Victoria wrote, "Melbournians were keen to learn as much as they could from Ervad Jehan's visit. And boy! Did we learn! The topic of Zarathushtrian universality raised a gamut of emotions between the 'traditional' and 'non-traditional' groups and in the heat of argument we missed the main point: Zarathushtra's pristine message of universal brotherhood – the relationship of Man and Man, without which Man has no hope of a relationship between Man and God."

Jehan and Freny's insurmountable energy and their indomitable spirit of enjoying life to the fullest left us in awe. Jehan left an indelible mark on many who had come to listen to his talks. Even if a few families were able to benefit from his visit then we can humbly conclude that it was worth the effort. The measure of success lay not in the numbers that came to listen to Ervad Bagli, nor in the prophetic words that he spoke. The success lay in how deeply reinforced some people felt about their quest for truth. ■

Jehangir Mehta, a ZAWA committee member is a Marine/Production specialist on the off-shore Floating Production Storage facility in NW Australia.



Cyrus the Great's palace at Pasargadae may be at risk from humidity.

Update on the Sivand Dam. In November, a petition of over 350,000 signatures collected online at www.savepasargad.com was delivered to the Director of UNESCO. This effort will continue until the desired result. Through this and other petitions, as a welcome sign, the Iranian Parliament (Majlis) has agreed that the flooding of the dam, which was scheduled to be flooded in February 2006, will be postponed "until further notice."

Brief recap. Persepolis and Pasargad are not at risk of flooding, though the effects of increased humidity needs to be assessed. The main cause of concern is the flooding of the Tange Bolaghi valley. About 130 ancient sites have been discovered here – cave dwellings, megalithic graveyards, pre-Achaemenian settlements with metal-smelting furnaces, an ancient trade route (King Darius?), ancient waterways etc., all pointing to a very advanced civilization. Surely the value of these historical sites surpasses the benefits of the dam!

by Mehrbanoo Bakhtiary, tourmaline1234@yahoo.co.uk

One positive outcome of the “Coming Together” session at the London Congress

The message from Solly Shapurji (soll@iafrica.com) of Johannesburg, from the Zarathushtis of South Africa touched the hearts of those gathered for the “Coming Together” session at the World Congress in London last June:



Some of the 32 Zarathushtis of Durban, at a gathering in 2000.

The miniscule Parsi communities of South Africa, Swaziland, Botswana, Mozambique, Malawi, Tanganika, Tanzania, Eden, Ethiopia etc. have not been able to thrive like other immigrant communities, but have contributed in many ways and helped in shaping the destiny of the dark continent of Africa. Our total population in all of southern Africa is 117, with 60 in Johannesburg and 32 in Durban. This is down from the 250 Parsis recorded in 1920. The major challenges facing the Parsis here are:

- In the past because of Apartheid, we lived in **isolation** ... we had short and infrequent contacts with our families and fellow Zarathushtis in India. Now with a democratic dispensation we still live in isolation – we have not been able to generate enough interest in our fellow brethren globally to come to South Africa.
- We have an **elderly population** with about two deaths per year, while the number of children produced is small. Many of the boys and girls have **married out**; others are elderly bachelors and spinsters, victims of the past regime.
- Our biggest challenge is to preserve our religion and culture in this new millennium. We have had **no resident priest** here, but we have managed to preserve our religion and culture for 120 years. Our concern is whether this new generation will be able to survive in this multicultural society. Because the anjuman is so small it is difficult to pay to get a priest to come here to minister to our spiritual needs. We have no qualified priest to minister to our spiritual needs or to perform jashans, navjotes, weddings or death ceremonies. These have all been done by behdins for the past 120 years.

To have a priest here has been a dream for 120 years.

A positive followup to the appeal. Er. Jehan Bagli, president of the North American Mobeds Council, representing NAMC at the “Coming Together Roundtable,” took on the challenge to respond to this poignant appeal and has mobilized a collective effort to help. Two mobeds, Er. Bagli and Er. Firdosh Bulsara, a member of NAMC from Toronto, will visit Durban and Johannesburg for 10 days in May 2006 and perform ceremonies there as needed. They will carry with them books CDs and tapes on religion and culture, daily prayers, navjote ceremony and Gehsarna ceremony, donated by FEZANA, WZO-India, WZCF and generous individuals around the world. ■

“Coming Together in Hamazori”

The above is a tangible and positive followup of just one of over 75 challenges, issues and cooperative projects recorded at the “Coming Together” session at the London Congress last June [see FJ, Fall 2005].

But who will follow up on the rest?

We hope that this model of a “Coming Together” session is perpetuated at each Congress until a formal alliance is formed of global Zarathushti organizations who wish to “Come Together and Work Together” for our common good.

- Ed

High Priest lashes out against WAPIZ



In a letter published in Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly [January 1, 2006] Vada Dasturji Khurshed Dastoor Kaik-obad Dastoor of Udvada [left] responded with detailed facts and figures to “unfounded and misplaced criticism”

of the Foundation for Development of Udvada (which he chairs) from orthodox groups and newsletters like The WAPIZ Page and The Parsee Voice.

WAPIZ, of course is the World Alliance of Parsi Irani Zarthoshtis launched in May 2005, “to give our people the choice of joining a traditional world body of Parsi Irani Zarthoshtis as versus a cosmopolitan world body whose membership is open to non-Zoroastrians and converts,” according to founder member Khojeste Mistree.

In an interview with Noshir Dadrawala the Dastur lashed out at WAPIZ: “In reality, WAPIZ stands for ‘WAR AMONG PARSI IRANI ZOROASTRIANS.’” He felt that except for criticizing and running down all and sundry, WAPIZ had made no lasting or real contribution to the community.

The Dastur’s candid censure of the new organization prompted the following commentary from the editor of Jam-e-Jamshed:

“At long last we have with us a Vada Dastur who thinks logically, speaks with courage and conviction and is not afraid to take a bold stand when needed. The likes of The Parsee Voice and WAPIZ have often come and gone. They are not important. *Jam e Jamshed* congratulates the Dastur for being so frank and forthright and taking a firm stand.” ■



The Ancient Incense Trade - Exhibit at the Smithsonian

From where did the ancient Persians obtain Frankincense and Myrrh? If the three Magi who carried gold, frankincense and myrrh to the new born Jesus came from the east, where did they get these gifts from ?

An exhibit at the Sackler Gallery in Washington, DC, dating to the bronze age, provides some tantalizing clues.

The motif of the winged bull (artistically modified) seen in Assyria and later in Persepolis, and now resplendent in many Zarathushti places of worship among the finds from North-East Africa. A stela commemorates the digging of a well; and we know that there is no agiary worth its name without a well! A gold necklace carries a motif of a half crescent similar to what we have hanging in *torans* in our agiaries. The motif is repeated on an altar dedicated to the sun goddess; and in our agiaries the east is clearly marked so that we may pray in the direction of the sun ...

These are all finds from the Southern Arabian kingdoms of Saba (biblical Sheba). The region of Yemen, once located at the southern end of the Arabian peninsula, played a central role in an ancient global economy that flourished from the Mediterranean Sea to the Indian Ocean. Frankincense and Myrrh grown in the Southern Arabian kingdoms were used in court and temple celebrations, spice markets, and perfume industries.

Sassanian glassware, which is part of the exhibit speaks to the connection between Ancient Persia and this part of Northern Africa. To quote from the book released with the exhibit: "The last phase of pre-Islamic Yemen remains in total obscurity until Islamic sources state that the last Sasanian governor of the Yemen, converted to Islam in 628 CE."

The people of that era are known to have practiced a monotheistic faith. The docent at the Sackler gallery when queried whether it could possibly have been Zoroastrianism, did not dismiss the idea.

by Behram Pastakia, Metropolitan Washington, DC

Lost Cities found off Indian coast

The Tsunami of December 2004 may have revealed further evidence of what archeologists believe to be the lost ruins of an ancient city off the coast of Tamil Nadu in southern India. Indian archeologists believe the foundation walls, stone lions and other artefacts unearthed by the 30-meter waves once guarded a small port city that



Divers exploring Lost City off coast of India

may have been submerged since the last ice age.

Since 2002, marine archeologists have been working with divers from Delhi and a team from the Scientific Exploration Society in Dorset, England, to search for remnants of this

ancient port. Legend has it that this city was so magnificent that jealous gods unleashed a flood that swallowed it up in a single day.

Dorset diver Graham Hancock, has been exploring in coastal areas of India for over three years. In 2002, marine scientists discovered archeological remains 120 feet under water in the Gulf of Cambay which could be over 9,000 years old. The vast city, which is five miles long is believed to predate the oldest known remains in the subcontinent – the ancient Harappan civilization which dates to 4,000 years.

Graham believes the evidence is compelling. "Nothing else on the scale of these underwater cities are known in the archeological record until roughly 4,500 years ago when the first big cities begin to appear in Mesopotamia," he said, "this discovery could radically reshape archeologists' view of the ancient world."

[Source: www.nzherald.co.nz, www.news.bbc.co.uk]

Sasanian gate unearthed at Gur. Archaeologists have recently unearthed a gate of a governmental site at



the ancient circled-city of Gur, the first capital of the Sasanid dynasty, the Persian service of CHN reported in January 2005.

Located 10 kilometers from Firuzabad in Fars Province, Gur was established during the

reign of the founder of the Sasanid dynasty, Ardashir I (224-241 CE). Very few studies have been carried out on

the city, which is one of the five most important Sasanid cities. It covers an area of 300 hectares. The team has also discovered a stone floor of the monument and restored some ruins in order to prepare them for in-depth study. The gate bears no bas-relief – a fact that has raised many questions for the team of archaeologists.

So far, the archaeologists have not been able to determine the exact use of the site, but they surmise that it may have been a temple or a palace.

They said that over 80 percent of this ancient city of Gur, which contains significant artefacts from the Sasanid era (226 – 651 CE) is threatened by farmers activities such as irrigation, ploughing, and levelling the lands. Part of the site has been under wheat, barley and corn cultivation for the past 30 years. Some of the upper level of the city has been flattened and its walls have been seriously damaged by farming over the years.

[Posted by CAISnews@aol.com on creatingawareness@yahooogroups.com. Visit: www.cais-soas.com/News/2006/January2006]

Parthian Fire Temple discovered in Kermanshah

A Parthian fire temple was discovered at the future site of the reservoir of the Shian Dam, which is being constructed near the western Iranian city of Kermanshah, the Persian service of the Cultural Heritage News (CHN) agency reported in October.

“An archaeological team tasked with saving ancient sites at the reservoir site discovered the fire temple, which had never been referred to in any document before,” team director Hassan Rezvani said.

“Covering an area of about 283 square meters, the fire temple seems have been in use until the Sasanid era. The



Parthian fire temple in Kermanshah

foundations of the monument have been strengthened with stone and mortar and the floor has been covered with blocks made of plaster. The fire temple has a collection of unique plasterworks. The pillars of the five censors have been ornamented with stucco featuring lotus motifs. The censors are located beside the circumambulation area,” he explained.

“The floor of the fire temple was restored by the dynasties that came to power after the Parthians. Due to some structures in the fire temple, the archaeologists surmise that the monument had been used as a mosque (after the advent of Islam in Iran). They also infer numerous Islamic burials near the fire temple. The monument also has some structures believed to date back to the Achaemenid era.”

Archaeologists believe that the flowing Shian fountain-head encouraged the first settlements in the region in about 2,400 BCE. They have identified a large number of ancient, historic sites in the region from the Parthian to the Islamic eras.

Shian Dam is scheduled to come on stream in 2007. A number of other dams, all in various stages of construction, have been identified as threatening Iran’s ancient sites in several provinces including Fars in the south, Gilan in the north, Khuzestan in the southwest, and eastern Azarbaijan in the northwest. ■



Fire temple at Tash-k'irman-tepe

Tour of historical world of the Avesta

May/June (14 nights)

This tour will take you to Uzbekistan and into the historical world of the Avesta. The delta of the ancient Oxus River (Amu Dariya), was ancient Chorasnia, an early stronghold of the Zoroastrian faith. Some researchers believe that it may have been the original homeland of Zoroaster’s ministry.

The trip commences with an eight day tour of the Silk Road cities of Bukhara, Samarkand and Khiva, the medieval Islamic cities of the ancient Silk Road.

The ‘by special invitation’ tour participants will spend five days at the excavation headquarters of the Karakalpak-Australian Archeological Expedition of USCAP, the University of Sydney Central Asian Programme, where specialist staff will offer tours of key sites and museums. Among the highlights will be the Tower of Silence at Chilpik [see page 89] and the Karakalpakstan Art Museum in Nukus and the Tash-k'irman-tepe, a monumental religious complex with a fire temple which may date back to the early stages of the Zoroastrian religion.

For details of the tour and USCAP, visit www.arts.usyd.edu.au/departs/archeology/CentralAsia/expedition.htm

death & beyond

doctrine and practice

Editor Roshan Rivetna

This issue of FEZANA Journal explores the Zarathushti doctrine of life, death and after-life as expounded in the Gathic and Avestan scriptures. We give here a description of the traditional ceremonies as practiced in the 'old countries' and as adapted in the North American diaspora. A step by step guide describes the rituals for disposal of the body, and prayers and ceremonies for the progression of the departed soul towards frashokereti.

A note on the illustrations. These articles on Death and Beyond are embellished with designs from Parsi sari borders and *gara saris*, ornately hand embroidered, deeply valued for their workmanship and artistry. The designs, many of Chinese origin, commissioned by Parsi merchants of the 18th and 19th centuries, were drawn from the rich repertoire of motifs depicting scenes of life and afterlife and mythological stories and legends wishing for long life and happiness, with symbols of: longevity and immortality (the bamboo, the crane, the deer, the endless knot, and the sacred 'plant of immortality'), good fortune, protection and plenty (fish), happiness and long life (butterflies), the legendary Simurgh (birds of paradise), prosperity (chrysanthemum, peony), fertility (pomegranate and the pod of the lotus), purity and mercy (the lotus) and figures wielding swords, flags, sticks or flywhisks to ward off evil demons – all craftfully placed to create a work of rare beauty and meaning [Ref: "A Zoroastrian Tapestry, Art, Religion and Culture" editors Pheroza J. Godrej and Firoza Punthakey Mistree].

SARIS AND BORDERS FROM THE COLLECTION OF ROSHAN RIVETNA. PHOTOGRAPHS BY CYRUS RIVETNA.

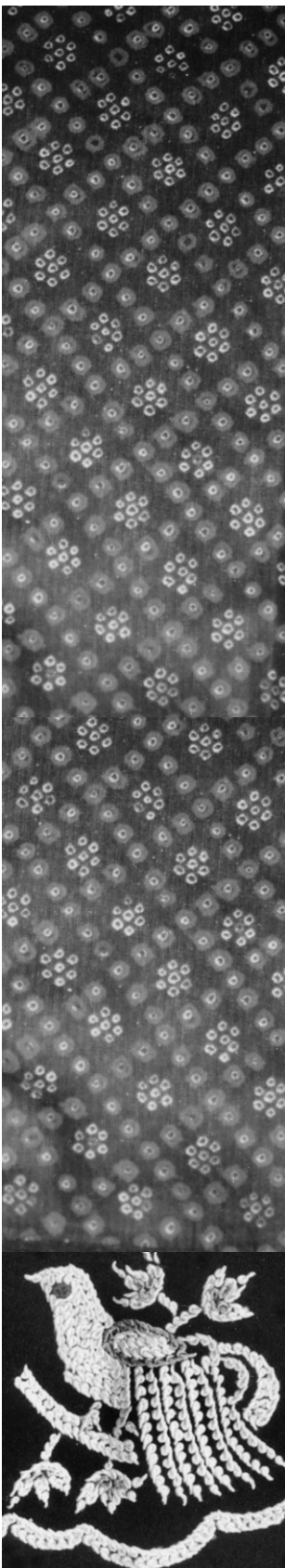
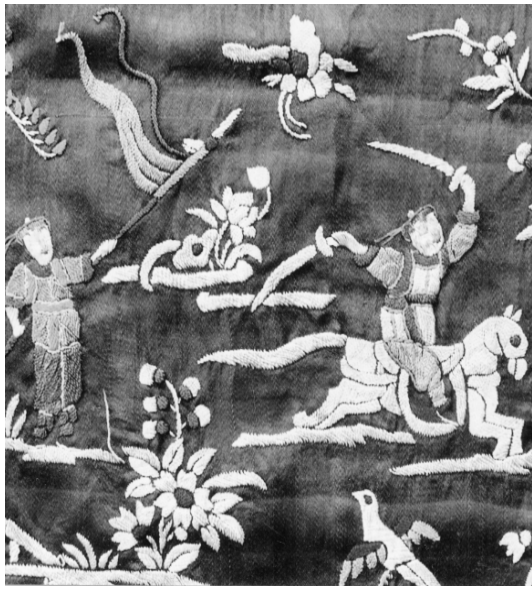


PHOTO: A 'LHA' SARI WITH A FRENCH KNOT BORDER, WORN BY PARSI WOMEN IN MOURNING. SEE PAGE 103.

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



Zarathushti view of death and the afterlife

by Kersey H. Antia

Exploring the Zarathushti view of life, death and afterlife, as propounded in the Gathas and later Young Avestan scriptures.

Figures carrying swords to ward off evil, and banners to awaken the spirits of the dead.

Throughout the ages, mankind has viewed death with awe and sorrow, and devised rituals and practices based upon the prevailing beliefs and philosophical underpinnings of a particular people, to soften the blow of death.

The Avestan people were no exception. Rather, all available evidence suggests that they were among the first, if not the very first, people on the earth to think of the afterlife – ‘paradise’ [Note 1 below] being an Avestan and not a Hebrew word – and to see death as a continuum between life and after-life, until the ‘renovation’ (*frashokereti*) or resurrection takes place, when life becomes eternal and perfect.

Avestan view of Death

The Avesta does not see a natural death as evil. Rather, the Gatha [Ys. 30.4] says that those who choose the path of evil (*angra*) are dead in spirit (*ajyaaiti* = without life) even while living; but those who have chosen the progressive path of *Spenta Mainyu* (the progressive spirit that represents Ahura Mazda) are welcome in the House of Divine Song (*garothman*, OAv. *garo.demane*, YAv. *garo.nmana*, Phl. *garodman*, or ‘the house of heavenly music’) until the renovation takes place:

*atcha hyat ta hem mainyu jasatem
paourvim dazde gaemcha ajyaitim-cha;
yaotha cha anghahat apemem
angheush achishto dregvatam,
at ashaune vahishtem mano.*

NOTE 1: The word ‘paradise’ is an Avestan word, *pairidaeza*, literally meaning ‘raised platform,’ used by the Greeks to describe the beautiful gardens of the Persians all over Anatolia (modern Turkey), a truly heavenly sight according to many first-hand witnesses.

And when together did these Spirits Twain,
Foregather at Creation’s early dawn,
Life did One make, the Other not-life;
And thus Creation’s purpose is achieved;
Dark is the mind of those that cling to False,
But brightly shines the Mind that holds to Truth.

[Ys. 30.4, tr. I. J. S. Taraporewala]

Reincarnation. This incidentally rules out *reincarnation* in Zoroastrian theology. We have but one life to make it to heaven, and we had better take it very seriously. The Gathas make it clear that evil was very rampant in Zarathushtra’s times, and there was urgency about eradicating it then and there, in one generation. Therefore, we do not find any reference to reincarnation in the Gathas, or any word denoting reincarnation, though some theosophists see it in a phrase ‘*paiti yantu*’ meaning ‘coming back.’ The idea of reincarnation, however, runs counter to the entire spectrum of Zoroastrian theology, though my own life-long study of the Gathas leads me to believe that Zarathushtra leaves the possibility, not of reincarnation per se – because after-death phenomena generally are beyond the conception of the human mind and imagination – but of some divine dispensation between the end of our physical existence and *frashokereti* when he asks Ahura Mazda [Ys. 44.19]:

“This I ask Thee, Tell me truly O Ahura!

“What shall be the *first* punishment for such a person (who unjustly shortchanges another person or breaks his promise to him). I know the *final* one which shall befall him.”

Zarathushtra makes a similar inquiry of Ahura Mazda in Yasna 48.2 as well.

Death. The word for death in the Avesta is *merethyoo*. It is mentioned once in the Gathas [Ys. 53.8]: “Let murders

and injuries be restrained. Let misery be restrained ... that person is the greatest who restrains death” brought on by violence.

*Shyeitibyo vishibyo iratu [ish] dvafsho,
Hvo dereza merethyaush, mazishto, moshu-cha astu.*

May tribulations vanish evermore;
May He (Zarathushtra), the Greatest, lead us all again;
Greatest is He, for He hath conquered Death.

[Ys. 53.8, tr. I. J. S. Taraporewala]

The word *merethyoo* (death) is mentioned at least three times in the Avesta, while describing how Yima (King Jamshid) was able to remove thirst, hunger, extreme heat and cold, old age and death, which is so suggestive of *frashokereti* [Yasna 9.5, Yasht 9.10, Yasht 15.16 and *Vendidad* 2.5].

The Avesta does not depict death as some form of disruption or disturbance on our way to eternity. It often portrays the soul *urvan* or *ravan* as pertaining to and embodied in the living person. Indeed, *urvan* receives guidance from the *fravashi* (*farohar*) the essence of Ahura Mazda in us all, for making the right choice in everything we conceive, speak or do.

Man's choices on earth govern destiny in the world beyond

The *Gathas* depict Ahura Mazda and His Holy Spirit (Spenta Mainyu) as uniformly and expressly acting in a spirit of benevolence and as governing humans on the basis of right or wrong choices made by them while on this earth. The *Gathas*, as well as *all* the later scriptures emphasize that only by good thoughts, words and deeds, can one ensure the triumph of Ahura Mazda over Angra Mainyu, nay, it is one's duty to do so:

*Ya-shyaothna, ya-vachanghaha, ya-yasna ameretatem,
Ashem-cha taeibyo daongha,
Mazda, Khshathrem-cha haurvatato.*

Through deeds I do, also through words I speak,
Through meditation deep within myself,
I bring mankind eternal life and truth,
Strength through Perfection, Mazda, do I bring.

[Ys. 34.1, tr. I. J. S. Taraporewala]

The *Later Avesta* at times seems to deviate from this basic Gathic principle. For instance, *Verethragna* (the yazata who smites enemies – later known as *Behram Yazad*), the yazata of Victory, asks:

To whom in my mighty power shall I smite with disease and death?

Similarly *Mithra* (*Meher*) the yazata of Covenants and Friendship, when not feeling fulfilled and revered by his worshippers, ponders :

To whom shall I, in my might, impart disease and death?
To whom shall I impart poverty that brings misery?
Of whom shall I, at one stroke, cut off noble progeny?

[Yasht 10.110]

Here, death and human misery are brought on by the fiats and whims of two major yazatas and not by the undeviating and fundamental Gathic principle of choices made by humans on this earth, a principle that makes the Zoroastrian religion so modernistic and humanistic in its outlook.

However, the *Vendidad* (The Law Against the Demons) a later scripture, strongly asserts that death, disease and other calamities are brought on by heretics and all those who do not practice proper purification rituals [Vendidad 9.47, 51; 20.1, 3, 6, 7, 9, 10; 21.2] and that death is evil and is brought on by Angra Mainyu (Ahriman), who is 'pouru-mahrka' – full of death and the very cause of it.

At first sight this may appear to be in contrast with the Gathic teaching of humans making their own destiny by the choices they make. However, if we make allowance for the fact that a full millennium and a half had intervened between these two beliefs, leading to some changes in people's critical understanding about the *Gathas*, in no small measure owing to the lack of knowledge about the Gathic language, we may well appreciate that Angra Mainyu may after all, represent the evil choices we make in life.

By not making the right choice we may be opposing Ahura Mazda, very much like Angra Mainyu does. We thus have a choice to be pro-Angra Mainyu or pro-Ahura Mazda.

Only an ethical dualism, however, pervades all through the *Gathas* where the problem of good and evil pertains itself only to human mentality. But even when, in later times, Angra Mainyu was somehow perceived to be directly in opposition to Ahura Mazda and not to Spenta Mainyu, as in the *Gathas*, the principle of making the right choice for right results was never abandoned or undermined in our scriptures – not even to this day.

Judgment upon death

For three days after death the soul (*urvan*) hovers around one's world and family. At dawn on the fourth day, the soul passes through *Chinvat Bridge* – the bridge that separates the good from the bad souls – which becomes narrower and narrower until it becomes as thin as a razor's edge.

This concept of the 'Judgment Bridge' is expressly enforced in the *Gathas* [Ys. 46.10-11 and 51.13] and may very likely even precede it.

The good souls have no problem crossing the *Chinvat Bridge*, and become one with their *fravashi*, as we pray at the end of the funeral and other prayers:

*Idha irristanam urvano yazamaide
Yao ashaonam fravashaiyo.*

The bad souls sink into the bottomless pit of hell where they remain until the time of *frashokereti*.

Thus upon death, a person will always be judged on the basis of his choices on this earth. Though there is some conflict between Gathic thought and the later doctrines about death and Ahriman, there is some basic continuity of belief and doctrine as well, namely, man's choices alone govern his destiny in the world beyond.

Heaven and hell

The post-Gathic and Pahlavi literature make abundant reference to heaven and hell, but Zarathushtra also alludes to them in the Gathas, for example:

"Foul food shall be for these, as they cry woe, when they shall be in hell." [Ys. 53.6, Stanley Insler]

He who is good will be blessed by God, but:

"Worse-than-evil will accrue to that one who does not acknowledge Him when he reaches Judgment Day at the end of his life." [Ys. 51.6]

"The abodes (of the Good) are in Thy house (garothman), O Ahura!" [Ys. 48.7]

However, when the souls of the wicked reach Chinvat Bridge:

"Their souls will become guests in the house of druj (the lie) for all times to come." [Ys. 46.11]

While such pronouncements abound in the Gathas, perhaps the most obvious reference seems to be:

"O Mazda, Thou maintain these (the faithful) in Thy house (garothman) ... But (as regards) the wicked with bad exercise (abuse) of his power, bad action, bad word, of bad conscience (religious precepts) and bad thought ... The souls come to greet them with rotten food (in contrast to the food of one's choice offered in the Satum ceremony?); they will indeed end up becoming residents in the house of druj (the lie)." [Ys. 49.10-11]

Yasna 43.20 reiterates this scenario and adds the words "a long lifetime of darkness and woe."

Post-Gathic literature paints a very graphic and detailed picture of heaven and hell, and describes different stages of heaven, culminating in Arda Viraf Nameh (which is reminiscent of Dante's work later on). One's belief in these later works is punctuated by one's own preconceptions and personal beliefs in the matter, many a one contending that heaven and hell exist in mind only.

It may be interesting to compare notes with people like Van Paragh [see page 36] without, of course, in any way abiding by it. He says [p. 86-87] hell "is a condition brought into existence by the thoughts, words and actions of those who have produced pain and suffering on earth. All of us will reap what we have sowed."

There is "a faint darkness ... an endless dance of restlessness. There is no safe refuge for a tormented soul when it is trying to flee from its own baseness. Spirits in such a dark realm harbor mental attitudes of hate, malice and the need for control over others ..." Their

The human Constitution

The Avesta, especially Yasna 55.1, anatomises the human constitution into nine parts as follows:

The three physical parts are:

- (1) **Gaetha** – the organs.
- (2) **Tanu** – the skin and muscles.
- (3) **Azdi** – the bones and skeletal frame.

The three invisible physical parts are:

- (4) **Ushtan** – Breath, which keeps us alive and serves as the only link between the body, mind and spirit, leading to their separation upon death.
- (5) **Kehrp** – the etheric body, which leaves the body upon death.
- (6) **Tevishi** – Etheric energy, senses, the power needed to make choices.

The three spiritual parts are:

- (7) **Baodha** – Consciousness and intelligence ('buddhi') essential for functioning normally in life, and making intelligent decisions/choices for the benefit of the soul.
- (8) **Urvan** or **ravan** – the Soul, which is called upon to choose right while living, and departs from the body upon death. It will rise from the body at dawn on the fourth day, will be judged at the Chinwat Bridge, and go to heaven or hell (or purgatory) depending on his actions on earth.
- (9) **Fravashi** [see below] – God's divine spark in each of us, that veers us to the right path (Path of Asha) all the time, and which rejoins heaven upon our death. - by Kersey H. Antia

"dwellings are molded out of negative mental attitudes and the darkness of spiritual ignorance."

The concept of fravashi

Fravashi (Av.) **farohar** or **fravahar** (Phl.) represents the divine essence in all living beings. It is invested with eternal light and works ceaselessly and eternally for the eradication of all evil in this world by inspiring our **urvan** (soul) to choose right all the time. While urvan is attached to the body while one is alive, the fravashi is divine in its essence, and its abode is in heaven. Its principal mission is to guide the soul towards making the right choices.

Etymologically, 'fravashi' means an ideally perfect purpose pervading every living thing in this planet or the divine impulse that guides the evolution of the world, or the divine impulse to make the right choice all the time.

It is described as '*anamanthwao*' or 'inconceivable by the human mind.' Each living object has its own fravashi, whose task is to lead every object (and not just humans) in God's creation towards perfection.

Fravashi may well be ‘the clothing of souls’ mentioned in Yasna 30.7. If we translate it as “the act of making a progressive choice,” it again fits well into the Gathic theology, even though somehow it is not mentioned there at all.

Fravardin Yasht [1, 17, 19, 28, 29, 71 and 78] suggests that the farohars assist Spenta Mainyu towards achieving the ultimate goal of perfection. Thus the farohars are engaged in the ceaseless cosmic battle for eradicating evil (and thus Angra Mainyu) from God’s creation and they inspire the urvan to do the same.

The word ‘fravashi’ occurs first in the Haptan Yasht [Ys. 37.3] which is quite Gathic in nature. Hadokht Nask [Yt. 22.39-40] says that fravashi emanated from Spenta Mainyu and Vohu Manah, which are the most unique of God’s divine abstractions in the Gathas.

The origin of fravashis thus lies in the Gathas, though its concept is more clearly described in Yasna 23 and 26 and in the Fravardin Yasht. Nowhere in the Avesta is it mentioned that Spenta Mainyu and fravashis are created. Fravardin Yasht [Yt. 13.80] mentions that Ahura Mazda has his own fravashi, but the Avesta does not mention any fravashi of Spenta Mainyu, which may very well be due to the fact that the concept of fravashi corresponds quite well with that of Spenta Mainyu.

It is not surprising that the fravashis of the living are regarded as more powerful and significant (because they still have the opportunity to do good while on earth) than those of the dead (who do not have such an opportunity any more, and may have even lost it).

Fravashis are the spiritual essence of Ahura Mazda in us all, but they lack *Haurvatat* (Perfection) and *Ameretat* (Immortality), which Ahura Mazda always had. According to Bundahishn, the ninth century Book of Primal Creation Ahura Mazda gave the fravashis a choice – either to go out to this earth to attain Perfection and Immortality by gaining intelligence and using it wisely to make right choices (a task they were not hitherto called upon to do) or continue to stay with Ahura Mazda without attaining intelligence and the twin rewards. The fravashis chose to come to this earth in order to be like Ahura Mazda completely. They readily responded to Ahura Mazda’s call to join Him in His struggle against eradicating all evil from this world, and make it as fresh and holy as the spiritual world [Bundahishn, 3:23 – 24]:

“Which seems more useful to you, that I should create you into material form, so that incarnate, you will battle the lie, and vanquish it, and that I should resurrect you perfect and

immortal at the end, and re-create you in corporeal form, and that you become immortal, unaging, and without enemies forever; or is it necessary always to protect you from the adversary. The immortal souls of mankind saw, through their omniscient wisdom, that the evil from Angra



This symbol is commonly believed by Zarathushtis to represent the farohar (or fravahar or fravashi), the essence of God that dwells in every living thing, and leads the soul on its journey towards the ultimate triumph of Good over Evil. To some, this symbol represents the royal khwar-nah or divine glory. Persepolis, c. 500 BCE.

PHOTO: KHURSHED A. PATELL

Mainyu would arrive into the material world and [saw also] the final non-opposition of the adversary. They agreed to enter the material world to become perfect and immortal in the final body up to eternity and eternal progress.”

Consequently, the mission of every Zarathushti is to align himself completely with the forces of Ahura Mazda and fight the forces of evil in everything they conceive, verbalize or undertake.

Present-day Zarathushtis regard as fravashi, a figure found often in Achaemenian architecture, hovering over the portrayal of kings, winged like a bird with a human face. While Fravardin

Yasht [70] provides some clue for it when it says “the fravashis of the righteous come to the help of (righteous) rulers flying like a bird and shaped as a winged man,” it may be referring to the royal *khwarnah* [FJ, Spring 1996] in my studied opinion, but most European scholars insist it represents Ahura Mazda.

There are some similarities between the concept of fravashi and Plato’s suggestion that all things and beings in the universe have their ideal prototype in the spiritual world. Long before Plato, Zoroastrians saw such an ideal pervading the universe in the form of fravashi. Bundahishn [IV: 4&5] even states that the fravashi of Asho Zarathushtra was known to the *Geush Urvan*, the soul of the universe, at the time of creation. It is quite likely that Plato was influenced by Zarathushti ideas, quite prevalent in Greece then.

The concept of fravashi is also somewhat similar to the Egyptian belief in ‘kaa,’ man’s higher double, the Hindu belief in ‘param-atma,’ or ‘pitris,’ the Roman belief in the ‘manes’ and the Chinese belief in ‘Tao,’ the origin of heaven and earth, the Ultimate Essence.

The final renovation (frashokereti)

At the time of *frashokereti*, not only all human beings, but also all living creatures, will become fresh (*frasha*) and pure by the grace of God, according to our Pahlavi scriptures.

Yasna 30.9 encourages us all to bring it about, on this earth,

“May we be like those who strive to bring frashokereti on this earth”

that is to make it as fresh and perfect as it was at the beginning, when it was unspoiled by evil – Angra, later Ahriman.

The material world was made in the image of the spiritual world by Ahura Mazda, but the introduction of evil polluted the material world with rage, greed, disease, violence, hatred, etc. The world will become frasha (fresh, renovated) again on their ultimate eradication. This is similar to the idea of *resurrection*. According to the Pahlavi tradition, the ultimate renovation will be brought about by a messiah born of a virgin mother. In the Gathas, there appears to be no break for the evil souls, even at the time of frashokereti, but the later Pahlavi writings uniformly make it explicit that all souls, even the evil souls, will be resurrected to a new, perfect life.

Near-death experiences

We are afraid of death because of the fear of the unknown. Little is known to us about what really happens when we die, but in our times many books have come out on this subject as a result of reports given by people going through near-death experiences and recalling them after being revived in hospital emergency rooms. I had the good fortune of having had many patients sharing such experiences with me.

A common thread runs through these experiences – going through a tunnel, meeting loved ones (who generally push them back into this world saying their time here is not over yet), seeing a bright light, a sense of utter peacefulness (except in cases of suicide), the sense that death is not the end-all of everything.

James van Praagh, author of the New York Times #1 bestseller writes [*Reaching to Heaven, Signet, 1999, p. 80*] that a good soul:

“... would discover radiant, manicured gardens as far as the eye can see, with each flower bursting forth in brilliant color. The vivid colors in the spirit world are beyond our natural, earthly spectrum.”

Many righteous souls hear divine music just before passing away. I know of a person, then a child, who heard it herself, as her dear brother was passing away.

Thus, from this earthly abode, a good soul passes on to the world of endless light (*anaghra raochao*, later *aneran*).

Van Praagh [*ibid.*] further observes:

“Everything in this environment is literally ‘lit up.’ The light of the realm does not originate from any sun or star; it is known as the astral light ... Because all things are harmoniously connected, you might think of this glowing effervescence as a reflection of the light that shines within each spirit.

“Next you would notice is the scent ... So often the spirits have said that they instantly possessed a heightened sensitivity to the exquisitely sweet smell of their environment.”

Tending the fire with fragrant sandalwood and incense after a death occurs and thereafter for all the ceremonies for the departed, becomes thus all the more meaningful. We die in the body, only to inhabit in spirit a life much more splendid and peaceful than we can ever conceive as humans.

Presence of fravashis of the departed

Our scriptures tell us often that the *fravashis* of the holy and of our departed relatives come to greet us when we die, which is proven time and again by the accounts of those who were pronounced dead on arrival at the hospital but were later revived. They guide the soul of the departed immediately upon death and from thereon, especially during the last five days of the year. I had first-hand evidence of this when my best friend-cum-classmate at the Cama Athornan Institute in Mumbai lay dying in a hospital in 1953 and repeatedly said that he saw his step-mother and step-brothers, and that they had come to escort him to the other world, though they had died long before he was even born.

Almost all, if not all, books on life after death mention this phenomenon without fail, and many of my own patients who were declared dead but were later revived, have consistently confirmed it.

As a teenager I remember a custom that if a person died during the Muktaḍ, the family would not observe the Muktaḍ ceremony for other deceased relatives, presumably because the fravashis were already busy helping the recently departed soul. While there may have been some variations in this custom in different *panths* (priestly sections), its implication is clear: the souls of our departed relatives do come to greet us and instruct us into the ways of the other world.

Although we lose our body on death, the Avesta assures us that we do not forsake those who have passed on. Rather, the Avesta repeatedly asserts that the departed souls crave:

“Who will praise us?
Who will venerate us?
Who will show love for us ... ?”

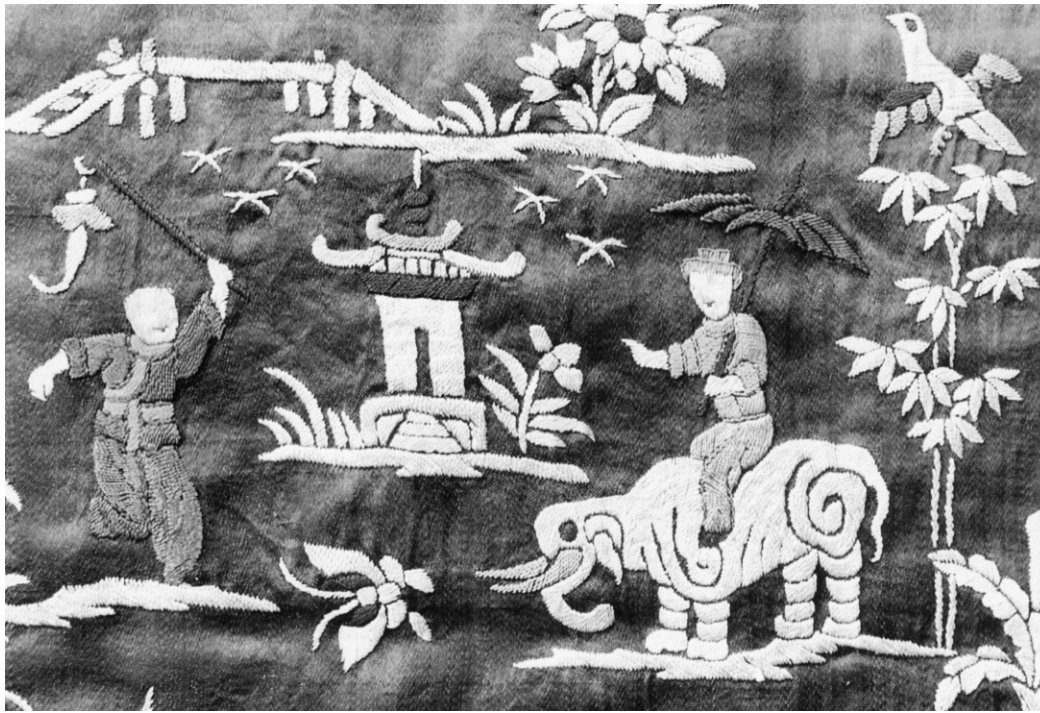
[*Afringan-i-Ardafravash*]

Venerating departed souls

Fravardin Yasht and Yasna 26 exhort us to hold proper rituals in memory of departed souls, as also to venerate them collectively at the end of the year, leading to what we observe today as *Muktaḍ* or *Panjeh*, similar to the observance of All Souls’ Day among the Christians.

It is not surprising that our third most important prayer (after Ashem Vohu and Yatha Ahu Vairyo), Yenghahe Hatam relates to the veneration of all worthy souls, men or women (*‘tascha taoscha’*).

[Continued on page 55]



A scene densely embroidered with auspicious imagery. The man at left wards off evil with a fly-whisk, an attribute of the “Eight Immortals” who, having imbued the Elixir of Life, have achieved immortality and are worshipped in Chinese mythology as the gods of longevity. A butterfly, symbolizing happiness and long life flutters nearby, while a bird sits atop a Bamboo plant symbolizing long life, vitality and strength.

afterlife – a zarathushtrian perspective

by Jehan Bagli

Exploring the Zarathushtrian perspective of the afterlife, and a brief historic comparison with the eschatology of other faiths.

The concept of life after death is a notion that profoundly affects human existence on this planet. The fact that the human mind attempts to understand such concepts beyond the five sensory physical systems, demonstrates the consciousness of humanity for possible existence in an invisible realm beyond.

Death can be defined in many ways based on diverse perspectives. However in the ultimate analysis, it is the last breath of life, the cessation of the thoughts, words and deeds, of the five-sensory personality – the physical – as defined by Gary Zukav in his book *The Seat of the Soul*. The interpretation of death in a metaphysical sense, only follows the ideas one formulates for the state of life, how to live it, and one’s perception of God.

Doctrine of afterlife in other faiths

Ancient *Egyptians* as also the *Australian aborigines* believe in continuity of cosmic life, a strand of thought that stretches back millennia before Christ to Vedic times. The belief of early Egyptians that humans continue to live on after death in an invisible underworld is supported by archeological finds of the belongings of the individual that were buried with the body. The judgment after death, according to these early ideas, was made by the God of Death and the Underworld – Osiris, who appraised the actions of the individual in life.

To the East, the ancient *Babylonians* also held a belief in the future life of the soul in a ‘lower world’ but not as elaborate as that of the Egyptians.

The belief of the *Proto-Indo-Iranians* in that infancy of civilization, was rooted in the early concepts of the *Vedic era*, that subscribe to the notion of an immortal component – the soul. The Veda addresses the soul spiritually as *Asu* or as the breath of life, *Atman*, which separates at the end from the physical self and lives on.

According to early Vedic scriptures the soul continues to bear the identity of one’s corporeal existence which is now purified by Fire of all its imperfections. The widely believed notion of transmigration only appears in the later Vedic scriptures of Brahmanas and is fully developed in the early Upanishads.

The spirit according to these early thoughts, traverses the path of the ancestors (*pitara*), is guided by Fire (*agni*), rejoins the purified body, and

is glorified in the kingdom of Yama. This concept closely resembles the final resurrection, *frashokereti*, described in the later Avesta [*Sanjana, Dinkerd, IX, p. 626, Bundahishn XXXIV.5-7*] where Ahura Mazda speaks as follows, to Zarathushtra:

"I produced each one of these when their production was more difficult for me ... what has been, can be again. I will demand the bony frame from the spirit of the earth, the blood from the water, the hair from the plants and life from the wind, as they had received from the beginning of creation."

[*Bundahishn XXXIV.5-7*]

The notion of afterlife that is common to **Judaism**, several sects of **Christianity**, **Hindu scriptures** of Satapatha-Brahmana, and **Islam** is that of reward and retribution received by the soul on its sojourn to the spiritual domain. The *Book of Mark* quotes Jesus as saying,

"With the measure you give, will be the measure you get."

[*Mark 4:24*]

Reward and retribution – Bridge of Judgment

The 9th century Zarathushtrian text of *Arda Viraf Nameh* speaks [*ch. 10-20*] of diverse returns meted out to souls returning from the corporeal existence. It was around 1,700 BCE in the Gathic hymns of Zarathushtra that we note the insemination of the doctrine of rewards for the righteous and retributions for the deceitful, when the Prophet says:

"I realize you to be powerful ... you give rewards both to the righteous and to the deceitful."

[*Ys 43.4*]

The doctrine of reward and retribution is closely intertwined with what Zarathushtra elaborates as **Chinvato Peretum**, literally translated as the '**Bridge of the Sorter or Separator**,' also interpreted as the 'Bridge of Judgment.' This is a concept of afterlife unique to the Zarathushtrian faith, where the Prophet declares that he will accompany those righteous souls across the bridge [*Ys 46.10*] while the souls of the evil ones shall

torment and tremble at the revelation on the bridge [*Ys. 46.11, 51.13*]. This imaginary span may be assumed as a juncture that stretches across the corporeal (*getig*) and the spiritual (*menog*) existence.

The Younger Avestan 9th century Pahlavi text *Menog i Khrad* [*Mkh. 2.116-191*] provides a highly anthropomorphic story of the appearance of Daena (a female form) to the soul at the bridge. The story starts with the soul arriving on the fourth day at the *Kindvar* Bridge (a corrupted term for the *Chinvato peretum* mentioned in the Gathas) to face a panel of judges Meher, Sarosh and Rashnu. These divinities are humanized as impartial judges and the text goes on to say,

His own deeds of a virtuous kind come to him in the form of a maiden who is more beautiful than any maiden in the world.

The soul of the righteous then asks, "who mayest thou be?" to which the maiden replies,

"I am no maiden, I am thy virtuous deeds..."

In contrast a wicked soul encounters Aeshma (demon of wrath) and Astovidhotu (demon of death) and confronts a hideous form of a woman. The woman when questioned to identify herself, answers,

"I am thy deeds, thou monster who are evil-thinking, evil-speaking, evil-doing, and of evil-religion."

It must be remembered that this is the way our 9th century co-religionists understood the fate of the soul within the Zarathushtrian concept of the Bridge of the Sorter or Separator.

A later perspective

Today, a millennium later, looking at this anthropomorphic episode, one can evolve a deeper level of interpretation of the concept.

The early Avestan literature classifies the yazatas ('ones worthy of worship') as *Mainyava* (celestial) and *Gaethaya* (terrestrial). The term Daena together with Chisti and Sraosha (Sarosh) tops the list of the Spiritual Ones [*Dastur Dhallah, History of Zoroastrianism, p. 177*] as Divine Wisdom. They together

formulate intuition, an intellectual understanding beyond the five physical senses.

Avestan literature is also replete with references in the Yasna, Yashts, Nyaeshs, Vendidad and other texts, to terms such as *Daena Vanghui Mazdayasni* meaning the Good Mazda-worshipping religion. Here Daena is interpreted as religion. It thus appears that it is the innate moral sense – the religion – of a person, the moral code by which the person has lived in the corporeal world, that is personified.

So what is believed to appear to the soul at the Bridge of Judgment, is a reflection of its own 'religious conscience.' For a righteous soul the conscience is personified as a damsel of boundless beauty; the charm and glamour that the soul experiences is derived from the noble thoughts, words and actions of its personality in the corporeal world. The noble soul is thus believed to make its way through the wind with fragrant perfume from the south to the spiritual domain [*Yt 22.7-9*]. The soliloquy referred to in the story, is the joyous perception experienced by the soul in judging its own character and redeeming a satisfying reward.

It is relevant to mention that the 'wind with fragrant perfume' experienced by a righteous soul, can be corroborated with the fact that the life-breath (Av. *ushtana*, Phl. *jan*) of the physical world is believed to unite with the wind [*Bd.III.13*] after death. The soul of the deceitful one goes through a vexing and castigating experience with the image of its religious conscience, which is visualized as a dissipated, profligate woman with its life-breath taking the form of a foul-scented wind. Despite the missing portion of Hadokht Nask [*Yt. 22*], one finds a comparable account in the Book of Arda Viraf [*Ch. 17*].

In the final analysis a noble soul is aided by the spirit of love and friendship (Mithra), following the voice of Mazda (Sraosha) and just nature (Rashnu) of the person during the physical life. On the other hand, for

the soul of a deceitful and wicked individual, the experience becomes difficult and painful through the wrath of its own evil nature.

The Older Avesta that describes the profundity of the Ahuna Vairya teaches [Ys. 19.6],

“Whosoever in this world remembers, recites recalls mentally ... the gift of Ahuna Vairya, I who am Ahura Mazda will cause his soul to pass over the bridge to the best world.”

An understanding of these eschatological facets of the Zarathushtrian faith can profoundly influence one in one's quest for a truthful and righteous life in this world of actuality.

Heaven and hell

Just as the pleasure and the torment for the soul at the bridge, are distinctly associated with righteous and deceitful ways of life respectively in the corporeal world, the concept of heaven and hell as elaborated in the Gathic hymns of Zarathushtra, are also inextricably woven with the honorable and fraudulent life respectively.

The Prophet uses the terms ‘*demana*’ meaning a house or dwelling to describe these places. For example he uses the terms ‘*House of Songs*’ [Ys. 45.8, 46.10, 50.4, 51.15] or House of the Good Mind [Ys. 32.15, 30.10] to represent Heaven. In contrast the Manthran addresses hell as the ‘*House of Wrong*’ [Ys 49.11], ‘*House of Deceit*’ [Ys. 51.14] or ‘*House of Worst Mind*’ [Ys 32.13]. The term House has been interpreted by some scholars as a metaphor for a state of being.

While Zarathushtra in this corporeal world, extols those souls that follow the message of Ahura Mazda, he unambiguously repudiates those evil thinking ones as destroyers in this physical world. It must be recalled that in physical life the body and the bony skeleton is indeed the House of the Soul. It is therefore entirely reasonable to postulate, that the use of the term ‘house’ by the Prophet, when the body has all but dissipated, is only an indicator of a containment for the soul in the spiritual domain.

Thus a righteous soul enters a spiritual enclosure or body (house) of praise and good thinking, while the deceitful ones suffer darkness in a spiritual body (house); the same darkness and deceit as it has practiced through the physical existence. It is interesting to note that the Prophet expresses the same sentiments of reward and retribution without using the word house when he says,

“The worst existence shall be for the wicked, but the Best Mind for the Righteous.”

[Ys. 30.4]

Time has taken a toll on this aesthetic understanding of heaven and hell. The idea has undergone a drastic transformation in that both heaven and hell have become graded into four levels.

The Younger Avestan 9th century Pahlavi text [Mkh. 2.116-191] describes the stages of hell as the first step of evil thoughts (*dus-humat*), the second step of evil words (*dus-hukht*), the third step of evil-deeds (*dus-huvrst*) and the final abyss of demonic darkness. A similar description also appears in Hadokht Nask [Yt 22.1-25].

About the sojourn of the soul, in the same text [Mkh. 2.146] we read:

Afterwards on its (soul's) march the first step is set on the place of Good thought, the second on Good words, the third on that of Good deeds and the fourth step reaches up unto the endless Light which is all radiant.

With time the parameters of these three lower heavens – *Humata*, *Hukhta* and *Huvareshhta* are defined

as spanning from the star regions to the moon, from the moon to the sun and from the sun to *garo.demane* respectively. The highest heaven *garo.demane* is the *Anghra raocha* (*aneran*), the endless light of the Younger Avesta that spans infinitely into space as the abode of Ahura Mazda. This account is also in consonance with the description of the levels of ‘Best Existence’ as observed by the soul of Arda Viraf [Book of Arda Viraf Ch. 7-10]. This soul describes its encounter with God in the words,

“When Ormazd spoke ... I remained astonished for I saw a light, but I saw nobody. I also heard a voice, and I understood that this is Ormazd.”

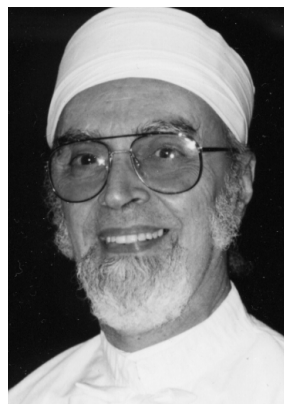
[Arda Viraf Nameh, Ch. 101]

The notion that the same human mind can conceive noble as well as ignoble thoughts is entertained on two occasions in the Gathas [Ys. 33.1, 48.4]. In the Younger Avestan times we see the evolution of an elaborate mechanism of measuring the good and bad deeds [Shayast la Shayast 6.3, 6; Skhand Gumanik Vizar 4.92-96]. This appears to have led to a unique feature of an intermediary place [Yt 1.1, Vd. 19.36, Mkh. 7.18] known as ‘*Hamestagan*’ (Av. *misvana gatu*) between heaven and hell for the souls who were equally good and bad in their lives.

“They in whom both (good and bad) are equal, remain among these, *hamestagan*, till the future body.”

[Arda Viraf Nameh, Ch. 6]

[Continued on page 41]



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Commentary - euthanasia, suicide, capital punishment and such

[Excerpts from postings on creatingawareness@yahoo.com]



As I grow older, I am increasingly conscious of my own oncoming mortality. I am neither afraid of nor obsessed by the event of death. But I am very apprehensive of the process of dying. If the end comes swiftly and quickly so much the better for myself and my family. But if I perceive that the end is likely to be at the expense of my dignity, with physical, mental or moral degradation, attached as a 'human corpse' to man-made devices with the loss of my personhood – then I am very clear that I would like my existence terminated, because I do not wish to merely exist, but to live.

I would like to discuss this issue in the light of Zarathushtra's teachings especially since our religion emphasizes 'free will' and the 'freedom to choose.' Does this freedom extend to life as well, in the case of euthanasia (one's own life) and also abortion and capital punishment (with another life).

Abortion. In the villages of India, where a female child is seen as an unnecessary burden at the least, where abortion is not available, even female infanticide is resorted to. Yet many girls are born to such unwanted parents; and many grow up to be pretty well adjusted, and often by sheer dint of hard work overcome the handicap of their birth and make

decent lives for themselves. Therefore wouldn't it be reasonable to say that although the parents' neglect may affect their lives, they can overcome if they use their Vohu Manah.

Capital punishment. I am totally against it because I believe that it makes no sense at all to kill a murderer to make an example to society that killing is wrong! From a Zarathushti viewpoint, our Gathas tell us that through the Mazda-given faculty of Vohu Manah, we humans are indeed capable of realizing our mistakes and mend our erring ways. By executing a murderer, we deny him that opportunity.

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I believe that our religion teaches us to always choose life over 'not-life.'

Euthanasia ensures the victory of death over life. Therefore I believe that it goes against our religion.

The fear of ultimate death after a prolonged and undignified illness can be mitigated somewhat if one thinks of the good that may come from what the medical community will learn from trying to prolong life. We have already come a long way from only a hundred years ago, when the only pain killer available was morphine; the only way to fight fever was quinine; and the only way to avoid sep-

sis was to hope that the immune system will fight it. As recently as 15 years ago, we have seen great advances in the development of the artificial heart which would not have been possible if no one had been willing to try to delay death even at the expense of great discomfort, indignities to the body and lack of privacy even in death.

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Zarathushtrian theology enjoins that human life is divinely ordained. As Asho Zarathusht teaches,

"Wise One, at the beginning Your thought process fashioned for us the living, conceptions and intellect, as You created the body and breath.

[Ys. 31.11]

Even after the advances of present day technology, creation of mankind remains a miracle, something far beyond human comprehension. Present scientific knowledge of how the human mechanisms function, may at best be described as the tip of the iceberg that will need continued unraveling for centuries to come.

With a creation that is beyond material value, its extinction or termination must necessarily be a matter beyond the physical; best left to divine control. Any discussion of Euthanasia

and Suicide must necessarily contemplate this theological perspective.

Euthanasia. From the point of termination of a human life, euthanasia has been looked upon by most organized traditions in general as abhorrent. From a theological standpoint any terminal sickness is an evil that one has the obligation to combat against, to the best of one's ability. It is important to recognize that despite cutting edge advances of medical sciences, therapy for many pathological conditions are grossly limited. Today many health-care providers even in western society are acutely aware of the spiritual component and its role in maintaining order in the human body.

Medical science has within its armament of 'extraordinary measures' available to keep 'alive' a physical body that has suffered irreparable and irreversible damage. The decision for deploying these measures must remain a choice. The exercise of this choice must rest with the individual involved, when mentally competent, or with a next-of-kin in the event of a mentally impaired case.

Voluntary euthanasia has been legalized in US since 1938, and that right-to-die movement led 40 states by 1990 to introduce legal measures that permit formulation of a Living Will. This protects the right of choice, that empowers the individual or immediate family members to withhold the life-support system in the event of a terminal situation.

When the happiness and joy of living experience has expired, and solely the evil of sickness dominates over the physical remains, it is time to appraise the values and worth of the quality of living. As the prophet teaches:

Of the two fundamental mental aspects, if the 'better one' has departed and only the 'bad one' prevails it only generates the 'non-living' (a life not worth living).
[Ys. 30.3]

To exercise the choice of right-to-die under such extreme conditions would

entirely be in consonance with the Zarathushtrian theology.

Suicide is a self-inflicted destruction of life, brought about by an intensely complex mental distress that perceives death as the only possible option. This behavior pattern may result from a variety of circumstances ranging from failures in life, to a sinful act of murder that is often punishable by death.

Regardless of the rationale, by Zarathushtrian theological definition, suicide is an evil act, as it desecrates a divinely ordained creation and is an unpardonable sin. The generation of such a mental state results from a copious disharmony between the physical and the spiritual within a human being. Life by Zarathushtrian ethical code is a struggle to extirpate evil by discovering the righteous path. In an effort to do that, there are barriers that one should be prepared to face. As it says in our later Pazand prayer of repentance, Patet:

Az anai khorsand hom

I am reconciled to distress in life.

It is therefore important to evolve, through routine communion with the divinity coupled with prayers or meditation, the holy state of 'right-mindedness' (*Spenta Armaiti*). Such devotional practice prepares an individual physically and provides the spiritual strength to withstand the forces of evil and steer towards the path of 'holy mentality' (*Spenta Mainyu*), a path that guarantees eschewal of such extreme notions as suicide and reveals the path of Asha.

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The whole thing about 'death' has been vastly overblown. Death is a part of living. It is a natural thing. It is not 'evil' (our Sasanian forebears to the contrary notwithstanding). Everyone is going to die some time or another. The only question is when and how.

I do not see any virtue in prolonging my life under certain circumstances; but I would never take it upon myself to commit euthanasia upon another human being, unless he was in a vegetative state and was being kept alive by artificial means when there was no hope of recovery.

I think to keep someone alive by artificial means, when there is no hope of recovery, is a desecration – an arrogant interference in a natural life process. It is wrong, in my view.

Even so, it would not be my choice to make for someone else who was capable of making that choice for themselves. If someone I loved, and for whom I was responsible, was not capable of making that choice, and if there was absolutely no hope of any recovery, then I would take whatever steps I could, within the law, to pull the plug, and allow that soul to peacefully pass on.

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Afterlife

[Continued from page 39]

'the future body' implying the final resurrection – *Frashokereti*.

It must be realized that much of this understanding of Zarathushtrian eschatology has evolved over several millennia and is metaphorically anthropomorphized. The fact remains as words of the Prophet resonate, as it is in this life and in the spiritual domain:

*"Achishto dregvatanm at ashaune
vahisstem mano"*

"Worst existence for the wicked, and
the Best mind for the righteous"

[Ys 30.4]

It is the righteous soul that will reach wholeness and oneness with the Divine to attain *haurvatat* (perfection) and through it *amertat* (immortality) of the undying eternal peace that is *vahishta* (Eng. *best*, Pers. *behesht*) the state of being heavenly. ■

A man, standing by the legendary Chinese 'Plant of Immortality' [far right], wards off the evil rodent, with swords, as a butterfly, symbol of happiness, flutters nearby, in this elaborately embroidered scene.

The Gahs

The five watches (*gah*) of the day are:

Havan gah:

Dawn to noon, morning period.

Rapithwan gah:

Noon to mid-afternoon (3:00 pm), afternoon period. Observed only during the first seven months of the year before the onset of winter when the days get shorter. For the rest of the year, it is the 'Second Havan'. (This fluctuates among the Fasli, Kadmi and Shenshai calendars).

Uzirehn gah:

Mid afternoon (3:00 pm) to sunset, evening period.

Aiwisruthrem gah:

Sunset to midnight, early night period.

