



# JOURNAL

Dae – Behman – Spendarmad 1378 AY (Fasli)

• Amordad – Shehrever – Meher 1379 AY (Shenshai)

• Shehrever – Meher – Avan 1379 AY (Kadimi)

## Religious Perspectives:

### Parliament of the World's Religions

**Also Inside:**

- Parliament of the World's Religions, Melbourne
- Parliament of the World's Religions: A short history
- Zorathustis join in prayers for world peace in Pittsburgh
- Book review: *Thus Spake the Magavs* by Silloo Mehta



# FEZANA JOURNAL

PUBLICATION OF THE FEDERATION OF ZOROASTRIAN  
ASSOCIATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA

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Odyssey to Preservation

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Ervads Soli Dastur and Jehan Bagli

## Summer 2010

The Zarathushti Diaspora

Guest Editor Deena Guzder

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Cover design

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of  
Lexicongraphics

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**Opinions expressed in the FEZANA Journal do not necessarily reflect the  
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## A word from the Editor

Dolly Dastoor

Steven Rockefeller in *Spirit and Nature* wrote "In this new ecological age of developing global community and interfaith dialogue, the world religions face what is perhaps the greatest challenge that they have ever encountered. Each is inspired by a unique vision of the divine and has a distinct cultural identity. At the same time each perceives the divine as the source of unity and peace. The Challenge is to preserve their religious and cultural uniqueness without letting it operate as a cause of narrow and divisive sectarianism that contradicts the vision of divine unity and peace"

Scientific and technological advancement has allowed us to come together and communicate with a click of a mouse, but we, as human beings still yearn for spiritual and emotional communication with all people, which we seem to have lost in our quest for material advancement. However in the last fifty years there has been a transformation of human thinking and we find ourselves in a world where people and nations who once denied the existence of God and religion are turning to "religion" in their quest to find meaning and hope. The unfortunate part is that religions are not quite ready to face the challenge, because the kind of exclusivist traditional religion on which most of us have been nurtured is not able to cope with the crying need of humanity for meaning, for a higher spiritual calling, a desire to discover God within themselves and their world and work out whatever relationship they want, which is beyond organized religion.

We need to recreate a moral vision for humanity of universally accepted moral principles which will make possible for all religions and all nations to live in peace with people within each religion and between each religion. The awareness that all people belong to the same family through their common origin and destination should lead to a higher universal responsibility to practice this awareness in our lives. This is not to imply that we need one religion which unites all religions but rather a paradigm shift in our thinking of the meaning of what a religion should be to ALL people.

In this issue, as we prepare to attend the 2009 Parliament of the World's Religions in Melbourne, Jesse Palsetia, our Guest editor, has put together a collection of papers from authors of different religious backgrounds, Hindu, Judaic, Christian and Zarathushti showcasing the rich heritage of the Zarathushti religion, and the impact of its collision with the Vedic, Jewish and Christian philosophies.



The articles in this issue will be of interest to the reader to understand and appreciate the vibrancy of Zoroastrian studies, internationally, and the need to dialogue, not the merits of one religion over the other but the interrelatedness of each on the other.

Much has been done in the name of religion, wars have been fought, people have been massacred. Religion has been much maligned. We now need to wage peace, of mutual respect where cultures of the world can come together and live in global harmony for the welfare of all humanity with a commitment to an environment that promotes life rather than threatens to extinguish it.

Inter-religious dialogue, as there undoubtedly will be at the World Parliament, will only be possible when we respect each other's individuality. Thus, knowledge of others in their cultural setting is essential. By recognizing and accepting social, cultural, and religious diversity, by allowing for an exchange of mutual values, and by recognizing the escalating ecological, social, economic and financial problems, humanity ultimately will be led to unity. Only then will a Global Community cognizant of a need for Universal Responsibility will prevail

A PEACEFUL 2010 TO ALL

*Dolly Dastoor*



# Calendar of Festivals

Calendar of Festivities September 2009 to March 2010

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Fravardian Jashan<br><i>Mah Fravardin, Roz Fravardin</i>                      | Friday, Aug 7<br>Sunday, Sep 6   |
| Maidyozarem Gahambar<br><i>Mah Ardibehesht, Roz Khorshed-Daepmeher</i>        | Saturday, Aug 29 -Wednesday, Sept 2<br>Monday, Sep 28 - Friday, Oct 02 |
| Paitishem Gahambar<br><i>Mah Sheherevar, Roz Ashtad Aneran</i>                | Saturday, Sep 12- Wednesday, Sep 16                                    |
| Jashne-Mehergan<br><i>Mah Meher, Roz Meher</i>                                | Friday, Oct 02   |
| Ayathrem Gahambar<br><i>Mah Meher, Roz Ashtad-Aneran</i>                      | Monday, Oct 12- Friday, Oct 16   |
| Jashne-Avangan(Avan Ardivisur Parab)<br><i>Mah Avan, Roz Avan</i>             | Monday, Oct 26   |
| Maidyoshem Gahambar<br><i>Mah Tir, Roz Khorshed-Daepmeher</i>                 | Wednesday, Oct 28 - Sunday, Nov. 01<br>Friday, Nov 27- Tuesday, Dec 01 |
| Jashne-Adargan<br><i>Mah Adar, Roz Adar</i>                                   | Tuesday, Nov 24  |
| Death Anniversary of Zarathushtra<br><i>Mah Dae, Roz Khorshed</i>             | Saturday, Dec 26   |
| Maidhyarem Gahambar<br><i>Mah Dae, Roz Meher-Bahram</i>                       | Thursday, Dec 31-Monday, Jan 04  |
| Jashne Daegan<br><i>Mah Dae, Roz Daepdin</i>                                  | Thursday, Jan 07   |
| Jashne Bahmangan<br><i>Mah Bahman, Roz Bahman</i>                             | Saturday, Jan 16   |
| Paitishem Gahambar<br><i>Mah Sheherevar, Roz Ashtad-Aneran</i>                | Monday, Jan 11 - Friday, Jan 15<br>Wednesday, Feb 10 - Sunday, Feb 14  |
| Jashne Sadeh<br><i>Mah Bahman, Roz Meher</i>                                  | Saturday, Jan 30   |
| Ayatherem Gahambar<br><i>Mah Meher, Roz Ashtad-Aneran</i>                     | Wednesday, Feb 10 - Sunday, Feb 14<br>Friday, Mar 12 - Tuesday, Mar 16 |
| Fravardegan/Panjeh/Hamaspathmedayem Gaham<br><i>Five Gatha days</i>           | Tuesday, March 16-Saturday, Mar 20                                     |
| Char-Shanbe-Soori (Heralding the New Year)<br><i>Tuesday Prior to NauRooz</i> | Tuesday, March 16  |
| NauRooz or Jamshedi NauRooz (New Year)<br><i>Mah Fravardin, Roz Hormazd</i>   | Sunday, Mar 21   |

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

## The UNESCO-Madanjeet Singh Prize

A Belgian human rights defender François Houtart and a Pakistani philanthropist Abdul Sattar Edhi have been awarded a prestigious **The UNESCO-Madanjeet Singh Prize** for their work in promoting tolerance and non-violence.

They will share the \$100,000 prize money and receive the award on 16 November, the International Day for Tolerance

The prize created in 1995 on the 125th anniversary of the birth of the Mahatma Gandhi through the generosity of writer and diplomat Madanjeet Singh, a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador. The prize is awarded every two years to individuals or institutions for outstanding contributions towards its goals.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=32629&Cr=unesco&Cr1=>

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**Past issues of *The Journal* are available to the public,  
both in print and online through our archives  
at [www.fezana.org](http://www.fezana.org).**





## COMING EVENTS

### DECEMBER 2009, PARLIAMENT OF THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

The 2009 Parliament "Embracing Difference, Transforming the World" . will be an international inter- religious gathering spanning seven nights and six days – from December 3rd to 9th - bringing together an estimated 8,000 to 12,000 persons. Visit: <http://www.cpwr.org/index.html>



### DECEMBER 2009, SINGAPORE-CHINA RELIGIOUS ARTIFACTS AND CULTURAL EXHIBITION.

December 16 – 23, 2009 at Suntec, Singapore, organized by Inter-Religious Organization (IRO), Contact Rustom M Ghadiali VP IRO SINGAPORE

### DECEMBER 2009, FIFTH COMING TOGETHER ROUNDTABLE

"Connect, Collaborate, Create" December 27th, 2009 at the India Club, Dubai  
December 30th and 31st at Crowne Plaza Hotel, Dubai  
To submit items for the agenda contact: Rohinton Rivetna [rivetna@aol.com](mailto:rivetna@aol.com)



### DECEMBER 2009, WORLD CONGRESS, DUBAI.

9th World Zoroastrian Congress "Unity Through the Sands of Time" Dubai, December 28-31, 2009. Contact [meher\\_bhesania@hotmail.com](mailto:meher_bhesania@hotmail.com)

### JANUARY 2010, PRAVASI BHARATIYA DIVAS (PBD)

"Engaging the Diaspora : The Way Forward", January 7- 9, 2010 <http://bindia.org/>

### MARCH 2010, COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN FIFTY-FOURTH SESSION,

United Nations Headquarters, New York. (March 1-12, 2010)  
Contact: Afreed Mistry [afreed.mistry@gmail.com](mailto:afreed.mistry@gmail.com), Co-Chair FEZANA UN-NGO Committee

### APRIL 2010, FEZANA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. April 2-4<sup>th</sup>

Sponsored by Ontario Zarathushti Cultural Foundation, (OZCF), Oakville

### DECEMBER 2010, FIFTEENTH NORTH AMERICAN Z CONGRESS, HOUSTON,

"Preserve, Protect and Perfect," Hotel Intercontinental, December 29 to January 1 2011. [www.zah.org](http://www.zah.org)

### APRIL 2012, FIRST ZOROASTRIAN MOBEDS AND SCHOLARS INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS, Tehran, Iran.

Contact: Mobed Firouzgary (for Mobeds) and Dr Farzaneh Goshatasbour (for Scholars) [Fezana Journal - Vol 23 No 2 page 127]

### AUGUST 2012, SIXTEENTH NORTH AMERICAN Z CONGRESS, NEW YORK ,

"Zoroastrian existence in the Contemporary World" [www.zagny.org](http://www.zagny.org)

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# FEZANA UPDATE

## The Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America, (FEZANA)

The Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA) is made up of 26 registered associations, 13 corresponding member groups, 9 standing committees and several ad hoc committees (9 at the present time) with three working groups. The 26 associations form the governing body of FEZANA and the decisions are taken by them.

In this issue we will feature a cross section of the associations and the ad hoc committees:

### Zoroastrian Association of California

The Zoroastrian Association of California is a strong and vibrant organization, having been in existence for over 30 years, serving the needs of Zarthushtis in the Los Angeles area. The committee, President Vira Santoke, Vice-President Tehmi Damania, Treasurer Chisti Dadachanji, Jt. Secretaries Rooky Fitter and Farida Udwadia, Program Chair Hilla Machhi and Youth coordinator Mehernosh Gundevia,



is geared towards promoting unity and community spirit by organizing varied functions throughout the year. Our mission is to get everyone together in a spirit of harmony and enjoyment, and to enrich our small but vibrant community for present and future generations. Apart from the usual Noruz and Pateti functions, religious classes, jashans, gahambars, picnics, ladies club meetings and annual walk-a-thon, we also introduced some educational seminars and a Senior Appreciation Day, honoring the older members of the community, which was received with great enthusiasm on the part of young and old.

Our youth are also active throughout the year with softball games, beach picnics and trips to theme parks. Our bi-annual youth show, followed by a Parsi Gujarati natak last August was a big hit. This special fundraiser helps promote camaraderie amongst our youth, who come together and make new friends and bond with old ones, during rehearsals and for months after the show itself.

We are, at the moment, in the process of purchasing land for our own center in the city of Anaheim and our biggest focus is to collect funds for this project. It is heart-warming to see the community come together strongly to make this dream a reality.

Submitted by Vira Santoke, President, ZAC.

### The Zoroastrian Association of Florida (ZAF) - 2009

ZAF, established in 1994 celebrates its 15th anniversary this year. It represents a dynamic community of 75 households in the tri-County (Miami/Ft. Lauderdale/Palm Beach) in Southeast Florida. It is a growing and diverse community with new families steadily moving into the area, and has all professions and walks of life represented.

This March, ZAF elected a new 2009-2010 board, and has crossed several milestones thus far. For the first time in Florida, we set up community Muktaad tables, including families as far away as Orlando and Tampa Bay, with the prayers performed by Ervad Soli Dastur. Also for the first time, ZAF celebrated the Pateti/New Year function that was combined from all the three major areas, including Orlando and Tampa Bay communities, with record 140 guests in attendance.





# FEZANA UPDATE



mukta flowers



Magician Sarosh Mistry entertaining the children

One of the highlights of the function was a locally produced, directed, and acted naatak, thanks to our veteran writer and director, Mr. Burjor Tata.

Our Z-Club children's program, with its history, culture and religion classes, under the leadership of Professor Aban Kavasmaneck, is already quite well known.

In 2009, ZAF initiated a two-fold recognition program: first, during the Pateti function, we recognized our high school and college graduates with cash awards. While not large, the awards serve as a token of the community's encouragement of their efforts to reach a desired educational goal. Second, ZAF presented service awards to those individuals who, over the years, have given their best and risen above expectations to selflessly fill needed niches and make it a better community, whether in the field of organizing events, teaching our children, or providing entertainment.

We are constantly looking to break new ground to preserve Zoroastrian culture and improve the benefits to our membership.

## **Zoroastrian Association of Houston (ZAH)**

**Established 1976**

**Zarathushti Heritage and Cultural Center opened in May 1998**

Over the years, Houston has been a beacon for Zarathushtis from many lands, including those from the US who choose to relocate to our dynamic city. Houston is a bright city which boasts a warm climate, an inviting business atmosphere, and a vibrant Zarathushti community. In 1998, the Zarathushti Heritage and Cultural Center (ZHCC) was built to preserve our religious practices and our rich and varied culture. It is at the ZHCC that members gather to learn, celebrate, and worship together. Jashans, conferences, lectures, workshops, Sunday school classes and many other interest groups meet on a monthly basis. Intercultural events, plays, dance programs, mukta



Heritage Centre

prayers, ghambars, art exhibits, interfaith activities as well as observances and celebrations such as navjotes, lagans, (weddings) and anniversary celebrations are held with aplomb.

In 1990, the Zoroastrian Association of Houston hosted the Seventh North American Zoroastrian Congress that attracted 700 participants. In 2000, 2200 Zarathushtis gathered from all over the world to attend the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress. Presently plans for a stellar 15th. North American Zoroastrian Congress, from 29 December 2010 to January 1, 2011 is in the works.



# FEZANA UPDATE

It is in Houston that the seeds for the World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce started. The city boasts a large number of Zarathushti businesses from real estate and venture capitalist firms to manufacturing and service oriented business.

The FEZANA Information Research & Education Systems (FIRES), a centralized collection of Zarathushti books, manuscripts, literature, and magazines, is also located at the Zoroastrian Association of Houston (ZAH) library.

Come visit us! And you will realize that there is something of real value.

## The Zoroastrian Association of Michigan (ZAOM)



The Zoroastrian Association of Michigan (ZAOM) was officially formed in September 2007. ZAOM's mission is to facilitate a Zarathushti way of life for our members.

Today, Michigan has over 50 Zarathushti families. Zoroastrians in Michigan can be traced back to the 1960s with immigrants from India and Pakistan. For close to 40 years, the community in Michigan operated as a close knit, vibrant community conducting all activities that an association needs to conduct such as religious classes, gatherings for community members, etc. However, in 2007, the community wanted to take a step for the future. The community realized that the next step forward was to become part of the bigger picture of the world Zarathushti bodies by setting up a formal non-profit organization recognized by both state

and federal governments. A near unanimous vote was taken by community members in favor of an association and the journey began.

The first Executive Committee of the Association took office on January 1, 2008 for a two year term. Thus far, the building blocks for running an association have been the focus. Some of the milestones include writing bylaws, developing a membership fee structure, obtaining state & federal exemptions, organizing community functions and integrating our children's prayer group into ZAOM. The Committee operates with different sub-committees who are in charge of specialty interests like social, educational, etc.

Our medium term goals are to build an endowment for a Zoroastrian place of gathering. Fund raising is a major challenge we face in this process being a new organization.

We recognize that this is just the beginning and we hope to model our success on other very successful North American and global Zarathushti associations. We hope all patrons will help us in whatever way they can in our journey.



ZAMWI is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. The membership of the association stands at about 170 family and individual members. The community throughout the Washington metropolitan area is much larger than our membership numbers, though, which numbers well over 500 individuals. The Association conducts about ten social events and Gahambars per year. The most popular events are Mehregan, NoRooz, Pateti, Sadeh, Children's Talent Show and Cooking Competition, and the Mukta prayers. The cornerstone of ZAMWI, however, is the Children's Avesta Classes. These classes along with the Adult Discussion classes are conducted biweekly. As the children in the Avesta Class number well over seventy, and in the absence of a Zoroastrian Center, the classes are held at one of the area public schools. The goals of the Avesta Classes reach beyond religious and cultural education and encompass sportsmanship, community service, and promotion of leadership. ZAMWI members also participate in community events, be it local river cleanup efforts, tree planting events or interfaith





# FEZANA UPDATE

activities. A few years ago, ZAMWI also started a very successful fund raising effort in the form of a Grocery coupon program in which grocery gift cards are purchased at a reduced price from the main grocery chains and in turn sold to the members at the face value. This program is able to raise several thousand dollars per year.

ZAMWI's Fali Chothia Charitable Trust was established in 1988, and is funded by donations from all over North America. The Trust provides scholarships and interest-free loans to deserving Zoroastrian students enrolled in universities in North America, regardless of their country of origin. Assistance is based on factors such as an applicant's educational level and achievements, community service, and overall financial need.

Since its inception, ZAMWI has been in pursuit of a Zoroastrian Center and we are very hopeful that within the next few years this dream will become a reality.

Please visit our website at [www.zamwi.org](http://www.zamwi.org)

## FEZANA COMMITTEES INTERFAITH ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

Zoroastrians strive to serve as bridge builders between faiths and among faiths. Our beliefs are reflected in faith traditions of both the east and the west. By promoting interfaith and intrafaith dialogue and discourse we attempt to deepen understanding.

The main activities of the FEZANA Interfaith Committee are:

- Attending religious services of other faiths to try to understand the similarity or differences in doctrine, culture and rituals;
- Organizing seminars for Zarathushtis and practitioners of other faiths where the organizers, speakers, participants, and the audience have the opportunity to exchange information freely;
- Distributing FEZANA brochures at get-togethers or by mail. These give concise information on the Zoroastrian religion and community, particularly in

North America; and supplement with brochures from local association which incorporate information on its activities.

- Distributing the *FEZANA Legacy Book* and the *FEZANA Journal* at local, national and international interfaith gatherings, libraries and colleges.
- Attending/participating in university seminars sponsored by Department of Religious Education.
- Organizing/participating in events where artifacts of religious, historic and cultural significance are prominently displayed with concise information about them.
- Organizing/participating in events for viewing of films and videos for Zarathushtis and members of other faiths.

FEZANA is represented on many interfaith organizations, such as Religions for Peace-USA, Inc.(RFPUSA), North American Interfaith Network (NAIN), and Parliament of the World's Religions (PWR), which is the largest interfaith group in the world today. Rohinton Rivetna is a Founding Trustee of the Council of PWR. Homi Gandhi is Treasurer of RFPUSA and member of the NAIN Investment Committee. These representations help us in bringing awareness of interfaith activities to the FEZANA membership and the North American Zoroastrian community and encourage participation at all levels by adults, young adults, and children. Zarathushtis from around the world will be attending the 5th PWR, in Melbourne, Australia, in December 2009 as they have done at past PWR's in Chicago, USA, in Cape Town, South Africa and in Barcelona, Spain.

Past activities of the Interfaith Activities Committee are chronicled in the Interfaith section of the *FEZANA Journal* accessible at [www.fezana.org](http://www.fezana.org).

Individuals desiring to participate at any event in the local area or at the national level may contact

### Co-Chairs

**Rohinton Rivetna** [rivetna@aol.com](mailto:rivetna@aol.com)

**Homi D Gandhi** [homidgandhi@gmail.com](mailto:homidgandhi@gmail.com)



# FEZANA UPDATE

## THE MANUSCRIPT COMMITTEE OF FEZANA

Under the Chairmanship of Dr Pallan Ichaporia, Teaching Assistant to Prof Helmut Humbach, Mainz University, Germany and Elected Fellow of Royal Asiatic Society of Gt Britain and Ireland over thousands of manuscripts of Avesta and Pahlavi which are scattered throughout the world have been collected and have been digitalized

They will be published under the ausices of FEZANA so that it remains at a single library either at Chicago or Houston. He has personally visited several European libraries including Russian libraries and collected over 1000 manuscripts and digitalized them as well as several important ones from K R Cama Oriental Institute.

Dasturji Dr. Firoze Kotwal, the scholar priest of high reputation has recently published a book describing in details manuscripts of Yashts from Meherji Rana Library, Navsari. The manuscripts were photographed by him. Dr. Pallan has in his possession the digitalized copies of the same.

The Sogdian Ashem Vohu and some other fragments which are already published as well as other Sogdian manuscripts will be published by the Manuscript Committee in due course, as an addendum to Xurtak Abestag (pahlavi) mss.

Below is an abstract from the National Public Library (formerly the Imperial Public Library), Russia, which started acquiring manuscripts in oriental languages as soon as it was established in 1795. By the time it was officially inaugurated in 1812 it had accumulated 183 such manuscripts, 103 of them being from P.P. Dubrovsky's collection.

Among more than 1000 Persian manuscripts, 140 are decorated with miniatures starting with "Shah-Name" of 1333. Especially well represented is the Tabriz school (for example, the poem "Gui va chaugan" by Arifi copied by Shah Takhnasp in 1525). Some of the miniatures are attributed to Bekhzad and Mukhammedi. There are also works signed by Rizai Abbasi. Among the calligraphists one should note Sultan-Ali Makhshadi, Shah Makhmud Nishapuri, Mir Imad. The Persian manuscripts produce great impression not only by their miniatures and calligraphy but also by their

overall design: by their ornamental illuminations and margins as well as by their stamped and patent leather bindings.

For more information contact

Chair Dr. Pallan Ichaporia, D.Phil,D, PhD  
prlchaporia@aol.com

## WELFARE & CRITICAL ASSISTANCE COMMITTEES

The Welfare & Critical Assistance Committees are FEZANA committees designed to provide assistance to individuals, families and organizations facing temporary difficulties due to medical emergencies, natural disasters, violence, or legal issues.

The Welfare Committee co-chairs, Houtoxi Contractor of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and Hosi Mehta of Chicago, Illinois started with only an idea in 2002. Clear objectives, defined goals, an understanding of what the community needed and a partnership with Freyaz Shroff of North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina has allowed the Critical Assistance Committee to partner beautifully with the Welfare Committee to provide consistent legal, social, medical and educational assistance over the past 7 years.

Although based in North America, our committees work for the global community. Over the last year we have worked with community members in need from:

- Canada
- India
- Iran
- Middle East
- New Zealand
- Pakistan
- USA

**Outlined below is a brief sampling of the types of cases addressed by the critical assistance committee:**

1. Providing Medical Equipment to hospitals involved in Zarthushti health issues
2. Low Income families with sick children and no medical insurance (life threatening illnesses).





# FEZANA UPDATE

3. Immigration issues causing immediate family separation.
4. Natural disasters that cause family displacement and affect livelihood. Example: Surat Floods & Hurricane Katrina.
5. Recovery from terrorist acts. Example: Bombay Train Blasts.
6. Situations of domestic and familial violence.
7. Widows without job skills, needing to re-build their lives.
8. Agiyaries that would be forced to close and are the only places of worship for Parsis in their towns.
9. Low Income families suffering losses of child(ren) and needing assistance with funeral expenses.

## Cases we have assisted in 2009 include:

1. A refugee Zarthushti Iraqi Kurdish woman who was threatened to be killed in an honor killing. She was moved to Turkey and eventually brought to USA Children are yet to be reunited with their mother.
2. Young Iranian girl who lost her father who was a taxi driver in an accident
3. Ava Bai Petit Girls Orphanage
4. Students in Iran
5. Aiding in recovery post house flooding
6. Pakistani earthquake victims
7. American tornado victims
8. Donation to Young Rathestars Group, to feed the poor
9. Donation to M. Joshi fund food for the poor
10. Nassesalars at Mumbai Doongarwadi for their general welfare
11. Setup an education fund for poor children
12. Support of a Mobed health insurance Program
13. 39 year old cancer patient
14. Cochlear transplant for young boy in New Zealand
15. Paid off all pending bills to Masina Hospital for Baby Ushta
16. Donated to pilot Scott Welch who flew Ushta from New York to Boston
17. Hyderabad Mobed's wife with both kidneys failing
18. 1- year old boy who was born with aorta on the opposite side of his heart
19. Young family with multiple health problems, husband died, wife in her 30's with small children

## UN-NGO COMMITTEE

FEZANA was recognized in 1997 as a non-governmental organization (NGO) with the United Nations in Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). A periodic report of our activities is submitted to the UN to maintain our Consultative Status; the last one was submitted in 2008.

The FEZANA UN-NGO Committee strives to provide opportunities to Zarathushtis, through volunteer action programs, to become world citizens. The committee facilitates access to the deliberations of the NGO's. The Committee has identified "Youth Development" and "Environment" as two priority areas to work on, within the framework of the United Nations' objectives.

Two major events that anchor our activities are the annual DPI/NGO meeting for three days in September and the fourteen days in late February/early March organized by the Commission on the Status of Women. Individuals motivated in taking initiatives to reduce the gap between the haves and the have-nots of our world are invited to join the team. The costs of travel, visa, and accommodations are borne by the participants. Children below the age of 18 are required to be accompanied by a parent or guardian as per the requirements of the UN. We have in the past had teams of family members, mother and daughter, father and daughter, participate in such events. The Committee has also hosted panel discussions and has made presentations at these events.

Reports of past activities of the UN-NGO committee are available in the Interlalia section of the FEZANA Journal accessible at [www.fezana.org](http://www.fezana.org)

Participation at the local city, town, family or even at an individual level is possible.

For more information,

|  |           |        |          |
|--|-----------|--------|----------|
| Contact  | Co-Chairs | Afreed | Mistry   |
| <a href="mailto:afreed.mistry@gmail.com">afreed.mistry@gmail.com</a> , | Homi D    | Gandhi |          |
| <a href="mailto:homidgandhi@gmail.com">homidgandhi@gmail.com</a>       | and       | Behram | Pastakia |
| <a href="mailto:bpastakia@aol.com">bpastakia@aol.com</a>               |           |        |          |



# FEZANA UPDATE

## APPEAL FOR FUNDS

## APPEAL FOR FUNDS

### Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Charity Fund

*Kalpataru Heritage, 127, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Fort, Mumbai 400 001*  
*Tel : 2267 3843-44 • Telefax : 2267 3845 • Email : mumbaiho@sjjcf.org*

Dolly Dastoor  
 Editor-in-Chief  
 'FEZANA' Journal

Dear Dolly Dastoor,  
 Appeal for Donations

The Trustees of our Sir J J Charity Fund would be grateful if you could publish, in a forthcoming issue of your Journal, our Appeal for donations towards the reconstruction of our Adarian in Adajan (near Surat) and for major repairs to our Agiary in Pune. Though these 2 Agiaries in Adajan and Pune are 183 and 166 years old respectively, they continue to render yeomen service to the Parsee Zoroastrians, and are very popular places of worship with the local residents of the area.

Reconstruction and repairs to both these Agiaries are already underway. In spite of our Fund and several benevolent donors having contributed generously towards the renovation, the cost of repairs keeps mounting and is gradually growing beyond our resources. Under these circumstances, we urgently need the services of a widely circulated publication like your Journal to help us in reaching out to fellow Zoroastrians settled in America.

We already have a Donor Board in the Pune Agiary and propose installing a similar one in Adajan. Every donation in excess of US Dollars 2,000/- shall find honorable mention on the respective Board.

*Yours sincerely,*  
**Aspi Pastakia**  
 Chief Executive

### APPEAL

Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Charity Fund manages four Agiaries in Pune, Navsari, Surat and Adajan.

**Sir J J Agiary, Pune**, is a 166 year old Institution located in the heart of the city. The Agiary with its surrounding areas and buildings being in urgent need of extensive repairs and renovation, work on the main Agiary building began in March 2009.

Re-construction of a new building for the 183 year old **Sir J J Adarian at Adajan, Surat**, also began in March 2009, and is currently in progress. It is expected that the newly constructed building shall be ready by August 2010.

In order to financially assist the Trustees in their endeavor to keep our places of worship in a well maintained condition, they earnestly appeal to all fellow Zoroastrians to lend us a helping hand by donating generously for this cause. Every donation in excess of US Dollars 2,000/- will find honorable mention on a Donor Board prominently displayed in the Agiary of your choice.

Your contributions should be made in favor of **Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Charity Fund**, and be sent to:

The Chief Executive,  
 Sir J J Charity Fund,  
 Kalpataru Heritage,  
 127 Mahatma Gandhi Road,  
Mumbai 400 001





# FEZANA UPDATE

## Soccer To Me

*Tehran Ghasri*

This past Labor Day Weekend marked the 6th Bi-Annual Zoroastrian Unity Cup Soccer Tournament. Over 300 spectators and 100 Zarathushti athletes ranging in age from 6 to 60 participated in this year's games at sunny Redondo Beach, California. The committee members of ZSC and the community worked together to make for a very successful event. The question is asked what exactly is a successful event?

### **The first key to a successful event is venue.**

Aviation Park in Redondo Beach is a 440-yard regulation soccer and football field resurfaced and re-turfed in 2008. Serving as home to the 6th Bi-Annual Zoroastrian Unity Cup the venue provided a mixture of space and atmosphere giving a professional feel to the games. With the ability to play two simultaneous games at any given time, it can truly be said "there is no place like home."

### **The second key is expert and competent presence onsite.**

The ZSC Committee and volunteers made of community members were excellent staff for the event. Lead by President Niaz Kasravi, Vice President Bijan Pourjamasb, and Treasurer Behnaz Dianat followed by Sports Director Behrouz Mehrkhodavandi, Sports Coordinator Arsham Dianat, yours truly as PR Director, and Secretary Katy Salamati and Web Designer Ramin Shahriari from afar, the ZSC committee provided everything from direction to protection from the sun on and off the field. The helpful volunteers Cyrus Cama, Sheila Mazdyasni, Nima Patel, Soroush Amanat, Shirin Amanat, Anahita Dianat, Mahnaz Mehrkhodavandi, and others helped keep order. Dr. Bakhtiari served as onsite physician, and Shahram Moobed and his team took photographs that will be lifetime memories for all of us. Doing it all from help run the games to help others survive the games, the staff and volunteers worked diligently to provide an organized, safe and fun event.

**The third key is a great audience.** With over 400 combined spectators and athletes the Zoroastrian community made a great audience. Being receptive, accepting, applauding, and donating to the cause, the community came out in full force in support giving new meaning to Unity Cup. The scene was very family oriented as children and grown ups alike stayed

amused as an audience and played hard as a team. The overall feeling was less of competition and more of camaraderie as a sense of community was achieved.