Ushahin gah:

Midnight to dawn, late night period.



spiritual ascent of the soul

by N. D. Minochehr-Homji

Perspectives on the spiritual ascent of the soul and theology of heaven, hell and resurrection.

The five stages of the soul's progress

The five stages of the soul in its spiritual ascent are embodied in the prayers the five *gahs* [see above] or watches of the day.

Stage (steady stage) 1: Ushahin gah.

At the dawn of existence, the soul was without consciousness (*usha-hina*) of its divine potentialities, still aspiring to rise higher, because of its built-in divine guidance, Sraosha (Sarosh Yazad). It has no idea of its own existence, nor was it aware of others, and hence this first stage was one of conflict, and spiritual progress was in a steady state (*nmana*). It had no experience of a previous life, but was gathering experiences. Though the soul was without consciousness, the divine monitor within (Sraosha) constantly reminded it to aspire to reach higher (*berejya*).

*"The longer I live and the more I see
The struggle of souls towards the heights above,
The stronger this lesson comes home to me,
That the universe rests on the shoulders of love ...
A love so limitless, deep and broad,
That men have renamed it and called it God. - anon*

As the soul tried to hear (*sru*) the small voice of Sraosha, it was awakened to the potentialities it possessed – the supreme attributes (*Amesha Spentas*) of Ahura Mazda, and strove to develop them. It tried to understand the order (*Rashnu*) pervading the universe, by virtue of truth (*Asha*) and wisdom (*Vohu Manah*). It realized that its strength (*Khshathra Vairyo*) must be used to serve not strike, and that it must use moral judgment (*Spenta Armaiti*) to try and evolve its higher consciousness of mind (*Arshad*).

Stage 2 (advancing stage): Havan gah.

While the first stage is that of mere *being*, the second stage is that of *becoming*. Through constant endeavor to understand and practice the teachings, it benefits (*savanghi*) from previous experiences and advances (*visya*) to a higher stage – the morning of existence. In this stage the soul tries to understand God's justice and mercy (Mithra, Meher), and experiences divine joy (*raman khvastra*) of doing good and attaining sublimity (*Khordad, Amardad*).

Stage 3 (enlightenment): Rapithwan gah. In the third or middle stage (mid-day or *arem pithwa*) the soul gets enlightenment (*ushta, zantu*), by means of mental energy (*athra*) contemplating over Zarathushtra's teachings. It is able to advance the progress (*fradat fshu*) of his own self and that of other sentient life.

Stage 4 (state of beatitude): Uzirehn gah. Deep contemplation over Zarathushtra's teachings leads the soul to sublimation (*uzayeirina*). It uses its reservoir of energy (*nafedhra apam*) and other forms of goodness and light (*apascha*) to advance the souls of all humanity (*fradat vira*) and enables them to experience bliss (*dakhuma*).

Stage 5 (state of garothman, sublime condition of the soul): Aiwisruthrem gah. Finally, a time comes when the soul reaches the stage of highest harmony – *aiwi* (higher) *sruthrema* (singing) – where there is music, and the highest life (*aibi-gaya*). In this stage the soul is fearless, because of moral courage (*ama*), it is victorious (*verethragna*), and excellence of truth wins over falsehood (*vanaint uparatat*). The soul is now blessed with luster and vision on the right path (*daena*), experiences abiding spiritual life (*hujyaiti*), and is able to advance the souls of all forms of life (*fradat vis-pam*). It is the stage of self-realization and identity with the divinity (*fravashi*).

Fravashi. As the eternal and infinite spirit of human beings, fravashi is of the same nature as Ahura Mazda, except that the fravashi of human beings has not yet attained the infinite knowledge of Ahura Mazda, although that is the goal. Hence, while the difference in spiritual status of Ahura Mazda and human beings is boundless, it is steadily being lessened as the urvan (soul) of human beings ascends towards that goal.

Future life

The ultimate goal of the progressing soul is immortality, realizing identity with the divinity.

If there is a future life, he lives in bliss.

If there is none, let it be said, he made the best of this.

The idea of a future life and the immortality of the soul and spirit is expressed distinctly in the Gathas and more so in Fravardin Yasht.

The Bridge of Judgment, heaven and hell. Closely connected with this idea is the belief in heaven (OAv. *garo.demane*, Phl. *garodman*) or 'house of hymns' and hell (OAv. *drujo.demane*, Phl. *duzokh*) or 'house of evil.'

On the fourth day after death, the urvan must go to the *Chinvat Pul* (Judgment Bridge). Here, the later "Younger Avesta" describes Meher Yazata presiding over

the tribunal, holding the scales of justice, flanked by Sarosh and Rashnu Yazatas. If his good deeds are weighed heavier, the urvan is led by a beautiful maiden, the personification of his own conscience, Daena across the broad bridge to paradise, *Vahista Ahu* (Pers. *behesht*) or 'best existence.'

The Gathas refer to a single heaven, but in the Younger Avesta, a four-fold division of heaven is mentioned, the last being *anghra raocha* ('endless light'). *Vahishta Ahu* is the collective term for all four heavens where there is happy and righteous living and where Ahura Mazda and his heavenly Amesha Spentas dwell.

If however, the scale sinks on the side of bad deeds, the bridge contracts to the width of a blade edge and the soul is confronted by the personification of his conscience in

the shape of an ugly woman who plunges with the soul down to hell, a place of torment, presided over by Angra Mainyu. There the wicked urvan endures a long age of misery and darkness.

Those urvans whose good and bad deeds balance, go to *misvana gatu* ('the place of the mixed ones'), where they lead a grey existence.

“ In the Gathic theology, heaven and hell are not geographical places but subjective conditions of the mind and soul. Heaven is essentially moral elevation, spiritual enlightenment and the highest self-realization, where the urvan (soul) merges into the fravashi (divinity). ”

Deed is the determination of destiny.

There are no rewards or punishments in this world.

What seems so are the consequences.

Let me live without guilt,

so I may die without remorse.

In the Gathic theology, heaven and hell are not geographical places but subjective conditions of the mind and soul.

The soul does not go to heaven or hell

Heaven or hell comes to the soul.

Instead of saying that man's soul goes to heaven, it would be more correct to say that heaven comes to the soul, by virtue of Light, Love and Law. Heaven is essentially moral elevation, spiritual enlightenment and the highest self-realization, where, in the philosophical terms of Zarathushtra, the urvan (the individual soul) merges into the fravashi (divinity).

The Fiery Test. Man's life in the world is a test of his soul. In the Gathas, it is called the Test of Molten Metal:

Both parties, True and False, are put to test,

O Mazda, by Thy blazing Fire Divine;!

This Fiery Test lays bare their Inmost Souls,

As Thy award to each one indicates;

Complete frustration shall the False One find,

Thy blessings full the Truthful One shall reap.

[Ys. 51.9, tr. Taraporewala]

On human values ...

- In spite of advancements in science and technology, human values remain the same.
- Knowledge alone, makes a man proud.
Devotion alone makes a man credulous.
Knowledge and devotion without action makes a man sterile. But knowledge, devotion and action makes a man complete.
- To a man of vision and perception, every leaf on a tree is a book of life.
- He is the real man who has the courage to change his opinion after he has carefully re-examined the facts.
- Cease not to learn until you cease to live.
- Whenever there is heat in a discussion,
I go home. When there is light, I stay.
- Malice, hatred and envy are the dirty mire of the soul - *Socrates*.
- Anger defaces the man.
- A politician looks to the next election.
A statesman looks to the next generation.
- Passion, anger, greed, infatuation, pride and envy erode the soul.
- A gentleman is he who can disagree without being disagreeable.
- I have every right to hold my opinion.
But I have no right to be wrong in my facts.
- Three tests before you say something:
Is it truthful? Is it useful? Is it kind?
- Truth is so very precious that men are very economical in its use. - *Mark Twain*.
- Reading without thought is useless. Thought without reading is dangerous - *Confucius*.
- Knowledge + Experience = Wisdom
- If you can keep your head whilst all around you are losing theirs ... you'll be a man, my son.
- *Rudyard Kipling*.
- Virtue is that quality that gives you inner strength.
- After all is said and done, usually 90% is said and 10% is done. Should be vice versa.
- May all my thoughts, words and deeds be deliberate, not thoughtless. God has given us two eyes, two ears but only one tongue. Observe twice, listen twice, but speak only once.
- My life is what I have wrought on the loom of life, with the fabric of thought.
- Sympathy is the art of knowing the other man's difficulty without being told.
- Intellect in action is intelligence.
- One who conquers himself has conquered the world.
- Light, wisdom and power are inseparable.
- My joy is dependent on the joy of others.
- *From the collection of N. D. Minochehr-Homji*

In the later Young Avestan theology, this was understood quite literally, however, in the Gathas, this 'Fiery Test' refers to our life upon earth.

Life is not as idle ore,
But iron dug from central gloom,
And heated hot with burning fears,
And dipt in baths of hissing tears,
And battered with the shocks of doom,
To shape and use.

[Anon.]

Resurrection and the Final Judgment. At the time of the resurrection (*frashogird* or *frashokereti*), the earth will give up the bones of the dead and the 'future body,' will arise.

This will be followed by the Last Judgment which will divide the righteous from the wicked. The *Airyaman* and *Atar* will melt all the mountains and destroy the earth. The wicked shall perish so that at this last ordeal, they will suffer a second death. Ahriman will be annihilated by the yazatas. Ahura Mazda and the Amesha Spentas will confer immortality on the blessed resurrected bodies. Thereafter the immortals will be ever joyful in the kingdom of Ahura Mazda.

It will be in this universe, restored to perfection (*haurvatat*), that eternity (*zarvan-i-akarnak*) will be passed in bliss.

Prayer and ceremonies

Prayers and ceremonies are like the river that flows; those who receive the benefit are the ones that draw from it, each to his liking and desire.

A Good ceremony, well performed, is a work of art.

- *Aldous Huxley*

Three ingredients of a good ceremony are physical fitness, intellectual comprehension and reverence.

I perform ceremonies to:

inform my mind;
to reform myself;
to transform the world around me.

Ceremonies are 60% lessons for the living and 40% for the peace of the departed.

All my prayers are directed towards the elevation of my life.

The essential factor of the soul is consciousness. Every time we hear the tolling of the bell in the fire-temples, it seems to say,

'Tis mine the passing hour to tell,
'tis thine to use it ill or well.

It is our custom to offer incense after a ceremony is performed. This is done to awaken the conscience, and give approval to the valuable lessons learned from the ceremony just completed.

Four-day ceremonies. It is customary to recite Ashem Vohu as soon as we hear of someone's demise and to also

recite it in the ears of the departing soul to remind the living that only truth and righteous, loving acts of service will be carried as 'foreign exchange' to the world beyond. The ceremonies for the first four days after death are very important. Though in fact,

There is no death, What seems so is a transition.

These ceremonies are offered to Sarosh Yazad, who is seated within us, ever vigilant and protecting us; he is the crown witness on the fourth day, when the soul is judged.

At the funeral ceremony (*Gehsarna*) the Ahunavaiti Gatha is recited asking the Almighty for wisdom and guidance to serve and bring happiness to all souls.

In our *Uthamna* (i.e. arise from mourning and get back to our duties) ceremony, we place fire in an afargan, sandalwood, frankincense, a diva lamp, a folded sudreh, flowers and a 'golabas' (silver sprinkler) of rose-water. Fire and the lamp represent life and energy. Sandalwood burns and gives light, as also we have to use our energy for the good of others. The frankincense, flowers and rose water spread perfume and create a pleasant atmosphere; so also we are careful in our daily lives and strive to bring happiness in the lives of others.

Only the actions of the just smell sweet,
and blossom in the dust.

The sudreh in the tray reminds us to get ready our sudrehs, woven out of our own good thoughts, words and deeds, to serve as 'foreign exchange' in our future final march.

These four-day ceremonies are concluded with the second uthamna at dawn. These ceremonies are for the erring and mortal soul, who has not yet achieved *baodhanga* (wisdom), but is on its path to achieve the final stage of self-realization and identity with the divinity. ■

[Compiled by Roshan Rivetna from notes of the series of 40 lectures delivered by Dastur Nowrooz D. Minochehr-Homji at the Zoroastrian Association of Chicago, 1984, and from notes provided by Mrs. Narges Nowrooz Minochehr-Homji].

Death be not proud...

Death be not proud
though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so,
For those whom thou think'st,
thou dost overthrow,
Die not, poor death,
nor yet canst thou kill me...

One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
And death shall be no more;
Death, thou shalt die.

- John Dunne (1572 - 1631)

Late Dastur Nowrooz D. Minochehr-Homji was high priest of the Petit Fasli Atash-Kadeh in Mumbai. He devoted a lifetime endeavouring to understand the wealth of knowledge in the Avesta and imparting his learning to his devotees.



His long years of study have been crystallized in four Prayer Guides, published by his wife Narges Nowrooz Minochehr-Homji at Union Press, Mumbai, which give Dasturji's interpretations and exegeses (not just a literal translation) elucidating

the prayers:

- [1] "My Prayer Guide." Daily prayers, text and interpretation.
- [2] "My Prayer Guide, No. 2, To the Fravashis." Sarosh Kardeh, Afringans and Afrins.
- [3] "My Prayer Guide, No. 3, My Life's Companion." The Ahunavaiti Gatha.
- [4] "My Prayer Guide, No. 4." Selected gahs, nyaeshs and yashts.



The Ahmai Raescha Prayer The Eight-fold Blessings

Grant unto the person who irrigates life with the waters of Purity and Dedication, and irradiates Lustre and Goodness. Grant, O Lord! these valuable gifts:

- (1) The **Light of Understanding**, and the **Radiance of Purity**.
- (2) **Health** and complete well-being of the body, mind and spirit.
- (3) Powers of **Endurance**, **Patience** and **Forbearance**.
- (4) **Self-conquest**; control over hunger and thirst, passion and greed.
- (5) Attainments that render **Life worthwhile**.
- (6) Progeny endowed with **Innate Intelligence**.
- (7) A long, useful, **Purposeful Life**.
- (8) Passing away with a sense of **Fulfilment**; the Soul's **Enlightened** condition (in Heaven, *Behesht*).

[tr. N. D. Minochehr-Homji]



Detail from an antique *jhabla* with 'cheena-cheeni' (Chinese) motifs. Commonly shown are figures wielding sticks and swords to ward off evil, and carrying banners and fly-whisks to awaken the spirits of the dead.

doctrine of afterlife *by Pallan Ichaporia*

As expounded in the Avesta, Pahlavi texts and the Gathas

The doctrine of life after death is well elaborated in the Avesta and further clarified in the Pahlavi literature. A person's soul meets, after death, an exact counterpart of his actions in this world. If he lived a good, honest life he gets blessedness in the next life, and if he has lead a dishonest life he gets anguish, pain, sorrow and suffering. Nowhere is there the slightest notion of reincarnation – this is alien to the Zarathushti religion. We will also discuss the Gathic doctrine.

Avestan texts

Vendidad. The Vendidad [*ch. 19*] paints a picture in idyllic fashion, when Zarathushtra asks Ahura Mazda:

"What becomes of the deeds of charity which a person confers for his soul in the material world? Where do these [such deeds] go? Where do these [deeds] spread? Where do these [deeds] recompense?"

Ahura Mazda replies:

"After the death of a person ... the fiends (*daevas*) and twisted lies do their work (i.e. putrefaction and decomposition of the body sets in). When, after the third night, the dawn brightens and the [morning ray] shines ... then, a deceitful-god Vizaresha carries away the soul of the wicked *devayasnan* (worshipper of deceitful gods/fiends), a sinful person. [But] the souls of the truthful and the untruthful go towards the account-keeper's bridge (Chin-

vat) made by Mazda, where the consciousness (*baodhascha*) and soul (*urvanemcha*) are asked to account for their deeds in the corporeal world.

"There comes that exquisite, well-defined, courageous, watchful, distinguished, elegant, intelligent, bright illumination. This [illumination] depresses the sinful soul of the untruthful in gloom, but it carries the soul of the truthful to the other side of *Haraberezati* (the highest abode) and guides him across the account keeper's bridge, the bridge of the spiritual yazatas (the adorable ones).

"Then Vohu Manah (Good Thought) rises from the golden seat and says, 'O truthful one, how [perfectly] you have come here to this deathless existence from the transient existence.'

"The soul of the truthful one goes in tranquility towards Ahura Mazda, and the Amesha Spentas, towards their golden seats, and then to *garo.nmana* (house of song) which is the palace of Ahura Mazda, the palace of the Amesha Spentas, and the palace of other holy ones."

[*Vendidad, 19.27 et seq, tr. Pallan Ichaporia, "New Translations of Selected Chapters of Vendidad," Heidelberg, forthcoming.*]

In this passage, it is the bright 'illumination' that meets the departed, and both the soul and consciousness have to give account for their behavior in the material world.

Vishtasp Yasht. In this yasht, we find a counterpart of the 19th chapter of Vendidad, but here it is a maiden (Av. *kainin-*) and not the ‘illumination’ that comes to greet the soul. The soul is said to repose during the first night on Good Words, during the second night on Good Actions, and then on the third night goes towards the account keeper’s bridge (Chinvat).

Hadokht Nask. A more augmented version is found in the Hadokht Nask. Zarathushtra asks Ahura Mazda:

“When a truthful person dies, where does his soul sit during the night after death.”

Then Ahura Mazda replied:

“It sits near the head singing the Ushtavaiti Gatha [see Note below] and entreats the Ushatat prayer, ‘I desire that stability and strength should come as He desires, to whomsoever Mazda Ahura, ruling as He desires, may grant what is desired.’ The soul earns as much satisfaction as the whole living world (earns).”

For the second and third nights, Ahura Mazda’s reply is the same. The account then continues:

At the end of the third night, when dawn approaches, the soul of the truthful passes through trees, inhaling aroma. Towards it (the soul) comes aromatic wind, more aromatic than other winds, blowing from the south ... In that wind his *daena* (religious view) comes forward in the form of a maiden of aristocratic mien, beautiful, brilliant, white-armed, well-formed ... the best among all creatures.

“I am Daena, of your body, O valiant man of good thoughts, words and deeds, you are accepted on account of your goodness and your victory over malice. When you saw [others] burning [corpses], worshipping idols, cutting of trees, you [opposed and] did not sing the Gathas, protected the good waters, and fire ... With your good thoughts, words and deeds, you made me more attractive, you made me more beautiful, and more charming than I was, you elevated me from where I was.”

We find that the soul of the truthful goes to heaven and then to the final destiny, the *garo.nmana*, the house of song, the seat of Ahura Mazda. Again, there is no indication of reincarnation.

Hadokht Nask [ch. 3] paints the opposite picture about the soul of the sinner, the untruthful. His soul also sits for the first three nights near the dead body, but utters words of despair [Ys. 46.1]:

“Where and which part of land shall I go to succeed?”

During the first three nights after death, the soul of the sinner suffers as much misery as suffered by the whole world. At dawn after the third night,

NOTE. Perhaps there was the tradition of praying Ushtavaiti Gatha at the funeral ceremony, but nothing has been discovered to justify this, and the praying of the longest Gatha, Ahunavaiti, may be appropriate for the departed soul; although there is a reference in the Vendidad of praying all the five Gathas at the funeral for the benefit of the departed soul as well as for protecting the living against defilement from the dead body.

“the soul of the sinner passes through the filthy place, full of stench, along with the blowing of the putrefied wind from the north, which is also extremely foul, the like of which the sinner had never inhaled ...”

Further description from the Hadokht Nask is lost, but its translation is preserved in the Pahlavi texts – Menog i Khrad and Arda Viraf Nameh.

Pahlavi texts

Menog i Khrad (Spirit of Wisdom) in the second chapter speaks in an illusory fashion about body and soul. In this account, the impartial judgment at the Chinvat bridge is given by Meher, Sarosh and Rashnu, the righteous, who holds the balance where the deeds are weighed. (Note: the figure of a blindfold lady holding a balance is an epitome of justice).

Menog i Khrad alludes that the soul of the untruthful is accosted by his bad deeds which take the form of an ugly woman. This personification of bad deeds then torments, reprimands and chides the untruthful, whose soul, taking four steps goes to ‘worst-existence’ (hell).

An important point of difference between the passage in Vendidad [ch. 19] and the rest of the Avesta and Pahlavi is very profound. The Vendidad has no maiden (beautiful or ugly) greeting the soul; only bright illumination meets the soul of both truthful (which it comforts) and untruthful (which it depresses).

Dadestan i Denik describes the destiny of the soul in chapters 20 to 25. Here there are five major statements, dramatically depicted in an exquisite fashion, not found anywhere else:

(1) Those souls whose good deed and bad deeds are equal do not go to the ‘best existence’ (heaven) or ‘worst existence’ (hell) but to a place called ‘*hamestagan*’ (equal, stationary).

(2) The design of the ‘account-keeper’s bridge’ is described in detail: many wooden beams, with broad roads for the truthful, and roads narrow as a razor’s edge for the wicked.

(3) When a truthful soul departs, the creations: water, earth, trees and animals mourn; and Ahura Mazda sends a new truthful unborn soul to the world.

(4) As in the other texts, one’s deeds come to meet the soul, but not as a maiden. Here they are referred to as ‘*ganjobar i kerf*’ (the riches of one’s deeds).

(5) Since neither the truthful or untruthful souls are all-good or all-bad, we see for the first time how this is taken care of. The truthful souls, while enjoying pleasure on the first two nights, gets some punishments on the third night for wrong deeds it may have done. Likewise, wicked souls, while undergoing punishments on the first two nights, derive some pleasure from any good deeds they may have done in the material world.

Noteworthy is this basic dictum of the religion – freedom of choice in all actions, and consequent responsibilities. Nobody is going to carry your cross for you, nobody will undergo the punishments on your behalf and nobody will exonerate you (not even Ahura Mazda or Prophet Zarathushtra). There is no shortcut, save your own actions, to the state of ‘best existence’ - paradise.

The Greater Bundahishn elaborates on these concepts and introduces some new materials, such as the allusion to keeping a fire burning near the dead body, as is the custom among Parsis, to repulse the evil forces, and withstand the ‘demon of separation’ Vizaresha, and also help light the path of the departed soul.

Arda Viraf Nameh. The missing Avestan passages from Hadokht Nask are found, translated in Pahlavi, in the Arda Viraf Nameh. Here, in addition to Meher, Sarosh and Rashnu, we also find the presence of Astad Yazata, at the account-keeper’s bridge.

Except in the Vendidad, where the departed soul meets a bright illumination, all the extant Avesta and Pahlavi books speak of the idea of a ‘maiden’ welcoming the souls. All these celestial stories have but one goal – to inspire men to live truthful lives full of meritorious deeds performed with good thoughts, words and deeds. Neither the concept of the ‘maiden’ nor the bright illumination appears in the Gathas.

Afterlife in the Gathas

It should be stressed that the Gathas are not a religious handbook with carefully coordinated paragraphs ... but poetical texts of visionary character [*Humbach & Ichaporia, The Heritage of Zarathushtra*, 1994, Germany, p 16].

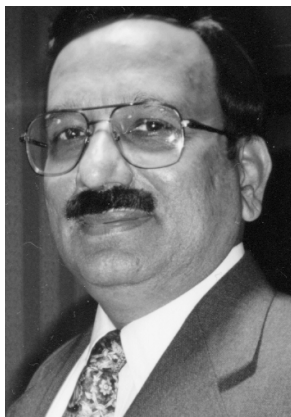
The Gathas are silent in many ways: for example, on how death is defined (the Younger Avesta defines it as ‘separation of consciousness from the body’ [*Vendidad* 5.57; 7.2, 8.81; 9.43]; or the time of individual judgment at the Chinvat Bridge (which is defined in the Hadokht Nask as chahrum, ‘dawn of the fourth day’). Perhaps it may have been of little concern to the Prophet.

The prophet recognizes “the sad end of existence of the deceitful” and that “the best will be in store for the truthful one” [*Ys. 30.4*] and also [*Ys. 45.3*]:

“...for those among you who will not practice the manthra in the way I (i.e. the Prophet) think and pronounce it, then woe will be the last word of their existence.”

Zarathushtra also describes afterlife and the universal judgment [*Ys. 43.6*]:

“At the turning point (i.e. universal judgment) to which You (Mazda) come with your Holy Spirit ... pronounces judgments on these here, (the judgments) of your intellect, which nobody can deceive.”



The prophet recognized two lives, the mundane life with man’s deeds on the earth and another after death and beyond, as he says [*Ys. 48.4*]:

“By action and words he follows his pleasures, desires and preferences. In the end he will be variously recorded in Your (Mazda’s) intellect, here and there.”

Zarathushtra warns in no uncertain terms [*Ys. 51.6*]:

“The very worst will befall the person who does not care for Him (Mazda), at the final turning point of his existence (i.e. death).”

In numerous stanzas of his Gathas, Zarathushtra demonstrates the secret knowledge given to him by Ahura Mazda, one such is the retribution for the soul of the deceitful (which is further elaborated in the Younger Avestan and Pahlavi literature) [*Ys. 49.11*]:

“But the deceitful of bad power, bad actions, bad words, bad religious views and bad thoughts, their souls come to meet them with foul food. They will be real guests in the house of deceit.”

The Prophet calls hell ‘*drujo.demane*’ or house of deceit, while he calls heaven ‘*garo.demane*’ or house of song, as for Ahura Mazda he sings the praise [*Ys. 45.8*]:

“For Him we lay down glorification in the house of song.”

Furthermore he says [*Ys. 50.4*]:

“I will worship You, praising You, O Mazda Ahura ... (and) I wish to be heard in the house of song.”

Zarathushtra promised the devout followers [*Ys. 51.15*]:

“In the house of song, Ahura Mazda, the Primal One, comes to the faithful offerers with the prize that Zarathushtra promised them.”

Here the prize is everlasting life in the house of song. Zarathushtra’s commitment to the truthful is clearly seen when he promises them that he will be with them always with love [*Ys. 51.22*]:

“Those who have existed and exist, I will be with them in their worship by calling their name, and I shall approach them with affection.”

The Prophet gives graphic accounts of how souls of the deceitful fare at the ‘*cahinvato-peretu*,’ or the ‘account-keeper’s bridge’ [*Ys. 46.11*]: [*Continued on page 51*]

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The Bamboo plant, the deer and ever-green trees are all symbols of long life and immortality, set here amidst a landscape of harmony and peace

saoshyants and the final renovation

by Maneckji Nusservanji Dhalla

[Excerpted by Roshan Rivetna from "History of Zoroastrianism" by Maneckji Nusservanji Dhalla, Mumbai, 1985]

The coming of the saviors (Saoshyants), resurrection, universal judgment and the final renovation – frashokereti, as propounded in the Gathas and Avesta-Pahlavi texts.

Saoshyant in the Gathas

The Gathas speak of a period when the progress of creation will stop, the evolution of the universe will reach its destined goal, as the cycle of the world will then be completed and creation and life will end [Ys. 43.5; 51.6]. Ahura Mazda will come at this time with his Holy Spirit, and with Khshathra and Vohu Manah, to accomplish this great work [Ys. 43.6]. The world process will then come to its final consummation as ordained by Him at the beginning of creation.

The term *Saoshyant* occurs in the Gathas, not as the name of any particular individual, but as a generic term, designating Zarathushtra and his fellow-workers. Those who by their good deeds work for the commandment of Ahura Mazda through Good Mind and Righteousness are called the savior prophets [Ys. 48.12].

All human souls will be subjected to a **universal judgment** before the ultimate renovation of the world. The souls will have to undergo the great ordeal by fire and molten metal [Ys. 51.9]. At the time of the final dispensation Ahura Mazda will judge the souls of the righteous and the wicked by the test of His blazing fire [Ys. 31.3, 19]. The world will at last arrive at the stage when *Asha* or Righteousness will smite *Druj* or Wickedness. When the law of Wickedness is annihilated, the divine law of Righteousness will pervade the entire world. Even the wicked souls, will after the retribution, come over to Mazda and acknowledge His sovereignty.

Soashyants in the Young Avesta and Pahlavi texts

Ahura Mazda sends his special messengers at various periods of chaos and confusion to save humanity from the clutches of Ahriman [Dk., Vol. 7]. In the three final millennia, three sons are to be born miraculously from the seed of Zarathushtra, through a supernatural conception by a virgin, bathing in the waters of Lake Kans (an idea as old as Zamyad Yasht, Yt. 19).

It is said that the spiritual seeds of Zarathushtra were entrusted in the keeping of Ardisur, the divinity of waters, and from these sanctified waters three saviors will be born, at thousand year intervals after the birth of Zarathushtra, each one miraculously conceived by a virgin [Bd. 32.8]. The advent of these saviors for the regeneration of the world will be attended with portents and miraculous signs as mentioned in the Pahlavi texts – Bundahishn, Dinkerd, Bahman Yasht and Menog i Khrad:

9,000 years [Note 1]

– Zarathushtra is born.

10,000 years (Millennium of Hoshedar)

– Hoshedar (Av. Ukhshyat.ereta), the first Saoshyant will be born, of a virgin mother.

NOTE 1: Years are measured from the beginning of the Creation story, as given in Bundahishn, which spans 12,000 years until the end of time, when the world will be restored to a perfect, immortal state.

- Wisdom of the religion will increase, and the world will slowly move towards perfection.
- The sun will stand still for 10 days and 10 nights.
- Poverty of the people and slaughter of cattle will decrease.
- Hoshedar will help remove wickedness and the wolfish nature of mankind.

11,000 years (Millennium of Hoshedar-mah)

- Hoshedar-mah (Av. Ukhshyat.nemangh), the second Saoshyant will be born, of a virgin mother.
- The sun will stand still for 20 days and 20 nights.
- Mankind will greatly advance towards realization of the final goal of perfection.
- Cattle will give milk in great quantities.
- Hunger and thirst will decrease. A single meal will satisfy a man for three days.
- Mankind will withstand disease and death.
- Humility, peace and liberality will be practiced

12,000 years (Millennium of Soshyos)

- The world will carry on the teachings of Zarathushtra, and will reach perfection in this millennium.
- Mankind will have fewer wants, and deaths occur only through old age.
- **Soshyos**, the final and most illustrious savior, is born, conceived immaculately by a virgin, from the third seed of Zarathushtra. His body, which is as radiant as the sun, partakes only of spiritual food and he is clad with kingly glory. He is the greatest renovator of the world. He comes to restore the dead to life, and to bring final perfection to the world.

The final 57 years

- The work of final renovation of the world will last for 57 years.
- The sun will stand still for 30 days and 30 nights.
- The demoniac nature among men will be broken.
- Men will cease to eat meat and subsist on milk and vegetables, and then on only water and vegetables. Eventually men will subsist on spiritual food alone, without even water or food of any kind.
- The evil Zohak will break loose from his bonds and disturb the righteous creation. At the command of Ahura Mazda, Kershasp will be raised from the dead, and slay Zohak.
- Soshyos will be assisted by six personages. They will act in the seven regions of the world, all miraculously reading each other's thoughts from a distance.
- All *druj* (evil) will perish during these 57 years. Men will embrace righteousness and zealously practice religion. Disease and death, apostasy and vice, depravity and every fiendish influence will perish. The world will be restored to its primal state.

Resurrection of the dead:

- All men from Gayomard, the primeval man, down to the last man Soshyos, whether righteous or wicked, will rise from the dead, and their bodies will be formed

anew. Men of demoniac nature (such as Zohak and Afrasiab) will not be given their bodies, for they are no longer men, but fiends.

Universal judgment:

- The righteous and the wicked souls will gather in one place and will be subjected to collective, or universal judgment. Ahura Mazda himself pronounces this judgment, from which there is no appeal.
- The righteous, in their new body, are sent to heaven; and the wicked, in their new bodies cast back to hell, where they suffer bodily punishment for three days.

Ordeal of molten metal:

- A comet will fall from heaven and melt all metals in the earth, and will burn up the world. A boiling flood will flow over the earth, and the righteous and wicked souls will be made to pass through it.
- In this glowing flood, the wicked souls will be purged of their sins, and become wholly purified. The righteous will feel as if they were walking in warm milk. This final conflagration brings freedom of the sinners from the prison of hell.

Frashokereti, the final renovation:

- The sinners thus purified by the fiery metal will become worthy of eternal bliss. The entire creation of Ahura Mazda will become virtuous.
- The completion of heavenly bliss requires that it be everlasting. The human soul is immortal, but the body is not so. Soshyos will perform a yasna ceremony, and consecrate a nectar, with the sacrificial ox Hadhayosh, a sip of which will make all beings immortal forever and everlasting.
- All beings will then be hungerless and thirstless, undecaying and undying, undistressed and ever-beneficial. Neither a blow, nor a knife, nor a sword, nor arrow will hurt the body, for it will be perfected and immune from pain. Bodily ailments will vanish. The portals of eternal bliss will be flung open to all of humanity.

Ahura Mazda vanquishes Ahriman

- Then will follow the last and decisive battle of the eternal war between the rival armies of Ahura Mazda and Ahriman. Hell itself will be burnt out. Ahura Mazda as the *zaota* and Sroasha as his *raspi*, holding the sacred girdle, will chant the holy formulas that confound the evil spirit, who, now impotent, will rush back to darkness by the same passage through which he had come at the beginning of creation.
- Demon and fiend, deceit and falsehood, strife and anger, hatred and ill-temper, pain and disease, want and greed, shame and fear, will all perish. Ahura Mazda will be supreme, and his Kingdom of Righteousness will be upon the earth.

The great world drama will then be over, the final curtain will fall. The ultimate triumph of good over evil will be secured, the divine kingdom of righteousness will be

established, and all this will come to pass through the work of man, the hero of this cosmic drama. All men now become of one will, giving voice in song, to the glory of Ahura Mazda. They will live as one, in perfection (*haurvatat*) and immortality (*ameratat*) as *frashokereti* has been achieved. ■

Dastur Dr. Maneckji Nusservanji Dhalla, was *High Priest of the Parsis of Karachi, now in Pakistan. Renowned Avestan scholar, philosopher and author, Dastur Dhalla was a most outstanding product of the renaissance of the religion of Zarathushtra in India, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.*

Doctrine of Afterlife [Cont'd from page 48]

“When the evil souls reach the account-keeper’s bridge their souls ... will make them tremble and they will be guests in the house of deceit.”

On the other hand the Prophet further commits himself to cross the account-keeper’s bridge with the truthful by declaring [*Ys. 46.10*]:

“With all those [the truthful] I will cross over the account-keeper’s bridge.”

Such joy-giving account of living life truthfully and the Prophet’s commitment to the finest rewards after death in the house of song is exhilarating – truly the best teaching coming from Zarathushtra for his devout followers.

Saoshyant and eschatology

In the religion of Zarathushtra, history comprises a cosmic conflict between a just God, Ahura Mazda, and Angra Mainyu, the force of evil. Humans are destined to choose sides and to participate in the conflict.

This is the first religion which articulated the notion of the end of the world, *eschaton*, and the doctrine of the end or *eschatology*: at the end of the cosmic cycle of 12,000 years (as recounted in the *Bundahishn*) when the savior and judge, Saoshyant, born miraculously of a maiden and the seed of Zarathushtra, will appear and rehabilitate creation, casting Angra Mainyu (Ahriman) into hell and purging the human race from the stain of sin. Then the whole human race will enter into paradise to enjoy eternal bliss and happiness.

The idea of a single Saoshyant to be a final savior of the world is post-Gathic. A victorious Saoshyant Verethrajan called Astwat.aretā, as the messenger of Ahura Mazda will rise from Kansaoya Sea. This is an eschatological myth [see *Humbach-Ichaporia, Zamyad Yasht, 1998, p.163, also see Yt. 13.128f*]. However the Gathic notion of several Saoshyants is reflected in *Zamyad Yasht*, when it says that Saoshyant Astwat.aretā together with his companions will ‘make existence brilliant’ (*‘frashem ahum’ = ‘frashokereti’*). The dead will rise again and imperishability will be bestowed on the living [*op.cit, p. 163-164*]. ■

Prayerful Thoughts for a Funeral

O Ahura Mazda, Creator of this world and the innumerable worlds beyond, the Lord of all human beings – past, present or future, we bow before Thee in reverence and worship.

May the Law of Asha prevail over the universe and may Thy love permeate everyone and everything, everywhere.

Thou, Ahura Mazda, have ordained in Thy wisdom that human beings cannot live forever, nor can they die at their will.

Peremptory is the summons of death, none can resist it. When the hour sounds and death knocks at the door, nothing in the world can keep it out. Not priest nor prince nor peasant can delay the fateful hour of death.

When Spenta and Angra Mainyu, the twin principal spirits of Ahura Mazda first met together, they created life and non-life.

Life and death are twins. Life and death are inseparable and indivisible. Death is life’s inevitable accompaniment and culmination. Apart from death, life is inconceivable.

Death conquers, but to be conquered in turn by life spiritual. Life dies in body; it does not die in spirit.

Death ends life of the flesh, but the life of the spirit lives for ever.

Death confers life’s liberty. Death in this world is but the beginning of Life in the next world. It is the life anew in the other and greater existence.

From one gate, man enters and it is life for him. From another he departs to start a greater existence. Death’s door is but an entrance to another and higher life.

Death, which leaves the body lifeless, liberates the soul which embarks upon its journey heavenward, to make up its accounts with the heavenly Judge.

Death has freed (name of departed) from his material bondage. He has shed his frail earthly mansion and departed this life to live hereafter in the realm of the spirit.

His earthly work is done and he has laid down his burden from the din and dust of life’s struggle.

Our beloved has gone to the deathless world of peace and rest, where light fades not and happiness fails not.

He has died in body to live in spirit, a life higher and nobler than our thoughts can measure and our minds can conceive.

May he rest in everlasting peace and joy with Thee, Ahura Mazda. ■

[Excerpted by Dr. Kersey Antia from Dastur Dhalla’s “Homage Unto Ahura Mazda.”]



A design of alternating pomegranates (symbol of abundance and fertility), butterflies (symbol of long life and happiness) adorn this richly embroidered gara border.

Soul and Salvation – a Zarathushti View

by Jivanji Jamshedji Modi

This Avestan passage below give us, in a nutshell, advice on how a man can get his salvation:

*noit chahmi zazva yo noit urune zazva
noit chahmi zazush yo noit urvani zazush*

He who did not acquire [his] own soul
did not acquire anything

He who will not acquire his [own] soul
will not acquire anything.

What is required is mastery over one's self, mastery over his desires, and mastery over his passions, much like the proverbs:

Man is the architect of his own fortune.

or

You will reap as you will sow.

Zarathushtra says that you require no outside savior for your salvation. You yourself are your savior.

What is salvation? The spring of action which should guide all men in their life, is submission to the will of God. It is the will of God that we should depart this life with the consciousness that we have done our duty in this world. Some speak of that state of life as a kind of absorption in God, or *kheshi-i Dadar Ahurmazd*, 'relationship with God.' To bring our soul to such a height of perfection by doing our duty in all directions, whereby we can consciously say "we are related to God," is spoken of as *ravan bokhtagi*, "the salvation of Soul."

Salvation does not only mean saving oneself from bad ways or sin. It has a broader significance – to save oneself from neglect of duty. Suppose a man is blessed with *tan*, *man* and *dhan*, i.e. good health of body and mind as well as wealth, and leads a good, quiet life. He is pious and virtuous and does harm to nobody. He may consider himself to be saved, but that is really not so. He ought not to be satisfied with merely passive virtues but must also have active virtues, and help, by all means in his power, others around him.

According to the *Patet*, there are active virtues and passive virtues. One must not rest satisfied with the passive state of not having done anything wrong, but must aim at the active state of actually doing good. In the *Patet*, a person repents not only of having thought, or spoken or done something wrong (*ku kam-i Ahriman bud*), but also for not having thought, spoken or done good, which it was in his power to do (*ku kam-i Dadar Ormazd bud*).

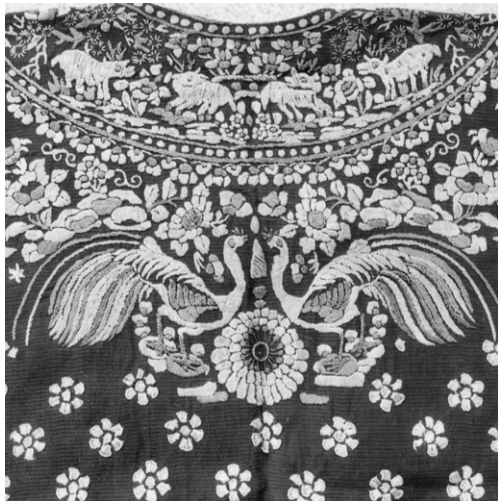
The first is a sin of commission, and the second a sin of omission. One must not rest satisfied with having done no wrong in this world. He must at the same time try to do good to others, when God has blessed him with the power to do so. That brings greater salvation.

Zarathushti scriptures speak of heaven as *Vahishta* (Pers. *behesht*, Eng. *best*) *ahu*, 'the best life.' Here the best state of life is 'heaven'. One's heaven or paradise begins from this life, in this very world. He need not wait for death to go to heaven.

Try to be good in your thought, word and action, not only passively, but, actively and you will gain salvation. These are the steps by which you go to heaven. Try to be perfect, complete, best, in your duties, all round. That state of being, whether in this world or the next, is your *behesht*, heaven or paradise. ■

[Excerpted from lecture by J. J. Modi for the Rahnuma Sabha, reprinted in *Ushao*, Ed. Virasp Mehta]

Ervad Shams-ul-Ulama Dr. Sir Jivanji Jamshedji Modi was panthaki of the Jeejeebhoy Dadabhoy Agiary, Colaba, Mumbai and secretary of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet [1893 - 1930] and widely published author and lecturer on the Zarathushti religion and customs.



Birds of Paradise and a central chrysanthemum (a symbol of immortality) adorn a richly embroidered 'jhablu.'

a guide to funeral ceremonies and prayers

by Kersey H. Antia

Compilation of materials by Roshan Rivetna

A step-by-step guide to funeral ceremonies, prayers and customs for the departed as traditionally practiced in the 'old countries' of India and Iran, tailored for the North American diaspora.

Origins and explanations of ritual observances

Rituals for the dead reflect the prevailing philosophy, theology, even myths and cultural and historical heritage of a people.

Most of our present-day rituals reflect the later *Sasanian beliefs* about Ahriman: Ahriman is a destructive force, actively engaged during the 'gumezishn' period (when good and evil are mixed, and frashokereti has not yet arrived) to oppose the creative and holy forces of Ahura Mazda. Since Ahura Mazda creates life, Ahriman actively tries to negate life, death thus being the *sum-mum bonum* (the highest pinnacle) of his achievement.

Ahrimanic forces. As soon as life departs from the body, Ahrimanic forces *druje-nasus* invade the dead body and make it *riman* – polluted, diseased, infected. The more righteous a person, the more it will be subjected to the Ahrimanic onslaught as he opposed Ahriman by his choices while alive. Thus arose the **bar on touching** the dead body after the *sachkar* (ritual bath and prepara-

tion of the body) [see page 61], and keeping a distance away from it.

Gaomez (bull's urine), also called **taro** (Guj.) and **nirang** (consecrated bull's urine) are used frequently in Zarathushti purificatory rituals. They are believed to possess disinfecting properties that destroy the germs of impurity and disease, which might accompany a decomposing corpse, and fight the Ahrimanic forces of the *druje-nasus*. This practice comes from pre-historic times when taro was the only (or best) disinfectant known to man.

Avoiding facing North. In all the ceremonies and prayers, care should be taken that the body does not point to the North, nor should prayers be done **facing the North**; for this is where the unwelcome winter wind blows, and wherefrom come the Ahrimanic forces, and the marauding invaders of the past.

Avoiding pollution of nature. Even in death, we must refrain from polluting natural elements in the universe. The system of *dokhma* or Towers of Silence is designed for this very purpose, as it does not pollute any of the elements of nature, and is

not expensive to maintain in the long run.

Menstrual laws. As the Vendidad conceives the menstruating woman as not being in perfect purity, it enjoins that women in that condition should not participate in rituals for the dead or any other rituals, or enter any sacred places. However, along with non-Zarathushtis, they may be allowed to view the body of a departed loved one, before the *sachkar* is done.

Avoiding contact with the corpse. The religious tenets about purity also govern our observances and practices, in regards to handling of the dead body, or for that matter, all dead objects. As cleanliness is next to Godliness, according to our scriptures, and as Ahriman is intent upon polluting God's creations in whichever way he can, strict rules were laid down to avoid any contact with the dead body.

Corpse-bearers. Two special cadres of corpse-bearers were created exclusively for this purpose: *nasesalars*, who participate in the funeral rituals, place the corpse on the *gehan* (iron bier) and carry the corpse inside the

dokhma; and the *khandhias*, literally pall-bearers, who carry the corpse from the house to the vicinity of the dokhma. Iron is chosen for the bier because, unlike wood, it is a non-transmitter of infection. Both these cadres have to observe strict rules of hygiene and purity, and stay in seclusion, away from the populace, to avoid pollution or infection, until they have undergone a purificatory *bareshtnum* ritual of nine nights.

Such strict observances about purity and hygiene are sometimes difficult to practice, even in India, but many lives have been saved by our adherence to these purity rules over the years. It is a matter of historical record that Zarathushtis have suffered the least casualties during the various epidemics due to these practices.

Paiwand. As the body is taken in procession to the dokhma the mourners are enjoined to walk in pairs holding a handkerchief as a *paiwand* (connection) between them, as two are supposed to hold off the onslaught of Ahriman better than one. The corpse-bearers are required to hold the paiwand too, as also the priests performing the funerary prayers. The injunction of always having a pair holding a paiwand (and never a lone person) in all these funeral rituals may also signify mutual assistance and strength in togetherness in fighting evil.

Sagdid ('seen by a dog'). A male dog, preferably 'four-eyed' (one with a white mark between the eyes) is brought in to view the corpse before its disposal, at the turn of each gah. In very ancient times, this was one of the ways to confirm that the person was really dead, as the dog has a sixth sense [see note below] to discern it.

In the Pahlavi Bundahishn, the dog is regarded as the companion of Sarosh

Yazad, protecting his master, just as Sarosh Yazad protects the soul of the departed during the night. Both play an important part in our funerary ceremonies, and a portion of the food offering at the Satum prayers is set aside (*'kootra-no-book'*) and fed to a dog. So important was the role of the dog, that when two priests or laymen are not available for the funeral ceremony, one person can perform the ceremony by forming a paiwand with a dog.

Sagdid served a vital function in ancient times, but in our modern times, we have better ways to ascertain if the person is dead and therefore, the practice of sagdid is hardly practiced or practicable in western countries.

Dietary restrictions. According to the Pahlavi books *Shayast la Shayast* and *Saddar*, we should not eat meat and should not cook at home until after the chahrum, possibly because *druje-nasus* may infect meat, as suggested by the *Rivayet Kama Vohra*. The practice of eating meat on the fourth day is observed by Parsis and Iranis.

Although we find no such injunction in the Avestan literature, the Pahlavi books dictate that a *gospand* (goat or sheep) be sacrificed and its fat offered to the fire of fire temples and to the hearth fire [Rististan by S. B. Bharucha, pp. 420-450]. This practice was discontinued by the Parsis around the nineteenth century, and they influenced the Iranis to do the same. Today it seems hard to believe that such a practice ever existed, but it must have had some rationale behind it, such as perhaps that the fat of the animal sacrificed for the soul of the departed symbolically represented the soul of the departed that has now merged with the divine forces.

Geti Kharid ceremonies. Some scholars believe this practice, of eat-

ing meat at the chahrum, originated from the injunction in the Patet to perform '*sedosh geto-farid*,' which some misread as '*geti-kharid*' literally 'purchasing the material world' or 'purchasing a place in heaven' by having priests perform essential ceremonies for someone while he/she is still alive. Obviously, there is no connection, at least doctrinally, between eating meat on the chahrum day and geti-kharid ceremonies, nor do I personally believe that performing geti-kharid ceremonies while still living on this earth (*geti*) could ever be in consonance with the fundamental teachings of our prophet.

Jorani Kriya. While Iranians and Kadmi Parsis do not observe *Jorani Kriya*, that is, ceremonies for the deceased as well as his/her living spouse, for which little evidence exists in the Avestan or Pahlavi literature, Parsis have been observing it, ostensibly on the belief that the soul of the living spouse will once again meet the deceased soul after his death. Many scholars believe this is not in consonance with our scriptures. It is hardly practiced, even in the old countries, especially when there is a paucity of priests, and there is no way to have it done. Moreover, as a widow or widower was allowed to remarry if they so wish, the logic behind such a practice is quite suspect.

Zindeh Ravan ceremonies. Believing in the efficacy of death ceremonies and to ensure their performance after death, some Zarathushtis choose to have all the requisite death ceremonies performed in advance, while they are still alive. These 'Zindeh Ravan' ('alive soul') ceremonies can be performed for all death rituals except those done in the presence of the body – primarily the Gehsarna (Paydust) ceremony. Any roz may be selected as the roz of death, and all ceremonies performed accordingly. This practice is very old and mentioned in the Rivayets, but is rarely practiced nowadays.

NOTE: Sagdid may appear as an anachronism in our times, but I directed a US Pentagon project in 1969-70 to train dogs to find mines, tripwires and tunnels for Viet Nam soldiers and these dogs saved many a life. CBS News even found it worthwhile then to run a 5-minute segment about it on CBS.

Ceremonies in disuse. While the extant Avesta does not mention any ceremonies for the departed, other than the ones detailed in this guide, and for that matter any ceremonies other than those practiced by present-day Zarathushtis, later Pahlavi scriptures refer to **Sadosh Ceremonies** – ceremonies for three days [*Rististan*, pp. 389 - 391] whose observance seems to have become extinct by now.

It is not compulsory to have priests conduct **Nirangdin**, **Hama Yasht**, **Vendidad**, **Faresta** and **Jashan** ceremonies for the deceased. It is interesting to observe that one of the greatest scholars of our religion and of our religious ceremonies, Dr. Sir J. J. Mody, instructed his family not to perform Vendidad ceremonies, or Dhoop Nirang, or Siroza on the Chhamsi [*Jame Jamshed Weekly*, February 20, 2000, p. 3].

While the **Gahambar ceremony** is not compulsory, participation in it is highly endorsed by the Gahambar Afrin, and it is a highly meritorious deed to have it performed if one can afford it, as it has contributed significantly over the centuries to communal unity.

Ceremonies in India and Iran. While most of the Parsi ceremonies were similar to those observed by Iranians until the 1800s and early 1900s, as revealed in the Rivayets, various factors have led to some divergence thereafter. The inner liturgies, such as Yazeshne and Vendidad are no longer performed in Iran, and according to my inquiries with the high priest in Tehran in 2003, even the Baj ceremony as that performed in Iran is not the same as that in India. However, if we consider the vicissitudes they have suffered over the centuries, their devotion to the religion and ancestor-worship is no less than that of the Parsis.

It behooves us to maintain as much of our funerary traditions in the new world (and the old, of course) as

is possible versus what is not possible, which indeed is the title of a Pahlavi book *Shayast la Shayast*, exhorting us to do the same when we could not carry out all our observances after the Arab invasion.

The invasion of modernity has made worse onslaught on our practices and traditions, but we should observe and preserve as much as possible. They are worth preserving, because symbolically as well as theologically, they were designed to represent man's role in the cosmic battle

against evil, and ultimately bring about frashokereti by always aligning oneself with Ahura Mazda and avoiding Ahrimanic ways.

While this is not the place to go into the details of Sasanian dualism versus Gathic (ethical) dualism, suffice to say the former are intrinsically woven into the fabric of our customs and prayers for the deceased souls, making us participants in the ceaseless cosmic struggle in this life as well as in afterlife.

Death and the Afterlife

[Continued from page 36]

The Gathas [*Ys 51.22*] also declare that those souls that have made the right choice while on this earth deserve our veneration:

*Yehya moi ashat hacha vahishtem yesne paiti
vaeda Mazdao Ahuro; yoi aonghare-cha henti-cha;
ta yazai khaish namenish, pairi-cha jasai vanta.*

That person indeed, who makes his every act
An act of worship, led by Asha's Law,
Is deemed as best by Mazda Ahura;
Each one of these, who have been and who are,
With reverence will I recall them individually by name,
and strive to emulate their holy deeds.

[*Ys. 51.22, the Gatha verse of which the prayer
Yenghahe Hatam is a later paraphrase*].

What Yasna 51.22 exhorts us has become a cardinal practice in the Zarathushti religion, as can be seen from the the Satum prayer [*see page 75*] for veneration of the worthy departed souls, the Jashan, Fravardin Yasht [*see page 75*] and other prayers.

Death ends life, only to start us into a life so spiritual and sublime. Life in the body dies, but not the life in spirit, which lives forever.

Death is but a beautiful beginning of life in a better world. Even so, as *Dadistan i Denik* [XXVII.3] aptly observes, at death the soul is utterly bewildered by the sudden change of environment and seeks our solace and prayers. Various ceremonies were devised therefore, to make the passage to the other world smoother for the soul, as also to provide some comfort and solace to the grieving relatives and friends.

Death can conquer man only to be conquered in turn by his Asho Ravan. Death takes away our body but not our Ravan. No sooner does the light go out of the *tanu* (body), than the ravan goes on eternally in our spiritual journey upwards. Death in this world is just the beginning of eternal life in the world beyond. Death is but an entry into higher spiritual existence – *Yawaecha Yawaeta taecha* – for ever and ever! ■

Dr. Kersey H. Antia's profile is on page 70.

***The highest wisdom is kindness* - Talmud**

References

- [1] Bagli, Er, Jehan and Unwalla, Er. Adi. *Understanding and Practice of Obsequies*, sponsored by NAMC, FEZANA and the Bapasola family, 343 p., 2006. An excellent handbook on death rituals, adapted for the North American diaspora [see announcement on page 156].
- [2] Birdy, Er. Jal and Parsi-Zarathushti volunteers of Southern California. *A Guide to Funeral Services for parsi-Zarathushtis in Southern California*. 1993. General guidelines for North America.
- [2] Kanga, Er. Maneck Furdoonji. *Khordeh Avesta*. Bombay Parsi Punchayet, 1993. In English, translated from the classic *Khordeh Avesta Ba Mayeni* (in Gujarati) by Kavasji Kanga, contains prayers in Roman script with translations in English. This and other valuable books have been scanned and placed on www.avesta.org by Er. Soli Dastur [page 152].
- [3] Minochehr-Homji, Dastur N. D. *Chicago Lecture Series Notes*, Zoroastrian Association of Chicago, 1984. Audio tapes and compilation of notes from series of 40 lectures.
- [4] Minochehr-Homji, Dastur N. D. *My Prayer Guide No. 2. To The Fravashis*, Union Press, Mumbai, 140 p., 1984. Afringans and Afrins, Sarosh nu Patru and Ys. 26, with text and free interpretation in English.
- [5] Minochehr-Homji, Dastur N. D. *My Prayer Guide No. 3. My Life's Companion*, Union Press, Mumbai, 140 p., 1984. The Ahunavaiti Gatha, with text in Roman script with free interpretation in English.
- [6] Kuka, Irach Sorabji. *Essential Ceremonies – Death and Post-Death*. 2003. Details all the essential death and post-death ceremonies, especially those based upon the recommendations of a scholarly committee appointed for that purpose in 1922 – the Mumbai-ni-Zarathoshti Jashan Committee, comprised of the most learned Parsi scholars of the day. The Committee submitted their considered opinions to the then Athornan Mandal for their approval, and printed this booklet in 1923. Ervad Kuka has rejuvenated this report for the guidance of future generations, and its guidelines are also followed for the most part in this guide.
- [7] Modi, Jivanji Jamshedji. *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees*. Union Press, Mumbai. 2nd. Ed. 475 p., 1986. In-depth description of all the death rituals, as practiced in India in his times.
- [8] Motafram, Er. R. R. *Four-Day Death Ceremonies of a Zoroastrian* (including Gehsarna), based on *Gujrelaan Zarthoshti ni Chaa Divas ni Kriyaa* (in Gujarati) by the late Er. Dinshaw Cavasji Sidhva. 77 p., 1986. A description of the four-day ceremonies as observed in India; and the Gehsarna prayers (Ahunavad Gatha) in full, in the Roman script.
- [9] Panthaky, Er. Rustomji Noshirwan. *Zoroastrian Ceremonial Prayers*. Regal Press, Toronto, 79 p. Jashan ceremony, Afringan and Satum in Roman script.
- [10] Peterson, Joseph. Website www.avesta.org. Contains a wealth of information on Zarathushti scriptures, texts with translations and rituals.

GEHSARNA PRAYERS ON AUDIO CASSETTE

WZO Trust has prepared an audio cassette of the Gehsarna prayers recited by Er. Kersi Bhada of Cama Baug. To order a copy contact Mr. Dinshaw Tamboly at beedee@bom3.vsnl.net.in, tel: 91-22-2281 3718.

PRAYER BOOKS

The prayers mentioned in these articles may be found in most Khordeh Avesta prayer books and notably in Er. Kanga's *Khordeh Avesta* which has been scanned and placed on www.avesta.org by Er. Soli Dastur [page 152].

Resources

- [1] FEZANA Member Associations and Small Groups are listed at www.fezana.org and in each issue of FEZANA Journal.
- [2] FEZANA North American Directory. Available at www.fezana.org, or on CD (\$10) or print (\$35). Contact Noshir Jesung (njesung@socal.rr.com) or Farrokh Mistree (farrokh.mistree@lycos.com). Provides listing of mobeds of North America by State or City; and listing of FEZANA Member Associations.
- [3] NAMC, North American Mobed Council, c/o Mehraban Guiv Dare Mehr, 3590 Bayview Avenue, Willowdale, ONT M2M 3S6, Canada. Current president is Er. Dr. Jehan Bagli, Toronto, ONT, tel: 905-855 1132, email: jbagli@rogers.com.
- [4] Doongerwadi, Mumbai, tel: 91 22 2367 5974.
- [5] Bombay Parsi Punchayet, tel: 91 22 2261 7421, Email: ppbombay@vsnl.com.

Companion FEZANA Journals

- [1] Ichaporia, Pallan, Ed. *Journey of the Avesta*. FEZANA Journal, Winter 1998. Historical review of the entire corpus of Zarathushti religious literature.
- [2] Antia, Kersey, H. and Rivetna, Roshan, Eds. *Prayer in the Zarathushti Religion*. FEZANA Journal, Fall 1999. Comprehensive prayer guide, with suggested prayers for all occasions.
- [3] Manekshaw, Sarosh J. H., Ed. *Treasures from the Avesta: Our Daily Prayers*, FEZANA Journal, Summer 2003. Guide to the content and devotional uses of daily prayers and rituals.
- [4] Choksy, Jamsheed K., Ed. *Treasures from the Avesta: Niyayishns and Yashts*. FEZANA Journal, Summer 2004. Contents and devotional uses of Niyayishns and Yashts.
- [5] Ichaporia, Pallan R., Ed. *Treasures from the Avesta: Yasna, Visperad and Vendidad*. FEZANA Journal, Summer 2005. Introduction to Inner (or High, or 'Pav Mahal') liturgical ceremonies. ■

Overview of Ceremonies (for North America)

Day 1 (Monday). The Zarathushti day (*roz*) is computed from sunrise to the next dawn. Thus if a person passes away after midnight and before dawn, say on a Tuesday, the *roz* of his death is recorded as the previous day – Monday.

- **Sachkar.** Purificatory bath and preparation of the body – should preferably be done in the same or next *gah* after death, in the funeral home or at home.
- **Sarosh-nu-Patroo** should be done after sunset (Aiwisruthrem *gah*), at the *darbe mehr* [see Note 1 below]

Day 2 (Tuesday)

- **The Paydust.** **Gehsarna** prayers are done at the funeral home in daylight hours (Havan, Rapithwan or Uzirehn *gah*); followed by the **sezdo** when family and friends pay their last respects. The body is taken by hearse in a motorcade to the crematorium or cemetery.
- **Sarosh-nu-Patroo.** After sunset (in Aiwisruthrem *gah*) at the *darbe mehr*.

Day 3 (Wednesday)

- **Uthamna.** Usually in the afternoon (in Uzirehn *gah*) at the *darbe mehr*.
- **Memorial service** with eulogies and a collection of charitable donations in memory of the deceased, may follow the Uthamna.
- **Sarosh-nu-Patroo.** After sunset (in Aiwisruthrem *gah*) at the *darbe mehr*.

Day 4 (Thursday)

- **Pachhli Ratnu Uthamnu** just before dawn (Ushahin *gah*) at the *darbe mehr*.
- **Chahrum.** Right at sunrise, at the *darbe mehr*.

Day 10 (next Wednesday)

- **Dasmu** prayers are done at the *darbe mehr*.

Monthly anniversaries, on the roz of death, every month for one year

- **Masiso** prayers are done on the *roz* of death (31st day), at the *darbe mehr*. **Siroza** prayers are done on the 30th day, called the **disi** by Parsis.
- **Bamsi** prayers are done at the *darbe mehr*, on the 2nd month anniversary (61st day or start of the 3rd month) on the *roz* of death.
- **Chhamsi** prayers are done at the *darbe mehr*, on the 6-month anniversary (181st day or start of the 7th month) on the *roz* of death. **Siroza** prayers are done on the 180th day, called the **disi** by Parsis.

Yearly anniversaries, on the roz and mah of death

- **Varsi** prayers are done on the *roz-mah* of death (366th day), at the *darbe mehr*. **Siroza** prayers are done on the 365th day, called the **disi** by Parsis.

(Fravardian) Fravardin Mah & Fravardin Roz – Day of Remembrance

- Prayers are offered at the *dokhma* or cemetery or *darbe mehr*.

The last ten (or five) days of the year

The last ten (or five) days of the year are observed as **Fravardegan** or **Muktad** (by the Parsis) and **Panjeh** (by Iranians), and devoted to offering prayers and venerating the *fravashis* of departed souls.

Note 1: If *darbe mehr* is not available, ceremonies may be done at home. Inner liturgies can only be done in fire temples in India or Iran. ■

Funeral and Other Ceremonies in Mumbai

Several agiaries in India offer facilities to perform ceremonies in remembrance of the departed: Pav Mahal ceremonies (Ijashni or Yasna, Baj, Vendidad), death ceremonies, Muktrad, Jashans, Maachi and other ceremonies. Some contacts are given below:

[1] Sethna Agiary (Tardeo) or the Manekjee Naorojee Sett Agiary (Fort). Contact trustee R. J. Vakil at 91 22 2284 5603, rjvakil@yahoo.co.uk [also see p READ 112]

[2] Athornan Madressa, 651 Firdausi Road, Parsi Colony, Dadar, Mumbai 400 014. Contact principal Er. Dr. Ramiyar Karanjia at ramiyark@hotmail.com.

[3] Cama Baug agiary in Mumbai. Contact Er. Keki Ravji in Mumbai, at 91 22 2495 2848 or Er. Jamshed Ravji in Chicago at 630 663 1716.

[4] Jeejeebhoy Dadabhoy Agiary, Colaba. Contact Er. Palanji P. Dastoor, Pilot Bunder Road, Colaba, Mumbai 400 005 at 91 22 2215 1909, zdarbari@yahoo.com.

[5] Iranshah Atashbehram, Udvada. Contact Er. Zarir Dastoor, Eruch Baug, Udvada RR Station, Udvada, Gujarat State, India, at 91 260 2340 190 or cell: 91 98254 24251, zarukh@rediffmail.com. ■

Ordering books from Parsiana Book Shop

Parsiana magazine and **Giara Publishers** offer books at Parsiana Book Shop at 39B, A. K. Nayak Rd, K K (Navsari) Chambers, Fort, Mumbai, 400 001, tel: 91 22 2207 4335, fax: 91 22 2207 5572. Order by email: parsiana@vsnl.net, website: www.parsiana.com. Payment by check or credit card.

Gender references. Please note that in this Guide, all references to the masculine (he, his, him ...) also pertain to the feminine (she, her ...).

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

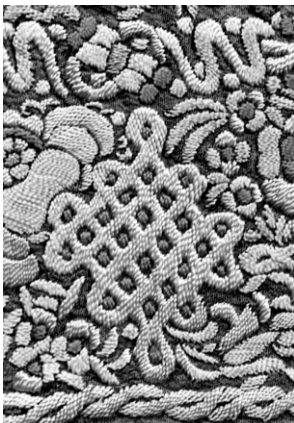


Bird poised on a sacred Chinese Plant – a symbol of immortality

Passing of a loved one is a tragic moment. Some planning and preparation ahead of time will assist family members of the deceased to cope with the bereavement with dignity and tranquility. It is recommended that all families keep the following information readily accessible, and make some important decisions ahead of time:

- Name and telephone number of **family physician** and local **hospital**.
- Name and telephone number of the nearest **Zarathushti Association**.
- Name and telephone number of one or more **mobeds/mobedyars** who will be available to perform the ceremonies.
- Name, telephone number, address and directions to your selected **funeral home**. You may wish to visit the funeral home beforehand, and review the facilities and costs. Some **crematoria** and **cemeteries** also have rooms/chapels offering similar facilities. Some Associations have arrangements with specific funeral homes/crematoria/cemeteries to allow appropriate facilities for our needs, and pre-negotiated costs for basic services, to include the following:
 - Take the body from the place where death occurred, to the funeral home.
 - Obtain copies of the death certificate, with the doctor's signature; and register the death with the appropriate authorities.
 - Obtain the burial or cremation permit from the Health Department.
 - Provide guidance for announcement in the local newspaper.
 - Transport the body by hearse from the funeral home to the crematorium or burial ground.
 - Embalming of the body. This is not needed, since we strive to dispose off the body as soon as possible, in one or two days at most.
 - Provide the casket. The mode of disposal will have a bearing on the selection of the casket. It is recommended that an elaborately expensive casket be avoided. The casket costs \$650 and higher.
 - Other points of discussion with the funeral home may include: permission to keep an oil lamp near the casket and kindle a fire with sukhad loban; for family members to do the *sachkar* (cleansing and preparation of the body); and for family members to stay by the body, if they so wish.

Funeral home costs may run from \$3,000 to \$4000 plus the cost of the casket.



The endless knot, a symbol of immortality, is a common motif in antique gara designs

- Make your choice and notify your relatives (possibly in your will) about your **preferred mode of disposal** [see page 78] in North America: burial or cremation. On rare occasions, the body of Parsi Zarathushtis have been **flown to Mumbai** for dokhmenashini, after special arrangements with the airlines, Doongerwadi and the Bombay Parsi Punchayet [see Resources on page 56]. For information contact Er. Jal Birdy in California (jalnb@comcast.net). There have also been a few cases of departed loved ones being **flown to Iran** for burial at a Zarathushti aramgah. For information contact Mehrborzin Soroushian in California (mazda@san.rr.com).
- Keep the name, telephone number, address and directions to the **crematorium or cemetery** readily accessible. You may wish to visit beforehand, and review the

NOTE : The information in this guide is compiled from various sources listed under "References" on page 56, and especially from the new publication *Understanding and Practice of Obsequies* by Er. Jehan Bagli and Er. Adi Unwalla [see page 156].

facilities and costs, and select the type of headstone/monument if you wish to have one. Some Associations have made prior arrangements with a crematorium, and purchased plots in a cemetery. If you opt for cremation, you may request the ashes to be handed to your relatives in an urn; or buried in a family plot or half-plot or community plot in the cemetery; or scattered in a garden or over a certain area or in the ocean, per your wishes if permitted by local regulations. If you opt for burial, you may wish to request a cement-lined box, to avoid polluting the earth and water.

- You may wish to consider having all death ceremonies – Baj, Muktaḍ or full death ceremonies for 5 or 10 or more years, performed in India, on a *pre-paid plan* [see page 57] that some agiaries in India and Dadar Madressa offer.
- Keep ready a *set of clothes for the sachkar*, to include: a sudreh, kushti; a white cap, white shirt or dagli and white pants (for men) or a white scarf or *mathabanoo*, white blouse and long skirt or petticoat (for women); and a white bedsheet. Only white, and used (but washed and clean) and not new clothes are to be used. Using new clothes for the dead body is an unnecessary waste, and a punishable sin [Vendidad VIII, 23-25].
- Keep ready a *shiav*, a set of new white clothes including sudreh, kushti, cap, white shirt, trousers, socks and (in the old days) a *jama* and *pichhori* (priestly white robe and sash) which will be consecrated during the *Chahrum* ceremonies, and then given to the priest, to the poor, or to the family of the deceased.
- If a person has *no progeny*, he should clearly, while still alive, entrust a member of his family or a friend with the responsibility to observe all religious ceremonies after his death, to ensure his smooth passage to the other world. Up until the early 20th century, a junior relative was adopted at the Uthamna ceremony, to ensure the observance of all future ritual obligations. (In the 1920s, Naval Tata was adopted for a similar role for Sir Ratan Tata, however, a decade or two later, when his brother Sir Dorab Tata also died childless, this custom was not followed through, as far as I know).



A peacock motif on a border. Peacocks may be seen in the lush foliage around the Towers of Silence at Doongerwadi, Mumbai.

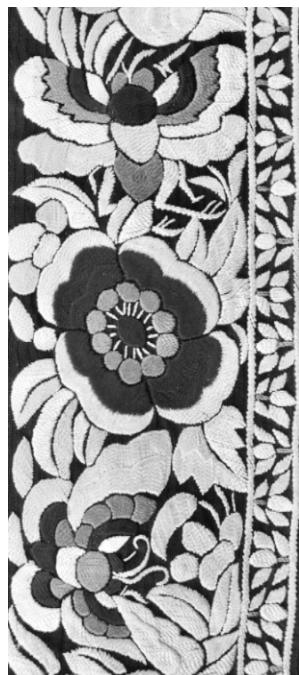
It is common practice among Zarathushtis for everyone to recite **Ashem Vohu**, as soon as we hear of someone's passing away. When death is imminent, Zarathushti relatives and friends should remain close to the loved one and sit by his bed. The head should be covered with a cap/scarf and **Ashem Vohu** should be recited continuously in the ears of the dying person. Hadokht Nask [52.1, para 4] exhorts that praying Ashem Vohu gives courage to the urvan. Hadokht Nask [XXI.31] advises us to recite the whole **Patet Pashemani** (a prayer for the atonement for one's sins) [see Note, page 70] in his ears, failing which to recite **Ashem Vohu** continuously until the sachkar is done. A *divo* (oil lamp) or candle is lit and kept burning where the body was placed, at least for four days until the Chahrum is over, for it is believed that the soul of the deceased hovers around the place for the first three days and nights, and the divo gives courage to the soul and solace to the living [Rististan, pp. 102-104]. A fire may be maintained in an afargan, fed with fragrant sandalwood and frankincense.

Flowers. Flowers may be sent to the family of the deceased, to be placed at the Uthamna and Chahrum ceremonies (i.e. after the body has been disposed). Placing flowers or wreaths on the casket or on the body during the Paydust, is not a Zarathushti custom and is to be avoided, because they can catch the virus or infection from the dead body. Many families request that a donation be made to their favorite charity, in lieu of flowers, which is highly advisable, and thoroughly Zarathushti in spirit.

STEPS TO BE TAKEN IMMEDIATELY UPON THE DEATH OF A LOVED ONE



A crested bird
with a lotus flower,
a symbol of purity
and mercy.



Butterflies, symbols of
happiness and long life,
are prominently woven
into this design.

Memorial service. A memorial service may be held following the Uthamna ceremony, when friends and relatives may be invited to deliver their eulogies and remembrances of the departed, though this is not our usual custom. However, this is a good occasion to revive our old custom of collecting donations for a worthy cause, in memory of the deceased.

At home, a divo is kept burning continuously and a few fresh flowers placed near the deceased person's bed for at least ten days and longer if possible. His worldly possessions are left untouched and certainly not disposed off, for a month or more, lest the soul still be attached to them. If the funeral ceremony is performed in the home, the place where the body was laid is not used for at least ten days in winter or thirty days in summer, after which it is purified with the help of nirang.

Dietary restrictions. Until the Chahrum, relatives of the deceased do not eat any form of meat, although eggs and fish are allowed [see page 54]. Traditionally no food is cooked in the house. Relatives and friends may send food for the bereaved family.

Grieving. Excessive grieving for the departed should be avoided; every effort should, rather be made through prayer and through good thoughts, words and deeds to assist the soul in its journey towards the twin rewards of *haurvatat* (perfection) and *amertat* (immortality). Prolonged mourning is discouraged in our religion, as it ties down the soul to this earth, and obstructs his progress in the other world. Iranians have an age-old custom to stop mourning after thirty days, a custom very much in accordance with the spirit of our religion. It is neither good for us or for the soul of the deceased to keep mourning unceasingly, as we have to submit to the will of God, as the Gathas instruct us, and as such mourning deviates us from bringing about frashokereti, because our own time is so short on this earth to bring it about.

First steps. Among the first steps to be taken by the relatives are:

- Contact the nearest **Zoroastrian Association** and the **selected mobed or mobeds** to plan the 4-day ceremonies, and to inform community members. Some associations have set up a "telephone calling tree" system to inform members of the sad news, and the date, place and time of the various ceremonies.
- It is important to find out if the departed has left any instructions by way of a will, or otherwise, regarding his wishes for the **mode of disposal**. Contact the selected **funeral home** and make arrangements to transport the body from the place of death to the funeral home. Alternatively, the body may be given the ritual bath (sachkar) at home, and taken directly to the crematorium or the cemetery if a place is available there for performing the Gehsarna.
- **Death Certificate.** This is an important document that should be obtained promptly. If the death occurs in a hospital, the certificate will be issued readily there. In the event the demise occurred at home, the first thing to do is to call the family physician. If the doctor is not available the nearest hospital should be contacted to report the death. In the case of accident, suicide or homicide an **autopsy** may be required.
- **Date, roz (day), mah (month) and time of death** should be noted. The roz of death is computed from sunrise to the next dawn. Thus, if a person passes away between midnight and dawn, say on Tuesday, January 3rd, the roz of his death is recorded as the previous day – Monday, January 2nd; although it may be recorded as Tuesday, January 3rd for secular purposes. There is a tradition, confirmed by the Rivayets, that if it is not known exactly when a person died (though this is highly unlikely in view of unprecedented advances in communication and medical technology) then Adar

Mah and Fravardin Roz should be observed for all ritual purposes as his day of death. If a person dies during the Gatha days, monthly anniversaries should be performed on Fravardin Roz of every month or every 30 days. If news of the death is received many days later, all the missed ceremonies should be performed immediately in sequence in the appropriate gah, and then monthly and yearly anniversaries should be performed per the roz and mah of death. This is elaborated upon by R. Motafram [8, pp. 27-30].

● ***Ceremonies in India or Iran; Ceremonies at more than one place.*** If there are no resources to perform religious ceremonies in the area, or if facilities are not adequate at the place of death, ceremonies may be done in the old country – India or Iran [see page 57]. However, it is preferable that the ceremonies *not* be performed at more than one place. It runs contrary to the Zarathushti theology of simplicity and conservation in every thing we do. The Committee of Scholars [see page 70] also decried it; but it is done sometimes, e.g. children living far apart, may have Muktads for their parents done separately. At times, in the case of illustrious souls, the Uthamna is held where the deceased was highly esteemed and sorely missed, but that is more for the benefit of the living than for the deceased.

The **sachkar ritual**, the last bath and preparation of the body to lie in state, is done by close relatives either at home (if the corpse is to be taken directly to the crematorium/cemetery) or at the selected funeral home. In the latter case, family members must bring the *clothes* for the sachkar, a *divo* and a small afargan with *sukhad* (sandalwood) and *loban* (frankincense) to the funeral home. The corpse is transported in a hearse to the funeral home, and placed in the cleansing room on a metal gurnee.

Relatives performing the sachkar (males for male corpses and females for female corpses, where possible), must first do the **Padyab Kushti** and begin the **Baj of Sarosh** [see page 76]. While reciting **Yatha Ahu Vairyo**, the body is gently cleansed with warm water, and dried with a towel. It is then dressed in all-white clothes: a sudreh and pajama/skirt, the kushti (tied while reciting the kushti prayers), a shirt/blouse and the head covered with a white cap or scarf. The scarf ends are tied under the chin leaving the ears open. The corpse is then placed in the casket, with hands crossed, the right one over the left, and covered with a white bedsheet, leaving only the face and the ears uncovered. Then they conclude the **Baj of Sarosh**. After the sachkar, contact with the body should be avoided, as it now begins to fall under the evil influence of *druje-nasus* [see page 53] and decomposition. After performing the sachkar ritual, family members should do the **Padyab Kushti**. ■

Traditionally, in the old country, the body is taken by hearse to a *bungli* (funerary building) located near the Towers of Silence. Close relatives stay at the bungli for the duration of the four-day ceremonies. The corpse is first cleansed with *taro* and then warm water. It is then clothed in sudreh-kushti (while reciting the kushti prayers) pajama and *jama* (long white robe) and wrapped with a bedsheet placed over three stone slabs. Two nasesalars (corpse bearers) take the **Baj of Sarosh** [see page 76], make a *paiwand* [see page 54] between them, and tie five strips of white cloth around the body at the neck, chest, waist, thighs and knees, while reciting **Yatha Ahu Vairyo**. They draw three circles with an iron nail around the place where the body is placed (to ritually contain the infections and impurities therein) and still holding the paiwand, leave the area and finish recital of the rest of the **Sarosh Baj**. This completes the sachkar. After the sachkar, no one except the nasesalars and khandhias should deal with the body. A male dog is then brought in to view the body after the sachkar and thereafter at the start of each gah. This is known as *sagdid* ('seen by the dog') [see page 54]. ■

SACHKAR RITUAL – PREPARATION OF THE BODY TO LIE IN STATE



Border of birds and flowers embroidered in fine french knots.

PRAYER VIGIL

PAYDUST (FUNERAL) CEREMONY, GEHSARNA, AND SEZDO (PAYING LAST RESPECTS)



*Lotus flower,
symbol of purity
and mercy, with
peacocks.*

Prayer vigil. From the time of the sachkar through the ensuing days and nights, until the Chahrum, prayers are to be recited continuously, but the paucity of mobeds has sometimes made it difficult to adhere to this practice even in the old country. Family members are encouraged, however, to maintain a prayer vigil by reciting the suggested prayers [see page 74] or a continuous string of **Yatha Ahu Vairynos and Ashem Vohus**, either at the funeral home or at home by the bedside of the deceased.

The **Paydust** (funeral) ceremony should take place only in the daylight hours, in the Havan, Rapithwan or Uzirehn gah. The deceased person is laid in state in the casket in the main hall of the funeral home, or in the prayer room of the crematorium or cemetery. Care should be taken that at no stage is the head of the deceased pointing towards the north. A divo (oil lamp) should be kept burning a few feet away, near the head, at all times. Fire may be tended with sukhad and loban in a small afargan. If flowers are sent for the deceased, they should not be placed in the same room with the dead body, lest they get vitiated by the virus from the *drujenasus*, but could be used for subsequent ceremonies elsewhere. Background music in the funeral home should be turned off. All members of the congregation, men and women are generally dressed in white or black and should have their heads covered with a cap or scarf. They should perform **Padyab Kushti** and the **Sarosh Baj** prayers before the ceremony begins.

Non-Zarathushtis are not traditionally allowed to view the body after the sachkar is done. It is preferable that the Gehsarna ceremony be performed in private with only family members and Zarathushti friends in attendance, but the *sezdo* (final homage) to follow, be open to all at a later time. However, the funeral home, crematorium and cemetery staff is all non-Zarathushti, as are often the spouse and relatives of the deceased.

The funeral begins with the **Gehsarna** ceremony, which is about one hour long, performed by two mobeds, maintaining the paiwand between them. In the absence of mobeds, two lay Zarathushti males may perform the Gehsarna. After reciting the prerequisite **Padyab Kushti**, **Sarosh Baj**, and appropriate **Gah** prayer, they stand facing the casket a few paces away, taking care not to face North. Wearing a padan (a mouth veil) they begin the **Baj of Sarosh** [see page 76] and recite the **Ahunavaiti Gatha** [Ys. 28 - 34] followed by the rest of the Sarosh Baj. The congregation may follow the priests by reading **Ahunavaiti Gatha** silently from their prayer book, or by reciting their **farazyat** [see page 77] prayers, or observe silence.

Upon completion of the Gehsarna ceremony, the congregation files past the casket one by one, bowing and paying their last respects to the deceased. This is called *sezdo*. There should be no touching of the body or the casket, nor placing of flowers or trinkets on the body.

The casket is then closed, and carried by the funeral home staff to the waiting hearse. Followed by relatives and friends in a motorcade, the funeral procession, proceeds to the crematorium or the cemetery. ■

Traditionally, in the old country, two or four nasesalars in all-white clothes from head to toe, and having a paiwand between them, enter the bungli with a *gehan* (an iron bier), cleanse themselves with gaomez, perform the **Padyab Kushti** and take the **Baj of Sarosh** [see page 76]. The sagdid is done. With an iron nail they draw three circles around the bier while reciting **Yatha Ahu Vairyo**. The two mobeds (or lay men) having done the prerequisite **Padyab Kushti**, **Sarosh Baj**, and appropriate **Gah** prayer, come with a paiwand between them (of a priestly sash or *pichhodi*) take a **Baj of Sarosh** and start recital of the **Ahunavaiti Gatha** [Ys. 28 - 34]. At the words “*vanaema drujem*” (“We vanquish all untruth”) in Yasna 31.4 the recital stops and sagdid is carried out again. The two mobeds, and prefer-

ably members of the congregation as well, turn their faces away or look down (so as to avoid eye contact with possible Ahrimanic forces and harmful effects of the *druje-nasus* that might thereby be released) as the nasesalars lift the corpse from the stone slabs and place it into the bier. Sagdid is carried out again. The Gehsarna recital is then resumed to its completion and the Baj of Sarosh also concluded.

On completion of the Ahunavaiti Gatha, all present pay homage (*sezdo*) to the deceased, one by one after which the khandhias (corpse bearers) carry the bier out and walk towards the dokhma. The funeral cortege from the bungli to the dokhma, is headed by two priests who walk at least 30 steps behind the bier, with a paiwand between them. All those wishing to follow form pairs with a handkerchief paiwand between them, take the **Baj of Sarosh** and walk in procession to the dokhma. The bier is placed on a stone platform some distance from the dokhma and a sagdid is performed for the last time. All present then bow and pay their final respects (last *sezdo*) to the deceased. ■

Upon arrival of the funeral motorcade at the crematorium (if mode of disposal is cremation) the casket is carried, again by the funeral home staff, to the antechamber of the crematorium and opened up for the last respects. Led by the mobeds in paiwand, the mourners recite **Ashem Vohu, Yatha Ahu Vairyo** and **Homage Unto the Urvans** [see below]. **Yenghahe Hatam** (revering all righteous men and women) is also a very appropriate prayer to recite at this time.

*Az hama gunah patet pashemanum.
Nemasate. Idha iristanam urvano yazamaide
yao ashaonam fravashayo.
Ashaone Ashem Vohu 1. (Recite three times)*

Of all sins I repent with contrition.

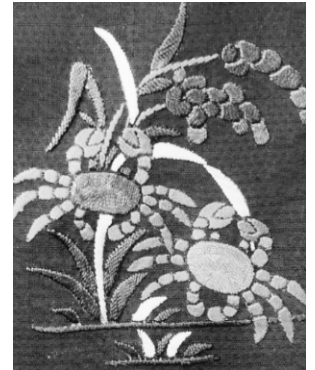
We here revere the souls of the dead who are [worthy of
the status of] the fravashis of the righteous. *[Homage unto the Urvans]*

The mourners file past the casket one by one, bow, and pay their final respects. The casket is then closed for the last time and carried by the staff through the doorway for immediate cremation, while all present recite **Ashem Vohu** and **Yatha Ahu Vairyo**. A few days later, the ashes are available to the family, to be disposed off per the wishes of the deceased.

If the selected mode of disposal is burial, the motorcade drives up to the gravesite, where the grave has been dug and lined with cement-like slabs. After the mourners pay their final respects, and recite the above prayers, the casket is closed, and lowered into the grave by the cemetery staff.

All in attendance at any of the funeral ceremonies, should wash their hands and face, perform **Padyab Kushti**, take a bath and put on fresh clothes upon returning home, before resuming normal activities. If this is not practical, they should minimally wash their hands and face and recite five **Yatha Ahu Vairyo** and three **Ashem Vohu** before returning to work, and take a bath and change clothes as soon as possible, thereafter. This minimizes the onslaught of *druje-nasus* and the resultant possibility of catching any infection, a custom that has saved many a Zarathushti life during vicious epidemics. ■

Traditionally, in the old country, after the mourners pay their final respects, the nasesalars unlock the gate of the dokhma, take the bier with the corpse inside, and lay it down, unclothed, on the allotted platform. After the body is consigned to the dokhma, and when the clap of the nasesalars is heard, or upon their return with the empty bier, the mourners leave the paiwand, conclude the **Baj of Sarosh**, and recite **Homage to the Urvans** [see above]. After cleansing their hands with taro and water, the mourners perform Padyab Kushti and recite the **Sarosh Baj**.



A rare design of two crabs and flowers.

THE FINAL DISPOSAL: CREMATION OR BURIAL



Peony flowers are symbols of nobility and wealth.

Then they return home, take a bath and put on fresh clothes, before resuming any normal activities. Note: Buying a new bier and new clothes for the corpse-bearers are not only unnecessary, but are expressly prohibited by our scriptures which highly recommend maintaining ecological balance by practicing conservation in every way. ■

FOUR-DAY CEREMONIES FOR THE SOUL OF THE DEPARTED



The **Sarosh-nu-patoo, Uthamna and Chahrum** ceremonies are done at the darbe mehr or at the home of the deceased. The prayer area is laid out with an afargan (fire vase), sukhad-loban (sandalwood and frankincense), a divo (an oil lamp), flowers and rose-water in a silver 'golabas.' A folded sudreh is placed in the Uthamna setup, perhaps to represent the 'sawab' (good deeds) a person has collected, figuratively, in his 'giryah' (the small pocket in front of the sudreh) during his sojourn on earth.

After the body has been disposed, the **Sarosh-nu-Patoo, Uthamna, 'Pachhli-ratnu Uthamnu'** and **Chahrum** ceremonies are performed, to help the soul (which is hitherto lingering around his old world) ascend towards its onward journey at dawn of the fourth day. These rituals should not be performed in the presence of the dead body, and thus in India, where the four-day ceremonies were all performed at the bungli, the first night's Sarosh-nu-Patoo is not performed unless the body has already been disposed off.

Pomegranates, symbolizing abundance and fertility feature on this densely embroidered border



Besides the above ceremonies, the family may arrange for performance of the following inner liturgies for the benefit of the soul of the departed. These can only be performed in fire-temples where the higher category of yaozdathregar mobeds and ritual implements are available, of which there are none outside India and Iran. To arrange for performance in India, see page 57:

- **Yasna** (or **Yazeshne** or **Ijashni**) in honor of Sarosh Yazad in the Havan gah for the first three days; and in honor of Ardafravash on the fourth day.
- **Vendidad** in honor of Sarosh Yazad in the Ushahin gah on the third day after death; and in honor of Ardafravash on the fourth day.
- **Maachi** may be performed in the Havan gah on the fourth day.

SAROSH-NU- PATROO

Sarosh Yazad, protector of the soul, in both the material as well as the spiritual worlds is invoked at the **Sarosh-nu-Patoo** ceremony, performed for three consecutive nights from the day a person dies. It is done by two mobeds, at the darbe mehr or at home, immediately after sunset, in the Aiwisruthrem gah.

The following prayers are recited at the Sarosh-nu-Patoo, after reciting the prerequisite **Padyab Kushti, Sarosh Baj** and **Aiwisruthrem Gah**:

- **Sarosh Yasht Vadi**, for the propitiation of Sarosh Yazad, who is appointed by Ahura Mazda to guide the souls of men in this world and in the hereafter. Sroasha is implored to guide and protect the soul of the deceased.
- **Patet Ravan-ni**, a Pazand prayer of repentance and atonement for sins.
- **Sarosh no Kardo** (Karda 7 of Sarosh Yasht Vadi).

After the mobeds conclude the recitation, members of the congregation, may come to the afargan and offer loban [page 76] and remember their departed loved ones.

On the afternoon of the third day, the *Uthamna* ceremony is performed by two or four or more priests, in the early Uzirehn gah, when the following prayers are recited, preferably while standing, after reciting the prerequisite **Padyab Kushti** and **Sarosh Baj**:

- **Khorshed and Meher Nyaesh**, litanies to the physical light (sun) and moral light (rays of the sun) respectively. These two nyaeshs were as a rule, recited twice, once for the living participants, and again for the departing soul.
- **Vispa Humata**, a short prayer extolling good thoughts, good words and good deeds.
- **Doa Nam Setayesh**, a short prayer of thanksgiving to Ahura Mazda.
- **Homage unto the Four Directions**, offering salutations to all creations of Ahura Mazda.

The priests then perform the ‘*hamazor*’ handshake with each other, signifying their strength (*zor*) and union (*hama*) in Asha, then sit down, and recite the following:

- **Uzirehn Gah**.
- **Sarosh Yasht Hadokht**, when Sroasha is implored to guide and protect the soul of the deceased.
- **Patet Ravan-ni**, a Pazand prayer of repentance and atonement for sins.

A priest then stands and recites:

- **Dhoop Nirang** (a recitation of the *dibache-i-Afringan* for the propitiation of Sarosh) wherein for the first time the name of the deceased is uttered aloud and the protection of Sarosh Yazata is sought for the upward journey of the soul.

The priests pray that Meher Yazad would find the soul worthy of upward journey in the high heavens. The prayers exhort that the only way to qualify for it is to understand the tenets of the religion and follow it rigorously in one’s life.

The Pahlavi name for the Dhoop Nirang prayer is **Nirang-i-Bui Dadan**, or the ‘*ceremony for sprinkling perfume*.’ After the Uthamna, each participant’s hands are sprinkled with rose water from a ‘*golabas*’ (a silver rose-water sprinkler) as he reverently touches the *khoomcha* (round silver tray) containing flowers that were prayed upon, in the ceremony. Each one is advised to spread the knowledge and fragrance of the Zarathushti religion all over the world:

May the Mazda-worshipping religion spread all over the universe.
May the message be heard in each and every corner of the world.
May evil be defeated.

After the mobeds conclude the recitation, family and members of the congregation may come to the afargan one by one, offer loban and remember their departed loved ones.

Following the Uthamna ceremony, friends and relatives may offer their eulogies and remembrances of the departed loved one in the new world.

Commemorating the deceased. Up until the early twentieth century it was customary to collect donations on this occasion for a cause relevant to the deceased’s sojourn on this earth. Friends and relatives generally announced liberal donations to charity funds in memory of the deceased. It would be fitting to revive this custom, especially in lieu of sending expensive flowers.

UTHAMNA CEREMONY



Border embroidered with lotus flowers and peacock motifs.

MEMORIAL SERVICE

The Parsis have another custom of commemorating the name of the deceased in the case of someone who was a great public benefactor. In Mumbai, admirers of the deceased send a signed petition to the Bombay Parsi Punchayet to hold a Hama Anjuman meeting to record his service to the community, during which a resolution is generally passed to commemorate his name in all jashans and afringans recited by priests. This is a great honor that a grateful community could bestow on a person for the good he had conferred upon his fellow-men, but as such names abound, priests usually recite more outstanding names they could recall from their limited memory.

A highly meritorious deed, and perhaps the best way to benefit a soul, either deceased or living, would be to help a deserving Athornan to become a priest (Navar) [see page 76].

PACHHLI RATNU UTHAMNU AND CHAHNUM (FOURTH DAY)



A rooster, known to awake the world with its crowing at dawn, adorns this richly embroidered border.

Dawn after the third night is a very significant period, for this is when the soul, that has lingered around for three days, departs from this world on its onward journey. This is theologically the real 'Uthamna,' which means 'getting up,' while the Uthamna held the previous afternoon is an Uthamna of convenience, which most people find easier to attend. The soul comes to the Chinwat Bridge, which is guarded by Meher Davar ('the Judge'), assisted by Rashnu, the yazata of spiritual Judgment and Astad, the yazata of Order, Rectitude and Justice. If his good deeds while on earth outweigh his misdeeds, his soul is allowed to pass over the bridge to paradise, otherwise he falls down into hell.

The *Pachhli Ratnu Uthamnu* at dawn, and the *Chahnum* prayers to follow at sunrise of the fourth day, are therefore of momentous significance at this juncture in the soul's journey.

Pachhli Ratnu Uthamnu ('Late Night Uthamna') is performed at dawn on the fourth day, at the darbe mehr. Two or four priests recite the following prayers, after reciting the prerequisite **Padyab Kushti**, **Sarosh Baj** and **Ushahin Gah**:

- **Atash Nyaesh**, in which Fire is implored to stay burning until the final renovation, and asked to grant paradise to the worshipper.
- **Sarosh Yasht Hadokht**, when Sroasha is implored to guide and protect the soul of the deceased.
- **Patet Ravan-ni**, a Pazand prayer of repentance and atonement for sins.
- **Dhoop Nirang** wherein the protection of Sarosh Yazad is sought.
- **Hoshbam**, a dedication to the Supreme Being, who is All-Light, to be recited at twilight just before sunrise.

Chahnum. Several ceremonies are performed on the fourth day, to provide solace and support to the soul at its critical time of judgment at the Chinvat Bridge.

(A) At sunrise, in the Havan gah, on the *Chahnum* (4th day) the following prayers are recited by preferably four mobeds, at the darbe mehr, after reciting the prerequisite **Padyab Kushti**, **Sarosh Baj** and **Havan Gah**:

- **Afringan** with the khshnuman of "*Daham Yazad Vispaesha Arda Fravash Beresad*," followed by the **Daham** and **Sarosh** kardas.
- A standard **Afringan** with **Ardafravash**, **Daham** and **Sarosh Kardas** and two **Afrins**.

This is the first afringan prayed for the deceased, who is now an ‘*anaoshe-ravan*’ (immortal soul) and belongs fully to the other world.

Afringan-i-Daham describes the fravashis, if pleased with our invocation as bestowing their blessings upon us:

In this abode ...
May obedience (to spiritual laws)
 overcome absence of such obedience,
Peace (overcome) anarchy,
Magnanimity (overcome) miserliness,
Right mentality (overcome) wrong mentality,
Well-spoken speech
 (overcome) ill-spoken speech,
Asha – divine truth/righteousness
 (overcome) *druj* (lie/falsehood).

[Afringan-i-Daham, Yasna 60.5]

After the mobeds conclude the recitation, members of the congregation, may come to the afargan one by one, offer loban [see page 76] and remember the departed loved ones.

(B) Some traditional families have four **Baj ceremonies** done just before dawn of the Chahrum. These are ‘inner liturgies’ that can only be performed in the consecrated precincts of a fire temple, where yaozdathregar mobeds and ritual implements are available, of which there are none outside India and Iran. To arrange for their performance in India, see page 57. The four Baj ceremonies are performed for:

- **Rashn-Astad**. Rashnu Yazad keeps the record of our deeds in this world and weighs our deeds. Astad Yazad assists Meher Yazad in his attempt to establish justice.
- **Mino-ram**, the angel of Good Wind (as opposed to the Bad Wind which belongs to the Ahrimanic forces) who helps the pious soul to pass through rarified air in the higher regions.
- **Sarosh Yazad**, who has sheltered and protected the soul for three days on this earth and now guides the soul on its journey in the other world.
- **Ardafravash**, the righteous farohars, as the soul of the deceased has now joined their ranks.

A set of new clothes, ‘*shiav*’ [see page 59] is consecrated during the Baj of Ardafravash, and then given to the priest, to family members or to the needy. Except for consecrating the shiav, it is not necessary to consecrate any utensils or other items, as was customary in the past.

(C) At noon (in the Rapithwan gah) and in the evening before sunset (in the Uzirehn gah), a mobed may recite at the darbe mehr:

● **Satum**, invoking the fravashis of all beings, recited with an offering of food, preferably favorites of the deceased. It may be vegetarian or non-vegetarian, per the practices of the family and the deceased.

We revere here the souls of the departed ones,
who belong to the Fravashis of the holy ones.
Here, in this house we revere
those Fravashis of the righteous men and women

[Satum no Kardo, verse 7]



Roses, symbol of royalty, and other flowers adorn a densely embroidered border.



The Bamboo plant and deer are both symbols of long life, vitality and strength.

CEREMONIES FOR REMEMBERING THE DEPARTED ON THEIR DEATH ANNIVERSARIES



French-knot border with birds, flowers and pomegranates, symbol of abundance and fertility.

If the surviving relatives cherish the memory of the departed, remember him with gratefulness, try to please him with pious thoughts words and deeds, and perform meritorious charitable deeds in his memory, it is likely that these departed spirits will in turn, assist in their well being on this earth with an invisible helping hand.

The Avesta does not give details about what ceremonies are to be performed after Chahrum, but the Pahlavi dibache (preface) for afringans make it explicit that prayers are to be recited on **Chahrum** (4th day), **Dahum** (Guj. **Dasmu**, 10th day), **Siroza** (30th day) and **Salroz** (year anniversary). In addition, some families elect to have ceremonies performed every day until the Dasmu; monthly anniversaries (on the roz of death) for one year; and the yearly anniversary or **varsî** (on the roz-mah of death) for a number of years. **Siroza Yazeshne** may be performed on: the 30th day (i.e. the day before the **masiso** or first month anniversary; on the 180th day, i.e. the day before the **chhamsi** or six-month anniversary; and on the 365th day, the day before the **varsî** or yearly anniversary [see Overview on page 57].

On these anniversaries, individual lay persons may recite prayers in memory of their loved ones [see page 74].

Mobeds may be engaged to perform the following ceremonies at the darbe mehr. After the prerequisite **Padyab Kushti** and **Gah**, they may recite:

- **Afringan** for remembering the souls of the departed and invoking their blessings. Usually it consists of the **Ardafravash**, **Daham** and **Sarosh kardas**, and the **Ardafravash** and **Bozorgan afrins**.
- **Satum**, invoking the fravashis of all beings, recited with an offering of a meal; one Satum is performed at noon (in the Rapithwan gah) and another Satum in the evening before sunset (in the Uzirehn gah).
- **Farroksi** invoking the fravashis of all beings. It is not generally performed in North America, but a lay person can recite it at any time [see page 75].

Performance of the following inner liturgies may be arranged in a fire temple in India [see page 57] in memory of the departed soul.

- **Baj, Yasna (Yazeshne or Ijashni) and Vendidad.**

Afringan-i-Ardafravash seeks the blessings of the fravashis. A brief example:

May the fravashis of the departed enter our house,
go all around our house, bless our house with the prosperity
Ashishwang Yazad bestows on men, and may they depart
from our house highly venerated and pleased with us (and our prayers).
May they never depart displeased from our house.

The *dibache* (preface) that precedes every karda in the afringan ceremony, repeatedly invokes all the souls of all the seven continents known then:

... whether born or to be born, men, women or children,
from the time of the first man, Gayomard, to the last man,
Saoshyant (the messiah who will bring about the ultimate
renovation of the world).

In the *afrins*, which conclude the afringan ceremony, we long to unite with the fravashis of the holy as with all other God's holy creations.

The post-death ceremonies may be performed depending on the family's ability to afford the services, their belief, their perception about their importance, their desires as well as the wishes expressed by the deceased in his lifetime.

The last ten days of the year (i.e. the last five days of the last month Aspandarmad and the five Gatha days) are observed by the Parsis as **Muktad** or **Fravardegan**. Iranians refer to the five Gatha days as **Panjeh-i-meh** (the greater five days) and the prior five days as **Panjeh-i-keh** (lesser five days). Lately, especially in the western diaspora, Muktad is observed for only the last five days of the year (the Gatha days). Up until the late 20th century, in India, Muktad was observed for 18 days, extending up to Amardadsal (Fravardin Mah).

FRAVARDEGAN, MUKTAD (PARSI) OR PANJEH (IRANIAN)



Muktad tables, laden with flower vases in remembrance of dear departed ones, at the darbe mehr in Chicago.

These Muktad days are devoted to remembering and honoring the fravashis of departed souls, who are believed to visit the homes of their loved ones at this time. Homes and agiaries are cleaned and a divo is lit to welcome them. It is also a time to do acts of charity.

Muktad ceremonies are in general the same as those performed for death anniversaries [see previous page]. For each

departed soul, family members set up a silver vase (or *behrun*) of flowers, at the darbe mehr. In North America tables of vases laden with flowers fill the prayer room, and requisite prayers are done by the mobeds, for all the departed souls of the community in one set of prayers. Some families prefer to engage the services of mobeds to perform individual ceremonies for their departed loved ones. Family members may also recite prayers [see page 74] at home for their loved ones.

Some communities in North America gather to recite a **hambandagi** (group prayer) every day during the Muktad days. An appropriate hambandagi for Muktad, derived from the Avestan portions of the Satum prayer, is described elsewhere [page 72].

If facilities or mobeds are not available locally in North America, Muktad ceremonies for a departed family member may be arranged to be performed in another town, or in India [see page 57]. However it is not advisable to have the ceremonies performed in more than one place [see page 61].

The 19th day of Nouruz (Mah Fravardin and Roz Fravardin) is celebrated as a day of remembrance, **Fravardian** or **Foroodak**, for the departed. Zarathushtis visit the dokhma, cemetery or final resting place of their beloved ones. Individuals may recite prayers in memory of their loved ones [see page 74]. The following ceremony may be performed by mobeds at the darbe mehr:

- **Fravardian Jashan**, including the appropriate afringan and afrin in honor of the departed.

There is no need to perform any ceremonies on Fravardin Roz of every month, before or after the first anniversary of death, as some are wont to do.



The “Endless Knot of Immortality” and Bird of Paradise on an ancient Chinese border.

FRAVARDIAN OR FOROODAK



Lotus flower, symbol of the Lord of Mercy. At the center is the Yin and Yang symbol representing the two principles, one negative and dark, the other positive and bright, whose interactions influence our destiny.

Despite the various ceremonies outlined above, the Zarathushti religion is a very humanistic, ethical and practical religion. If a person cannot afford all these observances, his predicament frees him from such obligations and discourages him from incurring any debt.

According to Ardaviraf Nameh:

Let them (Zarathushtis) lead such lives that on their deathbeds they may not need repentance, and let them not believe that punishments will be remitted (decreased) at the intercession of those they leave behind, nor will the prayers of the priests avail them.

Asho Zarathushtra has expressly stated [Ys. 43.5]:

Evil will follow the evil doers,
Good will follow the good.

It is, after all, the good deeds we perform here on this earth and not the prayers of the survivors that will lead us to heaven; though they may provide some solace to the living as well as the dead. ■

A NOTE ON THE PATET PRAYER. The *Patet*, written in Pazand, is a much later prayer, unlike the other prayers written in Avesta, and is generally acknowledged to have been compiled in the Sasanian times to counteract the growing influence of Christianity in Iran. It contains *patet* (repentance) for such a long list of sins that contemporary Iranian mobeds who can, for the most part, still understand Pazand, find it inappropriate to recite it on any occasion and even vehemently demanded its exclusion from the prayers listed here. This, however, regretfully cannot be done, as the Parsis, who are not as aware of its meaning, religiously abide by it to this day, although reformist Parsi priests such as Dasturji Dhalla concurred with the Iranian view, especially for its use during the navjote ceremony. Moreover, being a much later innovation, the devoutness of the hundreds of generations that preceded its formation was not violated or diminished by their not having recited it. Also, the idea of repentance being a later invention, primarily in response to social forces generated by the movement of another religion with a very different theology – Christianity, does not seem to me to be in real accordance with the fundamental tenet of Zarathushti theology, that bad thoughts, words or deeds can only be atoned if they are counterbalanced by good thoughts, words or deeds of equal or better value or proportions. Even the Shah-nameh often bears it out.

A NOTE ON THE SOURCE. For the most part, Er. Kuka's booklet [see Reference 6, page 56] was used as a guide in compiling the above lists of prayers. Needless to say, the learned Jashan Committee, on whose recommendations the booklet is based did not recommend performing the second Uthamna on the fourth dawn, Bamsi (the second month anniversary), the Chhamsi (6 month anniversary) or Vendidad on any day at all after death. It did not include the recital of Farroksi either. Neither is it necessary to perform the ceremonies (Afringan, Baj, Satum) daily for the whole first month or year. There is also no evidence or references made in the scriptures to perform the Bamsi or Chhamsi prayers, and these need not be performed. The Committee found no need to perform the ceremonies (Afringan, Baj, Satum) on the monthly roz anniversary after one year. It is not enjoined anywhere to perform any ceremonies on the birthday anniversaries of the departed. ■



Dr. Kersey H. Antia is the high priest of the Zarathushti community in Chicago since 1977, and has served as an honorary priest for over half a century. A fully-ordained priest, with the Best Boy medal and the Prefect Medal from the M. F. Cama Athornan Institute in Mumbai, Dr. Antia studied religion and Avesta-Pahlavi under Dasturji Dabu, Mirza and other learned priests, and has won essay prizes from K. R. Cama Oriental Institute and other institutions since 1956, and Avesta-Pahlavi scholarships in college. He has lectured widely and is author of numerous papers on religion and psychology. A clinical and management psychologist in private solo practice in Illinois, he is also affiliated with several hospitals. He is listed in several "Who's Who" and included in "2000 Outstanding Religious Personalities and Scholars of the 20th Century" and others.



Border design with alternating peacocks and lotus flowers. At the center of the lotus is the Yin and Yang symbol, representing the principles of light and dark, whose interactions influence the destiny of man.

Prayers for the departed - by Mobed Azargoshashb

Excerpts translated by Keikhosrow Mobed from the writings
(in Persian) of Mobed Ardeshir Azargoshashb.

[Excerpts from "Ways of Burying and Cremation after Death" by Mobed Ardeshir Azargoshashb]

Upon the death of a loved one, the following ceremonies are done:

At the funeral ceremony, *Ahunavaiti Gatha* is recited.

On the first and second evening after death, *Sarosh Yasht* is recited.

Porseh. The third evening after death is called the *Porseh*, a memorial service, when family and friends gather at the *darbe mehr*, to eulogize the departed soul, and offer inspirational readings. After *Ashem Vohu*, *Kushti* and *Uzirehn Gah* prayers, the *Sarosh Yasht* (7th - 9th *kardas*) and *Ahunavaiti Gatha* are recited.

Chahrum. On the fourth day, before sunrise, after recital of *Ashem Vohu* and *Kushti*, *Afringan-i-Daham* is recited. After sunrise, recite *Ashem-Yatha*, *Kushti*, *Havan Gah*, *Hormazd Yasht*, and *Khorshed-Meher Nyaeshs*.

On the 10th day, recite *Ashem-Yatha*, *Kushti*, *Khorshed Meher Nyaeshs*, *Uzirehn Gah* and *Ahunavaiti Gatha*.

Siroza. The 30th day is known as *Siroza*. Recite the *Yasht Ashavan Dahroon* (from the *Yasna*), *Kushti*, *Khorshed-Meher Nyaeshs*, *Afringan-i-Daham*, *Kardeh Sarosh* and *Hamazori Dahman*.

Roz anniversaries. On every *roz* anniversary (every 30 days) for 1 year, recite *Yasht Ashavan Dahroon*, *Afringan-i-Daham*, *Kardeh Sarosh* and *Hamazori Dahman*.

Year anniversary. On the first and subsequent anniversaries of death, in the morning recite *Ahunavaiti Gatha* and *Yasht Ashavan Dahroon*; and in the afternoon recite *Kushti*, *Uzirehn Gah*, *Afringan-i-Daham* and *Hamazori Dahman*.

In many places, where mobeds are not available, dehmobeds or even lay persons may recite the prayers.

Zarathushtra was the greatest messenger – he taught that *Vohu Manah* (good thinking) was always supreme.

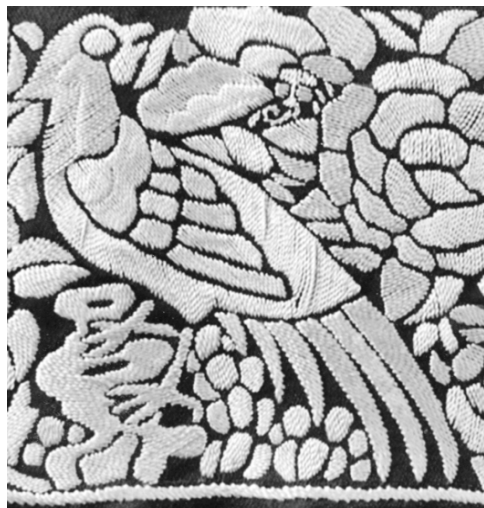
According to Keikhosrow Mobed, strict adherence to these prayers and ceremonies is not obligatory; for it is not the amount of prayers, but our good deeds that will assure us a place in heaven.

[Excerpts from "Khordeh Avesta," with translation and commentary by Mobed Ardeshir Azargoshashb]

The Avesta language used by Zarathushtra was the language of the Iranian people of that time. However, not all Avesta writings are the holy words of Asho Zarathushtra. Many of the *Yashts*, written in the Avesta language, are works of literature or history, or about fire, water, and the natural creations of Ahura Mazda, written by Iranian mobeds during Sasanian, and maybe Achaemenian times. The *Fravardin Yasht*, for example is the history of ancient Iran.

Zarathushtra says there is **only one** God, Ahura Mazda, who always stresses the Good Mind. Never has it been written that *Spenta Mainyu* (good) and *Angra Mainyu* (evil) are two gods; good and evil come from our own minds.

Mobed Ardeshir Azargoshashb, scholar and author of numerous books on Iranian Festivals, Navjote, Wedding, Death, Jashan, Role of Women, and the *Khordeh Avesta with commentary*, which is widely used today, was *Mobed-e-Mobedan* and president of the Iranian Mobeds Council. He passed away in 1993. He was succeeded by his brother, the Late Mobed Firuz Azargoshashb.



Richly embroidered gara border with motif of a bird perched on the Chinese symbol of immortality.

Zarathushti families in New Orleans get together during the five Gatha days of Muktdad at someone's house and pray this hambandagi. Each family brings flowers in a vase and we set up a table in remembrance of our departed loved ones. This is the same Hambandagi I used to pray at the Dadar agiary in Mumbai years ago. At our gathering, one person reads the translation first, and then everyone joins in reciting the prayer.

This prayer is derived from the Avestan passages of the Satum prayer, invoking the fravashis of all beings, and very appropriate for either individual prayers or communal hambandagi on any day and especially during the Muktdad days. It is from an excellent booklet published by the Dadar Jashan Committee, giving the prayer and meanings in Gujarati. I have transliterated the prayers in English and with the help of a dasturji in Mumbai, obtained an English translation.

Rohinton K. Tarapore, New Orleans
Tel: 504-460-9816, rktarapore@cox.net

Hambandagi for Muktdad

Passages from the Satum prayer, in remembrance of departed loved ones

Az hama gunah patet pashemanum, Ashaonam vanguhish soorao spentao fravashyo yazamaide! Ashaone Ashem Vohu - 1.

Recite the above 3 times.

Recite Ahmai Raescha, Hazanghrem, Jasa me Avanghahe Mazda and Kerfeh Mozd.

Kshnaothra Ahurahe Mazdao!

Ashem Vohu - 1.

1. Ashaou-nam vanghuish soorao spentao fravashyo satomi, zabyemi, oofyemi. Yazamaide naman-yao vis-yao zantu-mao dakhyu-mao Zarathustro-te-mao.

2. Vispa-namch aong-ham paorya-nam fravashi-nam eedh yazamaide fravashim-avam yam Ahurahe Mazdao, majish-tamcha, vahish-tamcha sresh-tamcha, khraoj-dish-tamcha khrathwish-tamcha hu-kere-patamamcha, ashat apno-tamamcha.

3. Ashaou-nam vanghu-ish soora-o spenta-o fravashyo yazamaide. Yao Amesha-nam Spenta-nam, kshaetnam, verezi-doethra-nam, berez-tam, aiwi-yam-nam, takhma-nam, ahurya-nam, yo-ee aethya-jang-ho ashavno.

4. Paoirya-nam tekesha-nam, paoirya-nam sasno-gusham eedh asho-nam, ashoni-namcha ahum-cha, daenam-cha, baodhus-cha, urvanem-

*The hambandagi starts with the **Muktdad no Namaskar**:*

Of all sins I repent through penitence. We revere (or remember) the good, heroic and prosperity-increasing fravashis of the righteous people.

*The remaining stanzas are the Avestan passages of the **Satum** prayer:*

1. We get attuned, remember, pray and sing in praise of the excellent, heroic and bounteous fravashis of all righteous beings who bring happiness and prosperity to us. We praise the fravashis and high priests belonging to our homes, cities, states and countries.

2. Among all these fravashis of the ancient epoch that we worship here, the first and foremost is that of Ahura Mazda, who is the most exalted, the most excellent, and the best, the firmest and the wisest, the most gracious and the highest in righteousness.

3. We remember the bounteous holy fravashis of the Amesha Spentas, who are the rulers, energetic eyed, the exalted and the mighty, who render help and assistance, act in accord with the Law of Ahura Mazda and who are the eternal holy ones.

4. Here do we extol the life-force, the conscience, the intellect, the souls and the fravashis of the righteous men and the righteous women of the ancient Mazdayasni faith before Zarathushtra, and of the righteous men and the righteous women who were the first listeners to the religious scriptures of Zarathushtra and who embraced his religion called Mazdayasni Zarathushtrish. All these people strove hard for righteousness. We adore the soul of the bounteous Mother Earth.



cha, fravashim-cha yazamaide, yoi-e ashai vao-neray, geyush hu-dhang-ho urvanem yazamaide.

5. Yoi-e ashai vao-neray. Geyehe Marethno ashaono fravashim yazamaide. Zarathushtra-he Spitama-he idh ashaono ashim-cha fravashim-cha yazamaide. Kavo-ish Vistasp-he ashaono fravashim yazamaide. Isat-vastre-he Zarathushtra-he ashaono fravashim yazamaide.

6. Naba-naz-dishta-nam idha ashaonam ashaoni-namcha ahum-cha, daenam-cha, baodhus-cha, urvanem-cha, fravashim-cha yazamaide, yoi-e ashai vao-neray; mat vispabyo ashao-niby, frava-shiby, ya-o ir-irith-usham ashaonam, ya-oscha zavan-tam ashaonam, ya-oscha naram azat-nam frasho-chere-thram Soshyan-tam.

7. Idha irriste-nam urvano yazamaide ya-o ashaonam fravashyo, Vispa-nam ahmai nama-ne naba-nazdishta-nam, para-iriste-nam, aethra-paiti-nam, aethraya-nam, neram, naeri-nam idha ashaonam ashoni-nam fravashyo yazamaide.

8. Vispa-nam aethra-paiti-nam ashaonam fravashyo yazamaide. Vispa-nam aethraya-nam ashaonam fravashyo yazamaide. Vispa-nam neram ashaonam fravashyo yazamaide. Vispa-nam nairi-nam ashaoni-nam fravashyo yazamaide.

9. Vispa-nam apere-nayuk-nam dahmo-keret-nam ashaonam fravashyo yazamaide. Aadakhyu-namcha ashaonam fravashyo yazamaide. Uz-dakhyu-namcha ashaonam fravashyo yazamaide.

10. Naramcha ashaonam fravashyo yazamaide. naeri-namcha ashaoni-nam fravashyo yazamaide. Vispao ashaonam vanghu-ish soora-o spenta-o fravashyo yazamaide. Ya-o hach Gayat Merethenat a Sosh-yan-tat vere-thragh-nat.

11. Vispa-o fravashyo ashaonam yazamaide; Ashaonam vanghu-ish soora-o spenta-o fravashyo yazamaide. Vis-pe ashav-no yazat yazamaide. Ashem Vohu - 1.

5. Among those who strove hard for righteousness, we respectfully remember the fravashi of the righteous Gayo Maretan or Gayomard. We revere here, both the holiness and the fravashi of holy Spitama Zarathushtra. We venerate the fravashi of the Kyanian King Vishtasp the Righteous. We venerate the fravashi of the righteous Istra-vastre, the eldest son (power) of Zarathushtra.

6. Here do we praise the life-force, the conscience, the intellect, the souls and the fravashis of the righteous men and the righteous women of our near relatives, who strove hard for righteousness. Along with all these holy fravashis, do we revere those of the righteous departed souls, those of the righteous who are living, those of the heroes to be born and the heralds of renovation, the Saoshyants yet to come – to fight evil and re-establish the Law of Asha (righteousness) in the world.

7. Here do we praise the souls of the departed ones who fought for ashoi and whose fravashis are holy. Of all the departed souls of near relatives who died in this house, the priests, the disciples and men and women who have gone beyond from this fold, we here invoke the fravashis of the righteous men and of the righteous women.

8. Of all the priests, we revere the fravashis of the righteous priests. Of all the disciples, we revere the fravashis of the holy disciples. We revere the fravashis of all the righteous men. We revere the fravashis of all the righteous women.

9. We praise the fravashis of all holy, innocent children of tender age. We praise the fravashis of the holy inhabitants of this country. We praise the fravashis of the holy inhabitants of other countries.

10. We praise the fravashis of the righteous men. We praise the fravashis of the righteous women. All the excellent, heroic and bounteous fravashis of the righteous do we revere, all those right from Gayo Maretan, the first mortal man, up to Saoshyant, our last victorious savior to come.

11. We remember and praise the fravashis of all the righteous souls. We remember and praise the excellent heroic and bounteous fravashis of the holy ones. All of them bring happiness and prosperity to us. We also remember and praise all the yazatas. ■



Border embroidered with Chinese motifs of flowers, a peacock, butterflies (symbol of happiness and long life) and a man carrying a fly-whisk (to awaken the spirits of the dead).

Guide to prayers for departed loved ones

by Kersey H. Antia

These prayers are recited by family members of the deceased for the solace, protection and progress of the soul in its onward journey towards haurvatat (perfection) and amertat (immortality), after it departs the body. They also serve to bring solace to the bereaved relatives and friends.

Prayers for the first four days after a death

The prayers described here may be recited constantly, day and night after the sachkar ritual and until the Chahrum at dawn on the fourth day. These prayers supplement the ceremonial prayers performed by the priests. If it is not feasible to recite these suggested prayers, then a string of **Yatha Ahu Vairyo**s recited continually will suffice.



The prayer vigil may be held near the body (about three paces away) or at home by his bedside or by a prayer corner set aside at home, specially for remembering departed loved ones [see photo left], on which are usually placed a picture of Zarathushtra, a divo/candle, prayer books, and photographs of the departed. The divo should be lit, and if possible fire enkindled in a small

afargan, with fragrant sandalwood and frankincense. During the day, pray facing the sun, and at night facing a lighted object. Do not pray facing North.

The suggested prayers for the first three days, until the chahrum, beginning with the obligatory **farazyat** prayers [see page 77] are:

- **Padyab Kushti**, to attain a clean, physical and mental state.
- **Sarosh Baj** to attune oneself with Sarosh Yazad (Sroasha), our guide and protector, both on this earth, and on the onward journey of the soul.

- Recite the following prayers, depending on the *gah*, or watch of the day [see page 42].

During the Havan *gah*, recite:

- **Havan Gah**
- **Hoshbam** (recite only at dawn, just before sunrise)
- **Khorshed and Meher Nyaesh**, litanies to the physical light (sun) and moral light (rays of the sun) respectively. The two nyaeshs must be recited together, while facing the sun, and only during the daylight hours.
- **Vispa Humata**, a short prayer extolling good thoughts, good words and good deeds.
- **Doa Nam Setayesh**, a short prayer extolling and giving of thanks to Ahura Mazda.
- **Homage unto the Four Directions**, offering salutations to all creations of Ahura Mazda.
- **Patet Ravan-ni**, a Pazand prayer of repentance and atonement for sins committed by the deceased [see note below].