### **No successful event is successful without an after party.**

The Black & White Affair at the Manhattan Beach Marriot Grand Ballroom provided the right amount of food, music, good times, and relaxation after a hard day on the fields. With nearly 280 exquisitely dressed guests and the sounds of DJ AL, the Black & White Affair was a perfect mixer to reunite old friends and introduce many new ones. Dinner was provided and a great time was expected as family, friends, and guests danced past 1aa.m. Young and old alike enjoyed dancing the night away. The Black & White Affair was truly a night to remember. Special thanks to the volunteers who helped pull off this great event: Nahid Pourjamasb, Samira Kasravi, Shahriar Bahmani, Bahareh Mehrkhodavandi, Jinous Kasravi, Negin Demehry, Arshia Kasravi, and Sima Namiri.

### **The final key to any successful event is the feeling the participants walk away with at the end of the event.**

It is evident in the amount of "thank you" emails received and the genuine smiles on peoples faces in pictures that all attendees had a great time. It is more evident in the response received for the next soccer event 2 years away. Withstanding the hot sun, the audience weathered through staying around for game after game, cheering both sides. Happy new memories were made on Labor Day Weekend while old memories were shared. The sense of community was strongest in the air as participating teams sincerely congratulated the winners and each other for a job well done.

The 6th Bi-annual Zoroastrian Unity Cup Soccer Tournament was indeed a very successful event thanks to the ZSC and participants alike. With the Z Games right around the corner July 4th weekend 2010, the question remains what makes an event even more successful. The answer is simple: **YOU**.

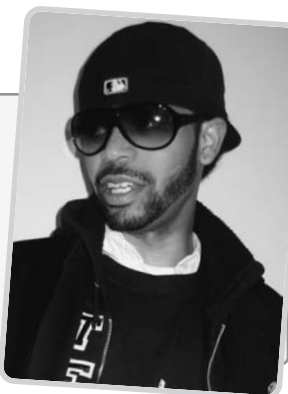
Join us at our next event and support your community. The saying is never more true; "The more the merrier." Be there as a part of history. Next time do not read about it be about it. See you next year at ZSC's next event. Spread the word. For more information, list of winning teams, photographs, and upcoming events please go to [www.zathletics.com](http://www.zathletics.com).



# FEZANA UPDATE

Just in case you wanted to know the results of the final day of the tournament, this year's champions in the three different divisions were awarded, with team Azadi taking the adult championship, LA Alliance the 10 -14 year-old division, and ZK United walking away as champions of the youth 6 – 9 division. Two other athletes were also awarded: Shahin Jamshid received the MVP award and Kaveh Hemati took home the Sportsmanship trophy. Congratulations to all! However everyone is a winner in my book or at least my article.

**Tehran Ghasri** is an Iranian tv/radio personality. He has a Masters Degree in Political Science and Economics. Tehran serves as the Director of Public Relations for the Zoroastrian Sports Committee (ZSC).



1st Place Champions Azadi



2nd Place Champions Esteghlal



3rd Place champions Niroo



3rd Place champions Niroo



San Jose Teams 1 and 2 Black and white party

Budding athletes





# FEZANA UPDATE

**The Fifteenth North American Zarathushti Congress NAZC-2010**  
**Houston, Texas**  
**December 29, 2010 - January 1, 2011**  
**Preserve! Protect! Perfect!**

- The theme of NAZC-2010 is "Preserve! Protect! Perfect!
- Preserve the Past, Protect the Present and Perfect the Future".
- The Congress will start on December 29, 2010, and continue through January 1, 2011.
- The venue for the Congress is The Intercontinental Hotel - Houston.



*The Zarathushtis of Houston, welcome one and all to the Fifteenth North American Zarathushti Congress (NAZC-2010). Visit our glittering city and enjoy our hospitality. Take advantage of our Early Bird Specials.*



The home of the Zoroastrian Association of Houston - The Zarathushti Heritage and Cultural Center, 8787 W. Airport Blvd, Houston, Texas.

## NAZC-2010 Highlights:

- Educational and interactive sessions encompassing segments related to youth, seniors, religious, cultural, and business issues
- Dance and music performances
- New Year's Eve gala banquet
- Fashion show
- Merchandise booths
- A grand "Jashan" at the Zarathushti Heritage and Cultural Center along with a guided tour of the facility.

For registration and details, please visit the ZAH website: [www.zah.org](http://www.zah.org), or Email Arnavaz Sethna at: [asethna@comcast.net](mailto:asethna@comcast.net), or Write to: ZAH, 8787 W. Airport Blvd., Houston, TX, 77071, USA. Attn: NAZC-2010





# FEZANA UPDATE

## READ ME

[www.zathletics.com](http://www.zathletics.com)

**More than a Competition**

**This is a Community**



## 12<sup>th</sup> Z GAMES COMING SOON

[www.zathletics.com](http://www.zathletics.com)

**12th Zoroastrian Games  
4th of July Weekend 2010  
Los Angeles, California**

[www.zathletics.com](http://www.zathletics.com)

email: [zsc@fezana.org](mailto:zsc@fezana.org)



## Parliament Of The World's Religions

### GUEST EDITOR'S NOTE

#### **“Parliament of The World's Religions and Zoroastrianism and Zoroastrians’ International Presence: Perspectives With Other Religions and Communities”**

It was with delight that I accepted the request from Dolly Dastoor, the general editor of the *FEZANA JOURNAL*, to guest edit the Winter Issue. Dolly noted that the issue would correspond to the gathering of a Parliament of the World's Religions in Melbourne, on 3–9 December 2009.

A Parliament of the World's Religions emerged from a congress held in conjunction with the World Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago on 11–27 September. Styled the World's Parliament of Religions in 1893, the gathering afforded one of the first formal assemblages of individuals from Eastern and Western religious and spiritual traditions. Almost a hundred years later, in 1988, the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions (CPWR) took shape that organized a centenary gathering of a Parliament of the World's Religions in 1993.

Subsequent Parliaments have been held in 1999, 2004, and in 2007 a Forum of Cultures. The Parliaments have provided the venues for various religious, spiritual, and cultural expression, and the forum for the promotion of a global dialogue of faiths. Indeed, in the true sense of the term, a parliament denotes both a gathering and the discussion that has come from the ‘talk shop’.

The topic of a Parliament of the World's Religions provides the opportunity to delve into Zoroastrian studies on an international level. As such, the general theme of the Winter Issue is Zoroastrianism and Zoroastrians’ international presence: perspectives with other religions and communities. The theme encompasses topics on history, religion, and interfaith issues. The issue examines topics and themes familiar to readers and scholars, while providing some new perspectives and interpretations. The issue combines the contributions of some well-known and respected scholars of Zoroastrian studies, and aims to highlight the work of some new and fast-rising scholars in Zoroastrianism and Iranian and Parsi studies. Contributions from writers with specializations outside Zoroastrian studies also add cross-cultural perspectives.

The issue opens with a review of a Parliament of the World's Religions and Zoroastrianism's presence in the organization by the well-respected Rohinton Rivetna. Rohinton Rivetna has devoted many years to promoting the understanding of Zoroastrianism within and without the Zarathushti community. In his article, he notes the lack of an official Zoroastrian presence at the first Parliament, and Zarathushti efforts to promote a Zoroastrian presence at international religious gatherings since then. Rivetna alludes that the Parliaments and other inter-faith gatherings not only afford opportunities to promote recognition and respect for Zoroastrians globally, but also to promote the respect for diversity of opinion and expression within the Zarathushti community.

The second article examines the rise of the modern study of Zoroastrianism and the historiography or history of writing on Zoroastrianism from the tenth to the nineteenth centuries. The article notes significant points in the rise of modern Zoroastrian studies, and how culture and history have affected its interpretation.

The history of the Zoroastrians of Central Asia has long fascinated Zarathushtis. The article by Jenny Rose provides an insight into perhaps Zoroastrianism's earliest ‘international presence’ outside Iran. In her article, Jenny Rose provides some new perspectives on the ancient Zoroastrians of



## Parliament Of The World's Religions

Sogdiana, in parts of modern-day Central Asia, and the uniqueness and diversity of Zoroastrianism outside ancient Iran. Rose notes both the continuity of Zoroastrianism in Central Asia and its unique characteristics.

Mohan Lal Singh notes the earliest connections between early Zoroastrianism and Vedic religion of the ancient Hindus from the time of Zarathustra. Specifically, Singh concentrates on the socio-religious ordering of the Zoroastrian and Vedic universe, and how common and unique perspectives on the divine emerge among the ancient Iranian and Vedic cultures.

Evraim Podell addresses the ties between Zoroastrianism and Judaism from the Babylonian Captivity through Sasanian times. Podell notes the profound impact Iranian culture and Zoroastrian ideas may have had on the Jews of Iran and the Jewish Near East diaspora on their ideas about the divine, and the subsequent impact of Jewish ideas on Christianity.

Father Tomy offers an ecumenical interpretation of early Christianity in India and its ties to the other great faiths of the subcontinent. He notes the Iranian-influenced features of early Christianity, and how Indian Buddhism in turn influenced both Christianity and Hinduism.

Ken Vincent offers a passionate interpretation of Zoroastrian and Christianity as Universalisms. Vincent notes that Universalism is the theological concept of a good God that saves all humanity. Vincent's work highlights the ethical nature of Zoroastrianism. Vincent's work offers a hopeful message for Zoroastrians and Christians alike, and the joyful vision that binds the two faiths together.

Whereas the preceding articles aim to elaborate on the profound influences and ties between Zoroastrianism and other religions, Burzine Waghmar examines the scholarship on Zoroastrian-Islamic relations or the lack thereof with reference to the expression coined by the scholar R.C. Zaehner of the 'Zoroastrian-Islamic rut'. Waghmar attempts to account for the paucity of great scholarly analysis of Zoroastrian-Islamic ties, and the fledgling attempts to succumb this in scholarship, since the beginning of the twentieth century.

The final article provides a contrast to the traditional view of Zoroastrian-Islamic relations. Dinyar Patel examines the case of the Parsi G.K. Nariman, a founder of the Iran League, the Bombay-based organization devoted to increasing Parsi-Iranian ties. Patel notes how Nariman's scholarship from the 1920s aimed to reassess Zoroastrian-Islamic relations, and specifically redress the long-held belief and prejudice of the animosity between Islam and Zoroastrianism.

The fascination, appreciation, and study of Zoroastrianism have increased significantly in the last few decades, among both academics and non-academics. All the articles in the issue attest to the vibrancy of Zoroastrian studies, and the attempts to have scholarship transcend religious and community barriers. As the articles demonstrate, the ties, influences, and simple dialogue whether in scholarship or inter-faith forums between Zoroastrianism and other faiths have been historical and are ongoing. Such opportunities afford not only the occasion to showcase the rich heritage of Zoroastrianism, but also open Zarathushtis to the prospect of greater internal and inter-faith dialogue.

**Dr. Jesse S. Palsetia** is Associate Professor of History at the University of Guelph, Canada. He has written extensively on the Parsis, the history of Bombay, and on topics in Indian history and civilization. Dr. Palsetia is the author of *The Parsis of India: Preservation of Identity in Bombay City* (Brill Publishers, Leiden, 2001; reprint New Delhi: Manohar Publications 2008). He is currently working on a manuscript of the Parsi merchant-prince and philanthropist Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, Knight and 1st Baronet.







## Parliament Of The World's Religions

### PARLIAMENT OF THE WORLDS' RELIGIONS: A SHORT HISTORY

*Rohinton M. Rivetna*



1893 Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago, at the Chicago Art Institute.  
(photo Library of Congress Archives, courtesy Kersi Shroff)

Growing up in Bombay in the 1940s, the 1893 Parliament in Chicago was still fresh in the living memory of many. Especially vivid is the image of Swami Vivekananda passed on to me from my grandfather's library. This memory came back full circle, a half century later, when I became associated with planning for the Centennial of the 1893 event.

Human beings have a yearning for oneness and togetherness. This yearning prompted Charles Bonney of Chicago to convene the Parliament of the World's Religions in 1893, as one of over twenty auxiliary events of the Columbian Exposition, which was organized to demonstrate to the world human prowess and mastery of the sciences.

The Parliament was convened on Monday, September 11, 1893 in the Hall of Columbus at the Art Palace (now the Chicago Art Institute). The Proceedings of the Parliament are faithfully recorded in *Religions at the World Columbian Exposition* edited by J. W. Hanson. The opening sentence reads:

"This great religious gathering, never before possible in the history of the world, nor even now perhaps, possible anywhere else than in the great 'city by the unsalted sea' was inaugurated in the Art Palace" <sup>1</sup>

This was indeed eventful in the history of the world, for the Columbian Exposition was an exhibition of humankind's prowess, as it was felt at that time that "Everything that can be invented has been invented" and the religions of the world were not to be left behind in making their presence felt. To his credit, Cardinal Gibbons agreed to take the chair, after much hesitation and in the face of opposition from many. Clearly, Christianity was not to be sullied in the company of non-believers!

In his welcome address, Charles Bonney, President of the World's Congress Auxiliary, expressed the hope that the Congress "become a joy of the whole earth and stand in human history like a new Mount Zion, crowned with glory ..." and "mark the beginning of a new epoch of brotherhood and peace."



## Parliament Of The World's Religions

In 1893, Henry Barrows, chair of the General Committee, had proclaimed: "Welcome, Most Welcome, O Wise Men of the East and of the West ...." It was the first time that East and West had met! This was indeed a salutary moment in the history of humankind. Many attempts had been made since to recreate its splendor and its purport, but none could compare.

That hope still unfulfilled a century later is what we set out to fulfill with a Centennial celebration in 1993.

### ORGANIZING THE CENTENNIAL

Some of us who undertook in 1987 to form a Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions (CPWR), to celebrate the Centennial embarked upon the project with great trepidation knowing the challenges we would face in attempting to replicate the magnificence and splendor of the 1893 event.

I was fortunate to be associated with the formation of the Council since its humble beginnings when a few of us met at the Vivekananda Vedanta Center in Chicago driven by a mission to commemorate the Centennial and celebrate the diversity of religions that Chicago had to offer. With Swami Sarveshananda of the Vedanta Society playing a leadership role we drafted an early Charter (based loosely on the charter of the Zoroastrian Association of Chicago!). Gradually the core group garnered support from Bahais, Jews, Hindus, Muslims and Cardinal Bernadin's office.

Early financial support came from publishing czar M. Blouke Carus who donated a small office space with an administrator. He wrote: "Yours is truly a remarkable group because of the differing backgrounds and, at the same time, a similarity of purpose. I have great confidence that this time we will keep the dialogue going and keep our long-term goals and organization in tact ... My grandfather Paul Carus knew this would happen sooner or later ... he and Vivekananda, and a few others were 100 years ahead of their time".

In the fledgling days, it was my hope, at least, to adopt the Zarathushti model of volunteerism (as evidenced by all our Zoroastrian associations), only expanded to include all religions. The CPWR, however, has evolved into a model of many large not-for-profits, with a downtown Chicago office and staff, led by an Executive Director (first Daniel Gomez Ibanez and now Dirk Ficca). The Trustees, from various faith organizations, are appointed to lend guidance and direction.

The early vision first came to fruition with a gathering of over 8,000, at the 1993 Centennial celebrations at the Palmer House in Chicago, barely a few blocks from the original venue. Since then, the Council has organized two other Parliaments—in Cape Town, South Africa in 1999, and Barcelona, Spain, in 2004, and is presently in the throes of preparing for the fifth Parliament, in Melbourne, Australia, December 3–10, 2009. The Zoroastrian Association of Victoria, in Melbourne, is playing an active role in organizing Zoroastrian participation at this event.

The celebration of the Centennial gave a much-needed impetus to the interfaith movement. Erstwhile, "Interfaith" in North America meant an assembly of various denominations of Christians and Jews. The Centennial celebrations expanded that matrix to include other major faiths including Zoroastrians. The lesson for us is that we were counted because we were there. In order to be counted, we must make a deliberate effort to be seen and be present.

### SWAMI VIVEKANADA

No account of the history of the Parliament can be complete without mention of Swami Vivekananda, who arrived in Chicago on his own, with hardly any resources and no place to stay, and soon won over the assembly with his commanding presence and oratory. He said:

"I am proud to belong to a religion that has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance ... I am proud to belong to the religion which has sheltered and is still fostering the remnant of the grand Zoroastrian nation .... Sectarianism, bigotry, and its horrible descendant fanaticism have possessed long this beautiful earth. It has filled the earth with violence, drenched it



## Parliament Of The World's Religions



KEVAD SHERIARJI DADABHAI BHARUCHA, BOMBAY, INDIA.

"THE DIGNITY OF INDIA AND PERSIA, THROUGH THE ANCIENT RELIGION OF ZOROASTER THE REVEREND BAHAI AND PROPHET OF ISRAEL, WHILE OTHER RELIGIONS OF THE ANCIENT WORLD, SUCH AS THOSE OF ANCIENT EGYPT, CHALDEA, ASSYRIA, BABYLON, GREECE AND ROME, HAVE DISAPPEARED FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH, THIS HAS REMAINED NEARLY UNTOUCHED AND UNCHANGED, AND WILL PERHAPS, IF NOT IN ALL ITS FORMS YET AND GLORY, WITH MANY OF ITS ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES REMAINING PRACTICALLY IDENTICAL."



often and often with human blood, destroyed civilization and sent whole nations to despair. Had it not been for this horrible demon, human society would be far more advanced than it is now.

"But its time has come, and I fervently hope that the bell that tolled this morning in honor of this convention, will be the death knell to all fanaticism, to all persecutions with the sword or the pen, and to all uncharitable feelings between persons wending their way to the same goal." <sup>2</sup>

This fanaticism and claims by certain faiths, to be the sole possessors of the truth, continues to be the cause of conflict between religions. Zoroastrians have had the foresight to not get into this fray. They have always respected all faiths and in turn they have earned the respect of other faiths. It is a delicate balance. Let us hope that we maintain this tolerance and continue to earn the respect of others, come to be viewed as bridge builders, and be an inspiration.

### ZOROASTRIAN PRESENCE AT THE 1893 PARLIAMENT

As K. R. Cama, President of the Rahunumai Mazdayasnan Sabha, explains in the Preface of Sheriarji Bharucha's book: "The Chairman of the Committee ... having communicated with Mr. Dadabhai Navroji, M.P. of London, to advise him as to the best means of getting Zoroastrian Religion represented in the Congress ... Mr. Dadabhai directed him to the Rahunumai Sabha, which had great pleasure in asking their Lecturer, Sheriarji Bharucha to prepare an appropriate paper." <sup>3</sup> This paper, "A Brief Sketch of the Zoroastrian Religion and Customs" was published as a booklet in 1893. The Proceedings of the Parliament, however, carries just a one-paragraph abstract of the paper alongside a photo of Er. Bharucha. <sup>4</sup>



Other Zoroastrian references in the Proceedings include: a 14 page paper on "Beliefs and Ceremonies of the Followers of Zoroaster" by Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, Secretary of the Bombay Parsee Panchayet; and a full page portrait of Dasturji Jamasp Asa (great grandfather of the present Dasturji Jamasp Asa).

While there was no known official Zoroastrian presence at the 1893 Parliament, it is of interest to note that a Miss Jeanne Sorabji, whose photo (in a Parsi sari) appears in the Proceedings, presented a paper on "The Women of India". In her paper, she notes: "The Christian women of my land have sent a message to give the women of America our love ... and tell them that we love Jesus." <sup>5</sup> Sadly, the Proceedings refer to "Miss Jeanne Sorabji as a convert to Christianity from Parseeism, Bombay, India." <sup>6</sup>(photo above)

Other Zoroastrian references in the Proceedings include: a 14 page paper on "Beliefs and Ceremonies of the Followers of Zoroaster" by Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, Secretary of the Bombay Parsee Panchayet; and a full page portrait of Dasturji Jamasp Asa (great grandfather of the present Dasturji Jamasp Asa).

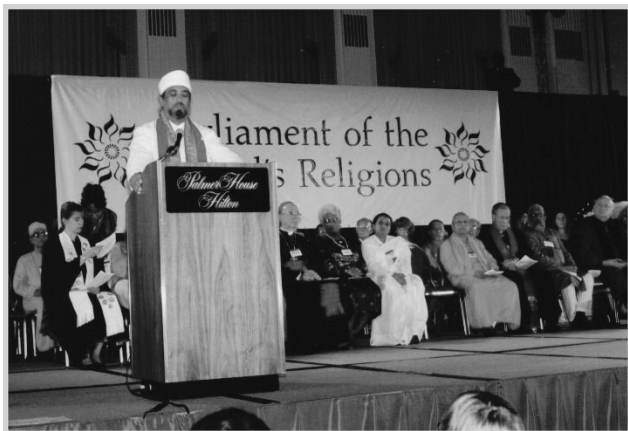
### ZOROASTRIAN PRESENCE AT THE CENTENNIAL

The sparse Zoroastrian presence at the 1893 event was more than compensated for at the Centennial celebrations in 1993, when Zarathushtis participated in large numbers, presented over thirty papers, showcased a Zarathushti booth, and held parallel events for busloads of visitors at the darbe mehr. <sup>7</sup> We were especially honored with the presence of Dastur Dr. Kaikhusroo Jamasp Asa, High Priest from Bombay (whose grandfather's photo had appeared in the 1893 Proceedings), Dastur Dr. Jehangir Oshidari, VP Mobeds Council, Tehran, Er. Dr. Ramiyar Karanjia, Padma Shri Homi J. H. Taleyarkhan, and Dr. Homi Dhalla; and from North America Dastur Dr. Kersey Antia, High Priest of Chicago, Mobed Mehraban Zartoshty, President of Council of Iranian Mobeds of North America, Er.





## Parliament Of The World's Religions



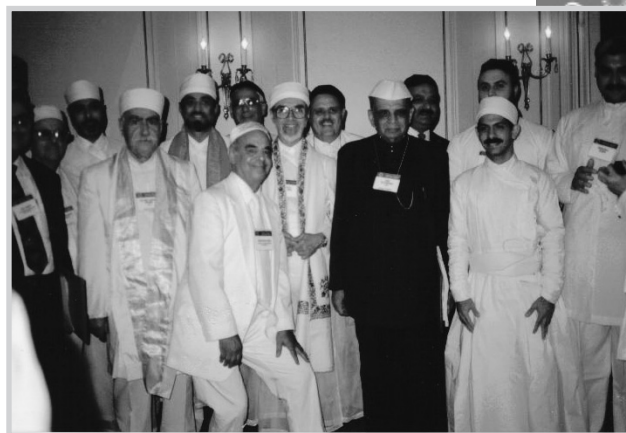
Ervad Kobad Zarolia from Toronto at the opening ceremony. Photo Dolly Dastoor



Dastur Dr. Kaikhusroo Jamasp Asa, High Priest from Bombay at the closing ceremony. Photo Dolly Dastoor



The Zoroastrian Booth at the 1993 Parliament  
Photo Dolly Dastoor



Mobeds from Iran, India, Canada, Australia, UK and the US with late PadmaShri Homi Taleyarkhan  
Photo Dolly Dastoor

Kobad Zarolia, president of the North American Mobeds Council, and scholars from UK, Australia, India, USA and Canada.<sup>8</sup>

### IMPORTANCE OF INTERFAITH WORK

Why there was no representation by a scholar or mobed at the 1893 event, although approached to do so by the organizing Committee, is not so difficult to understand, given the lukewarm recognition given to the importance of interfaith work at the time. The awareness is now slowly dawning that it is not enough to be a good practitioner of the faith, but that it is as important to be a bridge builder between faiths (interfaith), and also among our own faith (intra-faith).

Today in North America, one finds a core of interfaith workers—mostly among the first generation of North Americans. The fruits of their labours are evident in the recognition and respect garnered by Zoroastrians among a growing percentage of the general public, within less than a half century of our presence in this country. There is a need to inspire our next generation to carry this work forward.

However, the perception that we engage in interfaith work to showcase our religion is to be eschewed. Our reason for participation in interfaith work is to dialogue; for dialogue brings understanding, and understanding brings respect, and hopefully, peace, to our troubled world. Another benefit from this dialogue is a deeper appreciation of our own faith, and a better understanding and respect for our own (intrafaith) diversity. I dare say I have found this to be very true.



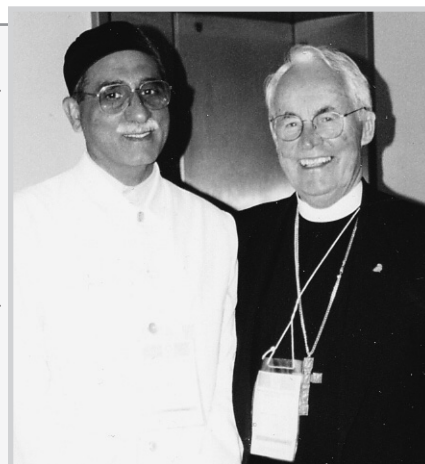
## Parliament Of The World's Religions

To be seen but not heard, action more than words, to speak only when spoken to, and to stand together shoulder to shoulder with other faiths, albeit in silence, I have found is more powerful, than to be obstreperous with frequent pronouncements and proclamations. Equality of faiths, equal time, equal participation, are all still distant, but intentionality to overcome these shortcomings is evident, and in time, these ideals will be achieved.

### Notes

- 1 J. W. Hanson, *The World's Congress of Religions*. Chicago, IL, 1894.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Ervad Sheriarji Dadabhoy Bharucha, *A Brief Sketch of the Zoroastrian Religion and Customs*. Bombay: Rahnumai Sabha, 1893.
- 4 Rev. John Henry Barrows, *The World's Parliament of Religions*, 2 vols. Chicago, 1893.
- 5 See Hanson, *The World's Congress of Religions*.
- 6 See Barrows, *The World's Parliament of Religions*.
- 7 Rohinton Rivetna, "Zoroastrian Presence at the Parliament of the World's Religions", FEZANA Journal, February 1993.
- 8 Roshan Rivetna, "History Turns a Page, Zarathushtis at Parliament of the World's Religions", FEZANA Journal, Winter 1993.

**Rohinton M. Rivetna** has worked tirelessly at the local, national and international Interfaith arena. He is a founding Vice President and Trustee of the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions (CPWR). He was involved in the core group that founded the San Francisco-based United Religions Initiative (URI). He is an active participant in the Chicago Center for Cultural Connections (formerly NCCJ – National Council of Christians and Jews) and contributes the Zoroastrian page in its annual Interfaith Calendar. Presently, he is working with the Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago to expand its membership, from Christians, Jews and Muslims only, to include other major world faiths. (Rohinton Rivetna on left with the Most Rev. Timothy Lyne, Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus of Chicago, at Parliament in South Africa, 1999)



### THE PAUL CARUS AWARD for Outstanding Contributions to the Interreligious Movement

The Council for a Parliament of the Worlds' Religions, announces the re-establishment of the 2009 Paul Carus Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Interreligious Movement, to be presented at the 2009 Parliament in Melbourne, Australia. This award of \$100,000 (USD) will be given to an individual, community or organization that has contributed in an extraordinary way to the international interreligious movement.

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## Parliament Of The World's Religions

### The Advent of Modern Zoroastrian Studies: From India to Europe, 10th to 19th Centuries

Jesse S. Palsetia

#### PRIESTLY PURSUITS

The arrival of the Zoroastrians to India sometime in the first half of the tenth century, circa 936, entailed challenges, both internal and external. In relation to their external environment, the Zoroastrians now known as Parsis had to balance the extent of their integration into Indian society and their distance from it in order to preserve a sense of community and religious identity. Internally, one of the most important challenges that faced the Parsis, and related to their external challenge, was the issue of the preservation of religious knowledge and texts. The latter was vital if any sense of religious identity was to be maintained.

The role of the Zoroastrian priesthood in preserving the oral and textual sources was significant in the early history of the Parsis. The Zoroastrian priests of Iran had maintained a tradition of preserving and transmitting religious knowledge in the centuries following the conversion of Iran to Islam. The Parsi priesthood continued the tradition of historical and literary work from Iran, while adapting to the new milieu of India. M.N. Dhalla noted that the early Parsi scholars in contact with learned Brahmins adopted Sanskrit as a literary medium.<sup>1</sup> Parsi religious tradition ascribes particular merit to the 12th century Parsi priest Neryosang Dhaval, who translated Zoroastrian religious texts from Pahlavi into Sanskrit. His translations include the Khordeh Avesta prayer book, the Pahlavi Menog-i-Khrad (Spirit of Wisdom), the Skand Gumanig Wizar, and the Ardar Viraz Namag. Dhaval also transcribed the original Middle Persian texts into the Avestan alphabet.<sup>2</sup>

Other Sanskrit works include the translation of the Pahlavi Pazand Ashirwad or Marriage Benediction, by Dinidas Bahman in the early 15th century. In the second half of the 17th century, the oldest manuscript of two of the Sixteen Sanskrit Slokas appears. The Slokas offer an account of the religion and customs of the Parsis recounted to the Hindu king Jadi Rana by the first Parsi emigrants. The composition is ascribed to Aka Andiyaru, and the Parsi scholar Hodivala noted that both the name and other elements of the Slokas suggested a non-Parsi authorship.<sup>3</sup>

Many of the names included in Parsi prayers of blessing of commendable souls also suggest Indian names. It is a matter of legitimate conjecture whether Hindu scholars were assuming Hindu/Parsi identities while studying Zoroastrian works in the custom of Indian syncretism, or whether the level of Parsi integration into Indian society had Indianized Parsi names. The production and content of Zoroastrian religious works and commentaries in Sanskrit reflect that religious and literary scholarship continued to have significance for the Parsis, and were assuming unique forms.

Throughout the period of early Parsi scholarship in India, the Parsis maintained ties to Iran, which produced literary benefits. During the Mongol Ilkhanate of Iran (1256–1353), the Zoroastrians of Iran further retreated to select provincial enclaves. In the late 13th century, Rustam Meherawan of Iran visited the Parsis of Gujarat bringing and in search of manuscripts. In the mid-14th century, Rustam's great-great nephew Meherawan Kaikhusro visited India by invitation from the Parsi Chahil, a merchant of Cambay, and brought with him literary and religious copies of Pahlavi works, including a manuscript of the Yasna.<sup>4</sup> In the late 15th century, Hoshang Siyavash of Sharifabad translated into Pahlavi a copy of the 13th century Avestan Yasna work.<sup>5</sup> Parsi-Iranian ties during this era reflect the unique pressures on both communities. The Zoroastrians of Iran found a safeguard for their religious heritage among the Parsis, while the Parsis gained a rich religious literary inheritance.

The Rivayat correspondence perhaps marks the height of Parsi-Iranian religious and literary ties. From the 15th through the 17th centuries, the Parsis communicated on religious matters with the Zoroastrians of Iran. The Rivayat correspondence constitutes questions and answers on the normative customs and procedures for the practice of the religion. In 1478, Nariman Hoshang of Broach returned





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from Turkabad in Yazd province with the replies of the Iranian priests<sup>6</sup> In the 17th century, Hormazyar Framarz, Darab Hormazyar, and Barzu Kamdin classified what were now twenty-two Rivayats.

The Rivayat correspondence from the time of Nariman Hoshang underscores the trade and communication routes between India and the Persian Gulf that the interlocutors relied on, and the growing importance of Parsi laity involved in the trade. The Parsi leader Changa Asa of Navsari had deputed Hoshang to undertake the sojourn in Iran. By the 18th century, the Parsi laity, led by important Parsi traders, assumed the leadership of the Parsi community of India. Furthermore, the impetus for religious literature in the vernacular Gujarati of the Parsis grew. The Sanskrit translation of the major Zoroastrian religious texts would form the sources for the Parsis to reproduce Gujarati translations that emerged from the late 17th century.