If more time is available, the Khorshed and Meher Nyaeshs should be repeated, the first recitation being for oneself, and the second for the soul of the deceased.

During the Rapithwan *gah*, recite the following:

- **Rapithwan Gah**
- **Khorshed and Meher Nyaesh**
- **Patet Ravan-ni**
Khorshed and Meher Nyaeshs may be repeated.

During the Uzirehn *gah*, recite the following:

- **Uzirehn Gah**
- **Khorshed and Meher Nyaesh**
Khorshed and Meher Nyaeshs may be repeated.

NOTE: The **Patet Pashemani** is recited by an individual to repent for his own digressions; while the **Patet Ravan-ni** is recited by another person on behalf of the deceased, for his digressions while on earth. [Also see the note on Patet on page 70].

During the Aiwisruthrem gah, recite the following:

- **Aiwisruthrem Gah.**
- **Sarosh Yasht Vadi** [*Yasna* 57] is the greater yasht to Sroasha, the guide/protector of the soul.
- **Atash Nyaesh**, litany to the Fire.
- **Patet Ravan-ni**

During the Ushahin gah, recite the following:

- **Ushahin Gah.**
- **Sarosh Yasht Hadokht** is the shorter yasht to Sroasha, the guide and protector of the soul.
- **Atash Nyaesh**, litany to the Fire.
- **Patet Ravan-ni**
- **Hom Yasht** for the yazata Haoma.
- **Khordad Yasht** for Haurvatat (perfection).

Prayers for death anniversaries

The prayers described below are suggested for recitation by individuals, on the 4th day (Chahrum), 10th day (Dasmu), 30th day (Siroza), monthly and yearly anniversaries of departed loved ones.

● The prerequisite, **farazyat** prayers [*see page 77*] as appropriate (**Padyab Kushti**, **Sarosh Baj**, **Gah** ...)

● **Satum**, invoking the fravashis of all beings.

There is perhaps no better prayer than **Satum** for the lay person to pray on any day (except that it should not be recited during the first four days after a person dies, when his soul is still lingering near the earth) or even every day, remembering the fravashis of the departed loved ones. The main occasions for its recital are the anniversaries of death, but it is not necessarily connected with the dead, and may be recited, either by mobeds or lay persons, even on joyous occasions when one wants to gratefully remember the dear departed souls. The *dibache* (preface) for Satum is the same as for any afringan, and the rest is a mini-Fravardin Yasht.

● **Fravardin Yasht**, revering righteous souls of ancient Iran and celebrating the fravashis of all the creations of Ahura Mazda.

This great yasht, dedicated to the fravashis of the righteous, reveres all souls from the first one (Gayomard) to the last (Saoshyant) and celebrates the fravashis of all the creations of Ahura Mazda, as well as living human beings. Fravardin Yasht [*143-155*] declares:

We venerate the fravashis of women in all the lands ... We venerate the souls of righteous men and women....

Of those we know, Zarathushtra is the first and the best in the Divine Doctrine ...

We venerate the life, conscience, perception, soul and conviction of the righteous men and women, who have acquired the teachings of Zarathushtra for the sake of righteousness.

We venerate the righteous men and women of the primal principles who acquired all these houses, settlements, districts, and lands, and who acquired righteousness, who acquired the thought-provoking message of Zarathushtra, who realized their own souls, who acquired all that is good.

We venerate the souls of the helpful, law-abiding persons. We venerate the souls of the righteous persons, born in whatever land, and of men and women, whose religious convictions are gaining, have gained, or shall gain (in future).

Thus we venerate good men and women who are progressive, eternal, ever-gaining and ever-growing – all men and women who live a life of good mind.

● **Farroksi** is a prayer invoking the fravashis of all beings. It basically consists of the Fravardin Yasht and Satum, an excellent combination of prayers for the veneration of the dead.

Prayers for Muktd/Panjeh

During the ten days of Muktd, or Fravardegan or Panjeh [*see page 69*] the same prayers may be recited as for the death anniversaries [*shown at left*]. In addition,

During the first five days (i.e. the last five days of Mah Aspandarmad) recite:

● **Framroat Ha (Yasna 20)**, which is a commentary on the Ashem Vohu prayer.

During the second five days (five Gatha days), recite:

● The appropriate Gatha prayer:

- **Ahunavaiti Gatha** on Ahunavad Gatha day.
- **Ushtavaiti Gatha** on Ushtavad Gatha day.
- **Spentamainyu Gatha** on Spentomad Gatha day.
- **Vohukhshathra Gatha** on Vohukhshathra Gatha.
- **Vahishtoish Gatha** on Vahishtoish Gatha day.

An appropriate hambandagi for recitation during the Muktd days, derived from the Avesta portions of the Satum prayer, is described elsewhere [*see page 72*].

Prayers for Fravardian

The prayers described for death anniversaries [*see above*] may also be recited by individuals on Farvardian (Roz Fravardin, Mah Fravardin) which is a day of remembrance for the departed.

Recitation of the names of the deceased

The name of the deceased is recited at indicated places in the Patet Ravan-ni and other prayers and while offering loban. For Parsis, the name should be recited together with their father's (for men and unmarried women) or husband's (for married women) name. Iranians as a rule recite women's name with her father's even after marriage. Surnames are not recited. The name is prefixed with their status:

Behdin: Male or female from non-priestly family.

Ervad: Male who is at least a navar (priest).

Khurd: Child whose navjote has not been done. 'Khurd' here means 'small.'

Osta: Male from priestly (athornan) family, but who is not a navar.

Osti: Female from priestly (athornan) family.

Thus, Sohrab, son of Rustom, from a non-priestly family would be “Behdin Sohrab Behdin Rustom.”

When reciting Patet Ravan-ni, at the word ‘falan’ recite the first name of the departed soul prefixed with the appropriate title [see Ref. 2, page 56]. ‘Khud’ here means ‘self.’ For example, if the name of the departed is Behdin Sohrab, for ‘falan’ say “Behdin Sohrab”; for ‘khud falan’ say “khud Behdin Sohrab,” and for ‘falan khud falan’ say “Behdin Sohrab khud Behdin Sohrab.”

Offering loban, ‘Loban mukvanu’

When offering loban, one should bow reverently, offer sandalwood and frankincense, and remember departed loved ones by name, reciting as follows:

*Nam chesti anaoshahe ravan ravanee Behdin Sohrab
Behdin Rustom aeder yad bad.*

May the immortal ravan of (name of deceased) named here be remembered by me.

Or, we pray that (name of deceased) be in heaven:

Behdin Sohrab Behdin Rustom ney garothman behesht.

One may invoke the help and blessings of Ahura Mazda and all departed souls and fravashis, by reciting:

*Dadar Hormuzd-ni madad hojo ji
Asho ravan, asho farohar ni panah hojo ji*

One may also pray the following verse from the Avestan portion of the Satum prayer [verse 10]:

*Vispao ashaonam vanghahuish soorao spentao fravashayo
yazamaide, yao hacha Gayat Merethnat a Saoshyantai
verethragha-ey*

We revere all the virtuous, brave, beneficent fravashis of the ashavans (righteous ones) – all those from Gayo Maretan or Gayomard (the first mortal) to the victorious Saoshyant (the savior will redeem the world by ending it eternally into frashokereti).

Recite Yenghahe Hatam (1) and Ashem Vohu (1)

Taking the ‘Baj of Sarosh’

Traditionally, in the old country, the ‘Baj of Sarosh’ is recited by those who perform the sachkar ritual bath, by nasesalars and priests during the funeral services, as well as by mourners who follow the corpse to the dokhma. To take the Baj of Sarosh, recite the Sarosh Baj prayer upto the following words at the end of Kemna Mazda:

Ma merenchainish gaethao astavaitish ashahe.

Do not destroy the living creations of Asha.

After the particular ritual is completed, resume recitation of the Sarosh Baj, but omit recital of Ahmai Raescha, Hazanghrem and Kerfeh Mozd and omit the passage “ramano khvastrahe, etc.” in Jasa me Avanghahe Mazda. Conclude with Ashem Vohu (1). ■

[Dr. Kersey H. Antia’s profile is on page 70].

PRAYER BOOKS

The prayers mentioned here may be found in most Tamam (complete) Khordeh Avesta prayer books, notably in Er. Kanga’s *Khordeh Avesta* which can also be viewed at www.avesta.org. [See references, page 56].

Useful information about the contents, significance and devotional uses of various prayers may be found in the “Companion FEZANA Journals” [see page 56] ■

A meritorious deed

Helping a deserving Athornan to become a navar is a highly meritorious act and perhaps the best way to benefit a soul, either deceased or living.

According to our Pahlavi scriptures, for whatever good deeds or prayers a person performs in his entire life, a portion of the benefit accrues to the one who helped him do the good or become a priest.

Assistance to become a navar is both the best and the most unique way to benefit the soul of the deceased, because it will reap the benefits as long as the young priest lives and prays. It is unique because a deceased person can no longer make such a choice and benefit from it, but it is not too late for a relative to act on his behalf. In such a case, the benefit accrues to the living person as well, in this world and the other.

It is also our long established custom to make someone a navar for the spiritual benefit (*sawab*) of a living person. Indeed my uncle, a life-long Yaozdatregar, chose to make my brother navar, for such a sawab.

As the whole structure of post-death rituals depends entirely on priests, and as it is nowadays so hard to find them, the benefits to the community at large of enabling someone to be a priest is also immeasurable, as if life can spring back from death.

Death, be not proud!

How you can help. WZO has started a **Navar Fund** to assist deserving Athornans to become a navar. To donate to this worthy cause contact Dr. Kersey H. Antia at kerseyantia@yahoo.com or WZO at Secretary@w-z-o.org (website www.w-z-o.org).

Audio Tapes Available

Dr. Kersey Antia has recorded two audio tapes:

- (1) A tape of Gathas recited in the original meter, and
- (2) A tape on uniting body, mind and spirit using Zarathushti principles, which could be very helpful in relieving stress, ulcers, high blood pressure, headaches and tension, etc.

The tapes are available from Dr. Antia [see above] for a donation. All proceeds from the tapes will be donated by Dr. Antia to the Navar Fund. ■

Farazyat Prayers

The Farazyat (or obligatory) prayers include:

- **Padyab Kushti**
- **Sarosh Baj** and **Din-no-Kalmo**
- The appropriate **Gah** prayer
- The appropriate **Nyaesh** or **Yasht**:
 - (a) During the three daylight periods: Havan gah, Rapith wan gah and Uzirehn gah, the **Khorshed** and **Meher Nyaeshs** are recited.
 - (b) During the Aiwisruthrem gah, **Sarosh Yasht Wadi** is recited.
 - (c) During the Ushahin gah, **Sarosh Yasht Hadokht** is recited.
- **Vispa Humata** (recited in Havan gah only)
- **Doa Nam Setayesh**
- **Tandarosti**

The prayers should be recited in the order given. Other non-Farazyat prayers, if recited, should be placed prior to Doa Nam Setayesh.

[For further explanatory notes on these prayers, see "Our Farazyat Prayers" by Jal N. Birdy, FEZANA Journal, Summer 2003]

A Life that Matters

Ready or not, some day it will all come to an end. There will be no more sunrises, no minutes, hours or days.

All the things you collected, whether treasured or forgotten, will pass to someone else. Your wealth, fame and temporal power will shrivel to irrelevance.

Your grudges, resentments, frustrations, and jealousies will finally disappear. So, too, your hopes, ambitions, plans, and to-do lists will expire. The wins and losses that once seemed so important will fade away.

It won't matter where you came from, or on what side of the tracks you lived at the end.

It won't matter whether you were beautiful or brilliant. Even your gender and skin color will be irrelevant.

So what will matter? How will the value of your days be measured?

What will matter is not what you bought, but what you built.

What will matter is not what you got, but what you gave.

What will matter is not your success, but your significance.

What will matter is not what you learned, but what you taught.

What will matter is every act of integrity, compassion, courage or sacrifice that enriched, empowered or encouraged others to emulate your example.

What will matter is not your competence, but your character.

What will matter is not how many people you knew, but how many will feel a lasting loss when you're gone.

What will matter is not your memories, but the memories that live in those who loved you.

What will matter is how long you will be remembered, by whom and for what.

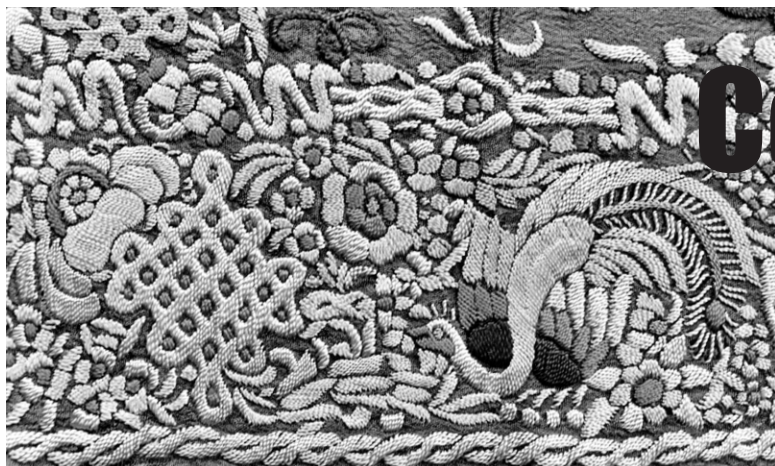
Living a life that matters doesn't happen by accident. It's not a matter of circumstance but of choice.

CHOOSE TO LIVE A LIFE THAT MATTERS!

by Michael Josephson [From www.quickinspirations.com]

On religion and life... quotations by Late Dasturji N. D. Minochehrhomji

- Religion is lived on a double axis:
Worship of God and Fellowship of Man.
- Religion is not the Sunday suit, but the daily garment.
- Living with Wisdom, Truth, Service and Insight (four Amesha-Spentas, brings the twin rewards of Perfection and Immortality. Living with these principles gives an inner lining to the garment of my life.
- Service and Worship go hand in hand.
- This darbe mehr is the portal of three L's:
Love, Light and Learning (or moral Law).
- Sight is good, but insight is better.
- O God, give me the gift of seeing myself as others see me *[adapted from Robert Burns]*.
- The root for the word punishment, is purify. Punish the criminal, but do not remove his humanity.
- Let me not be a hinderer (*abshuhinti*).
Let me rather be a helper.
- Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom. Freedom is my awareness with responsibility. Liberty without responsibility becomes license.
- Sacrifice is that which makes me sacred. Not animal sacrifice, but sacrifice of the animal within me.
- There is nothing good or bad, but thinking makes it so *[Shakespeare]*.
- Some people bring happiness wherever they go.
Others bring happiness whenever they go. ■



A motif of the endless knot – a symbol of immortality.

Commentary on disposal of the dead

A discussion of various modes of disposal of the dead, available in North America: burial, cremation or *dokhmenashini* (by transporting the body to India); and a review of practices in Iran. In India, the preferred mode is *dokhmenashini*, which is discussed elsewhere in this issue.

“Each association [may] maintain a small garden plot where the ashes of all the departed could be placed, even intermingled - so reminiscent of dokhmenashini.”

by Kersey H. Antia

Dr. Kersey H. Antia is high priest of the Zarathushti community in Chicago [profile on page 70].



Dokhmenashini is the only way to avoid pollution to any element of nature – any other method for disposing the dead body invariably involves polluting at least one element of nature, which naturally forces us to resort to the lesser of the evils.

Burial. Burying a dead body has a double whammy, as it pollutes the earth and lets zillions of *Ahri-*

manic khrafastra (worms) thrive on the body for decades, which has been known time and time again, to pollute nearby streams and water systems, resulting in serious epidemics.

Moreover, land belongs to the living in our religious tradition, and not to the dead. I was surprised to see how much of the land in Iran (Pars) is infertile, which makes it sinful to use it for the benefit of any one other than the living. No wonder, therefore, Vendidad exhorts us to dig up any dead body from a grave and expose it to the sun. If modern laws do not allow it, cremation should be the

next alternative. Moreover, our scriptures advise us against making the expenditures for death wasteful in any way – we use the same iron bier for the corpse of a baronet or a beggar, the same *dokhma* and the same essential rituals.

Burial requires individual lots, individual coffins, individual decor and inscriptions and lifelong maintenance. This is not in keeping with the parsimony, simplicity and ecological economy advocated in death by our religion. In rare cases, it is not even possible to resort to burial, as in New Orleans, where the water table is close to the surface, and water contamination could become a serious hazard.

Cremation. While cremation may be viewed as polluting fire, it does not have the other disadvantages of burial, as outlined above. Moreover, our Indo-Aryan brethren always practiced cremation, and modern technology should enable us to have better and pollution-free crematoria in the future, such as the ‘promatoruim’ described by The Guardian [UK, October 1, 2005].

Our aversion to cremation primarily ensues from thousands of years of conditioning for respecting fire as Ahura Mazda’s representation on earth and some medieval misperceptions about it, but cremation seems to be the second best alternative for us. If, however, burial is the only choice available in the absence of a crematorium, it is advisable to surround the grave with cement-concrete blocks on all sides, as they do in Iran, to reduce polluting land and water to some extent.

Fire is known to remove any impurities it touches. It is not surprising therefore, an Iranian mobed told me years ago that the Zarathushtis in Iran would have preferred

cremation over burial when dokhmenashini was forced out by the Shah, if they really had the choice; but it is not acceptable in an Islamic country.

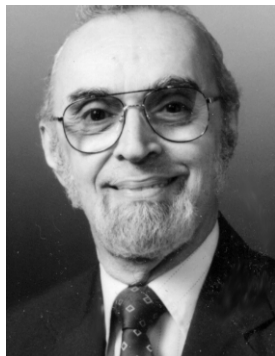
I have read about archeological evidence for cremation in very ancient Iran and we must have practiced cremation when Indo-Iranians lived together in the remote past. Even the Greek Aryans observed it.

The practice of burying cremated ashes, however, is a very un-Zarathushti practice. I have often suggested that each association maintain a small garden plot where the ashes of all the departed could be placed, even intermingled, so reminiscent of dokhmenashini. ■

“The generalization that the act of cremation is a desecration of the Holy Fire, has no doctrinal basis.”

by Jehan Bagli

Er. Dr. Jehan F. Bagli is president of the North American Mobeds Council [see profile on page 39]



Of the three commonly known modes of disposal of the dead, *dokhmenashini* is perhaps the best mode of disposal where the *dokhma* towers are available and are located in isolated wilderness away from civilization, and have an adequate population of vultures. In North America, we do not have access to such a mode of disposal. This leaves us with a choice between *burial* and *cremation*.

Fundamental facts. There are some fundamental facts that we must understand about the disposal of a corpse:

- The disposal of a dead body is the removal of putrefying matter that is harmful to the living.
- No method of disposal is perfect; each one has its shortcomings.
- Destroying by transforming solid organic matter into gases requires energy. This energy may be provided by natural means such as sunlight (as in dokhmenashini) or by anaerobic microbes (as in burial) or by using intense heat (as in cremation).
- All the prayers and ceremonies are directed to the soul that is immortal and to memorializing the life of the individual. The recital of the liturgies in no way relate directly to the matter of the body.

Burial. Of the two choices available, burial has been one of the most common forms of disposal used in North America. However with increasing population, one of the major disadvantages of this mode of disposal is fast

becoming evident. Burial ties up vast areas of land, making them unusable for the living. In addition, dangers of ground water pollution, and leaching of formaldehyde from the decomposing matter has been detected in certain areas, which can lead to harmful consequences to wildlife and the plant kingdom. Recognizing these disadvantages, coupled with the high cost of burial, its use has diminished in recent times.

From a theological viewpoint the above reasons clearly show burial to be a means of contaminating the earth – a sacred creation of Ahura Mazda, by disturbing the ecosystem of nature, and is therefore deemed undesirable.

Cremation. Traditionally for Zarathushtrians, cremation has been erroneously looked upon as undesirable. This is based on the premise that contact of the corpse with fire is theologically proscribed. The generalization that, “fire is sacred in the Zarathushtrian religion” and that the act of cremation is a desecration of the Holy Fire, is a notion that demands careful clarification.

The mention of fire in the Gathas has brought immense sanctity to this element of nature that was already used in religious rites, long before the time of the Prophet. In fact Asho Zarathushtra elevated this element to the incarnation of Ahura Mazda in the physical world. We acknowledge this in the metaphor of “*athro Ahurahe-mazdao puthra*” in the liturgy of Atash Nyaesh.

The liturgy clearly identifies the fires that are worthy of veneration viz., Atash-e Behram, Atash-e Aderan and Atash-e Dadgah. These are the fires that are sanctified through prayers and elaborate rituals and are elevated to the level of the embodiment of Ahura Mazda. Their authenticity must be fully preserved to avoid their desecration in any way. They are the very representation of absolute purity and absolute righteousness, the very implication of the concept of Asha in the physical world.

They command spiritual respect, in the sacred spaces where they are enthroned.

It is recorded in history that fat from sacrificed animals, and pieces of *omentum*, together with dry wood, was a customary *zaothra* (offering) to the hearth fire of Zarathushtrian households to keep it aglow [Boyce, *History of Zoroastrianism*, Vol. I, pp. 153-155].

It must be understood that the fire, beyond the realm of Zarathushtrian theology, by its very nature is at once, a preserver and a destroyer. It can destroy good as well as evil. It has the awesome power to transmute organic matter fully to gases and to reduce inorganic matter completely to ashes. This duality is reflected in the Holy Fire of Mazda, mentioned in the Gathas.

Zarathushtra reveals in the Gathas [Ys 31.19, 20; 34.4] that the sacred fire is the preserver of the righteous (Good) and the destroyer of the deceitful (Evil):

“Thy fire Lord, which possesses strength through trust and which is the swiftest, forceful thing to be of clear help to

thy supporter but of visible harm, with the powers in his hands, to Thy enemy, Wise One.”

[Ys 34.4, tr. Insler]

A fire that engulfs a house is not sacred by any measure and must be swiftly extinguished. In contrast, a pile of waste matter that is being set ablaze must be allowed to incinerate until all the polluting matter is converted to gaseous elements. Any contagion by Gathic precepts must be removed from the environment of the living as it violates the divine principle of Asha. The purity laws of Zarathushtrian religion demand that such a source of contagion be fully eliminated promptly and with dignity.

Modern electric crematoriums are designed to provide sufficient heat to cremate organic matter to ashes within a short period. The concept that such an act is a desecration of the Holy Fire has no doctrinal basis. The flames involved if any, are not of a consecrated fire; and more importantly, any flames emitted are being fully utilized to destroy the evil of contagion, to prevent pollution, to purify the environment for the living and to refresh and renovate the world. All this is entirely consistent with Zarathushtrian canon.

The use of the heat of fire in cremation is analogous to the fire that will arise out of the molten metal [Ys. 30.7, 32.7, 51.9] to effect the final purification and resurrection to *frashokereti* [Bundahishn, 34.18-20]. In contrast to burial, after cremation, no land plot is necessarily needed for the leftover residue and the ashes remaining are not only harmless to the living but can also be scattered as nutrients for the plant kingdom depending on the wishes of the loved ones. Fire is the very agency that helps promote purification and rid pollution.

Dastur Kotwal's statement. In this matter High Priest Dastur Dr. Firoze M. Kotwal has said [*personal communication*]:

“Both these methods (cremation and burial) are not in accord with Zarathushtrian tenets. However, due to unavailability of a dokhma, the preferable method of disposal will be cremation as it takes less time and disposes the body speedily” ■

“The unnecessary defilement of any of the four basic elements of nature, fire, water, air and earth is therefore considered a sin.”

by Jal N. Birdy

Er. Jal N. Birdy is vice-president, Traditional Mazdayasni Zoroastrian Anjuman (TMZA) and past president of the North American Mobeds Council (NAMC).

When the soul separates from the body at the time of death, it is like a newborn infant, alone, fragile and vulnerable. It remains in this delicate



state near the body for three days and three nights. It yearns for solace and reassurance and it is our duty to channel our emotions in providing this reassurance by reciting Avesta prayers continuously during this period.

On the dawn of the fourth day (*Chahrums*) the soul begins its journey toward the spiritual world and towards Ahura Mazda.

It needs as much support as we can provide to make its journey to the Chinvat Pul (Bridge of the Separator) and beyond as smooth as possible.

Sarosh Yazad, who has been the guardian angel during the soul's stay on this earth, remains with the soul on its journey and we offer our prayers to Sarosh Yazad to protect and guide the soul during this transition. It is believed that because of the potency of our Avesta prayers we do not hear of Zarathushti souls lingering on this planet in the form of ghosts.

The body, on the other hand, without the soul is just an empty shell. It begins to decay from the moment of death and living persons should avoid any contact with it for their own wellbeing. It is not a Zarathushti custom to adorn the body or keep it on display for several days in an expensive casket. It should be disposed of as quickly as possible, using the same simple mode of disposal for rich and poor alike.

A fundamental teaching of our religion is adherence to *Asha*, which signifies truth, righteousness, purity, order in the universe and living in harmony with nature. The unnecessary defilement of any of the four basic elements of nature, i.e., fire, water, air and earth is therefore considered a sin.

In this age of exploding population growth, shrinking real estate and concern for environmental pollution, the age-old Zarathushti custom of disposing their dead on remote hilltops by exposure to the sun's rays and scavenging birds really comes into its own. Far from being a barbaric practice, it is now considered seriously by organizations in developed countries as a most natural, ecological and cost effective method of disposal. Under ideal conditions it takes less than an hour to dispose of a body in a dokhma in Bombay. It is therefore best if a Zarathushti uses this method for the final disposal of his body.

Unfortunately, since we do not yet have a dokhma in North America, we are forced to choose between the following alternative methods:

- Flying the body to Mumbai for disposal in a dokhma.
- Cremation in a local cemetery.
- Burial in a local cemetery

Flying the body to Mumbai, which requires considerable prior groundwork, has been used only in isolated cases in North America [See Resources, page 56].

Opinions vary regarding the choice between cremation and burial. Some religious authorities advise against cremation because of the belief that this method constitutes defilement of fire. Some are against burial because they believe the earth remains contaminated by diseased corpses for centuries after burial. Others believe that all of God's creations are meant for man to use for his benefit; and that fire consumes everything while still remaining pure.

High Priests' statement. In a joint statement, our High Priests Dasturs Dr. Hormazdyar Mirza, Dr. Jamasp Asa and Dr. Firoze M. Kotwal have expressed their preference for using cremation over burial whenever disposal in a dokhma is not possible. ■

“In the absence of dokhmas, proper burial of the dead is the next best alternative. However, the choice remains with the reader, after careful review ...”

by Pallan R. Ichaporia

Dr. Pallan R. Ichaporia is an Avestan scholar and published author [see profile page 48].



The mode of disposal of the dead is often regarded as one of the most fundamental customs of a people. The Zarathushti rites of exposure of the dead is not presently possible in the West – not due to the absence of a Tower of Silence but due to lack of initiative to build one, although there are more million-

aire Zarathushtis in North America than in their mother countries of Iran and India.

We will examine three modes of disposal of the dead:

Cremation. In the long history of Zarathushtis from Achaemenians to Sasanians, there is not a single evidence of cremation among the faithful.

The *Pahlavi Rivayat Accompanying the Dadestan i Denik* gives a lucid account of the punishment meted out to the soul of Kersasp, the famous warrior hero of ancient Zarathushtis who defiled and desecrated the fire by extinguishing it with water mixed with food [also see *Zamyad Yasht*, 39-43]:

ud ohrmazd guft ku be est rowan i Kersasp che-m zisht pad chashm hee che-t ataaksh i man pus ozad u-t pahrez ne kard

And Ohrmazd said: “Stand away O soul of Kersasp, for you are hateful in my sight, because my son Fire was extinguished by you and you did not take care but defiled him.”

[*Pahlavi Rivayat Accompanying the Dadestan i Denik*, ch. 46.4.5; 47.16, 18,20, but cf. 47.20,21]

For ill treatment of fire, Kersasp's soul was not allowed to enter the House of Song (paradise). Only on intervention of Zarathushtra was Kersasp released from his pitiable condition and allowed to enter *hamestagan* (purgatory) where he will stay until *frashokereti* (the final universal judgment) when his soul will be allowed to enter the House of Song [*ibid.* ed Dhabhar, 1931, p. 10, also cf. *Ys.* 9 and *Yt.* 19].

If the great warrior of the Zarathushtis is not allowed to enter heaven in spite of his heroic deeds, we must have a fertile imagination for the fate of the souls who have chosen cremation. Some may say that this is legendary history and they have the right to say so, but the big question is: When Zarathushtis enthrone the fire as their king (NP. *Iran-Shah*, Guj. *Atash Padshah*) and pay homage and reverence to it, is it possible that they, after their death, can defile, dishonor and desecrate the same fire by cremating the *nasu* (dead body)? Others may say that in electric cremation, the dead body does not touch fire. This is not true. The corruptible parts of the dead body (*nasu*) catch fire and burn before they turn to ash. Just because nobody sees it, the fact cannot be denied and brushed aside.

One can easily find several doctrinal bases against the desecration of fire by cremation given in very emphatic terms in the Avesta, for example [*Vd.* 7.25-27]:

Those wicked ones who have brought corpses into the water and unto the fire cannot be clean again ... they are unclean, thenceforth, for ever and ever.

Burial. The Vendidad, the only Zarathushti scriptural authority on the dead says that it is a heinous dreadful sin to cremate the dead [*Vd.* 1.17; 7.74] or to bury it [*ibid.* 1.13]. However the sin of burial, unlike the sin of cremation, was not punishable severely (*margazan* “deserving death”). Only corporal punishments were prescribed and these punishments were convertible into fines [cf. *Vd.* 3.36-42]; and, moreover, the land on which a grave had been dug becomes pure again after fifty years [*Vd.* 5.14]. The Sasanian commentators in the Pahlavi Vendidad (which is a translation and commentary of Vendidad in Pahlavi) favors still lighter punishments [*Pahlavi Vd.* 3.37-40; 5.14].

The burial practice of the Achaemenians and the Parthians [see page 86] was carried out carefully, in such a way that the earth was not defiled. They first exposed the dead and then placed the cleaned disarticulated bones into *astodans* as ordained in the Vendidad [*ibid.*]. The royal Achaemenian tombs were prepared as a result of wishing to obey in a practical way the ordinance of the Vendidad.

We have also noted [*ibid.*] the burial of thousands of dead Kermani Zarathushtis, who were murdered by the invading Muslim Afghans, in a mass grave after the genocide.

Burial was carefully carried out by the Zarathushtis of Iran by interring their dead in coffins and lowering them

into a shaft lined with concrete to protect mother earth from pollution. The practice of careful burial, preventing any pollution of the holy creations of Ahura Mazda (fire, earth and water) is regularly carried out by the Zarathushtis of Iran after the closure of most of their *dokhmas* in 1937 CE.

We have examined the history of burial and the relevant scriptural ordinance which shows that in absence of *dokhmas*, it is preferable for Zarathushtis to bury their dead with proper precautions to prevent pollution of Ahura Mazda's holy creations. The unforgivable sin accruing from the cremation of the dead, in view of all the historical facts and scriptural citations, is not conducive for the Parsi/Irani Zarathushtis of the second diaspora.

Exposure. For a full description of this mode of exposure of the dead, see J. J. Mody [*The Religious Customs and Ceremonies of the Parsees*, 1922, 1. 49-71, reprint 1995]. No one can deny that exposure is the only ecologically friendly mode of disposal of the body. It is advisable and the recommended mode when the *dokhmas* are available. Some may differ by saying that flesh-devouring birds are "in short supply"; let them examine how the problem was solved by the Parsi anjuman of Karachi.

In the absence of *dokhmas*, proper burial of the dead is the next best alternative. However in the final analysis the choice belongs to the reader to opt for any of the three modes of disposal after careful review of the historical and scriptural evidence. ■

"In Iran, a property was purchased in Tehran, that is used for the Zoroastrian cemetery ... Gradually Yazd and Kerman adopted the cemeteries so much that the dokhma has become obsolete."

by Daryoush Jahanian

Daryoush Jahanian, MD, is a founder and president of Fravahar Zoroastrian youth organization in Tehran, founding president of the Zoroastrian Association of Kansas, and a trustee of the Rustam Guiv Foundation.

Living creatures in general are afraid of death, thus they attempt to hide its signs. It is known that elephants collect the bones of dead elephants with their trunks and carry them to a hiding place – the reason why at times accidentally a treasure trove of ivory is discovered.

The teachings of Zarathushtra in the Gathas are mainly about how to live in this world in accordance with the wisdom of the good mind, how to freshen this life and



renovate the living world. The details of daily practices are not discussed and Zarathushtra does not prescribe any social injunctions or taboos. Consequently issues such as what to eat, what to wear and how to dispose corpses are absent and to be determined by society.

The discussion of corpse disposal appears in the much younger Avesta such as Yasna 65.8, and the Vendidad. The first one should be writings of the Median to Achaemenid era, and the latter is a mid Achaemenid- Parthian composition.

Based on the concept of avoiding pollution of the ground, the burial method is not recommended and exposure of the corpse far away from the cities and villages are mentioned. This method was later evolved as exposing the corpses within a surrounding wall known as the Tower of Silence or *dokhma*. The problem with the *dokhma* is that the sign of death is visible on the tree. Despite the recommendation of Vendidad one should remember that in ancient Iran *dokhma* was not the exclusive method of body disposal. For example, the Achaemenids of southern Persia practiced burial of the corpses. On the tomb of Cyrus the great, the inscription states:

"... Grudge me not this little earth that covers my body."

Practices in Iran in modern times. In our modern times, the *dokhma* was used in Iran until seventy years ago when Mr. Guiv Guiv (older brother of the Late Arbab Rustam Guiv) passed away. He was buried in his private property and many dignitaries were in attendance.

Following that, through the efforts of the late Arbab Keikhosrow Shahrokh, a large property, along with its historical Qajar summer palace, in the southeast of Tehran, was purchased from the government, that to this day is used for the Zoroastrian *cemetery*. It is called *Qasr e Firoozeh*. At the time, Reza Shah was quoted as saying:

"Keikhosrow, your people suffer so much in living. I always wondered why they should suffer after death."

Gradually other Zarathushti communities in Yazd and Kerman adopted the cemeteries so much that the *dokhma* has become obsolete. It is worth mentioning that the Zarathushti cemeteries in Iran are open to the public and during the funeral as well as memorial services, friends and colleagues, regardless of their religion, attend.

In 1973 my uncle, the late Shah Jahan Goodarz, who was here for medical treatment, indicated to me that the best method of disposing the dead is *cremation*. On return to Iran he purchased a crematorium and after the approval of the Zoroastrian Anjuman of Tehran and the Council

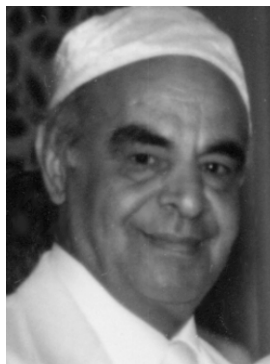
of Mobeds, installed it in Qasr e Firoozeh. The Council of Mobeds by a unanimous vote approved the method of cremation. In their declaration they cited that as the corpse is cremated by electricity, the desecration of fire is not an issue. Although this was new to Iran, however the Zarathushti community was considering that as another method by choice. Surprisingly the voice of opposition came from a sector of society that was never expected. Some intellectuals and also some of those who may be termed restless educated, raised so much objection that the crematorium was never used and was left to rot. ■

Mobed Ardeshir Azargoshasb's thoughts on burial and cremation

by Keikhosrow Mobed

Keikhosrow Mobed is a mobed and former board member of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago.

In his book, *Ways of Burying and Cremation after Death* (in Persian), Mobed Ardeshir Azargoshasb writes that in olden times, cremation was practiced in



areas where wood was easily available, such as in northern, eastern and western Persia. In southern Persia, where wood was scarce, burial was practiced. In ancient times, in the cold regions of Airyana Vaeja, if someone died in the winter, they could not be buried in the frozen ground, so they were taken to the mountain tops; then in the spring they

were taken down and buried.

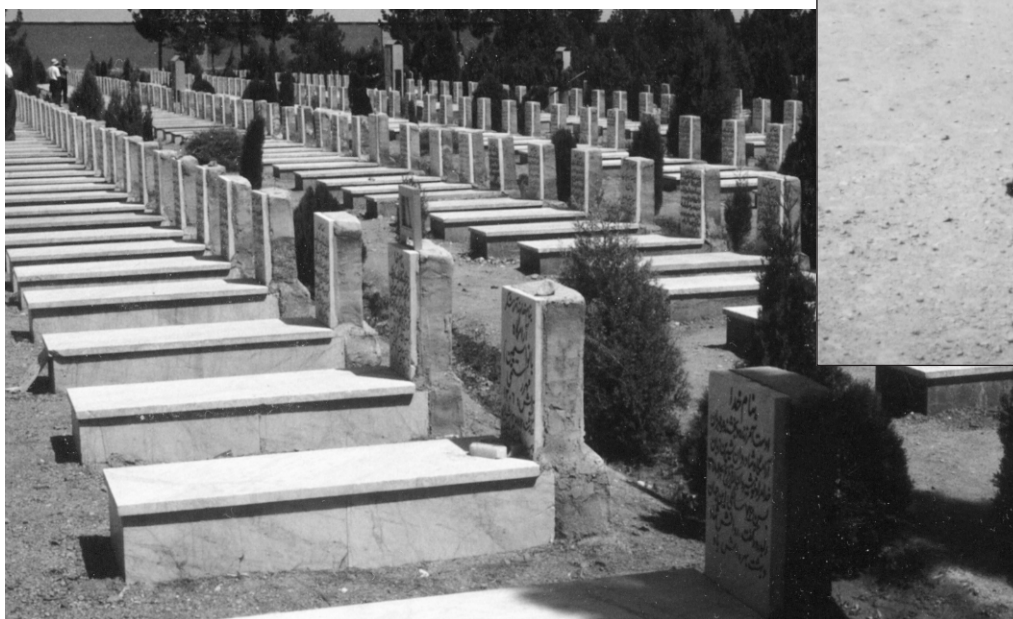
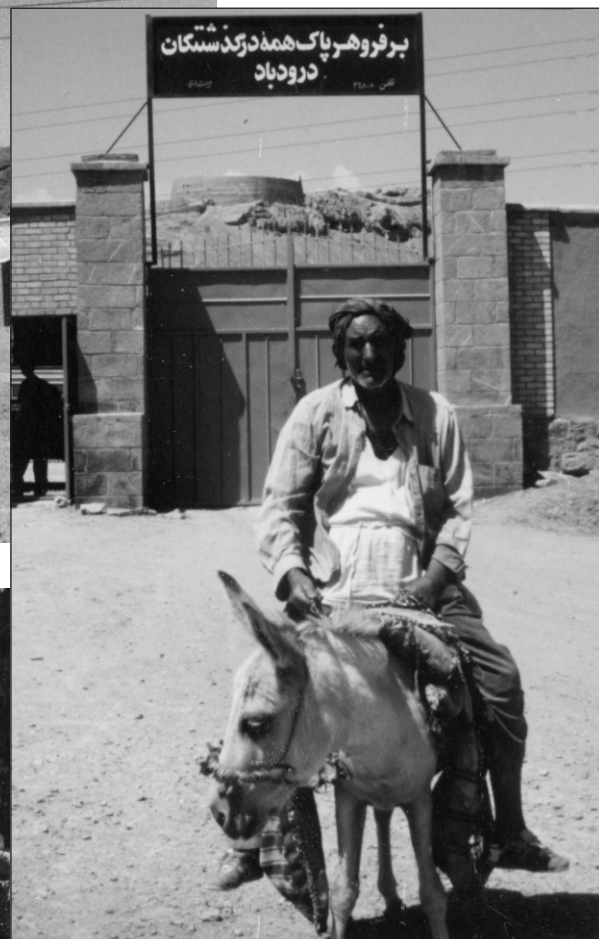
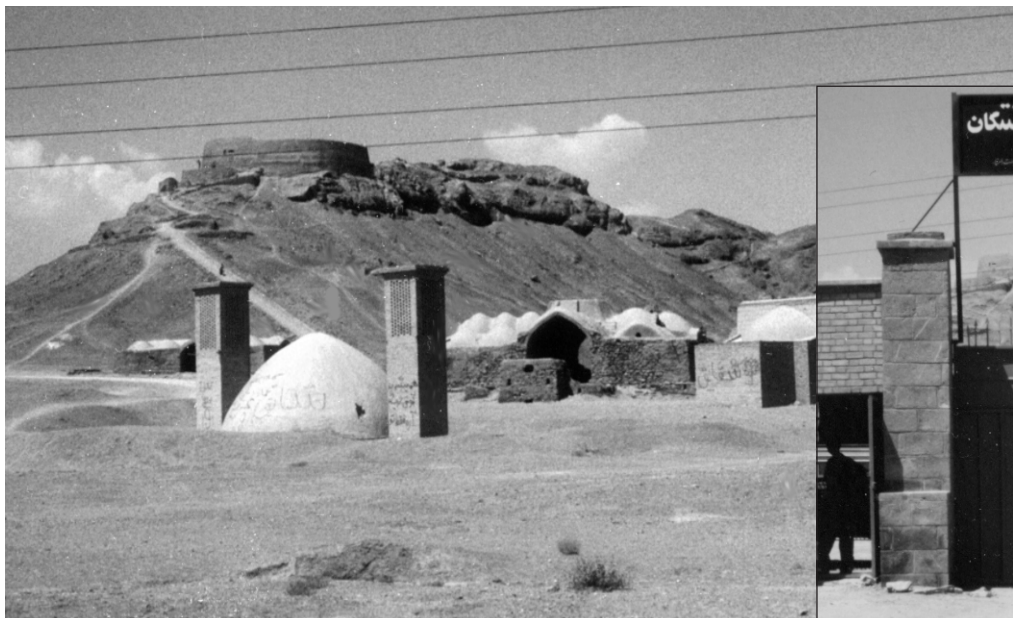
It is written in the Vendidad that the corpses were taken to the mountain tops in the winter and buried in the summer. In the old writings of the Vedas, the ancient Hindus also took the body up to the mountain tops.

Towers of Silence were created because of sickness (cholera and other epidemics) which killed many. They were located far away from the town. There was a deep hole in the center, where the bones were placed, called the 'astodan' ('place of bones').

In present-day Iran, there is only burial. In North America, some Zarathushtis bury and some cremate. ■

Cemetery or aramgah ('place of rest') in Kerman, Iran. PHOTO COURTESY MEHRBORZIN SOROUSHIAN.





The dokhma and aramgah (cemetery) in Cham, near Yazd, 1996

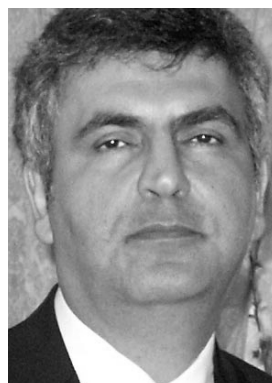
PHOTOS BY ROSHAN RIVETNA

At Cham, a village outside Yazd, Iran. Clockwise from left: the Zarathushti cemetery (aramgah); one of the two dokhmas which are now in disuse, atop a hill, with adobe 'bunglis' at the base where the 4-day ceremonies for the departed were held; Shahriar, the aged cemetery keeper and corpse-bearer proudly displays his sudreh-kushti. One of the dokhmas can be seen in the distance, past the cemetery gate.

***“In Iran today, the method of disposal is burial in Zoroastrian aramgahs. Dokhmas went out of use in 1930s in Tehran and Ker-
man, and in the 1960s, in Yazd.”***

by Mehrborzin Soroushian

Dr. Mehrborzin Soroushian is a co-founder of the web-journal of Zoroastrian heritage, www.vohuman.org.



In North America the primary method of disposal of the body, used by most Iranian Zarathushtis is burial in cemetery lots that have been pre-purchased for the community. Some are using cremation, and the ashes are either kept or in some cases scattered, such as in the ocean. There have also been a few cases of remains of beloved ones being shipped back to Iran for burial at

Zarathushti aramgahs. The motivation for these methods is driven by the practicality of what is available, and individual preference, more than any doctrinal basis.

In Iran the method of disposal is burial in Zarathushti aramgahs ('place of rest'). Each aramgah has a place for washing the corpse. As a religious ritual, the body of the deceased is washed, wrapped in white cloth and carried on a bier to the grave site. There, cement is poured into the bottom of the dig, which is lined with slabbed cement walls. The body is then placed inside the cement enclosure and covered with cement slabs to seal it and prevent contact with the earth that would cause pollution.

There are Zarathushti aramgahs in Kerman, Yazd, Tehran and other locations. In the early 1970s, there was an effort to introduce cremation in Tehran, but it was not well received by the community.

Up until the 1930s dokhmas were in use in Kerman, Yazd, and the villages around Kerman and Yazd that had Zarathushti inhabitants. A dokhma had also been built south of Tehran through the initiative of Manekji Hataria in the late 1800s, for use by an increasing number of Zarathushtis, who were gradually moving to the upcoming national capital. Dokhmas went out of use in the 1930s in Tehran and Kerman due to the difficulty of maintaining them, with frequent breakins, defiling by ragtags, and bodies being snatched (for medical school use, etc.). The dokhma in Yazd continued to be used as late as the 1960s.

Again, the reason for the adoption of aramgahs as the preferred method of disposal, was practicality and the fact that the old methods could no longer be sustained.

My view and many others in regards to the method of disposal, is that each individual use his best thinking and see what is practical, makes sense, and is in accord with the law of the land. [Contd. on page 158] ■

Promession - an alternative to burial or cremation

[Excerpted from an article "Promession Seems Promising" by Noshir H. Dadrawala, Mumbai, 2006]

The new system of 'Promession' has been developed in Sweden to address the shortage of burial space and to reduce the mercury pollution created by dental fillings during cremation. It involves freezing the coffin and the body to -18°C before lowering it into liquid nitrogen at -196°C, which makes both the coffin and corpse extremely brittle. A vibrating pad then reduces the remains to a powder and a magnetic field removes all traces of mercury and other metal residues from fillings or hip replacements. The remains are then put into a biodegradable coffin made from vegetable matter which in turn could be buried in a shallow grave in one's own backyard or garden, where it can be absorbed into the earth within six to twelve months. ■

Thoughts from Late Dastur Nowrooz D. Minochehr-Homji

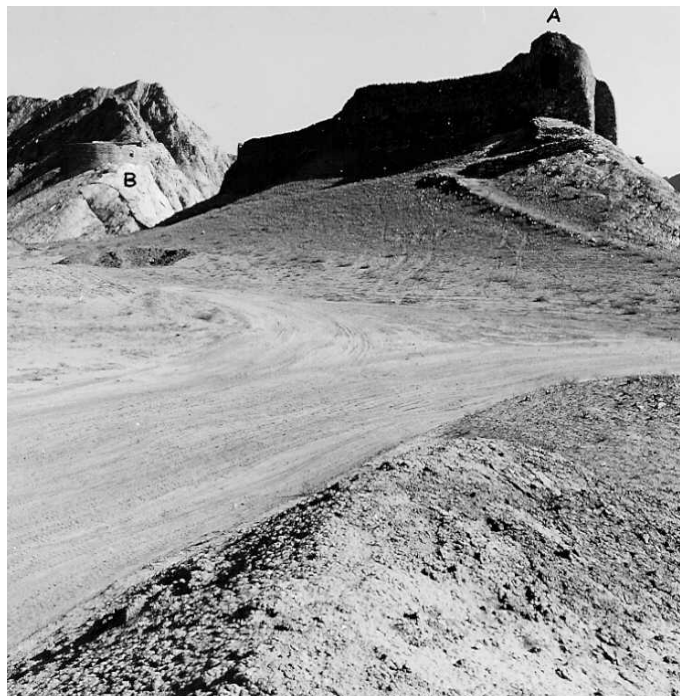
[Excerpted by Roshan Rivetna from notes of Chicago series of 40 lectures by Dastur Minochehr-Homji, 1984.]

Dastur Minochehr-Homji was of the opinion that quick disposal of the body by cremation is better than burial. Zarathushtis are against any mausoleums, and the ashes are best scattered in a garden, so we meet on common ground in a simple garden plot.

Some gems culled from the venerable Dasturji's Chicago lecture notes:

- There is no worse enemy than mental darkness.
- Man is God's creation in whom the Mind is his magnificence.
- Religion is morality in principle.
Morality is religion in practice.
- Worship makes a man better. Worship of God and fellowship of man go hand in hand. Worship: 'worth' and 'ship' – that which increases my worth.
- Ahura Mazda dwells in an innocent mind and a pure heart.
- As I sow, so shall I reap [Ys. 43.5].

[More of Dasturji's quotes on page 77]



Kerman's two dokhmas (labeled A and B), one old and the other new, commissioned by Manekji Limji Hataria. From an article "The dadgah of Kerman" by Dietrich Huff, in "The Fire Within: Atash-e Dorun," Jamshid Soroush Soroushian Memorial Volume II, 1st Books, Bloomington, IN, 2003, p. 183 - 198. [See page 115, 158].

PHOTO COURTESY MEHRBORZIN SOUROUSHIAN.



Detail of an intricately embroidered Chinese garo, late 19th century. At the base of the paisley design are petals of the lotus flower, a symbol of purity and the Lord of Mercy.

history of zarathushti funerary practices

by Pallan R. Ichaporia

A historical review of Zarathushti funerary practices, from the rock-cut *astodan* or 'bone-receptacles' of the Achaemenids to the present-day Towers of Silence in Mumbai

In the long and checkered history of Zarathushtis, their funerary practice remained mostly exposing the dead on a hill-top to corpse-devouring birds which swiftly removed the decaying flesh and left the clean bones, which remained exposed to the sun as prescribed in the Zarathushti Law Book, the Vendidad [7.25-27]. It states that the corpse (*nasu*) is taken over by *druj-nasus* the 'demon of death' which is capable of polluting the holy creations of fire, water and earth. [Vd. 7.1-9, 25-27, 54-59]. Consequently it is forbidden to cremate or to bury a dead body [Vd. 1.17; 7.74]. Some variations are witnessed at different periods but all followed the rules as ordained in the Vendidad.

Among ancient Iranians

Archeological evidence has shown the practice of burial among some Zarathushtis before the conquest of Iran by the Arabs. This has been supported by Zarathushti scriptures (Avesta) and later Pahlavi and Persian literature. The old funerary practice among Indo-Iranians was also burial [see Inostrantzev, "On the

Ancient Iranian Burial Customs, Journal of KRCOI 3, 1923, pp. 1-28]

The original meaning of dokhma was most probably 'grave' [see Karl Hoffmann, ZVS (KZ) 79, 1965, p. 238]. This indicates that ancient Iranians practiced interment. This practice of burial was seen in the 18th century after the genocide of Zarathushtis of Kerman by Afghan invaders, when the Kermani Zarathushtis had to bury massive numbers of corpses; this dokhma (an enclosed stack of earth) can still be seen [see page 115].

With the coming of the Zarathushti religion, burial was unambiguously prohibited, and exposure to flesh eating animals was approved in the Zarathushti scriptural Nask of Vendidad as the only way to dispose the dead. In the absence of facilities for exposure on a hilltop, burial was preferable to cremation which is considered desecration of the fire.

The sin of burial was not punishable by death. See Vendidad [3.36-42] where only corporeal punishments were cited, depending on the elapsed time and exhumation, and these pun-

ishments were converted into fines. The land on which the grave (entombment) had been dug was to be considered pure after fifty years [Vendidad 5.14].

Among the Achaemenians

Archeological evidence of burial is inadequate and evaluation of the surviving evidence distorts the relative importance of the practice of burial. In eastern Iran exposure is well documented and bones were preserved in ossuaries. In western Iran it was not customary to gather bones after exposure and no trace of such Zarathushti practice (of gathering bones) is found anywhere in western Iran.

As seen above burial is insufficiently documented. The bodies of the kings

Facing page, clockwise from top: rock-hewn tombs of the Achaemenian kings at Naqsh-e Rostam near Persepolis, Iran; ceramic coffin at Susa; communal grave in a Parthian cemetery at Susa; Tomb of Cyrus the Great, Pasargadae, 2000.

PHOTO: FARHANGSARA YASSAVOLI



PHOTO: CYRUS RIVETNA

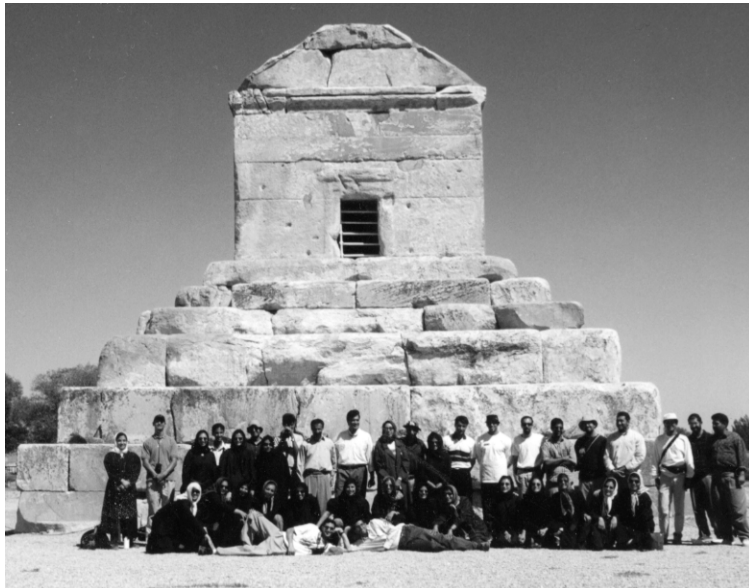


PHOTO COURTESY "IRAN" BY R. GHIRSHMAN

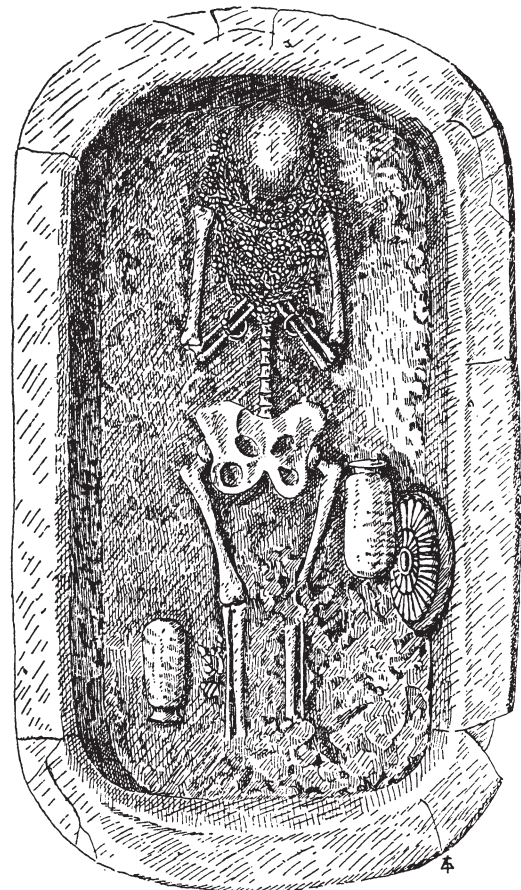
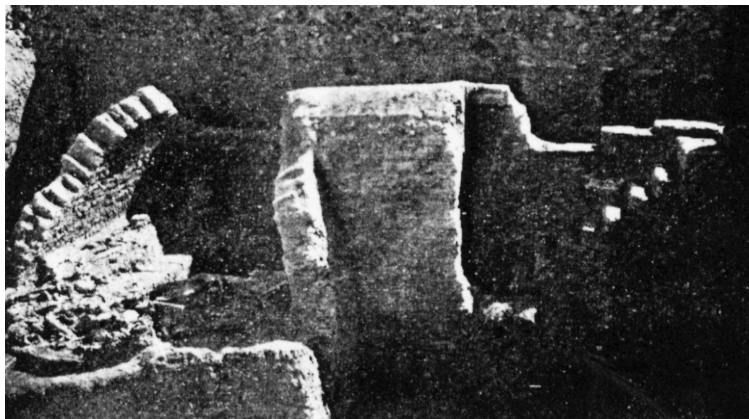


PHOTO COURTESY "IRAN" BY R. GHIRSHMAN

were laid in freestanding or rock-cut tombs. Fifth century BCE historian Herodotus [1.104] mentioned that corpses were coated with wax before burial which is interpreted as a means of preserving the earth from pollution [see Kammenhuber, *Totenvorschriften und Hunde-Mgier im Videvdat*. ZDMG 109, 1958, pp. 299-307]. However, Mary Boyce opines that coating the corpses with wax before burial is alien to the spirit of Zarathushti regulations.

Of special interest is the confirmation by Herodotus of the two methods of disposal of the dead among the Persians: exposure and embalming

[Herodotus 1.140, confirmed by Strabo, "Geography," 15.3.20]:

It is said that the body of a male Persian is never buried until it is torn either by dog or a bird of prey ... The dead bodies of those who do not follow this are covered with wax, and then buried in the ground.

The entombing of Achaemenian kings is evidenced by the free-standing tomb of Cyrus at Pasargadae and the rock-cut tombs of other Achaemenian kings at Naqsh-e Rostam, indicating that Achaemenians brought the old customs into harmony with Zarathushti doctrine by encasing the body in stone and pro-

tecting the earth from pollution by the decaying corpse.

The wealthy who did not practice exposure avoided pollution of the holy creations of fire, water and earth by first embalming the corpse and placing it in a solid coffin and entombing it in a stone (rock-cut) sepulcher. The Achaemenian tombs were thus prepared as a result of wishing to obey in a practical way the laws of the Vendidad. [Note: It seems that we may have to revise the date of the Vendidad, as being pre-Achaemenian.]

Among the Parthians

In the Parthian period, according to Isidore of Charax [see "The Parthian Stations"] the kings were buried in royal tombs, and burial in ceramic coffins was common. The Armenians who followed these methods of interment even during the Sasanian rule, were decried in the Bundahishn as followers of the "Ahrimanic practice of burial."

According to Justin [41.3.5] the Parthians left their dead bodies on hilltops to be torn by birds and dogs; when the bones were stripped of flesh they were buried. However the Parthians practiced both exposure and inhumation [J. M. Unwala, "Observation on the Religion of the Parthians," Bombay, 1925, pp. 29ff].

Among the Sasanians

Exposure of the dead, as ordained by the Vendidad was the usual practice among the Sasanians [see Procopius, "Persian Wars" 2.11-34]. However there are many ossuaries (Av. 'uzdan; Phl. astodan) or 'receptacle for bones of the dead,' and as explained in the Vendidad [5,6] these astodans were built of permanent materials and put in a place inaccessible to dogs, wolves and rain water [see Vendidad 6, 49-50]. This practice of the exposure of the dead, as enjoined in the Avesta, became widespread among Central Asians and East Iranians.



PHOTO: CYRUS RIVETNA

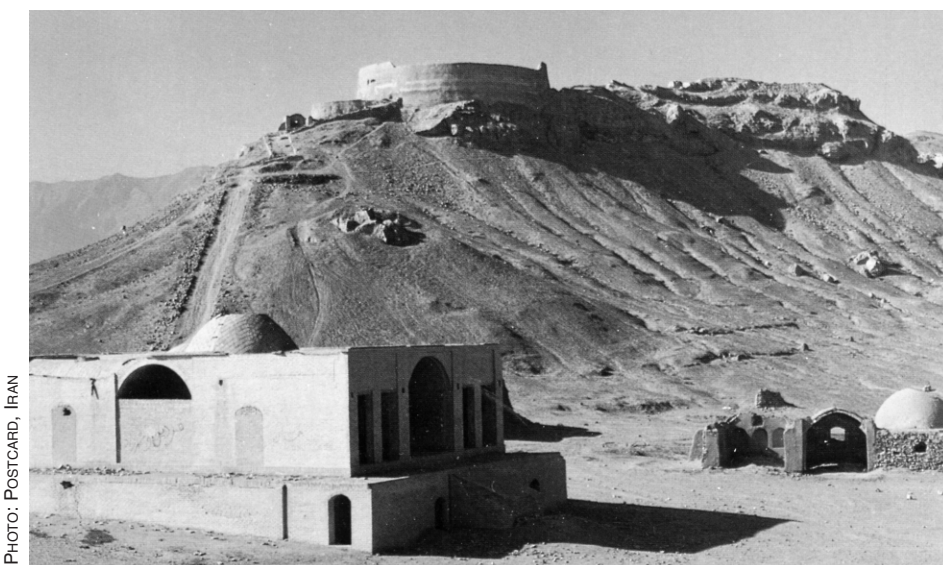


PHOTO: POSTCARD, IRAN

From top: Inside view of the dokhma at Cham near Yazd, which has not been used since the 1930s, showing the central 'bhandar' and the concentric slabs of stone where the corpses were laid; one of the two dokhmas on a hilltop at Cham. At the base are the 'bunglis' for the rituals.