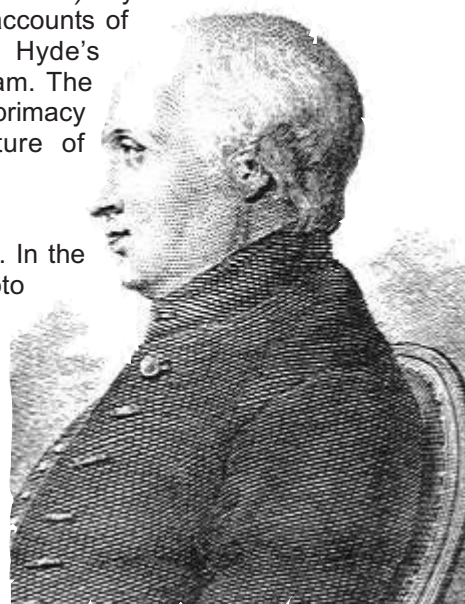
By the time of the latter Rivayats, Parsi religious and literary works were emerging a unique genre with singular Parsi themes. In 1599 one of the most curious documents of Parsi history, the Qissa-i Sanjan, appears. Composed by the Parsi priest Bahman Kaikobad Sanjana, the poem written in Persian recounts the migration and settlement of the Zoroastrians of Iran in India. Debate surrounds the Qissa-i Sanjan as regards the historical accuracy of the events described.<sup>7</sup> Notwithstanding the importance of this debate, the historical value of the work lies in highlighting themes and motifs of significance in early Parsi culture. The Qissa reflects the development of an indigenous Parsi religious-historical tradition and ideology that provides a powerful statement of a distinct Parsi identity in India.

### ZOROASTRIAN INFORMATION AND EUROPEAN KNOWLEDGE

By the 17th century, European scholars began to study Zoroastrianism as a 'modern' academic discipline. The earliest of European scholars are referred to as 'Orientalists'. The Orientalists were sympathetic to the cultures and religions of the Orient or East which they investigated, while steeped in their own ethnocentric cultural perceptions. The European Enlightenment's thirst to comprehend, categorize, and control the knowledge of the East would affect Zoroastrian studies. Zoroastrian information, that is facts and sources, was transformed into European 'knowledge,' that is an interpretation of the East. European Orientalist researches marked the beginnings of the modern study of Zoroastrianism; and the researches would shape the image of Zoroastrianism to the world and among Zoroastrians.

In 1700, the British scholar Thomas Hyde published *Historia religionis veterum persarum* (*History of the religion of the ancient Persians*). Hyde utilized various sources from ancient Greek and Roman accounts of Zoroastrianism sources to medieval travelogues. Hyde's interpretation linked Zoroastrianism to the Biblical Abraham. The value of Hyde's interpretation appeared more to affirm the primacy of the Judaeo-Christian tradition than reveal the nature of Zoroastrianism.

French study of Zoroastrianism was not to be outdone. In the 18th century, Abraham Hyacinthe Anquetil du Perron (photo right) travelled to India and spent three years in Surat learning and obtaining religious material from the Parsi dasturs. In 1771, back in France Du Perron published the *Zend Avesta* in three volumes. Du Perron broke with previous European scholarship in decoupling 'Zoroaster' from the Biblical narrative and elucidating the prophet's unique historical contributions. Du Perron placed Zoroaster in the 'axial age' of the 6th century BCE, and a contemporary of the Buddha, Confucius, and the Greek sages. The European mind continued to see the East as a





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land of ancient if flawed wisdom, as Du Perron noted Zoroaster's ultimate failure as a prophet. Du Perron's work, however, was seminal in bringing Zoroaster and Zoroastrianism to the European imagination.<sup>8</sup>

By the 19th century, European Orientalism and sympathies for the religions and cultures of the East gave way to more chauvinistic Eurocentric and Christian views. In particular, European missionaries with both evangelical and educational agendas severely critiqued non-Western cultures and religions. Perhaps the most famous critic of the Parsis and their religion was the Scottish missionary Reverend Dr. John Wilson. Wilson and his wife Margaret had arrived in Bombay in 1829 and in 1832 started an English school with the support of the Scottish Missionary Society, which became the General Assembly's Institution. (photo right)



Throughout the 1830s, Wilson proceeded to gain notoriety for his school and mission by engaging the Indian religious communities in debate following his study of their religious works. Wilson's critique of the religion of the Parsis was harsh, though in keeping with his evangelical and missionary outlook. The Parsis' inadequate attempts to counter Wilson's propaganda highlighted the poor state of general Parsi religious knowledge by the 19th century. In 1839, Wilson's conversion to Christianity of a Parsi youth, Dhanjibhai Naoroji, led the Parsis to initiate a court case in the Supreme Court of Bombay to 'retrieve' Naoroji and prosecute Wilson, which the Parsis lost. Wilson's actions, however, elicited not only a communal response from the Parsis against contact with the missionaries, but, more importantly, a desire to improve Parsi religious education.<sup>9</sup>

The 19th century saw the further progress of European scholarship on Zoroastrianism. The new disciplines of comparative philology (science of language) and religion opened new vistas in scholarship. From 1875, the Sanskrit scholar and philologist, Friedrich Maximilian Müller edited the *Sacred Books of the East* which reached some fifty-one volumes. During the same period, the German philologist Martin Haug was seminal in his study of the Gathas, as the earliest Zoroastrian works associated with Zarathustra. Haug was also one of the first to interpret Zoroastrianism as a strict monotheism. Haug's analysis of the Avestan texts was followed by the British engineer-cum-scholar E.W. West's study and monumental translations of the Pahlavi literature into English.

The attacks of the missionaries and the study of Zoroastrianism by European scholars spurred a new Parsi study of their religion. By mid-19th century, the rise of a new generation of educated Parsi reformers combined with the charity and wealth of traditionalist Parsi shetias witnessed the building of new schools, and began the process of making education a marker of Parsi identity. The general religious education of the Parsi priesthood was given priority and witnessed the founding in 1854 of the Mulla Firoz Madressa for the instruction of priests.

New Parsi scholars also emerged dedicated to the study of Zoroastrianism. Many were Western trained and educated. In the second half of the 19th century, Khurshedji Rustomji Cama (photo right) emerged the most celebrated and gifted of Parsi religious scholars. A lay Parsi of Kadmi background, Cama began his career in business, but soon moved to academic pursuits. Cama studied in Europe, including Avestan and Pahlavi philology with Friedrich Spiegel, professor of Oriental Languages at the University of Erlangen. Cama contributed to the scholarship on Zoroastrianism and established a 'school' of lay scholars. Jamshedji Jivanji Modi was influenced by Cama's work and example. Modi's religious and historical work still commands the respect and study of generations.





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European and Parsi scholarship of the 19th century greatly elucidated the religion and history of Zoroastrianism. At the same time, all knowledge is a product of its time. Just as the earliest of European Orientalists continued to see Zoroastrianism as an offshoot of Biblical tradition confirming to them the primacy of the latter, so too, Parsi scholars accepted prevailing interpretations of Zoroastrianism that confirmed or suited their training, and religious and cultural perspectives.

Chief among these tendencies in Parsi interpretations of Zoroastrianism during the 19th century was definitively defining Zoroastrianism as monotheistic. The Parsi reformers' emulation of the West largely informed their response to Zoroastrianism and the Parsi heritage. The compulsion to defend Zoroastrianism from the 'charge' of being a dualism represented a reaction to the comparison of Zoroastrianism with the Judaeo-Christian religious tradition. The early Parsi reformers accepted the judgment prevalent in 19th century Western circles that viewed monotheism as the most advanced stage of religious theology. Western interpretations of Zoroastrianism also found accord with those Parsis dissatisfied with traditional observance and worship. The reformers' reliance on the early European scholarship into Zoroastrianism, as well as their perspectives, however, ignored the limitations of this early modern analysis, including the necessity to interpret Zoroastrianism in light of the entire religious tradition.<sup>10</sup>

Notwithstanding the cultural limitations of every age, the contributions of Zoroastrian scholars, priests, Orientalists, European philologists, and Parsi scholars brought forward the modern study of Zoroastrianism. The present-day scholarship not only takes account of the history and historiography of the study of Zoroastrianism of the past, but also will have to deal with the challenges faced by the decline of the Parsis and their living heritage. Wither the Zoroastrians and equally wither the future of Zoroastrian studies?

1 M.N. Dhalla, *History of Zoroastrianism*. New York, Oxford University Press, 1938, p. 448.

2 Kaikhusroo M. JamaspAsa, "A General Account of Iranian Studies," in *A Zoroastrian Tapestry: Art, Religion and Culture*. Edited by Pheroza J. Godrej and Firoza Punthakey Mistree. Ahmedabad: Mapin Publishing Pvt. Ltd., 2002, pp. 399–407.

3 S.K. Hodivala, *The Parsis of Ancient India*. Bombay: The Sanj Vartaman Press, 1920.

4 Mary Boyce, *Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*. London: Routledge, 1979, pp. 170–71.

5 Boyce, p. 165.

6 Boyce, pp. 172–73

7 See Alan Williams, "The structure, significance and poetic integrity of the Qesse-ye Sanjan," in *Parsis in India and the Diaspora*. Edited by John Hinnells and Alan Williams. London: Routledge, 2007, pp. 15–34.

8 J. J. Modi, Anquetil du Perron and Dastur Darab, Bombay, 1916; Arthur Waley, "Anquetil-Duperron and Sir William Jones," *History Today* (January 1952), pp. 23–33; Jenny Rose, *The Image of Zoroaster: The Persian Mage through European Eyes*. New York: Bibliotheca Persica Press, 2000, pp. 155–67.

9 Jesse S. Palsetia, *The Parsis of India: Preservation of Identity in Bombay City* (Leiden: Brill, 2001; reprint, New Delhi: Manohar Publications, 2008), chapter 3.

10 See Mary Boyce, "The Continuity of the Zoroastrian Quest," in *Man's Religious Quest*. Edited by W. Foy. London: Croom Helm, 1978, pp. 603–19.

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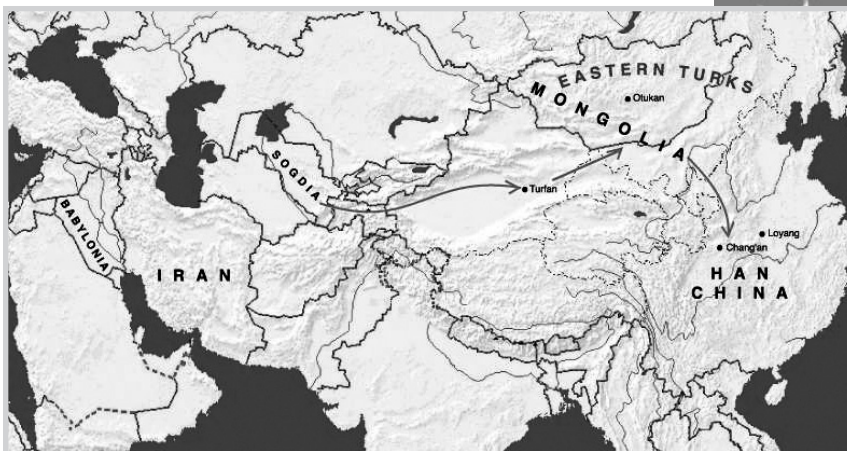


## Some New Perspectives on Ancient Zoroastrians

*Jenny Rose*

Airyana Vaejah, the mythical Iranian homeland where Zarathushtra is said to have lived and taught (Yt 9:14, Yt. 5:104), has been located by some scholars in modern Kazakhstan, but other Central Asian countries have also been suggested. Some of these lands are mentioned, as Sogdiana, Khwarezmia, Margiana, Nisaya and Bactria, in the Videvdat and the Mihr Yasht as places where Iranians dwelt prior to their migration onto the plateau. The early religion of these eastern Iranian-speaking peoples was predominantly Zoroastrian, and many modern inhabitants of the region lay claim to a Zoroastrian heritage. Uzbeks, for instance, assert that Khwarezm (Chorasmia) was the birthplace of the religion, a connection celebrated in the Avesta Museum of Khiva. Such claims merit further evaluation in the light of recent archaeological and textual discoveries throughout the area, particularly in eastern Uzbekistan and western Tajikistan (ancient Sogdiana).

Interaction amongst Iranians continued after settlement on the plateau. Under Ancient Persian rule, the Sogdians adopted the imperial Aramaic script, which they continued to use throughout successive centuries. After the Parthians had made a treaty with the Han Chinese in the 2nd century BCE, Sogdiana became a midpoint on trading routes between east and west, north and south. However, the culture and religion of the Sogdians remained Iranian, and closely related to that of their Parthian and then Sasanian neighbors.



From the mid-Sasanian period, evidence of the centrality of fire as the focus of devotion is found in large houses and temples in the Sogdian city-states of Samarkand, Panjikant and Varakhsha, where murals depict votaries sitting on their heels whilst offering fuel or incense. A fresco in Temple II at Panjikant showing a fire being carried supports the notion that the hearth fire was used to light a smaller fire, which was then transported to the shrine area of a temple or large residence. Actual fire holders were found in Temple I at Panjikant, and at the southern Sogdian site of Er Kurgan, but there is no solid evidence of a permanent fire existing in temples or in private homes.

Ossuaries from Sogdiana dating between 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries CE display Zoroastrian motifs that indicate the continuity of both priestly rituals and exposure of the dead. Some are illustrated with motifs not found in Sasanian Iran, such as winged female fravashis. But more familiar themes also occur, such as that of a fire holder flanked by priests wearing kusti and padan. Zoroastrian priests in Sogdiana were not organized into a hierarchy like their peers in Sasanian Iran, who were officials in a state religion, but their ritual function was similar. On one ossuary the seated priest (Zot) holds barsom bundles, or sticks to feed the fire, and the standing attendant (Raspi) holds tongs. This may depict the afrinagan ceremony performed on the fourth morning after death, known as the chaharom.

The ossuaries were placed in family vaults, such as at Panjikant, or in bone depositories. Some claim that the Khwarezmian Muslim practice of laying the corpse on top of the ground inside the tomb, rather than interring it, is a continuation of Zoroastrian practice. Use of ossuaries ended shortly after the





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Islamic conquest, which suggests that the practice of exposure was replaced by primary burial. But a letter written in the early 9th century CE by Adurfarnbag Farrokhzadan from Iran records his advice to the Zoroastrians of Samarkand concerning how to dispose of their dead whilst they constructed a new dakhma, since their old one had been damaged<sup>1</sup>.

Another example of different approaches to death amongst Zoroastrians in Sogdiana is depicted in a fresco at Panjikant of gods and humans apparently grieving over a young man. This may illustrate a cult of mourning centered on the Iranian hero Siyavush, which is recorded in Narshakhi's 10th century History of Bukhara. In the Shahnama, Siyavush was said to have founded the citadel at Bukhara. Narshakhi relates that stories about the slaying of Siyavush, which were well known throughout the region, had been set into songs known as "the weeping of the magi." In the mural, the mourners seem to be beating their heads, cutting their hair, or even their faces, with small knives. Middle Persian texts criticize such actions of grief, but beating the chest and head is depicted on ossuaries with Zoroastrian inscriptions, which indicates that such mourning rituals were part of local eastern Iranian custom, although the practice may have originated with the nomadic Huns<sup>2</sup>.

The Iranian nature of the mythology of the Sogdians is revealed in a series of narrative friezes at Panjikant based on the seven exploits of the hero Rustam, who is shown wearing a leopard skin and riding his red horse, Rakhsh. Rustam seems to have been the most popular heroic figure for the Sogdians, for he also appears as a minor character in two other painted epic cycles at Panjikant, and in a contemporary Sogdian narrative from Dunhuang, neither of which relates to any known written text (such as the Shahnama), but which may come from an east-Iranian cycle.

Sogdian frescoes also include illustrations of Zoroastrian yazatas. The mourning scene at Panjikant, for instance, contains the figure of Mithra holding a flaming torch towards the ground. The yazata of the wind, Vayu, is painted in the guise of a tri-headed divinity, with the name Veshparkar. Sogdian translations of Buddhist texts substitute Veshparkar for Shiva. "Veshparkar" comes from an Avestan term "Vaiiush uparo kairiyo" (Vd. 19.13), meaning "the wind whose activity is in the upper regions." One of the most commonly represented divinities in Sogdian murals, however, is the goddess Nana. She seems to have been partly identified with the Iranian creative and chthonic yazata Spenta Armaiti, but also retains iconographic elements associated with the Mesopotamian goddess Inanna, and rides a lion, reminiscent of the multi-armed Hindu goddess Durga.

Both Veshparkar and Nana appear on mortuary couches belonging to Sogdian merchants who lived and died in northern China in the late 6th century CE. Several of these funerary beds have been uncovered within the last decade. They are in accord with the Zoroastrian practice of keeping the corpse away from water and earth, and incorporate scenes relating to Zoroastrian funerary rites and to ancient beliefs about the soul's journey after death. One panel shows a priest wearing the padan in front of an afargan-shaped fire-holder; a dog faces the fire, which may illustrate the ancient ritual of sagdid; and mourners cut their hair or faces in the same manner as on the mural at Panjikant. A scene from a sarcophagus of the same period shows two priests, who appear to have solemnized the chaharom ceremony, and to have sent the souls forwards across the Chinvat Bridge. Under the bridge, which is guarded by two dogs (cf. Vd. 19.30), lurk two monsters in the turbulent waters. Such images correspond to Avestan texts concerning the judgment of the soul, and later descriptions of "radiant paradise" (cf. Bd. 30.26).

Sogdians developed a network of mercantile communities along the 1500 miles between their homeland and northern China. Tang era (618-907 CE) sources record that a number of Zoroastrian temples were built in inner China, including one that was restored in Chang'An in 631 CE. Under the Tang, northern Chinese towns with a sizeable Sogdian population appointed an official administrator named a sabao, from the Sogdian epithet for "caravan leader." The sabao was a supervisor of the fire temple, but it is not known whether he was also a priest.<sup>3</sup>

The reference to a temple priest in an early 4th century letter found near Dunhuang indicates that at this early stage the Sogdian community there was sufficiently large to have a place of worship and a serving priest. Eighth century Chinese sources describe a Zoroastrian temple on the eastern edge of Dunhuang, which had a main hall with a religious painting and twenty niches.<sup>4</sup> This temple



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flourished into the early 10th century, the latest evidence for Sogdian Zoroastrian practice in the region. There are also records of fire temples established in other Sogdian settlements in the Tarim Basin <sup>5</sup>, where local governments provided material support for annual offerings –probably gahanbars, or jashan ceremonies such as Farvardigan, which were also celebrated by the Khwarezmians and Sasanians. A mural at Samarkand may illustrate a New Year's festival, when delegates from many countries brought tribute for the king, similar to the gift-giving at Persepolis.

Many aspects of the Sogdian form of Zoroastrianism do not fit comfortably with what is known of the religion as practiced in Sasanian Iran. These disparate elements cannot all be dismissed as originating in pre-Zoroastrian Iranian belief, or in “foreign” religions. Indeed, there seems to be an ancient, original Zoroastrian core to the religious expression of these eastern Iranians. Confirmation of this core is partly found in a 9th century Sogdian manuscript, discovered amongst 40,000 other texts in the “Library Cave” at Dunhuang. The first two lines of the manuscript comprise a Sogdian version of the Ashem Vohu. The text is not in the standard Avestan of the Sasanian period, nor a Sogdian translation, but includes some archaic Old Iranian forms.<sup>6</sup> This points to the Sogdian preservation and oral transmission of the prayer from Achaemenid times, if not earlier, within a setting independent of the Sasanian recension of the Avesta.

The existence of both a fire temple and an oral transmission of sacred text at Dunhuang testify to the endurance and continued importance of the earliest practices and prayers of the religion to the eastern Iranians.

### Notes

- 1 Dhabar, pp. 104–5.
- 2 Frye (1996), p. 190.
- 3 De la Vaissière, p. 151.
- 4 De la Vaissière, p. 128 and note 39.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 See Sims-Williams, p. 14.

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## ZOROASTRIANISM AND VEDIC RELIGION

**Mohan Lal Singh**

### THE COSMIC ORDER OF THINGS

Both Vedic religion and Zoroastrianism placed considerable importance on the concept of order. Amongst both the early Vedic peoples and the Iranians, the universe was seen as defined by a cosmic law—*rta* (Veda) or *asha* (Gathas), and whose preservation depended upon the acts of gods and humans. To the original Indo-Iranian steppe tribes, order was essential to their preservation and sustenance, and an important concept deeply rooted in the Indo-Iranian religion is that of a cosmic law which prevails in nature. The movement of the sun and moon, the coming of seasons, and the cycle of life owed to *rta* or *asha*.

The earliest of the four Vedas, the Rig Veda expresses a sense of the vastness and brilliance of nature and its maledictions. Above all, Vedic religion exudes a sense of the inexorable law that regulated the universe. The earliest hymns of the Vedic Indo-Aryans, accordingly, pertained to this cosmic religion. The Rig Veda notes that the god Indra slew the serpent demon Vritra, who controlled the earthly waters. When Indra killed this demon, the waters were released for the use of humanity. Indra then set the sun in the sky, and cosmic order (*rta*) was established under the administration of the winged sky god Varuna (Rig Veda, 1.32, translated by Joel Brereton). Ahura Mazda is often equated as the Zoroastrian counterpart of Varuna, and is the beneficent and righteous creator (Yast. 1.1). Ahura Mazda, however, exceeds the nature of Varuna, as he is also Lord of Wisdom and creator of the seven Amesha Spentas, the Beneficent Immortals—Spenta Mainyu, Vohu-Manah, Asha Vahishta, Khshathra Vairya, Spenta Armaiti, Haurvatat, and Ameretat. Thus Ahura Mazda emerges the supreme god. Ahura Mazda is in conflict with Angra Mainyu, the Evil Spirit. Thus the cosmic order rests on the benevolence of Ahura Mazda to protect creation.

### THE FRAVASHI

The gods regulated the cosmic law. The relationship between the various deities of the Rig Veda is not always clear. Deities are often personifications of natural forces. No hierarchical status is evident among deities. At the same time, as the core myth of the Rig Veda above suggests, the god Indra, the god of thunder, is represented as pre-eminent, and is often referred to as *eka deva* or 'the god'. Early Veda notes other important deities in addition to Indra and Varuna such as Agni, the 'fire god'. Both the Indo-Aryans and the Iranians developed the worship of Fire, to an extraordinary degree. The god Agni is the personification and

Zoroastrianism and Hindu religion share a common origin and many similarities in terms of theology, religious culture, and language. Both Vedic religion and early Zoroastrianism share a common proto-Indo-Iranian culture and tradition that took shape circa 3000-2000 BCE in the steppes of central Asia, east of the Caspian Sea and north of Afghanistan. The oral and later written literature of the Veda recount how this culture and people was known as Arya. This culture venerated fire and the horse, had a pantheon of naturalistic gods, and shared a common proto-Indo-Iranian language. The migration of the Indo-Iranian tribes first to the subcontinent circa 1500 BCE where they became known as the Indo-Aryans or *arya*, and to the Iranian plateau circa 1200 BCE where they became known as Iranians began the process of distinct cultures taking shape in India and Iran respectively.

The time period of the prophet Zarathushtra, around 1200 BCE, places the origins of Zoroastrianism in the same period of the arrival of the Indo-Aryans and the consolidation of Vedic religion and culture in India, around 1500-1000 BCE. Common with the founders of other religious systems, Zarathushtra would reform aspects of Vedic religion developing Zoroastrianism as a unique religion. The religious vision of Zarathushtra would emerge in the *gathas*—the set of poetic, philosophical, and theological thoughts composed in a tongue resembling Vedic, later to be known as Old Iranian or Gathic Avestan. The resplendent vision of Zarathushtra would distinguish Zoroastrianism as a distinct religion and offer humanity a unique vision of the divine and humanity. In this article, I would like to note a few of the significant common elements between early Zoroastrianism and Vedic or early Hindu religion specifically as regards the construction of community and order.



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deification especially of the sacrificial fire. He is the priest of the gods and the god of the priests. In the Rig Veda he is second only to Indra in prominence. He has three forms: terrestrial as fire, atmospheric as lightning, and celestial as the sun. Agni opens for settlement and consecrates the land the Indo-Aryans settle in North India.

The Vedic religion also notes female deities. Prthvi is the earth goddess; Ratri is the goddess of night. Surya, the goddess Dawn, is one of the most beautiful gods. Dawn is a lovely woman, driving her chariot across the skies to usher in the new day, and a young girl, stripping away her garment to reveal her naked radiance (RV 5:80). The hymns also praise Dawn for the reassertion of the divine order.

The Zarathustrian reform of Vedic concepts witnessed the elaboration of guardian spirits, the Fravashi. (Av.). The praise and worship of the Fravashi is found in the Fravardin Yast (Yt.13). Different classes of fravashi are also mentioned in the Avesta. The fravashi protected men but also the yazatas, and the physical creations of sky and earth. In both the Hindu and Zoroastrian calendars special days honour the spirits. Zoroastrian tradition devotes ten special days known as the Fravardigan days to the Fravashi of the dead. (Photo Varuna, sandstone carving, 9th to 11th c )

### COMPARATIVE RITUAL AND LORE: THE HAOMA AND SOMA, YIMA AND YAMA

Humans had an important role in the maintenance of order in both Vedic religion and Zoroastrianism. Vedic religion and Zoroastrianism are highly ritualistic. Communion between gods and humans took place through ritual, and sacerdotal and vicarious rites. Chief among the ritual and sacerdotal practices is the

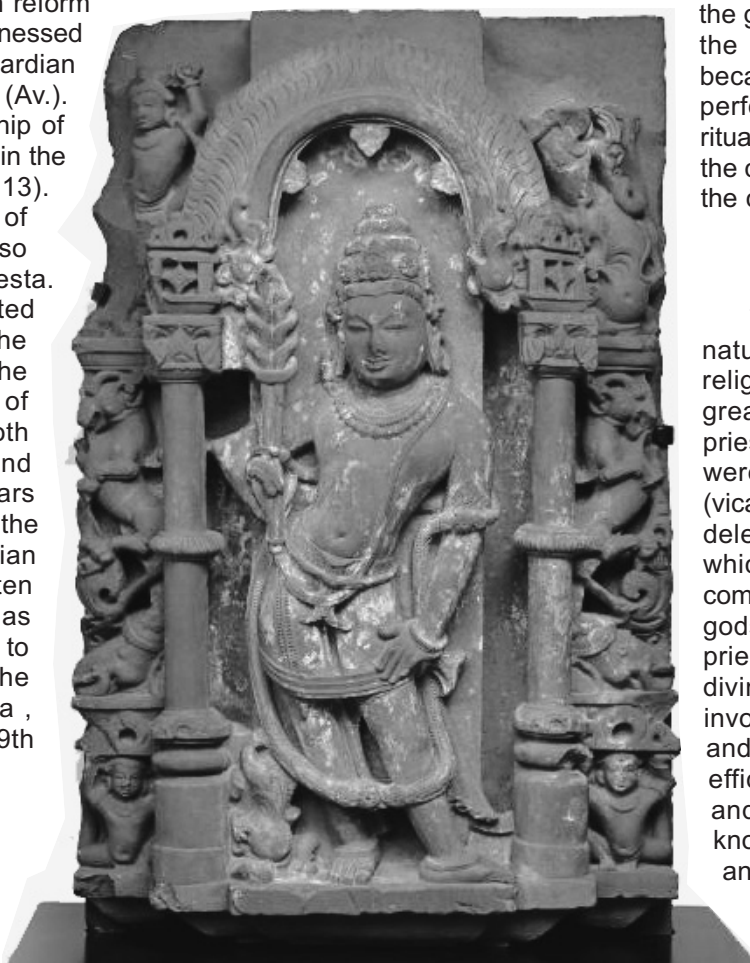
reverence of fire. The fire-god Agni is often referred to in the Rig Veda. Prayers or mantras are offered to Agni for his protection and service. Sacrifice is also a part of both religions.

The most famous 'sacrifice' involved the squeezing of the plant soma (V.) or haoma (Av.), derived from the proto-Indo-Iranian sauma. Soma was a plant, its juice, and the god. The stalks were pounded by the priests and the extracted juice was mixed with milk, during a complex ritual ceremony meant to consecrate the drink with the power of the holy word. The 'pressing' of Soma served as a sacrifice to the gods and as a means

to commune with the gods. Over time, the 'sacrifice' became the correct performance of the ritual which became the central aspect of the ceremony.

The ritualized nature of Vedic religion gave also great influence to priests. The priests were the mediums (vicarious delegates) through which humans communed with the gods. The Vedic priests were semi-divine figures who invoked the sacred and magically efficacious hymns and invocations known as mantras and prayers called brahman to

communicate with the gods. The priest performed the fire ritual. The Vedic priests, consequently, composed a highly specialized class in Vedic society. The class of priests that recited the prayer (brahman), came to be referred to as the





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Brahmans, or priestly caste. It is on the basis of these ritualistic Vedic concepts that the earliest definable religious thought of India is identified as Brahmanism.



The haoma (Av.), hom (Middle Persian) ritual was central to early Zoroastrianism. Haoma is the only divinity with a Yasht and is dedicated in the Zoroastrian calendar. The Yazata Haoma or Hom Yast, the hymns of Yasna 9-11 venerate the haoma. Haoma appears before Zarathustra as a 'beautiful man' who directs the gathering and pressing of haoma. Haoma is tall, fragrant, golden-green, grows on mountains and spreads swiftly, and has strength, and is righteous and wise. Haoma is given the sacred girdle aiwiyanghana by Ahura Mazda and aids the Amesha Spenta.



In the Avesta, Vivanghvant was the first man to prepare the haoma, and as a reward a son, Yima, was granted to him. Yima is presented as a superhuman who aids humans and creation, making the earth grow and the waters flourish (Yt.I5.I6). In the Rig Veda, Yama is the son of Vivasvant (RV. X.14.5), Vaivasvata (RV. X.14.1). He also makes the land fertile with his golden plough.

The similarities and points of comparison between early Zoroastrianism and Vedic religion and its latter day development as Hindu religion are numerous whether in early theology, ritual, or customs. Often the roots are forgotten in the quest to single out uniqueness. The uniqueness of Zoroastrianism and the Zarathustrian achievement of an ethical vision of the universe cannot be denied. The long heritage of Hindu religion, of which Vedic religion is its core, equally speaks to the resilience of the vision of the divine amongst modern-day Hindus. The commonality of both religions roots and their singular development should be celebrated.

### Note

Dieter Taillieu and Mary Boyce. "Haoma"  
*Encyclopaedia Iranica*. New York: Mazda Pub. 2002.  
<http://www.iranica.com/articles/v11f6/v11f6059.html>

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## ZOROASTRIANISM AND JUDAISM IN CONTACT

*Evraim Podell*

### IRANIAN INFLUENCE ON JUDAISM

Whereas today Zoroastrianism is accounted one of the world's smallest religions in terms of the number of adherents, the historical influence of Zoroastrianism on other great world religions has been considerable. The impact of Zoroastrianism on Judaism has been both direct and at other times more understated. Judaism and its tenets in turn would come to influence Christianity, and Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and Christianity all in various ways came to influence the development of Islam.