The Tower of Silence at Chilpik, in ancient Chorasmia (present-day Uzbekistan) near the delta of the ancient Oxus River (or Amu Dariya). This is one of the highlights on the tour of the Karakalpak-Australian Archeological Expedition, offered by the archeology department, University of Sydney [see page 30]. Chorasmia was an early stronghold of Zarathushtra's ministry [Source: www.arts.usyd.edu].

Cremation is severely prohibited as it defiles the sacred fire. It must be noted that instances of cremation appear to be rare in Zarathushti history. Burial of the *nasa-niganih* ('corpse matter') would defile the earth, one of the seven holy creations, belongs to the Amesha Spenta Spenta Aramaiti (Phl. Spandarmad). In Saddar [chapter 33] it is said that Spenta Aramaiti "shudders when a corpse is buried."

Modern times

The open amphitheater-like place of interment, wrongly given the name '**Tower of Silence**' by the British during their Raj in India, is known as the '**dokhma**' (Av. '**daxma**') and exposure therein, as '**dokhmanashini**.' In the Tower of Silence the corpses of Zarathushtis are exposed to birds of prey.

In the absence of birds of prey, exposure to the sun known as '**khwarshed nigerishn**' may be more than sufficient, as seen in the dokhmas of Karachi [see page 101]. Of course the climactic conditions of the hot

sun of the province of Sind with average desert temperature of over 80° F, and the possibility of only about 40 corpses a year in Karachi, make that approach viable.

It is interesting to note that the British could not find an appropriate word for the dokhma and called it variously a "sepulcher, roofless tower, round tomb, burial tower or Parsee cemetery." These words were used from time to time to describe the dokhma until 1832 when Robert Murphy, an Oriental translator of the Bombay Government coined the name 'Tower of Silence' which although most inappropriate is constantly used to describe the unique structure of the dokhma [See F. M. Kotwal, "The Parsi Dakhma, Au Carredour des religions Melanges offerts a Phillippe Gignoux, Res. Orientalis, Vol.VII, p. 162].

On the other hand, among the Zarathushtis of Iran, after 1937 it was impossible or almost forbidden to use dokhmas. They inter their dead in coffins lowered into a shaft lined with concrete to protect the sacred

earth Spenta Aramaiti from pollution. In the Western Zoroastrian Diaspora, exposure of the bodies of the dead is not possible, so the best way of disposal seems to be burial following necessary rites. The graves must be lined with concrete to prevent pollution of the earth. Cremation in all forms including electric cremation which ultimately burns the corpse, is considered the most serious and indefensible sin as it defiles the sacred and most revered creation of Ahura Mazda, the fire, the presence of which is *sine dubio* required in all Zarathushti rituals and which is an enthroned 'king' (Guj. *Atash-Padsha*) in all the Fire-Temples where devout Zarathushtis pray.

Conclusion

From the rock-cut astodan, 'bone-receptacles' of the Achaemenids to the practice of burial of bones of the Parthian Kings in ceramic tombs to avoid pollution of the genesis of earth, Spenta Aramaiti, and exposure of the dead as followed by their Sasanian successors – all bear witness to the fact that Zarathushtis followed the rules of disposal of the dead as given in the Vendidad to avoid pollution of Ahura Mazda's holy creations of the earth, water and fire. Of special interest in the history of the funerary rites of Zarathushtis is the indication that the Vendidad, being the only Zarathushti scriptural book giving the rules and regulations for disposal of the dead, was most probably composed during the ancient pre-Achaemenian period. ■

Dr. Pallan Ichaporia's profile is on page 48.



Yazd's dokhma is registered as National Heritage Site

In October 2005, the head of the Yazd Cultural Heritage and Tourism Department announced that the Zoroastrian mass graveyard [dokhma] was recently registered as a national monument. The graveyard is one of the most ancient of its kind ever known. Up until a half century ago, according to Zoroastrian rituals, dead bodies were laid at the site ... He noted that other mass graveyards in Yazd province include the Cham graveyard in Taft, the Firouzabad graveyard in Sadough and the Ardakan graveyard. [From www.cais-soas.com/News/2005/October 2005, submitted by Afreed Mistry]



A man waving a banner or flywhisk to symbolically awaken the spirits of the dead. Detail of an antique Chinese gara design.

dokhma at sanjan

Recent findings from excavations of the oldest (thousand year old) dokhma in India to date, at Sanjan, the earliest Parsi (as distinct from Zarathushti) historical site ever, to be excavated.

The ancient site of Sanjan on the coast of Western India, was first excavated by the World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation (WZCF) in January 2002 [see *FEZANA Journal*, Spring 2003]. According to the oral traditions of the Parsis, this is the site of their first landfall on mainland India around 750 CE.

A team of archeologists, under the stewardship of WZCF founder-president Dr. Homi Dhalla and Dr. Mani Kamerkar, in collaboration with the Indian Archaeological Society, New Delhi, has been excavating at Sanjan, bringing to light hitherto unknown aspects of Zarathushti history and the early settlement of Parsis in India.

Through the contributions of numerous archeologists and scientists trying to piece together the jigsaw puzzle of our history, Sanjan is emerging not only as a historically relevant site of Parsi history but also as a benchmark site on the Indian West coast and a big player in the Indian Ocean trade network.

While the earlier seasons of excavations at Sanjan had brought to light a

large settlement having well constructed brick structures, advanced drainage systems, artefacts and ceramics from the Persian Gulf, China, Mesopotamia and elsewhere, no single specifically 'Zarathushti' find had been unearthed.

This evidence emerged during the explorations and the study of available data. Through the 19th century, visitors and scholars had reported the remains of an ancient dokhma at Sanjan. In fact, Dr. Jivanji Jamshedji Modi had reportedly dug and cleaned a small part of the dokhma bhandar at Sanjan in 1917. Explorations by the archeologists in 2002 brought the location of this structure to light and excavations were undertaken in the third season, in 2004.

Dokhma excavation. Tradition has it that Sanjan originally had nine dokhmas, however, this is the only one discovered so far. The site is located on a small hill on the northern extent of Sanjan. Prior to the excavation, a great deal of clearance had to be undertaken since date palms, berry trees, shrubs and grass made it impossible to work.

What was revealed after clearance was a hilltop with a deep crater in the centre and a dense scatter of brickbats.

The dokhma structure. The excavations revealed a structure made up of three distinct parts. The first is a brickbat and soil/clay outer wall, which probably had an inner veneer of bricks. This wall had a very clear entrance gap facing almost due east. This was followed by a gently inward sloping mud and brickbat platform, on which the bodies were placed. The third was a brick lined dry well – traditionally called the 'bhandar.' This was where the residual osseous material was deposited.

Though stray bones, bone fragments and stray teeth had been recovered all over the platform it was from the bhandar that the maximum number of human remains were uncovered. The bhandar is almost 90cm deep and 5m in diameter. Such a shallow receptacle would have been convenient to clean out periodically. It lies directly on virgin soil, and has an inner facing of seven courses of brick. Lime lumps were seen in the area, which were probably used, as

Right top: inner view of the dokhma. The remains of the outer wall (20m in diameter) can be seen, with an east-facing gap where the entrance would have been. The well or 'bhandar' (5m in diameter) is in the centre. The two intersecting paths are the baulks or demarcaters made by the archaeologists to have some control over the excavations and to help in better referencing of artefacts found during the digs.

Right, below: the dokhma structure has three basic parts – the outer wall, the 'pavi' or the floor upon which the bodies are placed, and the 'bhandar' or central well which is an ossuary or receptacle for the bones. The picture shows a brick built bhandar with lime plaster. It is only one meter deep (in contrast to the dokhmas today which have bhandars that are several meters deep). This shallow well would have been easier to clean and maintain. Apparently the dokhma had been built with considerations of hygiene.

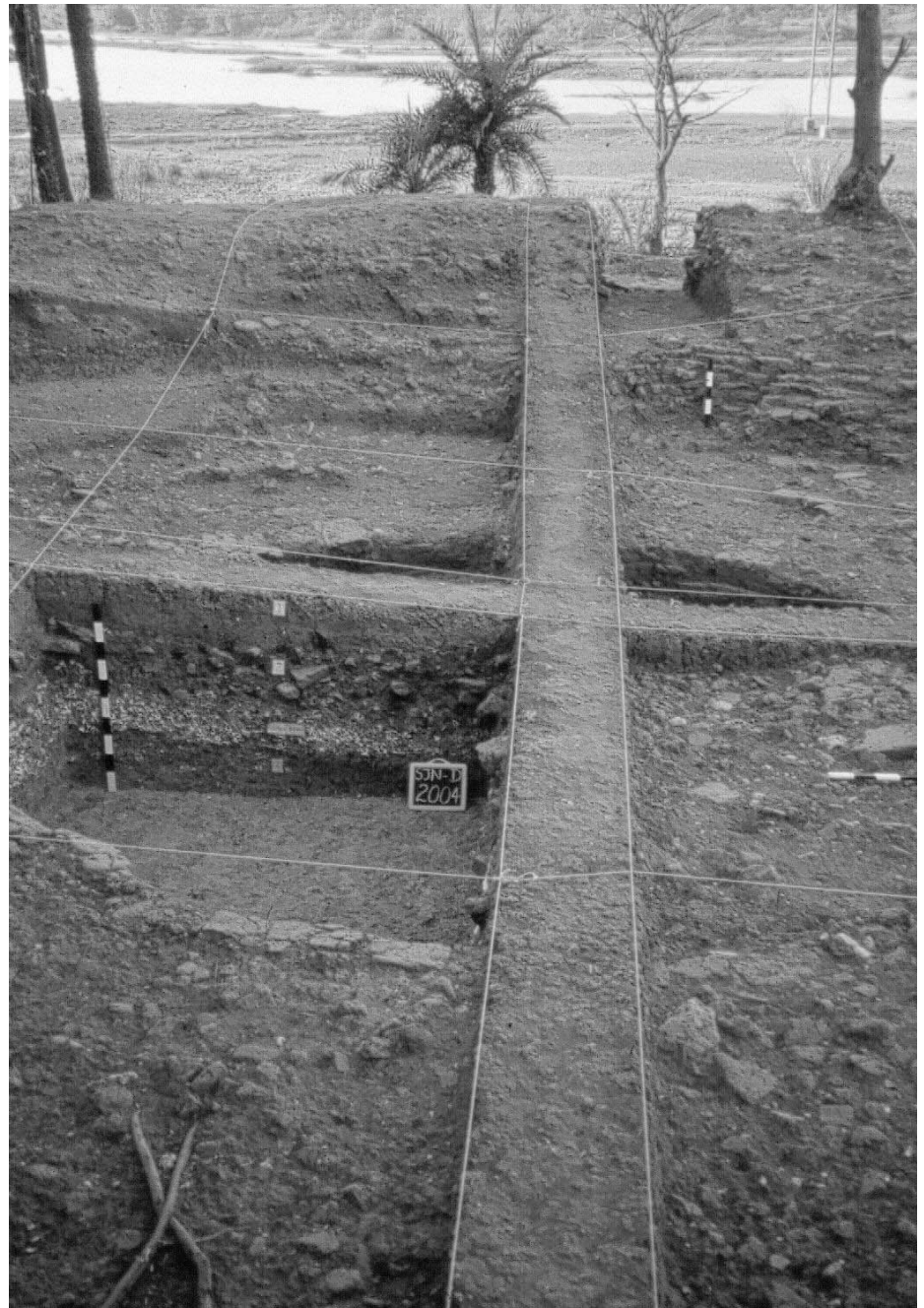
[PHOTOS COURTESY RUKSHANA NANJI]

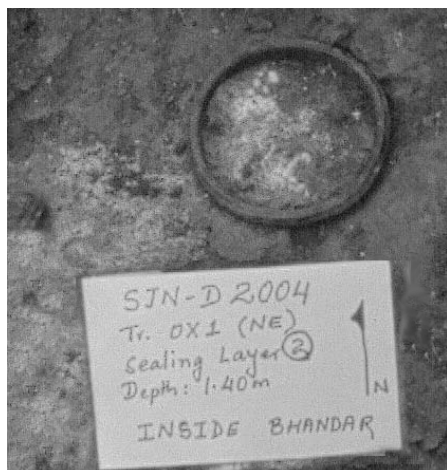
per the Parsi tradition, to aid the decomposition and disintegration of the body. Lime coated bricks were also seen in the same area.

Skeletal remains. Careful excavation of the inside of the bhandar revealed the remains of at least 140 individuals in about 40% of the bhandar, leading us to suppose that it could hold the remains of at least 350 to 400 individuals.

The skeletal elements collected during the course of excavation were packed in seven large metal trunks and sent to the Palaeoanthropology Laboratory at the Department of Archaeology at Deccan College, Pune in April 2004.

Approximately three to four thousand teeth have been collected from the site. The entire series requires serious attention where morphological and metric data can be generated to know the process of micro-evolu-





Glass bangle inside the bhandar.
PHOTO COURTESY RUKSHANA NANJI.

Glass bangles and finger/toe rings have been found inside the dokhma, sometimes articulated with the bones. This is of relevance since the present practice of divesting the body of all ornaments was apparently not current amongst our forefathers.

Parsi women commonly wore glass bangles as a sign of their married status. Rings of silver, copper or mixed metal were used as toe ornaments and signified a similar (married) status. A tradition grew whereby Parsi women, upon death, were interred in the dokhma wearing their bangles. This practice was discontinued only about 200 years ago. Silver toe rings were being worn in Navsari and adjacent villages up to two generations ago.

These traditions were borrowed from contact with Indian groups, as the same were not extant in Iran.

tionary changes operative during more recent times.

Artefacts and pottery. Excavations within the dokhma yielded a large number of glass bangles, bangle fragments, rings of silver, copper and mixed metal, and beads of glass.

A number of ceramics (porcelain, celadon and others), coins of silver and copper, fragments of stone and ceramic vessels and pottery were also found during the digs.

Dating. Earlier seasons of the Sanjan excavations had revealed the evidences of a large city that existed possibly between the 8th and 13th centuries.

The *date for the dokhma structure* is derived from the materials found in the excavations, keeping in mind that it could have undergone repairs and renovations periodically. Pottery and ceramics, mixed up with the construction materials (brick and mud), the antiquities, beads, bangles, rings, coins, animal remains, and botanical remains (grains and seeds throw light on ancient food patterns) are chronological markers being studied by experts in Mumbai and Pune.

At a meeting of specialists held in January 2006, at Deccan College, Pune, which is a premier archeology institute in India, in light of all the evidence, it was established that the dokhma was constructed in about the 11th century CE, which makes it about 1,000 years old.

It appears to have remained in use until 1420-1450, which is the date for the last deposition of bones.

The *dates for the bones* found at the dokhma site give us the terminal date (i.e. the date of last use) of the dokhma, keeping in mind that the bhandar was cleaned out periodically. A report from the Radiocarbon Accelerator Laboratory at Oxford, UK has just been received (in January 2006), and Rukshana Nanji writes:

“We have just received the AMS (Accelerated Mass Spectroscopy) dates from Oxford and can now state with confidence that the last use of the dokhma was in the time period 1420 to 1450 CE. This is a calibrated date, 95% certain, and gives the exact date of the bones.

“We are very excited about this new data because it gives us a sure, scientifically established chronology for the first time, and helps many pieces fall into place.”

Dating and DNA analyses reports are awaited from Oxford, of six human skeletons excavated in Sanjan at a

location about 600m from the dokhma. These will aid in getting a demography profile for the Sanjan site.

Arguably, this is one of the oldest dokhmas in India. It is also the earliest Parsi historical structure in the world (a distinction is made here between Parsi and Zoroastrian), which has been excavated.

The historical, archaeological and ethnographical importance of this structure to our community is immeasurable.

The role of Sanjan in the Indian Ocean trade network and the importance of this site in the maritime commerce of medieval times is creating waves in the world of archeology and history. The Sanjan Excavation team is excited about their big discoveries, and rightfully so. ■

Excerpted by Roshan Rivetna from articles and reports by: Dr. Homi Dhalla, WZCF founder-president who conceived and spearheaded the excavations at Sanjan; Dr. Kurush F. Dalal, PhD, department of Archeology, Pune University, field director, WZCF Sanjan Excavations; and Rukshana Nanji, archeologist, who is completing her doctorate on “Ceramics and Pottery from San-

An appeal

The World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation (WZCF) is making all efforts to raise the necessary funds to continue this very worthwhile task of saving this fragile and ancient monument (the dokhma) and piecing together the early history of Parsi arrival in India.

WZCF is appealing to members of the community to come forward and support this project. Costs for dating of samples at the Radiocarbon Accelerator Laboratory in Oxford, UK, is about £400 per sample.

Contact WZCF president, Dr. Homi Dhalla at:

wzcf@bom8.vsnl.net.in.



Finely embroidered motifs of peacocks and lotus flowers with the yin yang symbol at the center, adorn this antique gara border. Peacocks still make their home in the lush gardens around the Towers of Silence (or Doongerwadi) in Mumbai.

towers of silence

a western view

Thoughts on the Towers of Silence at Doongerwadi, in Mumbai, by western visitors.

The Towers of Silence, 1870

Excerpted from an account by Sir Monier Monier-Williams in Indian History Sourcebook, www.fordham.edu/haisall/india. Submitted by Ardeshir Damania.

In Bombay one may see the Parsi Dakhmas, or Towers of Silence. These latter are erected in a garden, on the highest point of Malabar Hill – a beautiful rising ground on the north side of Back Bay, noted for the bungalows and compounds of the European and wealthier inhabitants of Bombay. On the occasion of my first visit the courteous secretary of the Parsi Panchayat, Mr. Nasarwanjee Byramjee, awaiting my arrival at the entrance, took me at once to the highest point in the consecrated ground.

Idyllic location. We stood together on the terrace of the largest of the three ‘Sagris,’ or Houses of Prayer, which overlook the five Towers of Silence. It is noteworthy that the wall of the Sagri has an aperture so arranged that the light streaming from the sacred fire, or from a consecrated oil-lamp kept burning throughout the night, may pass through similar apertures in the parapets of the towers, and fall on the bodies lying in the interior.

The view we enjoyed when standing near the principal Sagri can scarcely be surpassed by any in the world.

Beneath us lay the city of Bombay partially hidden by cocoanut groves, with its beautiful bay and harbor glittering in the brilliant December light. Beyond stretched the magnificent range of the Ghauts, while immediately around us extended a garden, such as can only be seen in tropical countries. No English nobleman’s garden could be better kept, and no pen could do justice to the glories of its flowering shrubs, cypresses, and palms. It seemed the very ideal, not only of a place of sacred silence, but of peaceful rest.

Five towers. But what are those five circular structures which appear at intervals rising mysteriously out of the foliage? They are masses of solid masonry, massive enough to last for centuries, built of the hardest black granite, and covered with white *chunam*, the purity and smoothness of which are disfigured by patches of black fungus like incrustations. The largest of the five may be about fourteen feet high and ninety feet in diameter, resting on the ground in the midst of the garden. It is built of solid granite, except in the center, where a well, ten feet deep and about fifteen

across, leads down to an excavation under the masonry, containing four drains at right angles to each other, terminated by holes filled with sand, or in some cases, with charcoal.

Clearly, one great object aimed at by the Parsis in the construction of these strange depositories of their dead is solidity. We saw two or three enormous massive stones lying on the ground, which had been rejected by the builders simply because they contained almost invisible veins of quartz, through which it was possible that impure particles might find their way, and be carried, in the course of centuries, by percolating moisture, into the soil.

Earth, water, and fire are, according to Zoroaster, sacred symbols of the wisdom, goodness, and omnipotence of the Deity, and ought never, under any circumstances, to be defiled. Hence the disciples of Zoroaster spare neither trouble nor expense in erecting solid and impenetrable stone platforms fourteen feet thick for the reception of their dead. I was informed by the Secretary that the largest of the five Towers was constructed at an outlay of three lakhs (Rs. 300,000).

The oldest and smallest of the five was built two hundred years ago, when the Parsis first settled in Bombay. The next oldest was erected in 1756, and

the other three during the succeeding century. A sixth Tower stands quite apart from the others. It is square in shape, and only used for persons who have suffered death for heinous crimes. The bones of convicted criminals are never allowed to mingle with those of the rest of the community.

Vultures. But the strangest feature in these strange, unsightly structures, so incongruously intermixed with graceful cypresses and palms, exquisite shrubs, and gorgeous flowers, remains to be described. Though wholly destitute of ornament, and even of the simplest moulding, the parapet of each Tower possesses an extraordinary coping, which instantly attracts and fascinates the gaze. It is a coping formed, not of dead stone, but of living vultures.

These birds, on the occasion of my visit, had settled themselves side by side in perfect order, and in a complete circle around the parapets of the Towers, with their heads pointed inwards, and so lazily did they sit there and so motionless was their whole mien that, except for their color, they might have been carved out of the stone-work.

As to the interior, the upper surface of the massive granite column is divided into compartments by narrow grooved ridges of stone, radiating like the spokes of a wheel from the central well. These stone ridges form the sides of seventy-two shallow open stone receptacles or coffins, arranged in three concentric rings. Channels convey all moisture to the central well, and into the lower drains. The seventy-two receptacles represent the seventy-two chapters of the Yasna, a portion of the Zend-Avesta.



Postcard in the Liebig series, purchased on eBay by Ardeshir Damania [more about Liebig Cards on page 117]. The caption reads: "The most interesting curiosity of Bombay consists of five Towers of Silence, constructed in the midst of luxurious vegetation of the Malabar Coast. They serve as the cemetery of the Parsi community, which, according to the strict religious rites expose the corpses to the sun, on special slots, in the interior of the circular walls, where vultures complete the task ..."

The solitary door, which admits the corpse-bearers from the exterior, must face the east, to catch the rays of the rising sun.

In the outermost circle of stone coffins, which stands for good deeds, are placed the bodies of males; in the middle, symbolizing good words, those of females; and in the inner and smallest circle, nearest the well, representing good thoughts, those of children.

Each Tower is consecrated with solemn religious ceremonies, and after its consecration no one, except

the corpse-bearers is allowed to enter.

Funeral. The first funeral I witnessed was that of a child. While I was engaged in conversation with the Secretary outside the Fire Temple, a sudden stir among the vultures made us raise our heads. At least a hundred birds, collected round one of the Towers, began to show symptoms of excitement, while others swooped down from neighboring trees. The cause of this sudden abandonment of their previous apathy soon revealed itself. A funeral procession was seen to be approaching ...

Two corpse-bearers speedily unlocked the door, reverently conveyed the body of the child into the interior, and, unseen by any one, laid it uncovered in one of the open stone receptacles. In two minutes they reappeared with the empty bier and white cloth. But scarcely had they closed the door when a dozen vultures swooped down upon the body, and were rapidly followed by flights of

others. In five minutes more we saw the satiated birds fly back and lazily settle down again upon the parapet. They had left nothing behind but a skeleton.

In a fortnight, or at most four weeks, the same bearers return, and with gloved hands and implements resembling tongs, place the dry skeleton in the central well. There the bones find their last resting-place, and there the dust of whole generations of Parsis commingling is left undisturbed for centuries. ■

The Parsees and the Towers of Silence at Bombay, India

Excerpted from an article "The Parsees and the Towers of Silence at Bombay, India," by William Thomas Fee, U.S. Consul General, Bombay, in *The National Geographic Magazine*, Vol XVI, December 1905. Submitted by Dinaz Rogers.

Mr. John Fryer, who arrived in Bombay in the year 1671, says in his book of travels: "On the other side of the great inlet to the sea is a great point abutting Old Women's Island, and is called Malabar Hill; a rocky, woody mountain, yet sends forth long grass. At the top of all is a Parsy tomb, lately reared ..."

This 'Parsy tomb' or 'dokhma' as it is called, still exists, on Malabar Hill.

THE TOWERS OF SILENCE

In accordance with religious injunctions, the Parsees build their Towers of Silence on the tops of hills. No expense is spared in constructing them of the hardest and best materials, with a view that they may last for centuries, without the possibility of polluting the earth or contaminating any living beings dwelling thereon.

“Death is a solemn reminder of the equality of all men before the law of nature, and their mode is an efficient preventive to post-human distinction, vanities and funeral pomp.”

On Malabar Hill, a long, prominent, rocky ridge, paralleling and overlooking the Arabian Sea, are built the 'Towers of Silence.' They are five in number, the one mentioned by Dr. Fryer now more than 230 years old; another for the use of suicides only, and three others.

They are surrounded by about sixteen acres of ground, artistically laid

out and planted with beautiful flowers and tropical plants. Just inside the entrance gate is a building, set apart for a fire temple and a house of prayer.

These dokhmas are built upon a plan which I have annexed hereto [next page].

When the corpse has been completely stripped of its flesh by the vultures, which is generally accomplished within an hour at the outside, and when the bones of the denuded skeleton are perfectly dried by the powerful heat of a tropical sun and other atmospheric influences, they are thrown into this pit, where they crumble into dust, the rich and the poor thus meeting together after death in one common level of equality.

This mode of disposing of the dead, which the Parsees have practiced for countless generations, is repulsive to the sentiment of nations accustomed to bury their dead; but it is thoroughly sanitary, and clears away most effectually one of the greatest difficulties encumbering the path of sanitary reformers in great cities.

According to their religion, earth, fire, and water are sacred and useful to man, and to avoid their pollution by contact with putrefying flesh, the faith strictly enjoins that dead bodies shall not be buried in the ground, burnt, or thrown into the rivers or sea. They further claim that it really carries out the doctrine of the equal-

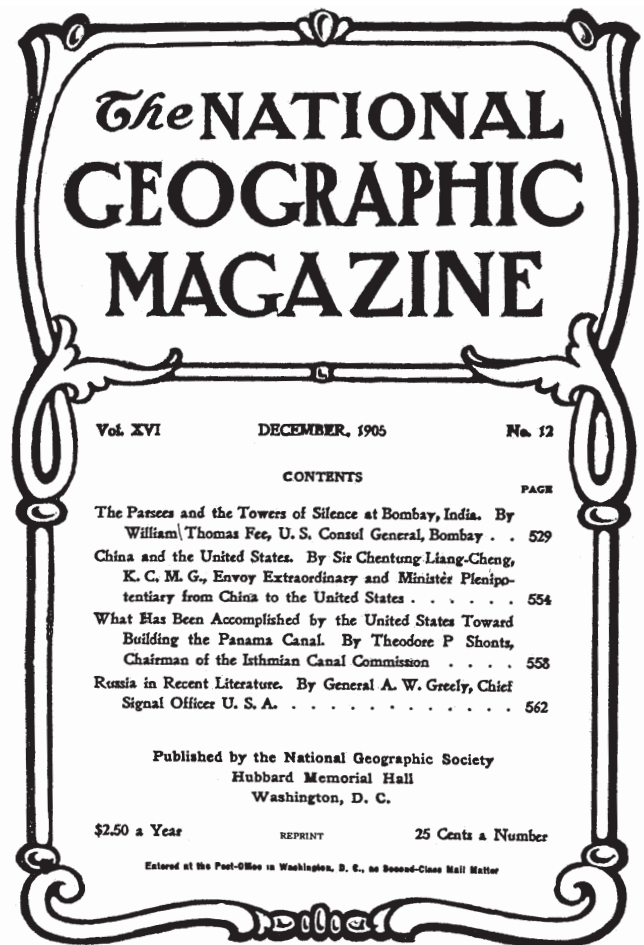
ity of man more satisfactorily than burying or burning, since the bones of the whole community, rich and poor, rest together at last in the well within the Tower of Silence ...

Their absolute silence has reigned for centuries, and there, within the last half century, more than fifty thousand Parsees have been exposed.

THE VULTURES

It is estimated that some five hundred vultures make their home in the lofty tropical palms in the gardens that surround the towers, and when a corpse is exposed in one of them they swoop down and do not rise again until all the flesh has been devoured.

Within its silent precinct they are secluded and free from all outside interference, and I have been told by those who have watched, that they never rise to the top of the tower with any substance whatever. They are disqualified by the form of their weak, little curved, unretractile



“The Parsee stands unique in the history of mankind”

- William Thomas Fee, U.S. Consul General, Bombay, 1905,

Excerpts from *“The Parsees and the Towers of Silence at Bombay, India,” National Geographic Magazine, 1905 [see previous page]. Submitted by Dinaz Rogers.*

Though comparatively small in point of numbers, the Parsees occupy one of the foremost places among Indian nationalities. Their social position, peculiar customs, manners, and foreign designation are impressively striking to a stranger on his first visit to Bombay.

“ Their kings were the most powerful and wisest of monarchs ... Their heroes as humane as they were brave. ”

Their story is a romantic tale of a people whose ancestry appeared at the very dawn of history, and who occupied Persia when Abraham was a nomadic wanderer, tending his flocks on the sandy plains beyond the Euphrates.

They claim that their ancestral race was the foremost Asiatic nation of their time, whose grandeur, magnificence, and glory were unsurpassed; that their kings were the most powerful and wisest of monarchs, whose armies were renowned for courage and military prowess; that they were valorous and energetic, bringing up their youth to “ride, draw the bow, and speak the truth;” that their heroes were as humane as they were courageous; that their women were as brave as they were fair, and as celebrated for the freedom allowed them as for their modesty.

For some 1,200 years they have lived among the all-absorbent Hindoos, yet this mere handful of people have not been absorbed ... Internecine wars, racial strifes, and caste prejudices have robbed India of her own; pestilence and famine have blighted her fairest flower; yet during all these centuries, amid all the vicissitudes of oriental life, have lived the worthy descendants of the ancient Persian people, true to their faith, and have substantially preserved and transmitted the main characteristics of their ancestral race.

“ Their women were as brave as they were fair, as celebrated for the freedom allowed them, as for their modesty ”

The Parsee stands unique in the history of mankind!

Physically they are tall and erect, having remarkably small hands and feet, with facial features resembling the Euro-

peans. They have a quickness of action bordering on nervousness. Their hair is jet black and their eyes are dark. In their manners they are exceedingly polite, kind, and hospitable, often putting themselves to great inconvenience to accommodate a stranger.

The long, flowing ‘saree’ of many silken tints, wrapped about the body in graceful folds, gives to the female Parsee a garment of exquisite beauty and rare comfort. It would be a matter of great regret if this graceful dress should give place to modern European fashion, with the tight corset and the high-heeled shoe, that destroy the graceful carriage and health of the wearer.

The Parsee women are generally of good figure and of pleasing and intelligent countenance. Many of them have a light olive complexion and are considered very handsome. They appear to great disadvantage by being obliged to conceal their hair, of which nature has graced them in a most luxuriant manner, under the ‘mathabana,’ a custom regarded as a token of feminine modesty.

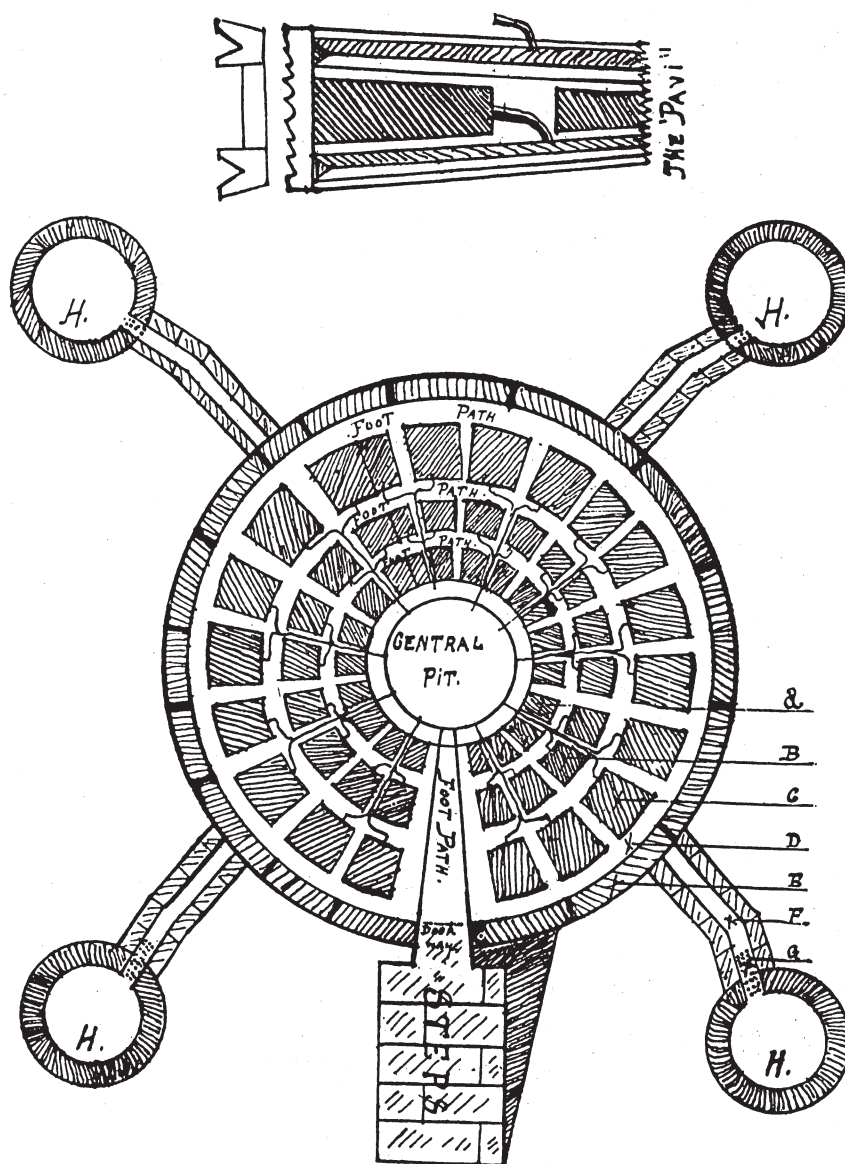
“ Their faultless generosity goes broader than their race. Many of the fine public buildings owe their origin to the liberality, wealth, public spirit and genius of the Parsees. ”

The Greek historian, Herodotus, has remarked that of all nations the ancient Persians were most distinguished by their readiness in imitating foreign manners and customs. This peculiarity their descendants have retained to the present day.

Their villas and garden houses are some of the best in Bombay. Their drawing rooms are richly furnished and decorated, while the particular boast of a Parsee is to have his house brilliantly lighted with many lamps and chandeliers.

They provide for their own poor and infirm. Strikingly strange, one never sees in Bombay a Parsee soldier, servant, or beggar.

Their faultless generosity goes broader than their race, and many of the fine public buildings, colleges and hospitals, owe their origin to the liberality, wealth, public spirit, and genius of the Parsees. ■



Ground Plan, Towers of Silence, Malabar Hill, Bombay

These dokhmas are built upon one plan, but their size may vary and does vary. The largest measures about 90 feet in diameter, surrounded by a circular wall (e), 20 to 30 feet in height, built of the hardest stone, and faced with chunam or white plaster. There is an opening with a door, through which the dead bodies are carried by professional corpse-bearers. No one else can enter or touch the bodies.

Inside the tower is a platform, divided into three concentric rows, entirely paved with large stone slabs, called 'pavis,' for the bodies of the dead. The outside row (c) is used for the bodies of males, the next row (b) for females, and the third or inner row (a) for children. Channels are cut around each pavi for conveying all the liquid matter flowing from the corpses and rain-water into a central 'bhandar' or a deep hollow or pit, the bottom of which is paved with stone slabs.

Four drains (f) are constructed leading from the bottom of the pit beyond the outer wall into four underground wells (h). At the mouth of each drain (g) charcoal and sandstones are placed for purifying the fluid before it enters the ground, thus observing one of the tenets of the Zoroastrian religion, that, "The mother earth shall not be defiled."

The wells have a permeable bottom, which is covered with sand to a height of 5 to 7 feet.

talons from seizing or carrying away living prey.

These birds lay two eggs at a time, and are said to produce once a year. Like the American eagle, they build their nests in inaccessible rocks and places remote from the hands of man. These jackals of the air are large in size and have remarkably keen sight. They have naked heads and necks, a broad powerful, hooked bill, and strong, thick legs. They are gregarious, slow in flight, gluttonous of habit, and prefer carrion to living prey.

In view of the fact that the corpses of all Parsees, regardless of the cause of death, even of the most contagious smallpox, Bombay plague or cholera, are thus exposed in the towers, it is remarkable that these vultures have never been known to spread the contagion or suffer from it themselves.

When all is over they come to the top of the towers, where they sit for hours without moving. The fact is that there is no unpleasant taint of this charnel-house, there not being the faintest odor of death to mingle

with the perfume of the flowers blooming in this beautiful garden.

The undoubted fact remains that from the sanitary aspect the Parsee system is infinitely better ... Their system is at all events the more perfect solution of the sanitary side of the question, especially in this hot and moist tropical climate.

Death is a solemn reminder of the equality of all men before the law of nature, and their mode is an efficient preventive to post-human distinction, vanities and funeral pomp. ■



Above and on the cover, Parsis offer prayers on Fravardin roz and Fravardin mah, at the dokhma at Doongerwadi, Mumbai, 1984. One can see an occasional peacock, as can be seen in this photo, but one rarely sees a vulture these days. PHOTO COURTESY "THE ZOROASTRIANS OF INDIA, PARSIS, A PHOTOGRAPHIC JOURNEY" BY SOONI TARAPOREVALA.

when vultures die

Exploring solutions to preserve the tradition of dokhmenashini, as the vulture population suffers a sudden and staggering rate of decline in India.

Where, a century ago “five hundred vultures” [see articles on pages 93 and 95] made their home at Doongerwadi, the lush 55-acre gardens around the dokhmas of Mumbai, and would “settle motionless side by side in a complete circle on the parapet of the Towers” – today there are none. Where once dozens would circle overhead, swoop down upon the corpse, and within a few minutes, leave nothing but a skeleton – today the body lies decomposing for months.

Where have all the vultures gone? As recently as the 1980s, the Indian white-backed vulture was so abundant in India that it was among the most common large birds of prey in the world. In the span of barely a decade it, along with other vultures such as the long-billed, slender-billed, white-backed Gyps and Griffin, is on the point of extinction in India and Pakistan. This staggering rate of decline which has wiped out 95% of the vulture population since the 1990s, has recently been ascribed to a drug, diclofenac, used for treating ailments in livestock.

In matters of death and disposal, as in concerns of the living and survival, the Parsis of Mumbai are embroiled in a bitter controversy. Here we present the positions of Dr. Homi Dhalla, who is offering a pragmatic solution for the speedy disposal of the corpse harnessing solar energy using solar concentrators; and Khojeste Mistree, advocate for building an aviary around the dokhmas to breed a self-sustaining population of vultures.

- Roshan Rivetna

Harnessing Solar Energy to solve the dwindling vulture problem

by Homi Dhalla

Due to the staggering decline in the vulture population, in 1998 the trustees of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet had encouraged innovative solutions to overcome the problem of disposal of the dead. The challenge was to find a method which was within the parameters of our religious doctrine and practice.

The principle behind our system of disposal is *khurshid nigerishn* (exposure to the sun); the role of the birds is of secondary importance. Hence I thought of harnessing solar energy for the speedy disposal of the corpse. This has now been successfully implemented for the first time in the more than 1,000 years history of the Parsi community in India.

Solar concentrator. The process of using the solar concentrator was initiated in Baroda with the help of solar energy specialist Ronnie Sabawalla in 2004. Encouraged by the positive results of experiments on animals in Baroda, the BPP trustees decided to install a concentrator at Doongerwadi.

With the solar panels reflecting sunlight at a temperature of 125°C for an average of seven hours a day, it takes about 3-5 days to reduce a corpse to a mere skeleton. In the absence of this method, it would take the corpse about 5-6 months to dry up. This in turn, would lead to the problem of stench and the possibility of it being a health hazard.

In this new method, dehydration or desiccation (the process by which moisture is removed from the corpse) commences within the first two hours. Hence the problem of stench and the possibility of it being a health hazard are eliminated. It is pertinent to note that at no stage does the body burn.

As the temperature is fixed at 125°C there is no danger of excessive heat that might affect the foliage.

The solar concentrator costs only Rs. 1,60,000 (approx. \$3,500) it is cost effective and can be used by the other anjumans also.

After this project proved successful in Mumbai, six other cities in India have already introduced the solar panels – Ahmedabad, Balsar, Baroda, Hyderabad, Navsari and Pune. At present, there are five solar concentrators operating at Doongerwadi; and by the end of 2005, about 9-10 units.

Priestly sanction. It is imperative to note that this method has priestly sanction. Dasturji Dr. Hormazdiar Mirza, High Priest of the Iranshah Atash Bahram, Udvada, in a letter to me dated September 17, 2000 had written, inter alia:

“Under these circumstances, the use of solar energy to dry up the corpse for disposal of the dead body is permissible from the religious viewpoint. By this system, the disposal of the body will be quicker without emitting stench.”

Community support. After seeing the initial results, philanthropist Naryman Dubash has donated Rs. 5 lacs to cover the cost of 3 units, followed by another donation of a similar amount. In the year 2002, following lectures in London, at the invitation of ZTFE, two ladies spontaneously donated one unit each to Doongerwadi. This is an indication of the wide support extended by community members to this project.

Time magazine, BBC and National Geographic have covered stories on the solar concentrator, and national dailies have advo-

cated this method as cost-effective and eco-friendly, pointing out that the practice of cremation by millions of Hindus is destroying 200 acres of forests daily.

The solar concentrator is the most effective and efficient way of disposing the corpse within the parameters of our religious doctrines. We are helping nature by accelerating the process of *khurshid nigerishn*. I can now confidently say that its use has not only enabled us to put *dokhmeh-nashini* back on track but to also strengthen it. ■

Dr. Homi Dhalla is founder president of the World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation, and spearheaded the solar concentrator project.

Below, solar concentrator at Doongerwadi; a concentrator at the 150-year old dokhma at Bhoiguda.



PHOTO COURTESY HOMI DHALLA



PHOTO: "THE LAST RAYS" BY PADMINI PATELL, WWW.HINDU.COM

The Aviary Project: bringing back the vultures to safeguard dokhmenashini

by Khojeste Mistree

In 1998 I was invited by the Bombay Parsi Punchayet to discuss the vexed dokhma problem. The directive was to strengthen the system of dokhmenashini at all costs and to find a way to augment the vulture population.

Bird sanctuary, UK.

Shortly thereafter I visited Ms. Jemima Parry-Jones, who owned and ran the world's largest sanctuary for birds of prey, in Gloucestershire, England. I discussed the "Parsi vulture problem" with her and explained the religious reasons as to why we had to use such an unusual mode of disposal.

She reassured me that one could house and breed vultures in captivity, and that she was sufficiently optimistic that we could build an aviary around our Towers of Silence which would enable the birds to live in the environs of Doongerwadi. This would not only help us from a religious point of view, but also help the cause of conservation. In other words, a win-win solution was possible, where religion and science would both benefit from what appeared to be a feasible project.

Project plans. In January 1999, Jemima spent four days in Mumbai and was shown around our Doongerwadi lands. In her preliminary report, she outlined how this project

could be brought to fruition. Vultures take to captivity pretty well if they are kept correctly.

Jemima's next report, in July 1999, outlined her thoughts in greater detail about dimensions, fittings, shade netting, architect, feeding, drinking, husbandry, keepers, veterinary requirements and the breeding program.

High Priests' support.

Dastur Jamasp Asa and Dastur Feroze Kotwal wrote letters supporting the project:

"We would like to affirm our position, which is to strengthen the system of dokhmenashini through the bringing back of the natural scavengers to be housed in Doongerwadi ... this is the only long-term solution we see ...

"By building the aviary a greater good will be achieved namely of strengthening the system of dokhmenashini, in a natural way, by using innovations which are in consonance with the beliefs of the faith."

"The ecologically friendly system of Khur-

shid Nigerishn, enhanced by the use of birds of prey will, in our opinion, be in consonance with our traditions and customs."

Phased project. The population of the white-backed Gyps vulture has drastically fallen in the wild in most parts of India and South East Asia. The Government of India and State governments have given the Parsi Vulture Project encouragement and

support. Initial scouting trips for juvenile vultures from the wild have been successful, as we are talking of only about 50 birds to start with in Phase I. Phase II will entail breeding the birds in captivity, approximately five years after the young vultures have been housed in the aviary.

The aviary will require high masts from which cables will be suspended over which the netting will fall. The netting for the aviary will be 3-4 inches square and therefore plenty of sunlight will fall into the dokhma, fulfilling the requirement of direct Khurshid Nigerishn, as versus focussed rays of the sun being directed onto the body, as is promoted by some (the solar concentrator advocates).

The netting will be at least 30 feet above the dokhma wall. Resting perches, bird-baths, shade houses, etc. will be provided for the birds to live in comfort in a simulated natural habitat. The Indian white-backed vulture nests in trees, so aviaries with platforms will have to be built. Flowering creepers on the sides of the aviary netting will screen the dokhma from high rise buildings. The netting will cover an area of 120,000 sq. feet. which will include two (Banaji and Bisni) dokhmas. Two Zarathushti wild-life enthusiasts will be sent to England for hands-on training. We will also require the services of a veterinary doctor specialized in avi-culture and bird medicine.

We will have to employ four to five other workers for the day to day running of the aviary.

Cost of the project. The monies required for the capital costs for this project will be Rs. 3 crores (~\$650,000). It is an expensive project but one has to see it in a holistic sense. The Doongerwadi lands are a priceless asset, settled by our forebearers specifically for the purposes of dokhmenashini, so it should be our avid desire to preserve this heritage so that there is no change of use within the environs of our sacred grove. I believe a community as



Slender-billed vulture [PHOTO
ALLAN MICHAUD, WWW.ARKIVE.ORG]



White-backed vulture
[//NEWS.NATIONALGEOGRAPHIC.COM]

wealthy as ours, supported by the healthy resources of the BPP, should be in a position to generate the funds.

Is this a high price to ask, if one is able to strengthen and preserve a spiritual heritage as important as our dokhmas for years to come? The answer is quite clear that the majority of Zarathushtis including myself wish to preserve this religious heritage, at all costs. ■

Excerpted from "Give the Aviary Project a Sporting Chance" by Khojeste Mistree, Jame Jamshed, February 2001. Submitted by Afreed Mistry.

Khojeste Mistree is founder and managing trustee of Zoroastrian Studies (ZS) and founder member of the World Alliance of Parsi Irani Zarthoshtis (WAPIZ).

The Parsis don't bury their dead

They don't burn them either – earth and fire are sacred. So white-robed men place the bodies on towers, in the open of bird-filled space.

Prayers vibrate and hum like a band of tuning forks, but the towers are silent. Their tops are clean and smooth, hot under the clouds. There is a cluster of these high tables, offering souls on a plate, a field of these monuments like false forests.

The sky above continually moves, stirred by the circuitous routes of vultures in slow motion. Their wings point and beat with a conductor's precision, over my grandmother's bones, clean as piano keys.

*by Zarina Mullan Plath
Chicago, Illinois*



The Karachi solution

Mr. Byram Avari, chairman of the Karachi Parsi Anjuman, 2001, states:

In Karachi, we have two dokhmas and have had no vultures since 1956, yet the disposal of the dead works as efficiently with the sun's rays as with vultures. We use no chemicals, no herbs, and no powders. It is standard practice that after a year, the bones are piled into the central dry well, where they turn to ash and crumble over the years. At the end of 1990 the pit of the main large dokhma at Karachi was cleaned after nearly 100 years, and the contents were placed in a dry well close to the dokhmas, which has been specified on a map kept at the Karachi Parsi Anjuman Trust Fund office. This has also been recorded, and a marble plaque embedded into the wall of the bunglis at the dokhma. This dry well, called an astodan (or receptacle for bones) has been prepared as per our Zarathushti rituals.

[From a posting by M. Fitter on zoroastrians@yahooogroups.com, submitted by Maneck Bhujwala.]

[This practice works well in Karachi, which has a low death rate of about 40 deaths per year, and enjoys the year-round hot sun of the Sind desert; however it may not be as effective in Mumbai, which has about 1,000 deaths per year, and a monsoon season with heavy rains for part of the year. - Ed]



Lest We Forget

by Dinaz Kutar Rogers

Do you remember any stories or sayings?

"Lest We Forget" is hosted by Dinaz Kutar Rogers, a high-school biology teacher and published writer. Readers are invited to contribute their stories, lores, legends and memories related to our faith, community, Iran, India, that we grew up with as young children. Jot down those sayings your mother used to say, and send them in, with your version of the meanings, to Dinaz at 1240 Takena SW, Albany, Oregon 97321, tel: (541) 967-1911, email: drogersor@msn.com.

*Come with me now through time and mind,
for the past beckons to be known.
And the future crouched like a
panther on the bough of a tree,
Waits to see if we ...
If we have truly grown
While it growls impatiently.*

- White Deer of Autumn

"Where shall we lay the bodies of the dead?" [Vd. VI.V44]

If one had to summarize, the genesis and reasons for some of our Zarathushti purification laws and rites, then this quote by Dr. Rapp, in 1863 would be most appropriate.

"The Iranians had a cultivated sense of purity and decency; whatever has in the slightest degree anything impure, nauseous in itself, instills into them an unconquerable horror... The Iranians had in a certain measure a distinct sixth sense for the pure."

Over three thousand years have passed since the commandments and dictates of the Zarathushti faith were laid down. Whilst enduring multitudes of upheavals and changing fortunes Zarathushtis have conformed to, and preserved faithfully, many of their ancient religious customs.

Underlying all the ceremonies at the end of life's journey are two basic mandates: to maintain respect for the dead, and carry out the disposal in the least harmful way to the living and to the surrounding environment.

In the Vendidad [1] Zarathushtra asks Ahura Mazda [Vd. VI.V44]:

"O Maker of the material world, thou Holy One! Whither shall we bring, where shall we lay the bodies of the dead, O Ahura Mazda?"

Ahura Mazda answered: "

"On the highest summits where they know there are always corpse-eating dogs and corpse-eating birds.
O holy Zarathushtra!"

Arriving in Bombay in 1671, John Fryer writes in his book of travel, "On the other side of the great inlet to the sea is a great point abutting Old Women's Island, and is called Malabar Hill; a rocky, woody mountain, yet sends forth long grass. At the top of all is a Parsy tomb, lately reared." This 'Parsy tomb' or 'dokhma,' or Towers of Silence as they were called by the British, still exist on Malabar Hill, situated on 16 acres in a veritable tropical jungle with exotic plants, trees and birds [2].

US Consul General William Fee [2] observes that only the best and hardest of solid stones and other building materials were used to build the dokhmas, so that they would withstand the vagaries of weather and time, as well as guard against pollution of the earth or contaminating any living beings dwelling thereon.

Much has been debated and written about the disposal of our dead. I was brought up hearing that: our religion is based on science; we respect nature, hence in death, as in life, we must refrain from polluting it; and that even in death, we Parsis are charitable. Inasmuch, I claim to be a moderate-liberal religiously, I admire, adhere to and believe in the way of our ancients and the injunctions set forth in the Zend Avesta. What worked for our nomadic Aryan ancestors many millennia ago, works well for us even today, now more than ever, with the horrendous pressures of environmental pollution and a dearth of available land.

I am not sure how many vultures still reside at Doongerwadi, but there were about five hundred in the early 20th century [2]. After the *nasesalars* (corpse-bearers) lay the corpse on one of the pavis, the vultures swoop down and within a few minutes, devour all the flesh. The bones, worked upon by the tropical sun and heat, crumble and



Lhai sari. Left, and on the cover, a silk 'lhai' sari and a border hand-embroidered in french-knots. Such tie-and-die designs of maroon dots on a black sari with a sober colored border, was traditionally worn at funerals and by women in mourning after a death in the family.

COLLECTION: ROSHAN RIVETNA,
PHOTO: CYRUS RIVETNA

are deposited into the central pit, or washed away by rain into the underground wells.

It is noteworthy that there is no smell of death at Doongerwadi; only the heady fragrances and dazzling colors of the tropical flowers soothe the mourners and remind them of paradise rather than the grounds that house the Towers of Silence.

The rich, the poor, the famous and the ordinary – all are taken to the same place of disposal and receive the same simple, ancient rites that have stood the test of time.

Prayers to Sarosh Yazad

After a death in the family or of a friend, I remember my mother would talk about going to Doongerwadi for the *Sarosh nu Patroo* ceremony. The Sarosh Baj and Sarosh Yasht are among prayers recited at this ceremony, in honor of Sarosh Yazad, the guardian angel who protects and guides the soul, in this world and the next:

O beautiful, holy Sraosh! Protect us here in these two lives, in these two worlds, in this world which is material, and in that which is spiritual.

[*Sarosh Yasht Wadi*, Ys. 57.25]

Sarosh Yazad occupies a high place in the Zarathushti hierarchy. Dr. Geiger [3] distinguishes Sarosh as “a characteristic figure in the Avestan religion ... who exemplifies clearly the ethico-philosophical spirit which predominates in the Zoroastrian system.”

Since Sarosh is also the guardian of the living as well, all our prayers begin with the recital of Sarosh Baj, and this is also the prayer one says before going to bed. Some recite it even years after their loved one's death; such is the belief in the powers of this prayer.

The bridge that leads to ...

Zarathushtis believe in heaven and hell. Heaven, in the Avesta is *vahishta-ahu* ('best life'). In Persian and in Parsi Gujarati it translates to *behesht*. Hell is *achishta-ahu* ('worst life').

On the morning of the fourth day, the soul passes over the Chinvat Bridge which spans over hell and then enters paradise. The bridge is guarded by the angel Meher Davar (Meher the Judge) who presides with the aid of angels Rashnu (Justice) and Astad (Truth). For virtuous souls, this bridge spreads to a width of nine javelins; but for the wicked it shrinks to the fullness of a thread! If the soul's good and bad deeds balance each other, then the soul is sent to *hamestegan* (purgatory).

Either an angelically beautiful maiden or a horribly ugly one, according to the way that person has led his life, takes the soul to heaven or hell.

This maiden, fair or ugly, is indeed that person's own conscience.

Vohu Manah, the door-keeper to paradise, greets the good soul, which now reconciles with Ahura Mazda:

Up rises Vohu Manah from his golden seat; Vohu Manah exclaims, “How hast thou come to us, thou holy one, from that decaying world into this undecaying one?”

The souls of the righteous are gathered together there.

[*Vd. XIX.31,34*]

Words of wisdom

Here are some words of wisdom I remember my mother and grandmother telling us; I was able to find many of these taboos in the Vendidad [1].

- For three days and three nights after a death in the family, it is forbidden to eat or cook meat in the house. This injunction is followed in all Parsi homes. [*Vd. VIII.22*].

- On your deathbed if a priest or other lay Zarathushti is not available to pray for you and with you, then recite the Ashem Vohu and Yatha Ahu Vairyo (Ahunavar) [*Vd. XIX*]. If you are unable to do so just repeat the first two words of these prayers, as many times as you can:

Yatha-Ashem, Yatha-Ashem, Yatha-Ashem ...

- My grandmother grew up in the small village of Nar-gol. In such small towns, at times, there were no physi-cians to certify the death. Besides using common sense procedures, a ‘*char ankhno*’ (four-eyed) dog would be brought near the corpse, and if the dog barked, it meant that the person was still alive. My grandmother narrated a few incidents where she remembered a person waking up after they were thought to be dead [Vd. VII]. The dog also dispels the *druj nasus* (the foul corpse-spirits) that rush to the body upon death [Vd. VII.I].
- The body should be moved to Doongerwadi only dur-ing the day, and never during the night [Vd. V.13].
- Pregnant women are forbidden to go to Doongerwadi. The only time it is allowed is for a close relative, and then only for certain ceremonies. I remember the ratio-nale was that some of the prayers for the dead were too “strong” and might cause harm to the unborn child.
- During their menstrual periods, or for 40 days after giving birth, women were not allowed to go to Doonger-wadi, or to the fire temples or near any sacred places or rituals. My grandmother used to say that the touch of such a woman, would spoil the spicy *achars* (pickles) that she used to make and store in huge glass jars.
- Never get a tattoo, otherwise you will not be taken to Doongerwadi upon your death.
- Peacock feathers bring bad luck; don’t bring them in the house.
- To attend ceremonies at Doongerwadi, the women wore white or black, deep brown or navy saris or dresses;

the older generation wore the silk ‘*lhai*’ saris [see photo previous page and on the cover]. The men traditionally wore white shirt, pants and *daglis*.

- Upon return from Doongerwadi, they would not touch anything until they had a full bath, and changed into fresh clothes. The Vendidad says “whoever thenceforth touches the corpse becomes unclean and makes unclean whomsoever he touches” [Vd. VII, I].
- After the death of a close family member, for a whole year, we had no chalk designs or flower *torans* on our doors, no radio and no cinema. The cinema rule was relaxed for the younger ones.
- Autopsies are forbidden unless ordered by authorities. Even then, the families could still dispute the procedure.
- We were told never to face the north whilst saying our prayers, or performing any religious, auspicious or somber, ceremonies. Vendidad says the evil spirits come from the regions of the north [Vd. VII.1.2].

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Through the Door by Dinaz Rogers

A thousand times
I’ve walked through this door
And I know, I will
A thousand more.
For once again
Someone has gone away
And never more
Shall he laugh or play.

I mourn this friend
The one who’s passed.
I curse my silence,
Questions I should have asked.
Never listened to his fears
Or
Saw the pain in his tears.

No one mourned him,
He who passed.
No one worried, no one asked.
But I alone should have cared.
When others would not,
I should have dared.

Remorse and memories
Please let me go
From this place
With crumpled picture
Of his face
Imprinted in my heart.
I wonder who will be there,
To despair,
When I depart.

From here on,
Let me not grieve
Or cry.
Let his soul rest in peace
Wherever he may lie.

In this somber chamber
I’ve been before,
Wish
I did not have to walk
Through its door
in pain,
Once again. ■

Eulogy to the Soul

by Farida Bamji

As the human’s life
slowly ebbs away,
The poor Soul seems to say:
“Woe is me!” as he nervously
Awaits judgment day.

Shaking and trembling
with each passing day,
“Who will welcome me?
Will it be Amesha Spentas
Or will the daevas lead the way?”

The day dawns bright and clear
Soul is trembling with fear
“Will I soar high?
Or will I be fried?”

Since we are all
Equal before the Law
No matter what religion,
caste or creed,
He will judge you solely on
Good thoughts, Good words,
Good deeds. ■

YS 1

YS 2

YS 3

Farsi 1

Finding solace at times of grief

by Er. Marzban Hathiram

Lessons on how to deal with life's challenges, from Adurbad Mahrespand's *Handarz*.

We live in tumultuous times. Our miseries seem never-ending. Calamities, both natural and human-made visit us with uncanny regularity. Faced with these misfortunes, some of us feel betrayed by God. Does He not see the pain we are going through? Why does He allow so much evil to flourish on this earth? Many people turn to the scriptures for answers.

Handarz of Adurbad Mahrespand.

The Zarathushti deen has a positive and proactive outlook towards human suffering. One of the foremost exponents of Zarathushti philosophy was the sage Dastur Adurbad Mahrespand, prime minister and pontiff in the court of Sasanian King Shapur II who reigned in Persia during the fourth century CE.