Contacts between the Jewish people and Iranian civilization go back many centuries beginning in the sixth century BCE, at the time of Cyrus the Great. Cyrus is reputed to have ended the Babylonian Captivity and exile of the Jews, permitting them return to Jerusalem. In the following centuries, Jews of the broader Middle Eastern diaspora lived under Parthian and Sasanian rule. In this article, I will examine Zoroastrian influences on the Jews and Judaism in the above period.

The influence of one religion or religions on any other is not always readily apparent. Not only does distinguishing influence require determining how elements of one religion have changed as a result of contact with another, but also assessing why that change is attributable to 'outside' influences, rather than internal evolutions. In the discussion of Zoroastrian influence on Judaism—two ancient religions and the products of ancient civilizations—the question may also be asked whether Judaism influenced Zoroastrianism.

The nature of the changes in Judaism from the time of the Babylonian exile, from the beginning of the sixth century BCE, to the end of the Second Temple period in CE 70, suggests the impact of new influences on Judaism. During the period of captivity, Jews continued to practice and develop their religious traditions. These traditions evolved from their earlier origins, in large measure due to the impact and influence of local Iranian culture. Indeed, a rebirth of Judaism may be said to have commenced even prior to the re-establishment of the Jewish kingdom. Jewish sources reflect the enormous impact of the Babylonian Captivity and the subsequent return to Israel on the Jews. Jews regard this period as a central part of their relationship with God. Freedom from captivity formed part of a tripartite prophesy that included the freedom from slavery in Egypt, captivity in Babylon, and the return to Jerusalem.



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Religious developments in Judaism during this time period included greater emphasis on personal religious experience and faith and a greater inquiry into the nature of God. The nature of Good and Evil were debated, and the concept of evil forces in the world distinct from a God were elaborated on. The concept of 'angels' and 'demons' first enters Jewish ideas in regards to the divine. One solution for evil and deterioration in the world was found to lie in hope of a more perfect afterlife, and renovation of the world and universe that included the resurrection of the dead and hope of paradise. Many of these concepts were developed and further debated in centuries to come. In particular, the collection of papyrus texts known as the Dead Sea Scrolls dating between 150 BCE to 70 CE, and associated with an ancient Jewish sect known as the Essenes that lived in the deserts of Palestine at Qumran discuss the concept of 'spirit' angels, their arrangement into categories, and their relationship with the divine.<sup>1</sup> From the end of the Parthian period and into the Sasanian period would see the development of the Talmud. Jewish prophesy and wisdom literature would develop resembling Iranian folklore.

The ideas the Jews of the Second Temple period ruminated over may be said to have found their way into Christianity, with its emphasis on angels, the Devil, the resurrection of the dead, and a final judgment. The verdict on Jewish adoption of Zoroastrian concepts is by no means conclusive, not least of all given the time lag between the end of the Babylonian Captivity and the elaboration of the ideas such as found in the Dead Sea Scrolls at the end of the first century BCE. At the same time, the gestation of ideas from one culture to another can take time. The dispersion of the Jews in the Middle East with communities in Iran, Palestine and the greater Near Eastern diaspora may also account for the length of time for ideas to formulate and take shape. Whereas the provenance of influences on Judaism is greatly debated, the correspondence between the Jews contemplation of the divine in the period following the Babylonian Captivity and Zoroastrian theodicy and eschatology suggest the influence of an older and more established religious tradition from Iranian civilization and Zoroastrianism.

### JUDAIC INFLUENCE ON ZOROASTRIANISM

In the discussion of Zoroastrian influence on Judaism, the influence of the Jews on Zoroastrianism is often overlooked. The strong emphasis on Zoroastrian dualism as a means of explaining the distinction between good and evil in the Sasanian period, as found in the third book of the Denkard, the Bundahishn, and Pahlavi Texts, may suggest the debates with the Jews and intensity of culture contact.<sup>2</sup>

### Notes

1 Ronald de Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Schwich Lectures of the British Academy, 1959. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973; Jozef Tadeusz Milik, *Ten Years of Discovery in the Wilderness of Judea*. London: SCM, 1959.

2 See Simone Petrement, *Le Dualisme Dans L'histoire De La Philosophie et Des Religions*. Paris: Gallimard, 1946; Jean P. de Menasce, "Note Sur Le Dualism Mazdeen,," In Satan. Edited by Bruno de Jesus-Marie. Paris: Desclee de Brouwer, 1948, pp.130–135.

**Evraim Podell** was born in Tehran in 1972. His family had lived in Iran for generations, prior to their departure in 1981. He lives in the United States and is a graduate student at the University of Mainz. He studies the history of the Jews of Iran and the Middle East outside historical Palestine and Israel





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### GREAT RELIGIONS OF INDIA AND THEIR ANCIENT RELATIONS

*Fr Tomy Scaria Kariyilakulam, (Fr Tomy)*

India and the Middle East can boast of the great religions of the world like Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. This paper is a humble attempt to look at some of the visible points of contacts between the communities, which originated from Zarathushtra, Buddha, Jesus and Mohamed.

Zoroastrianism is undoubtedly one of the most ancient and greatest religions of the world, which had millions of followers and occupied a place in world history, especially during the rule of Cyrus the Great.

One interesting piece of history of the Zoroastrian community is the migration of some of its followers to the western coast of India following Islamic rule in Iran. These migrants later known as Parsis became a small but influential and significant community in the history, culture and economy of India. One of the salient features of this community is that it does not accept any form of proselytization in India, which in fact is leading to the extinction of the community. Parsi folklore holds that the basis of this practice is firmly rooted in a promise given by the first leaders who arrived in India, to the King of Gujarat who welcomed them.

A very interesting parallel is found in the history of the Christians of Kerala and Southwest India. This community is known as the Syrian Christians or the Syrian Malabar Nasranis denoting their ancestors' origins in the Middle East. The Syrian Christians are the descendants of Indian and Jewish converts to Christianity of the Malabar Coast in the earliest days of Christianity, as well as the descendants of Christian migrants to India fleeing persecution in the Middle East from the first millennium.

Adrian Fortescue, the Church historian, writes in his book *"The Lesser Eastern Churches,"*:

"In the 4th century the Persian Christians were being cruelly persecuted. At that time could it be that a number of them, with bishops and clergy, fled to the more tolerant Hindu princes on the western Coast of India? There is considerable evidence of some such migrations as this; it forms an interesting parallel to the Parsi migration to India after the Moslem conquest of their land; and it accounts for the Syrian Character of Malabar Christianity.

The sum, then of what we know about the introduction of Christianity in South Western India would seem to be this. At some unknown period, but early, probably in the 2nd Century, there were Christians in India. They had come either overland from East Syria or by sea from Arabia. In the 4th century, a body of Christians from Persia arrived in the Malabar Coast. These were subject to the Persian Metropolitan; they brought their language and rites, and had bishops ordained in the East Syrian Mother Church."

It is also very pertinent to note that the Syrian Christians of India had only Persian bishops until 16<sup>th</sup> century when the Portuguese, who took the control of the ports of the western coast like Cochin and Goa, forcibly stopped the Persian Bishops from entering India.

#### SYRIAN CHRISTIANS AND ZOROASTRIAN CONNECTION

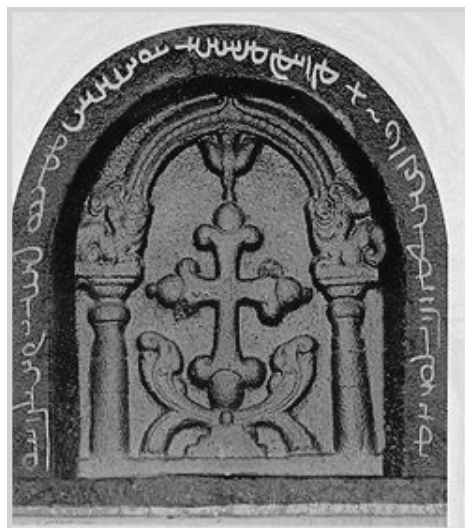
To this day the most important and singular symbol for the Syrian Christians of India is the Persian Cross which is now called 'St. Thomas Cross' or Nasrani Menorah, and Mar Thoma Sreeba in Malayalam. The Cross contains the Christian crucifix, with a dove at the top tip symbolizing the Holy Spirit, and a six-branched candle stand (three on







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either side of the cross) in the tradition of the menorah, to represent God in the burning bush.

There are many ancient models of this cross in many places, the most famous and ancient of them is in the church on St. Thomas Mount, near Chennai, which is believed to be the place where St. Thomas the apostle was killed.

"The Mount cross was found by the Portuguese about 1547, whilst digging among the ruins of the former Christian buildings, for the foundations of the chapel over whose altar the cross was afterwards fix. The Pahlavi inscription is cut into the flat surface of the slab" (*Epigraphia Indica* Vol. IV June 1896 p. 174). In the annual report of the archeological department, Travancore state, 1923-1924, on p. 4 it is stated that the inscription of "the smaller Kottayam Cross... appears to be identical with that at the Mount, and is similarly situated and divided. The larger cross in the

same church, in addition to the Pahlavi, has also an old Syriac inscription."

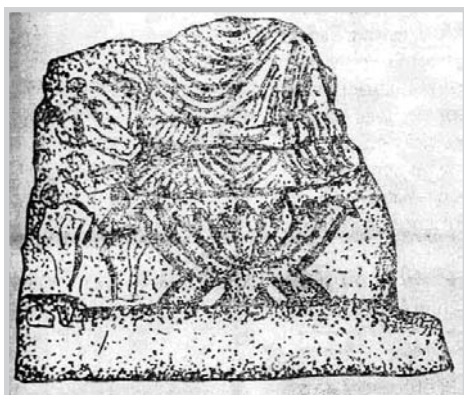
Various Orientalist scholars in 19th and the early 20th centuries researched the Pahlavi inscriptions on the Southern Indian Crosses. Their studies are of interest to philologists, archeologists etc. However, there is a very interesting study published in the "Journal of the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute", Bombay in 1958 by Mr. B.T. Anklesaria in "The Pahlavi Inscription on the Crosses in Southern India". Anklesaria concluded that Syrian Christians had erected this cross to commemorate their safe landing in India. Among them there should have been some who were originally Zoroastrians while in Persia and got converted to Christianity. The Pahlavi inscriptions around the cross can be explained only by this.

Pahlavi was the common script utilized by this community, and understood by worshippers and pilgrims to the site.

The accuracy of the above conclusions can be well appreciated by a Syrian Christian from Kerala (which the author is) There is a strong sense of traditions which is deep rooted in Kerala and corroborate by ample evidences in their folk songs and other sources.



### THE BUDDHIST CONNECTION OF ST. THOMAS CROSS (PERSIAN CROSSES OF SOUTH INDIA)



South India has long been a center for the interaction of various cultures. Buddhism has a significant history in South India up to the 5th century.

The Madras Museum has many Buddhist statues and engraved stones, which have uncanny similarity to the St. Thomas Cross. The motifs include the lotus flower on the base of crosses, the arch and with two pillars on both sides which support the arch. This is exactly similar to the art work and engravings of St. Thomas Cross. Above the main arch of the Kottayam Cross is another arch and a small St. Thomas cross between the arches. The Madras Museum has a slab exactly similar, with a Buddha on the lotus between the pillars



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beneath the arch and a small Buddha between the two arches.

I do not doubt that the artwork and engraving of the St. Thomas crosses are Buddhist art of the 4th century. Buddhist influence in South India has a long history. Alongside the Pahlavi inscription and the Syriac quotation from Galatians on the Kottayam Cross, the Syrian Christians in India incorporated Buddhist symbols into their iconography substituting the cross of Jesus, their Lord, in the place of Buddhist imagery.

### **BUDDHA TURNING TO SRI AYYAPPA, THE HINDU DEITY**

From the 6th to 9th centuries, Buddhism would decline in India. A resurgent Hindu religion would eclipse Buddhism. The works of the Bhakti devotees, beginning in South India, revived Hindu religion. The Buddha was 'assimilated' into Hindu religion, as an avatar of a Hindu god.

The most telling example is the emergence of Sri Ayyappa or Dharma Sastha, who is the deity of Sabarimala, the second most important God of India next to the Lord of Thiruppathy. There are several Ayyappa temples in South India especially in Kerala.

The legend says that he is the son of the king of Pandalam, a small kingdom of Central Travancore.

Sri Ayyappa's statues and pictures are closely similar to that of the Buddha. In the prayers to Ayyappa is the word "Sharanam," continually chanted by devotees enroute to his forest shrine every year. The word comes from a Buddhist Mantra "Buddham Sharanam Gachami, Sangham Sharanam Gachami." The Ayyappa Temple of Sabarimala was the only major Hindu temple in Kerala where Non-Hindus had unrestricted entry. To my mind, I have no doubt that Sri Ayyappa is the makeover of Sri Buddha.

The assimilation of Buddhist imagery and religiosity into a rejuvenated Hindu religion marked the decline of Buddhism, first in South India and then greater India. At the same time, the above evidence suggests the points of contact and commonality between religious ideas. Greater research will throw more light upon our basic unity, as one human race created by God.



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### UNIVERSALISM (FRASHO-KERETI) IN ZOROASTRIANISM AND EARLY CHRISTIANITY: An Overlooked Parallel

**Ken R. Vincent**

In 1893, when prominent religious leaders convened in Chicago for the First Parliament of the World Religions, two of the major participants were J.J. Modi, Zoroastrian, and John Wesley Hanson, Universalist Christian. Dr. Hanson subsequently edited a landmark book about the proceedings, *The World's Congress of Religions*, which included Modi's presentation, "Belief and Ceremonies of the Followers of Zoroaster," as well as a synopsis of his own definitive book, *Universalism, the Prevailing Doctrine of the Christian Church During Its First 500 Years*. Through this effort, a modern resource was created for exploring the largely forgotten parallels between their two religions. For me, Universalism is the most profound of those parallels and the most relevant for today's world.

Universalism is the theological concept that God is too good to condemn anyone to eternal hell, that hell is for rehabilitation (not torture), and that in the end, ALL humanity will be saved by God. Universalism (Frasho-kereti) has been an essential part of Zoroastrianism since antiquity. Zoroaster taught that God loves us all, and that after evil is defeated and those who have fallen prey to evil are "purified" in hell, ALL humanity will be saved at the end of time. In the words of Zoroaster: "If you understand these laws of happiness and pain, which Mazda has ordained, O mortals, (There is) a long period of punishment for the wicked, and reward for the pious, but thereafter eternal joy shall reign forever" (Y30.11).

In Christianity's first 500 years, Universal Restoration was an accepted truth and, following the Reformation (16th Century), it enjoyed an enthusiastic resurgence. Several passages from the New Testament point toward the concept of Universal Salvation, but one of the most familiar is Jesus' Parable of the Lost Sheep (Matt 18: 10-14). The parable ends: "So it is not the will of your Father in Heaven that one of these little ones should be lost." Similarly, the writer of The Acts of the Apostles describes ideas that are central to Zoroastrianism: "Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Messiah appointed for you, that is, Jesus, who must remain in heaven until the time of universal restoration that God announced long ago through his holy prophets" (Acts 3:19-21),

#### Early Scholarship

Some modern minimalist scholars dispute the fact that Zoroaster was a Universalist and say that Universal Salvation came into Zoroastrianism later; however, Mary Boyce points out in *Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism* that the religion was definitely Universalist many years before Christianity when the Greek Theopompus (4th Century BCE) stated that, "Zoroaster prophesies that some day there will be a resurrection of all the dead. In the end Hades shall perish and men (people) shall be happy."

In a later Zoroastrian theological text (Dinkard), the following explanation of Universal Restoration is given: "they have the dead bodies of all men restored; for the good creator, granting forgiveness and full of goodness, would not abandon any creature to the fiend. In revelation it is said that every dead body is raised up, both of the righteous and of the wicked; there is none that they should abandon to the fiend"

The first Universalist Christian theologian whose works survive is St. Clement of Alexandria (150–215 CE). He was head of the theology school there, which, until it closed at the end of the 4th Century, was a bastion of Universalist thought. His pupil, Origen (185–254 CE), wrote the first complete presentation of Christianity as a system, and Universalism was at its core. According to Edward Beecher, a Congregationalist theologian, four of the six theology schools in Christendom during its early years were Universalist (Alexandria, Cesarea, Antioch, and Edessa). Most of the





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Greek-speaking Universalists throughout Christendom favored the teachings of Origen that emphasized humanity's free will to choose good over evil. Origen was convinced that God's love would prevail, and ALL would be saved in the end.

Later, Theodore of Mopsuestia (350–428 CE) of the Nestorian Church of the East developed a somewhat different theological basis for Universal Salvation. For most of its history, the Nestorian Church maintained its Universalist position. Today, only a quarter-million Nestorians remain, but the Universalist liturgy written by Theodore of Mopsuestia is still in use.

Despite its hearty beginnings, Universalism began to lose favor in the Roman Catholic Church and, by the 6th Century, Rome had formally condemned all Universalist thought. As discussed above, Universalist doctrine survived in the Church of the East but would remain suppressed in the West until the Reformation. Today, a tiny remnant of Universalist Christians remains within the now-interfaith Unitarian Universalist Church, but most Christians who profess Universalism are scattered across a broad spectrum of denominations from post-Vatican II Catholics to Primitive Baptists.

### Requirements for Salvation

For the followers of Zoroaster, the requirements for salvation are simple to remember but difficult to follow: GOOD THOUGHTS, WORDS, and DEEDS. Also in Christianity, the need for GOOD WORKS is repeated throughout the New Testament Synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. In fact, verses supporting GOOD WORKS, combined with those supporting UNIVERSAL SALVATION are predominant in the New Testament. It is true, however, that several verses suggest other paths to salvation, including Belief ("Jesus Saves"), Predestination, and Mysticism. Inevitably, Christians splintered into sects according to the verses they assessed to be most true.

### "Trial By Fire" Parallel

Zoroaster refers several times to the "trial by molten metal" (Y 32.7, Y30.7, Y51.9), including this example: "With what understanding shalt Thou, O Mazda, give judgment to the two contending sides, through Thy fire, a token of the final molten test? Let there be a sign of the separation: The destruction of the evil, from the Blessedness of the righteous" (Y51.9).

In the later Bundahisn: "Then all men will pass into that molten metal and become pure; when one is righteous, then it seems to him just as though he continually walks in warm milk; but the wicked, then it seems to him in such manner as though, in the world, he walks continually in molten metal. Afterwards, with greatest affection, all men come together, father and son and brother and friend ask one another: 'Where has thou been these many years, and what was the judgment upon thy soul? Hast thou been righteous or wicked?' ... all men become immortal forever and everlasting. This, too, it says, that whoever has been the size of a man, they restore him then with an age of forty years; they who have been little when not dead, they restore then with an age of fifteen years; and they give everyone his wife, and show him his children with the wife; so the act is now in the world, but there is no begetting of children....this earth becomes an iceless, slope less plain; even the mountain..."

Compare this to the Universalist passage in which John the Baptist quotes Isaiah from the Hebrew Scriptures (Is 40:3-5): "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God" (Lk 3:4-6.).

In Christianity, a molten metal "end of time" is described in the New Testament 2nd Letter of Peter (3:10-13): "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed. Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in leading lives



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of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home" (II Peter 3:10- 13) .

Fire for the purpose of purification is a central theme in early Christian Universalism. Both Origen and St. Gregory of Nyssa referred to (Mal 3:2): "For God is like a refiner's fire and a fuller's soap". St. Clement of Alexandria also used Luke 3:16: "He (Jesus) will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire". Origen, who was early Christianity's most prominent theologian, adds: "Our God is a consuming fire" (Heb 12:29), and: "I (Jesus) came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!" (Lk 12:49).

Finally, St. Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and St. Gregory of Nyssa referred to St. Paul's writings regarding the use of fire for purification leading to salvation: "The work of each builder will become visible, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each has done. If what has been built on the foundation survives, the builder will receive a reward. If the work is burned up, the builder will suffer loss; the builder will be saved, but only as through fire" (I Cor 3:13-15).

Finally, let us examine Universal Salvation in the last book of the New Testament, Revelation. After the "second death" (Rev. 14:14), we are told of the beauties of the New Heaven, the New Earth, and the Holy City: "Its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there" (Rev 21:25-27, emphasis added). But what of those who went through the "second death?" According to Universalist theologians Jan Bonda (Dutch Reformed) and Gregory MacDonald (Evangelical Christian), they are outside the city as described in the following verse: "Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they will have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city by the gates. Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and fornicators and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood" (Rev 22:14-15).

What do they have to do to get inside? They have to "Wash their robes" or, as alternately translated, "Do his commandments," i.e., GOOD WORKS. The gates of the Heavenly City are OPEN, and "God is its light" (Rev. 21:23). St. Macrina the Younger taught her brother, St. Gregory of Nyssa, that the "second death" was for souls who needed additional purification before their final restoration with God. The great Universalist scholar John Wesley Hanson preferred the final word expressed in 1 Cor 15:28 when God becomes "all in all."

### Conclusion

In stark defiance of the message currently proclaimed in the series of best-selling Christian books, Universalists know that NO ONE is "Left Behind" by God! Zoroastrianism has always maintained this hopeful message; unfortunately, it is a message embraced by only a minority of Christian denominations today.

All quotations from the Bible are from the New Revised Standard Version and reproduced with permission.

**Ken R. Vincent, Ed.D.** is the author of *The MAGI: From Zoroaster to the "Three Wise Men"* and *The Golden Thread: God's Promise of Universal Salvation*.





## “The Zoroastrianism-Islamic rut”: Reflections on the Scholarship of Zoroastrianism and Islam

**Burzine K. Waghmar**

In his 1953 inaugural lecture as Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics at the University of Oxford, Robert Charles Zaehner, the Anglo-Swiss Iranist and scholar of comparative religion, noted the perils and promises in the study of eastern religions by western theologians. Among the criticisms was that the Christian theologians were often uninterested in the study of exotic and distant credos such as Hinduism, Confucianism or Buddhism. Zaehner, however, noted that the religious scholar: “could, perhaps, have paid a little more attention to the Zoroastrians, many of whose dogmas seem so strikingly to prefigure ideas that we have come to regard as specifically Christian, [including] the freedom of the human will, the reality of heaven and hell, the individual judgement of the soul at death, and a universal judgement on the last day, to mention only the most important.”<sup>1</sup>

Some six years later, Zaehner edited *The Hutchinson Encyclopedia of Living Faiths*, and it remains one of the finest one-volume compilations of essays by leading specialists of their respective religions. Zaehner’s contribution on Zoroastrianism is splendid in perspicuity and penetration. In the introduction, he notes: “The importance of Zoroastrianism, however, like that of Judaism, lies not in the number of those who profess it, but rather in the influence it has exercised on other religions, and particularly on Christianity, through the medium of the Jewish exiles in Babylon who seem to have been thoroughly impregnated with Zoroastrian ideas. Christianity claims to be the heir of the prophets of Israel. If there is any truth in this claim, it is no less heir to the Prophet of ancient Iran, little though most Christians are aware of this fact.”<sup>2</sup> Zaehner further acknowledged that much of what the Zarathustra taught lives on in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. “Judaism had absorbed into its bloodstream more of the Iranian Prophet’s teaching than it could well admit.”<sup>3</sup> Through its connection with Islam, Baha’ism, may also be the newest ‘universalism’.

Although Zoroastrianism has now received greater recognition in Judaic and New Testament scholarship, Zoroastrianism’s relationship with Islam remains relatively unexplored. Whereas some scholars of Islam have correctly underscored the socio-historical impact of Iranian culture on Islam, less is noted of actual Zoroastrian influences on Islam.<sup>4</sup> Amidst Zaehner’s own appeal for the study of comparative religion, in his Gifford Lectures delivered at the University of Oxford between 1967 and 1969, Zaehner coined “the old Zoroastrian-Islamic rut” that bedevilled the scholarship.<sup>5</sup>

Whence and whither this rut? It is, literally, a rut depressing in scholarly recognition and deplorable in popular realization. The aversion has been frequently cool, occasionally cordial, and always mutual whether between Arabist and Iranist scholars or Zoroastrians and Muslims. The history between Zoroastrians and Muslims was summed up by Jamsheed Choksy as, “a legacy of who they had been and what they had experienced through conflict and cooperation<sup>6</sup>.” The modern historian of the Arabs, Bernard Lewis, however, noted that “Zoroastrianism suffered the most. The Persian state, unlike the Christian empire, was completely overcome and destroyed. The Zoroastrians, lacking either the stimulation of powerful friends beyond the border enjoyed by the Christians or the bitter skills in survival possessed by the Jews, fell into discouragement and decline.”<sup>7</sup>

Notwithstanding the history described by Lewis, the relationship between Zoroastrianism and Islam remains compelling for some modern scholars. Zoroastrian ideas have percolated into early Islam. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Ignaz Goldziher (1850-1921), the father of modern Islamology, pioneering work still remains the departure point for all embarking on Islam’s relationship with Zoroastrianism.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, Alessandro Baudani (1921-88), the accomplished scholar of Arabic and Persian noted the Iranian-influenced roots of Islam.<sup>9</sup>

Consider, for example, Goldziher’s contention that the five, diurnal, mandatory prayers of Islam, part of the five pillars of the faith, can be plausibly attributed to direct Zoroastrian influences on the development of early Islam. Furthermore, the famous night journey of the Prophet Muhammad to Jerusalem and heavenly ascent to from the holy city mount to paradise, noted in the hadith literature and written a century after Muhammad’s death, might reasonably be said to have been influenced by Pahlavi Iranian lore. Such a heavenly sojourn is evident in the apocalyptic voyage of the righteous (arda) Wiraz. The Arda Wiraz Namag or “The Book of the Righteous Wiraz”,<sup>10</sup> written in Middle





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Persian, is little known to Islamic scholars; yet may well have influenced ideas from the Qur'an to Dante Alighieri's *La Divina Commedia*.

The lack of knowledge on the ties between Zoroastrianism and Islam forms a lack of comparative scholarship, and a faulty or scant comprehension of even the basics of the Irano-Islamic religious situation. Other misunderstandings are a result of biased views; the latter, admittedly, routine among adherents of any confessional system. The 'Zoroastrian case for Islam' and the former's influences on the latter, was problematic given the doctrine's of Islam. Unlike the case of Judaism and Christianity, whose followers were (ahl al-kitab) "people of the book", Zoroastrianism as Islam's 'spiritual forebears', was impossible.

The inter-faith movement in recent years has witnessed the establishment of "a common word" ecumenical declaration by a grouping of 138 Muslim scholars and theologians and the Holy See. An initiative of this nature, albeit on a far modest scale, between Zoroastrian representatives and Muslims of all branches might not be undesirable

### Notes

- 1 "Foolishness to the Greeks" (an inaugural lecture delivered before the University of Oxford on 2 November 1953). Reprinted in R. C. Zaehner, *Concordant Discord: the interdependence of faiths* being the Gifford Lectures on Natural Religion delivered at St. Andrews in 1967-69 (Oxford 1970), p. 431.
- 2 R.C. Zaehner, "Zoroastrianism" in *The Hutchinson Encyclopaedia of Living Faiths* (Oxford 1959, revised reprint 1994), p. 200.
- 3 Ibid., p. 213.
- 4 Shaul Shaked, *From Zoroastrian Iran to Islam: studies in religious history and inter-cultural contacts* (Aldershot, 1995) available in a Persian edition as *Az Iran-e zardoshti ta Islam: mota'alat-e darbareh-e tarikh-e din va tamasha-ye miyan farhangi*, trans. M Sabqib Far (Tehran, 1381/2002); B.K. Waghmar, 'A Note on Parsi Islamology', Third International Congress Proceedings: K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, ed. H. Modi (Bombay, 2001), p. 258, n. 3. See especially the papers by E. Yarshater, H. Kennedy and C. E. Bosworth in *The Rise of Islam: the Idea of Iran IV*, eds. V. Curtis and S. Stewart (London, 2009) delivered as part of the The Idea of Iran symposia annually sponsored since 2004 by the Soudavar Memorial Foundation at the London Middle East Institute, SOAS.
- 5 Zaehner, 1970, p. 8.
- 6 J.K. Choksy, *Conflict and Cooperation: Zoroastrian Subalterns and Muslim Elites in Medieval Iranian Society* (New York, 1997), p. 143.
- 7 B. Lewis, "The Middle East and the West" (London, 1964), p. 20, repr. in *The Shaping of the Modern Middle East* (New York, 1994), p. 15; also reiterated in his *The Middle East: a brief history of the last 2,000 years* (New York, 1995), p. 218.
- 8 I. Goldziher, "Islamisme et Parsisme" in *Actes du 1er Congrès International d'Histoire des Religions* (Paris, 1900), pp. 119–147; repr. in idem, *Gesammelte Schriften IV*, ed. J. Desomogyi (Hildesheim, 1970), pp. 232–260. Translated by G.K. Nariman with an afterword as "The Influence of Parsism on Islam" in C.P. Tiele, *The Religion of the Iranian Peoples, part I*, (Bombay, 1912), pp. 162–186. Repr. in G.K. Nariman, *Persia and Parsis, part I* (Bombay, 1925), pp. 39–74. A recent study by an Iranist is P. O. Skjærvø, "Goldziher and Iranian elements in Islam" in Goldziher Memorial Conference June 21-22, 2000, Budapest. Oriental Collection: Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, eds. A. Éva and O. István (Budapest, 2005 [2006]), pp. 245–250.
- 9 A. Bausani, "The Problem of Iranian Islam" in *Religion in Iran: from Zoroaster to Baha'ullah*, tr. J. Marchesi (New York, 2005), pp. 111–145.
- 10 E. Blochet, "Études sur l'histoire religieuse de l'Iran II: l'ascension au ciel du prophète Muhammad" *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, 40 (1899), pp. 1–25. F. Vahman, *Arda Wiraz Namag: The Iranian 'Divine Commedia'* (Copenhagen, 1986).

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## Parliament Of The World's Religions

### Gustaspshah Kaikhusroo Nariman: Improving Ties Between Zoroastrianism and Islam

*Dinyar Patel*

Within the Zarathushti tradition, no religion has—historically speaking—excited more controversy and antipathy than Islam. Iranian Zarathushti religious authorities in the early Islamic era heaped scorn on the new faith from Arabia that had turned their world upside down. In India, Parsis excoriated Muslims for their role in their exile, firmly believing that invading Arabs had given them the simple choice of conversion, banishment, or execution. While it is true that, on countless occasions, Zarathushtis suffered dearly at the hands of Muslims, both in Iran and India, Islam and Zoroastrianism often have enjoyed happier encounters. And, periodically, men from both religious traditions have sought to break down the mutual mistrust and hostility that have accreted over the centuries. One such man was Gustaspshah Kaikhusroo Nariman.<sup>1</sup>

Nariman, a staple of Bombay's intellectual and political life in the early twentieth century, was a descendant of Mulla Firuz, the famous Kadmi priest who traveled to Iran in the late 1700s, mastering Persian and Arabic and gaining a wealth of knowledge on the Zarathushtrian religion. Like Firuz, Nariman was a talented linguist, learning Arabic, Sanskrit, Persian, and various European languages. His penchant for languages earned him positions as a translator at the Chief Court of Rangoon and an assistant censor for foreign communications in Bombay during the First World War. More importantly for our story, however, Nariman's knowledge of these languages gave him thorough command of sources on the Zarathushti religion and its history. He began to write and publish extensively on these topics.

Utilizing Arabic and classical Persian sources, Nariman began advancing a very unconventional argument for a Parsi: that the Arab invasion of Iran was marked by relative tolerance and respect for Zoroastrianism and that most ancient Iranians embraced Islam due to corruption and lethargy within the Sasanian state church. Islam's appeal and a variety of secular reasons, rather than "the point of the Arab's sword," explained Iran's process of Islamicization.<sup>2</sup> In his *Persia and the Parsis*, published in 1925, Nariman shattered the idealized portrayal of the Sasanian Empire upheld by most Parsis, noting rampant polygamy, concubinage, slavery, and abuse of power in the last years of the Zarathushti era. Arab invaders, Nariman argued, hardly deserved their appellation as uncivilized barbarians and, in a similar vein; Islam could not be blamed for the supposed "fall" of Iran:

"A dispassionate comparative study of Sasanian Persia and Persia under Islam raises the question: Are those quite justified who lay the relative backwardness of modern Persia entirely at the door of Islam? Was Sasanian Iran in its latter days so immeasurably superior in national ethics and social organization? Why did then the mighty edifice collapse so hopelessly under the shock of a few thousand miserable 'lizard-eaters', veritably like a pack of cards? It came down because the moral foundations of the nation were sapped by religious maniacs and it ultimately survived the cataclysm because it had clung to some of the planks of shipwrecked Zoroastrianism.

"It appears to me that save and except for the veiling of women and appalling defiance of the laws of hygiene, there is hardly any of the alleged meretricious usages of modern Islam which had no parallel, sometimes in an aggravated form, in the later Zarathushti period. Let us be loyal to Truth and just to our confreres in Persia."<sup>3</sup>

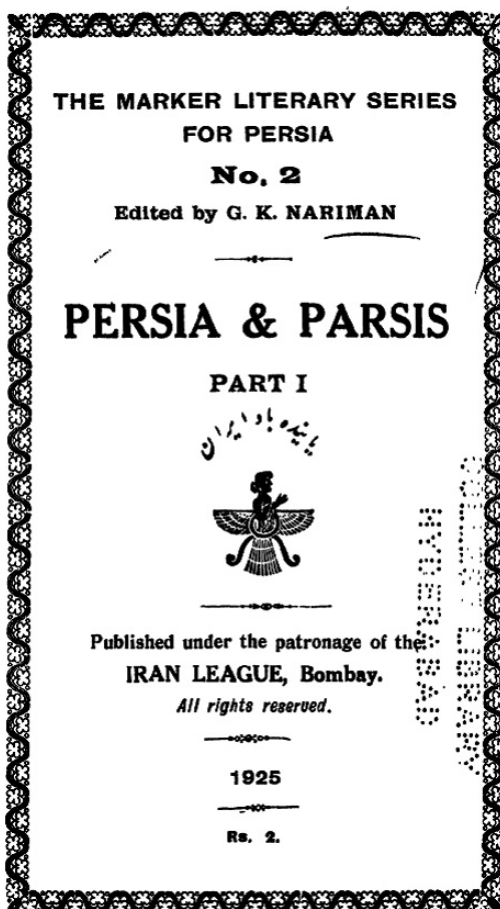
Many modern scholars of ancient Persia would take issue with Nariman's argument, pointing out that Iran hardly fell like "a pack of cards". While the Sasanian army and administration did give way to the invaders within a number of years, it took nine decades for the Arabs to reach the farthest reaches



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of the former empire and many more centuries before Iran would become majority Muslim. Nevertheless, Nariman's argument was revolutionary in the sense that it challenged the traditional Zarathushti notion of Iranian history. In 1922, Nariman helped found the Iran League, a Bombay-based organization committed toward increasing Parsi ties with Iran and, consequently, improving relations between Parsis, Iranian Zoroastrians, and Iranian Muslims. He served as vice-president of the organization and the editor of its publication, the *Iran League Bulletin*, for several years.

Nariman's intended audience was not simply the Parsis. He wished to dispel the allusions and the narrative of history that led to rampant anti-Arab sentiment in Iran in the late Qajar and Pahlavi eras. "The wars [between the Arabs and the Persians] are over, but the consuming jealousies still hamper Iran's progress," Nariman noted. "There has been immemorial antagonism between the Persian and the Arab as belonging to dissimilar ethnic groups, alternately sovereign and subject." As an example, he cited a recent edition of *Iran Shahr*, a Persian monthly published out of Berlin, where an illustration portrayed "Lady Iran being ravished by the forbidding ghouls of Arabia" while flames swallowed the imperial palace at Ctesiphon. "To this day," he lamented, "the Persian Musalman, though he is enjoined by the Qoran [sic] to be a brother in Islam to the Arab, has unfortunately not abated an iota of his hatred of the latter."<sup>4</sup>



Nariman's historical work and arguments appear to have had little popularity in Iran. Amongst the Parsis, however, they were well known, and the scholar "paid the price of brushing aside conventions," as R.B. Paymaster noted in a compendium of Nariman's works published shortly after his death. Parsis attacked Nariman for being "pro-Moslem" and "indifferent to the interests of his own religion."<sup>5</sup> While his scholarship received the praise of Rabindranath Tagore, the Aga Khan, A.V. Williams Jackson and, apparently, the "King of Siam," Nariman was pilloried by many Parsis.<sup>6</sup> In 1929, he resigned from his position as editor of the *Iran League Bulletin* and severed his connections with the Iran League, for reasons unexplained in further publications or other biographical sketches. It can only be assumed that Nariman's controversial reputation within the Parsi community had an impact upon his decision to retire from the organization.

While G.K. Nariman labored to break down the centuries of antipathy that many Parsis had developed toward Islam and Muslims, he also supported Islamic scholars whose work sought to decrease Islamic prejudices toward Zoroastrianism while acknowledging the tremendous debt that their faith owed to Iran's ancient creed. One such scholar was Syed M. Taher Rezwi of Calcutta's Presidency College who, in 1928, published *Parsis: A People of the Book*. In his work, intended for an educated Muslim readership, Rezwi explained the teachings of Zoroastrianism while tracing the interaction of

Islam and Zoroastrianism in Iran, highlighting both periods of toleration and persecution. From Zoroastrian, Quranic, and later Muslim documents, as well as European and Parsi scholarship, Rezwi acknowledged Zarathushtra as a legitimate "Prophet of God" and explicated on the similarities of the two faiths.<sup>7</sup>

In a later article, included in a memorial volume for a Parsi president of the Iran League, Rezwi made the remarkable conclusion that, "The same Ahura Mazda or Allah spoke through the Prophet of Arabia as He had spoken already through Zoroaster, ages before."<sup>8</sup> The book received high praise from another professor at Presidency College, Shams-ul-Ulama M. Hedayet Hosain. In the Foreword





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to Rezwi's volume, Hosain wrote: "I wish that the Muslim community take a deep interest in these pages, replete with information and full of suggestion, and appreciate the full measure of the value of the great religion of Prophet Zoroaster that has contributed so much to the Islamic speculative thoughts, especially in its Sufistic developments." He further noted: "Mr. Rezwi's work, *Parsis: A People of the Book*, will, it need hardly be said, point to that common ground where the followers of the Prophets of Iran and of Arabia could meet and exchange ideas on religion and life."<sup>9</sup> Members of the Iran League, including Hormusji Adenwalla and Nariman, assisted in Rezwi's research and later arranged for the book to be translated and published in Persian.<sup>10</sup> Nariman also supplied an introduction to the volume where he described Rezwi's work as part of a body of scholarship—being undertaken at the Iran League, Aligarh Muslim University, and elsewhere—that was "bring[ing] about unity between the two most ancient lands of Aryan culture."<sup>11</sup> Rezwi, for his part, offered his gratitude for Nariman's assistance and chose to dedicate his book to the Iran League, "In appreciation of its services towards strengthening the ties of fraternity among the various religious denominations inhabiting Persia and India, especially between the Moslems and the Zoroastrians."<sup>12</sup>

G.K. Nariman passed away in 1933, still a highly controversial figure amongst the Parsis of Bombay. However, he left behind legions of admirers around India and the world. Benjamin G. Horniman, the editor of the Bombay Chronicle who himself sparked controversy amongst his fellow Englishmen for his pro-Indian independence views, praised Nariman's erudite contributions to Indian journalism. Scholars of ancient Iran such as A.V. Williams Jackson of Columbia University remembered Nariman for his lucid academic work. R.B. Paymaster penned a fitting obituary for this scholar, while hoping for kinder treatment for the subject by future generations of Zarathushti readers. Paymaster writes: "Of the few writers who have attained international repute and yet who were misunderstood by their own people, G.K. Nariman was one, who in advance of his time spoke and wrote in a manner which to many of his contemporaries seemed unacceptable."<sup>13</sup>

### Notes

- 1 For a detailed biography of Nariman, see R.B. Paymaster, "Life-Sketch of G.K. Nariman," in Writings of G.K. Nariman, compiled by R.B. Paymaster (Bombay: Captain Printing Works, 1935), pp. i-x.
- 2 Gustaspshah Kaikhusroo (G.K.) Nariman, "*Parsis and Early Islam*," in *Ibid.*, p. 178.
- 3 G.K. Nariman, "Introduction," in *Persia and Parsis*, p. v.
- 4 *Ibid.*, pp. viii-ix.
- 5 Paymaster, "*Life-Sketch of G.K. Nariman*," p. iv.
- 6 *Ibid.*, p. i.
- 7 This is the title of an entire chapter. Syed M. Taher Rezwi, *Parsis: A People of the Book* (Calcutta: Imperial Art Cottage, 1928), p. 95.
- 8 Syed M. Taher Rezwi, "Parallel Thoughts in Islam and Zoroastrianism," in Dinshah Irani Memorial Volume (Bombay: The Dinshah J. Irani Memorial Fund Committee, 1943), p. 154.
- 9 "Foreword," in Rezwi, *Parsis: A People of the Book*, p. iv.
- 10 K.A. Fitter, "Summary of Work Done by the Iran League Between September, 1931 and September, 1934," *Iran League Quarterly*, April 1937, p. 196.
- 11 "Introductory Note," in Rezwi, *Parsis: A People of the Book*, p. xli.
- 12 Rezwi, *Parsis: A People of the Book*, p. v.



<sup>13</sup> Paymaster, "*Life-Sketch of G.K. Nariman*," p. i.

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# In The News

## THE ECONOMIST AWARDS RATAN TATA THE "BUSINESS PROCESS INNOVATION AWARD" FOR CHANGING THE WAY INDIAN COMPANIES CONDUCT BUSINESS.

Ratan Tata, Chairman of TATA Group, was the winner of the eighth edition of the Annual 'Business Process Innovation Award' for the successful

"Innovative ideas are everywhere," said Mark Langley, executive vice-president and COO of the Project Management Institute. "What we salute with the Business Process Award is rarer: The



development and launch of the world's cheapest car, the Tata Nano.

In a statement, the UK based magazine, Economist, said Tata was selected for "...forging a company that is shaping businesses across the globe and changing the way Indian companies conduct business. The company is also responsible for inventing the Tata Nano, the world's lowest-cost car. Innovative methods through which the car is designed and manufactured enable Tata Motors to offer a more affordable, safe and efficient form of mobility to families in emerging markets."

implementation, through effective projects and programs that translate ideas into lasting change. Tata Motors' Nano challenges the way automobiles have been made and marketed for a hundred years. The application of project management is testimony to Tata Group's record of refining its processes, from boardroom to manufacturing floor, and promises transformation of an industry facing a billion new customers over the next generation."



# In The News

## TATA GROUP AIG

### Farrokh Kavarana of Tata Group says : 'We Are Just Trying to Reclaim Our Legacy'

When insurance giant AIG ran into problems during the sub prime mortgage crisis, how did that affect the company's two ventures with India's Tata Group?

The impact was surprisingly small, according to Farrokh Kavarana, a director of Tata Sons, who oversees Tata AIG Life Insurance and Tata AIG General Insurance. Tata AIG's ventures are well capitalized and they more than meet regulators' solvency norms, he told India Knowledge@Wharton in an interview during the recent Wharton India Economic Forum in Philadelphia.

*Kavarana was the recipient of the 2009 Wharton Indian Alumni Award*



## ZAC YOUTH SHOW / NATAK

The Zoroastrian Association of California Youth Show, followed by a Parsi Natak, was held at the La Mirada Centre for the Performing Arts on August 29, 2009. It was truly a night to remember, with an audience of almost 400 people. It was a ZAC fund raiser, for both the hall fund as well as the youth fund. The youth show sparkled with the talents of all the young people who had been practicing and perfecting their different acts through the summer. Each act excelled in precision, talent and novelty. MC's, Arish Dubash and Mehernosh Gundevia filled the evening with comic delight.

The hilarious Parsi natak, "Masi ne de fasi", with its outstanding cast of actors, was a big hit. Rhoda Lakdawalla was pivotal in organizing and putting this delightful comedy together.

Over \$10,000 were raised. Congratulations.

The show was co-chaired by Persis Choksy and Rooky Fitter.

Photographs by Ardeshir Baghkhani



Om Shanti OM



Jai Ho Dance



DesiGirls



Adult Natak, "Masi-ne-de-fasi"

# In The News

## DINSHAW PATEL ELECTED TO NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, THE HIGHEST HONOUR BESTOWED ON AN AMERICAN SCIENTIST

Dr. Dinshaw J. Patel, the son of Mrs. Shirine J. Patel and the late Jehangir E. Patel of Mumbai, India was elected in April 2009 to the National Academy of Sciences USA, the highest honor that can be



bestowed on an American scientist. He was one of 72 Americans in the mathematical, physical, biological, medical and social sciences who were inducted into the Academy, an institution established by President Abraham Lincoln in 1863 in the midst of the civil war. Dr. Patel holds the Abby Rockefeller Mauze Chair in Experimental Therapeutics at the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York where he heads a research group in Structural Biology. Dr. Patel's research is centered on an understanding of molecular processes controlling gene regulation and he has been credited with landmark discoveries in exploring the inner working of proteins, nucleic acids and their complexes. Recently, Dr. Patel has collaborated extensively with research groups at nearby Rockefeller University on projects involving RNA silencing-based suppression of genes of medical interest and the role of DNA's packaging proteins in spatial and temporal regulation of gene function.

Dr. Patel received his BS from the University of Mumbai in 1961, his MS from the California Institute of Technology as a Jamshetjee N. Tata Scholar, and his PhD from New York University in 1968, all in Chemistry. He joined the AT&T Bell Laboratories, Murray Hill, NJ, where he undertook biophysical research on the structure and function of DNA and its

complexes with antibiotics and anti-cancer drugs. He next moved to Columbia University-Health Sciences as Professor of Biochemistry and Biophysics in 1984, where his research expanded to carcinogen-mediated DNA damage processes. He took up his current appointment at Sloan-Kettering in 1992, where his research direction changed to structure-function studies of protein and RNA-mediated processes.

His many research achievements have been recognized by the 1983 Distinguished Member of Technical Staff Award of AT&T Bell Laboratories and the 1997 Distinguished Alumnus Award of New York University. Dr. Patel has served on the Advisory Boards of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute and the National Cancer Institute. At Sloan-Kettering, he runs a laboratory of 15 scientists, and has welcomed numerous Parsi students, who have undertaken summer research projects, before moving on to successful careers at graduate and medical schools.

Dr. Patel is married to Shernaz Kutar, daughter of the late Dasturji Dr. Sohrab Kutar and the late Dr. Shirine Kutar of Woolwich, United Kingdom. They live in Dobbs Ferry, NY with their three children Zarine, Kerman and Sohrab. Dr. Patel has very much enjoyed his scientific career, with each day bringing new challenges and opportunities, while being part of a world-wide community of scholars, probing the frontiers of cutting-edge research in the life and medical sciences. It has allowed him to travel extensively in Europe and Asia, thereby allowing him to maintain his contacts with scientists in developing nations. Dr. Patel is an avid reader of current events, political autobiographies and military histories. He is a passionate fan of the New York Yankees and Manchester United. He is also a keen collector of books, antique prints and Persian carpets, and most recently, Chinese and Korean pottery.

The National Academy of Sciences is a private organization of scientists and engineers dedicated to the furtherance of science and its use for the general welfare. It was established in 1863 by a congressional act of incorporation signed by Abraham Lincoln that calls on the Academy to act as an official advisor to the federal government, upon request, in any matter of science or technology.

**Dr. Dinshaw J. Patel**, Abby Rockefeller Mauzé Chair in Experimental Therapeutics

Member, Structural Biology Program, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, 1275 York Avenue, New York, NY, 10021 USA, e-mail [pateld@mskcc.org](mailto:pateld@mskcc.org)

# In The News

Hi!



From Neville Medhora



# In The News

## KAINAZ AMARIA, PHOTOJOURNALIST AND MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER, FROM SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA, AWARDED A FULBRIGHT SCHOLARSHIP TO MUMBAI



Photojournalist and multimedia producer Kainaz Amaria, from the San Francisco Bay Area has been awarded a nine-month Fulbright Scholarship to Mumbai, India. Established in 1946 and sponsored by the United States Department of State, the Fulbright program seeks to increase multi-cultural understanding through the exchange of knowledge and skills. While in Mumbai, Kainaz plans to visually document the Parsi community at a critical time in its history. Through photography and video, she will document how the community is coping in the face of possible extinction. The project's goal is to uncover diverse Parsi voices in order to understand how gender roles and generational differences affect the preservation of the Parsi heritage and the Zarathushti faith.

Kainaz holds a B.A. in international relations and political science from Boston University and a M.A. in photography from the School of Visual Communication, Ohio University.

She has completed photographic and political internships at the St. Petersburg Times, in St. Petersburg, Florida, at US News & World Report in Washington D.C., at the Journal Star in Lincoln, Nebraska, at the House of Commons in London, England, and at Senator Edward M. Kennedy's office in Boston, Massachusetts. In 2007, she was the recipient of the nationally competitive Chips Quinn

scholarship, honoring promising young journalists. At Ohio University, she worked as a graduate teaching assistant and content producer for the award-winning web magazine the *Soul of Athens*. She has attended and instructed at professional photographic workshops such as the Missouri Photo Workshop, the Fall Workshop at Syracuse University, and the Eddie Adams Workshop.

Kainaz's documentary work has taken her across the United States, examining social issues such as the effects of coal mining in southeast Ohio, to the public housing crisis in New Orleans. Her images and multimedia pieces have been recognized by numerous contests including the College Photographer of the Year, Women in Photojournalism, Atlanta Photojournalism Conference, the National Press Photographers Association Multimedia Contest, the Society of American Business Editors and Writers and by the South Asian Journalists Association.

Kainaz's love of learning and passion for understanding the human condition led her to become a visual storyteller. Above all else, she strives to uphold the following tenets of journalism – humanity, diversity and accuracy – in her work. You can visit her website at [www.kainazamaria.com](http://www.kainazamaria.com) and are welcome to contact her with questions, comments or thoughts at [kainazamaria@gmail.com](mailto:kainazamaria@gmail.com).



*Nilda Walters gently drapes a sash across her daughter Kristen Grace Walters, 6, in preparation for the Grand "Flores de Phil Fest" Parade at the 14th annual Philippine Festival in Tampa. Kristen's sash read "Reyna Sententiada" or the Queen of Peace. Photo St Petersburg Times*

# In The News

## CYRUS SINOR Named Minority Small Business Person of the Year at Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week 2009 Conference

The co-owners of North Charleston-based International Public Works, a construction and engineering firm, Cyrus Sinor and Kai-Yun Yeh have been named Minority Small Business Persons of the Year by the U.S. Small Business Administration, during the 27th Anniversary of the National Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week conference in Washington, D.C.

"I'm honored to be part of this important event with these extraordinary entrepreneurs. These business leaders provide innovative products and services to the federal government and commercial market, create jobs and stimulate economic growth," said SBA Administrator Karen Mills, who made the announcement during her keynote address. The award was presented by Joseph Biden, Vice-President of the United States. (photo from left Cyrus Sinor, VP of USA Joseph Biden, Kai-Yun Yeh.)

The award recognized their firm's consistent growth and their efforts to reach out to other certified, historically disadvantaged businesses in the Charleston area.

Sinor and Kai-Yun Yeh are both registered professional engineers. They founded International Public Works, LLC in 2002 which is now a \$19.5 million engineering and construction firm servicing South Carolina and North Carolina. The firm has significant experience in new construction, renovations, civil engineering, operations and maintenance, electrical, and mechanical services. Other services include design, geotechnical consulting

and major and minor renovations. IPW has received numerous letters of recommendation from past clients and continues to perform at the highest level for every client. Sinor, an Army veteran, and Yun-Yeh, a Navy veteran, said their military service helps them compete effectively for work on military construction projects. They have made military construction a niche in their business

Cyrus is the son of Dara and late Lily Sinor of New Jersey.

*SOURCE: U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)*



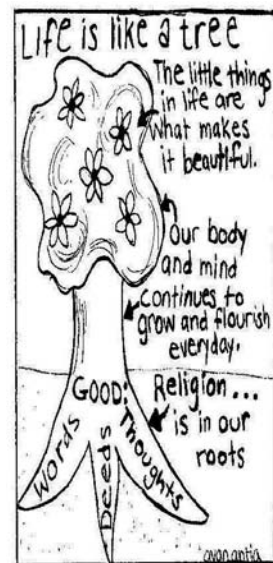
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# In The News



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## KARL SUKHIA OF THE BAND BAMBOO SHOOTS WRITES



"Hello all - on September 29th Epic/Sony records digitally released "ARMOUR", the debut album from the band Bamboo Shoots. We have worked with legends like our producer, Talking Head's guitarist/keyboardist Jerry Harrison, mixed our record with Spike Stent (his credits include U2, Madonna, Beyonce, Depeche Mode countless others), played on Late Night with Conan O' Brien, and getting to play live and tour all over the US and recently in India. It's been a lot of fun and a ton of work. As the first band of Indian Americans on a major US label, we look forward to blazing some trails and kicking open doors that were previously closed. (photo above, Karl Sukhia with beard leaning against the rails)

We make music that is vibrant, catchy, with an Indo-flavored kick, performed by enthusiasts who love to entertain, dance and rock. Yes, it has been a tough sell but our songs have managed to shine through and our record is finally going to see the light of day (something a lot of signed bands sadly can't say).

You can listen to our music @ [www.myspace.com/bambooshoots](http://www.myspace.com/bambooshoots), and you can go to [www.bambooshoots.com](http://www.bambooshoots.com) and download a copy of our 11 song album. I hope you can support us to make it into the top 200 on the Billboard Charts.

My sincere thanks to my family and all our Zarathushti friends for their support

Karl is the son of Arnavaz and Diniar (Dan) Sukhia of Cherry Hill, New Jersey





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# In The News



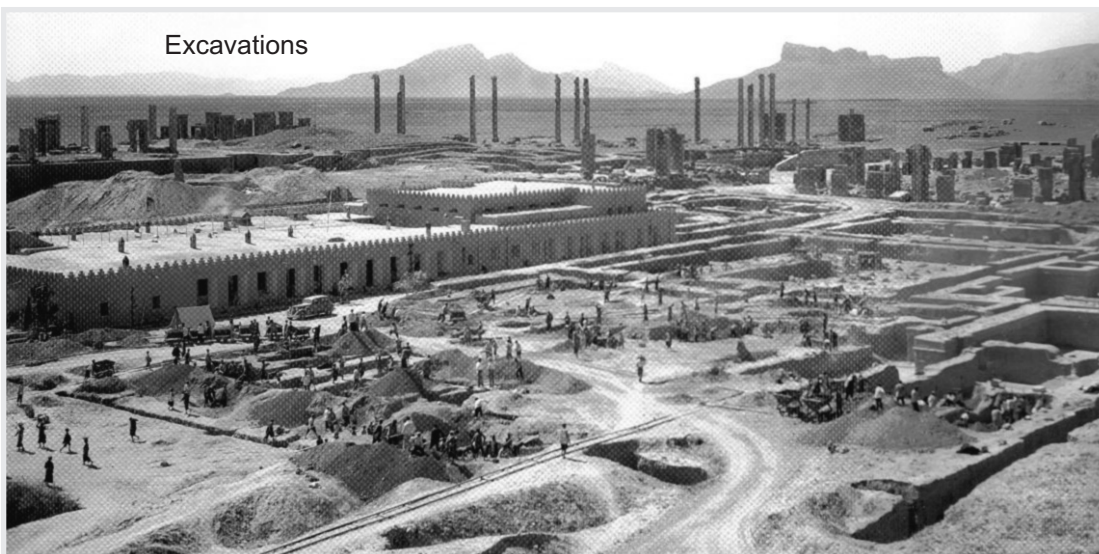
Outside the Oriental Institute

On May 17th 2009, Roshan and Rohinton Rivetna, Jehan Bagli (photo left) and Soli Dastur went to see the Chicago Oriental Institute Museum and specially The Persepolis Fortification Tablets. Unfortunately, the professor in charge was out of town. However they stumbled upon a room which said Persepolis Fortification Archive Project. They knocked on the door and a research student opened and they were in for a great viewing of the tablets.

## WHAT ARE THE PERSEPOLIS FORTIFICATION TABLETS?

These 30,000 clay tablets were discovered by a team of archeologists from the Oriental Institute, Chicago, in 1933 in southwestern Iran at Takht-i-Jamshid, ancient Persepolis, the chief imperial residence of the Achaemenid Persian Kings. During the excavations ,

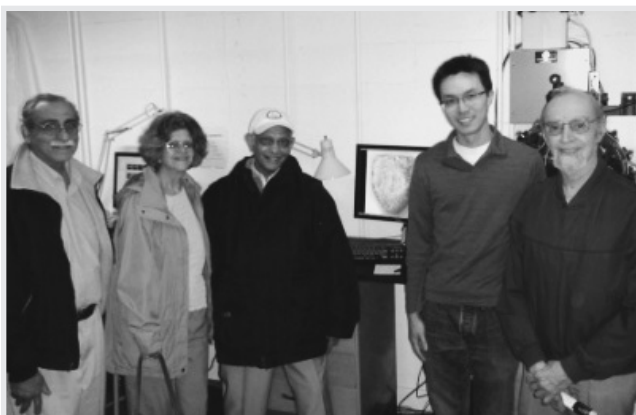
Ernst Herzfeld and his team from the Oriental Institute discovered a deposit containing tens of thousands of unbaked clay tablets and badly broken tablet fragments impressed with writings in a cuneiform script. These tablets were found in one of the rooms of



Excavations

the northern fortification wall surrounding the palaces, and treasuries of Persepolis. Hence the name Persepolis Fortification Tablets.

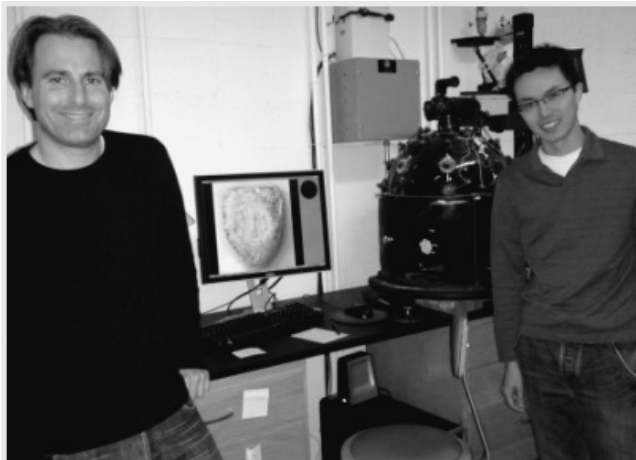
These tablets are administrative documents dating from 500 BCE and bearing texts primarily in the ancient languages of Elamite and Aramaic, as well as impressions of seals, with at least one of the clay tablets written in Old Persian. Most of them deal with day to day distribution of food and supplies and contain invaluable information for the study of Achaemenid Persians and provide a unique source of scholarship. Until their discovery, the main sources of information for the Persian Empire were those written by foreigners viz the Hebrew Bible, Greek sources of Herodotus and historians of Alexander's campaigns, which gave us biased and partial account of the Persian Empire. The source



from left Rohinton and Roshan Rivetna, Ervad Soli Dastur, research student and Ervad Jehan Bagli



# In The News



Research students digitalizing images of the tablets.

provided by the Persians themselves was the monumental carved stone inscriptions by Darius and Xerxes at Bisitun and the inscriptions on the palace walls of Persepolis itself.

With the discovery of the tablets researchers are able to get an understanding of the everyday life and internal workings of the imperial organization as described by the Persians themselves. These tablets are securely dated with a very narrow time frame of 509 to 494 BCE in the reign of Darius I.

In 1936 the Imperial Iranian Government allowed these tablets to be brought to the Oriental Institute on long term loan for purposes of translation and analysis. It took decades before the Oriental Institute scholar Richard Hallock was able to decipher the script effectively and publish the first set of 2000 tablets in 1969. Slowly scholars started cracking the code of the tablets and revolutionized Achaemenid studies.

## THE LEGAL BATTLE

The first set of 179 tablets were returned to Iran in 1948, with 37,000 fragments returned in 1951, In May 2004, 300 complete tablets were returned to the National Museum in Tehran, which received very favorable international press. Several months later the Oriental Institute was served with a legal document demanding it surrender all of the remaining tablets to satisfy the legal claims for damages in a lawsuit by victims of a Hamas bombing attack in Israel. This complex legal drama began in 1997 when a group of Americans fell victim to a bombing attack in Jerusalem. Five people died and many were injured, Hamas claimed responsibility. The victims and the families claimed that since Hamas was funded by Iran, Iran should pay compensation. A default judgement was entered against the State of Iran for over \$200 million in damages. And since the tablets are on loan, the

plaintiffs are attempting to seize and sell these tablets to satisfy the claims for damages. But the tablets are not commercial assets like oil wells or tankers. Both the US State Department and the Representatives of the Iranian Government have asserted the protected cultural status for the tablets and asked they be exempt from legal action. A legal dispute clouds the future of these tablets.

Interpreting and recording the tablets is a project that Prof Mathew W Stolper, John A Wilson, Professor of Assyriology at the Oriental Institute and the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, has been pursuing at an intermittent pace.

To bring greater awareness to the situation the Iranian American Bar Association held a panel



A tablet showing writings and seal

discussion on June 10, 2009, on the impact and legal issues concerning the auction of Persian antiquities in legal disputes in Illinois and Massachusetts. It was attended by Roshan and Rohinton Rivetna and Rashna Ghadiali.

*It is a miracle that these tablets survived the burning of Persepolis by Alexander, it is extraordinary that they were found and excavated. They are the only archives of their kind in the world, it is our responsibility as scientists and citizens of the world to protect them for future generations. This is a shared heritage of all people, (*

*visit [http://news.uchicago.edu/news.php?asset\\_id=1732](http://news.uchicago.edu/news.php?asset_id=1732)*





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Religions Working for Peace and Justice

## FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF NON-VIOLENCE

2 October 2009

*Mahatma Gandhi*, whose legacy this annual observance celebrates, once observed that "non-violence, to be worth anything, has to work in the face of hostile forces." In today's world, we face many hostile forces -- multiple and persistent crises that demand a response from leaders and grassroots alike.

Gandhi understood that a powerful idea could change the world. He knew that individuals, working alone and together, could realize what others might dismiss as impossible dreams.

Inspired by Gandhi's life of non-violence, the United Nations today works to end violence.