Those were difficult days for the Persian monarchy. The growing influence of Christianity threatened the monarchy as well as the Zarathushti deen. The faith of Zarathushtis was badly shaken, so the learned Dastur directed his efforts towards reviving the flagging faith of the people.

On his deathbed Dastur Adurbad dictated a series of lessons to his son. These have been handed down as the *Handarz i Adurbad Mahrespand*.

Rule of moderation. These teachings, while being extremely simple and pithy, are of relevance even today, and give us important lessons

on how to deal with life's various challenges.

The golden rule of moderation was Dastur Adurbad's key to living a good life:

Do not be unduly glad when good fortune comes to you, and do not be unduly downcast when misfortune befalls you. Be content in adversity and patient in disaster.

This is not a fatalistic approach to life, but rather an extremely healthy and positive approach which he has expounded beautifully in the *Handarz*.

The six comforts. Every time a misfortune befell me, says Dastur Adurbad, I derived six kinds of comfort and solace from it.

The first comfort was this: the tragedy could have been much worse. In our suffering we sometimes fail to realize that it could have been much worse. Hence it is appropriate to thank God that the calamity that befell us was only so grievous and not more.

The second solace was that the blow was to my body, and not to my soul. It is important to realize that the body is but a shell, given to us by God to further the progress of the soul. Physical harm to our body is therefore less grievous than a spiritual tragedy.

The third solace was that of all the misfortunes I have to endure, one

more has passed. The sum total of a man's suffering is dependent on his past thoughts, words and deeds, and is hence of a finite number. When a misfortune befalls us, it is a source of solace to know that of the tragedies scripted for us, one more is behind us.

The fourth comfort was that I must have been a good man. I should take solace that Ahriman took notice of my goodness and sought me out in the hope to lead me astray from goodness.

The fifth comfort is knowing that my children are spared the misfortune. The effects of our evil thoughts, words and deed fall either upon us or our children. I find solace that the tragedy fell upon me and not on my child.

The sixth and final comfort to be found in grief is this: knowing that the total evil that can happen in the world is limited. When one such misfortune visits us, we find solace in the fact that the world is one evil less, and humankind is moving forward on the path to Ahura Mazda.

The learned sage's counsel show us that misfortune and grief are a part and parcel of everyday life, and a positive attitude will help us cross the greatest hurdle.

What is needed is faith in the mysterious ways of God, and the wisdom to realize that whatever happens, always happens for the best.

Rightly, the Dastur concludes: "Remember, my son, of all things, wisdom is the best." ■

SOURCE: *The Mazdayasnie Connection*, California, Summer 2002, and "The Speaking Tree," *Times of India*, July 31, 2002.

Some people complain that God put thorns on roses. While others praise Him for putting roses among thorns.



***I complained to God that I had no shoes,
'Til I saw a man who had no feet.***

READERS' FORUM

Readers may submit letters (under 250 words) to the editor. The Journal reserves the right to edit materials for suitability, clarity and space.

On past issues

Thanks a million! I have learned a lot from FEZANA Journal, and continue to learn.

*Thrity Mistry
Edmonton, Alberta*

Thanks for the Fall 2005 issue, it will be read from cover to cover by all of us at home. The Journal has become the premier means of dissemination of knowledge on our Zarathushti religion, as well as keeping our community connected. Your services have been immeasurable – **THANK YOU!**

*Nadir and Zarine Camay
Los Angeles, California*

Just as Buddha received enlightenment under the Bodhi (?) tree, I get all my enlightenment reading the Journal! You are doing such an excellent job. **THANKS!**

*Sunny Deboo
Los Angeles, California*

I am often amused when I read articles in FEZANA Journal where the Zarathushti/Parsi food that was consumed on a particular occasion is mentioned in some detail. I think this obsession with food should be strenuously discouraged.

*Rostam Chami
Perth, Australia*

I enjoy reading FEZANA Journal and learn a lot from it. I am interested in reading more about Asho Zarathushtra's life. Maybe FEZANA can conduct an essay contest; I will offer \$100 towards a prize. May Almighty Ahura Mazda bless all of you who devote your time and energy to give the community such valuable knowledge. Long live FEZANA!

*Dinshaw R. Sachinvala
Woodside, New York*

Please accept my heartiest thanks and my compliments for your excellent and, I am sure, painstaking coverage of the 9th World Zoroas-

trian Congress [FJ, Fall 2005]. Thank you for giving proper coverage to all the different points of view that were presented; and for your patience, your understanding and your generosity in over-looking the inevitable shortcomings during this massive endeavor.

*Dorab Mistry
Chairperson, 8th World
Zoroastrian Congress, London, UK*

We were thrilled to receive our first copy of FEZANA Journal; a book-magazine such as this is something to be treasured and read over and over again.

Thank you for doing the article on our daughter Shirin Dastoor [*"In the Wake of Katrina," FJ Fall 2005*] – We want to thank you and FEZANA and the Parsi community for your kindness to Shirin during those difficult days after the hurricane.

*Parvez and Pat Dastoor
Farmington, Missouri*

Food label literacy

In "Food Label Literacy 101" [FJ, Fall 2005], Dr. Mehroo Patel writes: "Cholesterol is a fat (Lipid)." I would like to clarify that cholesterol is a Cyclopentanofen-antren alcohol, and not a fat.

I also beg to differ on the issue of expiry dates. While the medicines may have efficacy past the expiry date, the disintegrated ingredients are dangerous and can destroy vital organs.

After their expiry dates, drugs like Tetracyclines can destroy the kidneys; some like Chloramphenicol, can cause a fetal disease (anemia aplastic) more dangerous than cancer. Even Aspirin, if not properly made, after fabrication disintegrates to Salicylic acid and vinegar. This is so powerful that we use it to destroy skin corns; you can imagine what it does to one's stomach. So please be careful. You do not want to harm our

people by publishing information without checking it first.

*Dr. H. Rad
The Hague, Netherlands*

Silent moderates

There are many critics of the fundamentalist Parsi groups in India, such as WAPIZ, who want to treat the Zarathushti religion as an elite and exclusive club. Most of them give voice only in private meetings but more and more are now beginning to appear in print. My writings against the ill-advised vociferous members of the small ultra-conservative Parsi groups have appeared on 'creating awareness@yahoo.com' as well as in FEZANA Journal, Parsiana and the Jam-e-Jamshed weekly, but there is little hope of changing their mind. I hope that some of their younger progeny may be affected by my forward-looking views.

What is termed the "indifference of the average Parsi" may be only a waiting stance, waiting for the appropriate leadership. Some leadership has been provided by the out-married Parsi women and their leader Mrs. Amersey supported by the Wadia brothers in establishing a Prayer Hall for the families of the out-married. More such people should stand up and be counted among the so-called 'silent majority.'

One option might have been overlooked by the ultra-conservatives. In the face of the general disapproval by the majority of Parsis to the decidedly irrational pronouncements of the fundamentalists, the silent moderates will look elsewhere for leadership, which will pass to the West and away from India.

Our religion, once brutally suppressed by the Arabs in Iran, found sanctuary and flourished in multi-ethnic tolerant India. Now that it is persecuted from inside by biased and narrow-minded people of our own

community, who cannot or will not look beyond their noses, it will flourish again in the more tolerant multi-ethnic West.

Jamshed R. Udvardia
Lansing, MI, USA

While Rome burns...

The Fall 2005 issue, like every issue of FEZANA Journal, is very informative, but I think there was just too much emphasis on Khojeste Mistree. His photo appeared about 8 times!

Of course, I support the formation of a world body; we Zarathushtis should be represented with a single and loud voice. However, I am convinced that WAPIZ (the World Alliance of Parsi-Irani Zarathushtis) supporters in India and abroad are genuinely concerned about “losing their identity and ethnicity” with non-Parsi Zarathushtis (or as they

say “pseudo-Parsis”) getting control of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet and its humongous funds. No matter how much you may bend to accommodate them they will not be convinced and agree to join the world body.

May be it is time to de-link India's Parsis from the universal Zarathushti religion/World Body. I think it is time for them to promote, not WAPIZ, but yet another association – ‘India Alliance For Parsiism,’ and they can go their own way; because it is the ‘Parsipanu’ or Parsi culture, Parsi ethnicity and Parsi identity is what the orthodox think is at stake here.

The Zarathushti religion is not the monopoly of the Parsis! The writing on the wall is that the Parsi population in India is going down. Instead of directing all our energies to stem this drop in numbers, all we are doing is squabbling and name-calling

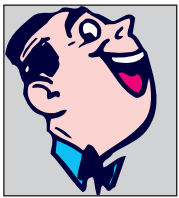
among ourselves. It is not just Nero who is fiddling, but an entire orchestra is playing while Rome is burning!

The way things are going, we Parsis (born of both Parsi parents) will be extinct in India in another 75-100 years tops, but the Zarathushti religion will continue to flourish elsewhere.

Today, over 50% of Parsi Zarathushtis who have migrated all over the world are marrying outside. I would like to do an in-depth study as to why our youth forsake the community that gave them so much? Why do they think that our religion and culture are not worth preserving?

Will the hardships, toil and sacrifices of our forefathers all go in vain?

I am sad and depressed at the thought of losing our culture, but find some measure of solace in the fact that our



Laugh and be Merry

By Jamshed Udvardia



The little boy asked his father, “Daddy, how was I born?” Here is the techno-reply:

You see your mom and I first got together in a chat room on the Internet. Then I set up a date via e-mail with your mom and we met at a cyber-cafe. We sneaked into a secluded room, where your mother agreed to a download from my hard drive. As soon as I was ready to upload, we discovered that neither one of us had used a firewall.

Since it was too late to hit the delete button, nine months later a blessed little Popup appeared and said: “You’ve Got Male.”

[Anon.]

In Italy, for thirty years, under the Borgias, they had warfare, terror, murder and bloodshed. But they produced Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci and the Renaissance. In Switzerland, they had brotherly love, and they had 500 years of democracy and peace, and what did they produce? The cuckoo clock.

- Graham Greene [forwarded by Dinaz K. Rogers, Albany, OR]

Three buddies are travelling to New York in a car. They are all laughing and joking when a speed fiend overtakes and cuts in front of them in a dangerous move. They begin to speculate what would happen if they got involved in a fatal car crash.

One asked, “When you are in your casket and friends and family are mourning, what would you like them to say about you?”

The first guy says, “I would like them to say that I was a great sportsman of my time, and a great family man.”

The second guy says, “I would like them to hear that I was a wonderful husband and school teacher who made a huge difference to our children of tomorrow.”

The last guy replies, “I would like to hear them say, ‘Look! He’s moving!’”

[Anon]

religion will go on. Thanks to Zarathushtis in Iran and those among them who have migrated to North America and Europe, and those in the new republics of the former Soviet Union who have re-embraced the faith of their ancestors, our religion will not die out.

A day may come 100-150 years from now when the entire population of Iran, recognizing the greatness of their heritage, will revert to the religion of their ancestors. You may think I am indulging in 'sek challi na vichar' (wishful thinking) but who predicted only 20 years ago that the Soviet Union will collapse and East and West Germany will re-unite?

Ardeshtir B. Damania
Davis, California

The Pomegranate popularized



As if more evidence is needed for the benefits of pomegranates in addition to my letter [FJ, Fall 2005], may I submit what

Newsweek [January 23, 2006] noted:

"... the ruby-red fruit was largely absent from the American diet.

That's changing now. US foodmakers are adding the fruit to chocolate, chewing gum, even chicken sausage. In 2005, 190 new pomegranate flavored foods and drinks were introduced in the US.

"Pomegranate products got a boost from studies touting the fruit's protective benefits against cancer, heart disease and high blood pressure. This so-called superfood is also packed with nutrients like vitamin C and potassium ..."

This is further example of good things on this *getig* (material) world being a reflection of the *menoi* (spiritual) world as the former was fashioned and conceived in the latter.

Dr. Kersey H. Antia
Orland Park, Illinois

Making revival a reality - An effort to revive performance of high liturgical ceremonies

There has been a downward spiral over the last many decades in the performance of the *Ijashni* (*Yasna* or *Yazeshne*) high liturgical ceremony and other rituals to the general detriment of our community. The off-shoot of this has been the decline in the number of mobeds who are qualified to perform these higher rituals or '*pav mahal ni kriya*,' and a very real threat that such ceremonies may become impossible within a generation or so.

It is for us to realize that our generation has to initiate effective steps to stall such an eventuality and reverse the trend. For this purpose, the panthaky of the Sethna Agiary at Tardeo, Mumbai, Er. Pervez Dordi, which had stopped performing the Ijashni ceremony for the last few decades for want of mobeds and lack of interest, has now formed a team of two young mobeds who are considering the option of doing mobedi. However it is for us, Zarathushtis living in India as well as abroad, to bring our religious ceremonies back into the agiary. Availing of these services would complete the cycle – the personal satisfaction of having these ceremonies done for our family, perpetuating our traditions, supporting the mobeds, and revitalizing our agiaries.

Procedure to book a ceremony. The Ijashni ceremony can be performed either for the good health and prosperity of an individual or family, or for the peace of a departed loved one. The cost of a two and a half hour ceremony by two mobeds, is just Rs. 900 i.e. approx. \$20. (Rs. 350 plus Rs. 50 *ashodad* to each of the two mobeds and Rs. 100 to the agiary). It may be performed on a one-time basis or preferably be an annual commitment. To book a ceremony, please submit an email form, available upon request from me. Payment may be sent to the address below.

We can also arrange to have other ceremonies done, such as *Baj*, *death ceremonies*, *annual Muktd*, *Jashan*, *Tandarosti*, and *Maachi*, at Sethna Agiary as well as at the Manekjee Naorojee Sett Agiary at Fort, Mumbai. For those who are settled abroad, the Trust, which is a public registered Trust for Parsis, would acknowledge receipt, carry out the necessary administrative tasks per the wishes of the family, and send a confirmation from the panthaky after the ceremony is performed.

Rustom J. Vakil

Managing Trustee, Framji H. B. Settna Legacy Trust

6, Naju Mansion, 54 Wodehouse Road, Colaba, Mumbai 400 005

Tel: 91-22-2284 5603, Cell: 91-93232-29263, Email: rjvakil@yahoo.co.uk

[Other agiaries in Mumbai, that offer similar services for those living abroad, are listed on page 57 - Ed.]

Errata

FEZANA Journal regrets the following error in the Fall 2005 issue:

- Page 15, Nozar Sachinvala is not "on disability" as stated erroneously in the article. While Dr. Sachinvala does have multiple sclerosis, he leads a full, productive and active life, as lead scientist and research chemist for the Southern Regional Research Center, USDA-ARS.

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War Dokhma in Kerman. PHOTO BY DR. KERSEY H. ANTIA, KERMAN 2003.

War Dakhma. War dokhmas (*dokhma jangee*) were make-shift walled enclosures built on a hill top near war zones, where the remains of soldiers lost in battle were laid to rest. Dating back to Achaemenian times, the last of these [photo left] can be seen on a mountainside on the highway from Kerman city to Mashad. A fire was kept burning in the round stone ‘*atasuz*’ [top right].

This dokhma was built after the massacre of thousands of Zarathushtis by Mahmud of Kandahar (present day Afghanistan) in 1721. Zarathushtis were not allowed to live inside the protective walls of the city’s fort, and therefore became easy casualties of the plundering Afghan army.

[Read more about this in “The Last War Dokhma of Iran,” By Mehrborzin Soroushian, at www.vohuman.org]

Legacy of the village of Qatel-Gah [1]

[Excerpted from a posting by Mehrborzin Soroushian on creatingawareness@yahoo.com.]

This report appears in “The History of Zoroastrians after Sasanians” [Tehran, 1982] by Late Mobed Rashid Shahmardan. He relates the personal experience of Shahriar Jamshid Varjavandi, an employee of the British-Persian oil company, in 1951.

Shahriar was traveling on a local minibus in Southern Fars province when the bus arrived at a remote village. The driver stopped and announced that he would be visiting relatives for a few hours, and that the passengers should wait for him to get back and resume the trip.

“She went on to relate what had happened to the Zarathushtis of her village some sixty years earlier.”

Shahriar was unfamiliar with the area, so the driver invited Shahriar to accompany him. Once they arrived at the house of the driver’s relatives, and found out that Shahriar was a Zarathushti, the level of excitement increased. They informed Shahriar that their grandmother is still a practicing Zarathushti and would be very happy to meet another living Zarathushti.

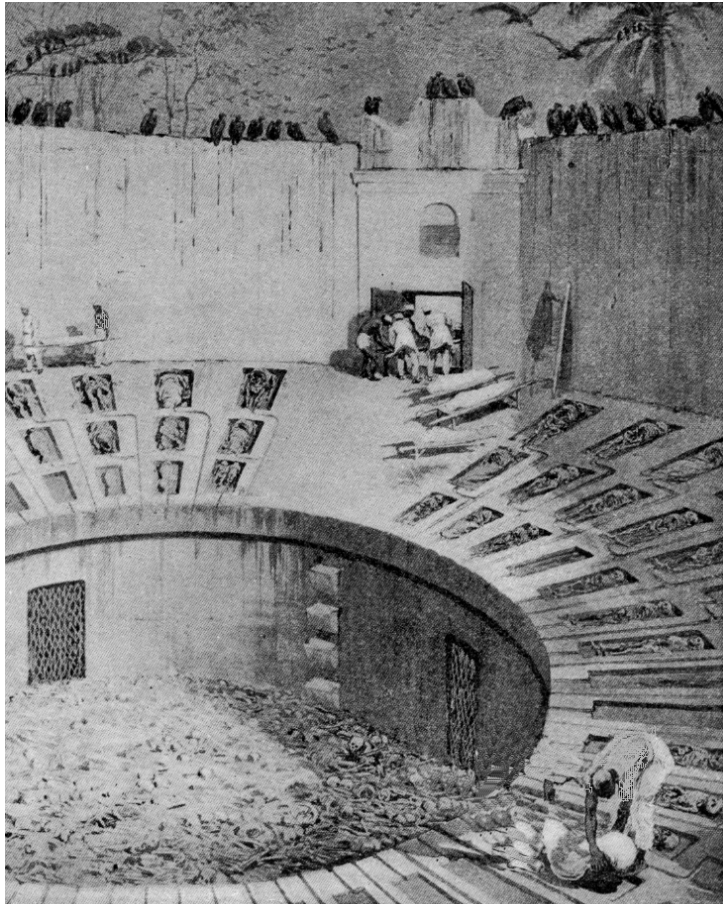
Soon a rugged, old lady walked in with the help of a cane. Shahriar stood up to greet her, but she motioned him to stop and asked him to first produce his *sudreh* and *kushti*, which Shahriar did. Reassured that Shahriar was a

Zarathushti, the old woman embraced him, and informed him that this was the first time since her youth that she had met another living Zarathushti. She did not think that any had survived; all her children and grandchildren had converted to Islam. She went on to relate what had happened to the Zarathushtis of her village some sixty years earlier. “One day an Islamic mullah passed through our village and was very upset to find out that there was no mosque or any Muslims in the village. A few months later he returned with a gang of *aubash* (fanatical rebels). They would stalk individual villagers, kidnap them and take them to the village well, where he (or she) would be decapitated and their body thrown into the well. Once the surviving villagers realized what was happening, some ran away and others converted to Islam to save their lives.”

The aged lady was amongst those who had fled, and later came back to the village to live amongst the converted Muslims, but had never converted herself despite marrying a Muslim convert. Living in an isolated and remote village, she had no news of any other surviving Zarathushtis in Iran, and was overjoyed and emotional to meet another living Zarathushti who had survived the incredible genocide that had unfolded in the land after the arrival of the Arabs.

It would be sad indeed if we forget all the heroes and heroines of the long struggle. ■

[1] ‘Slaughter-house.’ The village has since been renamed Malleh Seyed Al (‘belonging to Seyed Al’).



In Western Eyes

The fascination of Westerners with the funeral customs of the Zarathushtis is evident in the many pictures, engravings and writings, often whimsical, at times grossly erroneous, that can be found in bookstores and on the Internet.

FOLIOS ON THIS PAGE FROM
THE COLLECTION OF CYRUS RIVETNA

Left, sketch from an article “*The Great Famine and Plague in India*” from *Leslie’s Illustrated Weekly*, New York, February 25, 1897. The article says:

“At the Lord Mayor’s meeting, London, measures were discussed for the relief of the Indian famine sufferers ... The ravages of the plague are in the Bombay district ...

“The picture shows a method of disposing of the bodies of victims of the epidemic ...”

THE TOWER OF SILENCE IN BOMBAY — WHERE THE DEAD BODIES ARE DEPOSITED TO BE DISPOSED BY THE VULTURES.



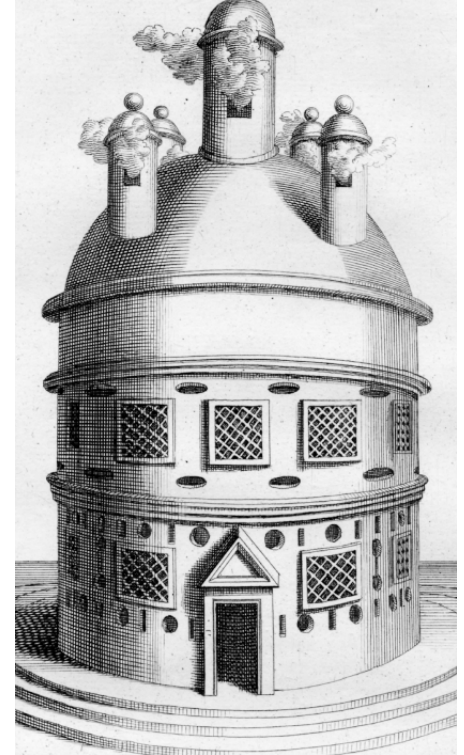
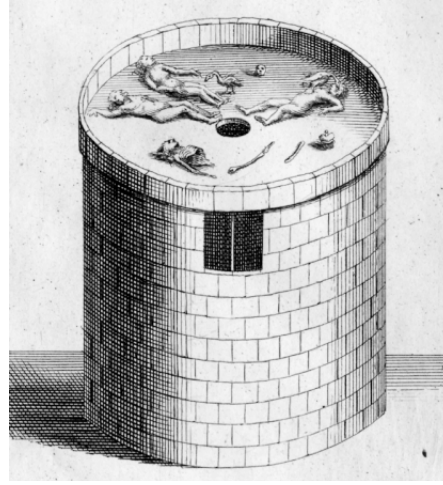
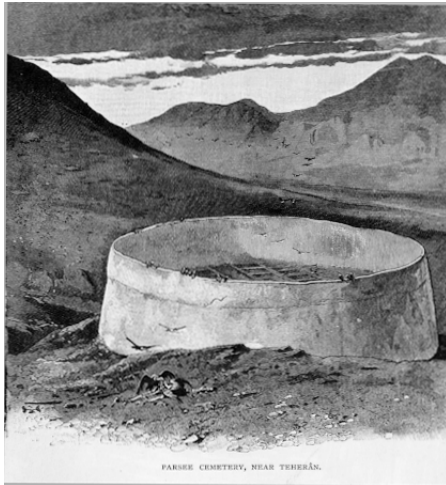
FUNERALS of the PARSIES.

FUNERAILLES des PARSIS.



PARSIS ou GUEBRE AGONISANT,
dont l'AME est recue par un CHIEN.

Left, engraving entitled in English and French “*The Funerals of the Parsies.*” Note the whimsical Tower of Silence! Right, engraving entitled “*Parsis ou Guebre agonisant, dont l’ame est recue par un chien*” or “*An expiring Parsi or Guebre, whose soul is received by a dog*” which is of course erroneous! Folios from “*Ceremonies et Coutumes Religieuses des Peuples Idolatres*” from an estate sale in Lincoln, RI. The original copper engravings are by Bernard Picart, 1728.



Left, sketch from *The Century Magazine*, December 1885, from an article entitled “The City of Teheran.” It says, “On a ledge overlooking the site of Rhei is the Parsee cemetery of Teheran, a white spot on the purple side of the bare mountain. It is a circular inclosure, open to the sky. The dead are laid in shallow, open graves exposed to the elements ...” Middle and right, engravings of a tower of silence and fire temple, B. Picart, 1730. COLLECTION: CYRUS RIVETNA.

Liebig Trading Cards. Right, a postcard entitled “Parsees and the Towers of Silence” [also see page 94]. The caption, translated from Italian and Dutch, reads:

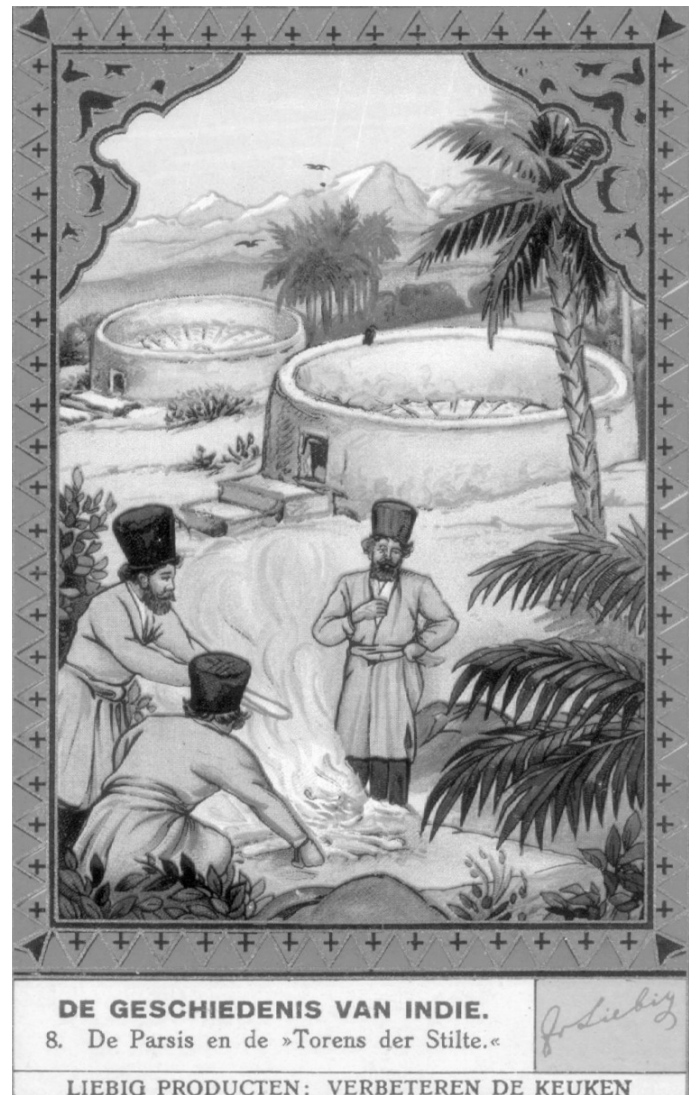
“... The feast day for Fravardin, who has the responsibility for protection of the souls of the deceased, is reserved for the memory of the dead. People gather at the high grounds near the Towers of Silence where the dead are left for the vultures, and they pray for the souls of the dead. For followers of Zoroaster, the dead body is unclean ... Neither water, fire nor earth can be contaminated with the uncleanness of a dead body. The last ten days of the year have to be celebrated in charity and New Year’s day is dedicated to fire worshipping and prayers.

“Pay attention to the headdress, the blessed shirt (jamow) and the belt (pitcharow) of the followers at the Towers of Silence.”

This is one of a series of postcards issued by the German Liebig Co. (Estd. 1865) in an advertising campaign for their company, which introduced the concept of meat extracts for cooking. In the days when meat was prohibitively expensive, extracts were a cheaper way to transport ‘meat’ from South America to Europe.

These cards have now become collector items, still appreciated today. The Liebig Co. published over 11,000 different types of cards until it was taken over by Brooke Bond Ltd. in the 1970s. Every subject is usually in a set of six cards. The card at right and the one on page 94 are from the series on Parsees of Bombay. There is also a series on Zoroaster.

FROM THE COLLECTION OF
ARDESHIR B. DAMANIA, WHO FOUND THEM ON EBAY.



[Excerpted from "South Asians Fought in US Civil War" by Francis C. Assisi and Elizabeth Pothen, posted by Shahrukh Mehta on creatingawareness@yahoo.com; from <http://home.ozconnect.net>, and from www.sepiamutiny.com/sepia/archives/002300.html].

His entry in the Naval Rendezvous Reports [Vol. 18, p. 109] reads:

"Antonio Frank Gomez, Landsman, aged 25, enlisted February 8, 1862. Born Hindostan, eyes dark, hair black, yellow complexion, on December 10, 1836, son of an Indian prince, he had his name changed by Reverend Henry Ward Beecher, from **Conjee Rustumjee Cohoujee Bey...**"

Born in 1836 into a princely family of Punjab, at the age of 12, Rustumjee was packed off from Lahore to be educated in London. At 24, the adventurous young man, with the British flag tattooed on both arms, arrived in New York. He became the protégé of Rev. Henry Ward Beecher (brother of Harriet Beecher Stowe who wrote Uncle Tom's Cabin) who managed to convert him to Christianity and gave him a Hispanic name.

Gomez, 26, answered the call of President Lincoln, and began his service in the US Navy aboard the USS North Carolina at the Brooklyn Navy



PHOTO: [HTTP://HOME.OZCONNECT.NET/FOEN/ASIANS.HTML](http://home.ozconnect.net/foen/asians.html)

Yard, February 8, 1862, as Ward Room Steward.

He served on the USS Dacotah when she had several skirmishes with the Confederates – at Harden's Bluff, Virginia, on 2 July. While serving aboard the first USS Iroquois, a sloop of war in the US Navy, Gomez saw action at the mouth of the Mississippi River, where, after a spirited engagement, she helped capture New Orleans, Louisiana, the South's largest and wealthiest city.

On April 14, 1865, Gomez was present when the Stars and Stripes were raised at Fort Sumter, South Carolina, for the grand celebration of the Union

A Parsi in the US Civil War

The story of Conjee Rustumjee Cohoujee Bey (a.k.a. Anthony Frank Gomez), one of about 50 South Asians enlisted in the US Civil War. He served in the US Navy and upon his death in 1911, was interned at the Presidio in San Francisco with full military honors.

victory. A band played while nearby Navy warships, including the Niagara on which he was then serving, fired salutes, and there were hymns and prayers as the Union flag was raised as a symbol of the restored and victorious United States.

Gomez was discharged in 1865, and made his home in San Francisco. After the death of his first wife Alice Vass, Gomez married Suzanne Dutreaux. When he died in 1911, the Navy interned his body at The Presidio, with full military honors. The descendants of his son and three daughters are believed to have lived in Oakland, California. ■



Memorable meeting

Through a series of chance events, business tycoon Benjamin Swig [center] of San Francisco had befriended young Stanford student Dady Banaji [at left] and helped advance the young architect's career in the late 1950s [see *FJ*, Spring 2004, p. 104]. Over time, a deep friendship developed between Dady and Benjamin Swig.

When John F. Kennedy was running for president, Dady was even able to switch Benjamin's support from Stevenson to Kennedy. Hearing about this Kennedy asked to meet "the young student from India." The meeting is recorded in this memorable photo that proudly hangs in Dady's office in Mumbai today. [Source: *Minochehr Damania*].

2005 WZCC RECOGNITIONS

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

To encourage excellence in business and the professions, the WZCC annually recognizes individuals in three categories:

- Outstanding Zarathushti Entrepreneur
- Outstanding Zarathushti Professional
- Outstanding Young Zarathushti Entrepreneur/Professional

Nomination forms are available at

www.wzcc.net

or from

Filli Madon

**WZCC Regional Director,
Australia**

pars09@yahoo.com.

Nominations must be received by **June 30, 2006**. All nominations received shall be judged by a panel of three judges. The selected candidates will be honored at the upcoming WZCC Annual General Meeting in India in January 2007.

WZCC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Preliminary, tentative plans for the 2006 WZCC AGM:

DATES: January 5-7, 2007.

VENUE: Khandala or Lonavla, hill-stations on the ghats, about 60 miles from Mumbai.

AGENDA:

- Installation of new directors
- Annual recognitions
- Showcasing of entrepreneurs
- Interactive corporate quiz
- Financing avenues
- Success stories
- New project offerings
- Corporate/technical site visit

For information, visit
www.wzcc.net

ZARATHUSHTI ENTERPRISE ■ PRODUCTS AND SERVICES ■

WZCC Business Digest

Code of Ethics. The long awaited WZCC Code of Ethics [see page 124] has now been finalized and available on the WZCC website (www.wzcc.net) for review. We thank Yazdi Tantra and associates for pursuing this project to conclusion. A living document that will be fine tuned as WZCC evolves, this Code offers commitment to basic obligations – to customers, business owners, employees, society and to ourselves.

It provides an insight into the Zarathushti business mind which traditionally puts integrity and industry above all, which is indeed emblazoned on the WZCC logo. Zarathushtis have earned a reputation for honesty and integrity, in the old countries of India and Iran, and have always stood tall, where others have fallen. We shall strive to develop that good name in the diaspora as well.

Change of guard. Soon there will be a change of guard in WZCC. The initial Board of Directors that set up this organization, following a dream

going back a decade or more, and nurtured it through its fledgling years, will be retiring and the new guard will take over the reins at the next WZCC AGM, scheduled for January 5 - 7, 2007, in India

[see announcement this page]. The systems are now pretty much in place. We are confident the new directors will take the organization to even greater heights.

Annual recognitions. In order to encourage excellence in business and professions the WZCC has set up an Annual Recognition Program to recognize outstanding Zarathushti entrepreneurs and professionals. Please seek out the best among us and submit their nominations [see Call for Nominations this page].

Contact WZCC corporate secretary Edul Daver at (732) 469-1866, daver@acupowder.com or visit www.wzcc.net

Rohinton Rivetna
president, WZCC
Rivetna@aol.com, (630) 325-5383.



Have you checked out the new features at the WZCC website?

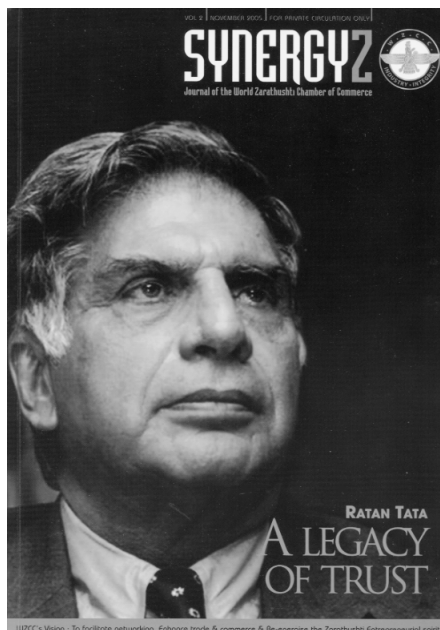
OPPORTUNITIES

You can search for and post: trade and business opportunities, job vacancies, finance required/available, seminars and trade fairs, products and services, properties, manufacturing facilities, and more.

www.wzcc.net or **www.wzcc.org**

All business persons and professionals are invited.

Contact **Yazdi Tantra** at yazdi@on-lyne.com or
Homi Davier at davier@CapricornTravel.com.



The second issue of the WZCC journal **SynergyZ** is now available to all WZCC members. **SynergyZ** is WZCC's flagship publication conceived and developed by Meher Bhe-
sania, WZCC director (Middle East Region) and produced for WZCC by Zarathushti journalists, graphics designers and media specialists in Dubai. This issue showcased businesses in the field of construction and architecture. The next issue will profile CEOs. To get a copy or to become a member of WZCC, please contact your chapter chair or visit www.wzcc.net.

WZCC Seminar

Hosted by Zoroastrian Association of Atlanta, at Wingate Inn Atlanta Hotel
Sunday, May 28, 2006
(following the FEZANA AGM)

12:30 Lunch hosted by AZA
1:30 Welcome - Rustom Kanga
2:30 **Ruth Ann Carlton**,
Business Consultant, Small
Business Development Center,
University of West Georgia.
3:30 Discussion and Q&A
6:00 Dinner (contributory)

Contact: WZCC-Atlanta
chapter chair Rustom Kanga
rkanga@gmail.com.

Below, from left, NY chapter chair Rusi Gandhi, Niloufer Daver, youth director Avan Patel, Arnaz Maneckshana and Edul Daver. Right, Kayhan Irani in a solo performance.



New York Chapter (chair Rusi Gandhi, rusi@garden.net) honored **Edul Daver** (WZCC corporate secretary) and his wife **Niloufer** at a program at the darbe mehr in Pomona, on September 18. With their devotion to the cause and their constant support and goodwill, the Davers have been a pillar of strength for WZCC worldwide and the New York chapter in its formative years. They were presented with a plaque and flowers. An accomplished seamstress, Niloufer hand made the WZCC-NY chapter banner shown above. The program also featured a captivating solo performance by 'artist' Kayhan Irani.

On November 13th, WZCC-NY invited Zareen Karani Araoz, network director of the Zoroastrian Women's International Network (ZWIN) and president of Managing Across Cultures. This lively, interactive session discussed ways to enhance our effectiveness in ■

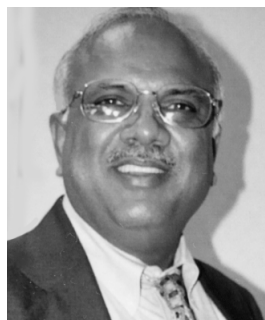


Rusi Gandhi, WZCC-NY chapter chair, delivered the keynote address at the Navra-tri function of the Parsippany India Association (PIA) on October 15, at the Parsippany High School gymnasium. Mr. Gandhi, who is on the advisory board of PIA, urged the gathering of over 800, to volunteer their services and help PIA to grow.

WZCC-Chicago presents opportunities in the childcare business

WZCC-Chicago (chapter chair Pheroze Nagarwalla, nagarwalla@hotmail.com) organized a presentation by **Kanti Kothari** [photo below] at the darbe mehr on November 12. Mr. Kothari, who has experience in the Children's Day Care Center business, offered to help interested persons in the WZCC community to invest in this largely untapped market, which he believes has excellent potential.

He proposed building a team and working with investors through the process of site selection, permitting, development and leasehold improve-



ment, throughout Illinois to begin with, and then plan for future expansion nationwide.

Interested persons may con-

tact Kanti Kothari at radkot@aol.com.

New chapter in Surat

Under the initiative of Hormazdiyar Patel (automotive_pressings@hotmail.com) a new WZCC chapter has been formed in Surat, India. About 30 entrepreneurs, including a good number of young entrepreneurs, came to the inaugural presentation on December 3rd. Trustees of the Surat Parsi Panchayat have offered willing support to the fledgling chapter, in the best traditions of encouraging entrepreneurship amongst fellow Zarathushtis.

- Yazdi Tantra



What advances a community is not so much to prop up its weakest and most helpless members, but to lift up the best and most gifted, so as to make them of greatest service to the community. - J. N. Tata

At WZCC-India meet at Hotel Diplomat, Mumbai on November 28: Zarine Commissariat, Vice-president Homi Davier, India region president Minoo Shroff and patron Jamshed Guzder. Inset, International Director Bomy Boyce.

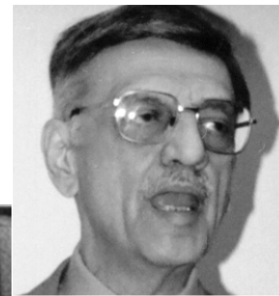
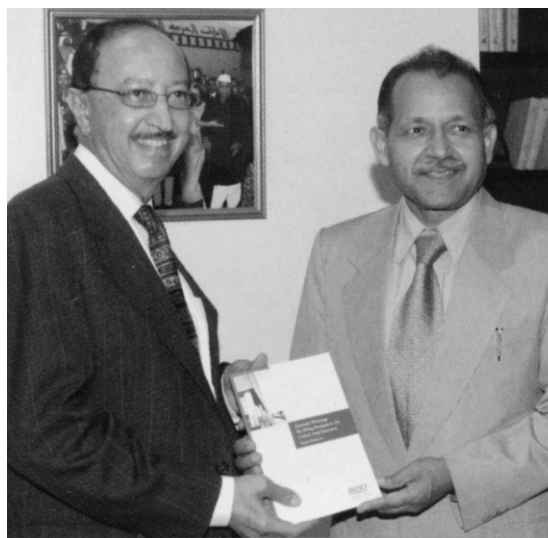


PHOTO: PARSIANA, JANUARY 7, 2006

WZCC-India meeting. WZCC International VP **Homi Davier** of Houston and International Director **Bomy Boyce** of Toronto, along with author publisher **Marzban Giara** and entrepreneur **Cyrus Driver** of *Calorie Care*, a new health food delivery service, shared their insights at the WZCC-India meeting at the Diplomat Hotel on November 28.

Homi Davier writes: "The strides that India has made and continues to make are incredible. That is the place where our educated and entrepreneur oriented youth should be heading. I remain convinced that if new fortunes are to be made then one just has to have a tie-in with India! Mumbai chapter chair Kersi Limathwalla (limath@vsnl.com) and Kersi Commissariat (kcommissariat@yahoo.com) are very active in promoting joint ventures between Indian and foreign companies and should be contacted whenever any WZCC member visits India."



New Business handbook,

"Strategic Planning for Doing Business in the UAE," by Russi J. Patel keeps investors abreast with developments in the business environment and potential investment opportunities. Patel, a leading Dubai-based financial and investment consultant is shown [at left in photo] with Chandra Bhandari, Indian ambassador to the UAE, at the book launch, in Dubai.

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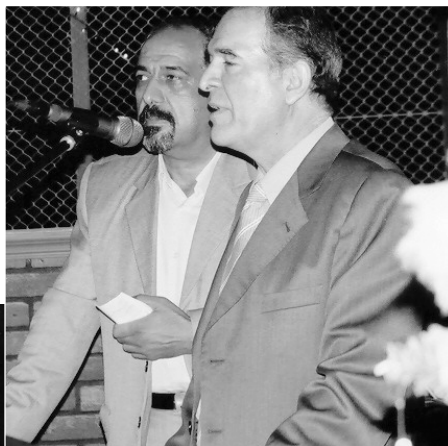
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Historic visit. Chief guests MP Kourosh Niknam and WZCC-Iran director Khodayar Attaie [inset] speaking at a WZCC-Middle East function on the roof-top terrace of the Avari Hotel in Dubai.



"Spinning the Wheels of Commerce with Iran." It was a historic occasion when Zarathushtis from Iran and Dubai got together for the first time to discuss trade and commerce between those two regions. Over 80 persons attended the final program of the year "*Spinning the Wheels of Commerce with Iran*" organized by WZCC-Middle East, at the roof-top terrace of Hotel Avari, Dubai on December 15. Chief guests at this historic function were the director of WZCC-Iran, Khodayar Attaie and his wife, and Zarathushti Member of Parliament in the Majlis Dr. Kourosh Niknam and his wife Parimarze.

The purpose of this three-day visit was to revive the historic, ancestral bonds and promote trade and commerce between members of these two regions. Several businesses by WZCC-ME members, including Rumi Engineer and Ferzin Irani, were showcased.

Members discussed present-day 21st century Iran and opportunities for business with the United Arab Emirates (UAE).



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Contact Perviz C. Patel or Cowas G. Patel at (626) 967-0037.

Seamless Solutions Across Borders

A new Interest Group has been formed at GlobalTrade@wzcc.net, where we propose to discuss various global trade issues, from setting up an export business, global trade arrangements, international audits, opportunities for trade and services across the world – in short anything and everything to further the idea of *seamless solutions across borders*. An inaugural session, "How to Start an Export Business" in Mumbai, on January 18th, addressed the objectives of this Interest Group.

To subscribe, visit www.wzcc.net, and enter your details in the 'Groups' section. For information contact Group leader Farrokh Rustomjee at f.rustomji@vsnl.com.html. ■

OPPORTUNITIES

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

Young woman *seeking a position in the tour and travel industry*. Diplomas in Tourism and Travel and computer fundamentals. Experience in TCI (India). Any help from Zarathushtis with connections with a travel agency or airlines, will be most deeply appreciated. Contact franak_25@hotmail.com.

Success is measured not so much by the position one has reached, as by the obstacles one has overcome.

- Booker Washington

WZCC Code of Ethics – a commentary by F. S. Nariman

[Excerpted from article to be published in the WZCC journal, SYNERGYZ, March 2006]

The Honorable Fali S. Nariman, M.P. Rajya Sabha, senior advocate of the Supreme Court of India, and an honorary member of WZCC commented on the new WZCC 'Code of Ethics' document:

"Ethics has been defined in the little known Doubters Dictionary, as 'a matter of daily practical concern, described glowingly in commercial terms by those who intend to ignore it'(!). However despite misgivings I heartily welcome the Code of Ethics for Members of the World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce (WZCC).

"At a time when the high and mighty in the non-Zoroastrian corporate world have fallen and are biting the dust, questions are being raised as to whether the entire concept of corporate capitalism and fulsome praises about its benefits have not been unduly exaggerated. The recently retired chairman of the US Federal Reserve, Alan Greenspan, has pointed to a corporate culture blighted by "infectious greed" as the cause of the breakdown in confidence among investors. The prosaic virtues of integrity and good conduct – so long derided – are now slowly, very slowly, finding their way back into the economics of proper governance.

The collapse of the largest corporate companies in the world in recent times, coupled with the recent compelled disclosure of untrue accounts by managers around the world, compels us to look more closely at the foundations of the existing framework of corporate governance. The foundations are shaky and do require some major architectural repairs. That is why a Code of Ethics helps.

"My own experience is that ethical codes are good for those corporate managers who have consciences – for those who have none, they simply have no effect; for them there is only one remedy: instilling the Fear of God, which translated on earth is the mortal Fear of the Law – that is, the letter and the spirit of the law.

"But in the end it is good to be committed to something which is the overarching object of the WZCC Code of Ethics: the Code guarantees mutual watchfulness for observance of standards: a breach would always prompt the taunt: 'He is not behaving like a true Zarathushti!'"

The WZCC Code of Ethics, drafted by Yazdi Tantra (WZCC-India) with input from WZCC president Rohinton Rivetna and international directors, can be viewed at the website, www.wzcc.net. In the preamble it states: "A Code of Ethics cannot guarantee ethical behavior or resolve disputes. Rather it merely sets forth standards to which WZCC members aspire and against which their actions can be judged ... Ethical behavior should result from a personal commitment to engage in ethical practice and an attempt to act always in a manner that assures integrity. All members of WZCC should pledge to maintain their own competence by continually evaluating their membership, by conducting themselves in accord with the ethical standards expressed in this Code, and by remembering that their ultimate goal is to contribute positively to the growth of Zarathushti Business and Commerce." ■

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Foodstuff export company in Yazd

Zarrin Sanat Esatis Ltd. is a foodstuff and trading and exporting company in Yazd (Iran). We would like to do business with Zarathushti businesses or Import-Export companies. Our products includes various fruit drinks (e.g. 200 cc is 10 cents each), tomato paste, canned foods, pickles, jams, pomegranate paste and more. If you are interested in working with us, or can introduce us to importers in your area, please contact **Shapoor Khosravi** at chitran.co@gmail.com.

Export company looking for international affiliates

I am affiliated with a very successful web-based export company (www.badlani.com/bags) which offers custom-printed bags – beach bags, shoe bags, duffels, laundry bags, aprons, chef's coats – to trade shows, hotels and resorts; wine and gift bags; tourist items, etc.



I would like to establish affiliate relationships internationally and would love to do business with a Parsi-Irani Zarathushti. Any contacts will be appreciated. Contact **Porus Karanjawalla** at porusk@indiainfo.com.

Valentine's day gifts on the web

Daleara and Sheriar Hirji-kaka of Canada have put together a website offering Valentine's Day gifts. Their vast range of gift ideas includes romantic candles and tea light holders, lovingly hand-painted porcelain plates and figurines, exquisitely crafted porcelain roses, trinket boxes, coasters and a selection of gift baskets. Visit: www.urmyvalentine.com



Engineer turned gourmet chef



'Le Chef' Jamshed Bhathena

After retiring from Thermax's Chemical Division in the USA in 1997, Jamshed Bhathena (the same who immigrated to USA in 1966 and then to Toronto in the 1970s and set up a boiler manufacturing business with Noshir Mirza) [see *FJ*, Fall 2005, p. 141] turned his attention to fulfilling his love of cooking. He graduated from the famous Culinary School of Schoolcraft College in Livonia, Michigan, learning the fine art of American and European cuisine – baking, charcuterie (sausages, terrines ...), oenology (fine wines) and more.

Bhathena now caters parties, teaches cooking classes, and offers personal chef services, cooking meals – American, French, German, Italian, and an occasional dhansakh – in the customer's home. Contact jamshed@comcast.net, tel: 248-646 5305, www.yourpersonal-chef.com.

Asian Wall Street Journal visits Jimmy Boy

In an article "Bustling Bombay's Hidden Treasures" [*Asian Wall Street Journal*, March 14, 2003] Stan Sesser writes about the Parsi restaurant Jimmy Boy:

"...Jimmy Boy is a chance to try the very tasty and distinctive cuisine of

the Parsis, who are known for their love of food ... Just get the wedding feast (*Lagan nu Bhonu*) which costs \$7.60, and you're in business. The word feast describes it accurately. The dishes are spooned onto the banana leaf that serves as a plate. The food never stops coming ... it was excellent, but we were so full that we had to wave away the last dish untouched, which is something I can't remember ever doing before. My favorite dish of the whole feast was the pomfret (*patra ni machhi*), encased in a puree of coriander and mint and steamed in a banana leaf."

Jimmy Boy (at Horniman Circle, Fort, Mumbai, tel: 91-22 2270 0880) also offers *saas ni machhi*, *jerdaloo sali boti*, *lagan nu stew*, *kid mutton and chicken pullav dar*, with all the trimmings: *sarya*, *lagan nu achar*, *lagan nu custard* and *rotli*.



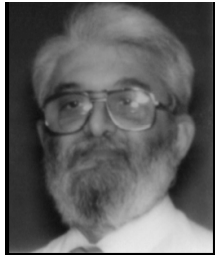
A coastal home in Mira Bay, Florida

Florida living is 'baag e behesht'

"Rustom and I have finally made the move from Maryland to Florida – to Sun City Center in the South Shore area of Tampa Bay," writes Yasmin Kevala. "The best compliment was paid by Rustom's mother who said, 'This place feels like *baag e behesht*.'" The Kevala's have also bought two investment properties to rent out.

Yasmin, who is with Keller Williams Realty writes, "I am excited about the prospects for Real Estate in Florida," and would love to help any Zarathushtis interested in retiring or investing there. Contact 813-634 0933, yasmink@kw.com.

A tale of caution: dreams stolen



Projection Systems Inc.

Vancouver businessman **Paterasp Nirumvala** of **Delta4 Projection Systems, Inc.** sells high-end audio-visual equipment – multimedia projectors and screens, home cinemas and sports entertainment systems. Their tale of caution related by wife Pervin appeared in the local paper [*Burnaby Now*, January 5, 2005]:

“Like scores of immigrants before us, my family immigrated to Canada and settled in BC over 11 years ago. With our hearts brimming with hope and our minds elated with enthusiasm, we started a family business in Burnaby. We brought in all our hard-earned savings and spent years day in and day out, and made it a success.

“Within a year of arriving here our expectations were untarnished. After all, what could possibly go wrong in a country as beautiful and as akin to paradise as Canada.

“What we overlooked was the unfortunate fact that the place was home to some of the finest, most cunning and ruthless crooks in the Western world. In the past six years, our business has been burglarized repeatedly, leaving us both emotionally and financially drained.

“To future immigrants who approach us for advice, I now narrate our tale of caution. I may have lost a lot, but when I think of the disasters that have hit us recently – like the tsunami – I realize how much I still have to be grateful for.”

Contact Delta4 Projection Systems, Inc. in Burnaby, BC, at 604-294 9442, www.delta4projectionsystems.com. ■

An Old Italian Story ...

“I came to America because I heard that the streets were paved with gold. When I got here, I found out three things: first, the streets were not paved with gold; second, many were not paved at all; and third, I was expected to pave them.”

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P R O F I L E S

Doctor with Heart and Soul



PHOTO: INDIA JOURNAL

Dr. Dhun Farrokh Noria, MD, FRCP (C) is an achiever and an excellent role model in today's time because she believes in giving back to the community.

“It is the generosity and policies of Canada,” she says, “that have helped immigrants settle in this beautiful country.

Dr. Noria is gifted with a well honed business

sense. She is chief of Laboratory Medicine at The Scarborough Hospital and has been assistant professor at the University of Toronto, teaching medical students for over 25 years.

A leader in health planning and community services, she has established and successfully operates several medical businesses: the Eglington Medical Laboratory, Scarborough North Pulmonary Function Services, Scarborough North Andrology Lab, Scarborough North Sleep Disorders Clinic and the Scarborough North Medical Arts Building.

To get where she is today, Dr. Noria had to work hard at her academics. Her title today reads: MD, FRCP (C). It started back in 1967 with her MBBS from Osmania University in Hyderabad, followed by ECFMG in Colombo, Ceylon, then LMCC, FRCP and finally HCOM, or Health Care Organization Management, all in Toronto.

An avid volunteer in many organizations, she is currently chair of the Building Capital Campaign for the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario, with a mandate to raise \$2.2 million [see ad on back inside cover] for a new building at the site of the present darbe mehr in Toronto.

Dhun and her husband Farrokh, founder and owner of Normak Fashions India and Canada, which makes fashion jewelry in Hyderabad, have personally donated over \$250,000 towards this project. As she says, “We like to put our money before we ask others.” Their daughter Sabrina has a PhD and is now in medical school in Toronto, and son Zubin is a businessman and president of Hydra Exports.

In 2004, Dr. Noria was recognized as the 2004 Business Woman of the Year [see *FJ Winter 2004*] by the Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce; and in 2006, received the Hind Rattan Award for outstanding contributions as an NRI in Canada. [Partly excerpted from *India Journal, Canada*, September 2003]

Bias may lie hidden in us all *by Zahra Sethna*

When asked if we have biases against people because of age, weight or race, most of us would quickly respond, “of course not.” But a new test of implicit attitudes might prove us all wrong.

“Our minds contain knowledge of which we are unaware,” says Dr. Mahzarin Banaji, a psychology professor who designed the test. Born in India, Banaji has a BA from Nizam College and an MS from Osmania University, both in Hyderabad. She received her PhD from Ohio State University in 1986 and taught at Yale University until 2001. In 2002 she moved to Harvard University where she is Professor of Social Ethics in the Psychology department.

She and her colleagues have explored the topic of implicit social cognition by conducting research to demonstrate that our minds contain knowledge about social groups and our attitudes toward them whether we like it or not. “Our thoughts, words, and deeds are often influenced by factors outside conscious awareness and even conscious control,” she says. Such research is important, because these processes are in operation in ordinary ways every day during the course of our lives.

As Zarathushtis, we hope that our conscious values and aspirations will lead us toward good thoughts, good words and good deeds. “Yet,” Banaji says, “as we have discovered, there are startling ways in which the hidden parts of our minds may not go along with this intention to be fair and to treat people based on the con-



Banaji, a native of India, arrived at this work through the study of memory 20 years ago, as a PhD student at Ohio State University. [PHOTO BY ROSE LINCOLN, WWW.HNO.HARVARD.EDU/GAZETTE]

tent of their character. Instead we automatically seem to take into account features of the social group to which a person belongs – their religion, class, gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and perhaps even features such as height, accent and attractiveness – in making assessments of them.” Banaji says she doesn’t feel her Zarathushti background has had any direct bearing on her work. “It perhaps should have,” she says. “My friend Stanley Insler, who is a scholar of Indian and Zarathushti religious texts and languages, once told me that Zarathushtra was the first social psychologist because of the similarity in his conception of human nature and parts of my science. But whatever influence there may exist in my work is from the ethnic not religious experience.”

Growing up as a minority in southern India gave her a sense of what it means to be outside the mainstream of a culture and “the points of view that are present from such locations.” Banaji also credits her Zarathushti parents as her greatest influences – “my father, through his love of the printed page; my mother, through her unabashed outrage at injustice.”

To find out more about your own implicit attitudes or biases visit <http://implicit.harvard.edu/> or www.tolerance.org and take a variety of online tests yourself. If indeed you find biases you did not know you had, Banaji advises there are two ways to cope: (1) focus on yourself and train your mind to expect and correct for bias and (2) create environments in which prejudice and stereotypes are likely to be muted.

“Insofar as explicit attitudes are within our conscious control and can influence implicit attitudes, indeed,” she says, “the Zarathushti triumvirate of practicing good thoughts, good words, and good deeds can save us from ourselves.” ■

Zahra Sethna is a freelance journalist with experience in print, televi-



sion and online media. Her writing has appeared in magazines such as *Picture* and the *UN Chronicle*. She lives in New York with her husband, Stephen.

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Business booms in India

● **Microsoft invests in India.** Chairman Bill Gates said Microsoft Corporation plans to invest \$1.7 billion in India over four years. Half the investment will be used to beef up its research center, its global software delivery unit and expanding to 33 cities with 700 retail outlets.

● **IBM**, which first set up research labs in India in the 1990s announced that it is opening a software and services lab in Bangalore. "This is part of an incredible tectonic shift that is occurring," says the dean of engineering at Berkeley, CA. [*New York Times, February 16, 2006*]

● Chip maker **Intel Corporation** plans to pour \$1.1 billion into its Indian operations. Communications equipment maker **Cisco Systems Inc.** plans to invest \$1.1 billion and triple its staff numbers in India. U.S. bank **J.P. Morgan Chase & Co.** hopes to hire 4,500 graduates in India over the next two years.

● **Taj Group buys Manhattan hotel.** The Taj Group is buying *The Pierre*, a luxury hotel in mid-town Manhattan, for an estimated \$50 million. Two years ago, the Taj Group nearly acquired the Inter-Continental Hotel near Central Park, but was outbid by Donald Trump.

● **The Times of India at the top.** With more than 2.4 million copies sold every day, The Times of India has been certified by the Audit Bureau of Circulations as having become the world's largest selling English broadsheet newspaper – ahead of giants like USA Today and Wall Street Journal, Times London and The Guardian. [*Times News Network, June 26, 2005*].

● **Tata, Tetley and tea.** In October 2005 the Tata group announced it was buying the US tea brand Good Earth through its subsidiary, Tetley US Holdings. [*www.guardian.co.uk*].

● **Wadia Group launches Go Air.** The Wadia Group-promoted low cost carrier *Go Air*, was launched in India in October 2005. In a promotional move, Go Air managing director Jeh Wadia said 10,000 tickets will be offered free every month. [*Times News Network, October 18, 2005*].

Dell, Inc. the world's largest computer maker, plans to set up a fourth call center in India (at Gurgaon, Delhi) and increase its workforce from 10,000 to 15,000.

The Tata Group thrives in brutal global industries without losing its old-school values. The conglomerate expects revenues of \$24 billion in 2005, driven by cars, steel and IT consulting. "Tata's profit margins rival any multinational's" says CEO Ratan Tata, proving a gentle giant can make it in global competition. [*Newsweek July 4, 2005*].■

FINANCIAL CORNER

Financial Progress Report

"Thanks for your generous outpouring of support for all the special appeals"



As the past year 2005 came to a close, there was a flurry of activity in regard to donations. The year's end is a wonderful time to take advantage of the year-end tax benefits of charitable donations. It is especially beneficial for donating appreciated securities. If you would like more information about transferring appreciated securities to the FEZANA funds, kindly contact me at JerryKheradi@aol.com.

Our endowment funds have been enriched with the help of further donations from the *Cummings family* for the *Damkevala Endowment Fund*; and a new endowment fund is being established by *Dr. and Mrs. Behram and Siloo Kapadia* of Pennsylvania. I will elaborate on all these generous donations in the Spring issue.

Thank you for supporting all the FEZANA funds throughout the year and for the generous outpouring of support for all the special appeals and disasters of the past year. May Ahura Mazda bless you and your family with good health and happiness.