We strive, for example, to rid the world of weapons of mass destruction. Our recent WMD campaign -- we must disarm -- sought to raise awareness about the high cost of weapons of mass destruction. Recent initiatives and meetings, including last week's Security Council summit on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, have improved prospects for reductions in global arsenals. We must sustain this momentum, and press for success at next year's Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty review conference and beyond.

The call to non-violence need not apply only to the use of deadly weapons. The United Nations and its grassroots partners have long campaigned to stop the human assault on our planet. Greenhouse gas emissions have been part of this onslaught, and now threaten catastrophic climate change. I urge activists everywhere to turn up the heat on world leaders to seal a deal at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in December.

The appalling violence inflicted on women and girls throughout the world must also be at the centre of

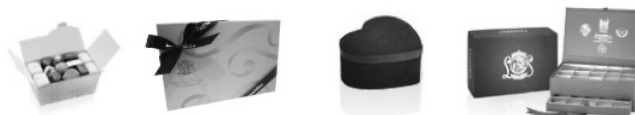
our concerns. An estimated 150 million women and girls are victimized each year. Rape is increasingly widespread as a weapon of war. Victims of sexual coercion are more likely to suffer sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS. I urge all partners to join my UNiTE to End Violence against Women campaign, which aims to raise awareness and funds to fight this problem in all parts of the world -- since no country is immune.

On this International Day, let us celebrate -- and embody -- the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi by heeding his call for a movement of non-violence. Let us end violence in all its manifestations, and strengthen our collective work for a safer, greener and more peaceful world.

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# INTERFAITH INTERALLA

Religions Working for Peace and Justice

## International Day of Non-Violence -

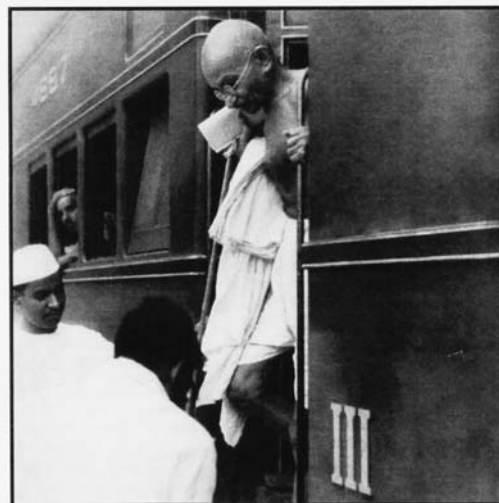
2nd October 2009

**"You are the Absolute Truth and  
Beauty,  
in this world full of joy and  
grace.**

**The Universe adorns your feet  
The Sun and the Moon, the  
planets and the stars bathe in your  
light."**

With these words, from "Ananda Loke" by Rabindranath Tagore sung in Bengali by Sudeshna Basu, set to an arrangement specially created for the Bell Choir by Jeffery Bauer for the occasion, accompanied by flutist Kathryn Bauer, the community in Washington D.C., at the Gandhi Memorial Center celebrated the International Day of Non-Violence.

The evening, marking the 140th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, was graced by her Excellency, Meera Shankar, Ambassador of India to the United States, who in her spirited discourse reminded us that the ideas of Mahatma Gandhi are for all time – a gift to the world!



### GANDHI JAYANTI

The 140<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi

**'Mahatma Gandhi's Timeless Message'**

*Friday, October 2, 2009*

*7:30pm*

*in the Golden Lotus Temple followed by  
exhibit opening in the Gandhi Memorial Center*



© 1947 Margaret Bourke-White, LIFE Magazine

The ends do not justify the means, and if the means are blemished the ends will be too. Violence is to be eschewed and the lesson of satyagrah – truth force -- is one for all of us to learn, to relearn and to apply in our daily lives. It behooves us to understand the symbolism of the spinning of the "charkha" – to be self reliant in meeting our economic and material needs. She recalled the influence of Western writers, of Thoreau, of Tolstoy, of Ruskin on M.K. Gandhi and in turn, his influence on the United States symbolized through the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr., in the struggle of African-Americans for social justice in this land of the free.

# INTERFAITH INTERALLA

Religions Working for Peace and Justice

Dr. Farooq Abdullah, the Honorable Union Minister for New and Renewable Energy, recently arrived from New Delhi, congratulated the community for perpetuating the tradition of remembering the gifts of the great soul from India with his message of peace and ahimsa for mankind.

come from Canada, will be shown in England after completing its tour in the United States.

We are grateful to Ms. Carie Trybulec, and to Srimati Kamala of the *Gandhi Memorial Center* for making these events possible, year after year and look forward to continued collaboration in the future.



Bell Choir with flute and vocal sings "Ananda Loke" by Rabindranath Tagore with Sudeshna Basu  
Photo courtesy Carrie Trybulec

A telling quote from M.K. Gandhi in the program brochure showed how far ahead of his time the great thinker was: "Civilization, in the real sense of the term, consists not in the multiplication but in the deliberate and voluntary reduction of selfish wants." The message from the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr Ban-Ki-Moon (page 57.) mirrors this focus on the need to care for our earth and our environment today.

The evening marked the opening of an exhibit "History in the Making – Images by photo-journalist Kulwant Roy" -- presented by the Embassy of India in cooperation with the Indian Council for Cultural Relations. The creator of the archive, Aditya Arya shared with us the time when these photographs were taken; when photography in its infancy took its first baby steps out of the studio into the real world; in a historic sense, the birth of photo-journalism. The exhibit, tracing the early years of independent India, and which had

**"I love all mankind as I love my own countrymen, because God dwells in the heart of every human being, and I aspire to realize the highest in life through the service of humanity."**

-- M.K. Gandhi

**Photo credit Kulwant Roy for Gandhi Jayanti brochure.**



# INTERFAITH INTERALLA

## **An Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity** **Novruz, Nowrouz, Nooruz, Navruz, Nauroz, Nevruz**

### **Recognition Given by UNESCO**

#### **The Fruitful Culmination of a Long, Sustained International Effort !**

Jamshedi Navroze was inscribed in 2009 on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO at the Fourth Session of the Intergovernmental Committee held in Abu Dhabi, capital of the United Arab Emirates from 28 September to 2 October 2009. The recognition was a culmination of a long and sustained effort on the part of Non-Governmental Organizations, representatives of Governments and individuals in civil society who all worked together in harmony to preserve and protect this valuable legacy for future generations.

The action taken by the UN agency was a result of the combined efforts of seven countries, viz., *Azerbaijan, India, Pakistan, Iran (Islamic Republic) Turkey, Uzbekistan and the Kyrgyz Republic*. The Summer 2008 and Summer 2009 issues of FEZANA Journal, with color photo montages of Haft Seen Tables reflect the international scope of these celebrations.

Novruz, Nowrouz, Nooruz, Navruz, Nauroz or Nevruz marks the New Year and the beginning of spring across a vast geographical area in the Middle East, in Central and South East Asia and parts of Europe. It is celebrated on 21 March every year, a date originally determined by astronomical calculations. Novruz is associated with various local traditions, such as the evocation of Jamshid, a mythological king of Iran, and numerous tales and legends.



The rites that accompany the festivity vary from place to place, ranging from leaping over fires and streams in Iran to tightrope walking, leaving lit candles at house doors, traditional games such as horse racing or the traditional wrestling practiced in Kyrgyzstan. Songs and dances are common to almost all the regions, as are semi-sacred family or public meals. Children are the primary beneficiaries of the festivities and take part in a number of activities, such as decorating hard-boiled eggs. Women play a key role in organizing Novruz and passing on its traditions. Novruz promotes the values of peace and solidarity between generations and within families, as well as reconciliation and neighborliness, thus contributing to cultural diversity and friendship among peoples and various communities.

The organizations involved in India, Iran and Pakistan were :

**India:** Dr. Shernaz Cama, UNESCO Parzor Project, Mr. Dadi Mistry, President Delhi Parsi Anjuman,; Dinshaw Mehta, President Bombay Parsi Punchayat, Mr. Keki Gandhi, Secretary Federation of Zoroastrian Anjumans of India,

**Iran (Islamic Republic of):** Dr. Fariborz Dolatabadi, Deputy of the Cultural Heritage, the Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization

**Pakistan:** Syed Firasat Ali Kazi, Deputy Secretary General, Pakistan National Commission for UNESCO, Ministry of Education

Source: <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?RL=00282>

# INTERFAITH INTERALLA

**HOMI DHALLA AT G 8 Summit** July 2009 in L'Aquila

**HOMI GANDHI AT G20 Summit** September 2009 in Pittsburgh

## HOMI DHALLA INVITED TO INTERFAITH CONFERENCES

The G8 Summit of 2009 comprising of the world's political leaders met at L'Aquila (near Rome) in July 2009.



Prior to this important event, the IV Summit of Religious Leaders was also held in Rome on June 16-17. An invitation to attend this important conference was extended to Dr. Homi Dhalla by the Vatican and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss relevant topical issues to be debated at the intergovernmental meetings from the perspective of men of religions. The role of religious representatives was not to provide economic or political solutions to the big issues on the agenda, but rather to tackle them from the ethical perspective providing the precious 'spiritual' support which is required to hopefully deal with socio-political issues.

On June 16, all the religious leaders were taken to L'Aquila site of the serious earthquake. A brief interfaith prayer was conducted at Piazza del Duomo in memory of the victims of the earthquake. This was followed by a lengthy session where representatives of the faith communities discussed various issues which would form the ethical framework of the draft proposal. The next day, a detailed proposal was prepared by the religious leaders, which was forwarded to the head of the Italian government who placed it before the political assembly of the G8 Summit in July.

On June 16 evening, the religious leaders were invited to Quirinale Palace where they had an audience with the Hon. Giorgio Napolitano, the President of the Italian Republic. Dr. Dhalla was introduced to the Hon. President.

The Government of Kazakhstan then extended an invitation to Dr. Dhalla to attend the Third Congress of Leaders of the World and Traditional Religions at Astana on July 1-2, 2009. He led the Zarathushti delegation of four young Zarathushtis, Anahita and Kurush Sidhwa and Roshnek and Darius Dhalla.. The organizers were heartened at the Zarathushti delegation, as it was the youngest compared to others. Their participation in this Congress provided an opportunity to them to dialogue with prominent religious leaders from other traditions.

Due to the bold initiative of President Nursultan Nazarbayev, Kazakhstan has been hailed as a model of harmony on the world stage. Kazakhstan had inherited 1400 nuclear weapons (the fourth largest arsenal in the world) from the Soviet Union but became the first nation on the planet to give up its stockpile by ceding all the missiles to Russia by 1995.

# INTERFAITH INTERALLA

Religions Working for Peace and Justice

On July 1, the opening plenary session was held at the Palace of Peace and Accord which is a gigantic pyramid structure designed by the British architect Norman Foster. The conference was inaugurated by President Nazarbayev himself in the presence of several world religious leaders. At this important event, Shimon Peres, the President of Israel was also present. His presence among many important Muslim leaders was a very important step in initiating a dialogue in healing the Middle East imbroglio. This was followed by a few speeches from certain religious leaders.

The next day, Dr. Dhalla presented a paper entitled "*In the face of violence, peace is possible*" in the "*Dialogue and Cooperation*" session. He also participated in the general discussion on various issues related to peace and human rights which took place on that day.

In the evening, at a banquet hosted by President Nazarbayev, Dr. Dhalla had an opportunity to converse with Shimon Peres, the President of Israel and was also introduced to President Nazarbayev.

On July 6, 2009, Dr. Dhalla was invited to an Interfaith Prayer Meeting and Tree Planting Ceremony to celebrate the 74th Birthday of His Holiness the Dalai Lama at the Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. The book "*Three Missions of His Holiness the Dalai Lama*" was released on this occasion. It contains papers delivered at the national seminar organized on July 6, 2008 by Tibet House on the occasion of the 73rd birthday of His Holiness. One of the articles has been authored by Dr. Dhalla. At this interfaith meeting, he recited Zarathushtrian prayers and also planted a tree in the garden of the Jamia Millia Islamia together with other religious leaders.

## PEOPLE OF MANY FAITHS JOIN IN PRAYERS FOR WORLD PEACE AT PITTSBURGH DURING G 20 MEETING

The Group of 20 (G-20), established in 1999, brings together major industrialized and developing economies to discuss global economic issues. Together, these countries account for 90 percent of global gross



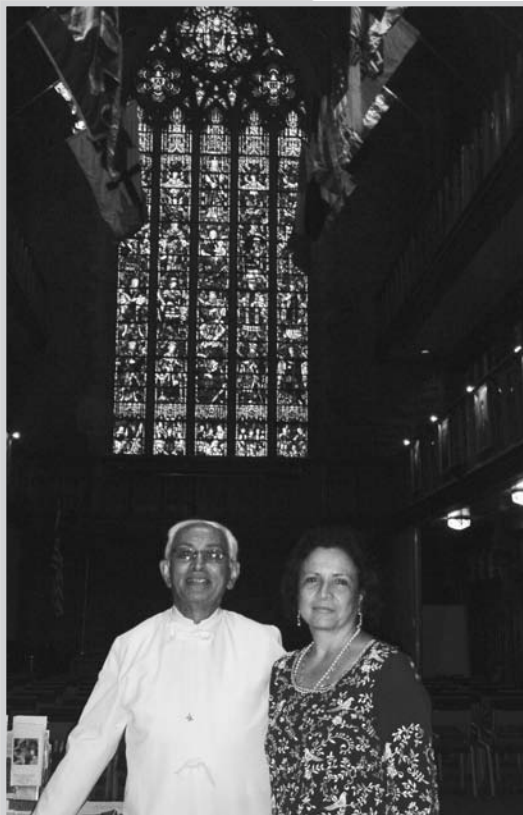


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national product, 80 percent of world trade, and represent two-thirds of the world's population. And yet for the first time in history, over a billion people are suffering from hunger.

The G20 had its meeting in Pittsburgh Sept 24-25, and on that occasion 30 national faith leaders from the Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian religions gathered there for a *Faith Leaders Summit* to urge leaders of the G-20 nations to keep the fight against hunger and poverty squarely on the agenda. They also advised world leaders that any meaningful global economic recovery should be measured against how many of the world's poorest people are able to lift themselves out of chronic hunger and poverty. They held a press conference on Wednesday, September 23. Immediately following the press conference, they then went in a walking procession in clerical garb to a nearby meeting with Dr. Michael Froman, deputy national security adviser for international economic affairs and a leader of the U.S. delegation to the G-20 Summit. Dr. Froman acknowledged that the White House knows the summit was not only about fixing broken financial systems, but also addressing the needs of the world's most vulnerable people.



Bishop David Zubik welcomed everyone to his cathedral. "Without ignoring our differences or hiding our most fervent beliefs," he said, they had gathered "to praise our God and beg his help in a very special moment in the history of our city".

They thanked Dr. Froman for his service and assured him that the religious leaders were praying for those who would make difficult decisions at the G20 Summit. They also reminded him that their success will be measured in God's eyes by their effectiveness in relieving the suffering of poor people around the world and in communities like Pittsburgh across the country.

*Homi Gandhi* was invited to the National Religious Leaders Summit and offered Zarathushtrian prayer "*Blessing the G-20 participants*". *Houtoxi Contractor* had joined the meeting and the procession.

(Photos page 62. Homi Gandhi and Houtoxi Contractor can be seen in the walk Photos credit *Pittsburgh Post Gazette* website)

A day prior to that, Houtoxi Contractor was invited to attend an interfaith peace meeting. This was a beautiful ceremony where all the different religious leaders prayed and performed different rituals according to their own customs. Houtoxi had taken a small 'afarganyu', lighted a divo & sang the verses relating to peace from the Gathas with explanation in English. People carrying flags from ALL the countries of the world paraded on Mount Washington overlooking the city of Pittsburgh.

The prayer service, among numerous other G-20-related religious events, was organized by *Christian Associates of Southwestern Pennsylvania* and the *Religious Leadership Forum of Southwest Pennsylvania*. Another interfaith service, with groups as diverse as Buddhists and Zarathushtis, was held simultaneously on Mount Washington.

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## THE LEGACY OF ZARATHUSHTRA PETER CLARK LECTURES AT ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF HOUSTON

On October 16, 17 and 18, the ZAH Library Committee presented its Seventh annual Library event, featuring Peter Clark, the well-known lecturer at several British Universities and the author of *"Zoroastrianism: An Introduction to an Ancient Faith"*. On Friday evening, at the informal meet-and-greet in the atrium of the ZAH Center, Aban Rustomji introduced Peter Clark, and outlined many of his distinguished accomplishments. Peter Clark remarked on how a Western scholar like him got interested in studying an ancient Persian religion like Zoroastrianism and spoke about the course on Zoroastrianism he teaches at Cardiff University in Wales.

In the more formal presentations on Saturday, October 17 Peter Clark drew similarities and differences among the teachings and principles of Christianity, Judaism and

Zoroastrianism. Tracing the legacy of Zarathushtra, he pointed out that the ideas that Jesus was preaching may well have come from Zoroastrianism and Judaism.

Speaking on rituals in general Peter emphasized their importance because they are the manifestations of faith. Since rituals can shed light and give meaning to religious doctrines, they are a source of religious insight and have the power to influence human behavior. Fire and water are the main stable components of any ritual, but our Zoroastrian rituals are unvarying, along with their associated sounds and movements that are specified and cannot be changed. The Sunday morning session was on Zoroastrian cosmogony and eschatology, tracing the wheel of birth, life and death in a fascinating presentation.

To listen firsthand and share ideas with renowned scholars is an opportunity that does not come often.

Reported by Jangoo Mistry

## Thankful for all that God has Given Me

**Tina Dukandar**

According to the Human Development Report from the United Nations Development Program, one-half of all of rural children in India are underweight and malnourished for their age. In addition, more than half of these children do not complete their education or have never gone to school. Although India has been rising economically, these statistics have roughly been the same for the past 17 years.



Upon reading these statistics, I knew I wanted to do my part in helping the abolishment of poverty and, especially, the encouragement of education to countries that seem to "forget" about the underprivileged children. In the summer of 2009, I visited New Delhi, India to do my service to my cause. On my first day there, I went to the institution called *Prabahtara*, which means Morning Star, to enroll myself as tuition teacher for Math and English from grades 1-5. But, before I could get myself started as a teacher, I was advised to familiarize myself with the homes that the children come from.

At the rag-pickers colony, there were three little boys sitting on a wooden vegetable cart, malnourished and tired from the heat and lack of food. I took a picture of them with my camera and just by taking one picture of them they instantaneously forgot about their hunger and thirst. It was their first time seeing a camera and

# INTERFAITH INTERALLA

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their happiness of getting a picture taken from a "foreigner" was their prized memory of the time. The hour that I spent with them watching their expression as they remembered which button to press to review the pictures of the alien object was the moment that I knew I wanted to give every underprivileged child an opportunity for an education and something to smile about with their accomplishments.

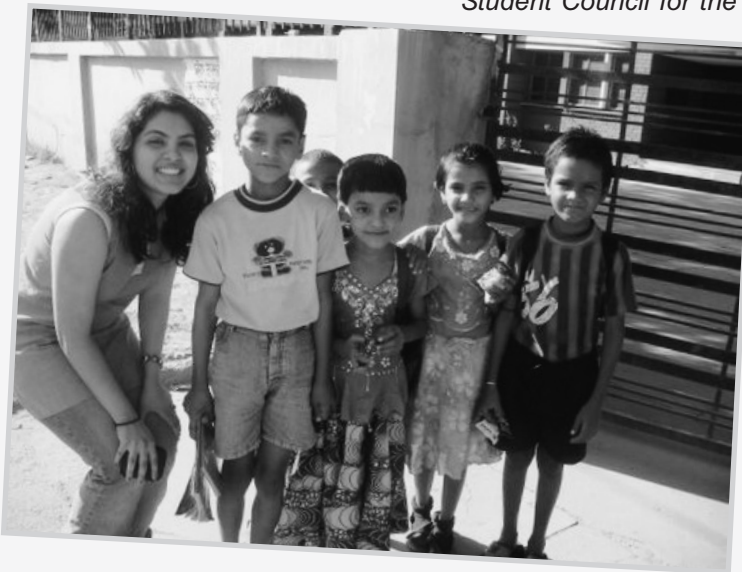
The next day was my first day as a tuition teacher at *Prabahtara*. I enter the room seeing eight eager children looking at me with pencils and books ready to learn Math and English. Before I started teaching I told the children in Hindi, "As I am helping you with Math and English, you can help me in Hindi since I know very little." Saying this, made the children surprised that a girl from America was willing to have herself corrected numerous times from 5-10 year olds. As they were determined to make my Hindi stronger, I was just as determined to make them do well on their exams for Math and English. For two hours, the class was practicing reading, writing, and math. If a child needed help, I sat down next to him/her and tutored the child privately until they understood the material. Before class ended I gave them homework to do for the following day. After every class I rewarded them with either a snack or playing time with my camera. Each day, knowing there would be a reward for their hard work, made them enthusiastic to come to class and determined to do well so that Tina didi will not get upset. The two weeks I spent with my class not only made them stronger intellectually, but made them wiser in understanding that only education can get them far in life. When they were in my class I wanted them to forget about all the woes they had at home.

By the end of the two weeks, I had to say good-bye to my children. We had grown fond of each other even though there was a massive age difference and a language barrier. We learned a great deal from each other. I grilled in their head that education and studying is one of the most important things in life and should never be ignored. And as for me I learned that every day I should be thankful for what I have and not to be ignorant of the problems people have; we all have troubles and concerns, some just have more than others and should be heard and taken care of first. A problem is not caused by the situation but by the way it is dealt with.

[http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2009/papers/HDRP\\_2009\\_13.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2009/papers/HDRP_2009_13.pdf)

The census of India reported 12.66 million working children but estimates by agencies working against child labour such as **The Global March** and the **International Center on Child Labor and Education (ICCLE)** calculate that there are roughly 25-30 million child workers in India (ITUC 2007) and **Human Rights Watch** says that more than 100 million could be working because so many are out of education.

**Tina Dukandar** is a junior at Edison High School. She is in numerous clubs and has been the treasurer for Student Council for the past 3 years. Odissi and Bollywood dancing are her other passion, which she has done for 8 years. She would like to pursue in law/ International Affairs when she goes to college.



Three years ago at ZAGNY, she led an event called **Stand Up Against Poverty**. Because of this event she became aware of what was going around in our world today, thus, starting her passion for making a difference to underprivileged families. From this event she was called to represent FEZANA at the 51st CSW Women's Conference at the United Nations in New York City. Hearing about the corruption, poverty, and hygiene in the third world countries made her even more ambitious to do her part in helping people. Her chance finally came last summer at *Prabahtara*. Her goal is to raise enough money for new books and teachers to help children at tuition classes.



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## FACEBOOK: A TOOL FOR SOCIAL ACTIVISM

**Kayzad Namdarian**



**Kayzad Namdarian**, of Australia and a member of the FEZANA UN-NGO team has been selected as a Noble Laureate for *Karmaveer Puraskaar (Global Indian category)* for activism against World Hunger and for the *Friends of the World Food Program (WFP)* of the UN It is for his e-activism and e-donation drive to end world hunger. His efforts gave a boost to the website: <http://www.charitii.com/progress.php>

**This is a National People's Awards for Citizen Social Justice and Action.**

In November 2007, I started an internet Facebook group called "*Feed a Child with just a Click!*". Facebook groups were a new concept whereby people could join internet social sites, within Facebook, to chat, message and be part of groups pertaining to any interesting topic. Facebook groups rarely go beyond a couple of thousand members in size. My particular Facebook group focused on two things. One was to direct people to a website at the time that would allow people to feed a child just by clicking on a link, and the other was to spread the message of world hunger, most importantly; child world hunger.

Free charity websites attempt to earn traffic by promising to pay a portion or all of their internet advertising revenue to a charity or cause. When hopefully

free-charity-clickers click on links or "click" on sites with advertisements, then the webmasters earn advertising revenue for the causes, albeit a trickle at a time. This notion had been in its infancy, and had only sprouted its head through the recently famous **FreeRice.Com**. (FJ Vol. 22, No1 Pg 60 ) Although a novel and altruistic concept, most people need to be motivated to donate even small portions. Hence FreeRice flourished with innovative web-based educational game system.

Getting back to *Feed a Child with Just a Click!*, after one month in existence, my group began to grow exponentially. I was lucky that my package of motivational words, and reality-reflecting images of world and child hunger, had motivated people enough to invite all their friends to the group. Today the group sits at just under 4.5 million members (Copy-cat groups double this figure) and contains a list of websites that people can go to for free-donation-clicks to donate for free, to charity. I've also been able to collect over 30k for charity. In the past year, I have been lucky enough to receive so many countless messages of thanks and hope for my work on Facebook. The member-base touches nearly all countries represented in Facebook. At one time, my group was the only common popular facebook group for both Israeli online populations and Palestinian online populations.

From my experience (from countless messages received from across the planet) I can say, that when the right combination of words and images exist, a cause, no matter how ancient or hidden, can be exposed to new people across the world for the first time. Palestinians are one of the most caring people on Earth, for those suffering injustice. Only a handful are offended by photos of malnourished children, enough to voice their concern, and the vast majority are shocked by this hidden reality (many were exposed for the first time in the US).

Whatever it is, I have been lucky enough to find the right set of words and images, for the right cause, through a novel media format, to ultimately expose it to millions of people across the world.

*This world must destroy widespread-world hunger, and it must begin in your motivated heart first. Over 25,000 lives a day count on it. Every little effort counts. Just look what I did. **Congratulations Kayzad***

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karmaveer\\_Puraskaar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karmaveer_Puraskaar)  
<http://www.karmaveer.com/>

# INTERFAITH INTERALLA

Religions Working for Peace and Justice  
**Mahatma Gandhi's Appreciation of Parsis**

(Part 3)

**Maneck Bhujwala**

## BACK TO SOUTH AFRICA

Gandhiji sets sail for South Africa as planned.



## RUSTOM GORKHODU BEFRIENDS GANDHIJI:

As mentioned in Mr. Dinyar Patel's Harvard University, History Department paper '*Gandhi and the Parsis*', in South Africa, Gandhi befriended Rustom Gorkhodu, better known as "Parsee Rustomji," who became one of his closest confidants and most generous financial supporter during the Satyagraha campaign. Gorkhodu had arrived in South Africa with little education and hardly any knowledge of English, yet built himself into one of the most successful and respected merchants of Durban.

As with Naoroji and Edulji, it was Parsee Rustomji's ethos of simplicity that most impressed Gandhi. "*Luxuries had no place in his life,*" the Mahatma wrote upon

Gorkhodu's death in 1924. He spent money after great hesitation on himself and his family. He continued to live in great simplicity till the end. Gorkhodu's simplicity translated into munificent charity: he committed his resources towards funding mosques, madrassas and national schools in addition to Gandhi's work both in South Africa and India. Parsee Rustomji was also a proponent of Swadeshi and a believer in Khadi, donating Rs. 12,000 in 1921 towards the distribution of Charkhas in famine-stricken Gujarat."

About Edulji, (mentioned above) Dinyar Patel writes "...During his childhood Gandhi was struck by one of his father's Parsi friends, a man named Edulji "whose own way of living was extraordinarily simple" in spite of being related to a powerful official in Rajkot. "Every time he came to see my father, his favorite subject of conversation was simplicity," Gandhi recalled. From the examples of Parsee Rustomji, Edulji, and Naoroji, and others, the Mahatma formed an especially high opinion of the Parsi community, praising their habit of giving away hard-earned wealth across communal boundaries.

After reaching Durban, South Africa and waiting out a quarantine period of 5 days on ship (due to plague in India), they were allowed to disembark. However, as the whites were enraged against Gandhiji (for what they considered his condemnation of the whites of Natal), an official escorted the Gandhi family to the home of a Parsi, Mr. Rustomji to ensure their safety:

Mr. Laughton came to the captain. He said: '*I would like to take Mr. Gandhi with me, should he have no objection....*' After this he came to me and said somewhat to this effect: '*If you are not afraid, I suggest that Mrs. Gandhi and the children should drive to Mr. Rustomji's house, whilst you and I follow them on foot.*'...My wife and children drove safely to Mr. Rustomji's place. With the captain's permission I went ashore with Mr. Laughton. Mr Rustomji's house was about two miles from the dock. ..." Gandhiji was recognized by a crowd and pelted with stones, brickbats and rotten eggs, until he was rescued by policemen:

"...Escorted by the police, I arrived without further harm at Mr. Rustomji's place. I had bruises all over, but no abrasions except in one place. Dr. Dadibarjor, the ship's doctor, who was on the spot, rendered the best possible help. ..." Gandhiji had to leave the Rustomji house to go to a police station in disguise due to the crowd surrounding it.

# INTERFAITH INTERALLA

*Religions Working for Peace and Justice*



During his stay in South Africa Gandhiji wanted to do humanitarian work as a nurse in his off-time from legal work. He mentions the charity of a Parsi that aided him: "I longed for some humanitarian work of a permanent nature. Dr. Booth was the head of the St. Aidan's Mission. He was a kind-hearted man and treated his patients free. Thanks to a Parsi Rustomji's charities, it was possible to open a small charitable hospital under Dr. Booth's charge...."

## RETURN TO INDIA AND MEETING SIR PHEROZESHAH MEHTA, DINSHAW WACHA AND OTHERS

After the Boer war was over, Gandhiji decided to return to India to serve the country. He was bestowed with many gifts but he did not want to accept them so he

created a trust for the community and entrusted it to trustees including a Parsi: "Even then I was exhorting people to conquer the infatuation for jewellery. What was I now to do with the jewellery that had come upon me? I decided that I could not keep these things. I drafted a letter, creating a trust of them in favour of the community and appointing Parsi Rustomji and other trustees....I am definitely of the opinion that a public worker should accept no costly gifts. "

On reaching India, Mr. Gandhi was again in contact with famous Parsis: "...After reaching India I spent some time in going about the country. It was the year 1901 when the Congress met at Calcutta under the president ship of Mr. (later Sir) Dinshaw Wacha. And I of course attended it. It was my first experience of the Congress. From Bombay I traveled in the same train as Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, as I had to speak to him about conditions in South Africa....With him were Mr. Wacha, and Mr. (now Sir) Chimanlal Setalvad. They were discussing politics.

As soon as Sir Pherozeshah saw me, he said, 'Gandhi, it seems nothing can be done for you. Of course we will pass the resolution you want. But what rights have we in our own country? I believe that, so long as we have no power in our own land, you cannot fare better in the colonies.' I was taken aback. Mr. Setalvad seemed to concur in the view; Mr. Wacha cast a pathetic look at me. I tried to plead with Sir Pherozeshah, but it was out of the question for one like me to prevail upon the uncrowned king of Bombay. I contented myself with the fact that I should be allowed to move my resolution." Gandhiji's resolution about the grievances of Indians in South Africa was passed at the next Congress session in Calcutta.

## SECOND TIME LAW PRACTICE IN RAJKOT

Gandhiji after traveling in Bengal and Burma, decided to restart his law practice in Rajkot, although Gokhale wanted him to do so in Bombay: "I liked Gokhale's advice, but I was not overconfident of success as a barrister. The unpleasant memories of past failure were yet with me, and I still hated as poison the use of flattery for getting briefs. I therefore decided to start work first at Rajkot. Kevalram Mavji Dave, my old well-wisher, who had induced me to go to England, was there, and he started me straightaway with three briefs.... I had heard friends say, before I went out to South Africa, that Sir Pherozeshah Mehta had the law of evidence at his fingertips and that was the secret of his success. I had borne



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this in mind, and during the voyage had carefully studied the Indian Evidence Act with commentaries thereon...."