Jerry Kheradi, MD, FACG

Chairperson, Funds and Finance Committee.

Committee: Rashid Mehini (treasurer), Rustom Kevala, PhD, Celeste Kheradi.

Please mail all donations to:

Rashid Mehini, Treasurer, FEZANA
583 Beverly Place, San Marcos, CA 92078.

FINANCIAL CORNER

Thousand Points of Light	2001-4	2005	Total		2001-4	2005	Total
Anonymous, FL	5		5	Niranjan Choksi, IL	W 2		2
Anonymous, IL	J 5	J 10	15	Vijay Choksi, IL	W 2		2
Anonymous, NY	G 1		1	Coating Engineers, TX	S(n) 2		2
Anonymous	R 1		1	Cyra Contractor, PA	W 2	D 1	3
A Wellwisher, MI	1		1	Laila Contractor, PA	W 2	D 1	3
Ansheel, Inc.	W 1		1	Dr Farhad & Hutoxi Contractor(g)(h)	W 41	D 3	44
Dr Babak Abadi, PA	W 2		2	Dinshaw R. Contractor, AZ		W 1	1
Jamshed Antia, IL	W 1		1	Dr. & Mrs. Farokh Contractor, LA C,R,W	12	G 1	13
Noshir & Kashmira Antia	C 1		1	Farobag Cooper, IL	W 1		1
Shiraz Antia, CT	C 2		2	Cowas A. Cooper and Ruby, PA	G 1	(f) 1	2
Parviz & Simin Ardeshirpour, NC	S 2		2	Darcy B. Cooper, IN		S 1	1
Jim Arjani, CA	C 1		1	Katy & Farrokh Cooper, CA	W 3		3
Oufreez Argenta, MN		S 1	1	Phil F. Cooper, CA	GW 2	S 10	12
Mr. & Mrs. Aspi		G 1	1	Tommy and Nairika Cornett, GA	1		1
Dr. Cyrus F Austin, AZ	G,W 19		19	Shiavax Cowasji, ND		W 1	1
Porus Austin and Khar, CA	W 4	W 5	9	Porus and Zerin Dadabhoy, IL	W 1		1
Gulnar Balsara, PA	C 1		1	Alayar & Giti Dabestani, WA		W (p) 60	60
Zubin & Silvia Balsara, AR	G 1		1	Tammy & Behram Dalal, NC	G 3		3
Edul & Tehnaz Bamji, NJ	W 1		1	Keki Dalal	C 1		1
Beaudette family, RI	(l) 5		5	Phiroze H. Dalal, CA	C 5		5
Dolly & Pesi Bavadam	C,W 2		2	Sam Dalal, MN		G 1	1
Behram Baxter, CA		G 1	1	Dr Ardeshir & Parvin Damania, CA	2		2
Thritee, Soozan & Trista Baxter, NY	(e) 1		1	R. F. Damania, CA		G 1	1
Beach Cigar Group, FL	C,W 90	C,G,W 228	318	Boman & Bachi Damkevala, IL	W 1		1
Best Western Crystal Palace Inn, CA	W 5		5	Diana Damkevala, CA	1		1
Yasmin Bhajiwalla, IL	W 1		1	Maneck Daroowalla, NY	G 2		2
Gopal Bhalala, IL	W 1		1	Jehanbux & Nancy Daroowala, FL		D 1	1
Zazu & Tinaaz Bhandara, CA	G 2		2	Niloufer & Phiroze Darukhanavala	W 2		2
Cyrus Bharucha, IL	W 1		1	Adil Daruwala, CA	G 2		2
Aspy J. Bharucha, OH		G 1	1	Khushroo Daruwalla	G 1		1
Firdaus & Jasmin Bhathena, MA	1		1	Ron & Farida Daruwala, IN	W 1		1
Katy & Noshir Bhathena, IL	W 2		2	Noshir & Katy Daruwalla, IL	W 2		2
Rustom & Sherroo Bhathena, OH	1		1	Dolly Dastoor, QE	S 1		1
Rustom Bhopti, NJ		C 1	1	Maneck Dastoor	G 1		1
Bachi Bilimoria, IL	W 1		1	Shirin Nariman Dastoor's family		O 50	50
Farrokh Billimoria, IL	W 1		1	Aspy & Lily Dastur, PA	W 2		2
Yaz & Firoza Billimoria, IL	W 2		2	Farrokh N Dastur, CA	1		1
Meena S. Birdie, FL	G 1		1	Meher N. Dastur, CA	2		2
Mezdie R. Birdie, FL	G 2		2	Khurshed Jehangir Dastur, PA	(g) 1	W 1	2
Jal Birdy, CA	C 1	D 1	2	Nari & Dinoo Dastur, CT	1	S,W 6	7
Elizabeth F. Boardman, CA		G 1	1	Er. Soli & JoAnn Dastur, FL	J,R 6		6
Kobad & Nancy Bugwadia, CA	C 1		1	Adi & Parvin Davar, VA	S,W 2		2
Cyrus Bulsara, TX	W 2		2	Usheen Davar, NJ	W 2		2
Homi & Ellen Byramji, NJ	1		1	Edul & Nilufer Daver, NJ	G,W 5	G, D 12	17
Kershaw & Bakhtawar Byramji	C 3		3	Homi & Nargish Davier, TX	W 2		2
Farhad & Shernaz Cama, PA	W 2	D 1	3	Farrokh & Goolestan Deboo, CT	R,W 7	D 2	9
Dr. Lovji D. Cama, NJ	7		7	Jimmy & Freny Deboo family, MI	1		1
Shahrookh Cambata, IL	W 50		50	Dectron	G 3		3
Kamal E. Campbell, GA	C,W 1		1	Rohinton K. Deputy, PA		G 5	5
Dr. & Mrs. Nadir Camay, CA	G 2		2	Afsaneh Dehghanian	W 1		1
Sohrab D. Charna	C 1		1	Suresh Desai, IL	W 1		1
Homiyar Choksi, VA	1		1	Jimmy & Shahdokht Dholoo, MD	(f) 5	J 3	8
				Faroukh & Freya Dhunjisha, IL	W 2		2
				Ross Dinyari	G 1		1
				Mr. & Mrs. Dinyarian, TX		RC 2	2
				Geeta Dhutia, IL	W 3		3
				Yezdi N Dordi, CA	5		5

"1000 points of Light" donors are shown above. Each \$100 counts as 1 Point of Light. Help us reach our goal of 5000 points. Donations received from October 7 through November 30, 2005 are shown in bold.

FINANCIAL CORNER

Thousand Points of Light [Contd]

	2001-4	2005	Total
Aloo Driver, MA		G 1	1
Dr. K. Dua, WI	W 4		4
Jimmy and Mary Dubash, VA	G,W 4		4
Jamshid & Parastu Dubash, MA	C 2		2
Mina Dubash, IN	G 1		1
J. H. Dudha, TX	C 1		1
Noshir & Kashmira Dutia, NJ	C 1	S 1	2
Manek R. Dustoor, MI	2	G 1	3
A.D. & G.A. Dutia, AL	G 4		4
Dara & Arnavaz Elavia	W 2		2
Tony & Swati Elavia, MA	1		1
Daulat P. Engineer, IL		W,D 2	2
Freddy Engineer, CA	1		1
Rumi Engineer, CO	C,S,W 3		3
Shirin Engineer, MD		W,G 11	11
Beverly Engineer, IL	W 10		10
Rustom & Yasmin Engineer, TX	W 1		1
Adil Feroz, GA	1		1
Four Diamonds Enterprises, NV	W 5		5
Sami R. Framjee	W 10		10
Rusi D Gandhi, NJ	1		1
Golmeher B. Gandhi	(j) 2		2
Cecilia & Sorab Gandhi, CA	5	W 3	8
Hanoz & Shahzdeen Gandhi, NJ	C,W 9		9
Navroz Gandhi, MD	C,W 10	C,G,R,W 10	20
Rusi Gandhi, NJ	W 2	W 1	3
Eugene Gauger, MI	1		1
Jamshed & Yasmin Ghadiali, NJ	W 3		3
Rashna Ghadiali, IL	1		1
Burjor & Behroze Ghandhi, MI	W 2		2
Mr. & Mrs. Sorab K. Ghadiali	3		3
Rustam Guiv Foundation, KS		S 20	20
Soonu & Jal Godiwalla, TX	1		1
Behli H. Hansotia, VA	C 1		1
Noshir and Hooty Hansotia, MO	C, (f) 2	S 1	3
Dinyar & Meher Hodiwalla, NJ		D 2	2
IHOP Bonitat, FL		S 1	1
Piloo E. Ilavia, TX	C 1		1
International Access, WA	G 77		77
Behram K & Farieda Irani, TX	C,R,W 22		22
Hormuz & Shahdookht Irani, GA	G 14		14
Mervan and Katayoun Irani, MD	1		1
Noshir Irani		G 1	1
Shapur K. Irani, IN	C 1	G 1	2
Minoo S. Italia	G 1		1
Rohinton Boman Irani, NY	G 1		1
Rustam H. Irani, MA	1		1
Rustom and Sarvar Irani, FL	G 1		1
Irani Family Foundation	C,G,R,S,W 10		10
Minoo & Ruby Italia, TX	G 1	G 1	2
Jim & Homai Jagus, PA	5		5
Daryoush & Mahin Jahanian, KS	G 3		3
Iraj Jahanian, MO	G 5		5
Khurshid & J.J. Jamadar, TX	2		2
Rumi & Kashmira Jamsetjee, IL	1		1
Cyrus D. Jilla, VA	G 1	W 1	2
Noshir & Gool Jesung, CA		D 1	1

	2001-4	2005	Total
Dinshaw & Goolcher Joshi, MD	C 4		4
Joshi and Verahrami families		O 50	50
Khorshed & Dr Firoze Jungalwala, MA	(d)1		1
K and K Pharmacy, IL	W 1		1
Afried Farokh Kamdin, NY	W 2		2
Jamshed & Rita Kapadia, MA	R,W 7		7
Jamshid R. Kapadia		(q) 20	20
Homi & Shireen Kapadia, PA	5		5
Hoshang & Bonnie Karani, IL	W 4		4
Erach & Lily Karanjawala, CA	W 1		1
Banoo Karanjia		S,W 2	2
Dr Natasha Karanjia, PA	C,R 3		3
Minoo & Behroze Karanjia, PA	W 1	D 1	2
Aspandiar G. Katki	C 2		2
Kia Kaviani, FL		(f) 1	1
Roya Kaviani, NJ	C 1		1
Dolly Kerawalla, CA	1		1
Mr & Mrs Khodamorad.S. Kermani, NY	(a)5	(a) 2	7
Dr Rustom & Yasmin Kevala, MD	(f)(k)J,W 5		5
Dilshad P. Khambatta, MA		S 10	10
Purvez & Aban Khambatta, OH	G 1		1
Sunita Khambatta, WI	W 2		2
Delara Kheradi, NY	(f) 6		6
Celeste Kheradi, RI	(f) (k) 28		28
Dr Jerry Kheradi, RI	(f) W 83	(f) W D 190	273
Sohrab & Teresa Kheradi, NY	(f) 5	(f) 5	10
Kershaw & Nazneen Khumbatta, TX	S 11		11
Todd & Jennifer Kilsey, RI		(f) 3	3
Jasmin & Maneck Kotwal, NJ	2		2
Kaizad Kotwal, OH	G 1		1
Zenobia & Shahrookh Lala, MI	C 2		2
Mathew & Delara Lungen, NY	(f) 1	(f) 1	2
Jyoti Madhavan, IL	W 2		2
Kaizad & Jinobya Machhi, WI	C 3	C 2	5
Borzoo Kushesh & Mahindokht	(b) 1		1
Malhotra, Inc. IL	W 1		1
Dolly Malva, CA	G 2	G 1	3
Pervin Marawala, CA		S 1	1
Firdous Marfatia, IL	W 1		1
P. Master		G 1	1
Dr. Firdausi & Sherenaz Mazda, IL	W 2		2
Mazdayesnie Connection, CA		D 1	1
Mehran & Dr. Mitra Mazdyasni, CA	1		1
Noshir & Yasmin Medhora, TX	2		2
Farahnaz Mehdiabadi, TX	C 2		2
Rashid & Afsaneh Mehin, CA		(f) 1	1
Mehraban & Mahbanoo Mehr	G 1		1
Dhun Mehta, PA		S 1	1
Hosi & Kim Mehta, IL	W 17		17
Firdosh & Rashna Mehta, TX	W 1	D 1	2
Sherazade Mehta, TX	(m) 1	D 1	2
Kayomارش & Nergish Mehta, IL	W 1		1
Kersi & Kamal Mehta, OH	J 1		1
Merwan and Rukshana Mehta, MO	1		1
Shahrokh & Gool Mehta, NY	G 3	G 1	4
Hoshi & Nawaz Merchant, NJ	2		2
Ardaviraf & Houtoxi Minocherhomjee	7		7

FINANCIAL CORNER

Thousand Points of Light [Contd] 2001-4 2005 Total

Ardeshir Mistry, TX	S 5	S 10 15
Kashmira Mistry, TX		D 1 1
Pesi Mistry, NY	1	1
Tehmtan & Aloo Mistry, MO	1	1
Jehangir and Olive Mobed, IL	1	1
Manou Mobedshahi, CA	J(i) 25	J 2 27
Sorab K. Modi, DC		(m) 1 1
Rumy Mohta, VA	1	1
Mahrukh & Firoze Motafram, WI	W 2	2
Edul D. Nakra, MA	S 1	1
Nesh Inc.	1	1
Pheroze & Renate Nagarwalla, IL	W 2	2
Minoo Netervala, CA	2	2
Percy K Nikorawalla, NJ	1	1
Jamshed & Farzana Palsetia, MA	1	1
Farhad & Firoza Panthaki, MA	11	11
Nekzad Parabia, WI	W 1	1
Sam & Perin Parabia, CA	W 10	10
Patel Builders, Inc. IL	W 1	1
Avan Patel, NY		C 1 1
Baji & Perviz Patel, IL	W 1	1
Framroze Patel, NJ		(f) 1 1
Jyoti & Navin Patel, IL	W 1	1
Drs. Khushru & Roda Patel, IL	W 3	3
Homi Patel, IL	G 2	2
Vimesh Patel, IL	G 3	3
Mr & Mrs Randolph Paulling, GA	(d) 1	1
Yasmin & Shapur Pavri, TX	S,W 18	S 10 28
Dr Parvez Pohowalla, OR	1	1
Rostam Pooladi-Darvish, AB		W 8 8
Minoo & Zarin Press, IL	W 2	2
Faruk B. Presswalla, NJ		C 5 5
Benaifer Printer		W 1 1
Godej & Piloo Randeria, TX	G,R 2	2
Dr. Murli & Mani Rao, IL	W 5	5
Mitra & Rashnavad Rashidi, ONT		(f) 2 2
Dr. Minocher Reporter, OR	R 2	2
Dara & Dinsoo Rivetna, IL	W 5	5
Jamshed & Tamara Rivetna, TX	1	1
Rohinton & Roshan Rivetna, IL	J,W 7	D 2 9
Dinaz & Dan Rogers, OR	J 6	J 2 8
Villoo & Solee Rudina, TX	1	1
Eric & Delnaz Rustomji, IL	W 3	3
Purvez & Aban Rustomji, TX	(d) 2	S (n) 4 6
Neville Sarkari, WY	1	1
Nargesh & Aspi Sethna, TX	1	1
Prochy Sethna, CA	W 20	S 6 26
Sonal Shah, IL	W 2	2
Houshmand Sharyari, IL	W 1	1
Behram Shroff, VA	C,W 4	4
Dr Burjis & Hovi Shroff, FL	C,G 7	7
Dr Nariman & Parrin Shroff, FL	2	2
Neeve & Kurush Shroff, SC	W 5	5
Zubeen Shroff, NY	1	1
Fali Sidhwa, OR	C 1	1
Bapsi Sidhwa, TX	W 1	1
Feroze & Anahita Sidhwa, TX	C,S,W 20	S 10 30

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	S 2 3
Arnavaaz Sukhia, NJ	G 1	1
Cyrus Subawalla, IL	C 2	2
Dr. Hoshedar & Anahita Tamboli, FL	W 5	W 150 155
Sanobar & Aderbad Tamboli, TX		C,R,W 25 25
Karrus Tarapore	G 1	1
Bella Tata, BC	1	1
Khurshed M Tengra, ID	G 2	2
Mahnaz K. Tengra, ID	C,G 2	S 1 3
Mahrukh Neville Tikkoo, CT		W 1 1
S. Toddywalla, FL		D 1 1
Sam & Lyla Toddywalla, FL		D 4 4
Jamshed R. Udvadia, MI	5	S 5 10
Perry Unwalla, FL	C,G,R,S 7	7
Rayomand J Unwalla, PA	G 2	2
Minoo & Shirin Vaghaiwalla, FL	(m) 1	1
Taera M. Vakil, FL	G 1	1
Cainaz Vakharia, VA	C,W 3	3
Dick & Sherroo Vazir, FL	2	2
Jer Vijan, AZ	1	1
Dr. M. Darius Vohman, GA	G 1	1
Gool & Dinyar Wadia, CT	W 4	D 20 24
Ken & Dinaz Weber, IL	W 5	5
Richard & Zarine Weil, IL		S 1 1
Gene Winderlich		S 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	G,R,(c) 336	336
Mehraban Zartoshty, B.C	25	25
North American Mobeds Council	R 10	10
World Z Chamber of Commerce		C 1 1
Z Assoc of Alberta, Canada	3	3
Z Assoc of Greater Boston Area, MA	W 1	1
Z. Society of British Columbia, BC	W 2	2
Atlanta Z Anjuman, GA	1	1
Z Assoc of N Calif, CA	C,G,W 7	C S D 47 54
Z Assoc of Chicago, IL	W 2	C 8 10
Z Association of Florida, FL	G 2	2
Z Association of Greater New York		C 10 10
Z Association of Pennsylvania, PA	W 2	D 5 7
Z Association of North Texas	2	2
Zoroastrian Community	G 1	1

Total Points 1522 1118 2640

[Please see next page for the key]

Don't deprive yourself of the joy of giving. - Michael Greenberg

Funds: C=Critical Assistance, D=Disaster Relief, G=General, J=Journal, R=Religious Ed.; S=Scholarship, W=Welfare

- (r) In memory of Jamshed (Jim) Jagus ■

FEZANA gratefully acknowledges the following donations for specific causes, received from October 7 - November 30, 2005. This does not include donations acknowledged under the “1000 Points of Light” program [*previous pages*]. Generally, donations under \$50 are not listed.

Zenia Ayrton, PA (\$50); Nancy Bacon, FL (\$50); Robert Bsea (\$50); Bielau, Tierney, Coon & Co. PA (\$100); Farhad Contractor, PA (\$50); Jeffrey & Joanne Deluca, PA (\$100); Gilbert & Gladys Fitzpatrick, PA (\$25); Steven & Donna Johnson, PA (\$25); Behram Kapadia, PA (\$100); Glen Thomas & Kimberlynn Kleasen, NJ (\$100); Hubert & Audrey Kleasen, OH (\$35); Janet Landefeld, PA (\$25); William & Alice Malaxos, FL (\$75); Dr. Susan & Jerrel Mitchell, FL (\$100); W. Rupert Mock, Jr. FL (\$25); Jim & Navaz Modi, IL (\$201); Elyse & Rohinton Morris, PA (\$50); Rohinton & Roshan Rivetna, IL (\$101); H. J. and Virginia Tata, PA (\$100); ■



thousand by action. - Dinkerd 6.e15

If you are among the many people who would like to make a sizeable contribution to the charity of your choice, there are ways to do so at a reasonable cost. Through life insurance, one can leverage a smaller contribution into a much larger one.

- Some families choose to *spread out their gifts* over many years by donating some funds now, donating insurance on their own lives and also donating insurance on their children's lives.

Arnaz Maneckshana (arnaz.maneckshana@axa-advisors.com) offers securities through AXA Advisors, LLC, and annuity and insurance products through AXA Networks, LLC. AXA does not provide legal or tax advice.

An affair to remember – the cost of dying *by Jamshed Behram Gandhi*

Yes, with all other emotional costs entailed, the costs of dying and their financial impact are often never considered until it's too late. In my tax and financial planning practice, I come across situations where urgent attention is needed and the parties involved are either complacent, or believe in the 'tomorrow is another day' concept. Sometimes, tomorrow never comes and, for that, one needs to prepare. I have heard it all. "I am too young" goes one refrain. Another all time favorite is "Once I die it's not my problem anymore." Well, death has no age limits, and has never been entirely free of problems for the loved ones left behind.

Under-noted are some salient issues one needs to be aware of and plan for, to save time and costs which, due to neglect, can run up very rapidly. I address these from experience and, if one person's life is changed as an outcome of this writing, I will have achieved my goal of being a disseminator of critical information.

Wills, Living Trusts and more

Dying without these is a recipe for handing over your affairs to the State and leaving it in charge of a gatekeeper called *Probate* and, perhaps, the laws of intestacy. If one has the misfortune of dying without a will, it is the State, and not the decedent, that decides how the assets are distributed. I stress, and attempt to rectify the misconception, that not having large assets is a reason for not having the appropriate documents drawn up. Yes, these are documents that address estate tax issues, but they also address issues such as health care, guardianship and stewardship. I would rather have this entrusted to a loved one, or someone other than the State. Sometimes, not having these documents is a prelude to the law of unintended consequences, and history is a tough act to change or beat.

How is Title held? What is Title?

Mr. Client comes to me and I ask, "how is title held to this house?" Mr. client retorts, "Meaning?" or "I think it is joint or whatever." If assets are not appropriately titled you have a nightmare in the offing. Marriages, divorces, having kids, in laws, second marriages etc., all add to the dire need of proper title to one's assets.

Trustees need trust

One of the most difficult things in life is leaving your assets in the care of someone else within and/or outside the family unit. Assets such as the principal residence, your investments, your business interests etc, need careful thought in regards to issues of succession and continuity. You, however, have to choose someone who takes on this role and works in your best interest. Trust me (excuse the pun) this choice is not easy. Usually it needs

to be someone with financial savvy and wherewithal; furthermore, it can be a very thankless job but one needs to find someone who will take on the role after one's death. Often, making the choice is difficult in a family context, so the easiest choice would be to involve everyone; but how long would decisions take in that case? If you choose just one person in the family you then risk alienating the others. There are no easy solutions, just some food for thought.

Death is a tough thing to address, but addressed it has to be. Working with family members and explaining your needs and wishes after you depart is important. Often it is an invitation to acrimony, but neglect to address these issues while you are alive would have even more dire consequences later.

Financial plan

Financial planning is crucial during one's lifetime, but it takes on an even more important role after death. Planning for the inevitable and, death being one of those inevitabilities, needs a lot of thought. Some of the major considerations are *estate tax implications, post death liquidity, insurance collections, investment of assets, retirement plan and IRA distributions, income tax implications* to the beneficiaries and other such issues. The best laid plans of mice and men go awry, with accountants and attorneys rushing to address those situations retrospectively. Even they, at times, cannot change the ills of the past.

So, one may ask what a number cruncher by profession knows about the intensity and preparation for dying? But one couldn't be more wrong, at least in the financial context. We don't pretend to bring solace to the family as far as human spirituality goes at such times; however, we do serve the public in matters that are critical to the transition and financial well being of the members left behind. We lend a hand to the ones who, as I mentioned earlier, cynically lament "it's not my problem, since I will be dead and gone" but more so, we help the ones left behind and who need to carry on.

Killing one bird, and keeping the other alive, with one stone, is quite a task but someone has to do it. ■



Jamshed Behram Gandhi

(jbgandi@bgwbcpas.com) CPA, CFP, CVA, MS Tax, is a practicing CPA and Financial Planner and partner in Bertorelli Gandhi Won and Behti in downtown San Francisco. A native of Karachi, he has been practicing for over 30 years.

PLEASE GIVE FROM YOUR HEART

DONATIONS & APPEALS

Donations. Unless specified otherwise, please send all donations to: **Rashid Mehin, FEZANA Treasurer, 583 Beverly Place, San Marcos, California 92078, tel: (760) 891-0699, Email: rmehin@yahoo.com.** Make checks payable to "FEZANA," specifying the fund (General, Welfare, Critical Assistance, Religious Education, Academic Scholarship, Creative/Performing Arts Scholarship and FEZANA Journal). All charitable donations to FEZANA are tax deductible in the 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.**

APPEALS FOR AID

Below are some examples of the large number of appeals for aid received by FEZANA in the last quarter. Please give generously.

Its payback time, to the venerable Masina Hospital

Many Zarathushtis in the western diaspora may have enjoyed the facilities of the palatial **Masina Hospital** at Byculla. Today it is payback time – as the well-known hospital is short of funds and needs our support. The trustees have kept the dream of its founder, the revered Dr. Masina, alive by maintaining a 53-bed Parsi ward run solely on donations, where many needy Zarathushtis are treated with respect and good quality care, without charging a penny. This space is not enough, though, and many have to be turned away. Moreover, day by day, with costs rising, it is getting increasingly difficult for this venerable institution to continue these excellent services. The old orthopaedic operating theatre is also in need of an upgrade.

Concerned Zarathushti Dinyar Tarapore appeals to all Parsis and business owners to come forward to help maintain and expand these facilities, possibly by building additional floors, "This will require tremendous funds and effort, but nothing is impossible with commitment from generous Parsi philanthropists in India and abroad. Let's save this valuable community institution." Please send donations to the FEZANA Welfare Fund. [From appeal by Dinyar Tarapore, dinyartarapore@hotmail.com].



Five aged members of the Devgadwalla family of Mandvi Dist. Surat, earn their living farming and running a taxi. The Rathestars helped with urgent repairs needed on their old and dilapidated house [shown at left].

Young Rathestars reaches out to needy Zarathushtis



Young Rathestars (estd. 1942) reaches out to needy and impoverished Zarathushti families by way of educational, medical and financial aid, and distribution of grain and other household items. As part of the Gujarat Poverty Relief Project, volunteers visit the interior villages around Navsari, Nargol, Udvada and Sanjan and, since 2002, have 'adopted' over 50 rural Zarathushti families. Visit www.youngrathestars.org to see the progress made through generous donations from the US collected in 2004. Please send donations to the FEZANA Welfare Fund. [From appeal by Niloofar Desai, nellie_desai@yahoo.com].

Home for disadvantaged children in Nairobi

Zahra Sethna [see page 127] writes:

"While my parents lived in Nairobi, East Africa, my mother worked with a home for disadvantaged children – where some were homeless, and some so poor their parents couldn't look after them. Since returning to the States, she has continued to support the children with funds. This year they are in a particularly urgent situation. We would be most grateful for any donations from generous hearted Zarathushtis for these unfortunate children." To donate, please contact Zahra at z_sethna@hotmail.com.

Vision 20/20 by 2020

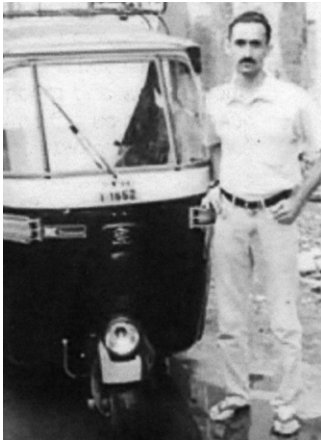
The goal of the **Sankara Foundation, USA**, is to build at least twenty Sankara Eye Hospitals all over India, to perform at least one million free eye surgeries per year, to help eradicate curable blindness in India. Chair Krishnamurthy writes: "Please become a founding member by donating \$1000, and have the name of your loved one on the Wall of Founders." To learn more about this noble cause, call 1-866-sankara or visit www.giftofvision.org. [Appeal forwarded by Edul Udvadia, Chicago]

Perin Fitter does humanitarian work among poor in Kenya

A remarkable humanitarian, Ms. Perin Fitter, former teacher, who now has a visual disability due to an accident,

is doing exemplary work with the poor in Kenya. Known as 'Mama Neem,' as she promotes the benefits of Neem in prevention and treatment of illnesses, Ms. Fitter, who speaks African languages, works tirelessly with the impoverished. She lives most humbly and is struggling financially. Zarathushtis who would like to support Ms. Fitter's work with a monetary donation, please write to her at P. O. Box 1268, Kisumu, Kenya, or contact her niece Dr. Sokwala at rubysokwala@yahoo.com.au. [Appeal forwarded by Farah Shroff, Vancouver, fms@ece.ubc.ca].

Baimai Surti Foundation helps the needy help themselves



Baimai Surti Foundation supplied funds for five rickshaws in 2005.

The Canada-based **Baimai Surti Foundation** assists the needy and dispossessed members of our Zarathushti community in India to get their life under control and become productive members of society. The Trust helps with: financing small business ventures, training and tools, to become self-supporting; financial support to children's education; food and medical assistance to the aged and disabled. Trustee Edul Kanga writes: "The pictures raised a lump in my throat to see the conditions under which some of our brethren survive – they need our helping hand." Checks payable to "Baimai Surti Foundation" may be mailed to Baimai Surti Foundation, 1511– 551 The West Mall, Etobicoke, ON. M9C 1G7, Canada. Email: surti@primus.ca.

Childline, Mumbai – Emergency telephone hotline for children



Social entrepreneur Jeroo Billimoria [left] launched **Childline**, India's first 24-hour emergency telephone hotline for street children. Childline provides follow-up services including police assistance and health care for thousands of children living on India's city streets.

During the past two years, Childline has serviced over 400,000 calls and provided direct assistance to 20,000 children in Mumbai. The project has spread to 20 cities nationally and Jeroo is working to establish Childline in 158 cities across India and Asia. The model is now being replicated in New York City, where Jeroo's career working with the homeless began.

Childline has partnered with the Indian government to train police, health care and transport workers to be proactive on behalf of children's issues. Contact jeroo@childhelplineinternational.org.



PHOTO COURTESY PARSIANA, JANUARY 21, 2006

At the inauguration of the Dolat and Hormusji Vandrewala Senior Citizens Centre in Navsari on December 15, from left, Bachi Tamboly, Rena and Behram Baxter and Dinshaw Tamboly.

The Baxters of California fund senior center in Navsari

When Behram Baxter of San Diego, California inquired if there was place at the Bai Maneckbai P. B. Jeejeebhoy Senior Citizens Centre in Navsari for his 93-year-old mother who resides in Canada, he was informed there was a waiting list. "Why wait?" he queried, "build a new center."

That was in 2003. By December 15, 2005, Baxter and his American wife Rena were in Navsari to inaugurate the three-storey, 15-room center named after his parents, Dolat and Hormusji Vandrewala, two buildings away from the first center. The Rs. 75 lakh (~\$160,000) project was funded by the Baxters, and executed by the WZO Trust Funds (managing trustee Dinshaw Tamboly). The Center was inaugurated with a jashan by 19 mobeds led by Vada Dasturji Saheb Meherji Rana of Navsari.

Baxter had migrated from Bombay to Toronto in 1967, at the age of 24, and landed a job with Westinghouse. But the entrepreneurial bug was strong in him, and he took the plunge into the real estate business. When he left Canada for USA 18 years later he owned 500 apartments. Baxter and his wife Rena now live in San Diego. His latest deal is a \$400 million joint venture to develop and sell condominiums. [Excerpted from Cover Story in Parsiana, January 21, 2006].



Toxy Cowasjee, center, with villagers in Gheri in the Mansehra district. One has to cross a bridge over the River Jhelum from Azad Kashmir to enter the North West Province of Pakistan, and then it is a trek by car over mountainous terrain, with the last mile on foot to come to Gheri. The whole village, made up of five hamlets in the Balakot area, was completely destroyed and reduced to rubble by the quake. Five were killed and the survivors left homeless, with nothing at all. The villagers welcomed Toxy, being the first outsider to visit Gheri since the partition of India-Pakistan, in 1947.

International Relief Effort for Earthquake Victims

With personal care and commitment, Toxy Cowasjee ensures that every penny from the outpouring of donations from around the world, is used to best avail to rehabilitate earthquake-stricken villages in Pakistan. PHOTOS COURTESY TOXY COWASJEE

Toxy Cowasjee (toxy39@attglobal.net) writes about the earthquake relief efforts in Pakistan under the banner of World Zoroastrian Organisation of which she is a Board Member and the representative in Pakistan.

“To date (February 3, 2006) I have received PRs. 7,804,718 (US\$130,078) which includes Rs. 3,935,868 from the Parris of Karachi and the balance from Zarathushtis and friends from Australia, Canada, Germany, Italy, Malaysia, Morocco, Oman, Switzerland, Turkey, UK and USA. This figure includes donations from Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia (Cdn \$3,000), Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (Cdn \$5,704), Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York (US \$ 1,973), Egan Jr. High school in Los Altos, CA (US \$ 993), and a private non-Zarathushti Trust from UK (£1000), FEZANA’s donation of US \$5,000 in January, which included \$500 donated by Zoroastrian Association of Houston (FEZANA had also sent an initial donation of \$5,000 in November via WZO-UK), donations received by WZO UK (£3,000 + \$550) and WZO UK (£2,000).

“ With your generous donations you have rehabilitated, as far as housing goes, a whole village, and more, for which my most humble gratitude. ”

- Toxy Cowasjee

Relief efforts. From the outpouring of donations received, the following items have been purchased and given to the people in the affected areas, through the Marie Adelaide Leprosy Centre (MALC) which was covering the Muzaffarabad area, and the Omar Ashgar Khan Development Foundation of Islamabad, which was covering the Mansehra district.

- 550 waterproof tents and heavy duty canvases, ranging from Rs. 1,800 to Rs. 6,500 each were forwarded to the affected towns and villages of North West Frontier Province – Muzaffarabad, Bagh, Ravalakot, Kokhmar near Balakot, Mansehra district and other areas.

- Two 20 foot insulated containers at Rs. 140,000 each, converted as outpatient's departments (OPDs), with a desk, shelves, bunk, toilet, shower and basin, were sent to Muzaffarabad and Ravalakot, where there was no shelter to treat the afflicted.

- 250 heavy acrylic shawls at Rs. 200 were distributed to TB patients and their families in Muzaffarabad.

- Five tons of corrugated iron sheets for Rs. 275,000, for roofing, were distributed in Muzaffarabad and Bagh.

- Ten wheelchairs at Rs. 3,900 each were delivered to Rotary International for three hospitals in Abbottabad.

- 100 tents at £68 (reduced in price from £225) were flown gratis by PIA from London to Islamabad for the highest areas of the Neelum Valley. The donation of \$5,000 from FEZANA in November paid for 39 tents, and the balance of 51 tents was paid by WZO (London).

- 300 activity items, in brilliant plastic folders, and packets of sweets and biscuits, were given to 300 children who were evacuated from the mountains, and brought to safety at the 'G-7' shelter outside Islamabad. The cartons were carried gratis by DHL. A negligible cost of Rs. 14,501, brought so many smiles!

- 200 children were given goody bags with balloons and balls, at the MALC shelter at Muzaffarabad, and 100 children were given activity folders at the village of Gheri. This donation was not from the funds received.

- Cathay Pacific Airways sent 300 blankets from Hong Kong. 404 fleece blankets were purchased from a factory at Rs. 260. All were distributed in Mansehra district.

- 75 winter shelters [photo next page] costing Rs. 15,000, were given for Gheri and Tarach. Two fir trees were given with each shelter for the villagers to plant.

- 75 wood-burning stoves (a simple rectangle with 2 top burners) which also serve as a heater, manufactured in Abbottabad for Rs. 500, were given to the people of Gheri.



From top, destruction at Gheri – all 75 homes in this village in Mansehra district were destroyed; tents set up at Gheri – as more permanent shelters are built, these will be used for their livestock; all the children in the mountaintop village of Ghanari had been gathered together for, on that day, the only bakery at Balakot had started functioning and had sent up fresh baked bread for them.



Winter shelters are being made by various NGOs now, initially designed by Ali Asghar Khan, an architect by profession, and a major contributor to the relief effort. Ali's carpenter and mason are showing the people by erecting one unit, and then the families themselves make the rest. It takes precisely two days to put one up.

They are a simple A form design using stones to form the initial wall of about 3 feet, wood for anchoring the metal sheets (both available on site), 12 corrugated metal sheets, wire netting to hold the insulation, either straw or mud, in place, bolts and screws with tools, all given to each family as a kit. The size is 14ft x 14ft a most comfortable area for a family.

- Two containers (Rs. 200,000 each) converted with all facilities for an OPD, equipped with a heater and a geyser, and manned by a doctor, were delivered to Garhi Habibullah to look after the medical needs of that area.
- 100 anoraks for Rs. 360 each have been given for the children of Hangrai Union Council which is at 7,600 ft.
- From FEZANA's second donation of \$5,000, 19 winter shelter kits (at Rs. 15,300 each) and 9 fuel efficient stoves, were given to families in the village of Darra near Balakot. All 34 homes in Darra were destroyed by the quake.

[Based on email reports from Toxy Cowasjee]

**The Zarathushti Cultural Center
of Delaware Valley, Inc. presents:**



Super Raffle

Fabulous prizes:

Mercedes Benz C280 4Matic	\$38,000
2 tickets to India or Europe	\$3,500
42-inch plasma / LCD TV	\$3,000
2 cruise tickets	\$1,500
Persian carpet	\$1,200
One \$500 gift certificate	\$500
Ten \$100 gift certificates	\$100

Raffle tickets are \$100 each

Only 999 tickets will be sold
Raffle drawing on October 28, 2006

Tickets may be purchased from:

Jehan Kasad (president, ZACUCE Board of Trustees)

● tel: 609-799-1954 ● email: jkasad@yahoo.com ●

or visit

www.zacuce.org

All proceeds will benefit ZACUCE, whose...

"Vision is to preserve Zarathushti heritage and faith for future generations through religious, cultural and educational activities. In order to foster these activities it is our mission to build the Zarathushti Cultural Center that will bring the community together in a common place, giving us a sense of belonging and help us leave a legacy for the future."



PHOTO: ALI ASHGAR KHAN

Toxy Cowasjee informs us that there are many, many more winter homes still required. Sadly, most of the schools were also destroyed in the earthquake-ravaged areas. The desire is to build a school which costs approximately Rs. 2.5 million. This is an urgent appeal to help your fellow humans, we owe these children a basic education. Please send your generous contributions to:

FEZANA DISASTER RELIEF FUND

Make your checks payable to "FEZANA," with a foot note "Disaster Relief" and mail to: Rashid Mehin, FEZANA Treasurer, 583 Beverly Place, San Marcos, CA 92078.

Scholarships available

A list of miscellaneous scholarships is given below:

- **FEZANA Scholarships, Mehraban & Morvord Kheradi Endowment Scholarship – FEZANA Scholar and Banoobai and Maneckshaw Kapadia Endowment Scholarship** 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: 630-654-8828, www.fezana.org.
- **Fali Chothia Charitable Trust** scholarships for students in NA universities. ferozafitch@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 & Creative Arts Scholarship** offered by FEZANA/ZYNA in music, drama, dance, literature, poetry, fine arts, sculpture and painting. Application form is on www.fezana.org. Anahita Sidhwa, afsidhwa@dcccd.edu.
- **Keyannejad-Kapadia Zoroastrian Scholarship Fund** (endowed by Homi Kapadia and Mahkrokh Keyannejad) for a member of Triangle Fraternity. www.Triangle.org/TEF. [See ad in this section].
- **Erach and Roshan Sadri Foundation** provides financial assistance for education and welfare, relieving poverty, alleviating homelessness, and assisting Zarathushtis. www.ersf.org.uk.
- **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. Email: SRF@iie.org.
- **Harvard's Pluralism Project** offers research grants. staff@pluralism.org, or www.pluralism.org/research/student_grant.php. For summer internships, visit www.pluralism.org/resources/calendar/summer_internships.php
- **National Science Foundation** offers grants for documenting endangered languages. Visit www.fedgrants.gov/Applicants/NSF/OIRM/HQ/04-605/Grant.html.
- Scholarships for **Commonwealth citizens**. www.csfponline.org/hostcountries/uk/

- **Gates Millenium Scholars Program** offers awards for science studies. Visit 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/>
- **Royal Society scholarships** in science. Visit www.royalsoc.ac.uk/funding/
- **Marshall scholarships** for Americans in UK. www.marshallscholarship.org.
- **Fulbright exchange programs**. Visit www.fulbrightexchanges.org/base/grant.asp.
- **UNESCO** 'Information for All,' an international information society initiative offers funding for information literacy projects. www.portal.unesco.org/ci/en/
- **Indicorps fellowships** for a one-year public service program in India. www.indicorps.org. Email: info@indicorps.org, or contact 2004 Indicorps scholar roshnikasad@yahoo.com.
- **Canadian Subsidy Directory** contains 3100 listings of government grants and loans, including foundations and associations. \$69.95. Call 450-224-9275.
- **Boren Scholarships and Graduate Fellowships**. Visit <http://nsep.aed.org>.
- **Jacob E. Javits Fellowships**. Undergrads or first year of graduate study. Includes social sciences, arts, humanities. www.ed.gov/programs/jacobjavits/index.html.
- **Gates Cambridge Scholarship**. All countries (except UK) eligible. www.gates.scholarships.cam.ac.uk.
- **Harry S. Truman Scholarship** Foundation. Graduate funding for career in government or public service. www.truman.gov.
- **Rotary Scholarships**, to citizens of all countries where there are Rotary Clubs. Rotary ambassadorial Scholarships are at: www.rotary.org/foundation/educational/amb_scho/rotarian/award/avail.html.
- **Goldwater Scholarships** for sophomores and juniors, for mathematics, natural science, engineering. www.act.org/goldwater.
- A list of **trusts/organizations in India**, which support postgraduate studies abroad is given in Parsiana, December 2001. Contact Parsiana@vsnl.net.
- Scholarships **mainly for students in India**. <http://education-support.nic.in/allscholarship.asp?allsch=Yes>.
- **National Institutes of Health (NIH)** undergraduate scholarships upto \$20,000, in biomedical, behavioral and social science health research. www.usgp.info.nih.gov.
- **Northrup Grumman** engineering scholarships of \$10,000 for graduating high school seniors pursuing engineering in MD, CT or IL. www.es.northrupgrumman.com/engscholars.
- **Harvard is offering free tuition** to undergraduate students with family income below \$40,000. Princeton offers a similar program. www.fao.fas.harvard.edu, tel: 617-495-1581.
- **Community of Science (COS)** maintains an extensive database of available research grants and awards, at www.cos.com/services/funding.shtml.
- **American India Foundation** Service Corps Fellowships for Americans to work with NGOs in India. <http://www.aifoundation.org/site/Programs/ServiceCorps/index.html> ■

FEZANA SCHOLARSHIPS (2006-2007)

Applications are invited for the

- **FEZANA Academic Scholarships** ●
- **Mehraban and Morvorid Kheradi (MMK) Endowment Scholarship** ●
for Academic Excellence – The FEZANA Scholar *and the*
- **Banoobai and Maneckshaw Kapadia (BMK) Endowment Scholarship** ●

The scholarships are open to Zarathushti applicants who have obtained admission for attendance at institutions of higher learning (accredited degree-granting colleges or universities) in USA or Canada. Scholarships for the academic year 2006-2007 will be awarded in September 2006.

Eligibility: Applicants must complete the application form and provide documentation for: (1) proof of USA or Canada citizenship. For non-citizens, a minimum of one year or two semesters residency in USA or Canadian academic institution is required; (2) past academic records and accomplishments (attach documentation for the past 4 years only); (3) program of study; (4) annual financial need including assistance already pledged by other funds, charitable institutions or the institution of choice; (5) other financial assistance available from family and friends; (6) community service including contributions to Zarathushti functions and organizations; and (7) three reference letters.

Award Criteria: Applicants will be evaluated and judged on academic accomplishments, financial need, answers to essay questions, extra-curricular activities, community service and general impression from the application form.

The Mehraban and Morvorid Kheradi Endowment Scholarship of \$5000 will be awarded for post graduate studies (masters degree and above) for scholastic excellence. **The Banoobai and Maneckshaw Kapadia Endowment Scholarship** of \$1000 will be awarded for undergraduate studies for good academic standing and financial need.

Application forms are available from www.fezana.org or from dollydastoor@sympatico.ca. Return completed forms post-marked no later than August 1, 2006 to:

**DOLLY DASTOOR Ph.D, Chair, FEZANA Scholarship Committee,
3765 Malo, Brossard, Quebec Canada J4Y 1B4.**

Keyannejad-Kapadia Zoroastrian Scholarship Fund

The Triangle Education Foundation is pleased to announce it is receiving applications for the Keyannejad-Kapadia Zoroastrian Scholarship Fund (endowed by Mr. Homi Kapadia and his sister Mrs. Mahrokh Keyannejad). The scholarships generated by this fund may be used for undergraduate or graduate study in an accredited university in the USA.

To qualify for an award, the applicant **must be a member of Triangle Fraternity**, have at least a 3.0 cumulative grade point average (out of 4.0) and be enrolled in an engineering curriculum. Additionally, priority will be given to candidates who are:

- Enrolled at Michigan State University.
- Not citizens or Permanent Residents (Green Card) of the USA. However, applications from US citizens will also be entertained.
- Of the Zoroastrian religion.

Triangle Fraternity was founded at the University of Illinois in 1907 and is recognized as the social fraternity for students majoring in engineering, architecture or the sciences. Triangle Fraternity is:

Serious About Scholarship ● Sets and Demonstrates High Standards ● Celebrates Achievement

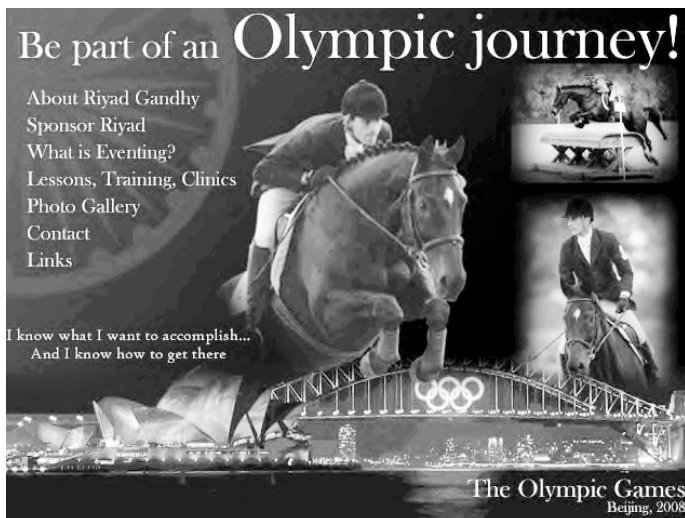
For information about the scholarships and the application process, please contact:

**Triangle Fraternity National Headquarters, 120 S. Center Street, Plainfield, IN 46168
Tel: (317) 837-9641 ● fax: (317) 837-9642 ● www.Triangle.org/TEF**

Be part of an **Olympic journey!**

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I know what I want to accomplish...
And I know how to get there



The Olympic Games
Beijing, 2008

Equestrian athlete aims for Olympics

"I have committed myself to the goal of representing India at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing ... and beyond to London 2012," writes equestrian athlete **Riyad Gandhi**, "and I intend to go full steam ahead." Growing up riding horses at the Amateur Rider's Club in Bombay, Riyad is currently based in Lexington, Kentucky, working on a horse farm, training and riding horses professionally. He has a 4-year degree in Equestrian Science, and has spent the last 10 years training with some of the best coaches in the world.

Riyad's immediate priority is to buy a top-of-the-line horse, "so that I can be extremely competitive and a true contender at the Games," says Riyad. Owning, maintaining and competing a horse is very expensive. Riyad is therefore seeking corporate or individual sponsors to help him realize his dream. He has received a generous sponsorship grant from The Godrej Group. Also an Indian Sports Foundation has offered to cover expenses related to maintenance, competition, coaching, etc. if he is able to purchase a top-of-the-line horse.

Riyad's local US sponsor Homi Davier writes:

"We must, as a community, support our young stars to participate at an international level. If we all chip in our two penny's worth we can collect enough funds to send Riyad Gandhi off to Beijing, and on to London in 2012, where he can bring glory not just to India, but to our community as well."

Help send Riyad Gandhi to the Olympics!

Contributions are currently needed for the purchase of a horse and equipment. Tax deduction available.

<i>Gold Sponsor:</i>	Over \$10,000
<i>Silver Sponsor:</i>	\$3,000 - \$9,999
<i>Bronze Sponsor:</i>	\$1,000 - \$2,999
<i>Good Luck Sponsor:</i>	\$100 - \$999

Visit: **www.riyadgandhy.com**

Contact: riyadgandhy@gmail.com, tel: 859-339-3474, 9863 Lexington Road, Lancaster, KY 40444.

The Erach and Roshan Sadri Foundation (founded in August 2005) offers funding for education and welfare

APPLICATIONS INVITED

Objects of the foundation are for general charitable purposes according to English law anywhere in the world, and in particular by: (a) Providing financial assistance for education and welfare purposes; (b) Relieving poverty by alleviating homelessness; and (c) Assisting members of the Zoroastrian religious faith.

Applications. Application forms are available at:

<http://www.ersf.org.uk/>

The Foundation will look favorably on applications made by Zoroastrians. Community projects as well as appeals for individuals are encouraged.

Erach and Roshan Sadri of UK owned Housemasters Company, importing luggage and household items. After Erach's sudden death of heart attack in 1990, Roshan carried on the business, worked reliantly for a number of charities and took an active interest in politics, until she passed away in 2004. The Foundation has been formed per her will to use her legacy, expected to be worth £6.5 million, for charity.

FEZANA SCHOLARSHIP FUND FOR EXCELLENCE IN SPORTS

CONTRIBUTIONS INVITED

At the FEZANA AGM in 2005, Firdosh Mehta expressed the need to create a Zarathushti Excellence in Sports Sponsorship fund to support very talented Zarathushtis of North America; and for FEZANA to earmark \$5,000 towards sports sponsorship, set up a sub-committee of the FEZANA Zoroastrian Sports Committee, and present Terms of Reference by AGM 2006. The motion passed unanimously.

In a letter dated January 25, 2006, president Firdosh Mehta, on behalf of the Executive Officers, writes:

Based on this FEZANA Board directive, supporting those who show excellence in sports, we have set up an opportunity for our generous donors to contribute to the:

FEZANA Scholarship Fund for Excellence in Sports.

All proceeds will be forwarded to authentic recipients, as per the criteria and guidelines established by a duly appointed ZSC sub-committee. Please make your checks payable to "FEZANA" with a footnote "Sports Scholarship Fund," and mail to: **Rashid Mehin, FEZANA Treasurer, 583 Beverly Place, San Marcos, CA 92078.**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
CONTRIBUTIONS AND GOODWILL!**

Tsunami victim remembered by Houston children

Remember Farzan, the nine-year-old boy who was the only survivor of his family when the tsunami hit Sri Lanka? [FJ, Spring 2005]. Well, a year later, the children of Vehishta Kaikobad's Sunday school class at the Zoroastrian Association of Houston took up a collection, made get-well cards, and sent them with chocolates and flowers to Farzan on his birthday. An uncle, who is taking care of Farzan now wrote back: "Thanks ... very soon Farzan will graduate from the walker to a walking stick; and then will send it on to you, as soon as he starts walking on his own two feet!" [ZAH Newsletter]

ZAC Student Scholarship

The Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago invites applications for their annual scholarship. All full-time, Zarathusti students at institutions of higher learning may apply. Applications must be received by **July 1, 2006**. Visit www.zac-chicago.org or e-mail crivetna@hotmail.com.

More opportunities to Give

Besides the opportunities for giving listed in this section, please also consider other worthy projects, described elsewhere in this FEZANA Journal:

- **OZCF, Toronto** land purchase and building project [p. 6].
- **WZCF** excavations of ancient dokhma near Sanjan [p. 92].
- **Akanksha Foundation** for children's education [p. 149].
- **Cyrus the Great** documentary film by Cyrus Kar [p. 150].
- **Tenaz Dubash's** film on contemporary Zarathushtis [p. 153].
- **Bahram Broomand's** Avesta-Pahlavi calligraphy works [p. 153].
- **ZSO** for larger darbe mehr on the existing premises [back cover].

Fali Chothia Scholarship winners

The Fali Chothia Charitable Trust (ferozafitch@lexicongraphics.net) has awarded 2006 scholarships to: **Farzad Damania** (MS, Electrical Engineering, Oklahoma State University), **Natasha Driver** (Master of Health Science, University of Toronto), **Zenobia Homavazir** (Masters in Social Work, University of Toronto), **Sherezade Khambatta** (Doctorate, Osteopathic Medicine, Des Moines University, Iowa), **Tara Master** (MD, obstetrics/gynecology, University of Illinois), **Arnaz Siganporia** (Masters, International Studies, De Paul University, Chicago), **Amy Suntoke** (Bachelors, Statistics, Carnegie Mellon University). ■

On philanthropy and service ...

Raj J. S. Taraporewala [“The Divine Songs of Zarathushtra”] draws attention to Yasna 19-21 (the Bagan Yasht) which discusses the Ahuna Vairya (or Ahunavar or Yatha Ahu Vairyo), the most ancient verse in the Avestan language. The last thought expressed in Yatha Ahu Vairyo is:

“**khshathremcha** (the power and glory) **Ahurai** (of Ahura, God the Creator) **a** (to) **yim** (him) **dregubyo** (to the one in need) **dadat** (gives) **vas-taram** (protection or support).” [Tr. Framroz Rustomjee]

Numerous translations of this verse, guide Zarathushtis to be charitable:

“Whoever gets support for the poor, as it were, honors Ahura Mazda as his own sovereign (Lord).” [Tr. Tehmuras Anklesaria]

“You appoint king, O Ormuzd, him who comforts and feeds the poor.” [Tr. Anquetil de Perron]

“He dedicates to him the Divine attribute of power by being the pastor of the poor.” [Tr. D. J. Irani]

“... He, the shepherd of the poor, makes the kingdom of Ahura Mazda.” [Tr. Dastur Dhalla]

“... the riches of Vohu Manah shall be given to him who works in this world of Mazda and wields according to the will of Ahura the power He gave him to relieve the poor.” [Tr. Darmesteter]

“He who gives succour to the helpless poor, acknowledges the Kingdom of God.” [Er. Dr. J. J. Modi]

[Submitted by Behram Pastakia]

On philanthropy and charity, from “A Treasury of Quotations from Zoroastrian Texts,” by J. J. Modi, revised by Er. Dr. Ramiyar Parvez Karanjia.

“May the chosen leaders of Mazda be helpers and supporters (of the world).” [Gatha Ahunavaiti, Ys. 30.9]

“May generosity prevail over stinginess in this house.” [Ys. 60.5]

“Grant me a child ... who would relieve the distress of others.” [Atash Nyaesh, Ys. 62.5]

“May you God-like, spread most benefits.” [Afrin Spitaman Zartusht, 2]

“He who performs charity knowingly and discerningly (is) like me, I, who am Ahura Mazda.” [Pahlavi Rivayet, Dadestan i Denik 10c1]

“This also is revealed, that Ahura Mazda said to Zarathushtra: ‘Whatever charitable men give, I give them twofold in return, and I store it up.’” [Pahlavi Rivayet, Dadestan i Denik 10n1]

“Garothman, the paradise of Ahura Mazda, belongs to those who give charity to righteous men.” [Pahlavi Rivayet, Dadestan i Denik 10q1]

“Happiness comes to him who seeks happiness for others.” [Gatha Ushtavaiti, Ys. 43.1] ■



*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.*

Bone Health-the Calcium connection

Bones make up our skeletal frame. They are connected at the joints by muscles and ligaments. The joints permit movement, initiated by the muscles, which are necessary for our daily activities. Contrary to popular belief, bones are living active tissue, made up of a matrix of bone cells called osteocytes laid down by the balanced activity of the bone forming cells, osteoblasts, and bone absorbing cells, osteoclasts.

Calcium. The process of bone formation and absorption continues throughout life at varying pace. Calcium in the form of calcium phosphate is laid down in the bone matrix

as a cementing and strengthening agent. The movement of calcium phosphate in and out of bone continues throughout life. Blood supplied to the bone and drained out of the bone makes this process called calcification possible. Red blood cells are made in the bone marrow, within the spongy structure of the bone matrix.

Bone growth. Bones must be in optimal health throughout life to facilitate our daily activities as well as our body's shape, size and structure. Bones grow in spurts in infancy, childhood and adolescence. At these stages of life the process of laying down bone, called osteogenesis, outpaces

bone absorption or osteoclysis. Later in life osteoclysis is more active than osteogenesis and some bone rarefaction occurs. This is called **osteopenia**. Excessive rarefaction is called **osteoporosis**, which is the leading cause of fractures in older people.

Vitamin D and PTH. The deposition of calcium is governed by the process of calcification. Vitamin D and parathormone (PTH) are essential for this process, which is modulated by a complex endocrine system balancing the actions of multiple hormones. An excess of corticosteroids cause bone rarefaction, while growth hormone and estrogen participate in bone formation, calcification and bone growth. PTH is secreted by four tiny pea-like glands situated at the back of the thyroid gland in the neck. Overactivity of the parathyroid or a tumor that secretes PTH can cause irregular calcification, excretion of calcium and phosphate in blood and urine, and cyst formation in the bones.

While PTH is the first violinist in the orchestra of bone health, other hormones like cortisol, estrogen, testosterone, and thyroid hormone are the accompanists, fine tuning healthy active bones.

Vitamin D is essential for the formation of PTH and is its chief chemical component. Hence adequate intake of vitamin D precursors in diet and exposure to sunlight, which facilitates vitamin D formation, are necessary for bone health. Although calcium is the essential cementing substance, it will not do any good without vitamin D. Calcium and vitamin D supplements are necessary only when nutritional intake is inadequate or cannot be absorbed and utilized by the body due to intestinal or other ill health.

Hormonal balance. Changes in the hormonal balance of the body, particularly continuing intake of corticosteroids, cause defective bone formation and excessive bone absorption. Thyroid hormone works both ways – bone rarefaction can occur through excessive amounts of



Keeping bones strong and healthy

- **Count up calcium** – Use foods, then supplements to meet calcium needs.
- **Double (or triple) up on D** – 800 to 1,000 IU/day now recommended for individuals over 50.
- **Bone up on B's** – an adequate intake of B6, B12 and folic acid may lower homocysteine levels, reducing fracture risk.
- **Add an array of vitamins, minerals** – a balanced diet and complete multi can ensure adequate vitamin/mineral intake.
- **Pick up on protein** – can maintain or improve bone density, speed up recovery after a fracture, and prevent bone fractures.
- **Reduce retinal** – found in animal foods, fortified foods, and some supplements, too much can lead to fractures. Beta-carotene is safer.
- **Beware of bone busters** – watch out for large quantities of caffeinated soft drinks, coffee, alcohol and high-sodium foods.
- **Move those bones** – any physical activity is helpful, especially strength-training and weight-bearing exercise.
- **Bottom line** – get regular exercise, don't smoke, eat a varied diet and supplement as needed.

From Environmental Nutrition, 9/2004.

Submitted by Judith Klockzim, fitness specialist/personal trainer.

Next issue: Brittle bones, Rickets, Osteopenia and Osteoporosis.

A decorative horizontal line consisting of a series of small, dark, diamond-shaped patterns arranged in a row.

The longest marriage

According to the Guinness Book of Records (1988), the longest recorded marriage lasted 86 years, from 1853 to 1940, between Sir Temulji Bhicaji Nariman and Lady Nariman, resulting from a cousin marriage when both were five. Sir Temulji was born on September 3, 1848 and died in August 1940 in Bombay.

Looking for a Soulmate?

Try these matrimonial sites and services:

- <http://matrimonial.zoroastrianism.com>
- www.TheParsiMatch.com
- www.shaadi.com
- Mrs. Gool Banaji, Parel, Mumbai, goolpesi@gmail.com.
- Mrs. Serah Kotval, Dadar, Mumbai, Tel: 91 22 2142 3570.