## SECOND TIME LAW PRACTICE IN BOMBAY

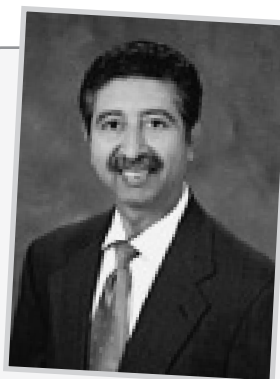
Eventually, Kevalram Dave convinced Gandhiji to settle in Bombay, where he lived in Girgaum area. When his son Manilal got very sick, he took him to a Parsi doctor who recommended chicken broth and eggs: "The doctor was a very good Parsi. I told him that we were all vegetarians and that I could not possibly give either of the two things to my son. Would he therefore recommend something else? ...'Your son's life is in danger,' said the good doctor. 'We could give him milk diluted with water, but that will not give him enough nourishment. As you know, I am called in by many Hindu families, and they do not object to anything I prescribe....'" Gandhiji told the doctor of his religious beliefs against meat and eggs but asked him to examine his vital signs. Eventually Manilal recovered.

In Bombay Gandhiji succeeded in his law practice (the second time around) and he moved to Santa Cruz for his son's health: "I prospered in my profession better than I had expected. My South African clients often entrusted me with some work, and it was enough to enable me to pay my way.... Like other fresh barristers I made a point of attending the hearing of cases in the High Court,...I began to make use of the High Court library and make fresh acquaintances and felt that before long I should secure work in the High Court. ..."

## CALLED BACK TO SOUTH AFRICA

When Chamberlain was visiting South Africa, the Asian community called Gandhiji to lead a deputation and advice them in presenting their grievances to him, and Gandhiji went to support them. In South Africa after reading Ruskin's book *Unto The Last* during a train journey from Johannesburg to Durban, Gandhiji was so impressed by its ideals that he decided to establish the Phoenix settlement in 1904, involving project members who lived and worked on the farm, including staff members of the press that produced his newspaper *Indian Opinion*. Gandhiji appreciated the help of a Parsi in getting this project started: "... The late Mr. Rustonji always supported me in such enterprises. He liked the project. He placed at my disposal second-hand

corrugated iron sheets of a big godown and other building material, with which we started work. ..."



**Maneck Bhujwala** born in Mumbai, India, migrated to the U.S. for further studies after studying engineering in Baroda. He has worked at many high-tech companies in technical and management positions. He now works as a Realtor, helping community members in real estate transactions. Maneck co-founded Zoroastrian Associations in Northern and Southern California and has been an active member offering religious classes and priestly services as a Mobediyar. He represents Zarathushtis at many interfaith events. Maneck now lives in Southern California



Cartoons submitted by Avan Antia aged 15 years



## North American Mobeds' Council

### PAGE FROM NAMC

#### AIWISRUTHREM GEH

*Ervad Cawas Desai*



(Part 5 OF 5)

**The discussion of Geh represents the Contemplation session of the NAMC, AGM agenda, held at Zoroastrian Religious and Cultural Center at 1187 Burnhamthorpe Rd., Oakville, Ontario, Canada on May 24/25, 2008**

In pre-historic times, without anything but natural light, the ancient peoples regarded the sunlit and dark periods as two opposing realms rather than parts of the same day. Eventually, as observation confirmed that the periods of sunlight and darkness followed each other, the day was divided into two parts, daylight and night. When the division of the day into daylight and night came into being, and the hours of the day entered into the reckoning of time, the day was divided into twelve hours of daylight, and twelve hours of night. Once both the light and dark hours were divided into twelve parts, the concept of a twenty-four hour day was in place(1). It was the Greek astronomers, mainly Hipparchus (147 to 127 BCE), who have been credited with the introduction of a twenty-four hour day, despite the fact that the

Sumerians, as far back as 2000 BCE using a sexagesimal system of mathematics, further divided the hours into minutes and introduced the concept of sixty minutes in each hour and twenty-four hours in each day

Prior to the time of Zarathushtra, the day was divided into three parts, two daylight watches and one watch for the entire night(2). According to Boyce, "As Zarathushtra asks in Yasna 44.5 *"Who (is he) by whom (were made) dawn, noon and night"*. The pagan Iranians referred to the two daylight watches as *"Havani"* and *"Uzayara"*, the time of (haoma) pressing and the time of the day's outing, each set under the care of one of the two lesser Ahuras, *Mithra and Vouruna Apam Napat*. As for the night this was assigned in paganism entirely to the fravashis, as a time of dread." According to Boyce, Zarathushtra added two more watches, *"Rapithwin"* in between *Havani* and *Uzayara*, and divided the night into two watches, leaving the first half, *"Aiwisruthrem"* to the fravashis of the righteous and assigning the second, *"Usah"* to Sraosha, Lord of Prayer. The day was, therefore, divided first into four watches of six hours each and then, the afternoon watch was divided into two watches of three hours each, giving us the five "Geh's" we know today.

In ancient times, the Atash Aderans and Atash Behrams were not only places of worship but also served as Courts of Justice, with different jurisdictions and where different types of appeals were heard. This is the reason why our fire temples are called *"Dar-e-Mehr"*, the Portal or Gateway of Mithra. Meher Yazad, also known as Mithra, is as we know, the "Lord of Contracts" and is described in the Meher Yasht, *"We sacrifice unto Mithra, the Lord of wide pastures, who is truth speaking, a chief in assemblies, with a thousand ears, well shapen, with ten thousand eyes, high, with full knowledge, strong, sleepless, and ever awake"*(3). Zaehner describes Meher Yazad as "He of the thousand eyes and the thousand ears, the undeceivable master of ten thousand spies"(4). The performance of the *"Boi"* signaled the closing of the courts bench to one type of jurisdiction and the commencement of another type of jurisdiction.

It is believed that the time of *Aiwisruthrem* was when appeals against the king were heard. In those ancient times, even the king was not above the law, and appeals against the crown were heard by the Dasturan-Dastur, the one who held the title of *"Zarathushtrotemo"*(5). The *"Zarathushtrotemo"* was the heir to the religious traditions of Zarathushtra himself. When that worthy achieved the exalted state of utmost righteousness he was known as *"Aibigaya"*, capable of transcending life itself, and was in complete attunement with every atom of existence, referred to as *"vispa huzyaiti"*.



## North American Mobeds' Council

### PAGE FROM NAMC

Let us now turn to the *Aiwisruthrem Geh*, when it is time to rest after the labors of the day, under the watch of the "*Zarathushtrotemo*" and the fravashis of the righteous.

The translation which follows is that of Jal Rustamji Vimadalal(6), and the alternative interpretation and commentary is that of Gool Shavaksha (7).

- (1) May it please the Lord! During Aiwishruthrem (prayer time), the time of purity and progress toward the good life, when the High Priest carries on his work, I declare myself to be a follower of Zarathushtra, opposed to Evil and acting in accord with the law of Ahura Mazda.

**Commentary:** Dear God, may I gain happiness through knowledge and meditation. May I be one with You, the Master Teacher, in thought, word and deed. May my mind, when asleep, be at peace and move in the right direction. May my actions be controlled even when unconscious.

- (2) For the worship and glorification of Behram Yazad (who grants the success that comes of final liberation), and the other beneficent angels created by Ahura Mazda, and for the timely arrival of all seasons of the year, may the Chief Priest (Zaota) recite "Yatha Ahu Vairyo" and may his associate (Rathvi) recite "Atha Ratush ashat-chit hacha".

**Commentary:** May my souls pure spirit (fravashi) be one with the world's pure spirit (farohar). I pray to you, Oh Master Teacher, to reveal to me the true meaning of the "Ahunavairyo" which I can pass on to others.

- (3) I worship Ahura Mazda, Zarathushtra and the Ameshaspentas.

I worship the noble, brave world-uplifting, guiding spirits (Fravashis) of the pure.

I adore the power of beneficent and timely prayers.

**Commentary:** Oh Ahura Mazda, may my soul's spirit be one with You. This can be gained by good thoughts which will take my soul's memory right to the time of Zarathushtra and beyond and make my spirit one with you. Then I will gain all the knowledge of life and the seventy-two aspects of life.

- (4) I worship the noble, brave, world-uplifting, guiding spirits (Fravashis) of the pure.

I adore the power of beneficent and timely prayers.

**Commentary:** Oh Time, who art the maker of mans mind, the rising sun is your first master. It gives man an idea of beauty. As soon as man appreciates beauty he will dislike all that is bad and ugly.

- (5) I worship Aiwishruthrem. I worship Fire, son of Ahura Mazda, the universal purifier, and all articles of utility created by Ahura Mazda.

**Commentary:** Rituals are like mental exercises which get the mind ready to attain controlled sleep. May my conscious sleeping soul, '*Aibigaya*' look after me from sunset to midnight when my body is lying uncontrolled. May my souls faith be alert like a flame which is kept burning properly.

- (6) I worship "Fradat-Vispam Huzyaiti" (all progress toward good life). I worship Zarathushtra and the power of beneficent and holy prayers as well as the High Priest who practices the teachings of Zarathushtra.

**Commentary:** "*Fradat-Vispam Huzyaiti* is the peaceful part of the nights sleep. Prayer is the life-line of this sleep. It joins the soul of the sleeping person with the soul of the earth "*geush urvan*" and brings the blessings of God on him.

- (7) I worship all righteous leaders of all grades and kinds, spiritual as well as temporal.

**Commentary:** The Initiate has to make his own mind and body ready so that when his astral mind and body take over in sleep he knows what is happening.

- (8) I worship all righteous young men and all patriots, whether of this country or of foreign lands.

**Commentary:** Wisdom of meditation, wisdom of good words and wisdom of good deeds leads the righteous man up to the sixth step of the ladder of wisdom. Thus step by step from the first to the sixth ghambar or "soul's steps" up the ladder, man reaches his Creator, by wisdom, faith and piety. May all good men and women reach this wisdom through their own self control.

- (9) I worship all righteous women who are truthful, fertile and obedient to their husbands.

- (10) I worship the noble, brave, world-uplifting, guiding spirits (Fravashis) of the pure. I worship *Behram Yazad* (who grants the success that comes of final





## North American Mobeds' Council

### PAGE FROM NAMC

liberation) and the other beneficent angels created by Ahura Mazda. The timely arrival of all seasons of the year do I admire.

**Commentary:** May our love for others be pure and may our thoughts, words and deeds be utterly good. May husbands and wives love each other deeply without thought for anyone else and with a love which is true and pure. This true love for each other will bind them to their God. They will love their children and teach them to love God and have good thoughts, speak good words and do good deeds so that they will one day be one with God in spirit and all the knowledge of the past and the future will be theirs.

(11) Thee do I worship, O purifying Fire, son of Ahura Mazda. I worship the souls (**Urvan**) of the departed, united to the guiding spirits (Fravashis) of the pure.

**Commentary:** May the fire within my soul burn as brightly as the fire I light with such care and precision. May my wisdom shine as brightly as the fire I kindle.

(12) I worship Ahura Mazda, the Supreme Lord, the most righteous of all. I revere the religion of Zarathushtra. I revere all deeds of goodness, done and to be done. Ahura Mazda knows who amongst the living are the true devotees – those devotees do I revere.

**Commentary:** I pray that all the souls that are living and dead be one with God one day. I pray for myself and others so that all who are living and dead and those who will be born in the future be blest. May our souls be one with Eternity.

(13) I revere the worship, the glory and the power of Behram Yazad (who grants the success that comes of final liberation), of the other beneficent Yazads created by Ahura Mazda and of all the timely seasons of the year.

**Commentary:** When all human beings are filled with the seventy-two attributes and virtues, "Ashaonam" they will be one with God. Till then dear God, help us to be truthful to you.

The Lord "Aiwisruthrem" is now ready to turn over his watch to "Sraosha", the guardian of the soul.

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**Cawas Desai** is an Akabar of the Navsari Bhagarsath Anjuman and a student of the religion and its history

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# When Hell Froze Over

At a Christmas Eve party, 2008, at a friend's home, as I was introduced to her family and friends, no one said much except for the fact that they had difficulty remembering and pronouncing my name, Dinaz. Later, Jane, my hostess brought up the fact that I was (originally) from...she just could not remember that new, undemocratically imposed name (Mumbai) of the beloved city of my birth and youth—Bombay.

So I chimed in. "Not that m-word, please...I can only call it Bombay." Some of the guests inquired about the recent tragedy of the attack on people and places in (South) Bombay by the terrorists and inquired about the well-being of my family back home. A young man sitting at another table asked me.

"Are you a Parsi?"

I was shocked! Oh I must have misheard him...might he have said... Paris?

"Did you say Parsi? Spelled P-A-R-S-I..?"

Justin, Jane and Doug's son, home for the holidays, nodded in the affirmative. I invited him to sit with me and we started a conversation about Zoroastrians and other related topics. I was amazed that he had so much knowledge about my faith. He found it amusing when I congratulated him. I told him that usually I get reactions such as:

"Are you an off-shoot of Islam?" When, I would mention Zoroastrianism to be the original religion of Iran.

"Zorro...Who? Zorro...What?"

"Never heard of such a thing. Is it a cult?"



**Dinaz Kutar Rogers** is a teacher and a published writer. She thinks of herself as a modern day Johnny Appleseed not sowing apple seeds but hope, knowledge, inspiration, pride and joy about the magnificence of Ariana Vaego and the ancient Zararthushti deen.

Needless to say Justin and I had a great visit! I asked him how he knew so much about my religion. Justin went on to say that he was attending Rosedale Bible College in Ohio, and might go into Ministry for the Church. He learned about Zoroastrianism in his Religions of the World course. His professor assured the class. 'You'll never come across a Parsi in your lifetime.'

Later as we were leaving the party, I told Justin..."Well Justin, today on Christmas Eve... hell froze over, you met a Parsi."

We both had a laugh.

Just the other day I spoke with Jane. Justin told his professor about meeting me. His professor replied "I am jealous."

**"I am proud of my country for having produced the splendid Zoroastrian stock, in number beneath contempt, but in charity and philanthropy perhaps unequalled, certainly unsurpassed."**

----Mahatma Gandhi.

# Personal Profiles

## Rohinton Rivetna: An Interfaith Story

**E**xuding a gentle and low-key demeanor, Rohinton Rivetna's no-flash, no-frills style should confuse no one. A modern-day visionary, architect and lion of the North American Zarathushti community, Rohinton is a leader who commands respect from those around him, and accountability from the many he has inspired through the years.

While most FEZANA Journal readers know Rohinton for his myriad of Zarathushti milestones, accomplishments and affiliations, most notably spearheading the founding of ZAC-Chicago, FEZANA and WZCC, it is his steadfast involvement representing Zarathushtis in the global interfaith arena that remains very much a work in progress.

With more than three quarters of all the world's conflicts waged in the name of religion, one could ask what exactly the Interfaith movement has done through the years to galvanize its voice, promote its principles and foster a dialogue of peace and goodwill among the world's religions.

But simple questions rarely have simple answers, and only through a deeper understanding of the interfaith movement and its continuing evolution can one truly appreciate and evaluate its proper place on the world's stage.

*"The big picture goal is to create peace among religions,"* said Rohinton, who serves on the Board of Trustees for The Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions. *"Sadly there is too much intra-faith strife within each religion."*

The strife, according to Rohinton, spills over, creating additional complexity that tends to affect intra-faith issues from being addressed adequately.

*"My thrust right now is to make a paradigm shift in the Interfaith world where we talk within our faiths about what we ought to be doing within the religions."*

Paradigm shifts, getting people to talk, participate and moving people to action are core tenets of Rohinton's being. For years he has guided, delegated and empowered those around him, but in the interfaith world it's a job easier said than done.

Rohinton says approximately 2 million people are a part of the global interfaith movement. Yet sadly, within the Zarathushti community, only a handful of dedicated individuals have helped Zarathushtis stay visible and engaged.

*"As a community we have not done enough – we are far from it – we don't even have interfaith committees set up within our local associations, and in India there are no interfaith organizations -- we need to work to correct that,"* he said.

Rohinton, now 75, read books shown to him by his grandfather at a very early age, reflecting on accounts of the historic 1893 World's Congress of Religions at the World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago.

*"My grandfather was around when it happened and shared his books with us and that's what made it a living memory for me,"* he said.

His interfaith calling came full circle for Rohinton in the early 1980s, when the *Vivekenanda Vedanta Society of Chicago* and other religious organizations recognized an important milestone: the upcoming centennial anniversary of the *1893 World's Congress of Religions*.

The 1893 Parliament (held on September 11 that year) marked the first formal gathering of





# Personal Profiles

representatives of eastern and western spiritual traditions, and is today recognized as the birth of formal inter-religious dialogue worldwide. The dialogue formalized in 1988, when Rohinton and monks from the Vivekenanda Society suggested organizing a celebration around the centennial, resulting in the eventual formation of the *Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions*.

Rohinton jumped in at traditional Rohinton pace, putting together a formal constitution for the Council. He recalls:

*"Seven of us met – I took the ZAC (Chicago) constitution and prepared the charter accordingly. Swami Sarveshananda pulled more people together, and as folks became interested, things got moving," Rohinton said. The Parliament did not have a focus as such but I started seeing the value and potential behind our work. We felt our mission was broader than just celebrating the centennial."*

He would go on to recruit, organize and lead the Zarathushti delegation at the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago. Through the years, the world's leading spiritual voices have spoken at Parliament events, including *His Holiness Dalai Lama (Chicago, 1993)* and *Nelson Mandela (Cape Town, 1999)*.

This year, the Parliament will convene Dec. 3 – 9, in Melbourne, Australia, and is expected to draw approximately 10,000 people. The culturally-vibrant Melbourne and Victoria are home to indigenous and aboriginal spiritualities, as well as a breadth of religious and spiritual diversity, including: *Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Jain, Jewish, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian faiths*.

As a bridge builder, Rohinton has always concentrated on generating dialogue, participation, involvement and alliances, believing in the power of dedicated individuals working together to bring about the change needed to advance shared causes.

*"Our community does not externalize - we are centered among ourselves. We need to step out a little bit and look at the world outside, where you'll find Christian churches are very much into the North American scene," he said. "Resources don't always have to be monetary, they can be human resources, but as a community we don't feel compelled to provide services outside the community. Christians do it as part of their scripture and training, we have to transform and externalize more."*

Rohinton envisions more Zarathushti participation, but not without coordinated efforts at the interfaith leadership level to foster a broader dialogue aimed at understanding the dynamics and competing forces within each religion. These forces, he says, tend to stovepipe and marginalize interfaith affairs, rather than prioritize them.

*"We need to persuade people and religions to generate peace among themselves," he said.*

With a large North American churchgoing population, Rohinton says religion can be a very positive force for transformation to take place, although he was equally strident in citing the potential of religion to be used in a negative manner.

*"The positive force of religion can transform people's thinking, but people do not understand that value within our Zarathushti community," he said. "We cannot feel we are superior to anyone else, and sadly many Zarathushtis feel this way. Everyone loves their faith and feels their religion is best, but if we continue on that path then we end up declaring war on each other."*

Rohinton's remedy for a brighter, more cooperative world: generating peace within the religions through the personal transformation of its followers.

*"We need to transform within ourselves, finding ways to create understanding and be respectful of one another within our own communities," Rohinton added.*

*"How we generate such respect is the question. How can we be more respectful of each other? These are the kinds of things we need to be doing in the future in order to create our own internal peace."*

Through each endeavor, Rohinton has been supported by his wife of 43 years, Roshan, their three children: Zenobia, Jamshed, and Cyrus, and five adorable grandchildren to constantly keep them on their toes.

**Jim Engineer** is an independent public relations consultant and a director of NextGenNow ([www.nextgennow.org](http://www.nextgennow.org)). For more than 20 years, he has donated his time and talent to the North American Zarathushti community, serving twice as FEZANA's Public Relations Chair, starting and perpetuating the Youthfully Speaking section, of FEZANA Journal, co-founding ZYNA, and representing Zarathushti youth at the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions.

# M I L E S T O N E S

as of November 30, 2009

## BIRTHS

**Arshan Forughi**, a boy, to Sunita Khambatta and Goshtasb Forughi, grandson to Farida and Sarosh Khambatta (Chicago, IL) and Perin and Sohrab Forughi (California) in Menomonee Falls, WI on April 4, 2009

**Cyrus Irani**, a boy, to Khursheed and Sarosh Irani, brother to Ava in Fremont, CA on June 20, 2009.

**Jayden Ullal**, a boy, to Rohena and Gautam Ullal, grandson to Ann Arnavaz and Darayus Elavia and Kripa and Surendra Ullal, great grandson to Sheroo and Amy, nephew to Eric (Zinnia), Kevin, Vishal, Shyam (Jyotsna) and cousin to Priyanna in Chicago, IL on July 21, 2009.

**Zara Sophia Bardoliwala**, a girl, to Dilnavaz and Nenshad Bardoliwala, sister to Asha Illaria in Castro Valley, CA on August 22, 2009.

**Bezun Daver**, a boy, to Azmin and Aashish Daver in Foster City, CA on August 25, 2009.

**Zenia Irani**, a girl, to Mahin and Farhang Irani, granddaughter to Zenobia and Jamshed Irani of London, England and late Burjor Irani of Mumbai, in Toronto, on September 10, 2009.

**Camren Chinoy**, a boy, to Rashna and Cyrus Chinoy, grandson to Kety and Dinshaw Batliwala (Ottawa, Canada ) and Jeroo and Minoo Chinoy ( Flint, Michigan) in Novi, Michigan, MI on September 18, 2009.

**Rayhan Guard**, a boy, to Persis and Freddy Guard, brother to Yohann in Naperville, IL on September 23, 2009.

**Reagan Kayla Rash**, a girl to Sonia Behrana-Rash and Ronald Rashin, granddaughter to Zenobia and Mehelli Behrana in Houston on September 22, 2009.

**Boman Austin Carroll**, a boy to Shireen and Billy Carroll, grandson to Bomi and Dilshad Hormazdi in Houston, October 2, 2009.

## NAVJOTES

**Perzaad and Behzad**, sons of Zenobia and Viraf Talavai in Mississauga, Ontario, on August 23, 2009.

**Alyssia and Kassandra**, daughters of Kae-zad and Vickie Divecha, granddaughters of Villie and Rohinton Divecha and great granddaughters of Mani Soli Divecha and Gool Homi Patel in Toronto, on August 28, 2009.

**Zoie Irani**, daughter of Aban and Hoshang Irani in Champaign, IL on August 29, 2009.

**Persez**, daughter of Sonita and Rustom Amaria, sister of Zarmesh, granddaughter of Lily and Pesi Amaria (India) and Zarin and Hoshang Lawyer (Pakistan) in Mississauga, Ontario on August 29, 2009.

## WEDDINGS

**Ardeshir Yeganegi**, son of Parviz and **Pari Yeganegi** to Mandana Tehrani, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Mohammed Tehrani in Vancouver, BC on June 19, 2009.

**Ashtad Kotwal**, son of Gool and Minoo Kotwal to **Patricia Carlos del Rio**, daughter of Jeannette and Juan Carlos Del Rio in Orlando, FL on July 4, 2009.

**Phiroozeh Petigara**, daughter of Perveen and Sharukh Petigara (Vancouver, BC) to **Hormuzd Romer**, son of Freny and Kiumars Romer (Toronto, ONT) in Vancouver, BC on July 11, 2009.

**Rayoumand Namdarian**, son of Iraj and Minoo Namdarian to **Agatha Peters**, daughter of Dave and Tina Peters in Port Moody, BC on July 17, 2009.



**Perry Unvalla**, son of Nellie and Ervad Darab Unvalla (Boca Raton, FL) to **Sasha John** in San Augustine, FL on July 19, 2009.

**Persis Damkewala**, daughter of Bachi and Bomi Damkewala (Woodridge, IL) to **Burjis Sidhwa**, son of Pervin and Ervad Maneck Sidhwa (Houston, TX) in Downers Grove, Illinois on July 25th, 2009. Napierville, Chicago, on July 25, 2009.(photo above)

**Roxanne Mistry**, daughter of Purviz and Kuroosh Mistry to **Phiroze Panthaky** son of Jai and Noshir Panthaky in Woodridge, Ontario, on August 28, 2009.

**Soraya Keyhani-Rofagha**, daughter of Sedigheh Keyhani-Rofagha and late Shakrollah Rofagha to **Phiroz Tarapore**, son of Silloo and Erach Tarapore (Lafayette, CA) in San Francisco, CA on September 5, 2009.

**Naomi Divecha**, daughter of Sami and Dilnawaz Divecha to **Meherwan Wadia**, son of Dara and Shirin Wadia in Toronto, on September 6, 2009.

**Farzeen Kekoo Irani**, son of Kekoo and Dilnavaz Irani to **Leanne Marie Petrosky**, daughter of Joseph and Missy Cimarossa in Springfield, IL on September 12, 2009.

**Saira Ghadially**, daughter of Amy and Sohrab Ghadially to **Burjis Mehta**, son of Sheroo and Kersasp Mehta in Toronto, on September 19, 2009.

**Katie Weber**, daughter of Dinaz and Ken Weber to **Mark Bredlau**, son of Cathy and Patrick Bredlau in Hoffman Estates, IL on September 25, 2009.

CONGRATULATIONS  
TO  
ALL  
NEWLY WEDS

# M I L E S T O N E S

## AUGUST 15-November 15

**Zarine Damkevala**, daughter of Bachi and Bomi Damkevala (Woodridge, IL) to **Mehrab Deboo**, son of Sunny and Hoshi Deboo in Bolingbrook, IL on October 2, 2009. (photo below)



### Looking for a Soul Mate?

Try these matrimonial sites and services:

<http://matrimonial.zoroastrianism.com>

[www.TheParsiMatch.com](http://www.TheParsiMatch.com)

[www.shaadi.com](http://www.shaadi.com)

**Mrs. Gool Banaji,**  
**Parel, Mumbai,**  
**[goolpesi@gmail.com](mailto:goolpesi@gmail.com)**

Please send all submissions for "Milestones" to Mahrukh Motafram, 2390 Chanticleer Drive, Brookfield, WI 53045, [maharukhma83@gmail.com](mailto:maharukhma83@gmail.com) Tel: 262-821-5296.

NOTE: If no year is specified, it implies "within the past 12 months."

### DEATHS

**Homi Daruwalla**, 75, husband of Rati, father of Pervin (Rod), Freny (Gary), Darius (Nancy) in Montreal, on June 26, 2009.

**Keki Sorabji Sethna**, 76, husband of Havovi Sethna, father of Sharookh (Rukshana) Daroowala (North Vancouver, BC), Shanaz Jal and Dilnaz Anklesaria, and grandfather of Shermeen, Hormuzd, Xerxes, Rohann and Rishad in Mumbai, India on July 3, 2009.

**Ronnie Bhagwagar**, son of Shiraz and Dinshaw Bhagwagar (Southern California) on July 9, 2009.

**Purviz Nanvati**, husband of Arnie, father of Myra, Sammy and Eric in Barrie, ONT on August 9, 2009.

**Dr. Pharokh Sunavala**, 76, father of Farhad Sunavala (San Ramon, CA), and Kaizad Sunavala (Houston, TX), grandfather of Freyana and Zaal (San Ramon, CA) and Zenia and Farzad (Houston, TX), brother of Dr. Jamshed Sunavala (Mumbai, India) in Mumbai, India on August 18, 2009.

**Zarrin Pheroze Driver**, wife of Phiroze Driver, mother of Tenaz Vevaina and Cyrus Driver, and grandmother of Yuhan, Leilah, and Murad, in Mumbai, India on August 20, 2009.

**Movarid (Zartoshty) Yeganegi**, 81, mother of Rostam (Mojgan) Yeganegi and Bahram (Shekoufeh) Yeganegi in Vancouver, BC on September 19, 2009.

**Bahram Shahbarami**, husband of Mahnaz Shahbarami, father of

Bejan and Mojgan in Westminster, CA on September 19, 2009.

**Houshang Mobedshahi**, husband of Manijeh Mobedshahi, father of Mandana and Katayoun in San Diego, CA on September 24, 2009.

**Mehroo Bacha**, 81, wife of late Jessie Bacha, mother of Percy and Syrus Bacha in Surrey, BC on September 30, 2009.

**Mehru Nariman Desai**, 70, daughter of Nariman and Shirin Desai, sister of Ratan (Navsari) late Coomi, Kersi (Maharukh), (Montreal); Khorshed (Navsari) Nergish Kerolwala (Toronto); late Homi in Montreal on October 11, 2009.

### CONGRATULATIONS

**Coomi Bhatena** celebrated her 99th birthday on September 7, 2009. She received a standing ovation for her multiple years of service to the community.

**Roshan and Pervaze Rabadi** celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary in Toronto on October 3, 2009.



## Matrimonials

**FEZANA Journal will coordinate initial contacts between interested parties. We do not assume any responsibility for verifying credentials.**

**Contact Roshan Rivetna rrrivetna@aol.com.**

**Male, 31, Ph.D.** in Business and Marketing, well-settled, professor at a university in Pennsylvania. Enjoys sports, music, movies. Interested in meeting a good-natured, educated, very good life partner. Contact 561-843 6678. [M08-21].

**Male, 31, B.Sc.** worked as sales manager for construction company, and recently started his own residential building construction company near Pune, India. Father invites correspondence. Contact 2613 4546 in Pune, India, or d\_bobinmaker@hotmail.com. [M08-24].

**Male, 49,** IT consulting professional, settled in USA. Contact 281-948 5316. [M09-46].

**Female, 34,** well-educated professional, working in an international East coast company, invites correspondence from well-educated professional men, ages 31 - 42. Interests include adventurous travel, volunteer work, politics and comedy, reading, entertaining, outdoor activities and spending time with family. Contact mynestnyc@gmail.com. [F09-47].

**Female, 68,** young-at-heart, in good health, retired health professional in California. Divorced, no children. Looking for companion between 55 - 65 or younger, in good health, with good sense of humor, who enjoys traveling and going out. Call 949-335 8107. [F09-48].

**Male, 27, 5' 9",** ITI Diesel Mechanic Diploma, working at Shapurji Palanji Construction Co., in Oman-Muscat. Contact uncle in Chicago at 630-372 5666 or z.fanibanda@yahoo.com. [M09-49].

**Female, 34,** Masters in Design (IIT-Powai) and M.S. in Film Production (California), Information Architect/Interaction Designer with US based companies, currently web-designer in Washington DC area. Enjoys traveling, hiking, outdoors, photography, reading and sketching. Would like to meet compassionate, kind, understanding and mature person. Contact rinapr@yahoo.com. [M 09-50].

**Female, 27,** Commerce graduate, working as Centre Head of Modern Fashion Brand, in Mumbai. Contact mkcsai007@gmail.com. [M09-51].

**Female, 28,** working in airlines in Mumbai. Contact aunt in Atlanta at 770-993 2963. [F09-52].

**Male, 29,** Production Engineer (VJTI, Mumbai), M.S. (Texas), currently working in Dallas. Contact 682-552 9164. [M09-54].

**Male, 29, 5' 10", B.E. (Mumbai), Ph.D. (University of Nottingham, UK)** specializing in Waterjet Technology for aircraft engines. Currently on a two-year assignment for multi-national company, IMI (UK) in China and USA. Pleasant personality, non-smoker, looking for a simple Zarathushti girl with good values. Contact yazdi@on-lyne.com. [M09-55].