■ MATRIMONIALS ■

FEZANA will coordinate initial contacts between interested parties; we do not assume any responsibility for verifying credentials. Contact Roshan Rivetna at rrrivetna@aol.com.

Female, 25, B.A., human resource manager in Mumbai, enjoys adventure traveling, dramatics, camping, cooking. Willing to relocate to North America. Contact ziacv1@hotmail.com. [F05-23]

Male, 33, 5' 10", B.Com., in management in New York. Enjoys reading, traveling. Call 610-589-5419.

Female, 28, B.S., post-grad in Systems Management, senior consultant in multinational software company in New York. Enjoys reading, traveling and taking photographs. Contact zarath.star@yahoo.com. [F05-25]

Female, 27, 5' 7" and very attractive, with excellent job in Mumbai. Studied in USA. Willing to relocate to North America. Contact jimmy.dholoo@aeroflex-weinschel.com, cell: 240 481 9236. [F05-26]

Female, 38, slim, 5' 8", working in department store in Pennsylvania. Call 610-589-5419. [F05-27]

Male, 45, well-to-do, well employed in Australia. Fun-loving and outgoing. Contact jimmy.dholoo@aeroflex-weinschel.com, cell: 240 481 9236. [M05-28]

Male, 33, science graduate, diploma in software technology, working as software consultant in USA (east coast). Interested in suitable match with girl, preferably originally from Bombay. Contact ruzhere@yahoo.com or silloo@gmail.com. [M05-29]

*Keep your eyes wide
open before marriage,
half shut afterwards.*

- Benjamin Franklin.

Please send all submissions for “Milestones” to Mahrukh Motafram, 2390 Chanticleer Drive, Brookfield, WI 53045, mmotafram@msn.com, Tel: 262-821-5296. NOTE: If no year is specified, it implies “within the past 12 months.”

BIRTHS

Kiyan Mazda Antia, a boy, to Shahnaz and Mazda Antia, grandson to Dr. Kersey Antia and Dilshad of Chicago area, and Dr. Rustam Mehdiabadi and Roshan of Lubbock, TX, great grandson to Gool Dinyarian, nephew to Jimmy, Anahita, Natasha and Farahnaz, in San Diego on December 28.

Jimmy Bhagwagar, a boy, to Goodafrid and Furhaad Bhagwagar in Mississauga on June 24.

Delara Cyrus Cama, a girl, to Farzana and Cyrus Cama, granddaughter to Niloufer and Edul Daver, and Mahrugh and Rohinton Cama, in Bridgewater, NJ, on December 31.

Cyrus Green, a boy, to Rashne Davar Green and Garrett Green, grandson to Pervin and Adi Davar of Falls Church, VA, on January 19, 2003.

Daniela Patel, a girl, to Tina and Nareeman Patel, sister to Fiona, granddaughter to Katy and Khurshed Patel and to Carm and Harold Craddock, great-granddaughter to Gool Homi Patel, in Mississauga, ONT, on October 18.

Natasha Patel, a girl, to Firoozi and Neville Patel, granddaughter to Aban and Dinshaw Dastur and Dolly and late Homi Patel, in Toronto on September 22.

Zachary Patell, a boy, to Daraius and Allison Patell, grandson to Rashne and Adi Patell of Round Lake Beach, IL, in Louisville, KY, on November 5.

Neville Rustomji, a boy, to Dilnaaz and Eric Rustomji, brother to Yazmin, grandson to Rashne and Adi Patell of Round Lake Beach, IL and



*Congratulations to **Karl R. Vakil**, son of Er. Ratansha and Nitash Vakil, on the occasion of his navjote in Dallas, TX, on November 5. Officiating were, from left, Ervads Perry Unwalla, Zubin Kotwal, Ratansha Vakil, Poras Balsara, Adil Masani and Khusrav Nariman.*

to Rusi and Piloo Rustomji of Mumbai, in Hainesville, IL, on October 20.

Rohan Kapil Sharma, a boy, to Persis and Kapil Sharma, grandson to Maruk and Farrokh Khambatta of Palo Alto, CA, in Alexandria, VA, on September 15.

NAVJOTES, SEDREH-PUSHI

[see photos this page]

WEDDINGS

Ruzbeh Daruwalla, son of Jasmin and Homi R. Daruwalla, to **Anahita Irani**, daughter of Mitra and Noshir K. Irani, at Albless Baug, Mumbai, on January 10. A reception followed at The Bombay Club in Anaheim, CA, on February 18.

Darius Mehta, son of Yezdi and Khurshid Mehta, to **Temilyn Ghadially**, daughter of Viraf and Toni Ghadially, in Long Island on August 26.

ANNIVERSARIES

Family and friends of **Farida and Houshmand Sharyari** of Hoffman Estates, IL, celebrated the couple's 25th wedding anniversary, with bowling, a Persian dinner and dancing arranged by their children Farzin and Negin Sharyari (who is a ZYNA co-chair) at Arlington Lanes in Arlington Heights, IL, on January 15.

RECOVERING

Author and scholar of ancient Iranian studies, **Dr. Shapur Shahbazi**, formerly of Shiraz University, Iran, and presently living in Oregon, is undergoing chemotherapy for cancer.



***Jehan and Rishad Mehta**, sons of Zia and Ashad Mehta and grandsons of Daisy and Hector Mehta of Los Angeles, celebrated their navjote at the Jeejeebhoy Dadabhoy Agiary baug at Colaba, Mumbai, on December 3.*



Farobag Homi Cooper, son of Perween and (late) Homi Zal Cooper of New Canaan, CT was married to **Ashees Bhadha**, daughter of Kaity and Er. Darabshaw Bhadha of Karachi, in Karachi, on January 20. The wedding, starting with the 'ara-antar' ceremony (among the few performed in several decades in Karachi) was held outdoors at the Beach Luxury Hotel overlooking an orchid and waterfall backdrop, and was officiated by Er. Keki Dastur and Er. Jehangir Sidhwa. The couple honeymooned in Koh Samui, Thailand.

DEATHS

Mary Dhun Baxter, mother of Pervin Adi Davar of Falls Church, VA, Minoo Baxter of Toronto, Farouk Baxter of Boston, and late Darius Baxter of Syracuse, grandmother of Binaifer, Rashne, Tamina, Soozan and Trista, in Mumbai on December 3.

Rattan Bhesania, son of Homai and late Savak Bhesania of Kolkata, husband of Sherry, father of Zubin Bhesania of Bahrain, brother of Dina Mathur of Kolkata, Arni Billimoria and Chandan Musa of Toronto, cousin of Bapsy Surti of Toronto, in Toronto on October 1.

Farrokh Minocher Daboo, uncle of Gaive Anklesaria of Houston, brother of Rohinton, Temurasp, Banoo Anklesaria, Amni Rustomji, Villie, Jeroo and Perviz Daboo, on September 18.



Jim Engineer, son of Adel and Firoza Engineer of Naperville, IL, was married to **Kiku Mistry**, daughter of Mehroo and Pervez Mistry of Mumbai, on October 29. The wedding, officiated by Ervads Neville Karanjia and Jamshed Ravji was held at the darbe mehr in Chicago.

Keki Dalal, father of Rashne Bulsara of Dallas, in Secunderabad on October 11.

Mehroo Hoshang Godiwalla, 84, mother of Adil (Arnavaz) Godiwalla of Houston, Yezdi (Shirley) Godiwalla of Brookfield, WI, Kersi (Nilufer) Godiwalla of Jamshedpur, India, sister of Gool, Jassi, Freny, Piloo, Nari and Aloo; grandmother of Shara, Shanaya, Nina, Amy, Yazad, Roxana, Tinaz, and Khushnum; great grandmother of Sabra, in Menomonee Falls, WI, on November 20.

Yasmin Hansotia, sister of Sarosh Kaikobad of Houston, in Karachi on October 19.

Katy Maneck Khambatta, daughter of late Sabar and Dhunjishaw Kavarana, wife of Maneck Khambatta, mother of Rati, grandmother of Jamie and Jason, sister of Rusi Kavarana (all of Toronto), Roda Kavarana (of New York) and of late Adi and late Homai Gharda (of New York) in Toronto on September 28.

Mondegar Kavouspour, father of Dinyar Kavouspour of Dallas, on September 25.

Goolu Motivala, 80, sister of Sheroo (Paul) Rusby of Arlington, VA, Mehli (Joan) Motivala of Paramus, NJ, Silla Motivala and Freny Dadachanji of Mumbai, Mehroo Merchant of London, of heart attack, in Mumbai, on January 12.

Piloo Rusi Rustomji, mother of Eric (Dilnaaz) Rustomji of Hainesville, IL, in Mumbai on December 21. ■

EXCERPTS FROM ASIAN AGE, MAY 5, 2004. FULL STORY AT [HTTP://WWW.TATA.COM/TATA_STEEL/MEDIA/20040505.HTM](http://www.tata.com/tata_steel/media/20040505.htm)

Jamshedpur is where India is shining

... Ratan Tata has kept alive the legacy of perhaps India's finest industrialist J. N. Tata. I was amazed to see the extent of corporate philanthropy and this is no exaggeration.

A visit to Jamshedpur is a must ... see the smiling faces of workers in a region known for industrial unrest; see the standard of living in a city that is almost isolated from the mess in the rest of the country.

The plant was gleaming ... Greener and cleaner and a tribute to environment management ... No tired faces and so many more women workers. There was a spring in the air which came from a certain calmness which has always been the hallmark of Jamshedpur ...

... I strongly believe the message of hope and the message of goodness that they are spreading is worth sharing. The fact that you do have companies in India which look at workers as human beings and who do not blow their software trumpet of having changed lives ... They have done so much more since I last visited Jamshedpur, which was in 1992. The town has obviously got busier but the values thankfully haven't changed.

J. N. Tata had created an edifice that is today a robust company and it is not about profits and about valuation. It is about getting the job done with dignity and respect keeping the age-old values intact and this is what I learnt.

Modern India is being built in Jamshedpur as we speak. An India built on the strength of core convictions ... Jamshedpur is an eye-opener and a role model ... Corporate India can do it ... visit Tata Steel, spend some days at Jamshedpur and see a nation's transformation. That is true service and true nationalism ...

Thank god for the Tatas!

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

EXCERPTS FROM STORY ON THE FRONT PAGE OF WALL STREET JOURNAL, FEBRUARY 6, 2006. [HTTP://ONLINE.WSJ.COM/ARTICLE/SB113918795449865603.HTML](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB113918795449865603.html). WRITE TO [PETER.WONACOTT@WSJ.COM](mailto:peter.wonacott@wsj.com)

Zoroastrians Turn To Internet Dating To Rescue Religion

Declining Population Threatens the Future of an Ancient Faith in India

BY PETER WANACOTT

MUMBAI, India. ... There are fewer than 200,000 Zoroastrians in the world, experts say. Most are in India and Iran, the religion's birthplace. The numbers are clearly dwindling in India ... To replenish their ranks, followers of the Iranian prophet Zoroaster, who is thought to have lived about 3,500 years ago, are extolling not just the modern benefits of fertility clinics but also those of Internet dating ...

The high-technology push to connect and reproduce Parsis comes as education and work opportunities pull a younger generation into the global work force, delaying love, marriage and children. Like other ethnic groups, Parsis in India are trying to adapt to a changing world without changing too much themselves ...

For years, the Bombay Parsi Punchayet has offered discount family housing in one of the world's most expensive real-estate markets, and subsidies for a third child ... it reimburses couples for exams at the new fertility clinic.

The demographic shifts have fanned fierce debate about the Parsi community's future. Orthodox members contend there is nothing wrong with Parsi genes and that emigration accounts for the shrinking numbers in India. Liberals argue the community would be better served by welcoming all children of mixed marriages and recognizing converts, too...

FROM SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, OCTOBER 1, 2005. FULL STORY AT [WWW.SFGATE.COM](http://www.sfgate.com). JCURIEL@SFCHRONICLE.COM

A brand new tribute to mark an ancient 'new day'

BY JONATHAN CURIEL, CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

Long before Islam came to central Asia in the 7th century, there was Zoroastrianism, a monotheistic religion whose adherents marked the spring equinox with a celebration called Nowruz. To this day, Persians and Central Asians of all religions – Muslims, Jews, Zoroastrians and others -- participate in Nowruz events, making Nowruz one of the oldest, continuous celebrations on earth.

In October, the San Francisco World Music Festival premiered its Nowruz Project, a sprawling work that brought together artists from around the world ...



Celebrating Nowruz, or "new day," one of the oldest, continuous celebrations on earth.

PHOTO: SAN FRANCISCO WORLD MUSIC FESTIVAL

Dadabhai Naoroji Millennium Award for Farrokh Kavarana



"In recognition of his outstanding achievements in his professional career and excellent services to society," the Dadabhai Naoroji International Society (UK and India) conferred the Dadabhai Naoroji International Millennium Award - 2005, to **Farrokh K. Kavarana**, in Mumbai, on November 19. The presentation was by H. E.

Dr. Balram Jakhar, Governor of Madhya Pradesh.

Farrokh Kavarana, director of Tata Sons Limited and Tata Industries Ltd., the apex holding companies of the Tata Group, is one of the most outstanding, brilliant and resurgent economists in India. He has contributed significantly to the country's economy, and is also associated with many charitable and social institutions, doing yeoman service to society.

Sumariwalla elected to UNA-USA Board

Russy D. Sumariwalla, international lawyer and expert on philanthropy and nonprofits, has been elected President of the Board of Directors, The United Nations Associations of the USA, Southern Oregon. Sumariwalla is a life-long student of the UN and has traveled and lectured extensively in over 30 countries. Russy was president and CEO of United Way International and is currently

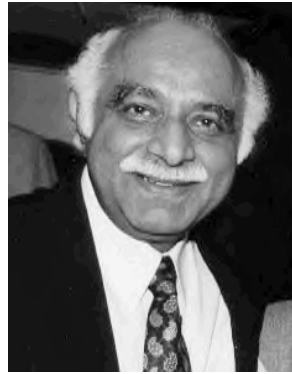


PHOTO: WWW.JHU.EDU/~ISTR

founder-president of Global Philanthropy and Nonprofits. He lives with his wife Anita in Medford, OR.

The purpose of UNA-USA is to increase public awareness of the important work of the UN and support and advocate efforts to increase its effectiveness in addressing issues of international peace and secu-

rity, the environment, and human well-being.

"I truly believe in the importance of the United Nations for the whole world," said Sumariwalla [*Mail Tribune, December 28, 2005*].

"There are so many things that individual nations cannot do, however rich or powerful they may be."

On The Daily Show



Last August **Aysha Ghadiali**, who is on the staff of Council on Foreign Relations, a foreign policy think tank in New York city, sent an email to The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, suggesting that the farohar symbol be put on the 'God-o-meter' along with all the other religious symbols. Aysha writes:

"I'm happy to say that in their segment, *This Week in God* on December 15, they paid tribute to Zarathushtis, with a brief description of Zarathushtra, the fire temple, and the farohar symbol. I'm sure the show's viewers learned something new."

Obituary to Common Sense...

Today we mourn the passing of a beloved old friend by the name of Common Sense who had been with us for many years. He will be remembered as having cultivated such valued lessons as knowing when to come in out of the rain, why the early bird gets the worm, and that life isn't always fair. Common Sense lived by simple, sound financial policies (don't spend more than you earn) and reliable parenting strategies (adults, not kids, are in charge).

His health began to rapidly deteriorate when well intentioned but overbearing regulations were set in place. Report of a six-year-old boy charged with sexual harassment for kissing a classmate, a teen suspended from school for using mouthwash after lunch, and a teacher fired for reprimanding an unruly student, only worsened his condition.

It declined even further when schools were required to get parental consent to administer aspirin to a student but could not inform the parents when a student became pregnant and wanted to have an abortion.

Finally, Common Sense lost the will to live as the Ten Commandments became contraband, churches became businesses, and criminals received better treatment than their victims.

Common Sense finally gave up the ghost after a woman failed to realize that a steaming cup of coffee was hot, spilled it in her lap, and was awarded a lot of money.

Common Sense was preceded in death by his parents, Truth and Trust; his wife, Discretion; his daughter, Responsibility; and his son, Reason. He is survived by two stepbrothers; My Rights and Ima Whiner.

Author Unknown. Submitted by Rusi Sorabji



Shaheen Mistri with children from an Akanksha Center.

Spreading the wealth

Tufts University student **Shaheen Mistri** decided to take a year off to go to India to explore her roots. She never returned. She started **Akanksha** ('aspiration' in Hindi) **Foundation**. The first center was built in three months with 10 Mumbai slum children. What started 15 years ago as an experiment is now a recognized NGO helping children from poor urban neighborhoods escape poverty and be a part of the mainstream population.



"I was hell-bent on taking the children out of the slums to show them that life can be different," says this deceptively soft-spoken young woman for whom 'determination' could be her middle name.

During its first four years of operation, Akanksha relied on donations of class-room space and supplies and all its staff were unpaid volunteers.

Shaheen's work started to be noticed and receive funding.

The World Economic Forum named her among the 'Global Leaders of Tomorrow,' and in 2001, she was named an Ashoka fellow.

Today the organization has expanded to 2500 children in 49 centers in Mumbai and Pune, with an additional 2100 children in 10 schools. Akanksha's programs are free to all students. Each Center is operated on an annual budget of about US \$55,000 that is raised from businesses and individuals and fundraising events.

To make a donation, sponsor a Center, or volunteer your services, visit www.akanksha.org. ■



"I shall pass this way but once.

Any good therefore that I can do or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now, For I shall not pass this way again."

- Stephen Grellet

■ ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT ■



Babak and Friends – a First Norooz by Norooz Productions and www.PersianMirror.com is a wonderful new animation movie for Persians written and directed by Dustin Ellis, formerly of Nickelodeon and Warner Brothers, with voice-overs of Oscar nominee Shohreh Aghdashloo, Parviz Sayyad, Catherine Bell (star of CBS's JAG) and Ali Pourtash. It also features the music of Aris and pop icon Andy called **Daram Miram Beh Tehran**. Set to classical Persian Music, the movie is a funny and heartwarming story about Babak, a mischievous Iranian boy caught between cultures, learning about the warmth and depths of Persian culture.

Recorded in Farsi and English the movie, suitable for young and old, is available on DVD, and comes with a free Norooz storybook. To order, call 917-402-2004 or visit www.babakandfriends.com.

Astad premieres 'Rivers' in Baltimore

Astad Deboo is India's leading contemporary choreographer and dancer. Classically trained in Kathakali he has pioneered modern dance in India. He also trains and tours with deaf performers from the Clarke School in Chennai, and was invited by Galludet University in



Washington, DC in the past to hold workshops for the hearing impaired.

In January, Deboo premiered '**Rivers**' in Baltimore, a graceful and touching work blending classical Indian dance and gesture with modern dance and American sign language, at the invitation of Quest Productions, which is internationally recognized for its innovative work in visual theatre. Performances have been called amazing and visually-rich.



PHOTO: [HTTP://ABCNEWS.GO.COM/NIGHTLINE/](http://abcnews.go.com/Nightline/)



Cyrus Kar, left, was interviewed by Ted Koppel on ABC's Nightline

Cyrus Kar detained while filming *Cyrus the Great*

So compelling was American Iranian Zarathushti Cyrus Kar's story that Nightline devoted two shows to it. In October Kar spoke at Claremont University in California.

by Maneck Bhujwala

APPEARANCE ON NIGHTLINE

On August 24 and 25, I watched ABC-TV's Nightline program, where Ted Koppel interviewed Iranian American Zarathushti film producer Cyrus Kar about his 55-day imprisonment by the US military in Iraq.

Kar mentioned that he was born in Iran, came to the US when 5 years old, became a US citizen, served in the US Navy, and was filming a documentary on *Cyrus the Great* near Babylon, when he was arrested, along with his Iranian camera man and the Iraqi taxi driver who admitted owning the timer devices found in the taxi.

Cyrus expressed a sense of betrayal by his government when, even after he was cleared of suspicion by FBI investigators who searched his home, car, computer in Los Angeles, and gave him a lie detector test, he was held for 55 days without being charged of any wrongdoing.

As a community, especially in North America, we should offer needed support to Cyrus Kar to enable him to complete his documentary. We should also be grateful to him for publicizing the name of *Cyrus the Great* and his Human Rights Charter on a national TV network watched by millions of Americans.

KAR SPEAKS AT CLAREMONT

On October 16, Kar spoke at an event organized by the Council of Zoroastrian Studies at Claremont Graduate University. Using pictures of sites in Iran, Cyrus discussed the many prevalent misconceptions about ancient Iran and world history, and the general lack of knowledge, even among Zarathushtis.

For example, it is wrongly accepted that democracy was introduced by the Greeks. In fact, it was much earlier in Hamadan, Iran where democracy was practiced, with meetings of all tribesmen. Greek historians like Herodotus have used wildly exaggerated numbers for Persian armies that fought against Greek armies whose numbers were minimized. Scholars have confirmed that it would have been logistically impossible to move such huge armies.

The origin of the word Caucasian used commonly for Europeans, comes from the Caucasus mountain region (between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea with Mt. Elburz as its highest point). The Caspian Sea was considered in ancient times to be the center of the Aryan world. People migrated from there to Europe, Iran and India. Today, Iran and Ireland are

the only countries named as the land of the Aryans. The Nazi Germans misused the Aryan symbol of the swastika which is associated with good luck (from the Sanskrit word 'swasti') to make it a symbol of the Nazis and racial superiority.

Unlike Greeks and others, the Persians never owned slaves. The lowest class in Persian society was the peasants. Women with characteristics of Amazon women inhabited the northern Caspian regions. There was a lot in common between pre-Islamic Iranians and Europeans – handshakes, chivalry, honor, respectful treatment of women, etc. Even today Zarathushtis are respected for upholding the good values of ancient Iran. Unfortunately, today Iran is the opposite of what Iranian society stood for in ancient times.

Ancient cultures are being lost, but the youth of Iran express a longing for knowledge about their past. One way to preserve our ancient culture is through documentary films which can be used to educate our own people and also the people of the world. ■

Kar's Film project

Kar has completed filming, spending about \$ 100,000 of his own, but post-production work remains for editing, sound, music score, and animation to recreate Cyrus' battle of Thymbra against Croesus, king of Lydia. Cyrus' military strategy was so ingenious that it is taught in US military academies and the subject of college curricula.

The total still needed to be raised is about \$100,000.

Please donate generously to preserve the giant status of *Cyrus the Great*, and educate others about his role in world history.

Make your tax-deductible donations to Filmmakers Alliance (Tax ID 95-444-9125) and mail to: Cyrus Kar, PO Box 292303, Los Angeles, CA, 90029. For information contact maneck_bhujwala@mindspring.com.



Shayan Italia's debut single, *Reflection*

Songwriter, singer *Shayan Italia* of London performed his debut single album *Reflection*, with two of the top session guitarists on stage, as the opening act at the Sony Sports Personality Awards 2006, on February 4, at the Park Lane Hilton Hotel in London. On February 6, Shayan performed *REFLECTION* and his song *SON OF GOD* live with the house band of top session musicians, at the Original Songwriters Show in London. Shayan received an Honor Award at the 2004 Great American Song Contest, in the pop/contemporary category for his song, *SOUL*. [Photo courtesy SynergyZ].

'Aapro' Maestro Zubin Mehta



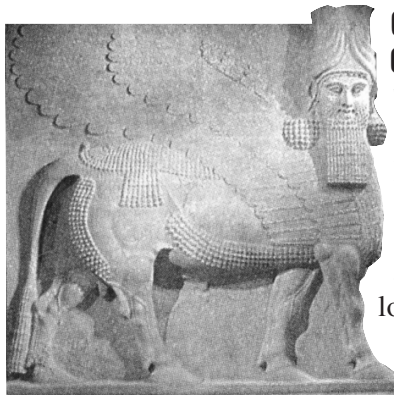
Mehta with admiring fan Manijeh Deboo at a performance with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra

Maestro Zubin Mehta, 69, makes frequent visits as guest conductor with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, where he was music director from 1962 to 1978. Prior to that he was music director of the Montreal Symphony from 1961 to 1967. Mehta became music director of the New York Philharmonic in 1978. During his 13 years in New York, he conducted more than 1,000 concerts, holding the post longer than any music director in the orchestra's modern history.

The Israel Philharmonic Orchestra appointed Mehta music advisor in 1969, music director in 1977, and music director for life in 1981. He has conducted over 1,600 performances on five continents with the orchestra.

Rohinton Mistry novel is now a West End production in London

Rohinton Mistry's much-acclaimed novel, *A Fine Balance*, about a young Parsi widow, which was shortlisted for the prestigious Booker Prize, is now a West End production. Tamasha, in association with Hampstead Theatre presented the world premiere of the new play by the same name, at Hampstead Theatre, Swiss Cottage, from January 16-28. [Visit www.hampsteadtheatre.com].

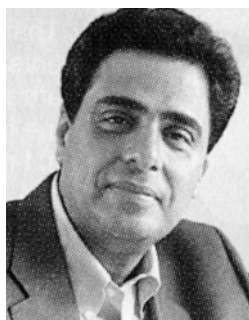


Winged bull from Khorsabad, c. 721 BCE. COLLECTION: ORIENTAL INSTITUTE, CHICAGO

Chicago's Oriental Institute voices concern over loss in Baghdad

Researchers at the Oriental Institute in Chicago are expressing anger at the lack of followup after the loss of priceless historical treasures two years ago from looting at the National Museum of Iraq. "These are material records of the people who were putting together the very first human civilization." The Oriental Institute is the most important center for Near Eastern studies in North America and the preeminent American center for Mesopotamian artefacts. [Source: *Chicago Tribune*].

Media magnate Ronnie Screwvala



Not content with heading UTV, a 14-year old media house that creates programming content for TV channels in India as well as produces and distributes Bollywood films, **Ronnie Screwvala** has now launched his own channel for children. Best known for bringing cable TV to India in 1981, he is now launching *Hungama* – a 24-hour all-Hindi live action channel targeted at the 4 to 14 age group, in an estimated 47 million cable and satellite households across the country. Screwvala heads the 189 member team of UTV in Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, Singapore, Malaysia and the US, and hopes to put the Indian media on the world map. [Source: *Times of India*, September 2005].

Writer-producer Fali Singara

He was India's youngest guy to dabble with console and headphones, only to shift his passion now to films. 24-year old **Fali Singara** has made a foray into the world of cinema with his first documentary, *The Roses of Mother Teresa*. This 21-minute film was shown at the UN, but the highlight, for Fali, was its screening at the Vatican in Rome. Singara also heads an Elvis Presley Fan Club (www.elvisfanclubindia.tripod.com). [Source: *Bombay Times*, October 30, 2005].



PHOTO: WWW.ING.MEETUP.COM

Bollywood star Perizaad Zorabian



Perizaad Zorabian has made it as Bollywood heroine though her Hindi is shaky and looks unconventional for a Bollywood star.

Perizaad, of Iranian descent – her father owns a poultry farm, Zorabian Chicken in Bandra, Mumbai – made her debut in Nagesh Kukunoor's *Bollywood Calling*, and bagged the leading role as a

Parsi girl Jenny in *Joggers Park*. She also has roles in the movies *Morning Raga*, *Mumbai Matinee*, *Stardust* and *Arranged Marriage*. Before moving to Bollywood, she had a role in the TV serial *Hum Pardesi Ho Gaye*, and a modeling job in a *Fair and Lovely* ad. She has an MBA and studied acting at the Lee Strasburg Academy in New York. [Source: *Fed Newsletter*, 2005].

Iranian Women in the Arts

The Center for Iranian Studies will present a special program: *Images of Iranian Women in the Arts*, on March 12, 2006. Celebrating International Women's Day, the program celebrates the work of poet and writer **Mahin Amid**, painter **Pari Amini**, filmmaker and actor **Roya Aryanpad**, poet and filmmaker **Frough Farokhzad**, singer and songwriter-composer **Mitra Rahbar**, writer and journalist **Homa Sarshar**, and singer and songwriter-composer **Ziba Shirazi**. [Posted by Jalil Doostkhah of Australia, dkshah@yahoo.com.au on www.iranshenakht.blogspot.com]

Tenaz Dubash's documentary film



While there was initial interest in collaborating with producer-director Tenaz Dubash's documentary about contemporary Zarathushtis, WGBH, the Boston PBS station (with 120 million national viewers) eventually did not accept Dubash's proposal but are interested in looking at a finished version.

However, Tenaz's passion, enthusiasm and energy to complete this project is unabated. She is continuing work on the film and will enter it in several competitive documentary film festivals after completing it.

The first eight minutes may be viewed at www.tdfilms.info. Tenaz is seeking corporate and individual sponsors, and will welcome help with organizing a fundraising viewing of the film, in major cities, once it is completed later this year. Please contact Tenaz at TDubash@gmail.com.

Béjart's ballet 'Zarathustra'



French Choreographer Maurice Béjart: "Zarathustra is the coronation of my career."

Maurice Béjart is probably the most famous choreographer in France. He also made significant contributions to the Persian Ballet Repertoire in the late 1960s and 70s performing at the famous Roudaki Hall in Tehran. One of the highlights of his contributions to Iranian ballet was the creation of two ballets (one was named *Farah* in tribute to the Shahbanou) during the Cyrus the Great celebrations at Persepolis in 1971.

Béjart's spiritual and philosophical quest has led him to the creation of a new ballet *Zarathustra*, which premiered last December in Lausanne, Switzerland. The two-hour ballet for 50 dancers is based on the works of German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. Béjart called the work the "coronation of my career" and the public concurred. When the 78 year old Béjart stepped on the stage, he was cheered by a standing ovation of 2,400 spectators, lasting for several minutes.

In *Zarathustra*, Maurice Béjart considers he has achieved his vision of "total theatre," in which language, music, dance and direction flow together. Little if nothing to do with the teachings of the historical namesake prophet Zoroaster or Zartosht in Persian, Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* is considered by some as a controversial yet important philosophical work of the late 19th century.

Other compositions inspired by Zarathushtra. The French composer Rameau wrote an opera called *Zoroastre* and the free-thinking Mozart used a variant of the name for his character Sarastro in *The Magic Flute*; Sarastro is the priest of the Sun and Light who defeats the Queen of the Night. But it is certainly the German composer Richard Strauss who, inspired by the Nietzsche work, wrote *Also Sprach Zarathustra* which became famous in 1968 as the theme for Stanley Kubrick's film 2001 – A Space Odyssey. [From comments by Darius Kadivar, www.iranshenakht.blogspot.com and www.IranDokht.com, posted by Jalil Doostkhah on creating awareness@yahoogroups.com].

From Bollywood to Hollywood

PHOTO: //PSCHULER.CLUB.FR



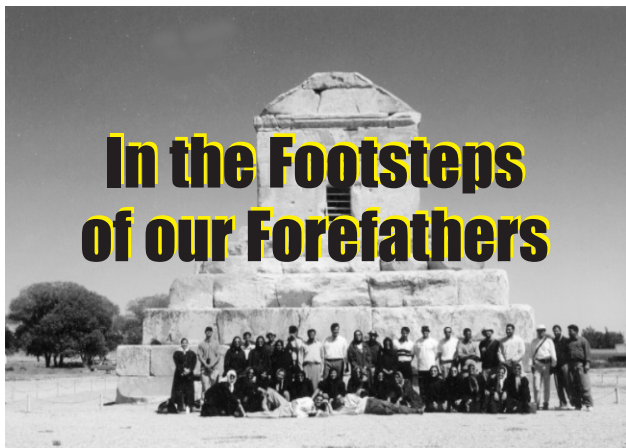
Bride and Prejudice, starring Bollywood actress **Aishwarya Rai** premiered in the US last February, just two days after the former Miss World appeared on David Letterman's *Late Show*. Earlier, Rai was profiled on CBS network's *60 Minutes* program. Rai's first English-language movie, *Bride and Prejudice*,

directed by NRI director Gurinder Chadha of *Bend it Like Beckham* fame, puts a Bollywood spin on the Jane Austen classic *Pride and Prejudice*.

Rai is all set to make a foray into Hollywood, having been signed on for international productions like *Chaos* with Meryl Streep and *Racing the Monsoon* starring Michael Douglas. [Source: www.rediff.com].

■ BOOKS AND SUCH ■

**As you celebrate Nouruz,
make sure to get a copy of the video**



This stunning documentary follows 34 young Zoroastrians as they travel within Iran to find out more about the roots of their religion. The film is shot in Persepolis, Yazd, Kerman and Isfahan. Parts of the film were featured on the History channel and CNN International.

The tapes are available on VHS
Cost \$20 plus shipping and handling

To order contact TDubash@gmail.com

New online journal in Persian

Touraj Daryae (tdaryae@fullerton.edu) of California State University, Fullerton, announces a new online journal, in Persian, *The Bulletin of Ancient Iranian History*. This is an endeavor by historians and archeologists to publish an academic journal on the internet in Persian. Visit <http://www.iranologie.com/BAIH/intro.html>.

Sooni Taraporevala's website

Acclaimed screenwriter and photographer Sooni Taraporevala, has launched a new website encompassing over 20 years of her creative work. It includes a collection of photographs, books (*Parsis: The Zoroastrians of India – a Photographic Journey*) and screenplays (*Salaam Bombay!*, *Mississippi Masala*, *My Own Country*, *Such a Long Journey* and more). Taraporevala's latest screenplay, *The namesake*, a film directed by Mira Nair based on Pulitzer prize winner Jhumpa Lahiri's novel – is expected to have a 2006 release.

Bahram Broomand's calligraphy

Gifted young man **Bahram Broomand** of Iran creates works of art in two forms: Zarathushti calligraphy on ceramic or pottery; and Avestan calligraphic paintings. He would be grateful for any sponsor to help him financially and with a visa letter to enable him to exhibit/sell his works at an upcoming congress or similar event. Contact bahrambroomand@yahoo.com or Mehrbanoo Bakhtiary at tourmaline1234@yahoo.co.uk.

Kangaji's Khordeh Avesta (English and Gujarati) on website

Er. Soli P. Dastur with the help of Joseph Peterson, has placed the e-Book versions of *Khordeh Avesta*, in English and Gujarati, on Joseph Peterson's excellent website www.avesta.org. For instructions visit:

http://www.avesta.org/ka/ka_inst.htm

Kangaji's Khordeh Avesta in Gujarati (first published in 1880 with the 13th edition in 1976) has been a very popular book for many Parsis. The prayers are in phonetically correct Avesta in Gujarati script along with a translation in Gujarati of all the prayers. An English translation of Kangaji's book was published in 1993 by Prof. Ervad Maneck Furdoonji Kanga.

Both these Khordeh Avestas are now available on the Internet in e-Book format for easy browsing.

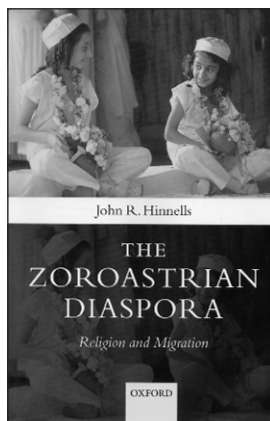
For the English Khordeh Avesta, visit:

http://www.avesta.org/kanga/ka_english_opf_files/slideshow.htm

For the Gujarati Khordeh Avesta, visit:

http://www.avesta.org/kanga/ka_gujarati_opf_files/slideshow.htm

For access instructions, contact Er. Soli P. Dastur of Sarasota, Florida at dastur@comcast.net



The Zoroastrian Diaspora ***Religion and Migration*** **by John R. Hinnells**

Oxford University Press, 2005.
ISBN:0-19-826759-2.
Hardcover, 865 p. \$250.

The Ratanbai Katrak Lectures,
The Oriental Faculty,
Oxford, 1985.

Review by Kersey H. Antia

John Hinnells worked on *The Zoroastrian Diaspora*, a book dedicated to his mentor, Professor Mary Boyce, for 20 years. He undertook this research because the Zarathushti diaspora has been ignored by scholars; and Zarathushtis all over the world will recognize it as a labor of love. Hinnells acknowledges the fact that records kept by Zoroastrian associations in the diaspora eased his work and hopefully that should inspire them to continue doing so. He ably refutes the contentions of scholars who maintain that the Parsis do not constitute a diasporic community.

A very unique feature of the book is a synopsis of the political history of each country of the major diasporas, very much like the Father of History, Herodotus, has done in his epoch-making history of the Greco-Persian wars in *The Histories*. Hinnells' work also may well become an epic for Zarathushtis – I learned so much from this work. It is impossible to do full justice to a 865-page book in the limited space available, so I can only highlight its main topics and findings.

Zoroastrian Diaspora covers: Parsis in Post-Independence Bombay, The Global Diaspora, Parsis in Hong Kong and the China Seas, Parsis of Karachi, Zoroastrians in East Africa, The Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe, Zoroastrians in the United States and Canada, Zoroastrians in Australia, as well as Globalizing Trends and a Conclusion. The book also contains an 18-page questionnaire used for this study, as well as a 5-page bibliography, which is invaluable for us.

India. While the Parsis have adjusted well to the changing political and cultural situations in post-independence India and Pakistan, their numbers are decreasing; deaths exceed births and one in three marriages in India are outside the community.

Hinnells finds the orthodox movement in Mumbai today even stronger than before, which however, may be due to the squeaky wheel making more noise, and reformists by nature not inclined to be feisty in their approach, as observed by the first reformist, K. R. Cama. Hinnells does observe some evidence of the influence of the diaspora in Mumbai, partly in debates over Joseph Peterson

and the film *Wings of Fire*, but also in personal contact by telephone, letters and visits to family and friends in the new countries. The major debates in Mumbai, as well as in the diasporas, are about intermarriage and conversion.

Hong Kong. The Parsis in Hong Kong helped needy Chinese and Mother Teresa's order, but most of their charities were for various Parsi causes in India. In terms of resources per head, "the Hong Kong Anjuman is the richest (Zoroastrian) community in the world. It is determined to use that money wisely." The Hong Kong Parsis have maintained a strong link mainly with India.

The Council of Hong Kong's Indian Association petitioned to the Governor in Council in 1985 to allow its 6,000 Indian members to use their passport to settle in Britain because of their great contribution to the colony: four Indian merchants' presence at the raising of the British flag, Indians' faithful service in the armed forces and civil service, starting Star Ferry, the University, the first bank, Seamen's Institute, donating the statue of Queen Victoria, as well as building schools and hospitals.

Although the Parsis were not involved in this petition and were not active in this Council, "in fact it was they who had been the leaders in each of the contributions to Hong Kong specified in the petition" [p. 184].

Pakistan. While living in Pakistan has not subjected the Zarathushtis to as severe restrictions as faced by them in Iran, there are few opportunities for social exchanges with the wider Pakistani society. Topics of intermarriage and purity laws often lead to debates about the status of those marrying out. The Parsis, as a group, have not been targeted for any hostile act. The Karachi Parsis have gone through various phases as pioneers in building Karachi, leadership roles in the early history of the nation, to a growing concern about fundamentalist trends and rampant gang violence.

The young are migrating to the West if they can. Deaths exceed births and the number of deaths per year increased from 32 in 1999 to 46 in 2000.

East Africa. Before becoming the Sultan of Zanzibar, Barghash had been exiled by the British to Bombay, where he befriended many Parsis whom he invited to **Zanzibar** upon becoming Sultan, circa 1875, but Parsis had migrated to Zanzibar even before that.

An American traveler, Osgood, to Zanzibar in 1854 commented on:

"... the Parsis' quiet energy, industrious habits, courteous address, tolerant loyalty and good morals.

"Than a Parsee, can be found no more faithful and enduring friend, no more assiduous catcher – and at the same time liberal squanderer – of money, no more skilful merchant or mechanic ... a handsome man."

An Anjuman was established in Zanzibar in 1875, and a priest came from Udvada in 1881.

Ethel Younghusband commented in 1908:

“By far the most superior of the natives of India who have come to Zanzibar are the Parsis ... They are a most interesting people, quite different from the other children of India. They are, to begin with, very much lighter in color ...

“Parsis generally are noted for their kindness, generosity and benevolence towards others less well off than they are; they build many public institutions and subscribe liberally to funds for any worthy object. They attain their position by hard work and good business faculties, perseverance being one of their strong points ...”

Such adulatory comments about Parsis, even when living away from India, are noteworthy. In 1963, when a new regime came into power after a brief revolution, the new president pleaded over a radio broadcast not to harm the Parsis, because of their contributions to the development of Zanzibar. Although no Parsi was harmed, the volatile political situation made it impossible for them to continue living in Zanzibar. Most moved to England – among them Bomi and Jer Balsara, and their young son Farokh, who went on to become rock superstar Freddie Mercury.

While Hinnells’ treatment of Zanzibar is extensive, the paucity of information about once so prominent a diaspora as *Aden* is very conspicuous, perhaps for no fault of the author as all the foreigners were summarily driven out of Aden after its hostile take-over by the Arabs thereby making all records unavailable.

England. The first Zarathushti (and the first Indian) to go to England was Naoroji Rustomji Maneck in 1724 to settle his grievance against the East India Company. From the 1840s, many Parsis visited Britain to learn about various technologies, sciences, law, medicine and commerce. In 1861, a Zoroastrian association was formed – the first Asian religious association founded in Britain.

Hinnells describes in detail the accomplishments of the three Parsis who became Members of Parliament in Britain. After reading Prof. John McLeod’s biography of M. Bhownaggee, Hinnells has changed his previous perception of Bhownaggee as one who merely toed the British line, to one who was a true patriot, as devoted to India, as was Dadabhai Naoroji.

Australia. Hinnells’ painstaking review of New Zealand and Australian immigration rules, even before Zarathushtis started migrating there in the 1960s and 1970s, is very illuminating, and is aptly matched by his step-by-step description of how Zoroastrian associations came to be formed there and how the *darbe mehr* was finally built in Sydney, despite many obstructions. Hinnells does not mention who migrated to Australia first, but as a child, I knew an old relative in Siganpore village,

Dosabhai Cooverji Patel who somehow, according to legend, “smuggled” himself in a steamboat sailing to Australia from Bombay in the late nineteenth century or so, and thrived there selling ice-cream until he retired in Siganpore, circa 1930s.

USA and Canada. Hinnells excels in his treatment of events in North America, as he has visited many places there and attended a few congresses. He provides illuminating facts about how FEZANA came into being, as well as about its antecedents since the 1960s, which would have soon become forgotten, as the first generation immigrants as a rule, have already reached retirement age. Almost anyone who played a significant role in forming FEZANA and kept it going, will find themselves mentioned in his mammoth, epic-making work.

“ I do not know of any Zarathushti, or for that matter, anyone else who has so deeply cared over the years, to study Zoroastrians and their diaspora, as John Hinnells has... This is the *summum bonum* of his work on Zoroastrians, for which he will be remembered forever. ”

Hinnells has come to know (and even live with) many Zarathushti leaders in all the five continents, and yet he has remained as neutral in his observations about them as is humanly possible, which is no mean achievement while dealing with a very fractious and individualistic people. I experienced his neutrality two decades ago at a North American congress when he utterly surprised me by personally apologizing for one of his non-Zarathushti colleague’s vocal criticism of me after my session. He told me how he let his colleague know in no uncertain terms of his displeasure. Without such a strong sense of impartiality and objectivity, such an undertaking would be worthless for historicity. In my own case, his indepth coverage of the Peterson navjote is both fair and neutral.

The tremendous amount of data his questionnaires have generated could prove useful in accurately gauging the community’s mood and preferences which, of course, will change with the times, as the new generation will soon replace the old, but Hinnells’ pioneering research methodology could provide inspiration to others to carry out similar fact finding projects in the future.

Hinnells has noted the efforts by various associations in North America, Australia and UK to engage in interfaith movements as well as provide religious education to the young, unlike in the other diasporas he studied.

NOTE: Dr. Antia fervently appeals to all readers to share any information they may have about the history of Aden Parsis. Please contact kerseyantia@yahoo.com, or write c/o the editor, FEZANA Journal.

In all diasporas, the Zarathushti associations seem to function more as social clubs, rather than as religious organizations on the whole.

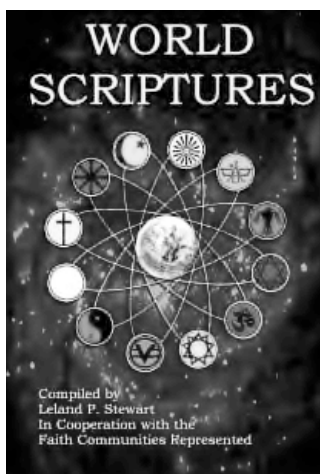
Conclusion. Hinnells' masterly treatment of the issues facing Zarathushtis in the diaspora is worth reading as well as preserving for future generations. It will be hard to challenge his conclusion:

"There is no single Zoroastrian diaspora, for the different groups in various countries sometimes contrast greatly with each other. Indeed, Zoroastrian associations in a single country can differ significantly ... There are many Zoroastrian diaspora communities; they are all different, but together they form a rich tapestry."

I do not know of any Zarathushti, or for that matter, anyone else who has so deeply cared over the years, to study Zarathushtis and their diaspora, as John Hinnells has. It is hard to find any fault with his painstaking and exhaustive research.

This is the *summum bonum* of his work on Zarathushtis, for which he will be remembered forever.

Ushta té (Happiness to you) and *darego jitim* (long life) to you, Mr. Hinnells! ■



World Scriptures

by Leland P. Stewart

ISBN: 1-931475-15-6
Blue cloth, hardcover,
736 pages.

Quiet Waters Publications.

To order, visit:
www.quietwaterspub.com

World Scriptures is ideal for personal study and meditation, as well as for use in classes which seek to build bridges between different faiths. Author Reverend Leland P. Stewart, a 1953 graduate of Harvard Divinity School offers a selection of scriptures from a number of traditions, including: Taoist, Confucianist, Hindu, Buddhist, Zoroastrian, Jewish, Christian, Islamic, Baha'i, Scientology, Brahma Kumaris and others.

Saros Cowasjee's Raj Collection

Oxford University Press (New Delhi) has published *A Raj Collection* of four 'Raj' novels from British India. Sarosh Cowasjee, professor emeritus at the University of Regina, serves as editor and gives a 40-page introduction. *Raj Collection* is a companion volume to *Oxford Anthology of Raj Stories*, also edited by Saros Cowasjee [Reviewed by Boman Desai in FJ, Winter 2002].

COMING SOON

A complete handbook with explanations, guidelines and practice of Zarathushti funeral rites

UNDERSTANDING AND PRACTICE OF OBSEQUIES

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Paperback, 343 pages.

To order contact Er. Bagli at jbagli@rogers.com

"With the passage of time in this North American diaspora and with the emergence of young priesthood, who are largely unfamiliar with the Gujarati language, we at NAMC noted a clear need for a handbook in English that explains the implications of Zarathushtrian rituals performed during the last rites, guidelines for their adaptation in North America together with all the prayers that are traditionally recited to help a smooth transition of the soul from the corporeal to the spiritual domain."

- the authors

Ch. 1: *Dying and Obsequies* describes life, death, after-life rituals, Gehsarna, Sarosh in pre- and post-disposal rituals, Uthamna ceremony and Cheharum.

Ch. 2: *Guidelines for Funeral and Obsequies* provides guidance for North American associations for dissemination to their local community. Some information is also given on modes of disposal.

Ch. 3: Notes on *Topics of Importance* describes several technical aspects of the rituals.

Ch. 4-10 give *prayers in English*: Gehsarna, Sarosh Karda (or Sarosh nu Patroo), evening Uthamna, Uthamna for Ushahin Geh, Cheharum prayers, Farokhshi with Satum Karda and Satum Karda.

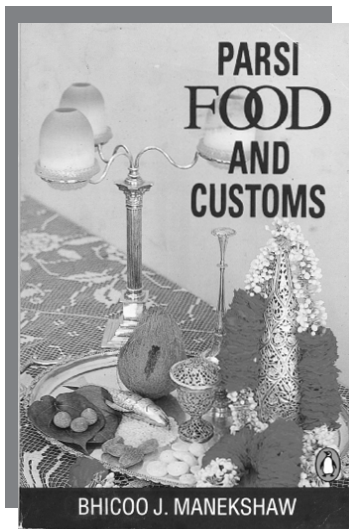
The book has a Foreword by Dastur Firoze Kotwal, who has reviewed it and offered suggestions that have been incorporated. ■



GATHAS in Russian

Text of Gathas in Avestan script, and translation in Russian, based on translations by Mobed Firuz Azargoshasb.

Contact Jamshid Zartoshti
Minsk, Belarus at:
jamshid.zartoshti@gmail.com



Parsi Food and Customs

by **Bhicoo Manekshaw**

Penguin Books India

ISBN:0140257594

Paperback, 440 pages

Rs. 250.

Available from
Parsiana Bookstore
[see page 57]

Parsi Food and Customs is a treasure-house of recipes and customs that define the Parsi way of life. Celebrations, rituals and food inevitably go together; and so it is with the Parsis. From Nouruz, jashans and gahambars, to the life cycle ceremonies of navjote, wedding and death, Bhicoo Manekshaw describes the attendant customs and traditions interlaced with recipes to suit every occasion.

Manekshaw, 84, was the first Indian to gain admission to the Advanced Course at the famed Cordon Bleu School of Cookery in London in 1963, and has had a long career as expert chef and catering consultant at venerable institutions like the Taj Mahal Hotel, Raj Bhavan and VIP flights on Air India. ■



The Space Between Us

a novel by

Thrity Umrigar

William Morrow, an imprint of Harper-Collins Publishers. January 2006. Hardcover, 336 pages. \$24.95.

www.harpercollins.com,

www.umrigar.com

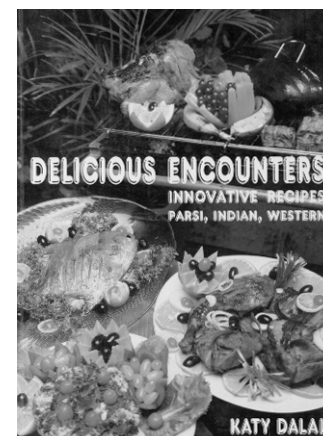
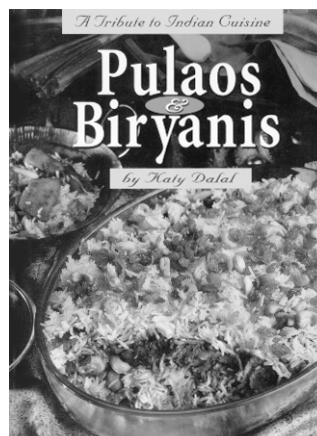
Set in contemporary Bombay, Thrity Umrigar's second novel, an affecting portrait of a middle-class Parsi widow, Sera Dubash, and her domestic servant Bhima, is on the San Francisco Chronicle Best Seller list.

"Bracingly honest... Umrigar is a perceptive and often piercing writer..." - *New York Times*

"Provocative and disturbing..." - *The Boston Globe*

"A powerful social commentary on the glorious and frustrating puzzle that is modern India." - *The Economist*

"Umrigar is a skilled storyteller..." - *Washington Post*



Cookbooks by Katy Dalal

Popular Parsi caterer Katy Dalal's sixth cookbook, *Seafood Fiesta*, was launched by Dr. Boman Chhapgar, former curator of the Taraporevala Aquarium in Mumbai. The book gives mouth-watering fish recipes – from Bombay Duck to salmon. Other books by Katy Dalal include:

Jamva Chaloji, Parsi delicacies for all occasions, including a Parsi wedding feast and other traditional favorites.

Jamva Chaloji-2, more Parsi traditional foods, including old-time recipes like vasanoo and aleti paleti.

Pulaos and Biryanis is a tribute to rice recipes from all regions of India and treasured Parsi family recipes.

Delicious Encounters, innovative recipes – Parsi, Indian and Western, from Tandoori chops to an English Tea.

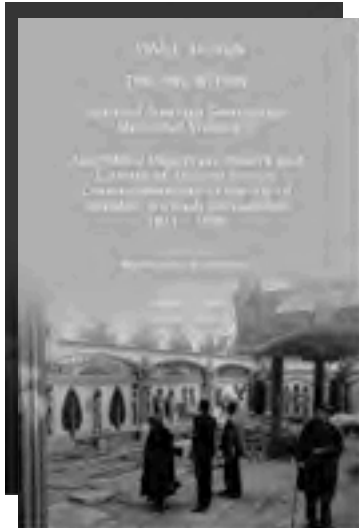
Vitality Cookbook offers fruit and vegetable recipes.

[Available from Parsiana Bookstore, see page 57].

Avesta volumes

Morvarid Publishers from Tehran have announced publication of the ninth edition of *Avesta* (in 2 volumes). Visit www.iranshenakht.blogspot.com. [Posted by Jalil Doostkhah, dkhah@yahoo.com.au on creatingawareness@yahoogroups.com.]

Method of disposal in Iran



For information, contact Mehrborzin Soroushian (mazda@san.rr.com).

[Continued from page 85]

Mary Boyce has written an informative article on the history and adaption of the aramgah in Kerman, Iran. The article was featured in **The Fire Within: Atash-e Dorun Jamshid Soroush Soroushian Memorial Volume II** (pages 43-56), commemorating the life of Jamshid Soroush Soroushian. It also features an article on Kerman's dokhmas by Prof. Dietrich Huff.

The Real Story of Freddy Mercury

by Mariam Ahundova

In Russian (in 2003), now available in English also.

<http://allofqueen.on.ufanet.ru/book.html>



The real story of Freddie Mercury written by Russian author Mariam Ahundova, destroys many stereotypes and prejudices, created around the rock icon.

The influence of the Zarathushti environment upon Freddie Mercury is discussed in the very first chapter. The second chapter deals with falsification and concealment of the facts, connected with his childhood, which in the author's opinion, is to conceal the influence of the Zarathushti environment upon the formation of Freddie's personality.

Ahundova believes Freddie Mercury's private and public life answers the description of a righteous Zarathushti and that he brought the light of his religion and his soul into his music. She devotes chapter 6 to analyzing religious motives in Queen's songs and points out numerous symbols that can be seen in his songs, such as the fravahar in *Who Wants to Live Forever* video and the symbol of Fire in the video of *Made In Heaven*; and the picture of a Symurg in the crest of the rock group, *Queen*. ■



"Being Religious and Living through the Eyes"

Editor-in-Chief:
Peter Schalk

Co-editor:
Michael Stausberg

Studies in Religious Iconography and Iconology. Uppsala University. 1998. Softcover, 423 pp., ISBN 91-554-4199-8 Michael.Stausberg@krr.uib.no

"Be pure as the Light." Zoroaster by Eduard Benndemann. Along with the Dresden Palace, the portrait was destroyed during air raids in 1945.

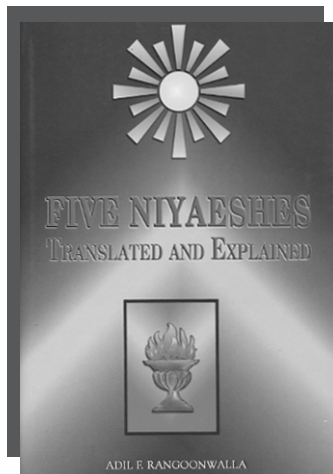
This mammoth volume celebrates the 65th birthday of Prof. Jan Bergman, who is noted for his studies of religious iconography. Of the 22 contributions in this volume covering a spectrum of disciplines, two are on Zoroastrian iconography: one is in German by Michael Stausberg and the second by Anders Hultgard.

In the introduction, Stausberg stresses that the word 'iconography' can be either used by the academic historian for his scholarly pursuits or by the faithful followers as a set of normative or prescriptive rules for producing a piece of art. He objectifies Zoroastrian iconography which enables him to observe the continuity and change through the centuries of how the Zarathushtra portrait was imagined by different cultures. A striking example, among the numerous paintings and engravings of Zarathushtra that illustrate his article, is the Dresden Zarathushtra [above]. According to him, Christian Jesus portraits have influenced the modern Zarathushtra portrait.

In the second article, "The Magi and the Star – the Persian Background in Texts and Iconography," Anders Hultgard avers that the literary and pictorial legend of the magi and the star goes back to a genuine Persian tradition that was circulating already, before the birth of Christ.

This book may be intended for scholars, but any book that sheds some new light on our history and tradition is welcome, as we have scarcely invested in studying them ourselves, and we have to depend on others to define us and our tradition. ■

[Excerpted from review by Dr. Kersey H. Antia. The full review is available from the editor, FEZANA Journal].



FIVE NIYAESHES **Translated and Explained**

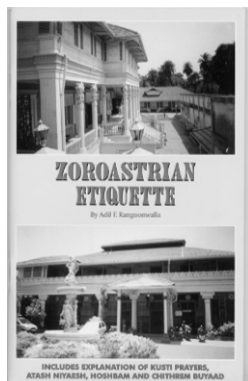
by **Adil F. Rangoonwalla**

Hardcover, 350 pages,
Union Press, Mumbai, 2004, Rs. 350.

Available from Parsiana Bookstore,
www.parsiana.com.

Inspired by the *Khordeh Avesta* (Gujarati translations) by Ervad Kavasji Edulji Kanga, Adil Rangoonwalla published *Five Niyaeshe*, which are a part of the *Khordeh Avesta* in 2004, on the 100th death anniversary of that illustrious scholar. Besides the text in Roman script and a translation in English, Rangoonwalla also gives a commentary for each verse. In the Foreword, he writes: "I have struggled all through these fourteen years of my humble experience, to write these explanations and interpretations, so that the real spiritual value and esoteric aspects of our prayers surface and bring joy to your heart."

Other recent books by Adil F. Rangoonwalla (at www.parsiana.net) include:



Zoroastrian Etiquette

by **Adil Rangoonwalla**

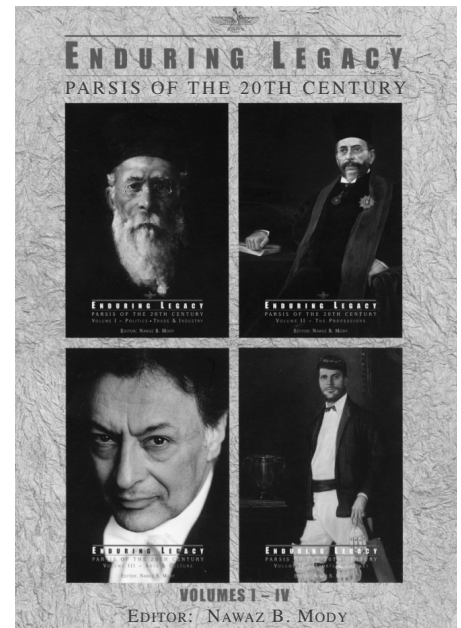
Includes explanations of *sudreh* and *kushti*, the prayer cap, fire and more.



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Available from Parsiana Bookstore
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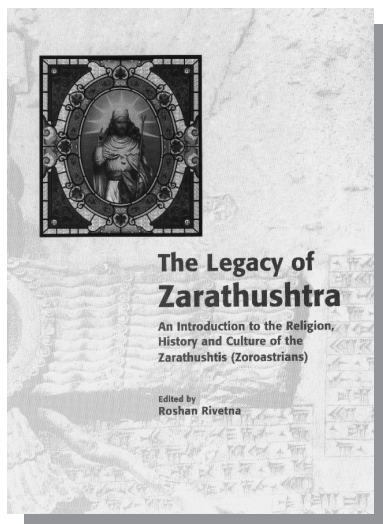
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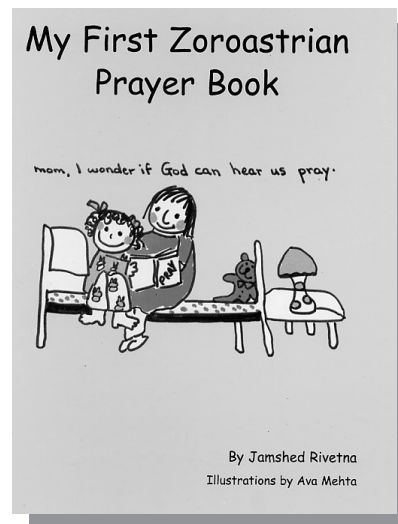
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