**Female, 24,** from a very well-placed family in Ahmedabad. Master's degree, presently working as a clinical psychologist at a hospital, and teaching at college level. Enjoys dancing, singing, music, cricket, dramatics and public speaking. Interested in someone from a good family, well-educated, caring, adventurous with good sense of humor. Contact mazneen@gmail.com. [F09-57].

## BETWEEN THE COVERS

## A Conversation with Murzban Shroff

Murzban F. Shroff, winner of the Gilgun Fiction Award, believes that life without letters is no life at all. His book, *"Breathless in Bombay"* (FEZANA Journal Summer 2009, page 151.) was short listed for the 2009 Commonwealth Writers Prize.

*Murzban was invited by the Gandhi Memorial Center in Metropolitan Washington DC for a book reading on 3rd September 2009.*

Photo Credit: Carrie Trybulec [www.gandhimemorialcenter.org](http://www.gandhimemorialcenter.org)



**There is a literary fascination with India. What do you think it is about India itself that makes for such a good story backdrop?**

Its pluralism, its mysticism, the fact that so many people, linguistically, communally, culturally and economically different, can make up a single nation. Within this diversity we are all trying to find our similarity as Indians. This makes for an interesting conflict and, of course, an interesting journey.

**What's unique about Bombay?**

Her willingness to absorb into her fold the rest of India and to support industriousness. Bombay (or Mumbai, as she is now known as) is like a benign mother: she accommodates, she protects, she teaches, and she rewards at the cost of extinguishing herself. In that sense, the book is a tribute to the prolific spirit of Bombay.

Many of the stories that make up *Breathless in Bombay* are about Bombay's citizens bending to the demands of the city rather than the city changing to meet the demands of the people.

**Do you think that is an occurrence specific to Bombay?**

I haven't lived long enough in other cities to say that it is specific to

Bombay, but this I will say: Bombay is a city of compromises. We could do with a more enlightened administration and with better living amenities.

**Is there one particular story or character from *Breathless in Bombay* that you are most attached to?**

Every story has a purpose and a responsibility. Each story addresses a key aspect of the city—be it loss of livelihood, bribery, corruption, depletion of green zones, encroachment or class envy. There some stories that work more holistically; they are more widely representative of Bombay. Amongst these are: "The Queen Guards Her Own" (it brings out the beauty and the squalor of Bombay), "This House of Mine" (it shows the diversity of the people and the need for universal tolerance), and "Breathless in Bombay" (it attempts to sensitize the haves to the have-nots).

**How do you think your work differs from other books set in Bombay?**

For one, *Breathless in Bombay* is a concept. It started out as individual stories, but after some time I realized what was happening, where it was all leading up to. I consciously took on the

role of documenting lives, situations, problems, mental energies, dreams, and realizations. I had to do a lot of walking around and talking around and had to change the stories over fifteen-twenty times, just to get it right. I had to let go a lot of myself for the characters. Secondly, I do not recollect any other book that examines the classic trades of Bombay which are under threat from growing consumerism. Thirdly, in terms of style, I think I have a difference. There is that unrelenting interior monologue delivered in a stream of consciousness style, where nothing is missed out, everything is felt and recorded. I think living here makes a difference: I can feel the city breathe through me.

**What was the single most memorable experience you had while writing the book?**

Originally, I had written the stories as plot-based. They were conventional shorts stories, delivered with a twist. Then I read how Steinbeck had first written *"Grapes of Wrath"* as a sort of comic satire but when he went into the grape farms he discovered the reality was something else, so he tore up his two years of work and wrote the version that we came to read and cherish. That did it for me. It changed my motivation. I got more real, shifted from plot-based to thought-based. The more I worked, the more I experienced the peeling away of illusions in my characters. Their realizations became my realizations, like the brave army widow in *"The Great Divide"* or the protagonist in *"This House of Mine"*.

I think that is the beauty of Bombay. Through sheer labor and struggle you work through your consciousness and experience great insights. I thought these moments would make for a life-like book; they would inspire me to go beyond fiction, into literature.

## BETWEEN THE COVERS

**Abstract of Doctoral dissertation****Study of Contemporary Parsis in India particularly in Mumbai***Noriko Katsuki, Graduate School of Chuo University, Japan*BOOKS  
ARTS &

A new Japanese work offers provocative scholarship that is empirically strong and theoretically rich about Parsi history. In her dissertation "*Study of Contemporary Parsis in India particularly in Mumbai*," Noriko Katsuki considers Parsi history and develops a narrative for why Parsi identity has been in decline. While the dissertation has yet to be translated into English, its abstract promises a fascinating read.

Dr. Katsuki provides a narrative for Parsi decline by positing that Parsis brought about their own degeneration as they gave up their cultural and traditional customs in the process of adopting western ways to achieve economic prosperity. They further lost community solidarity by destabilizing religious authority in Navsari and failing to provide a

transition of power from Navsari to Mumbai after the Parsi immigration to Mumbai.

The corpus of Noriko's research is divided into six chapters. The first chapter traces the immigration to Sanjan to the community's expansion in Gujrat till the early 18th century. Katsuki suggest that whereas Parsi scholars regale about Mehrji Rana of Navsari's invitation to Akbar's court in the 16th century, British scholars define them as brokers. The business clout helped both Parsis and non-Parsis of the time and brought about expansion of business from India to England and English colonies. But it also brought about a division in the community, namely the Bhagarias and Sanjanas, and the split between the Calendar issue.

The next chapter describes the Parsis immigration to Mumbai from Gujarat where Parsi merchants, such as the Wadias, Jeejeebhoy, Godrej, Pallonji and Tata's prospered. Other chapters highlight the rise and role of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet and argue that when powerful merchants were the leaders of the Punchayet, the role of the religious authority diminished. The absence of a sole religious authority caused further decline of the traditions and customs. An English missionary exposed the ignorance of Parsi priests which brought about a revival of religious reform and education, but the authority of priests was not reasserted and is viewed with suspicion even today.

The value of charity is the focus of another chapter. Social philanthropy and responsibility that included housing, medical aid, martial counseling and maintaining traditional customs were all admirably governed by the BPP. Katsui maintains, however, that this created a class of rich beggars. Meanwhile, the biggest charity trust for India by a Parsi is the Tata Group. Many other Parsi companies also have given back some of their profits to Indian society.

Other chapters focus on contemporary issues such as the declining census, Westernization, women's social advancement, emigration, late marriages and inter-marriages. The final chapter offers solutions, which include reviving the practice of traditional customs, agreeing on a definitive translation of the Avesta, articulating common Zoroastrian values based on the purity practices of everyday life, and establishing religious authority.

Dr. Katsui's dissertation is donated to the *FIRE*S (FEZANA Information Research Education System). However, it needs translation from the Japanese language so that scholars, Sunday school teachers, mentors and other persons interested in the well being of the community can read it, engage with it, and have a vigorous debate about our past and future.

**Aban Rustomji****Houston, TX.**



## BETWEEN THE COVERS

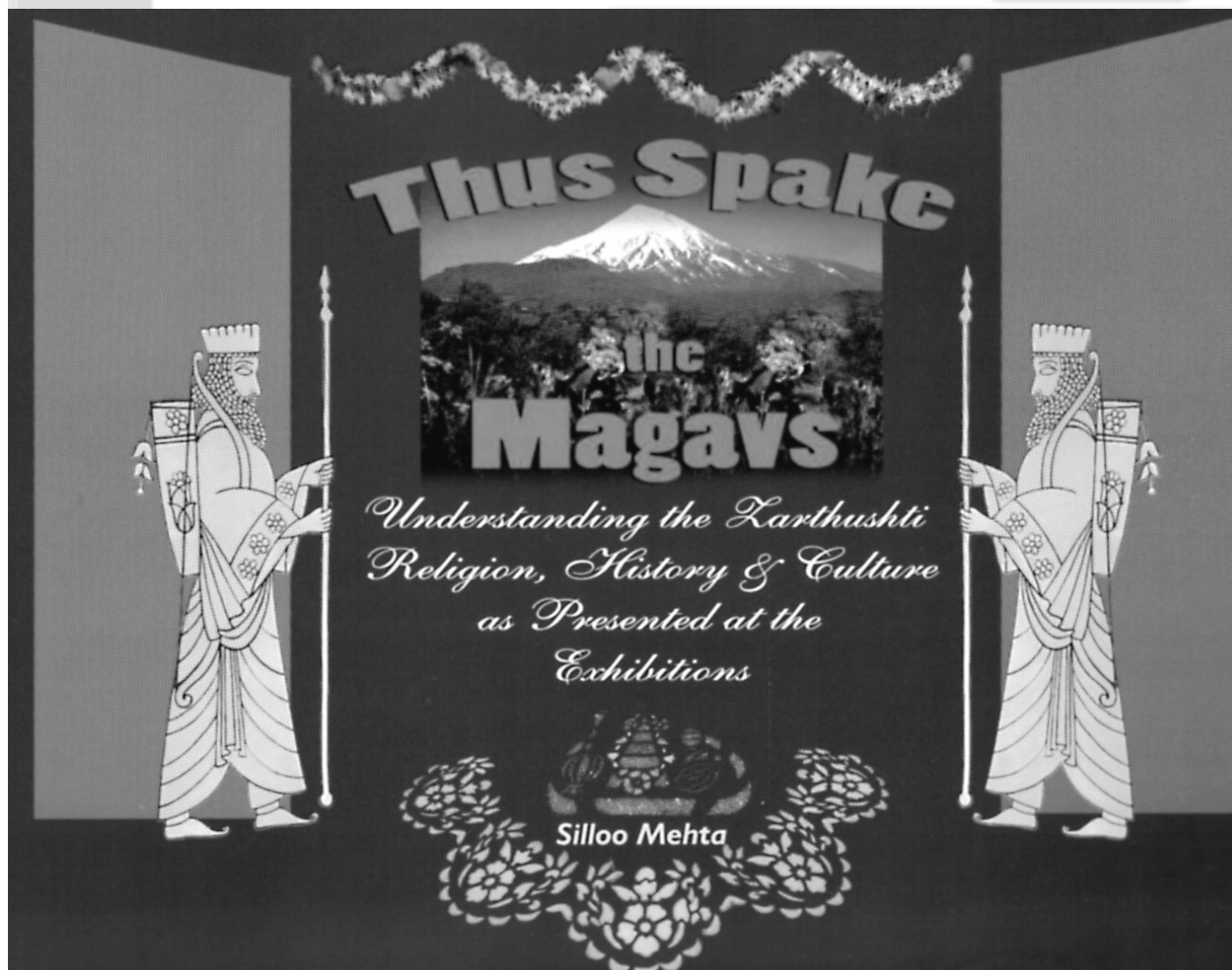
### Thus Spake the Magavs

By Silloo Mehta

The Mazdayasnie Connection First Edition February 2009

Published by the Mazdayasnie Connection, 116 pages

BOOKS  
&  
ARTS



#### Reviewed by Ervad Marzban J. Hathiram

Silloo Mehta's name is synonymous in the Los Angeles area with religious education and delicious food! For over 25 years now, she has been trying to spread religious awareness among the Zarathushtis of North America through varied activities like camps, summer retreats, discussions, public talks and magazines. Recently Silloo 'diversified' by holding exhibitions in Mumbai, India where large scale

#### Reviewed by Meheryar N. Rivetna

Behramshah Shroff, who founded the Ilm-e-Kshnoom (science of ecstasy or bliss) movement is said to have received instruction on the mystical aspects of Zoroastrianism from 72 Magav (Magi) priests called Abed Saheb-e-Dilan who lead a group of approximately 2000 individuals, the Saheb-e-Dilan, and presumably reside around Mount Damavand in the Caucasus Mountains.

models, charts, animation and talks were held to explain what our religion is really about, to the notoriously lazy and apathetic Mumbai crowd. Yet Silloo's exhibition caught the eye of the community and she was barraged with requests for a permanent memoir of the exhibition. The current book is the fulfillment of that demand.

The scope of the book encompasses all facets of the Zarathushti religion, specifically the deeper esoteric meaning which was revealed by Ustad Behramshah Nowroji Shroff at the beginning of the 20th century and which is more popularly known as Ilm-e-Khshnoom – the spiritual-bliss-giving knowledge. Ustad Behramshah Shroff was fortunate to have enjoyed a stay of over three years with a group of Zarathushti sages who live in seclusion near the Demavand mountain in Iran. After returning to India, Shroff revealed the knowledge he had brought from the sages as Khshnoom. Over a century after his revelation, the Khshnoom movement has gained strong support within the orthodox section of the community.

Silloo's book begins with the origin of creation, trying to answer the eternal questions: who am I, where have I come from, and where do I go? She then delves into the working of the Zarathushti Divine Government, explaining the status and function of the Yazatas and Amesha Spentas, as well as Prophet Zarathushtra, going deep into his spiritual stature as presented in the scriptures, which is quite at variance with the generally held view of the Prophet as a mere thinker-philosopher poet. She explains the various 'miracles' associated with the baby Zarathushtra, as well his adult life and so-called 'death', giving the deeper esoteric explanation behind the facts presented in the Dinkard.

Silloo then moves on to the dream of a young man, an allegory for all of us who are in search of the real meaning of our religion. The young man is visited in his dream by a sage who gives him six 'charms' which will help the young man find the answers to life's vexing questions. These charms are the various facets which comprise the Zarathushti faith – Sudreh & Kusti; Atash; Rituals & Kinetics; Avesta Manthras; Dokhmenashini; and finally the moral and ethical code comprised in the concept of Asha.

Using the models put up at the exhibitions as well as simple and lucid language, Silloo skillfully manages to explain the gist of all these mammoth topics, giving a visual treat as well as intellectual stimulation. The text is well interspersed with a multitude of photographs and diagrams which will enable both raw and advanced readers to find something for themselves. Special points to note

The Ilm-e-Khshnoom philosophy is based on mystic and esoteric interpretation of the Zoroastrian scriptures.

Silloo Mehta's recent book "Thus Spake the Magavs" (116 pgs. published by the Mazdayasnie Connection) provides a rudimentary study of Zoroastrianism as seen through the lens of the Ilm-e-Khshnoom movement. With lucid illustrations Mrs. Mehta depicts Zarathushtrian cosmology and the birth and death of Zarathushtra; she provides a very enlightening section on the symbolism of the sudreh and kusti and the meaning behind the design of the religious tunic and girdle. The significance behind the basic prayers and some rituals are also briefly, but clearly explained. A concise summary of the different Persian dynasties offers a nice historical perspective of the post-Zarathustra period.

Mrs. Mehta makes a concerted effort to back up with science the verisimilitudes typically associated with the Zarathushti faith. Without a doubt, Zarathushtra's teachings are well grounded in the laws of nature (science.) Science and religion must co-exist if either discipline is to have any veracity. In the words of Albert Einstein: Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.

Where the book falls short is the absence of any credible scientific, archaeological or scriptural references in support of the dogmatic assertions. Where Mrs. Mehta offers scientific explanations, the science is flawed and defies the fundamentals of the physical sciences. A case in point: she defines an atom as being made up of fire, air, water and earth (1). If this definition is allegorical, then the allegory is incomprehensible and an explanation to that effect would help.

Her claim that Zarathushtra lived 9,500 years ago calculated on some dubious scientific method of "Shumar-I-Falk" is highly questionable when scholars have wrestled for centuries to establish the era of Zarathushtra's life. In another instance, expounding on the importance of consigning a dead body to a dokhma, Mrs. Mehta boldly declares that "it is an inexpiable sin to consign a dead body to the fire or to immerse it into water or bury it under the earth." Undeniably, the dokhma is a very scientific (ecologically sound) method for disposal of the dead, but it is hard to conceive of a God who would mete reward or punishment on a soul, contingent on how the body was disposed and neglect to take into account one's life's works.

Silloo Mehta states that the Zarathushtrian view of time is cyclic and not linear. The concept of cyclic time comes from Zurvanism, a Zarathushtrian heretical movement introduced in the second half of the Achaeminid era that gained prominence during the Sassanid dynasty (2). The Zarathushtrian concept of time is linear and not cyclical as evinced by innumerable students of Zoroastrianism (3, 4, and 5). Another anomaly is the issue of resurrection vs. reincarnation. Under the section discussing resurrection—

include a detailed chapter on the life hereafter, and the importance of our prayers, rituals and traditions as being not just a method of disposal of the dead body, but an important catalyst to the onward journey and progress of the Zarathushti soul.

The book also gives a brief understanding of the history of time, as viewed by the Zarathushti mystic revelation and provides for the first time an integrated view of Zarathushti history from nearly 12,000 BCE to the present day, which may not be borne out by archeological evidence today but which forms the cornerstone of the revelation brought by Ustad Behramshah Shroff. The final chapter details the life of Shroff and the opinions of some prominent Zarathushtis about him.

Whether one believes in Behramshah Shroff or not, this book is an essential requisite for any Zarathushti home and fulfills a long standing demand for a tome which is easy to read, good to look at, deep enough to encourage further reading yet not dull and scholarly to put you to sleep. The quality of the printing and binding is superb and Silloo has not spared any expense to make this a visual treat. Makes for an excellent Navjote or birthday gift and indeed will educate both parent and child for many years to come.

**Ervad Marzban J. Hathiram Panthaky**

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## DANCE

as though no one is watching you

## LOVE

as though you have never been hurt  
before

## SING

as though no one can hear you

## LIVE

as though heaven is on earth

crossing the Chinvat Bridge—there is mention of reincarnation should the soul so deserve it. Zarathushtrian scriptures do not allude to reincarnation. Zarathushti scholars have averred that reincarnation is not a Zarathushti concept. There is ample evidence that Zarathushtrian eschatology has influenced Judaism and Christianity and the absence of belief in reincarnation in these faiths lends credence to the notion that reincarnation is, in fact, un-Zoroastrian. Reincarnation is diametrically opposite to resurrection. What are we to believe in?

“Thus Spake the Magavs” gives an impression that the Zarathushti religion is a mish-mash of the occult, divine legerdemain and fantasy.

While all religious beliefs are matters of faith, faith must be backed by reason; blind faith leads nowhere and soon dies. Sound reasoning invariably leads to the truth. There is nothing esoteric, mystical or cryptic about Zoroastrianism. God has revealed to us all, His doctrines. It is for us to understand His plan and act accordingly. If He has concealed His principles, He cannot expect mankind to do His bidding. The beauty and greatness of the Zarathushtrian faith lies in its simplicity: Good thoughts, Good words and Good deeds.

Zarathushtis are not troglodytes and it behooves Zarathushtra's followers to expunge the myths, folklore and magical attributes that people have ascribed to the prophet and the religion he founded.

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3. Boyce, Mary, *Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, Routledge & Keegan Paul Ltd. (U.K.) 1979
4. Mistree, Khojeste P., *Zoroastrianism: An Ethnic Perspective*, 1982

Any standard physics or chemistry textbook will provide a simple explanation of the atom as being composed of protons, neutrons and electrons.

**Meheryar Rivetna** is a Senior Executive Vaccine Specialist with Merck & Co., Inc. Meheryar is a member of the library committee of the Zoroastrian Association of Houston. Meheryar and his wife, Zubeen Mehta, live in Houston, TX.



## BETWEEN THE COVERS

## The Zarathushti Connection With Judaism And Christianity

Edited by Roshan Rivetna

Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America  
Publication. 56 pages

BOOKS  
&  
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Reviewed by Jehangir Sarosh

The suggestion that Zoroastrianism had a profound influence on Judaism during the five hundred years they lived together under the Persian rule is confirmed within this book by some twenty scholars of different faiths and cultures.

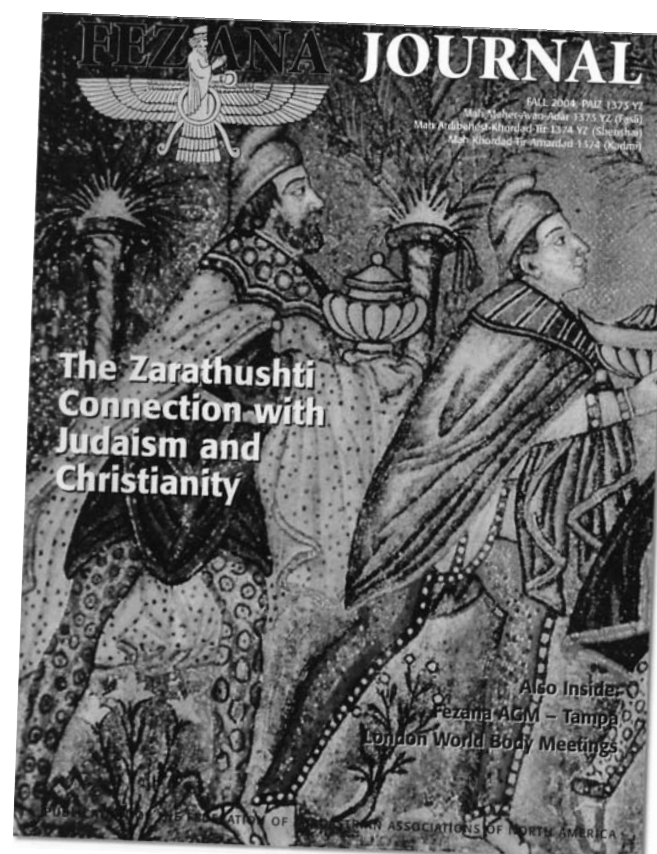
Roshan Rivetna has been careful enough to use the quotes from the various authors and maintained a neutral position, that is, there has not been an attempt to prove a preconceived conclusion.

The book begins with the extensively researched timeline of historical contacts which are well presented and easy to follow. It offers the reader appropriate background for all the different contributions.

It follows on by referring to historical and biblical (Jewish and Christian) references on Zarathushtra's monotheism with a dualistic philosophy that played such a powerful role in shaping our modern day values of human rights and individual responsibility, through the Judeo-Christian western culture.

Although it is clear from reading so many different contributions of the various researchers/scholars that Zarathushtra's teaching has had a substantial influence on Judaic theology and eschatology, it is a pity that the evidence offered is repetitive and tends to become monotonous reading. Having said that; the high quality of the academic credentials of the contributors, with the wide range of references they refer to, makes the book a must for any researcher as a reference point

For teachers of religion / comparative religion the book offers explanations for all ages, from the simple stories of the three wise man to the deep thoughts and respect for Zarathushtra and his theological,



philosophical and ethic teachings as offered by Cardinal Konig and others.

I am confident the book will encourage Zarathushties to look deeper into their own religious texts and offer to non-Zarathushties a different insight into their own faith and traditions.

Furthermore Roshan Rivetna's compilation will help, to brighten and illuminate what has hereto been referred to as a "shadowy presence" to being recognised as the powerful and important influence on Judeo Christian theology, philosophy, and culture which has so heavily influenced the modern age.

Visit <http://www.fezana.org> for information on purchase of book .

## BETWEEN THE COVERS

Reviewed by Shazneen Rabadi Gandhi

**City of Thieves:**

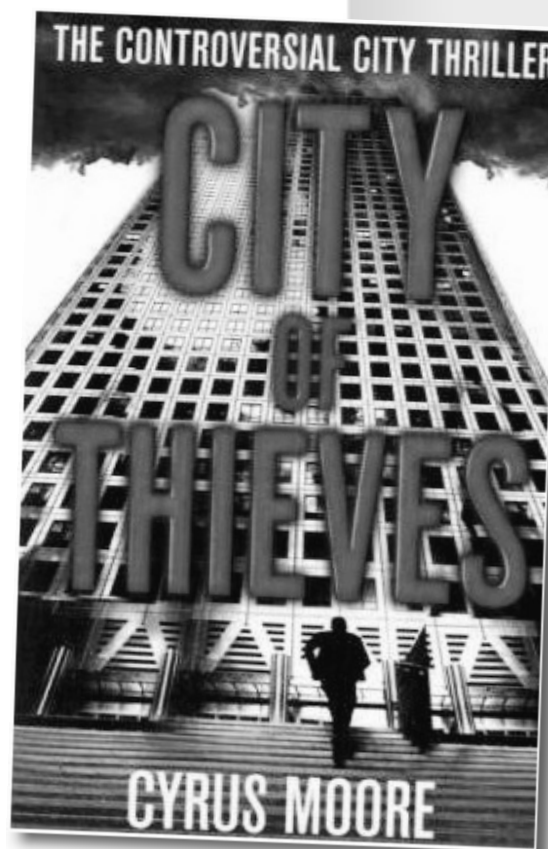
A fun debut novel by Cyrus Mewawalla  
Shazneen Rabadi Gandhi

Published: 2009 in UK by Sphere  
(coming to the US in 2010) - Pages: 407  
ISBN (Hardback): 978-1-84744-294-9  
ISBN (Paperback): 978-1-84744-295-6

Cyrus Mewawalla's first book – authored under the writing name, Cyrus Moore – is an interesting, fast read. It is the story of a young telecom analyst, Nic Lamparelli, who works for a leading US investment bank in London. As Nic's career takes off, he reaps the privileges of a banker's life. But before long, he finds himself being coerced to compromise his analysis to benefit financial insiders. *City of Thieves* follows Nic's discovery of, and his response to, the dark side of the glamorous world of finance.

Mewawalla writes well enough to hold your attention through the book. There is an abundance of multinational characters, but the main ones are drawn clearly and memorably. The character of Charlie Doyle, an old jaded veteran of the financial world, who leads a colorful life, has a witty comeback for every situation and comes to be Nic's mentor at the bank, is at once, comic and tragic.

Mewawalla's own professional experience – he was a leading telecom analyst in London for several years before starting his own independent research firm, Cyke Partners – lends credence to the portrait of the world of banking from the chauvinistic trading floor banter to the authentic descriptions of the deals to the description of the pressure of working in a fast-paced million dollar industry and living with golden handcuffs. To anyone familiar with this world, the premise of the fraud – that analysts of banks who provide investment services to corporations may be under pressure to provide tainted analysis - will sound very plausible. It is reminiscent of the accusations in 2002 against the investment bank Salomon Smith Barney's analyst, Jack Grubman, who was accused of tailoring his analysis so that the bank could garner more business from Worldcom, even though this was a fraud upon the investors relying on Grubman's analysis of the stock. Indeed, the corporation pressuring the bank to change its analysis is called Globecom.

BOOKS  
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Mewawalla penned the novel in 2003, but says there were few publishers interested in the manuscript. Then, with the recent financial crisis, suddenly interest in the financial villains of our times resurfaced and Mewawalla's novel was published in the UK last year.

Interestingly, the insider trading scandal here has another more modern real-life element to it: the use of financial fraud by religious fundamentalists to finance terrorism. But this angle is, unfortunately, given short shrift in the plot.

The story is not just about the world of finance, however. Other elements of the story: the personal relationship between Nic and his childhood friend, Jack, who also works at the bank at a heavy price to his personal life; their childhood and their relationship with their old Japanese sensei, which is illuminated with poignant flashbacks; the scheming, cheating, glamour, sex, murder and revenge that make any thriller thrilling are all there and make this debut novel one that is hard to put down.

*First edition sold out, 6000 copies sold in 19 countries*

## BETWEEN THE COVERS

Reviewed by Rohinton Rivetna

**Teaching About Religion Notebook**

Responses from IFC's 11 Member Faith Traditions to Questions Common to Each

Published by The InterFaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington 150 pages

150 pages.

This compilation of responses from the InterFaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington's (IFC) eleven member faiths (Baha'i, Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic, Jain, Jewish, Latter-day Saints, Protestant, Roman Catholic, Sikh and Zoroastrian) to common questions, is an invaluable resource for students and teachers of comparative religion and persons in the Interfaith arena.

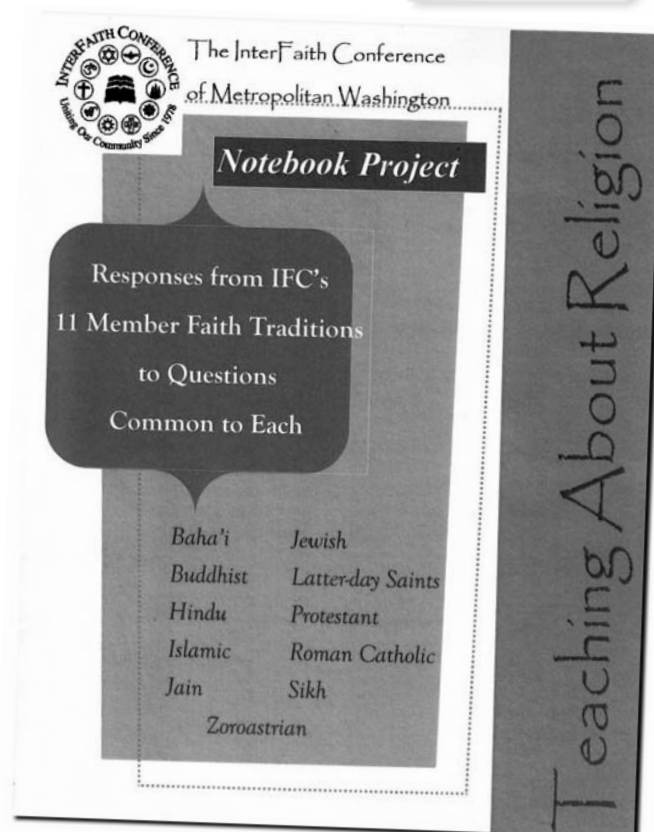
The Question and Answer format is unique, unequalled in content, and forms concise and readily accessible reference material. Well-thought out questions cover: Historical and Cultural background (e.g. "When and where was the religion founded?"); Ethics and Morality; God or Ultimate Truth (e.g. "Does God have a form?"); Scripture; Worship ("Describe a typical worship ceremony"); Life cycle (Describe main life cycle events and rituals); Afterlife ("What happens to an individual after death?"); Governance ("What are the functions of clergy?"); Attitude toward the 'other' (Do followers of other religions merit salvation?) and More .... The answers, written by faith practitioners, provide a sheer wealth of information very concisely, in a volume of barely 150 pages.

In preparation for writing this review, my attempt to quickly read and absorb the material presented in the book, proved to be futile. I soon realized that this indeed was the reference material I had oft-times sought and found elusive.

Most books on comparative religions deal adequately with the three main components of any religion – doctrine, ethics and eschatology. This Notebook is unique in not only adequately addressing those questions, but also makes an attempt to seek answers to the harder questions of attitude towards other religions, and matters of conversion and acceptance. "How are other religions viewed ... ?". "How important is it to try to convert others to this faith?"... The answers to these questions make very interesting reading. They range from somewhat evasive to outright condemnation of prosylitisation. This is seen as the crux of religious fanaticism.

BOOKS

ARTS



The IFC has been bold in having the faith traditions reflect on these questions of a delicate nature. Perhaps, at a later date, emboldened by the success of this Notebook, the IFC may consider venturing into the erstwhile forbidden area of one religion's assault on another through conversion. Other questions that might warrant further exploration are those of universality, spirituality and scriptural injunctions for the care of the Earth.

I highly recommend that all Zarathushtis (and in fact, persons of other religions as well), especially those engaged in Interfaith work, carry a copy of this concise compendium of comparative religions, in their library.

**Contact for ordering:**

**Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington  
The Gate House, 201 Allison Str., NW Washington  
DC 20011**

**Tel: 202 234 6300 Fax: 202 234 6303**





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